

# Vasse Taskforce

*November 2022 | Meeting 26*

The twenty-sixth Vasse Taskforce meeting was held in Busselton on 18 November 2022. Ms. Jarvis congratulated the City of Busselton's on receiving a state natural resource management Community Stewardship grant to fund Phase 3 of the Lower Vasse River Sediment Removal Project.

## **1. Lower Vasse River Sediment removal project**

The City of Busselton advised that Phase 1 of the Lower Vasse River Sediment removal project has been completed with an estimated 600 tonnes removed. Funding has now been secured for Phase 2 due to commence May 2023. Phase 3 will be funded from the State NRM Community Stewardship program.

## **2. Estuary View Drive sediment removal**

The Taskforce was advised that the sediment removal project at Estuary View Drive has been delayed. Tenders would be called again shortly and dredging is now planned for the winter of 2023.

## **3. Vasse Wonnerup Wetlands - Summer Operations 22/23**

The Vasse Taskforce acknowledged the extensive work of the Vasse Wonnerup Wetland Partnership to better manage the Vasse Surge Gate since 2015.

Summer operations for 22/23 will allow seawater into the Vasse estuary in response to declining water quality and to reduce the risk of a fish kill following water quality triggers rather than introducing water in early December. A maximum water level of 0.00m AHD for the end of summer/autumn period is also to be used. The hydrological barrier between the Vasse estuary and Lower Vasse River would be reinstalled to protect the Lower Vasse River from saltwater intrusion if required.

The Water Corporation has submitted the Section 40 to the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction outlining the details.

It was reported that a 'Surge barrier drop-in' was held in late October with approximately 20 community members attending. Representatives from DWER, Water Corporation and DBCA attended to explain operations and answer questions.

#### **4. Urban nutrient work**

Urban nutrient programs are on target with two Urban Gardens workshops completed. One workshop was delivered in partnership with the Community Landcare Nursery and Busselton Wildflower and Environment Show. The Garden Guardians education program continues to gained media presence on social media and with Garden Guardians displays and resources in several locations.

#### **5. Science and Monitoring Plan 22-24**

The Science and Monitoring plan (21-24) has been completed, and can be found at [Revitalising-Geographie-Waterways-science-and-monitoring-plan-2022-2024.pdf \(dwer.wa.gov.au\)](https://dwer.wa.gov.au/revitalising-geographie-waterways-science-and-monitoring-plan-2022-2024.pdf). The purpose of the plan is to monitoring water quality and health the waterways; increase understanding; evaluate actions, and inform decision making. The Science and Monitoring 2022–2024 plan will be implemented through collaborative partnerships between state and local government agencies, universities, and catchment groups and will cover seven key areas.

- Catchment water quality monitoring
- Drainage best management practices
- Rural land uses and best management practices
- Subsoil drainage best management practice trail
- Split phosphorus applications
- Soil amendment trials

#### **6. Fertiliser soil testing program**

The Taskforce noted the continuing uptake of the soil testing program by farmers. 39 farmers are participating in the soil testing program this season. It is estimated that 190 farmers (property over 40 hectares) have participated in the program since the commencements, equating to 40% of grazing land in the catchment.

A workshop was also held with the Fertiliser Industry representatives, exploring future tools regarding fertiliser use. An on-spot evaluation of participants showed that showed that 85% of participants had confidence in soil testing underpinning evidence-based fertiliser management, and 78% had confidence in results from the uPtake trials.

Work is continuing to better align fertiliser companies with the soil testing and best management practice projects.

#### **7. Community update October 2022**

A community update was held 6 October, covering a whole of program update and some farm case studies. 50 people attended the event and post-event evaluations showed a 78% confidence in the RGW program and confidence in the science information management

#### **8. Ecological indicators for the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands**

The Taskforce approved the development of ecological indicators for the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands. The extensive science and monitoring undertaken on the Vasse Wonnerup

wetlands since 2015 to monitor the wetlands, better understand their ecology and response to changes in water regime and to monitor the impacts of management actions (e.g. oxygenation plant and seawater inflow trials) will be used to develop the indicators.

## 9. Revitalising Geographe Waterways – planning progress 2024-2030

A report on the activities from 2020-2022 was presented to the Taskforce showing progress towards targets. Modelling has shown a 22 percent reduction in phosphorus against a reduction target of around 50 percent. Progress towards targets has increased since the start of Revitalising Geographe Waterways and continues to improve.

To continue water quality improvement the Taskforce is endorsed a process to finalise an update Water Quality Improvement Plan and Investment plan for 2025- 2030.

## 10. Upcoming engagement activities

Month	Scheduled Engagement Activity	Organiser	Topic
November	CorpEx district visit	DWER	Showcasing our work in the district, with a water quality focus.
November	Bay OK workshop at Origins	GeoCatch	Promoting low nutrient gardening practices
November	DIY Soil Testing training day	GeoCatch	Farmers learn how to take their own soil samples
December	Geographe Farmers Sundowner	GeoCatch	Celebrating farmers participating in catchment management
December	Exploring Soil Health	GeoCatch	Management practices to regenerate soils
February	Soil testing workshops	GeoCatch, DPIRD	Farmers received their maps with help to interpret them

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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)

Fish kills should be reported to the [FishWatch](#) 24-hour hotline on 1800 815 507.