



LESCHENAULT INLET MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

"Leschenault Inlet is currently in a healthy state but it will take very little to tip the balance. The role of LIMA as a 'guardian' is vital." Sir Donald Eckersley, Chairman

Leschenault Estuary a natural asset

Leschenault Estuary is one of the south-west's most valuable assets - an important conservation area and a water playground for generations of local families and visiting holiday-makers.

The good water quality ensures a healthy ecology which means that the estuary provides ideal conditions for the blue manna crabs, prawns and fish which attract recreational fishermen and boating enthusiasts in their thousands. The estuary and its fringing wetlands provide food and refuge for over 60 species of birds. Some of these, such as the black swan, are residents but the migratory waders come from as far away as Siberia to feed on the productive shores in summer. Several species, including tree-nesting ducks, breed in the fringing vegetation.

LIMA - managing the estuary for the future

The pressure on Leschenault Estuary is increasing because of its popularity for recreation and the demands for industrial, residential, agricultural and port development. Effective management is crucial to the estuary's future.

The Leschenault Inlet Management Authority (LIMA) fulfils the role of environmental 'guardian'. The Authority has the job of balancing the development and recreation demands with the need to preserve a healthy estuary environment to be enjoyed by the whole community.

LIMA has 12 members, some of whom are drawn from local interest groups, local government and the community. Members from the Department of Marine and Harbours and the Department of Conservation and Land Management supply technical expertise. LIMA is chaired by former Harvey Shire President and National Farmers Federation President Sir Donald Eckersley.

A full-time Inspector, Eric Wright, works in Bunbury with clerical assistance from Daphne Fleay. Eric attends to the affairs of the Authority and supervises casual

workers who carry out the works programme to provide recreational facilities and maintenance of foreshore areas.



Waterways currently managed by the Waterways Commission and the Swan River Trust. LIMA is the practical management arm of the Waterways Commission in Bunbury.

Protecting the water quality

One of LIMA's top priorities is keeping the estuary waters clean and healthy.

Monitoring is important to pick up early-warning signs of any environmental stress. The estuary is in a reasonably healthy condition, however large amounts of fertiliser are entering the estuary in runoff from the catchment. It is vital to detect and arrest problems like those in Peel Inlet before it is too late. The Leschenault Estuary is fortunate to have a strong tidal exchange which is helping to flush out some of the nutrients.

Sampling in the estuary and in the Collie, Brunswick, Wellesley and Preston Rivers keeps a check on nutrient levels, salinity and chemical pollution.

LIMA has developed an oil-spill contingency plan to ensure that quick action is taken to protect the waterways from any accidental spills.

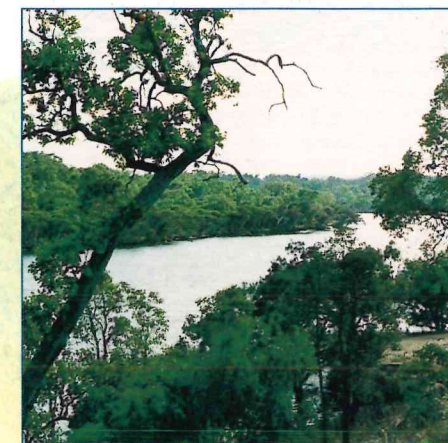
LIMA - finding the balance for the Leschenault Estuary

Planning for the future

A **management programme** to guide future development and management of the estuary was released in 1983, and reviewed with full public

consultation in 1990-91 to bring it in line with changing pressures and recreation needs.

LIMA encourages development in harmony with the environment and people's needs by providing input into **planning studies** and by **assessing development proposals** and providing advice to local government, the Department of Planning and Urban Development and other authorities.



Today's planning decisions must take into account the need to protect the conservation and recreation values of the estuary for the future.

The preparation of **management plans** for waterway and foreshore areas is a high priority and the Authority has received considerable co-operation and assistance from the local authorities in the area. Management plans are underway for the Clifton Park foreshore reserve, the northern Leschenault Estuary area (in conjunction with the Shire of Harvey), and the Eaton foreshore (with the Shire of Dardanup). The City of Bunbury and LIMA are working together on a management plan for the Vittoria Bay area.

These management plans provide a means of documenting the features of the waterway and foreshore areas and specifying how they can be managed to provide the public with recreational facilities and access to the waterways, while at the same time protecting the natural values of the area.

In practice, LIMA has two water bodies to manage. The original Leschenault Inlet was divided by the construction of Bunbury Inner Harbour. The 25 square kilometre northern section at Australind is the most popular fishing and boating area. The smaller southern inlet, covering about three square kilometres, is becoming a focus for Bunbury's redeveloped city centre.

Providing facilities and protecting the banks

Providing managed public access, foreshore beautification, riverbank protection and erosion control are all important aspects of the Authority's work. These activities increase public enjoyment of the estuarine environment and minimise damage to foreshore areas.

LIMA is providing controlled boat-launching sites and public access points around the estuary. By establishing these points, the Authority is hoping to discourage the illegal and destructive practice of launching boats through shoreline reeds. Boat channels are periodically dredged to maintain access for crabbing and prawning.



Providing public access and facilities is part of LIMA's role.

LIMA has worked with the Department of Resources Development to rehabilitate the sand dunes on the Leschenault Peninsula. The final stage of filling and revegetating the effluent disposal ponds is being supervised by the Waterways Commission. The Peninsula will then become a Conservation Park managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Catchment management

LIMA is working with a Steering Committee organised by the South West Development Authority to develop a catchment management plan for the Leschenault Estuary water catchment area. This involves community groups, farming groups, local authorities and government departments working together to identify sources of nutrients and develop strategies to prevent these pollutants from adversely affecting water quality in the estuary and rivers. LIMA is convening a sub-committee to assess industrial and domestic waste sources of nutrients.

Understanding - the key to sound management

The Authority is commissioning research aimed at building up an information base for estuary management. One study on the tiny plants and animals on the estuary floor helped to identify the source of the marine life food chain.

Studies on the samphire marshes and waterbird use of the waterways have helped to ensure that mosquito control measures do not damage the wildlife. Pressure to fill and drain mosquito breeding areas is threatening prime waterbird habitats, especially feeding sites for ducklings and migratory wading birds.

LIMA is undertaking a study of vegetation and habitats on river banks and islands along the Collie and Brunswick Rivers with a view to implementing the Environmental Protection Authority's recommendations for conserving the foreshore. (System 6 'Red Book' recommendation C67. Department of Conservation and Environment Report 13, 1983).

Working with the local community

'People pressure' is increasing, and will go on rising with the fast-growing population of the region. One of the Authority's most important objectives is community involvement in estuarine planning and management.

The production of this pamphlet by the Waterways Commission and LIMA was made possible by the help and sponsorship of SCM Chemicals Ltd. The pamphlet was first produced in 1988 and revised in 1991.

SCM is proud to be associated with the conservation of Leschenault Estuary. The great egret pictured on this leaflet is a symbol of the beauty of the estuary. A swamp area once on SCM land is the site

Publications, seminars, workshops and regular consultation are helping to keep the public informed, and concerned, about the estuary.



Encouraging people to use this beautiful and fragile environment with care will help to keep the estuary a scenic and recreational attraction to be enjoyed by all sections of the community.

LIMA is working to find a balance between the demands of recreation and development and the need for conservation to protect Leschenault Estuary for the future. This balance can only be achieved by working together - LIMA, local government, developers and the community caring for the estuary.

LIMA welcomes your enquiry

The LIMA office is open from 8.30 am to 4.45 pm on weekdays to answer your enquiries and provide information to help you to enjoy the estuary.

PLEASE CALL IN!

of one of the few known breeding colonies of great egrets in the south west. Rufous night herons also breed in this area. The preservation of this unique breeding ground was made possible by SCM ceding the land to the government as a conservation reserve.



HAVE YOUR SAY

- Contact LIMA or your local government or community representative to let them know of your concerns, willingness to be involved, or suggestions.
- Let LIMA know what information you think should be made available in future publications.

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Produced by the Waterways Commission as a community information service. September 1991
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Design by LaserDesigns Pty Ltd. Illustration by Mike Bamford.

RECREATION GUIDE

to help you to enjoy the many aspects of the waterways environment.

This map will help you to enjoy - and preserve - Leschenault Estuary. The chart shows the best fishing areas, picnic spots and deep-water channels. By using the controlled boat launching areas, and keeping away from environmentally-sensitive shallows, you can make sure the Estuary's unique ecology stays healthy for generations to come.

- NATURE RESERVES
- BOAT HIRE
- WATER SKIING *1
- FISHING *2
- LAUNCHING RAMP
- CAMPING
- BARBECUE
- HISTORIC ATTRACTION
- SMALL DINGHY ACCESS CHANNEL
- REGIONAL PARK

- *1 Department of Marine & Harbours chart 50976 gives details of navigation, swimming and water-ski areas.
- *2 If you have any questions about fishing in the area contact the Fisheries Department.



Help to preserve the estuary
Keep boats south of the recommended limit.

Enjoy the fishing
The estuary offers excellent fishing, crabbing and prawning. Observe the regulations and make sure there is a catch for everyone in years to come.

Help keep the waterways litter free
Dispose of rubbish, fish and prawn scraps and plastic wrappings carefully.