

Vasse Taskforce

August 2025 | Meeting 33

The thirty third Vasse Taskforce meeting was held in Busselton on 22 August 2025, Chaired by Neema Premji. The following key issues were discussed:

1. **Welcome incoming Chair Neema Premji**

Incoming Chair Neema Premji welcomed Vasse Taskforce members and introduced a pre-recorded video from Water Minister Hon Don Punch. In the video, Minister Punch expressed his appreciation for Ms Premji and highlighted their close working relationship. He emphasised the importance of stakeholder collaboration within the Vasse Taskforce, particularly in addressing critical issues concerning the Vasse River and the local community. The Minister reaffirmed his commitment to the Taskforce's work going forward.



Photo: Vasse Taskforce members August 2025

2. Announcement of Healthy Estuaries #2 Funding

Vasse Taskforce members noted the continuation of funding being delivered through the Healthy Estuaries WA #2 program. Several components of Revitalising Geopraphe Waterways are supported through Healthy Estuaries, included GeoCatch's work in the catchment to reduce nutrients leaving urban and rural areas. Also funded is the continuation of water quality science and monitoring in the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands, Lower Vasse River and catchment waterways.

3. Management of the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands

Rainfall in late spring 2024 resulted in higher than average estuary levels going into summer, with 0.3 mAHD at the Vasse surge barrier in late December. Gates on the surge barrier remained closed (in line with the section 40 Biodiversity Conservation Act authorisation) until late December when they were opened to address low dissolved oxygen in the estuary. The s40 authorisation guides the management of the Vasse surge barriers to allow seawater into the Vasse estuary based on water quality and water level criteria whilst reducing risk to waterbirds and Carter's Freshwater Mussels. The Vasse Wonnerup Wetlands Partnership successfully maintained water quality in the wetlands over the past summer, with no reported fish kills. Partnership agencies continue to seek a longer term solution to the hydraulic barrier at Ford Road to prevent seawater inflows to the Lower Vasse River.



Photo: seawater in-flow to the Vasse Estuary in March 2025.

4. Community engagement highlights

The City of Busselton hosted a Catchment to Coast community information evening in August along with partners GeoCatch, Murdoch University and DWER. The event was attended by around 65 community members, with presentations from GeoCatch (Reducing Nutrients from the Catchment), DWER (Healthy Rivers program), City of Busselton (Lower Vasse River projects) and Murdoch University (Feral Fish control). The event attracted a lot of interest, questions, and passionate advocates for improving water quality in the Lower Vasse River, wetlands and waterways.



Photo: Presenters from the 'Catchment to Coast' event.

5. Upcoming engagement activities

A Flood Protection Bus Trip is being held on 18 September, hosted by GeoCatch and presented by Water Corporation and DWER. The annual event showcase the drainage and infrastructure that protects Busselton and surrounding areas from flooding in winter, and assists with water quality management in summer. Contact GeoCatch for more details.

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

For more information www.geocatch.asn.au

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