

The fifth meeting of the Vasse Taskforce was held in Busselton on 10 March 2016. New Taskforce chair Ms Libby Mettam, MLA Vasse, said that the Taskforce partners had already commenced many of the 30 projects under the Vasse Geopraphe Strategy and were working to ensure all projects were delivered on time and budget.

### *Outcomes from the meeting*

#### **Fish Kill Mitigation Plan update**

Overall it has been a good summer and this is in part due to the Water Corporation removing a build-up of algal rack early in the season. The Vasse Estuary Fish kill mitigation plan was enacted once over the 2015/16 summer during December when harmful phytoplankton blooms reached critical levels. In response the Water Corporation opened the fish gates on the surge barrier. This action resulted in an increased salinity and reduction in the harmful algal bloom. Dissolved oxygen levels have remained high and harmful phytoplankton low since December reducing the risk of fish kills. The Department of Water will continue to monitor water quality upstream of the Vasse surge barrier for the rest of the high risk fish kill season (Nov-April).

#### **Vasse Surge Barrier Actions and Oxygenation trial update**

The mobile oxygenation plant was commissioned in the Vasse estuary upstream of the Vasse surge barrier in January 2016. The oxygenation plant has been working successfully coming on overnight if oxygen levels drop to below 4mg/L (trigger for the Fish kill mitigation response).

The live monitoring data for the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands can be accessed online at:

Vasse Floodgates - Site # 610019:

<http://kumina.water.wa.gov.au/waterinformation/wir/reports/publish/610019/610019.htm>

Vasse Upstream – Site # 6101227:

<http://kumina.water.wa.gov.au/waterinformation/wir/reports/publish/6101227/6101227.htm>

An overview of the oxygenation trial is available on the GeoCatch website < [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au) >

#### **Vasse Wonnerup Wetlands update**

Community consultation to support the development of a management plan for the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands has been well received with two collaborative workshops between government agencies represented on the Vasse Taskforce, interested community members and scientists sharing views and knowledge on the wetlands. The Vasse Wonnerup wetlands Collaboration will guide the development of the management plan and engage the broader community.

Further information can be found on the GeoCatch website < [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au) >

## Lower Vasse River and Toby Inlet update

The City of Busselton have prepared consultation plans to guide community involvement during the preparation of water management plans for the Lower Vasse River and Toby Inlet. A series of community workshops will be held during March, followed by interviews with key stakeholders to inform the development of management objectives.

Further information can be found on the GeoCatch website < [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au) >

## Dairy and fertiliser update

GeoCatch and dairy industry partner Western Dairy have completed a review on dairy effluent management on the majority of dairy farms in the Geographe catchment. Outcomes of the review will guide investment through the *Revitalising Geographe Waterways* program to support improvements in dairy effluent management. Soil testing and the development of fertiliser maps for the Fert\$mart Pilot project (National Dairy Industry fertiliser management program) was completed in December 2015.

## Reconnecting Rivers update

The Department of Water have completed the first phase of modelling for the Reconnecting Rivers project. The Department has built a hydrodynamic model that can assess flood risk and feasibility of increasing flows into the Lower Vasse River and the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands. GeoCatch will be facilitating a workshop in April for the community to discuss possible reconnection options and different scenarios to be looked at further. People interested in attending the workshop can keep up to date on news < [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au) > or on [Facebook/GeoCatch](#)

## Bay OK update

GeoCatch are planning their urban fertiliser project for 2016 which will be rolled out under the banner of Bay OK gardens. People interested in

attending the workshop can keep up to date on news < [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au) > or on [Facebook/GeoCatch](#)

## *More information*

Keep up to date on news from the Vasse Taskforce and progress on work at GeoCatch website < [www.geocatch.asn.au](http://www.geocatch.asn.au) > or on [Facebook/GeoCatch](#)