

Vasse Taskforce

August 2020 | Meeting 20

The twentieth Vasse Taskforce meeting was held in Busselton on 21 August 2020. Taskforce Chair Dr Sally Talbot, spoke about the Government's announcement of the Healthy Estuaries program acknowledging it was a triumph for the program and would enable work to continue through to 2024.

1. **Funding extended - Healthy Estuaries**

The Taskforce will be able to continue its work for another four years. In June 2020 the Premier announced the Healthy Estuaries WA program making available \$25 million over the next four years, including approximately \$1.6 million per year for Revitalising Geographe Waterways.

The Taskforce is finalising its work plans for the next four years and the program will build on the previous programs and include on-ground works to reduce nutrients entering key waterways through best practice fertiliser management, riparian management, and urban nutrient reductions. Monitoring and science will continue in the catchment and the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands, and funding will be allocated to implement key actions from management plans developed in the first phase of the program.

2. **Revision of Vasse water quality improvement plan**

Completion of hydrological models by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the Geographe catchment has provided the Taskforce with a more comprehensive understanding of where and how nutrients enter the waterways. This information is being used to revise the 2010 *Vasse Wonnerup Wetland and Geographe Bay water quality improvement plan*, set targets and identify the best management practices to achieve the targets. Taskforce members together with key stakeholders will participate workshops in October to help guide this work.

3. **Lower Vasse River**

Revitalising Geographe
Waterways

VASSE
taskFORCE

The Taskforce acknowledged the leadership of the City of Busselton to implement the *Lower Vasse River water management plan* including formation of the Lower Vasse River Management Advisory Group. Taskforce partners are collectively supporting the City through presentations, development of frequently asked questions and videos to explain the history and findings from previous work.

4. Governance

In response to funding through Healthy Estuaries Taskforce members continued to refine their roles and responsibilities to provide leadership and work together to improve the water quality and waterway health of water assets in the Geographe Catchment.

5. Upcoming events – Covidsafe

The Taskforce through its communications partner, GeoCatch has revised how it involves and communicates with stakeholders and the community in 2020. The priority remains to provide a Covidsafe environment for all our participants and this has resulted in a move to webinar presentations and videos.

August - webinar	Aquatic plants (Murdoch University)
September 16	City of Busselton Living Stream Design Survey and associated workshops
September - webinar	Fish of the Vasse Wonnerup (Murdoch university)
October - webinar	Water quality and gate management (DWER)
November - webinar	Waterbirds (DBCA)
October – community update	New funding and projects
October/November – bus trip	Bay OK garden tour
August-February video releases	Lower Vasse River health and water quality

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

For more information www.geocatch.asn.au