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MEDIA RELEASE:

CLEANING UP THE COAST

- Over 36 m³ amount of marine debris collected from the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and Huon Estuary
 - Industry, schools and community groups have been working together over the past 4 weeks throughout the Channel region
 - Plastic waste the biggest component of marine waste
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Over the last month the Huon and Channel communities have come together to clean up beaches and foreshore areas including Dover, Alonnah to Simpsons Point on Bruny Island, Garden Island, and Randalls Bay to Nine Pin Point in the Huon Estuary.

More than 36 m³ of marine debris has been collected by staff from Huon Aquaculture, Tassal TasWater and NRM South, school students from Sacred Heart Primary School, Glen Huon Primary School and with support from the Bookend Trust's Coast Watchers program, and 72 people have participated in community events with volunteers from Conservation Volunteers Australia, Bruny Island Boat Club, Port Cygnet Landcare and Watercare Group, Friends of Randalls Bay Coastcare Group and the Huon Valley Roamers Landcare Group. In total, over 150 people have participated over the past month.

Clean-up events have taken place as part of the D'Entrecasteaux and Huon Collaboration, a program hosted by NRM South and supported by local government, NGOs, and the water and salmon industries.

Collaboration Coordinator Nepelle Crane said the events had been very successful, but the level of marine debris – particularly plastics – was concerning.

“We began the clean-ups last year, and it was pleasing to re-visit a site on Bruny Island and collect less than half the volume of debris this time.

“But there is still a lot of new rubbish entering our waterways, and that presents a threat to marine life and the industries and recreational activities that rely on the Channel and Huon estuaries.”

As well as rope, nets and other fishing gear, there was a large amount of soft plastic rubbish, Ms Crane said.

“Thousands of wrappers and plastic bags have been collected.

“We encouraged the children to have a competition to see how many pieces of plastic they can find in a small area, and at one beach more than 400 pieces of plastic were collected in only 10 square metres.”

The clean-up events will conclude with a small working bee with Port Esperance Coastcare to remove 14 old tyres that have washed up on the Dover foreshore, whilst the Coast Watchers program – in partnership with the Bookend Trust – will continue with schools in the Channel and Huon areas throughout the year.

The Collaboration plans on running the clean ups annually, but they are seeking further sponsorship to support marine debris clean ups in the future.

“We have had fantastic support, with well over a hundred people participating this year, but that only covers a small part of our coastline. We have so much interest from people wanting to volunteer just a couple of hours – if we can generate more financial support to continue our coordinated approach to marine debris clean ups, we can really make an enormous difference in our local area.”

If you are interested in sponsoring future marine debris clean ups in the Huon Estuary, D’Entrecasteaux Channel and Bruny Island, contact Nepelle Crane for more information.

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The D’Entrecasteaux and Huon Collaboration is supported through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Programme, NRM South and the D’Entrecasteaux and Huon Collaboration partners – the Derwent Estuary Program, Huon Aquaculture, Huon Valley and Kingborough Councils, Tassal and TasWater.

Media should contact Nepelle Crane, Catchments and Coastal Coordinator NRM South on 62216112 or ncrane@nrmsouth.org.au

More info on the D’Entrecasteaux and Huon Collaboration at www.ourwaterway.com.au



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