



Review of NRM Resources

GLAMORGAN SPRING BAY COUNCIL
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By  **sona mara**

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PURPOSE

This review has been prepared to provide an overview of NRM (natural resource management) stakeholders, resources and capacity that operate externally to Glamorgan Spring Bay Council in the municipality.

A secondary component of this review was to scan a sample of other Tasmanian Local Government municipalities to ascertain indicative information about NRM groups in their region and any dedicated NRM resources and capacity.

No specific recommendations were sought as part of this report.

METHOD

This review has been conducted as a desktop assessment only, based on publicly available information, with relevant data sourced from credible organisations and sources, including government organisations. The information is presented in a summarized format to meet the context of the brief and data has been simplified to be indicative only.

For ease of comprehension the review will split into the following sections:

- Tasmanian NRM Overview
- Municipal Capacity and Key NRM Stakeholders
- Tasmanian Local Government Scan
- NRM Outlook
- Useful Links

TASMANIAN NRM OVERVIEW

The term NRM is by definition very broad and refers to the integrated management of natural resources such as land, water, soils, plants and animals. The management principles can vary but are often driven by the triple bottom line of social, economic and environmental outcomes.

In Tasmania the principle legislation is the Natural Resource Management Act 2002* and associated Framework. These legislate for the establishment of the three Tasmanian NRM Committees which in turn has seen the establishment of the three regional NRM organisations; NRM North, NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM. Since establishment they have been the principal recipients of Federal and State NRM funding in Tasmania, outside of government agencies.

The NRM sector is however much broader and includes a range of Not For Profit and Industry organisations, which increasingly focus on a particular niche. This can range

from specific industries, geographical areas through to individual species, and others offer specialist services to support the sector. There are also a range of private sector companies providing technical services to the industry. As consumer expectations evolve we are also seeing more corporate entities developing an interest and capacity in NRM to support their sustainability and accreditation.

NRM investment in Tasmania is derived from several sources, government, philanthropic, corporate and community (through volunteers and in kind support). Government investment has however been the greatest contributor to the Tasmanian NRM sector since the establishment of the National Heritage Trust but has been on a downward trajectory for over a decade. This can be attributed to a number of factors:

- The Australian Government shifted their investment focus from Regional NRM Strategies to targeted national priorities
NB due to Tasmania's relatively well preserved natural assets we have limited opportunity to bid for national priorities
- State Government investment in NRM Regions has always been historically low compared to federal funding, but it was also significantly reduced (40-50%) during the Global Financial Crisis and remained at that level until the last few years
- The recent failure to secure Australian Government funding in the initial round of the National Landcare Program by NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM resulted in a temporary loss of investment, capacity and confidence in Tasmania
- Competition from other sectors and political trends have impacted the limited funding and seen investment move into other areas of the economy

MUNICIPAL CAPACITY AND KEY NRM STAKEHOLDERS

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Council area has a range of natural assets that are of active interest to a range of NRM stakeholders and land managers. These range from nationally listed species and habitats to areas of local interest and value. It is not the intention of this report to highlight these natural assets, but rather focus on the capacity of current stakeholders to engage in and support NRM activity in the municipal area. To this extent key stakeholders are listed below along with a summary of their roles and responsibilities.

Community Groups

There are approximately 20 active NRM focused community groups operating in the municipal area with affiliation to Landcare Tasmania and Wildcare Tasmania, including the Glamorgan Spring Bay NRM Committee. This includes groups not based in the region but with statewide interests such as Threatened Plants Tasmania and SPRATs which also potentially operate in the area. As members of Landcare and Wildcare these groups have access to a range of support services, information and funding opportunities. A list of these local groups is provided in Appendix 1.

Role: These groups are predominantly volunteers with no obligations or responsibilities beyond an interest and desire to contribute to positive environmental outcomes. However these community groups are often the backbone of NRM activities at local level, leveraging funding for their activities and contributing at an environmental, social and economic level to local communities.

Responsibility: As predominantly volunteer groups they have no specific responsibilities outside of any obligations derived from their structure/governance and the coordination and management of the activities they undertake, particularly OH&S.

Australian Government

Role: The Australian Government defines its role as provider of national leadership to protect natural resources and facilitate sustainable and productive management of agricultural land. This extends to soil, vegetation and biodiversity assets but also support for viable rural communities and improving the engagement of Indigenous Australians in this process.

The primary mechanism for achieving this is the National Landcare Program, which is currently in Phase Two and invests in a range of NRM programs.

Responsibility: National priorities such as those covered by the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and immediate priorities defined in the Threatened Species Strategy.

State Government

Role: The State Government has a major role in NRM. The State has constitutional responsibility for land and water management and many sea fisheries. It is also a major land manager in its' own right, it administers the Resource Management and Planning System and has a key role in working with industry that use the State's natural resources.

Responsibility: Primary responsibility for natural resource management in the State rests at with the State Government, including use of state funds and relevant NRM decisions. This includes the development, adoption and promotion of strategies for the integrated and sustainable management of Tasmania's natural resources including implementation by relevant government agencies, statutory authorities and government business enterprises.

Government Agencies and Government Business Enterprises

Role: Although technically covered by State Government, it is worth highlighting agencies such as Parks and Wildlife and State Growth (road corridors) that have active roles as land managers in the region with commensurate responsibilities for NRM issues.

Responsibility: Their responsibilities only extend to the relevant lands they manage but they have potential to be valuable partners in terms of strategic planning, coordinating actions and shared resources in support of NRM outcomes.

Regional NRM Bodies

Role: Established under the NRM Act 2002, the role of the Regional Committees and their NRM bodies is to support the State Government in its NRM responsibilities, providing a link between local and state levels and integrate and coordinate regional activities. These organisations do not however have a regulatory role, or enforcement powers.

Responsibility: Under the terms of the NRM Act 2002 and associated NRM Framework the regional NRM organisations are primarily responsible for identifying NRM priorities in the region, developing a regional NRM strategy and to coordinate, facilitate and monitor the strategy implementation. There is also provision to work with State agencies to develop processes for NRM education and training for people in the regions.

Landcare Tasmania (16 listed groups in GSBC area)

Role: Landcare Tasmania is the peak body that represents Tasmania's Landcare groups. Their objective is to improve the health of our natural and work environments and they do so by providing a range of functions and services including distributing grants, providing cost effective group insurance and providing practical information, documents and templates to support group activities (including OH&S).

Responsibility: In addition to providing relevant support services Landcare Tasmania represents its members at all levels of government.

Wildcare Tasmania (2 listed groups in GSBC area)

Role: Wildcare Tasmania is a community of members, volunteers and donors who collectively care for Tasmania's wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage. It operates as an independent, incorporated, not for profit organization. They provide opportunities to work in close partnership with government agencies, local government and private landowners in a range of tasks and environments.

Responsibility: Wildcare has no direct responsibilities but is a key conduit to accessing and working on government land, particularly land managed by Parks and Wildlife and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania.

Industry and Industry Groups

Role: The primary role of private sector companies and industry groups is primarily focused on the advancement of the company or industry. Market expectations have increased pressure on all sectors to operate in a more sustainable way with increasing expectations on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability accreditation. Consequently we are seeing increasing advocacy and support for relevant NRM activities down to local level, with individual companies and industry group members. Relevant local examples are the Forestry, Aquaculture and Viticulture industries.

Responsibility: Any company operating in Tasmania must comply with relevant corporate and environmental regulations but there is an increasing appetite to expand on these requirements and to value add through additional voluntary NRM and community activities.

Environmental Non Government Organisations (NGO's)

Roles: In addition to those groups actively operating in the region there are a number of Tasmanian based organisations that have potential to contribute in the region. Organisations such as the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, Bush Heritage and Greening Australia are all potential partners and sources of resources for the right opportunity.

Responsibility: Each entity has their own strategic and project driven priorities that are not listed in detail here (see useful links section), but each offers potential capacity, support and partnership opportunities for appropriate projects and developments.

TASMANIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SCAN

Due to the significant variation in area, asset, population, natural resources and local priorities it is not feasible to attempt to directly compare or benchmark individual councils in terms of their NRM commitments, capacity or resources in the context of this report.

However, a scan of councils including those with comparable population, land area or proximity to Glamorgan Spring Bay Council was conducted as an indicative guide to the current level of support and dedicated NRM resources. The scan also incorporated the number of listed Landcare/Wildcare groups in the relevant municipality as an indicative measure, noting that this does not take account of membership numbers or how active the groups are. The information is summarised in the following table:

Council Area	Population (2019 ABS)	Land Area (ha)	Council NRM (or linked) Plan or Strategy	Listed NRM Groups (not statewide)	Dedicated NRM resource/s (FTE status unconfirmed)
Glamorgan Spring Bay	4,602	263,695	Yes	17	NRM Committee 6x NRM staff
West Coast	4,175	989,435	Yes	5	No, NRM enquiries via Community Development
Break O Day	6,288	355,836	Yes	8	NRM Committee 1x NRM Facilitator
Dorset	6,634	324,869	Yes	6	No, depends on nature of NRM enquiry/work
Circular Head	8,078	508,490	Yes	3	1x NRM Officer (shared with Waratah Wynyard)
Northern Midlands	13,347	513,308	Yes	12	1x NRM Facilitator
Waratah Wynyard	13,828	352,862	Yes	11	1x NRM Officer (shared with Circular Head)
Sorrell	15,603	61,791	Yes	9	Yes, NRM contact person BUT position covers other roles too

NRM OUTLOOK

The current COVID 19 environment continues to create many challenges, known and unknown, and it is likely there will be implications for the funding and implementation of NRM activities, particularly at local level. These could be positive or negative depending on the funding and participation variables.

There is also a question remaining around the current structure of Regional NRM delivery at both state and national level. The current federal focus is on investment in national strategic priorities, as opposed to regional and local priorities, and this puts considerable pressure on the current Tasmanian NRM model because of its dependence on Federal funding. The National Landcare Program Phase Two is currently scheduled to continue in its current form till 2023. On the positive this may encourage and create more opportunities for partnerships and resource sharing among NRM stakeholders.

Current and emerging priorities associated with climate change, such as coastal erosion and inundation, weather events and bushfire management are also likely to feature more in future NRM programs and priorities. This will have varying implications depending on the location, landscape and natural assets of individual municipalities, and also depend on whether there is additional investment or further dilution of current investment. In this regard it would be circumspect to acknowledge the current fiscal environment as State and Federal government adjust budgets to reflect their response and implications of COVID.

In response there are a number of options to increase the profile and opportunities for NRM investment in the municipality. One immediate opportunity is the review of the Tasmanian Regional NRM Strategies which is scheduled to take place in the next 12-18 months. This provides an opportunity to engage in NRM discussions and ensure that local priorities are considered and highlighted in a strategic context, in order to maximise opportunities for future support and funding.

Other local government areas have also engaged in proactive and innovative planning initiatives that focus local NRM effort and seek to leverage future investment opportunities, examples include the Waratah Wynyard Council ICEP (Integrated Council Environment Plan) and Douglas Shire Resilient Coast Strategy (see useful links section for detail).

In summary there is a high degree of uncertainty about the future of NRM investment, particularly at local level in Tasmania. There is no standard approach apparent in Tasmanian Local Government but Regional NRM bodies have significantly mitigated the risk by linking the majority of their resources and capacity to specific funding and projects, and by building capacity in the broader community (including industry) as opposed to the bodies themselves.

USEFUL LINKS

The Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002:

<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2002-037#GS17@EN>

The Australian Government National Landcare Program Phase Two:

<http://www.nrm.gov.au/national-landcare-program>

NRM North: <https://nrmnorth.org.au/>

NRM South: <https://www.nrmsouth.org.au/>

Landcare Tasmania: <https://www.landcaretas.org.au/>

Wildcare Tasmania: <https://wildcaretas.org.au/>

Tasmanian Land Conservancy: <https://tasland.org.au/>

Bush Heritage: <https://www.bushheritage.org.au/>

Greening Australia: <https://www.greeningaustralia.org.au/>

Forest Stewardship Council: <https://au.fsc.org/en-au>

Aquaculture Stewardship Council: <https://www.asc-aqua.org/en-au/>

Waratah Wynyard Council ICEP: <https://www.warwyn.tas.gov.au/projects/icep-integrated-council-environmental-plan/>

Douglas Shire Council Resilient Coasts Plan: <https://douglas.qld.gov.au/douglas-shire-first-in-qld-with-resilient-coast-strategy/>

APPENDIX 1

The following table lists NRM focused groups in the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council area who are formal members of Landcare Tasmania and/or Wildcare Tasmania, the two leading organisations providing services and support to NRM groups in Tasmania. The table does not include groups who operate statewide.

Group	Location	Affiliation
Bayview Bush Babies	Swansea	Landcare Tasmania
Bluemans Run	Sandy Bay	Landcare Tasmania
Brushy Plains Rivulet Conservation Group	Buckland	Landcare Tasmania
Dolphin Sands Ratepayers Association	Not listed	Landcare Tasmania
Earth Ocean Network	Bicheno	Landcare Tasmania
Friends of Bicheno Penguins	Bicheno	Landcare Tasmania
Friends of Freycinet	Bonnet Hill	Landcare Tasmania/ Wildcare Tasmania
Friends of Maria Island	Not listed	Wildcare Tasmania
Friends of Rocky Hills Inc.	Swansea	Landcare Tasmania
Friends of Triabunna Reserves	Triabunna	Landcare Tasmania
Glamorgan Spring Bay NRM Committee	Triabunna	Landcare Tasmania
Glamorgan Spring Bay Wanderers	Triabunna	Landcare Tasmania
Orford Community Group	Orford	Landcare Tasmania
Pulchella Community Nursery Landcare Group	Triabunna	Landcare Tasmania
Riversdale farm	Sandy Bay	Landcare Tasmania
Tasmanian Bushland Garden	Bream Creek	Landcare Tasmania
Pademelon Park Wildlife Refuge	Bicheno	Landcare Tasmania