



*Working to conserve and
restore water quality and
wildlife habitat in the
Perth inner city catchments*

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SUBMISSION – LAKE MONGER RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008 - 2018

On behalf of the Claise Brook Catchment Group I would like to make the following submission on the draft Lake Monger Reserve Management Plan 2008 - 2018.

The Claise Brook Catchment Group is a community based environmental group working to improve water quality and habitat within Perth city and the inner city. Since 2006 our group has been working with the many stakeholders within the Mounts Bay catchment, of which Lake Monger is a significant part, to improve understanding of water quality issues within the catchment and coordinate improvements to achieve better environmental outcomes.

With the assistance of stakeholders, a Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for the catchment has been prepared and will shortly be finalised. Stakeholders involved in the preparation of the WQIP include the Town of Cambridge, City of Perth, Main Roads, Water Corporation, Department for Planning and Infrastructure, Landcorp, Swan River Trust, Town of Vincent and the City of Subiaco.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS – LAKE MONGER RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008 - 2018

Water Quality

From previous studies it is apparent that a significant source of phosphorus and nitrogen (P and N) to Lake Monger comes via groundwater moving into Lake Monger through old landfill around the lake, particularly on the eastern side of the lake. This was identified in the "Water and Nutrient Balance Model" prepared by CyMod Systems Pty Ltd (September 2002). This model estimated that 66% of phosphorus and 77% of nitrogen entering the lake came from groundwater from infilled areas.

We are very concerned that the Draft Management Plan does not recognise the significant contribution of groundwater to nutrient enrichment of the lake or make any recommendations to address the issue. Unless this matter is addressed as a priority, we do not consider that the water quality within the Lake will improve. This will hamper the achievement of many of the objectives of the Management Plan, since improved water quality is fundamental to supporting biodiversity, reducing algal blooms, midge plaques and other nuisances.

Recommendation 1: Lake and Stormwater (page 7) to be amended to mention that since the previous plan was prepared, the significant contribution of nutrients from groundwater, particularly from areas east of the lake, has been recognised.

Recommendation 2: Lake and Stormwater (page 7) to be amended to add a priority for years 1 to 5 "Investigate and implement measures to reduce nutrients entering Lake Monger from groundwater". Note: This may require engagement and cooperation with the Town of Vincent whose municipality includes areas of historical landfill to the east of the lake.

Recommendation 3: Table of works to be programmed (page 19) under Lake and Stormwater Management add "Investigate measures to reduce nutrients entering Lake Monger from groundwater" for years 1 and 2. Add "Implement measures to reduce nutrients entering Lake Monger from groundwater" for years 3, 4 and 5.

Feeding Wildlife

Fauna Habitat (page 8) mentions the importance of community education and that signage that has been erected instructing visitors to refrain from feeding birds. We would recommend a comprehensive education program to include Council rangers, tour bus drivers, local residents and visitors similar to the program developed by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne to explain why feeding wildlife is harmful. This message will be consistent with that given at parks, reserves and National Parks across Australia and is also consistent with teaching in schools.

More information is available from the following website.

www.rbq.vic.gov.au/rbg_melbourne/visitorinfo/feeding_the_birds

Recommendation 4: Adopt a policy that the health of wildlife be protected by discouraging the feeding of wildlife.

Recommendation 5: Develop a comprehensive education program to include signage, brochures, website information and education programs targeted at Council staff, tour bus operators and local residents to explain the harmful effects of hand-feeding wildlife and encourage interaction with wildlife which respects their wild nature. Add development and implementation to the program of works.

Vegetation Management

Ecological Restoration (page 9) mentions that thinning of vegetation and weed control has been required in the restored areas.

We would suggest that the management of vegetation within the nutrient stripping channels needs more care. We were concerned that all sedges were removed from the banks and bed of the channel in 2006/07, leaving the banks completely bare of vegetation, because the channel had filled up with vegetation and water could not pass through. While we appreciate that vegetation may need thinning, we do not consider that the channel will strip any nutrients if all vegetation within the water and on the banks is removed. A selective thinning and weed removal program should be implemented as opposed to blanket removal in the channel.

In regards to lakeside vegetation being thinned to maintain views of the lake from the footpath, the group does not support blanket thinning given the loss of potential habitat values. Recent thinning on the eastern side of the lake has been severe. There should be a balance between maintaining habitat and providing viewing opportunities. As an alternative to blanket thinning, viewing nodes should be considered where only at these points vegetation thinning for sightlines be regularly undertaken.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that management of vegetation does not render nutrient-stripping areas ineffective.

Our group strongly supports the recommendations for ongoing replacement of exotic vegetation with native species. This will provide multiple benefits in improving water quality and providing habitat while also celebrating our unique floral heritage.

We congratulate the Town of Cambridge for their ongoing initiatives to improve Lake Monger and appreciate the opportunity to comment on this management plan. We are happy to discuss our concerns and explain these recommendations in more detail.

Regards



Warren McGrath
Chair