



Factsheet: 2 **Geographe catchment**

Vasse Taskforce

| May 2015 |



The Geographe Bay catchment extends from Capel in the north to Eagle Bay in the west and east to Kirup. Agriculture dominates the catchment's land area, with dairy and beef grazing the most widespread, while the urban area of Busselton supports a busy commercial and industrial sector. The Geographe Bay area is the most visited region in WA, attracting over 500 000 tourists spending an estimated \$300 million per year. Despite its high economic and social values, the combination of poor sandy soils, agricultural practices and urban expansion has led to water quality problems in the catchment's waterways from nutrient run-off.

GeoCatch has been undertaking on ground works and community awareness raising activities since 1997. GeoCatch will lead the implementation of projects to improve water quality and long-term management of the broader Geographe Catchment.

Key initiatives include:

- roll-out of national Fert\$mart program
- assessment of dairy effluent management systems
- protection of creeklines and stock exclusion works
- urban stormwater upgrades
- Bay OK community engagement program
- five year review of the Water Quality Improvement Plan
- long-term financial investment strategy



Project Spotlight

Roll-out of national Fert\$mart Program



Agricultural fertilisers and dairy effluent are significant contributors of nutrients to waterways in the Geographe catchment. For the last 15 years GeoCatch has been working in partnership with farmers, industry groups and agencies to reduce nutrients leaving agricultural areas.

Fert\$mart is the Australian dairy industry's national nutrient management framework, developed to improve the efficiency of fertiliser use on Australian dairy farms and reduce impacts to the environment. The national Fert\$mart program will be piloted in the Geographe Catchment to reduce nutrient loss off dairy farms and improve fertiliser use. Participating farmers will be provided with independent agronomic advice on optimising fertiliser use and managing nutrients on a whole of farm scale.

Concurrently Western Dairy and GeoCatch will undertake a review of dairy effluent systems in the Geographe catchment against the Code of Practice for Dairy Shed Effluent Management. The review will inform future investment in dairy effluent system upgrades and will provide farmers with access to high level technical advice.

Project Spotlight

Bay OK community engagement program

GeoCatch's Bay OK program works with the community to reduce nutrients entering waterways and Geographe Bay from everyday activities in the home, garden, school, business or farm. The Bay OK program will focus on urban fertiliser behavioural change by engaging gardeners to adopt low nutrient gardening practices through targeted workshops, training and demonstrations. The Bay OK program will develop low nutrient gardening information for new residents and work with developers to ensure water sensitive urban design features are included in all new developments.



More information

More information about the Vasse Taskforce and projects delivered under the Vasse Geographe strategy is available on the GeoCatch website

www.geocatch.asn.au

Be involved

Community members will have opportunities to be involved in events and workshops as work progresses. Information on how you can be involved will be available on the GeoCatch website

www.geocatch.asn.au