

The fourth meeting of the Vasse Taskforce was held in Busselton on 8 December 2015. The Taskforce chair the Hon Mia Davies, Minister for Water, announced \$7.15 million from Royalties for Region funds and a further \$7.64 million in matching funds from Taskforce partners to undertake 30 projects in the catchment over the next four years.

Outcomes from the meeting

Revitalising Geographe Waterways funded

The *Revitalising Waterways of Geographe Bay to Support Regional Development and Tourism*, now known as 'Revitalising Geographe Waterways' has been approved and will provide \$7.15 million in Royalties for Regions funding towards water quality improvements. Implementation will be overseen by the Vasse Taskforce. Funding covers activities associated with reducing nutrients in the catchment; improving the health and function of Vasse Wonnerup wetlands, Lower Vasse River and Toby Inlet, rethinking drainage, working together and developing a long term plan for the future.

An overview of the *Revitalising Geographe Waterways* and the funding breakup is available on the GeoCatch website < www.geocatch.asn.au >

Taskforce chair

The Minister for Water Mia Davies announced Ms Libby Mettam (MLA Vasse) as the new Chairperson of the Vasse Taskforce. As a local member and previous Deputy Chair of the Taskforce Ms Mettam is well equipped to take on the future challenges of the Taskforce focusing on:

- Coordination of the implementation of the Vasse Geographe Strategy and business case
- Strategic input into major initiatives and policy to improve water quality
- Building capacity in local asset managers
- Development of a long-term business framework including long-term governance and funding options
- Communication and reporting to the community

Oxygenation trial

A mobile oxygenation plant will be installed at the Vasse surge barrier in December 2015 for a trial period. The mobile oxygenation plant has been leased from Norway where it was developed to support aquaculture. The plant will draw oxygen depleted water in, supersaturate the water with oxygen and return the oxygen-rich water to the estuary using two pumps. The plant is expected to oxygenate approximately 500m of water in the channel upstream of the Vasse surge barrier. Extensive monitoring will be undertaken

to assess the effectiveness of the plant at improving dissolved oxygen conditions to improve water quality and reduce the risk of fish kills upstream of the Vasse surge barriers. This area is shallow and narrow with little water movement. It experiences very low dissolved oxygen levels through the summer period. Installation of the plant has been discussed with neighbours and issues raised concerning noise and public safety will be addressed in the trial to minimise impacts to residents.

An overview of the oxygenation trial is available on the GeoCatch website < www.geocatch.asn.au >

Busselton Water long term drainage manager and Buayanyup subcatchment Pilot Project

Busselton Water presented its report titled *Rethinking Drainage- Buayanyup subcatchment Pilot Project –Drainage Management Plan*. This report is now available for public distribution. The Taskforce endorsed best practice waterways management for rural drainage in the Geographe catchment. This work will be used as part of the *Optimising Drainage Project*.

Seawater trial

Water sampling for the summer trial commenced on 2 November 2015. This work aims to assess the effectiveness of salt water inflow on water quality in the lower Vasse estuary upstream of the Vasse surge barriers. Phase 1 involved the introduction of seawater via an opening mechanism on the surge barrier once a week for a period of 24 hours.

VETWG update

The Vasse Estuary Technical Working Group is evolving to take on a broader role, meet new challenges and find solutions with coordinated input among its partners. The group will now become the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands partnership with two groups supporting it: Science Advisory Group and Community Advisory Group. GeoCatch has sent invitations to groups and individuals inviting them to consider nominating for the community advisory group. Ads have also been placed in local newspapers. Further information can be found on the GeoCatch website < www.geocatch.asn.au >

More information

Keep up to date on news from the Vasse Taskforce and progress on work at GeoCatch website < www.geocatch.asn.au > or on [Facebook/GeoCatch](#)