



Hon Mia Davies MLA
Minister for Water

31/10/14

MEDIA STATEMENT

State Government outlines action plan for Vasse Wonnerup

- **\$200,000 for GeoCatch to improve waterways**
- **Option to reconnect Vasse and Sabina rivers to wetlands**
- **Sewerage proposal for 126 lots in Quindalup**

Water Minister Mia Davies today announced an action plan to improve the health of the Vasse Wonnerup and management of water assets in the Geographe Catchment.

Meeting with key stakeholders in Busselton, the Minister announced \$200,000 to community organisation GeoCatch, investigating the future connection of the Vasse and Sabina rivers to the wetlands and a future sewerage project in Quindalup to benefit Toby Inlet.

Ms Davies announced the establishment of a taskforce and released the independent review commissioned by the State Government, which includes 14 recommendations.

“The key recommendation was to address the governance structure for the management of the catchment. The new taskforce will oversee a long-term strategy to improve water quality and the ecosystem,” she said.

The Minister will chair the Ministerial taskforce to bring together stakeholders to ensure there is appropriate leadership, roles and responsibilities for the tasks required to improve the health of the catchment.

The taskforce will include representatives from Geographe Catchment Council (GeoCatch); South West Development Commission; departments of Water, Parks and Wildlife, Agriculture and Food, and Fisheries; City of Busselton; Busselton Water; and the Water Corporation.

“The report found the issues impacting on the management of the wetlands and infrastructure are complex and will require a combination of short, medium and long-term interventions,”

Ms Davies said.

“The taskforce will collectively agree on the actions required, guided by the recommendations in the report, and assign responsibility and a reporting structure to ensure ongoing co-ordination and management.

“I thank Professor Hart for his recommendations and the community for their patience while the Government considered its response.”

Fact File

- **More than \$4m worth of work recommended under the Vasse Wonnerup Wetlands and Geographe Bay water quality improvement plan is under way or has been completed**
- **Strategy under way, with monitoring, under way to guide the operation of flood gates to mitigate fish deaths during hot weather**
- **The Liberal National Government is committed to the long-term health of the Geographe Catchment and will take a lead role in co-ordinating the response**

Background

The Government response includes:

- **Governance:** Creation of a Ministerial Taskforce to clarify roles and responsibilities for key organisations and a clear governance model for the Geographe catchment and wetlands.
- **Funding:** Provide \$200,000 to GeoCatch to support their work with the dairy industry, revegetation, extending the Bay OK program and improvements to urban drainage.
- **Drainage:** The Department of Water and Water Corporation will work with Busselton Water on an engineering and design project with a view to re-connecting the Sabina and Vasse rivers to the wetlands to increase river flow and return freshwater inflow.
- **Infill sewerage:** \$14.5m of infill sewerage works underway in Abbey Beach, with a further \$4.8m committed to infill to help reduce local nutrient flows from septic tanks into the Toby Inlet.

Research: The Department of Water will review the Vasse Water Quality Improvement Plan and develop a Geographe Catchment Management Plan to guide on-the-ground activities to improve water quality for the long term.