

# HEALTHY ESTUARIES WA



Estuaries are special places that support the unique lifestyles of Western Australians. Many towns and cities were established near rivers and estuaries because of the reliable sources of fresh water, safe anchorages, and an abundance of food. The majority of Western Australians now live close to estuaries, or within their catchments.

While there are 166 estuaries in Western Australia, it is the estuaries in the south-west of the state that are most heavily impacted by urban development, agriculture and recreation. The most immediate and direct human impact is the oversupply of nutrients. Nutrients can cause excessive growth of plants and algae, pushing the ecosystem out of balance.

Healthy Estuaries WA aims to protect and improve the health of seven at-risk regional estuaries:

- Peel-Harvey estuary
- Leschenault Estuary
- Vasse-Geographe waterways
- Hardy Inlet
- Wilson Inlet
- Torbay Inlet
- Oyster Harbour.

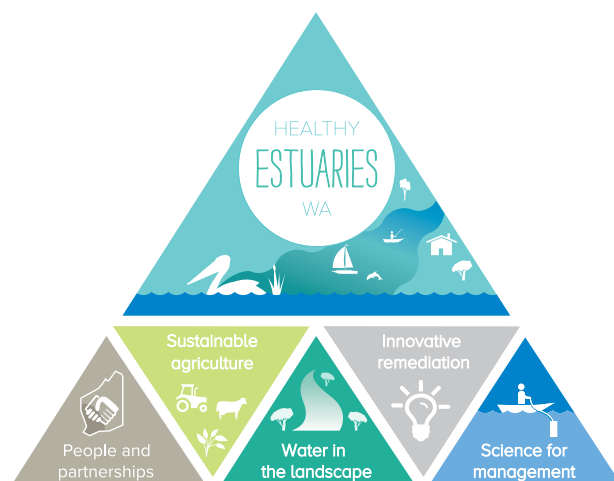
Healthy Estuaries WA coordinates and implements actions across these estuaries, working to reduce nutrient inputs, using the latest science to monitor and manage waterways, and building collaboration between community, scientists, government and industry.

## Actions across five strategies

A coordinated effort is needed to improve water quality and protect the values that depend on healthy estuaries:

- thriving ecosystems
- liveable communities
- economic development.

Healthy Estuaries WA guides estuary management through collaborative partnerships with State and local government, catchment groups, industry, farmers, research groups and the community. Healthy Estuaries WA incorporates delivery of the Revitalising Geographe Waterways program.





Estuaries are the vibrant places where rivers meet the ocean.

A catchment is the area of land where water (particularly rainfall) is collected by the natural landscape. One estuary may have a catchment area of several thousand square kilometres.

## People, partnerships and project delivery

Healthy Estuaries WA supports regional groups and partnerships to implement on-ground actions for healthier estuaries. Local communities and Traditional Owners will be informed, engaged and equipped for long-term regional catchment management.



## Sustainable agriculture

Healthy Estuaries WA works with catchment groups, farmers and industry to reduce the nutrient run-off from farms. The fertiliser management program supports farmers to make informed fertiliser decisions through access to accredited soil testing, workshops and one-on-one tailored advice from an accredited agronomist. Healthy Estuaries WA also works with Western Dairy to keep dairy effluent out of waterways and manage it as a valuable source of fertiliser. Adoption of other contemporary agricultural practices that reduce nutrient loss are also promoted, including climate resilient farming, circular economic solutions, grazing management and soil health management.



## Water in the landscape

Restricting stock access to waterways and revegetating edges of waterways improves stream function and water quality, and benefits animal health. Healthy Estuaries WA partners with local catchment groups and landowners, and Aboriginal work crews to erect stock-exclusion fencing and revegetate streams.



## Innovative remediation

Healthy Estuaries WA is continuing to demonstrate and apply new technologies to reduce nutrient losses to waterways and is supporting widespread adoption of these methods across the south-west. This includes soil-amendment trials in farm paddocks and phosphorus-binding clay that is applied to waterways to limit the phosphorus available for algal growth.



## Science for management

Scientific understanding is key to effective management of estuaries and their catchments. Healthy Estuaries WA monitors key indicators of estuary health, including salinity, temperature, oxygen, turbidity, seagrass and algae. Estuary and catchment models will be applied, reviewed and updated to understand these complex systems and inform management decisions.



#WAestuaries

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