



Building a Water Stewardship Community in the Hastings South Catchment

Western Port Biosphere Water Stewardship Project

“Good water management is good business.”

The Western Port Biosphere is leading the implementation of the Water Stewardship Project which aims to build collaboration between major water users, the community, water agencies, local government and other stakeholders. The International Water Stewardship Standard provides a framework to protect and enhance significant water-related assets in the Biosphere Reserve including Ramsar wetlands.

Water Stewardship is a form of water management that is easily developed and implemented, builds on existing works and planning, and can be externally accredited.

A site water stewardship plan provides a framework for water management actions on your site. Simply put, a site water stewardship plan examines the water coming onto your property, what happens to the water on your property, and the quality and volume of water leaving your property, as well as the areas downstream relying upon this water.

For more information visit www.biosphere.org.au/biosphere-projects/water-stewardship.

Why Hastings South Catchment?

Hastings South is an important catchment within Western Port due to its role in supporting agriculture, the ecosystem and human communities in the region.



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The region includes significant wetlands including the Coolart Wetlands and the Merricks Creek estuary which are important habitats for macroinvertebrates and native fish. Several important animal species are found within this catchment, including the Southern Toadlet, the endangered Dwarf Galaxias and Growling Grass Frog, as well as Short-Tailed Shearwaters (mutton birds) and Powerful Owls that are valued by the community.

Challenges for waterway health include managing the impacts of urbanisation, protecting important environmental habitats and enabling social access and use. The Merricks Creek estuary has experienced increasing problems from unpleasant hydrogen sulfide (rotten egg gas) odour and fish kills, resulting in decreasing aquatic recreation opportunities.

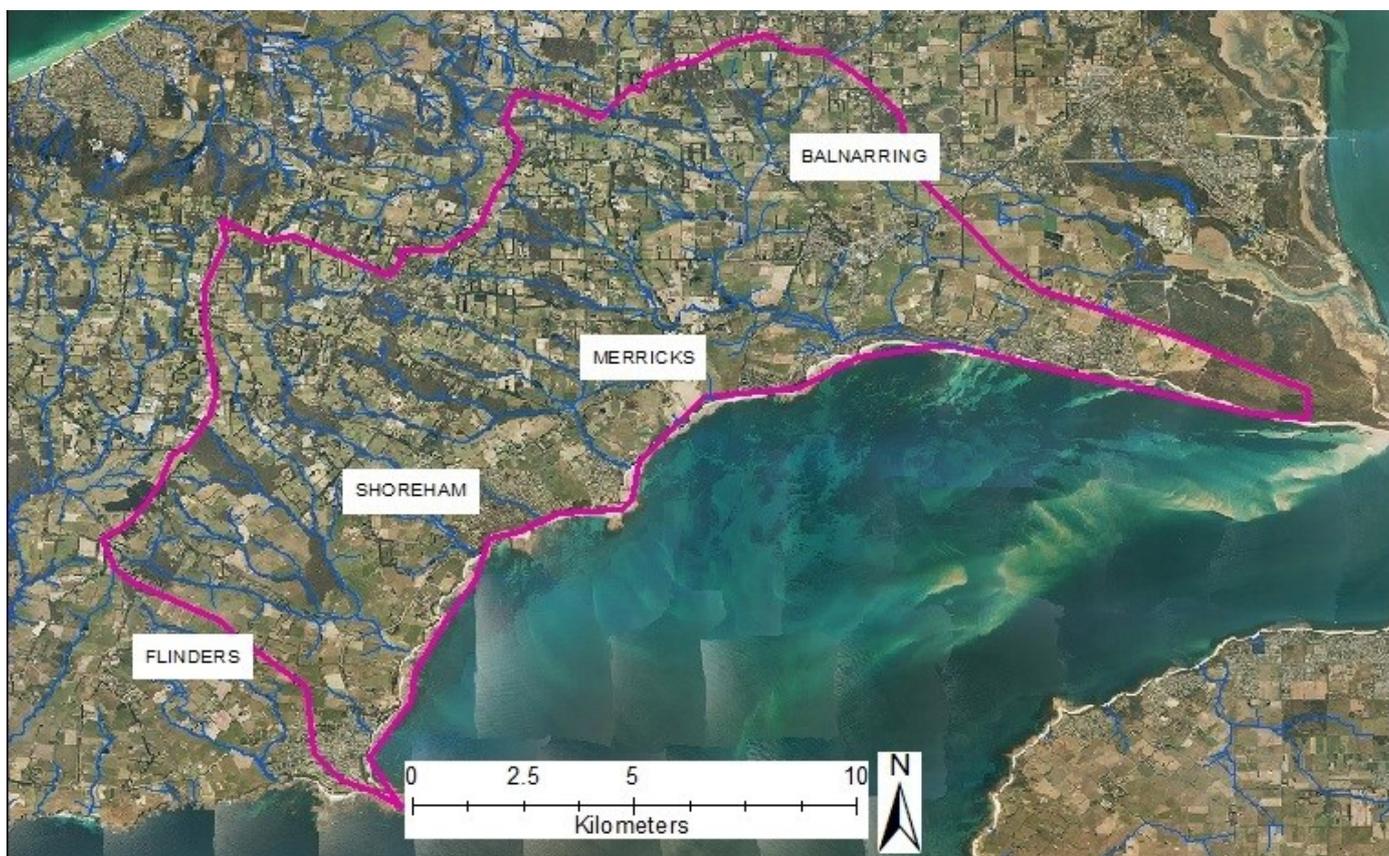
While the problems at the creek mouth have been investigated the assessment did not include a review of catchment-based water sources, such as the acquisition of existing water use entitlements and rights. Involving water stewards and improving site water management throughout the catchment may be one way of assisting with the broader waterway health and catchment issues.



Hastings South Catchment Area

While Merricks- Coolart Creek is the major system within the catchment, the whole system includes the following creeks:

- Unnamed Creek running through Somers village – (entering bay near mouth of Merricks Creek and locally known as Witts End Creek or Sweetwater Creek)
- Tulum Creek entering Merricks Estuary Lagoon
- **Merricks Creek (includes major tributary of Coolart Creek)**
- East Creek and Waterhole Creek entering the bay at Point Leo
- Stoney Creek entering the bay at Shoreham
- Manton Creek (with tributaries Musk and Cotton Tree Creeks)
- Dodds Creek at Flinders



How can you be involved in the Water Stewardship Program?

Landholders, businesses and organisations are invited to be at the forefront of this exciting initiative by becoming a water steward and developing a Site Water Stewardship Plan.

More information

Visit our website: www.biosphere.org.au/biosphere-projects/water-stewardship

Or contact Lance Lloyd,
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