

Vasse Taskforce

June 2018 | Meeting 13

The thirteenth Vasse Taskforce meeting was held in Busselton on 29 June 2018. Dr Sally Talbot (MLC South West Region) noted that for the next six months the Taskforce would be focusing on the development of an investment plan to guide operations after June 2019.

1 2017 Revitalising Geographe Waterways Annual Report

Nearly 60 people attended the community update on 29 June to hear about the achievements of the Revitalising Geographe Waterways program in 2017. The annual report which highlights three focus areas: reducing nutrients, science to action and collaboration is available at (<https://rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/J8950-Revitalising-Waterways-FINAL.pdf>). While the Taskforce has continued to meet its milestones and deliver project outcomes the biggest change is has come through its collaborative decision making. Partners have modified existing projects and practices to deliver integrated outcomes. For example the summer of 2017/18 saw improved water quality in the Vasse estuary and Toby Inlet through manipulating seawater inflows.

2 Visit by Water Corporation Board

The Water Corporation Board took the opportunity to visiting the Vasse Surge Barrier in June to understand its role in the Revitalising Geographe Waterways particularly management of its infrastructure for a shared water quality outcome in the Vasse Estuary.

3 In our urban areas

Two free Bay OK Gardening workshops were held in June with Gardening Guru Neville Passmore. Participants were provided with advice on soil improvement and plant selection and how to garden successfully with less fertiliser, water money and effort while Revitalising Geographe Waterways. The community is encouraged to become a Bay OK gardener by using the online tool <https://rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au/be-a-bay-ok-gardener/>. Work has also commenced on two demonstration Bay OK gardens through partnerships with the Water Corporation and Agile Royal. The community is encouraged to visit the sites at Dunsborough and Port Geographe when they are completed.

Plans are also underway to transform the Vasse Diversion Drain adjacent to Bussell Highway. Planned improvements include erosion and bank stabilisation works,

revegetation with native species, new park benches and a viewing platform.
<https://rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Final-VDD-Concept-Plan-supporting-report-17-002231-January-2018.pdf>. Water Corporation has also added to the project and will be undertaking additional work upstream of the bridge formalising parking in the area.

4 Investment planning 2019-2024

The Taskforce is driving the development of the next investment plan to *Revitalise Geographe Waterways* which will focus on five key action areas.

- **Reducing nutrients off priority catchments** will include extending and improving current programs including urban and agricultural fertiliser projects, dairy effluent and riparian management, soil amendment application and on-site treatment systems (e.g. bio filtration, sediment basins, rain gardens). This work is expected to form the major focus for new investment.
- **Remediation and intervention** using broad scale water treatment and/or modifications of the Lower Vasse River, potential oxygenation or aeration of the Vasse estuary, potential removal of sediment in key locations.
- **Coordination and Communication** of new initiatives and ongoing communication and community engagement.
- **Science and monitoring** will continue at the catchment scale to evaluate success of programs and evaluate nutrient reduction.
- **Minimising nutrient increase from new developments** to recognise the importance of reducing nutrients from new urban developments and agricultural intensification.

More information www.rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au

For more information www.geocatch.asn.au