Templestowe Lagoon

9 messages

Environment Mailbox <Environment@taswater.com.au> 11 August 2025 at 16:03
To: SEYM LONG <scagi7215@gmail.com>, Environment Mailbox <Environment@taswater.com.au>
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Hi Quentin,

I understand that you and some community members have some concerns around the biosolids spreading activity that occurred on areas of Chain of Lagoons Farm from January to May this year. As TasWaters' Senior Environmental Scientist (Biosolids Specialist), I can assure you that the activity was conducted within the requirements of Tasmanian State Planning Legislation and EPA Tasmania guidelines. The beneficial reuse of biosolids which meet strict classification requirements is common practice across Tasmania - approx. 75% of TasWaters biosolids are applied directly to farmland.

Our biosolids spreading program utilises expert environmental consultants to identify suitable agricultural land and willing landowners. First, they analyse testing results of the biosolids to determine its classification, which for Bicheno STP biosolids was Grade B for the contents of lagoon 1 and Grade A for lagoons 2 and 3. According to the Tasmanian Biosolids Reuse Guidelines (2020) Grade B is suitable for direct application agricultural land and Grade A could in theory be used in vegie gardens. Soil tests of the agricultural land are then taken to determine optimal application rates which provide the best outcome for the overall soil health. The biosolids from Bicheno STP were very low in contaminants and also relatively low in nutrients compared with other biosolids from around the state.

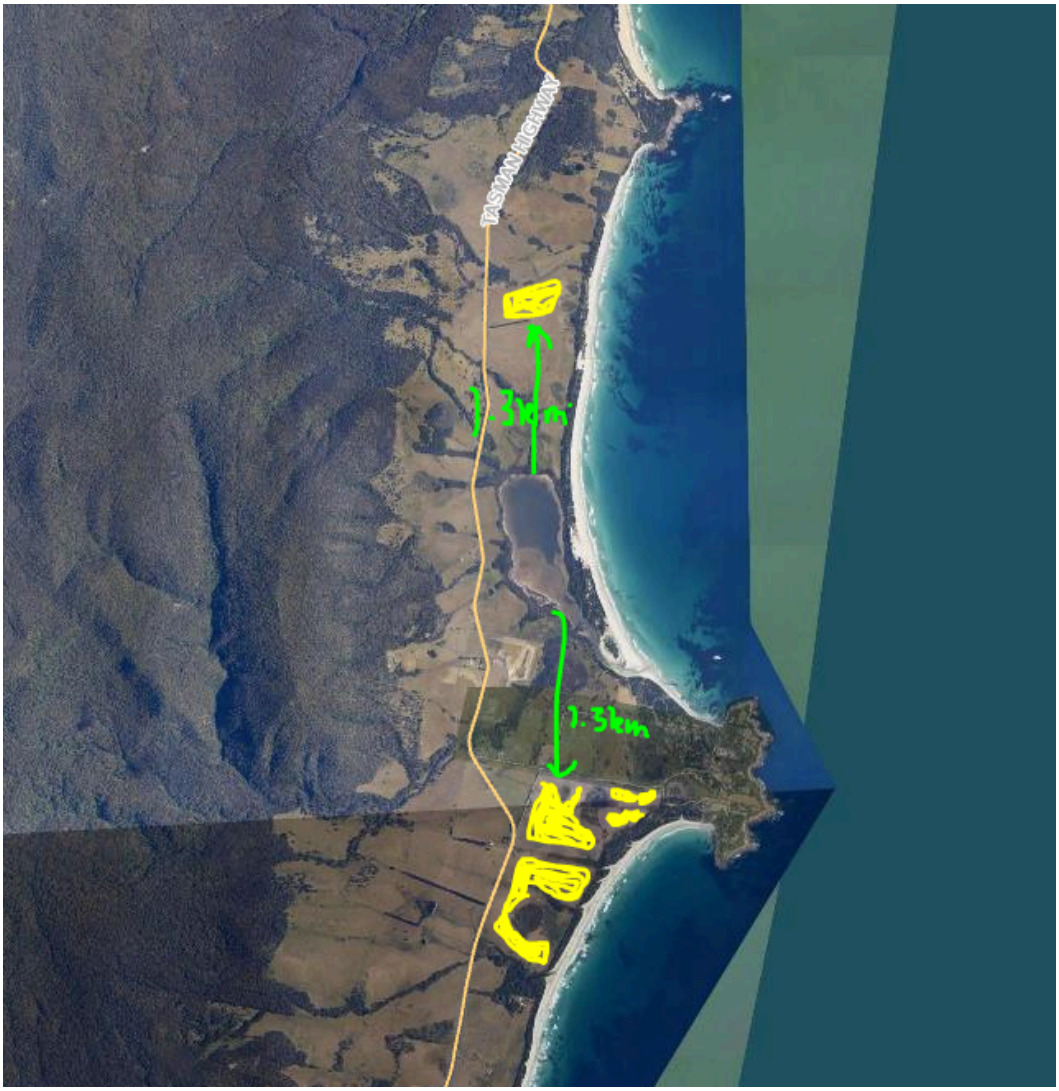
The land identified for biosolids application for this project is zoned as "agriculture" under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. Application of biosolids to agriculture zoned land is a permitted use – just like applying fertiliser, manure or compost products are. Identified sensitive areas such as creeks and drainage channels are protected with buffer zones (see details in table below).

Potential impacts to the water table are prevented through adherence to application rates identified in the management plan. The 120 wet t/ha maximum individual application rate is equivalent to a 12mm application depth. A 12mm application of water is a typical irrigation volume after application of synthetic fertiliser and is insufficient to generate runoff on areas in water deficient ground cover and equivalent to a few days' evaporation. Evapotranspiration and nutrient uptake by plants will prevent impacts to groundwater. The biosolids applied were notably low in nutrients and contaminants and this further reduces risk.

Table 11.1 Physical Site Restrictions

Site Characteristics	Restriction		Additional information
Slope	<15% (<1:7 ratio)		To prevent run-off and erosion. Forestry and site rehabilitation are possible exceptions, with management controls this can be increased to <25%
Buffer Distances	Open watercourse downslope	>100m	Buffer zones are used to reduce the likelihood of run-off, dust or odour affecting adjacent land or watercourses
	Open watercourse flat	>50m	
	Open Watercourse upslope	>10m	
	Occupied dwellings	>100m	
	Residential zones	>250m	
	Public roads and adjoining properties	>50m	
	Water bores	>50m (>250m if drinking water bore)	
	Native forests or significant vegetation	>10m	
	Property access roads	>5m	

The map below shows the approximate areas where biosolids were applied and also the distance to Templestowe Lagoon. The closest distance biosolids came to the lagoon was 1.3km. This fact along with our strict adherence to the minimum buffer zones and maximum application rates means that the chances of impacting this lagoon as a result of our spreading activity are very, very low.



Algal blooms are very common in semi land locked lagoon systems and the nutrient inputs that assist in the development of these blooms can come from a wide range of sources including animal faces from birds and marsupials which frequent the area, fertiliser runoff from surrounding land and decaying plant matter.

One final point I would like to address is the 30-day withholding period for livestock after biosolids spreading. This restriction is more about prevention of pathogens cycling through the food chain to humans than it is about the potential health impacts to livestock. If you want more information on this and how it may apply to native animals, I would strongly urge you to contact the Chief Veterinary Officer of Tasmania as they are the expert on animal health.

If you have any further queries regarding the biosolids guidelines or regulation of land application of biosolids, I encourage you to speak with EPA Tasmania.

Kind regards,

Jeremy Verdouw

Senior Environmental Scientist - Biosolids

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From: SEYM LONG <scagi7215@gmail.com>
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Subject: Re: Templestowe Lagoon