

# Vasse Taskforce

*March 2020 | Meeting 19*

The nineteenth Vasse Taskforce meeting was held by phone-link on 20 March 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Taskforce Chair Dr Sally Talbot, acknowledged the unprecedented situation noting that the Taskforce and its partners would continue to progress Revitalising Geographe Waterways 2019-2020 focusing on the highest priority issues and adapting delivery of projects in light the health situation.

## **1 Summer on the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands 19/20**

A strong integrated approach to management of the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands continued over the summer. A small fish kill occurred in late December but the Vasse Wonnerup Wetland Partnership worked collectively to manage the situation by adjusting inflow, opening gates and sandbars. Poor rainfall during winter and spring of 2019 also added to low water levels over the summer and resulted in quite a few complaints, particularly associated with odour adjacent to Estuary View Drive.

## **2 Lower Vasse River Water Management**

The Taskforce supported the City of Busselton in establishing a Management Advisory Group for the Lower Vasse River to harness community concerns. Water levels adjacent to Strelley Street were particularly low over summer drying out the river bed in some areas exposing the mud and increasing odour issues. Work by Taskforce partners has shown that part of river still has high ecological values even though it is a highly modified system with some works dating back to the 1920s. Nutrients entering the system come from multiple sources of nutrients making it necessary to manage groundwater sources, surface water sources and recycling of nutrients in the sediments. Considerable on-ground and investigative works have occurred since 1999 culminating the Lower Vasse River water management plan. The Taskforce will be working to improve the information available to the community which covers the integrated response across Taskforce partners.

## **3 Vasse Diversion Drain and flood infrastructure upgrade**

The Water Corporation advised the Taskforce that it had been able to incorporate duplication of the culvert where the Vasse Diversion Drain enters the lower Vasse River. Modelling work undertaken as part of the Reconnecting Rivers project

demonstrated the value of doubling the flow capacity into the Lower Vasse River. Further information is available at:

<https://rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/RGW-Reconnecting-Rivers-SR-FINAL.pdf>

<https://yoursay.watercorporation.com.au/VasseDrainUpgrade>

#### **4 Communication and participation under Covid-19**

The Taskforce acknowledged that communicating and ensuring community involvement during Covid-19 would be a challenge. Staff would be working to find alternative methods to engage people during these difficult times.

---

More information [www.rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au](http://www.rgw.dwer.wa.gov.au)

For more information [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au)