



## AGENDA ITEM 8.12 - ATTACHMENT

### Introduction

*This briefing paper was prepared by NRM North to provide George Town Council with clarification around the relationships that exist between NRM North, the TEER Program and Tamar NRM. Additionally this paper seeks to provide George Town Council with a clear understanding of the overall return on investment for participation in the TEER program.*

### 1) Relationships between organisations

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#### **NRM North**

NRM North is a statutory body which is tasked with co-ordinating natural resource management activities across the whole Northern region. This includes working with local government to support mutually beneficial activities which contribute to a cleaner and healthier environment. The focus for NRM North is on larger strategic projects which support regional community issues and priorities and can be funded from multiple sources.

#### **Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program (TEER)**

The TEER program is hosted by NRM North but is a partnership between 5 councils, Department of Primary Industries, Water and the Environment, TasWater, Hydro Tasmania, Department of Health and Human Services and NRM North. The focus for TEER is specifically on understanding what is happening in our waterways (the two Esk rivers and the Tamar) and undertaking meaningful work particularly from within the catchment area to keep the Tamar estuary as clean and healthy as possible. Each partner contributes to the outcomes of the program financially and in other ways. Stormwater is a major pollutant of the Tamar and so a fair bit of effort is placed into helping local government in this area.

#### **Tamar NRM**

Tamar NRM is one of 6 sub-regions in the Northern region. Each sub-region has a primary focus on local community engagement and undertaking community based activities such as volunteer events, supporting landcare/coastcare group activities and engagement with local stakeholders on their needs and desires for the environment. NRM North co-funds facilitators in each subregion and these work with the sub-regional group.

*(To be provided – a flow chart to show relationship between organisations/ programs and partners)*

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## 2) TEER Partner Value Statement

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TEER is a partnership approach to waterway management with over 20 organisations directly engaged and working together to achieve common goals for improving the health of the Tamar estuary and its rivers.

George Town Council has been a valued and instrumental member of the TEER program since its inception in 2008. A new Partnership Agreement has been forwarded to partners for consideration and we request that GTC considers on-going financial support of the TEER program to the total value of \$11,800 p.a for a further 3 years from July 2014 to June 2017.

TEER will continue to provide George Town Council with specific outcomes for improvement to the health of the Tamar estuary and its rivers under the new Partnership Agreement. In addition to the TEER program outcomes for GTC outlined below, specific partner related returns on investment result from opportunities arising from new partnerships developed each year and activities negotiated on an individual basis.

### Examples of specific activities that will provide outcomes for GTC under the new Partnership Agreement 2014-2017 include:

- An independent peer review report provided to TEER members including GTC examining potential environmental issues of concern/impact related to the proposal for the **Tamar Lake barrage**. Expected timeframe for release of the report is Sept 2014.
- Advice and information related to sediment (**siltation**) management in the Tamar estuary including impacts from silt raking activities.
- Funding to support implementation of the TEER Water Quality Improvement Plan which will aim to **reduce pollutant loads** delivered to the Tamar estuary primarily from the North and South Esk Rivers systems. A reduction in loads of pollutants to the Tamar estuary will help to conserve the unique and high conservation value of the underwater biodiversity in the Low Head area and improve water quality for recreational, domestic and industrial use.
- **Site audits** undertaken by the NRM North Stormwater Officer for **Sediment and Erosion Control practices** on building and construction sites at the request of GTC.
- Development of **Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)** engineering conditions and maintenance guidelines.
- Delivery of **stormwater monitoring** services for GTC upon request to assist councils to determine the effectiveness of current treatment and examine options for improvements.
- Advice for selection of appropriate Water Sensitive Urban Design WSUD technology for GTC including **assistance with design requirements and modelling**.
- **Training for staff** in WSUD and sediment and erosion control best practice. This includes providing cash subsidies for staff to attend training, participation on tours in other regions to examine best practice and networking opportunities and collaboration with other councils as a member of the Northern Tasmanian Stormwater Program Working Group.



**Key achievements and specific outcomes delivered through the TEER program to date for the George Town community include:**

- Establishment of the Ecosystem Health Assessment Program involving monthly **monitoring of the Tamar estuary** from Launceston to Low Head including the release of catchment and Tamar estuary **report cards**. TEER is the only group who currently monitors the entirety of the Tamar estuary. The monitoring program and data collected is of critical importance to continue as it provides the basis for any assessment of impacts on the Tamar related to future development and activities.
- **Engagement and collaboration** with key industry groups in the George Town community including Rio Tinto Alcan and BHP Billiton TEMCO.
- Development of a Northern Tasmanian Stormwater Quality Management Strategy including the development of a **Stormwater Management Plan for George Town Council**.
- Sub-catchment mapping for priority stormwater management areas in George Town including **mapping of stormwater infrastructure**.
- Tamar estuary Seafood Safety Investigation including **signage** in the George Town municipality.
- **TEER Water Quality Improvement Plan** project and **catchment modelling** to identify loads of sediments and nutrients delivered to the Tamar from catchment areas and recommendations on how to reduce loads and meet targets.

**Return on investment**

NRM North believes that the TEER program has successfully demonstrated that a partnership approach to catchment management and natural resource management delivers many benefits including; greater coordination between agencies, improved knowledge sharing, improved efficiency and pooling of resources as well as lasting partnerships and a return on investment.

Over **\$2.7M cash has been leveraged by the TEER program** from local, state and federal government bodies and industry partners from 2008-2014 representing a significant investment into the health of the Tamar's waterways which could only be achieved through the partnership approach adopted.

Additionally, over **\$4.0M has been committed in kind to the TEER program** in that time, representing a significant contribution by partners providing human resources, equipment and services. This investment has been allocated towards many on-ground activities to reduce pollutants entering waterways as well as scientific investigations to provide the knowledge and information required to make informed management decisions to improve waterway health.

Funds provided from partners of the TEER Program under the new partnership Agreement 2014-2017 will be used to support the continuation of the TEER Program's key activities and the implementation of the TEER Strategic Framework 2014(enclosed). Under the new Partnership Agreements funds committed by partners is approximately \$470,000 per year, representing a significant investment into projects and activities that will continue to improve the health of the Tamar estuary and Esk rivers waterways.