

Hotham-Williams Project REPORT

PHCC General Meeting October 2020

Melanie Durack, Program Manager, Hotham Williams



RLP – Numbat Neighbourhood

Jul 2018 – Jun 2023 \$2,174,505

Managed by Mel Durack, supported by Christine Townsend (Farmers for Fauna Coordinator) 3 days/week.

- Year 3 Q1 deliverables reported in MERIT and invoice submitted for \$78,978.51 (exc GST).
 - o Communication materials x 3 materials
 - o Identifying the location of potential sites x 6 sites
 - o Managing disease x 9 ha
 - o Negotiating with the Community etc x 3 groups
 - o Project planning and delivery of documents x 42.5 days
 - o Revegetating habitat x 5 ha
- Planning and delivery of Year 3 Quarter 1 tracking well, a major component since the last board meeting has been the 2020/21 Community Environmental Grant Round. Under this project 9 applications were received with 8 projects recommended for approval by the Hotham-Williams (HW) Steering Committee. These projects consist of:
 - o 14.8 km fencing
 - o 162 ha vegetation protected
 - o 9.5 ha weed control (revegetation preparing plus *Juncus acutus* & bridal creeper)
 - o 8.5 ha revegetation
 - o 14,000 ha feral animal control
- The HW steering committee also recommended to continue to support the Wandering Hotham Declared Species Group with feral pig control. PHCC has supported this group during 2018/19 and 2019/20 and the funding provides a dedicated autumn trapping using the services of the Lake Muir-Denbarker Feral Pig Eradication Group.
- Discussions with Indigenous Workabout to formalize a partnership are still in progress. A quote has recently been received, to support to local Shires with weed control (particularly bridal creeper and *Juncus acutus*) along the Hotham River. Currently under review and subject to approvals.
- An agreement to formalize a partnership with PYNOC has been drafted and under review. PYNOC is owned and operated by Daniel Christensen in the Cuballing-Popanyinning area to assist landholders to control feral cats as well as other feral animal control around Dryandra Woodland.
- Agreement in preparation to continue to support the partnership with DBCA to value add to Dryandra specific work including a fauna habitat survey, monitoring regimes and supporting the feral free enclosure.
- Mel and Christine attended Public Enquiry (via phone conference) regarding PHCC's submission on the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Problem of Feral and Domestic Cats in Australia.
- Supported a Williams community member to attend a AusChem (previously Chemcert) course hosted by the Williams CRC in September. The gentleman is planning to conduct weed control in a local reserve where there are plans for a walk trail.
- Expressions of Interest for Land for Wildlife registration from a Williams landholder which would fit under the Numbat project. Currently seeking quotes for the work to occur.

- Attended the Numbat Recovery Team meeting via Microsoft Teams on 1st September and updated provided on PHCC's involvement through the Numbat Neighbourhood project which contributes to addressing the Numbat Recovery Plan objectives for community engagement.
- PHCC will continue to support the release of the RHDV1-K5 virus to control rabbits. Over 40 landholders, including local Shires in the Hotham-Williams expressed an interest to be involved in the release which is currently planned for early November. Helen Parsons is coordinating this project.

Newmont - Hotham-Williams NRM & Conservation Project **Jan 2018 - Dec 2022 \$500,000**
Managed by Mel Durack, supported by Kristy Gregory 2 days/week until 31th December 2020.

- Meetings have been held with the Wandering, Williams, Boddington and Cuballing Shires to discuss the Final Hotham-Williams River Action Plan (RAP) and the next steps for future on-ground works. PHCC will be working with these Shires on planning potential projects based on the recommendations from the RAP. The next step is the development of detailed and site specific concept plans for the 8 sites which were field assessed. PHCC is awaiting a decision from South32 on a funding application to for a 5 year strategic partnership which will enable the concept plans to be developed and priority on-ground works to occur.
- A request for quotation was sent to several organizations for development of the River Concept Plans. Quotes have been reviewed and PHCC will inform the successful recipient within the week. The quotes have been coordinated with the Science and Waterways team.
- Restoration plans continue to be prepared for each of the 8 priority river sites.
- The Hotham-Williams River Health Assessment report prepared by Wetland Research and Management has now been finalized. It is planned that results from this report to be combined with results from the RAP to complete a score card for each area. Preliminary results and score cards are included in Attachment 2 to this report.
- The 2020 Community Partnership Resource Sector Award ceremony planned for early October was cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions and awaiting information on the announcement and what form this will be.
- There have been several structural changes with the Newmont Boddington Environmental and Social Responsibility Team. PHCC will now be liaising with Javier Brodalka and Craig Turley who were original involved in the establishment of the Community Partnership Agreement who are overseeing these departments regionally for Newmont.
- Mel Durack will continue to represent PHCC at the quarterly Newmont Community Reference Group meetings in 2020 and is the current chair.

South32 - Tunbridge Gully Stage 3&4 (South32) **Jul 2018 – Jun 2021 \$78,141**

Managed by Mel Durack and delivered by Helen Parsons working 2 days/week.

- A weed and vegetation survey to compare results from a baseline 2015 is being planned.
- South32 will be undertaking extensive consultation for their expansion project ahead of a public environmental review period which is due the second half of this year.
- As mentioned above, PHCC is awaiting a decision from South32 on a funding application to for a 5 year strategic partnership which will enable the concept plans to be developed and priority on-ground works to occur as well as supporting the delivery of the other Hotham-Williams projects.
- Mel Durack will continue to represent PHCC at the quarterly South32 Mine Community Liaison Committee meetings in 2020.

- Helen Parsons assisting with this project and additional other project support 2 days per week.

Hotham-Williams Shires MOU *(subject to annual budget approvals)* **Aug 2018 – Aug 2023** **\$180,000***

Managed by Mel Durack and delivered by Helen Parsons working 2 days/week.

- Mel and Kristy met with the Shire of Boddington Acting CEO, new Community and Economic Development Officer and new Works Manager to provide an overview of projects PHCC has supported in Boddington to date. A particular focus was on the concern from the community regarding the build up of silt against the Lions Weir at the Hotham River foreshore. PHCC have previously provided advice to conduct a river health assessment and determine the quality and quantity of the silt. The previous Shire CEO engaged a consultant to complete some of this work and PHCC have now receive the report. PHCC will continue to kept abreast of plans for this work and provide advice to the Shire of Boddington.
- Will support the Friends of the Reserves – Boddington (Inc.) to officially open the Ranford Pool restoration area. Planning for this to occur in mid to late November.
- Member of the Boddington Green Canopy Committee, no update since the last meeting.
- Further liaison with Shires reported in other projects above.
- Helen Parsons and volunteer Christina Nardini attended the official Opening of the Yornaning Dam project (Shire of Cuballing). PHCC have been involved in this area through the River Action Plan.

Other Project Support

- Mel has been coordinating the Community Environmental Grant Round 2020/2021 and associated Steering Committee meetings (Land Conservation, Hotham-Williams and Sustainable Agriculture). This includes the Numbat, Greening Farms, Banksia and Black Cockatoo projects.
 - o 46 Applications received, agreements prepared and majority sent to successful recipients
 - o 39 projects recommended and approved
 - 22 in the Hotham-Williams
 - 17 on the Swan Coastal Plain & Jarrah Forest region
 - o 1 application cancelled at the landholders request, 6 projects not recommended
- Reviewed a submission for a bulk feed lot facility at Cuballing and feedback provided to Shire of Cuballing.
- Supporting Black Cockatoo and Greening Farms project delivery in the Hotham-Williams as required.

Planned Events (and/or PHCC sponsoring or presenting) – check website

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all face to have events have been delayed until later in 2020/early 2021.

- Numbat Neighbourhood events:
 - o Numbat Dig Workshop with landholders – 13th November 2020
 - o Williams Primary School Excursion to Dryandra (inc. Project Numbat) – Date TBC
 - o Managing your bushland & pest animal workshop proposed – Date TBC
 - o Potential Project Numbat School Incursions – Date TBC
 - o 1080 accreditation workshop – February 2021
 - o Dieback Green Card Training (in conjunction with disease mapping) – late 2020/early 2021
 - o AusChem (previously Chemcert) training – PHCC supporting local farmer to attend a course being hosted by the Williams CRC on 15-16 October 2020.

- Tunbridge Gully
 - o *Juncus acutus* field Workshop (to be delivered with Greening Farms project) – Early 2020

Communications – See most recent issues of “*Landcare Matters: Hotham Williams*” **September and October 2020 Editions – Attachment 1.**

Work Health Safety

- Minor vehicle damage to the Hotham-Williams vehicle brake light cover due to impact with a sign.
- Repairs required to verandah railing outside the Boddington office, following up with the Shire of Boddington.

Melanie Durack

Program Manager, Hotham-Williams



NRM is the management of natural resources such as land, water, soils, plants and animals. It brings together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation and sustainability of industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry.

Hotham-Williams River Health Assessment

Results are in!

In May we reported that the autumn river health assessment sampling had been completed for the Hotham and Williams Rivers. We now have preliminary results, from Wetland Research and Management, which cover a comprehensive set of ecological parameters including a survey of fish, crayfish and macroinvertebrate communities, along with instream habitat condition and water quality measurements. These results will be combined with results from the river action plan to provide a score card on the health of our waterways and will be shared with the community.

Three of the six river health sampling sites offered up a total of 46 snake-necked turtles over both sampling events in spring 2019 and autumn 2020. *Chelodina colliei* is endemic

to the south-west of WA and is listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Redlist of Threatened Species as Near Threatened. These turtles only eat when open water is present because their diet includes tadpoles, fish, and aquatic invertebrates. The main threats to their survival is a drying climate, road deaths during movement in the nesting season and predation by feral animals.



Landcare Snapshot

- We have had an amazing response to our call out for expressions of interest for Landcare funding. The team have been busy visiting potential Numbat Neighbourhood, Greening Farms and Black Cockatoo Projects. We have received 31 expressions of interest in the Hotham-Williams Sub-catchment.
- Newmont and PHCC prepared a joint application for the 2020 Community Partnership Resource Sector Award (under the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety's 2020 Resources Sector Awards for Excellence). The partnership has been shortlisted as a finalist. Mel Durack and Newmont's Leesa King presented to a selection panel and the award winner will be announced in October.
- The Hotham-Williams River Action Plan is now finalised and we are in the process of sharing this with the local Shire councils. We are currently applying for funds so on-ground works can be planned, discussed with the community and implemented.
- 68 feral cats have been culled and reported to PHCC over 12 months. Predation by feral cats is one of the most significant threats to our native animals. If you cull a feral cat contact Christine on 0455166780 or christine.townsend@peel-harvey.org.au. We have vouchers to say thank you for this information.

COVID-19 We value the health and safety of our whole community and PHCC is now accepting visitors on an appointment basis only. Please contact us to make a booking via phone on 6369 8801 or 0455 166 780 or via email.

Black Cockatoo nesting is about to begin...



PHOTO: Keith Lightbody

What to look out for

September to January is the approximate nesting window for our Black Cockatoos. They will nest in large, hollow bearing trees, such as Marri and Wandoo.

Signs they are nesting include:

- Pairs of birds looking inside hollows
- Chipping (chewing) around hollow entrances
- Males feeding females (by regurgitation)
- Females on their own near hollows

If you do observe any of the above behaviours please notify our Black Cockatoo Project Officer Megan LeRoy by email megan.leroy@peel-harvey.org.au or phone 6369 8800. Megan can come and confirm nesting and may be able to use a pole mounted camera to look in the hollow.

Coming Up...

- Spring - Rabbit virus release (RHDV1-K5)
- November - Numbat Dig Workshop In Dryandra Woodland. Stay tuned for more information.
- Late 2020/early 2021 Pest control & bushland management
- Early 2021 - Spiny Rush (*Juncus acutus*) control demonstration site



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These projects are supported by the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, Newmont Boddington and the Shires of Boddington, Cuballing, Wandering and Williams

Landcare matters

Hotham-Williams sub-catchment update



Edition 47
October 2020



NRM is the management of natural resources such as land, water, soils, plants and animals. It brings together land use planning, water management, biodiversity conservation and sustainability of industries such as agriculture, mining, tourism, fisheries and forestry.



Williams River sites earmarked for action!

It was great to have Kate Barr back with the Hotham-Williams team recently to show Kristy Gregory the Williams River sites earmarked for potential on-ground projects as part of the Hotham-Williams River Action Plan.

Lovely sites like this one near Williams are already used by the community. The potential to restore the banks, control the weeds and re-introduce native species will be realised through future potential projects.

Rivers hold such an important place in our landscape and in our history, and through the restoration of habitat the PHCC wants to facilitate a renewed connection of people to the Rivers. Through the planning of potential projects, our aim will be to create areas that are ecologically restored as well as being easily accessible to the public. This will have the threefold result of environmental restoration, demonstration of healthy

ecosystems and a genuine connection of people to natural areas, whether it be in their 'backyard', a destination, or a stop-off on a long-drive!

Note: PHCC is in the process of applying for funding for future on-ground community projects across the Hotham-Williams sub-catchment.



Grant Updates...

- The Hotham-Williams team has been out and about visiting the completed Numbat Neighbourhood 2019/20 Community Environment Grant Projects and checking out all the seedlings that have been planted. For example, a Cuballing farmer has completed fencing and revegetation to increase habitat for threatened species and create a linkage to the East Yornaning Nature Reserve.
- The Numbat Neighbourhood, Black Cockatoo, Greening Farms and Banksia Woodland (Swan Coastal Plain area only) 2020/21 Community Environment Grant (CEG) applications were assessed across three different steering committee meetings during the week of 14th September.

The CEG program is a competitive grants process, and each application is assessed on its merits against criteria to meet Australian Government outcomes, for access to a limited pool of funds.

There were 45 applications in total across the Peel-Harvey catchment with 22 of these being for projects within the Hotham-Williams sub-catchment.

Applicants will soon be notified if their project has been successful.

COVID-19 We value the health and safety of our whole community and PHCC is now accepting visitors on an appointment basis only. Please contact us to make a booking via phone on 6369 8801 or 0455 166 780 or via email.

Cape Tulip...pretty flower or toxic weed?



Cape tulip (*Moraea floccida* & *Moraea minata*) originates from South Africa and was introduced to Australia as a garden plant and is now widespread in the south west of Western Australia and other states.

One leaf and two leaf Cape tulips are serious weeds of pasture. The branched flowering stem has short lived pink to

orange flowers which occur in late winter and spring. Animals will selectively graze clovers and other more palatable species, and this allows Cape tulips to flourish. The plants contain toxic chemicals called glycosides which affect the heart and most deaths occur in hungry animals that have recently been introduced.

When choosing plants for your garden, avoid buying species that are toxic and/or have weed potential.

Please see <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/declared-plants/cape-tulip-what-you-should-know> for more information on what you should know about Cape tulips and control methods.

Coming Up...

- Spring - Rabbit virus release (RHDV1-K5) - If you are involved in this please keep an eye out for an email from Helen Parsons
- November - Numbat Dig Workshop in Dryandra Woodland. Stay tuned for more information.
- Late 2020/early 2021 Pest control & bushland management
- Early 2021 - Spiny Rush (*Juncus acutus*) control demonstration site



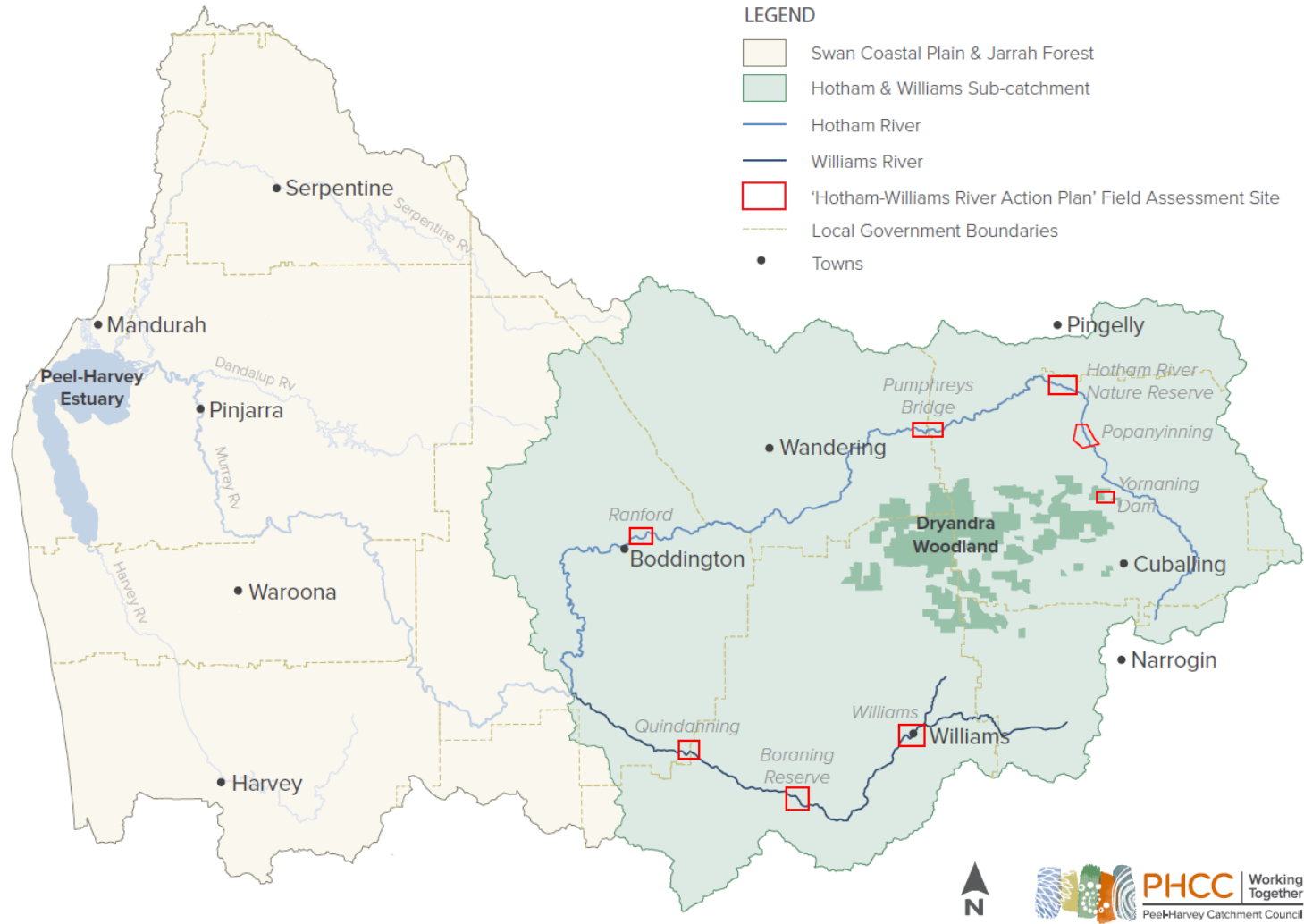
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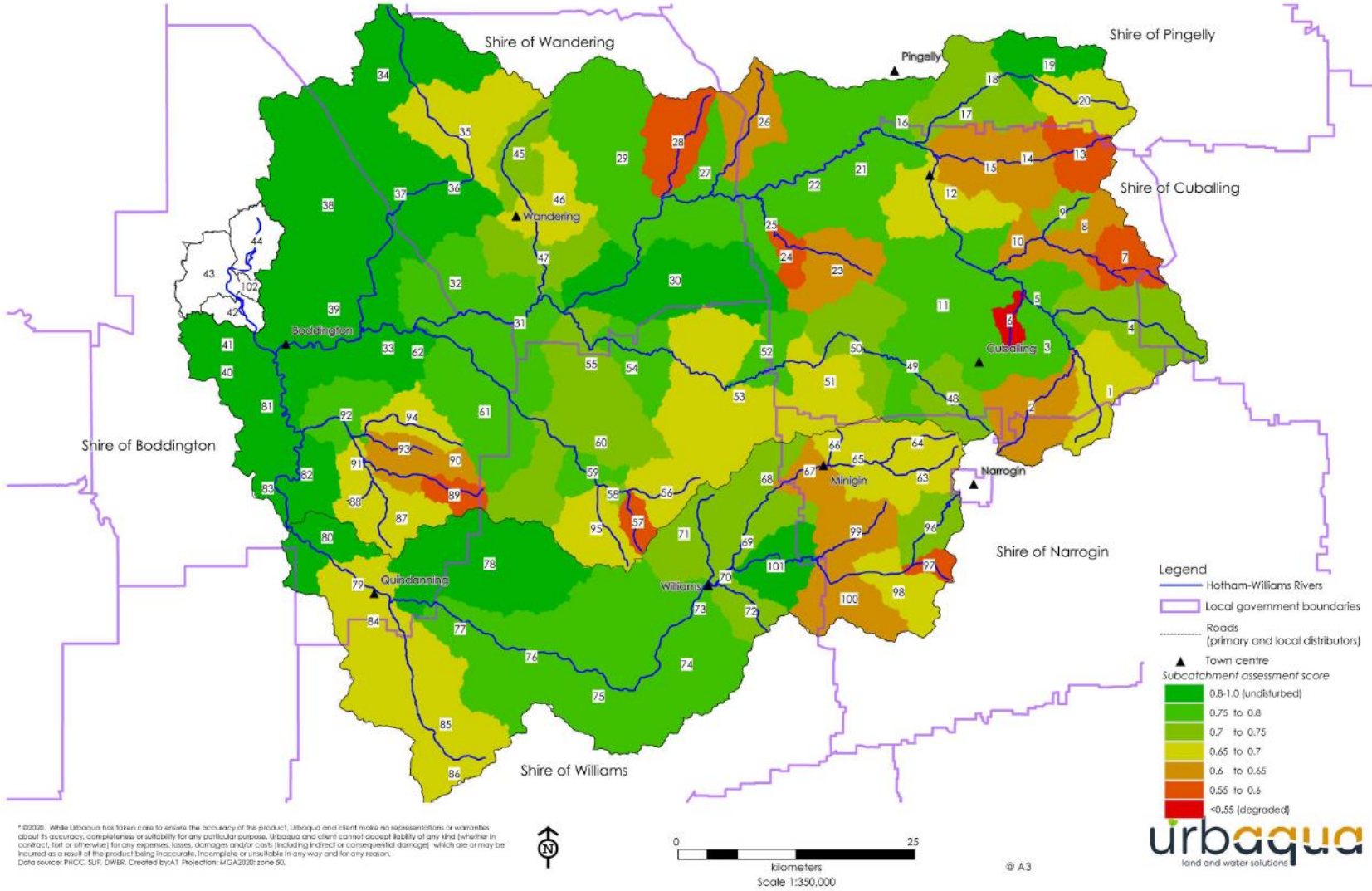


Attachment 2 – River Action Plan and River Health Assessment Locations and Summary of Results

Location of River Action Plan Field Assessment Sites



Peel Harvey Catchment Council - Hotham-Williams River Action Plan
 Figure 38 - Catchment Reach Assessment



River Health Assessment South West Index of River Condition Scores

