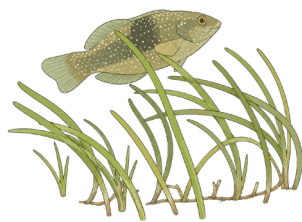


Healthy Seagrass. Healthy Estuary.

Seagrass in the Derwent Estuary



Why does seagrass wash up on the beach?

It is normal for waves, tides and storms to wash seagrass ashore. This is part of the natural coastal cycle. Washed-up seagrass provides food for coastal animals before breaking down naturally.



Photo by Olivia Johnson



Why is there so much seagrass?

- Seagrass is a living, changing habitat. It may appear, disappear or shift over time, especially in shallow parts of the estuary.
- Thriving seagrass is good news for the health of the estuary.
- Healthy seagrass meadows are becoming increasingly valuable – they have declined in many coastal areas over recent decades.
- Healthy seagrass meadows provide many benefits for people, wildlife and the environment.



Why is seagrass important?



Provides habitat for fish, shellfish, nudibranchs (like the one illustrated) and many other marine species.



Supports biodiversity by providing food, shelter and nursery areas for young fish and invertebrates.



Improves water quality by trapping sediments and helping keep the water clearer.



Filters nutrients from stormwater runoff before they can fuel algal blooms.



Stabilises the seabed, reducing erosion and helping protect the shoreline.



Produces oxygen and contributes to a healthy marine ecosystem.



What does healthy seagrass tell us?

Seagrass is sensitive to poor water quality, excess sediments and pollution. A healthy meadow suggests local conditions are currently supporting marine life and a functional coastal system.



Did you know?

Seagrass is a native marine flowering plant with roots, leaves, flowers and seeds, just like plants on land (it is not seaweed!)



Protecting healthy seagrass meadows today helps support a more resilient and biodiverse estuary for the future.

For more information visit the Derwent Estuary Program's website



Derwent Estuary Program