Vasse Taskforce

December 2016 | *Meeting 8*

The eighth Vasse Taskforce meeting was held in Busselton on 5 December 2016. Ms Libby Mettam (MLA Vasse) Vasse Taskforce chair, congratulated Taskforce partners, community and industry on their contribution to the many achievements that were delivered in 2016.

1 DairyCare

Expressions of Interest (EOIs) are now open for effluent management projects on dairy farms in the catchment and was launched on 29 November 2016 at the Western Dairy Spring Field Day. The Sustainable Agriculture Reference Group has finalised the criteria which also require dairy farmers to contribute 50% of the upgrade costs either in-kind or cash. Accepted EOIs must be finalised within three years and must be designed by an accredited effluent advisor and meet the Code of Practice for Effluent Management (Dairy Australia). For more information www.geocatch.asn.au

2 Community update 6 December 2016

A community update on the *Revitalising Geographe Waterways* science program ('Summer Science Spectacular') was held on Tuesday 6 December in Busselton, and was attended by 39 people. Ms Libby Mettam MLA introduced the event, with presenters from Department of Water and Murdoch University updating the community on some of the science being undertaken as part of *Revitalising Geographe Waterways*, including the biology and ecology of fauna in the Vasse Wonnerup estuary (black bream and invertebrates) and update on the food web research project, the Vasse Wonnerup sediment investigation, the lower Vasse River water treatment trials, and the Vasse estuary model and seawater inflow trial results. Feedback from attendees was positive, with all of those providing feedback stating that the *Revitalising Geographe Waterways* science program meets their concerns/expectations.

3 Soil testing program

Expressions of interest have been received from farmers interested in participating in the fertiliser soil testing program. The full quota of participants was achieved and soil testing will commence on seventeen farms in the catchment in December 2016. This soil testing will allow these seventeen farms access to whole farm nutrient

maps, independent agronomic advice and recommendations to support good fertiliser decisions.

4 Fish kill mitigation

The Vasse Wonnerup Partnership is prepared for the 2016/17 summer. In addition to its normal activities the oxygenation plant has been reconditioned and reinstalled at the Vasse Surge Barrier gates ready for this summer. To support current operations and planning additional intensive water trials and monitoring will commence in late summer through to early spring.

5 Sediment trial

Sediment coring was carried out at the end of October in the channel upstream of the Vasse surge barrier. Results will enable us to map the volume of sediments and better understand their composition. This information will be used to inform a report on options for removal. Preliminary work was presented at the community forum – "Summer science spectacular" on 6 December 2016. The final report will be completed in 2017 and make recommendations for action.

6 Seasonal variation in macro algae

Dr Jane Chambers from Murdoch University will shortly commence annual sampling of macro algal and aquatic plants in the Vasse Wonnerup estuary. The slightly above average rainfall we received in the catchment will assist future testing of surge barrier scenarios as water levels are higher than previous years.

7 Lower Vasse and Toby Inlet water management plans

The City of Busselton has advertised for interested community members to be part of a community advisory group to support the development of management plans for the Lower Vasse River and Toby Inlet. These groups will complement the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands Collaboration, with members from the local community, scientists and managers already established to support the operational plan for the Vasse Wonnerup wetlands.

8 Sewerage in-fill

The Vasse Taskforce encourages all property owners to do their bit in *Revitalising Geographe Waterways* and connect to recently completed sewerage in-fill works in the catchment. Connecting reduces the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus entering our rivers, estuaries and Geographe Bay.

More information www.water.wa.gov.au

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