Climate change is a significant policy driver for all levels of Government. Like other policy ‘problems’, there are uncertainties over the rate of climate change and the scale of impacts associated with changes to climate. Changes in climate are at least partly a result of the effects of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere from human activities including fossil-fuel combustion, land-use practices and industrial production. These emissions also contribute to ocean warming and changes in the chemical composition of the ocean.

Warming of the oceans impacts on global ocean currents, one of the main mechanisms by which the climate is moderated. At the same time, rises in ocean temperature contribute to extreme weather events such as cyclones or severe storms, that in coastal and estuarine areas can lead to inundation of coastal land. More broadly, changes in ocean temperatures may lead to changes in marine ecosystems, with direct effects on activities such as fishing and aquaculture operations.

As climate knowledge and projections of sea-level rise improve, the definition of extremes in natural events and the degree to which they represent ‘acts of God’ will evolve, with ramifications for Local Government and State Government as well as for the insurance industries. For example, improved understanding of the impacts of climate variability, including the frequency and scale of extreme events, has direct relevance for land use planning and other Local Government responsibilities such as flood or bushfire response planning. A more variable climate would also have obvious impacts on agricultural and land use practices.

Current climate modelling indicates increases in temperature and reductions in average rainfall in Southern and Eastern Australia, and higher variability leading to, for example, more frequent very hot days, more frequent drought periods, more intense periods of heavy rain, increased frequency of flood events, and more frequent extreme storm events. These projections are based on models operating at large scales. One area of future research is to model climate at regional and local scales. Such modelling will improve current projections of future climate scenarios by delivering information at local scales, where many people will have to make decisions about adaptations to climate change. Local scale information is particularly important in Tasmania where the complexity and variability in the landscape has a major influence on local climate.

Climate variability and change is the focus of considerable scientific effort around the world, with Australia playing a significant part including contributing to the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC, established by the United Nations Environment Program and the World Meteorological Organisation in 1988, coordinates regular assessments of the findings of climate change science and research. The IPCC’s most recent assessment, the Fourth Assessment Report has been progressively released in 2007.¹

The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report records that “global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and now exceed pre-industrial values determined from ice cores spanning thousands of years.”² The report also states warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global average sea level.”³
The impacts of climate change will vary regionally, and even within relatively small areas such as Tasmania. The report of IPCC Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability) recognises that with “increases in global mean temperatures of less than 1-3°C above 1990 levels, some impacts are projected to produce benefits in some places and some sectors, and produce costs in other places and other sectors.” Working Group II emphasises, however, “that it is very likely that all regions will experience declines in net benefits, or increases in net costs for increases in temperatures greater than about 2-3°C.”

It is important to note that the IPCC Working Group II, while recognising that impacts of climate change will vary, warns that these impacts “are very likely to impose net annual costs which will increase over time as global temperatures increase”. Local Government will not be immune from these impacts, and in many cases will be on the front line in adapting to these impacts and responding to their effects.

**Tasmania’s Contribution to Climate Change Science**

Tasmanian researchers are making a major contribution to national and global efforts in climate change research, including to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report as lead and contributing authors. Research at the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre (ACE CRC) located at the University of Tasmania, Hobart, provides a focus for Australia’s national effort to understand the role of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in global and regional climate.

The ACE CRC is a partnership of the Australian Antarctic Division, CSIRO Division of Marine and Atmospheric Research, the Bureau of Meteorology and University of Tasmania, together with six other national and international partners. The ACE CRC’s research programs are dedicated to the study of atmospheric and oceanic processes of the Southern Ocean, their role in global and regional climate change, and the impact of such changes on sustainable management of Antarctic marine ecosystem resources. The ACE CRC is also leading a consortium of researchers and research end users seeking funding for a project called Climate Futures for Tasmania, in which the impacts of potential climate change will be assessed at local scales across Tasmania. The ACE CRC is funded until June 2010 under the Federal Government’s Cooperative Research Centre program.

Research in Antarctica and the Southern Ocean is providing important data on climate change. The Southern Ocean represents about 20% (by area) of the global ocean and is the only place on Earth where all the major ocean basins (Pacific, Indian and Atlantic) connect without being blocked by land. This interconnection is crucial for the Earth’s climate because it allows the establishment of a global pattern of ocean currents that mix ocean water from the tropics to the poles and from the seafloor to the surface, distributing heat around the globe, absorbing carbon dioxide and circulating nutrients necessary for ocean ecosystems.

Australia’s scientific effort has a major focus on increasing understanding of the role of Antarctica and the Southern Ocean in the global climate system, as well as on Australia’s weather and climate. Australian expeditioners began this work in Antarctica a century ago. Meteorology and climatology have been important in the establishment of Australia’s Antarctic Program and current science, particularly glaciology and work on ice cores which is providing important information on climate change. Ice cores from Law Dome have provided important records of past climate and have helped understanding of the dynamics of climate change. The Law Dome ice core is also being used to explore the history of changes in Australian climate, although these relationships are complicated, and carry significant uncertainties.
Currently, ACE CRC researchers are assessing how climate change will affect sea levels and what the impact will be on the frequency and intensity of coastal flooding events around Australia and in selected South Pacific locations. Research done as part of the ACE CRC Sea-level Rise Program has already shown that storm surges of a given height in Sydney and Fremantle occurred two to three times more frequently in the last half of the 20th century, than they did in the first half. If this trend continues, coastal flooding currently expected only once every fifty years may occur once or more per decade by 2100.

ACE CRC researchers have combined satellite, coastal and island tide-gauge observations to estimate global averaged sea level from 1870 to the present. The results indicate that sea level has risen by almost 20 cm over this period and, at a rate of 1.7 mm per year during the 20th century. There has been a clear increase in the rate of rise – the current rate is ten times greater than the rate of rise during the two thousand years prior to 1800. Increased coastal erosion is another impact of rising sea levels. About 70% of the world’s sandy beaches have been eroding over the past 100 years. Erosion problems are expected to worsen as sea level continues to rise, resulting in loss of beaches, destruction of coastal infrastructure and the loss or deterioration of coastal ecosystems.

Climate Change and Local Government

Climate variability and change has obvious impacts on Local Government and the communities that it represents. The impacts identified above, affect a range of Local Government operations and services. However, these impacts are unlikely to affect all Tasmanian Local Governments in the same way. Local climate change needs to be considered in risk management strategies developed and adopted as part of ongoing planning. Incorporating climate change into Local Government decision-making will be enhanced with improved local scale climate modelling. Local decisions will be influenced by local conditions, hazard evaluation and vulnerability assessment. This information will assist decision-makers in the development of policy options. These options are, in turn, affected by the value of infrastructure likely to be affected and the associated costs of each option, including taking no action. As noted, “these costs (and benefits) are likely to change into the future as scenarios change and, more significantly, as the management options chosen today maximise or minimise the viability of options into the future.”

While the work of the IPCC and its contributing scientists has identified the significance of human induced climate change and its consequences related to issues such as sea-level rise, uncertainty still surrounds questions of probability or spatial and temporal predictability. Coastal zones are likely to be the sites of many primary impacts from climate change. Managing and adapting to these impacts will be of increasing importance.

Vulnerability assessments and identification of potential risks are clearly important, as is planning responses to impacts of reduced rainfall, or increased intensity of floods, or, where relevant, storm surges. In coastal areas, planning needs to take account of sea level rise and associated dynamic coastal processes such as coastal erosion occurring through combinations of sea level rise and storms. Local Government too can take a community leadership role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with its services and operations.™
The Natural Resource Management (NRM) network has seen a number of reviews in the past 18 months as the Australian Government assessed its investment and made decisions on the funding and direction of future NRM programmes. The results of these reviews demonstrated a strong commitment from the Australian Government and other stakeholders to the regional delivery model, and have led to a firm commitment of continued funding until 2013. This commitment has given security to the NRM network around Australia, and has prompted evaluations of NRM’s success at the state and regional scales. It’s been more than five years since the Tasmanian NRM Framework and its enabling legislation, the Natural Resource Management Act 2002, came into being. This milestone has triggered the need for a review of both the framework and the legislation, which is being conducted by the Department of Primary Industries and Water, with assistance from the NRM Council.

At the centre of the NRM Framework is the establishment of a state-wide NRM Council and the three regional NRM Committees – NRM South, NRM North and Cradle Coast NRM. The review aims to assess the effectiveness of the framework and, if necessary, make recommendations for change. The focal point of this review process will be the release of a discussion paper which is expected around mid-September. This paper will provide background information and pose focus questions based around the review’s terms of reference.

The release of the discussion paper will be followed by a six-week consultation period which will include public meetings in each of the regions. The review offers an opportunity for all who have been involved in natural resource management within Tasmania to provide their views and comments on various elements of the NRM Framework. This includes considering the appropriateness of NRM priorities and principles that were established for Tasmania within the framework.

It is important to note that there is a raft of policy and legislation to guide the management of natural resources in Tasmania. Much of this sits outside of the NRM Framework and will not be the subject of this review. The terms of reference for the review will be included in the discussion paper, or can be accessed via the website of the Department of Primary Industries and Water.

The review will extend to assessing the effectiveness of the three-region structure and of regional strategies in achieving natural resource management outcomes. Relating to this, and of particular relevance to Local Government, is whether the voluntary approach to linking regional strategies to land-use planning is effective. Alternative approaches, such as formally linking the two processes through legislation, will also be assessed through this review.

This raises questions on the implications of the NRM framework for council’s own natural resource management functions and for land-use planning more broadly. Are councils drawing on the regional NRM strategies to inform their strategic management of natural resources at the local level? How could these strategies become more useful to councils in their existing resource management and land-use planning functions?

The Tasmanian NRM Framework has offered a range of opportunities to Local Government and associated stakeholders in the five years it has been operating. Many of these opportunities have not been fully realised and this review provides a chance to enhance the opportunities for Local Government in to the future. Councils are therefore encouraged to consider the questions posed in the discussion paper and use the review to assess the benefits and opportunities from integrating NRM into their own operations. ♥

For more information about NRM or the review process, please contact Jenni Rigby at the Local Government Association of Tasmania at jenni.rigby@lgat.tas.gov.au.
Implementing the Glamorgan Spring Bay Weed Management Plan

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Council recently won the Local Government category of the Tasmanian Awards for Environmental Excellence for their strategic approach to natural resource management. The award recognised a range of different initiatives that reflect strong commitment from council, motivated staff and communities, and a strategic partnership with NRM South.

The implementation of the Glamorgan Spring Bay Weed Management Plan is one of these activities. Whilst the program includes essential on-ground spraying to combat Spanish Heath, it also extends to strategic risk assessment of threatened species and declared roadside weeds. This strategic assessment of weeds includes mapping significant weeds, and the development of approaches to manage weeds, for long-term benefits.

Cradle Coast’s Solution to Stopping Soil Erosion

Wet seasons in recent years have seen crops and soils – including fertilizer and topsoil, which carries essential organic matter – washed away. In many cases, the effectiveness of weed control efforts has also been reduced. But these impacts have been minimised with the introduction of a free hiring service for Ripper Mulcher Machines to the Cradle Coast Region.

The Ripper Mulchers are able to reduce erosion and save valuable topsoil, by applying straw mulch along the contours of sloped paddocks. Two new Ripper Mulcher machines, which have been modified to improve usability, are now also available for hire. The Ripper Mulchers are funded by the Australian Government through Cradle Coast NRM. For use, contact Agronico on 0418 534 017.

Andrew Crane, Department of Primary Industries and Water, provides training to the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council works crew on weed identification and control.

A north-west farmer puts the Ripper Mulcher machine to good use.
Lower Ringarooma Ramsar Project

The Lower Ringarooma Floodplain Wetland is a complex, coastal and estuarine ecosystem of 3,407 hectares; recognised as having values of international significance. Since 1982, it has been one of five Ramsar-listed wetlands in the Northern NRM Region. This project will secure the long-term protection and management of a natural asset of international importance within the region, while providing an example of how public and private landholders can work together to protect natural and cultural areas.

Two activities have already been carried out as part of this project; an Ecological Character Description and a Dairy Effluent Project. The Ecological Character Description has collated all available information on the wetland and led to a better understanding of the site’s biodiversity. From this, it can now be determined how to assess change in the wetland’s condition, and identify potential threats to the wetland and ways to mitigate them. NRM North engaged Dairy Tasmania to work with landholders, to develop and implement a dairy effluent management plan that will dramatically reduce nutrient levels within the wetland.

Interested stakeholders visit the wetlands site.

Through this project, stakeholders will continue to work together to develop management plans and strategies, undertake property management planning and on-ground works to promote the ecological significance of the wetland and implement best-practice management.

The Australian Government’s Natural Heritage Trust funds these and many other projects through Tasmania’s three NRM Regions. For more information about what’s happening in your region, contact jenni.rigby@lgat.tas.gov.au.

Tasmanian Alkaloids is an excellent example of integration between technology and the rural environment. Our most valuable asset - people - consist of qualified scientists, engineers, technicians, functional specialists, administrative support, operators and tradespersons; all working towards the same goal - to meet customer requirements using best practice systems.

The team also includes farmers; contracted for the production of the annual poppy crops and field officers working closely with farmers throughout the year to ensure top quality harvest results.
Throughout 2007, the Local Government Association of Tasmania conducted extensive consultation with councils on the issue of climate change. This had the dual objectives of raising awareness and ascertaining the key concerns and needs of Tasmanian councils.

The consultation process incorporated three main components – a climate change needs analysis survey, a workshop on climate change as part of the 2007 Local Government Conference, and workshops with the Local Government Climate Change Reference Group. The results of these individual consultations have been collated, analysed, and summarised into a report on the findings. The report includes recommendations for future actions by the Association and other key stakeholders to support Local Government action on climate change issues. Most significantly, this report will inform the development of a Local Government Framework for addressing climate change in Tasmania, and proposals for state-wide and collaborative projects on climate change at the local level.

Already in Tasmania, there are a number of councils who are taking action to adapt to, or mitigate against climate change. One role of the climate change reference group is to share information and outcomes of localised projects with councils across the state.

One significant project being undertaken at the council level is the Integrated Assessment and Response to Climate Change Impacts on Clarence Foreshore project, currently underway in Clarence. This project has been jointly funded through the Australian Greenhouse Office, the Tasmanian Risk Mitigation Fund and Clarence City Council. The Clarence Foreshores project looks at how climate change is likely to impact upon the Clarence municipality coastline. A catalyst for this project – and much of Council’s interest in the issue of sea level rise – was the release of the Sharples’ Report. This report highlighted the need to better understand processes and potential impacts of sea-level rise, storm surge and coastal erosion at the local level.

The Clarence Foreshores project examines these issues through an integrated socio-economic and scientific analysis to ascertain the likely impacts in the Clarence local area. The project will identify adaptive response options, and recommend actions that suit the local conditions with respect of physical processes and community expectations. The project is well underway, and is expected to be completed mid-2008. Outputs of the project will include management options to adapt to, or mitigate hazards at the local level, which will be codified and released for application in other local areas.

Coastal erosion at Curl Curl Beach, NSW. Photo supplied by James Carley, Water Research Laboratory, University of NSW
Early intervention on problem weeds offers Local Government major cost savings in the future.

Across Tasmania, councils are responsible for controlling weeds over major roadside, park, reserve and drainage line portfolios. The Weed Management Act 1999 establishes councils’ legal responsibility for management of declared, or ‘noxious’ weeds on council managed land. In addition to legal responsibilities, a range of other issues including complaints from ratepayers, amenity, fire abatement, environment protection and infrastructure maintenance, drive weed management programs.

With so much pressure on councils to manage weeds, some weed control is inevitably reactive and targets either widespread weeds with little prospect of eradication, or weeds with little potential impact on the triple bottom line. Councils have gone a long way to addressing this situation through weed management planning: most councils have developed one or more long-term plans for intelligent, targeted weed management across their lands.

Councils can realise major cost savings by incorporating vehicle hygiene and early intervention in their weed management programs. Researchers have established that significant long-term cost savings are made by acting against new or ‘sleeping’ weeds, before they become widely established. For every $1 spent on preventing weed spread through good vehicle hygiene, over $30 is saved in reactive weed control in the future. For every $1 spent on controlling a new weed with limited distribution, $16 is saved in controlling that same weed as a widespread species in the future. Contrast these figures with reactive control of established weeds, where for every $1 spent, $2 is saved.

The Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy 2005-2010 has identified weed-led priorities in the region, including candidates for early intervention. These priorities have drawn heavily on established council weed management strategies and plans, and complement councils’ existing investment in strategic weed management. Potentially devastating species with very limited current distribution include in the following table below.

Some councils are taking these weeds on with management programs, with a number of them also beginning to embrace weed hygiene practices and washdown culture. Major non-government stakeholders who neighbour council lands, such as Forestry Tasmania and Transend Networks have incorporated best practice vehicle hygiene in their standard operating procedures and contracts. The Cradle Coast Region is currently preparing a Regional Weed Hygiene Plan which will examine means of weed spread into and within the North-West, identify priority actions that will reduce or prevent new infestations, and liaise with key stakeholders to secure commitment to implementation of the plan. Preparation of the Regional Weed Hygiene Plan will include consultation across councils.

Throughout Tasmania there are excellent opportunities for councils to strengthen preventative hygiene around road works and roadside slashing, which will contribute to reducing the spread of such high profile weeds as Spanish Heath. There are also excellent opportunities to target very limited distribution weeds, including the species listed in this article. Warmer weather coming into spring and summer will see many of these species at their most visible and their most vulnerable to control options.

Implementation of the Southern Tasmanian Weed Strategy 2005-2010 is managed by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority and sponsored by the Australian Government through NRM South.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common name</th>
<th>Scientific name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridal Creeper &amp; Asparagus Fern</td>
<td>Asparagus asparagoides &amp; A. scandens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Hawkweed</td>
<td>Hieracium aurantiacum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paterson’s Curse</td>
<td>Echium plantagineum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John’s &amp; Square-stemmed St John’s Worts</td>
<td>Hypericum perforatum &amp; H. tetrapterum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilean Needle Grass</td>
<td>Nassella neesiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serrated Tussock</td>
<td>Nassella trichotoma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Old Phones, New Trees!

Tasmanians have played an important role in the planting of 75,000 native trees throughout Australia, through the recycling of their old mobile phones.

As part of MobileMuster and Landcare Australia’s ‘Old Phones, New Trees’ campaign, MobileMuster pledged to plant a tree for every mobile phone handed in for recycling during the month of June. Throughout Australia, 75,000 mobile phones were recycled, with Tasmanians handing in 900 mobile phones to help restore and protect the Australian environment.

Brian Scarsbrick, Landcare Australia CEO, said the ‘Old Phones, New Trees’ campaign will deliver a three-fold benefit to the environment. It has diverted 75,000 mobile phones from landfill, helped conserve natural habitats and helped plant 75,000 trees which are urgently needed across the country. The trees will be planted in degraded areas such as Innisfail in Queensland, and Murrumbidgee and Manning Coast in New South Wales.

Rose Read, Manager of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association’s (AMTA) recycling program said we are pleased with the support from the community however, there is still some way to go in tackling the estimated 15.9 million stockpile of handsets lying around in homes and work drawers.

For Tasmanians who didn’t get a chance to hand in their old mobiles, batteries and accessories for recycling during the campaign, they can still recycle them at on of 67 locations throughout the state. Mobile phone drop-off points include Telstra, Optus, Vodafone, Fone Zone, ANZ and participating local councils.

To locate your nearest MobileMuster drop-off point, call 1300 730 070 or visit www.mobilemuster.com.au.

(L-R) Landcare CEO, Brian Scarsbrick and Chair of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association, Holly Kramer, thank Tasmanians for their support in handing in their old mobile phones for recycling, as they plant the first native tree as a result of the ‘Old Phones, New Trees’ campaign.

Litter Continues to be a Dirty Word

Tougher litter laws will be introduced in Tasmania to address the state’s ‘Dirty Dozen’ litter problems.

Tasmania’s Minister for Tourism, Arts and the Environment, Paula Wriedt, said the Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index showed cigarette butts and paper headed Tasmania’s ‘Dirty Dozen’ of most commonly littered items.

“... in comparison to previous years, the amount of litter on our streets and highways, along our beaches and in our shopping centres has increased by the number of items counted and by volume,” Ms Wriedt said.

“These disturbing figures reinforce the need for tougher litter laws in Tasmania. Under the legislation currently before State Parliament, littering a cigarette butt will carry an on-the-spot fine of $100 and the public will be encouraged to report littering offences to a littering phone hotline or on-line."

“There are significant costs involved with removing litter from the state’s roads and highways and it is the community who pays for street cleaning, unblocking stormwater drains and repairing damage to the natural environment,” Ms Wriedt added.

For information on KAB initiatives, visit www.kab.org.au.
Fresh Water at Your Fingertips

With State and Local Government increasingly looking for cost-effective and sustainable ways to secure fresh water supplies to many Tasmanian communities, one local company has developed an innovative solution that will ensure a safe and reliable water supply at only a fraction of the cost of traditional infrastructure.

Normally associated with road maintenance and construction projects, the Launceston-based Stornoway Group has now ventured into the national water market, offering a range of mobile water and wastewater treatment and recycling systems for domestic and industrial use.

In many parts of rural Australia, poor water supply and boiled-water alerts are accepted as part of everyday life as many communities struggle to provide a reliable source of fresh drinking water for their residents. Stornoway offers a range of small water treatment systems that will guarantee a reliable source of pure fresh water for an entire community for years into the future. The fully packaged and mobile water treatment systems can be configured to supply fresh water for 50 to 1,500 people and provide a cost-effective alternative to traditional water infrastructure assets.

The water treatment systems are suited to small rural communities, as well as new housing developments, resorts, accommodation facilities and camping grounds that would otherwise require a major infrastructure investment to ensure a reliable water supply.

Further details on Stornoway Water can be found at www.stornoway.com.au.

ROAD TRANSPORT TRAINING

The Transport Industries Skills Centre Inc., trading as Road Transport Training is a not-for-profit Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Providing Nationally recognised training and assessments for the Transport and allied industries in Tasmania.

Road Transport Training currently conducts training courses and assessments for;

- All classes of Heavy Vehicles
- Forklift
- Transport of Dangerous Goods and Explosives
- Taxi Driver training courses
- Defensive and Effective driving courses
- 4WD training courses
- Professional Log Truck Driver accreditation (for entry to Gunn’s mills)
- Livestock (volume loading) courses
- Certificate I-III in Transport and Distribution (Road Transport) for Furniture Removalists.

Heavy vehicle driver training courses and licence tests are conducted from locations in Hobart, Launceston and the North West.

Specially equipped vehicles are provided for Medium Rigid, Heavy Rigid and Heavy Combination licence classes.

Forklift Operator Training courses and licence tests are conducted regularly at our Hobart premises, and ‘On-Site’ at other locations throughout Tasmania, subject to the availability of suitable resources and facilities.

Bulk Dangerous Goods licence courses and re-Accreditation courses are conducted regularly in Hobart, Launceston and the North West, as are courses in the transport of Explosives.

Licensed Passenger Vehicle Certificate (TAXI) courses are conducted regularly in Hobart, Launceston and the North West, using our specially equipped Taxi training vehicle.

Defensive and Effective Driving courses are provided on demand, and are usually conducted ‘On-Site’ state wide, as are 4WD training courses.

Professional Log Truck driver courses are conducted regularly at locations in Hobart, Launceston & Burnie.

Persons successfully completing courses eligible for a National qualification are issued with a Statement of Attainment detailing the units completed.

For further Information contact the offices of Road Transport Training at 5 Lamb place Cambridge 7170.
Phone 6248 5455. Fax 6248 5624.
email: admin@RoadTransportTraining.org.au

Further details on Stornoway Water can be found at www.stornoway.com.au.
The global carbon market is set to become one of the largest and most dynamic markets the world has ever seen. The public is acutely aware of the effects of global warming and the impact of carbon emissions. Local Governments now have an opportunity to educate their communities further and take a leadership position on this issue by supporting a groundbreaking and practical environmental solution.

Respected environmentalist and Vice President of Greening Australia, Rob Gell says Australians have the potential to become world leaders in the fight against climate change. “We are enormously proud to introduce a world-changing and practical solution to global warming that we can all take part in right now. Whether you’re in Local Government, business or an individual, this is something we can all do. It’s about living and working carbon neutral now, simply by reducing carbon emissions where you can, and offsetting via carbon credits where you can’t,” he said.

Greening Australia’s new Breathe Easy program, gives Local Government, businesses and individuals the opportunity to become ‘champions for climate change’ with a host of offset options available to suit all levels of industry and lifestyles. “Breathe Easy is an Australian-based, premium carbon offset product that not only provides lasting, environmental change on a large scale, it is also robust enough to comply with any Federal Government-introduced carbon trading scheme in the future.” said Mr Gell.

Breathe Easy is a unique program that delivers three major environmental outcomes:

- Carbon offsets, the planting of trees to offset the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere;
- Landscape resilience, large-scale tree planting that will stabilise and shelter the soil, reduce the effects of salinity and erosion, and help to improve the quality of our water; and
- Biodiversity, the strategic planting of a mix of native plant species to provide food and shelter for our native, endangered wildlife.

As the only carbon offset product of this standard currently available in Australia, Breathe Easy is fully compliant with the Kyoto Climate Control Treaty, and has been designed to meet the requirements of the NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme and the Australian Government’s Greenhouse Friendly initiative.

Greening Australia, has over 25 years experience tackling critical issues like salinity, declining water quality, soil degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss through an innovative blend of practical experience, science and community engagement. “With our depth and level of expertise, a program like Breathe Easy only increases our capacity to provide large-scale environmental care. Local Governments will play a key role in delivering this solution and involving the whole community,” Mr Gell said.

For more information visit www.breatheeasynow.com.au or call Greening Australia on 6223 6377.
It’s been just over ten years since Hobart Water was formed under a Local Government joint authority model and in that time, there have been subtle but important changes.

We opened our doors with 49 employees and a straightforward charter to provide bulk drinking water to our customers (and owners), the eight local councils making up greater Hobart. Prior to the transfer of ownership, the organisation had a strong supply-driven vision, with six goals based around providing water, asset management, government and community relations, employees and finances. A decade later, and our current vision – to create value for our community through the provision of quality water and water services – points to the shift which has marked significant growth for Hobart Water.

What have been some of the changes and benefits?

- Since the late 1990s, Hobart Water has developed and sought new markets. Major examples include the supply of off peak water to commercial irrigators in the Coal River Valley / Tea-Tree area, where we utilise the spare capacity in our supply system during the winter months to provide water to high value crop growers for storage and use in drier months. Today, we sell around 2,200 ML of water per annum to around 55 irrigators, creating a significant economic boost, previously not possible.

- In 2005, Hobart Water commenced offering operations and maintenance services to smaller local councils. Derwent Valley Council led the way in 2005, followed by Glamorgan Spring Bay Council which signed up mid this year. In the past 12 months, memorandums of understanding have been signed with southern rural councils enabling Hobart Water to use its water-specific people, systems and processes to assist councils with their water and wastewater systems.

- Significant inroads have been made in planning greater Hobart’s future water infrastructure needs. A Thirty-Year Water Infrastructure Plan was recently released, using international methodology to map out where and how water infrastructure needs to be upgraded throughout the capital city. This then triggered a relationship with the Southern Tasmanian Councils Association to develop an even broader plan for Southern Tasmania’s reticulated water and wastewater systems. Hobart Water is currently working with all southern councils to develop a detailed, long-term view for future water infrastructure needs and solutions.

- Using funds allocated to asset improvements, more than $35 million in upgrades have been spent on water systems since 1997. Works included pipelines, pump stations, treatment plant upgrades and other associated infrastructure. In 2006, Hobart Water began a major ten-year, $13 million upgrade of the old Bryn Estyn Water Treatment Plant.

- Consistent financial returns to our council owners have been delivered as dividends every year since 1998.

- With the development of water experts forming the centerpiece of Hobart Water’s mission, the current workforce of around 100 (including employees transferred from Derwent Valley and Glamorgan Spring Bay Councils) form the state’s largest water-specific team. Professional development, training, and a range of in-house programs underpin Hobart Water’s ongoing drive to be regarded an employer-of-choice.

- Through a dedicated catchment and environment team, Hobart Water has continued developing strong experience in working with local communities and stakeholders to devise and implement drinking water catchment plans. These blueprints are vital to how our open water catchments are kept as pristine as possible, to help maximise water quality prior to treatment.

There are a great many other achievements but the major point is that through ongoing investment, Hobart Water – with the blessing and support of its Joint Authority owners – has now attained a level of momentum enabling it to reach outside of its traditional, city-based borders. By offering our services and knowledge, more communities are able to benefit from a level of expertise developed over a decade. As we enter planning for our next triennial strategic plan, one thing is certain – there is much more work to be done and the next decade should be as exciting as the last one!✔

Decade of Change Points to an Exciting Future

DR CHRISTINE MUCHA, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Hobart Water

Houstons Farm, located in the Coal River Valley region, is one of many producers to benefit from off peak water supplied by Hobart Water when surplus water is available.
In Brief

BLUElink: A Triumph of Scientific Collaboration

Broad-scale, up-to-date information on ocean currents, temperature and salinity is now available for the first time, following the launch of a new, online ocean forecast system developed by the CSIRO, the Bureau of Meteorology and the Royal Australian Navy. BLUElink provides daily, high-resolution analyses and twice-weekly forecasts, incorporating the latest changes in the weather and ocean, particularly in extreme conditions. Further Information can be found at www.bom.gov.au/bluelink.

Renewable Energy Facility Opened

In a big step forward for the waste and renewable energy industry, the Launceston City Council has opened an innovative, world-class, waste facility. Situated at the Remount Road landfill site, the Launceston Renewable Energy Facility recovers landfill gas and utilises it for the generation of renewable energy. The initiative will reduce approximately 40,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions every year over the life of the project.

Local Government Sustainable Development Conference 2007

The 2007 Local Government Sustainable Development Conference, to be held in Melbourne from 11-12 September, will focus on reducing the carbon footprint, water sustainability, waste minimisation, and developments in the built environment within the Local Government field. The conference will assist Local Government practitioners to identify, plan and implement best practice sustainable development solutions and will showcase leading edge examples of outstanding environmental initiatives by Australian Local Governments. A detailed agenda for the 2007 conference can be found at www.halledit.com.au/conferences/sustainability/2007.