

River Catchment Water Quality Initiative

The Australian Government will provide \$1 million for a river catchment water quality initiative, drawing on CSIRO expertise, and delivered jointly with the Tasmanian Government. The program will build on river catchment auditing and monitoring work and provide an improved understanding of water quality management needs.

The first priority will be to assess the impact of chemical use on water quality in Tasmania's river catchments. Methods will be tailored to suit Tasmanian conditions and validated on the ground in Tasmania.

The results of this work will be used to identify priorities for ongoing monitoring programs and to inform decisions about how, when and where particular chemicals can be used more safely in Tasmanian conditions.

Tasmania's disease-free status and reputation for clean air and water underpin a marketing advantage that is invaluable for the State's agricultural industries. As part of the State's efforts to ensure the sustainability of agricultural practices, chemical usage is being reduced and best practices for the use of chemicals have been adopted.

Nevertheless, there are community concerns about the level of chemical usage and of the impacts of chemical pollution on industry, human health and the environment. The water quality research program will build on existing monitoring programs to provide the community and industry with the information to respond to these concerns.