



Wetlands and People Plan for the Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar 482

Wetlands and waterways are key features of Peel-Harvey's environment. Many are internationally significant places for wildlife and waterbirds and are used for recreation, tourism, crabbing, commercial fishing and education. With such a variety of values and uses, our wetlands need careful protection and management to ensure they can be enjoyed by future generations. To address this challenge a plan has been developed to foster greater awareness and enjoyment of our wetlands and involve government, industry and the community in their future.

Summary

We acknowledge the Noongar people as Traditional Custodians of this land and pay our respects to all Elders past and present



PHCC

**Working
Together**

Peel-Harvey Catchment Council

The **wise use** of all wetlands is a concept defined under the Ramsar Convention. It means the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands and all the services they provide for the benefit of people and nature. Wise use is about social and economic outcomes which at the same time achieve conservation. *An example of wise use is recreation which maintains or protects environmental values, or fishing which maintains fish stocks, aquatic ecosystems and habitats. Wise use aims to achieve win:win outcomes.*



People and Organisations Working Towards a Common Vision

The wetlands within the Peel-Yalgorup System are managed by numerous state agencies, local governments and community groups for a variety of purposes including conservation and recreation. Many of the wetlands are surrounded by large residential, commercial and rural areas and are intensively used by the public. With so many people and organisations involved in the management and use of the wetlands, a common vision and coordinated approach to their protection and management has been developed.

A vision for the Wetlands has been established under the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site Management Plan, and is achieved through three management goals:

- A. Management is in accordance with Ramsar wise use principles - conservation and compatible human use
- B. Community stakeholders, including industry and government, are engaged in the care and protection of the Wetlands
- C. The Wetland's ecological character is protected and enhanced

The Wetlands and People Plan is primarily designed to achieve Goal B.



The Wetlands and People Plan for the Peel-Yalgorup System (PYS) has been developed to encourage government, community and industry to become more involved in the care and management of the Ramsar-listed Peel-Yalgorup Wetlands System.

The wetlands cover 26,530 ha around Mandurah, Murray, Waroona and the inner Peel Region. They include the Peel-Harvey Estuary, freshwater Lakes Mealup and McLarty, and lands and lakes of Yalgorup National Park. Goegrup and Black Lakes have been identified for inclusion in the future.

A Plan to Engage People

This Plan has four Goals to encourage wise use and advocacy for the System's protection, and to increase community stewardship and support for the PYS. In a collaborative approach, we aim to implement these Goals through 9 Objectives and 32 Actions over the next 10 years to create a brighter long-term future for the wetlands.

**This Wetlands and People Plan is a CEPA (communication, education and public awareness-raising) Action Plan in accordance with the Ramsar Convention's CEPA Programme*



GOAL 1

Wise use of the wetlands is actively encouraged and supported

1.1 Best-Practice Wise Use and Advocacy by the Commercial Sector is Identified, Supported and Promoted

- 1.1.1 Establish tourism and recreational carrying capacity of the Peel Waterways
- 1.1.2 Create a nature based tourism wetlands network around iconic natural sites
- 1.1.3 Promote the Marine Stewardship Council's certification of the commercial and recreational fisheries

1.2 Commercial and non-commercial opportunities are created to allow wise use of the Ramsar Site's attractions

- 1.2.1 Create a 'Peel-Yalgorup' brand that is of both commercial and environmental value
- 1.2.2 Develop and implement a Signage Plan for the wetlands
- 1.2.3 Introduce distinctive, innovative concepts demarcating the boundaries of the wetlands or Parks
- 1.2.4 Incorporate wetlands information into tourism publications; link public facilities to environmental attractions
- 1.2.5 Assess potential to integrate a 'Wetlands Discovery' area into the 'Peel Waterways Institute'
- 1.2.6 Carry out a feasibility study into key enterprise opportunities

GOAL 2

Politicians and government are provided with the information and support to underpin better-informed decision making for wise use

2.1 Decision makers are supported to understand the PYS's values, threats, protection and management needs

- 2.1.1 Produce a fact sheet/digital presence on the status of the Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site
- 2.1.2 Produce a fact sheet/digital presence on the condition of the wetlands

2.2 Develop government's capacity to engage in collaborative management and protection of the wetlands

- 2.2.1 Develop a short training program for government officers on the wetlands & catchment management
- 2.2.2 Develop a 'Ramsar Recognition Campaign' to protect the wetlands and/or implement the wetlands' Management Plan

GOAL 3

Increased community sector stewardship and advocacy of the wetlands (active participation in decision making and management)

3.1 The community, government and commercial sectors are able to participate in the common development, implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions for the wise use of the PYS

- 3.1.1 Hold a biennial Peel-Yalgorup System Wetlands Forum
- 3.1.2 Prepare a Discussion Paper: Models for Governance, Participatory Management & Decision Making for the PYS
- 3.1.3 Establish a Peel-Yalgorup System Collaboration Group

3.2 Community stakeholders are engaged and supported in active environmental stewardship of the Ramsar System

- 3.2.1 Review & evaluate support to community groups & local governments managing the wetlands
- 3.2.2 Support community bird monitoring programs to inform System management & promotion.
- 3.2.3 A new citizen science program for the wetlands, to attract students, parents & teachers to learn about the wetlands.
- 3.2.4 Promote a community advocacy program - 'Protecting the Peel-Yalgorup System wetlands'
- 3.2.5 Identify research projects which will increase understanding of the wetlands & management solutions

GOAL 4

Increase the general community's capacity to protect the wetlands through social marketing, environmental education and Cultural events

4.1 The local and regional communities, including specific community sectors (e.g. schools) are provided opportunities and information to increase their understanding of the Site's values

4.1.1 Deliver an enviro-social marketing campaign on the theme of 'Love Peel, love our wetlands'

4.1.2 Review, list and publicise the educational resources already available on the wetlands.

4.1.3 Promote availability of educational resources amongst local schools & teachers

4.1.4 Investigate a new educational resource aimed at raising awareness of key values and issues

4.1.5 Assess feasibility of holding an annual/biennial arts-based Wetlands Festival to celebrate the wetlands

4.2 Opportunities are created to share stories of the wetlands across all sectors (e.g. champions, Noongar stories, European history)

4.2.1 Work with Noongar custodians to develop an interpretative manual highlighting the cultural significance of the wetlands

4.2.2 Create opportunities for cross-cultural exchange between Noongar and non-Noongar people

4.2.3 Support Noongar people to progress and develop already identified cultural trails

4.2.4 Document and promote the stories of [people who were or are] local champions for the wetlands

4.2.5 Create or support opportunities for Noongar people to work on country [in the wetlands]

4.3 Organisations and individuals in all sectors are given recognition for their efforts to wisely use the wetlands

4.3.1 Establish Wise Use Awards, or create an award under an existing awards program



Wetlands Worth Protecting

All wetlands provide benefits to our community and economy and are worth protecting in one way or another. Some wetlands, such as the Peel-Yalgorup, are of such importance that they are recognised as being of national and international significance and attract a heightened level of care and protection.

The Peel-Yalgorup Wetlands are recognised as being of international significance under the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands established in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar. The Convention recognizes the environmental, cultural, social and economic values of wetlands such as the Peel-Yalgorup.

Since 2007 PHCC has facilitated the Peel-Yalgorup System Ramsar Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The Peel-Yalgorup Ramsar Site Management Plan guides the 27 stakeholder groups that collaboratively manage and monitor the System; reporting their work via annual TAG meetings.

Values and Benefits

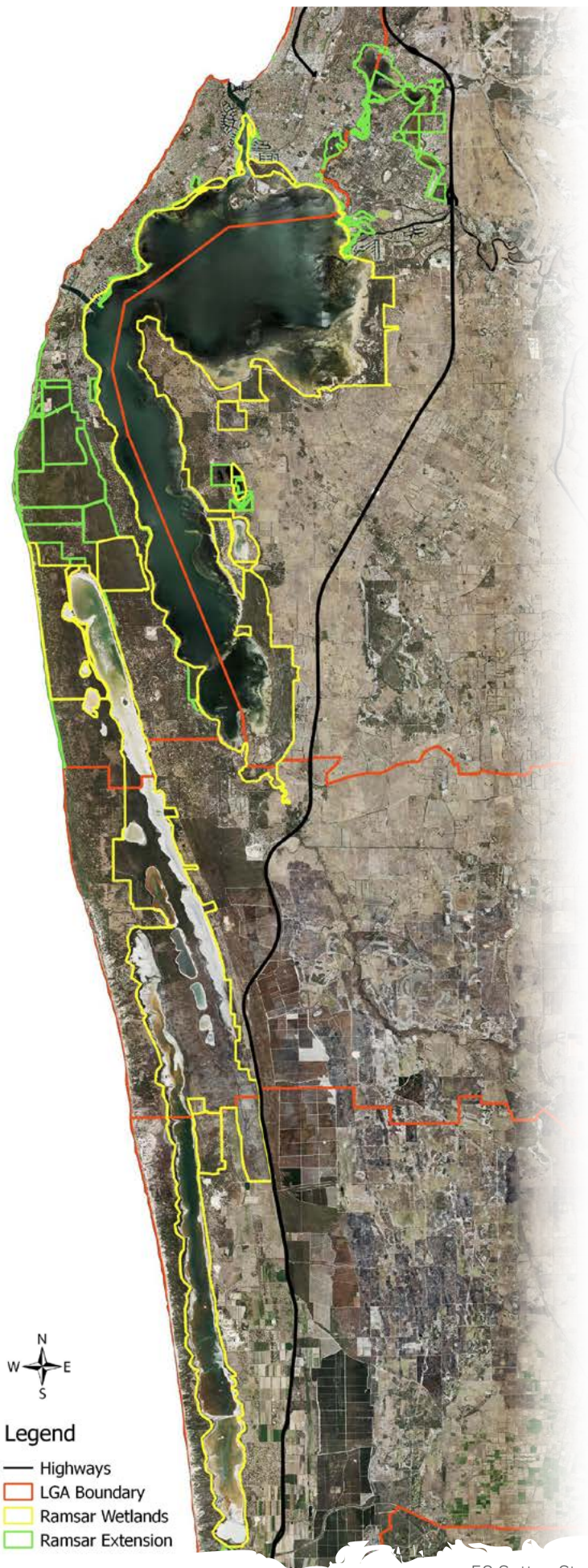
Some of the values and benefits of the Peel-Yalgorup Wetlands System are:

- Habitat for native fauna including waterbirds, mammals, fish, amphibians and reptiles
- Habitat for threatened species, such as Black Cockatoos and thrombolites
- Habitat for migratory waterbird species
- Pollution control and ability to assimilate limited amount of nutrients and pollutants
- Flood control – accommodating flood waters and storm surges
- Cultural significance to Noongar People
- Recreational values including boating, fishing, bird-watching
- Commercial fisheries - fish and crabs

The wetlands and waterways provide a significant boost to regional economy through boating, tourism and increased real estate values.

Want to know more?

All organisations are encouraged to participate in implementing the Plan's actions – schools, community groups, tourism and business community, government agencies and local government. To find out more or to get involved contact: admin@peel-harvey.org.au



Legend

- Highways
- LGA Boundary
- Ramsar Wetlands
- Ramsar Extension



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



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National
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