

Vasse Taskforce

November 2018 | Meeting 15

The fifteenth Vasse Taskforce meeting was held in Busselton on 30 November 2018. Dr Sally Talbot (MLC South West Region) noted that it was four years since the Taskforce was established and achieved significant changes.

1 Four years on

The Vasse Taskforce has completed four years of operation and delivered significant changes in how the Geographe waterways are managed. Established in October 2014, the Vasse Taskforce has provided strategic direction and support to the lead agencies responsible for delivering projects under Revitalising Geographe Waterways. Four years on we are now seeing water quality improvements in many Geographe waterways, as well as improvements to Toby Inlet and the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands where changes to flow regimes has seen immediate results. The most unique change is how everyone is working together, from the organisations that make up the Taskforce to industry, farmers, scientists, developers and community. These groups are actively working together to define problems, agree on solutions and get action on the ground.

2 Water Awards

Revitalising Geographe Waterways has been recognised in the annual WA Water Awards winning the Program Innovation category. Winners are eligible for the national awards to be announced in Melbourne at the Oz Water conference in May 2019.

3 Vasse surge barrier update guidelines

The Taskforce supported recommendations of the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands Partnership to update the 1990 operating guidelines for the Vasse surge barrier. The updated operating guidelines include opening the Wonnerup Inlet sandbar and gates on the Vasse surge barrier in early December to allow seawater into the Vasse estuary over summer months. The updated operating guidelines have been informed by four years of seawater inflow trials and development of a hydrodynamic model by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. The trials have shown that seawater inflows can be used to improve water quality in the Vasse estuary and reduce the risk of fish kills. The Taskforce recommendations include an

annual review of water quality and ecological monitoring to ensure the ecological values of the wetlands, particularly water birds are not negatively impacted by the changed management regime.

4 Lower Vasse Diversion Drain Enhancement

The community, GeoCatch, City of Busselton and Water Corporation have worked together to create a high profile demonstration showcasing best practice drainage management in an urban setting. The Lower Vasse Diversion Drain Enhancement project has commenced on the lower section of the Vasse Diversion Drain near Bussell Highway Traffic Bridge. The site provides a Work is progressing on removing weeds, controlling erosion. The community will benefit from a viewing platform and footpath near the footbridge and a picnic area at the old Water Corporation depot site.

5 Upcoming events for the community

27 November	Community Update- GeoCatch	Surge barrier management
TBC November	Project communication on Quindalup sewerage infill commencement – Water Corporation	
February 2019	Public advertising City of Busselton and Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions for draft management plans	
February	Public information sessions	City of Busselton and DBCA - 'Market stall' style community consultation for draft management plans
June	Community Update	DWER/GeoCatch 'Where to Next' Future governance arrangements

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

For more information www.geocatch.asn.au