

06/04/2022



# Stakeholder Workshop 1 Community Input Report

## CHAPMAN RIVER ESTUARY RESERVE ACTION PLAN 2022 –2025

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We respectfully acknowledge the Southern Yamatji people, who are the Traditional Owners and original natural resource managers of the lands and waters in the City of Greater Geraldton, and pay our respect to their Elders and leaders, past, present and emerging.

This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.

## 1 Agenda

| 2 hr Workshop – 31 Mar 2022 |   |                                |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Time                        | Item  | Facilitator                    |
| 17:30                       | Welcome to Country  | Raelene Collard<br>(Nanna Rae) |
| 17:30 – 17:50               | Introductions, aims of the workshop, uses of the Estuary by participants  | Amanda                         |
| 17:50 – 17:55               | Introduction to the Chapman River Estuary Reserve Action Plan 2022  | Alanah                         |
| 17:55 – 18:15               | Findings from asset inventory and user observations   | Alanah                         |
| 18:15 – 18:30               | Reflection: identify positive values and possible threats to the Estuary  | Amanda: facilitated discussion |
| 18:30 – 19:15               | Participatory mapping process identifying specific actions that will maintain or enhance the ecological, social or cultural values of the Estuary | Amanda: facilitated discussion |
| 19:15 – 19:30               | Feedback, next steps, thanks and close  | Alanah                         |
| 19:30                       | END   |                                |

Workshop objectives:

- To identify how stakeholders use the Estuary and what they value about the site
- To share results from initial data-gathering processes including literature review, on-site observations and asset inventory
- To invite stakeholders and community members to contribute by identifying specific actions to maintain or enhance the ecological, social or cultural values of the Estuary

## 2 Open Meeting

Alanah Campbell opened the meeting with an introduction to Nanna Rae (Raelene Collard) and Caris Collard who performed a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony. NACC NRM and the City of Greater Geraldton respectfully acknowledge the Yamatji Nation, specifically the Amangu, Wilinyu, Naaguja and Nhanhagardi People, who are the Traditional Owners and original natural resource managers of the lands and waters in the Geraldton area, and pay our respect to their Elders and leaders, past, present and emerging.

### 2.1 Attendance and Apologies

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Alan Howitt, Friends of CRP  
Marg Pike  
Des Pike  
John Coetsee  
CSAMBORSILI  
Colin Crane  
Rob Jefferies  
Jill Jefferies  
Ross Jefferies

Paul Spackman, Geraldton Mountain Bike Club  
Indre Asmussen, DPLH  
Alice Bishop, Birdlife Midwest  
Beth Teale  
Rob Smallwood  
Rebecca Millar  
Angie Stagg  
Megan O'Grady, CGG  
Shannon Holler, CGG  
Erin O'Connor, CGG  
Kane Watson, NACC NRM  
Amanda Bourne, NACC NRM  
Alanah Campbell, NACC NRM

## **APOLOGIES:**

Heather Beswick  
Greg Brennan

## **2.2 Expectations**

Each participant shared what they were hoping to achieve from the workshop at the start of the meeting. Expectations covered topics participants wished to discuss, contributions participants wanted to make, things they wanted to learn or gain and outcomes we hoped to achieve together. Participants were interested in learning more about the proposed Reserve Action Plan and working together to develop a plan to protect, conserve and properly manage the area, deal effectively with erosion, anti-social behaviour, pests and weeds, improve access and infrastructure and explore ways to connect the reserve with other natural areas, cultural heritage and social values.

### **EXPECTATIONS**

- Coastal erosion plans
- Develop plan (x2)
- Management of riparian area (x4)
- Conserve the area (x2)
- What is the plan? (x3) – bridge to sea
- Protect the area (x2)
- Properly managed estuary
- Observe, listen
- Improvements to pathways
- Vegetation protection (x3) (TEC)
- Interested
- Burning regime
- Weed and pest management
- Connecting other natural areas to the park
- Cultural values (x2)
- Marine/coastal/estuarine ecology
- Social values reflected
- Manage anti-social behaviour in park
- Maintaining the parkland - avoiding over-development

## 3 Discussions

### 3.1 Reflections on values, concerns, and potential

The following three-step-reflection approach was used at Workshop 1, in targeted interest group engagement, and through the online survey forum. For the purpose of conducting thorough and transparent engagement, all feedback has been collated into the table below.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>What do community members and stakeholders value about the Chapman River Estuary?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking (x4)</li> <li>Wildlife (x4)</li> <li>Bird watching (x4)</li> <li>Seasonal changes and variety (x3)</li> <li>Relaxing, peaceful and tranquil area (x3)</li> <li>Photography (x2)</li> <li>Riparian vegetation (x2)</li> <li>River is part of mid-west landscape (x2)</li> <li>Connection to bigger landscape/catchment (x2)</li> <li>Cycles of river mouth</li> <li>Bushland to the river</li> <li>Oldest bridge of its kind – heritage</li> <li>Pelicans</li> <li>Caves</li> <li>Sunset on the river</li> <li>Unique – lots of greenery and wildlife</li> <li>Social connection – kids surfing, playing, fishing</li> <li>Ecosystem services (crucial)</li> <li>Different plant communities (crucial)</li> <li>Connection to long history (Aboriginal heritage)</li> <li>Opportunity to integrate community living in the area with river qualities</li> <li>Respect for native Flora and Fauna</li> <li>Connection of Aboriginal Heritage to flora, fauna, mind, body, spirit (mental health)</li> <li>The areas presence of unregistered sites of cultural importance.</li> <li>Recognition of previous efforts to acknowledge Aboriginal Heritage through signage</li> <li>Overlap of UCL and Yamatji Southern determination.</li> <li>The area holds significant history for Aboriginal people, creation and colonisation.</li> <li>Dog walking</li> <li>Cycling</li> <li>Fishing</li> <li>Kayaking</li> <li>Nature appreciation</li> <li>The diversity of wildlife in this small corridor of land</li> <li>Sunrises</li> <li>Birdlife</li> <li>Unique area</li> <li>Natural area, environmental values</li> <li>Full of history (Aboriginal and early settler)</li> </ul> |
| <b>What are community members and</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rubbish (x4)</li> <li>Erosion of the riverbank and tracks (x4)</li> </ul>  |

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|--|--|
| <b>stakeholders concerned about the Chapman River Estuary?</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cut-ins from overland flows</li> <li>- Casuarina trees falling into river</li> <li>- 20 year trends, 5m (new erosion on north side)</li> </ul> <p>Small and fragile ecosystem – being gradually chipped away (x2)</p> <p>Upstream activities (x2) – runoff (soil, urban) affecting water quality</p> <p>Part of a system – hard to manage as a small pocket (x2)</p> <p>Weeds (x2)</p> <p>Water quality (x2)</p> <p>Antisocial behaviour (x2) (~5% - even criminal behaviour – drugs, police searches ~2/yr)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- abusive/noisy</li> <li>- vandalism of; property, environment</li> <li>- arson</li> <li>- abusive language and threatened violence</li> </ul> <p>How will flora and fauna be managed – getting trashed; motorbikes, quads and bikes</p> <p>Too much traffic (causes erosion when wet)</p> <p>Too much access</p> <p>4WD access (disturbance to ground)</p> <p>Damage to trees and other vegetation – exposed roots</p> <p>Walk trail (currently closed) goes through private property</p> <p>Rabbits</p> <p>Degradation</p> <p>Does not acknowledge Aboriginal culture and heritage well enough</p> <p>Why are some trails closed?</p> <p>Not formally gazetted as a reserve – inadequate protection</p> <p>Tenure – not clear who is responsible</p> <p>Soils are shallow and eroding (tides, cyclone)</p> <p>Closures have limited genuine users but not stopped antisocial behaviour</p> <p>Damage by people with good intent but poor knowledge</p> <p>Presence of fishing line, killing birdlife</p> <p>Metal detecting (digging holes)</p> <p>People ignoring signs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no fishing</li> <li>- no swimming</li> <li>- etc.</li> </ul> <p>Impacts of climate change on sea level rise - impacts of climate change mitigating infrastructure on the ecology of the site</p> <p>Access from Crowtheron Street is limited</p> <p>Small and fragile – lots has been lost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- silted up</li> </ul> <p>Climbing over fences</p> <p>Signage on walk trails – info about features (e.g. caves)</p> <p>Loss of habitat for wildlife</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gene pool, connected to other populations</li> </ul> <p>Loss of habitat for birds</p> <p>Vegetation communities have limited lifespan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exclusion of fire may prevent regeneration of vegetation</li> </ul> <p>Imbalanced – e.g. overabundance of ants</p> <p>No recruitment of vegetation other than that planted</p> <p>Holding ponds not effective – storm water draining into the river</p> <p>Triton Toilet block shut down = more traffic to the other toilet block on north side</p> |
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Is the water safe for people to swim in (“no swimming” signs however not patrolled)

Storm water run-off – especially the northern pipe

- Swan Drive – Chapman Road revegetated without earth works
- This is a major threat to water quality and also adds to erosion.

Spongy nature of the bank - seems to rise and fall with tides

Gaps in communication (in both a planning/collaboration and signage capacity – between planning committees/council and Traditional Owners)

Interpretive signage (in the future) may cause disharmony, reconciliation with CGG required to ensure signage is accurate, representative and fair (collaboration with Cultural Committee). Need real recognition (not tokenistic)

Building encroachment. Boundaries and rules regarding further developments (the City address this to say no further development is to occur around the estuary banks).

Disturbance to ground (heritage provisions – monitors, proper reporting of artefacts)

Current Aboriginal heritage and knowledge may not be reflected in existing records

River water quality (look at the history, evidence of mercury), talk to Elders, recent testing reports. History of contamination and pollutants.

Environmental damage caused by fishing

Environmental damage caused by motor bikes

Vandalism in the park area

Graffiti around the bridge area

Lack of respect for the area

Dogs of leads (danger to themselves, other dogs and people as well as riverbanks and wildlife)

Locating used syringes (usually located at the west end on the coastal area) and where people walk with their kids and dogs

Declining riparian vegetation

Feral species impact on wildlife

River health issues

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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Ideas for Action Plan</b> | Keep the south side of the river closed from the bridge to the north end of Charles street (x2)<br>Do something about the rabbits – baiting<br>Nature reserve (status)<br>Creating a community of care <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Dedicated care areas and conservation areas</li></ul> Management of water flows from upstream<br>Restore larger areas of catchment (x2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expand the reserve – more buffer, more habitat</li><li>- Double the wetland ecosystem extent</li></ul> Planting to stop silting<br>Limit access to sensitive vegetation<br>Need fire?<br>Signage on walk trails and all entry points<br>More respectful cultural engagement<br>Engage residents – directly <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lots of knowledge and willing to help</li></ul> |
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Protecting vegetation TEC on northern section

Need to understand how safe the river is if people do swim/fish

- Pollution
- Rocks
- Water quality disease

Education on appropriate use

- Primary schools in the area
- Chapman River Friends are already doing this

Circular access

Fishing line bins

Clear boundaries

“Park” vs. “Reserve” – is it for people to play in or nature preservation area

- Change the name?
- “Chapman Wildlife Reserve”

Playground/bike area - dedicated areas

Expand into vacant areas with revegetation to create a buffer

Strategy for engaging people productively and encourage people to care

CGG media promotions

Definition of responsibility need to be clearer (e.g. health = state gov.)

Erosion solutions will depend on use

- Revegetation vs. infrastructure

Permeable pathways

Reduce water energy of water flowing (i.e. river works upstream and stormwater management – reduce shocks)

Reduce energy on South bank (e.g. submerged coir logs or other creative solutions)

Capture sand during flow events rather than lose more sand.

Protections and value added to native flora and fauna.

Fencing/barricades/some minimal disturbance to ground to limit (prohibited) 4WD access

Ongoing collaboration with Cultural Committee to ensure knowledge is up to date (knowledge changes over time)

Informing on Aboriginal heritage (in reports or signage) should be completed with/in collaboration with the Cultural Committee to ensure accurate and complete representation

Recommendation for the City to prepare for site surveys of both sides of the river to collect accurate current knowledge –

archaeological/anthropological/ethnographic, Aboriginal heritage surveys

Meaningful ongoing engagement following proper communication channels

Long term integration – agreed Cultural Heritage Management Plan (further upriver, regional potential)

Interpretive signage for Aboriginal names for local animals, plants, etc.

Demonstration of equal respect through reconciliation trail integration with signage.

Incorporate Cultural Heritage Management Plan in overall Action Plan including an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy – clear, set role in project, everyone knows what is expected

Shaded/seated area/s on the southern side of river

Potential to have interactive activities with Aboriginal people available at interpretive signage (long-term goal/opportunity)

Sunset signage (popular spot for beautiful sunsets!)

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Keep the south side of the river closed from the bridge to the north end of Charles street  
Increase City of Geraldton Ranger presence (deterrent for a lot of these negative behaviours)  
Perhaps development of a specific Ranger program for local people through NACC or the City of Geraldton specifically for Chapman River utilising this as a training ground for perhaps students studying environmental science, Certificates in land management etc. (this serves multiple purposes - provision of education opportunities for students, potential ongoing employment, developing understanding and commitment to the area with a desire to educate and protect)  
Concentrated program/media/installation of recycling stations/education in relation to impact of rubbish being dumped in and around the park and river area

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### 3.2 Management Priorities in the Chapman River Estuary

In this session of Workshop 1, participants were allocated into “breakout” groups, each group was given a map, markers and pieces of paper and asked to think about what could be done in the reserve to improve its value to them. Groups recorded these ideas and identified a spokesperson in the group to report back to everyone at the end. If any of their ideas had a spatial aspect, they were asked to indicate these on the map. This process identified specific actions that to maintain or enhance the ecological, social or cultural values of the Estuary.

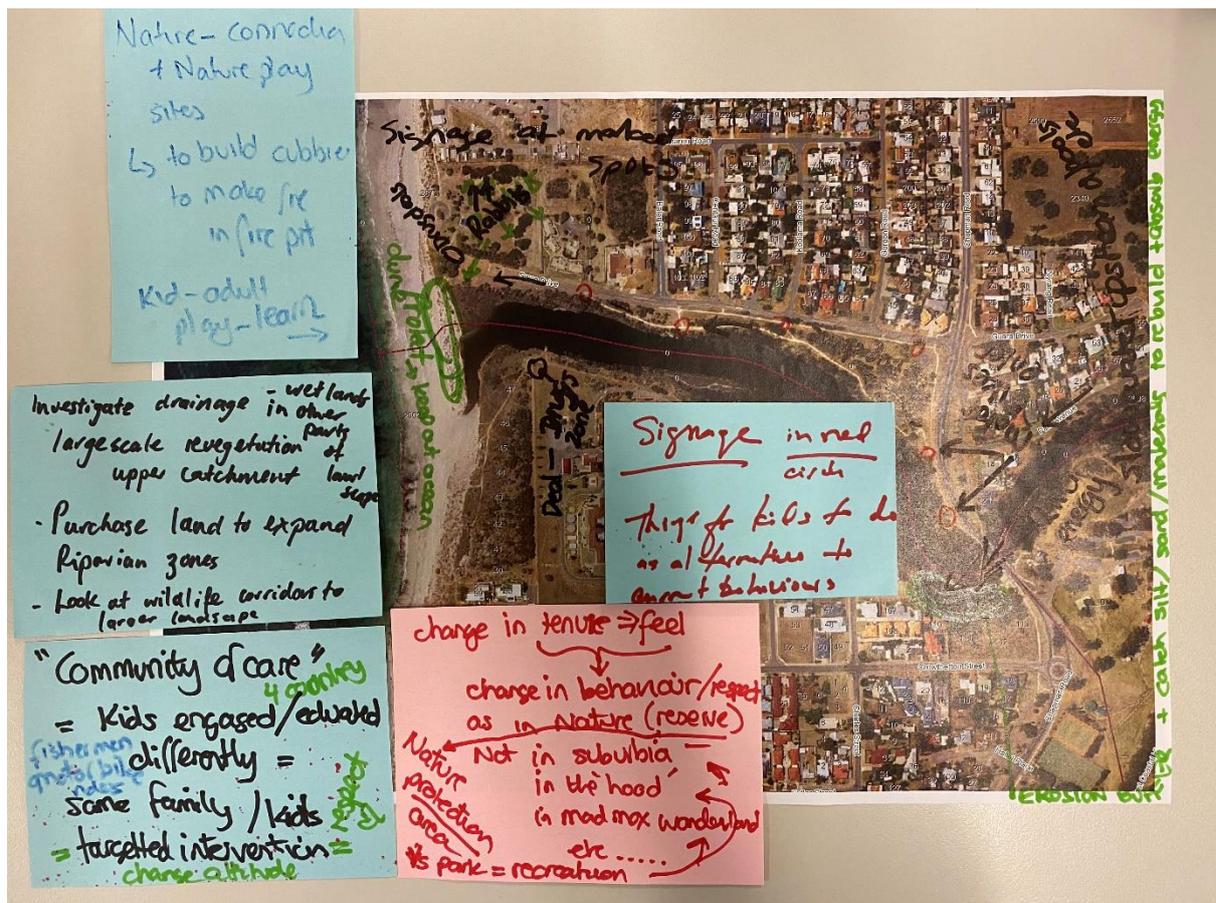
#### GROUP FEEDBACK



#### Group 1

- Nature – connection and nature play sites
  - To build cubbies and make fire in fire pit
  - Kid – adult, play – learn -> Education -> connect with nature
- Investigate drainage – wetlands in other parts of land scape
  - Large scale revegetation upper catchment
  - Purchase land to expand riparian zones

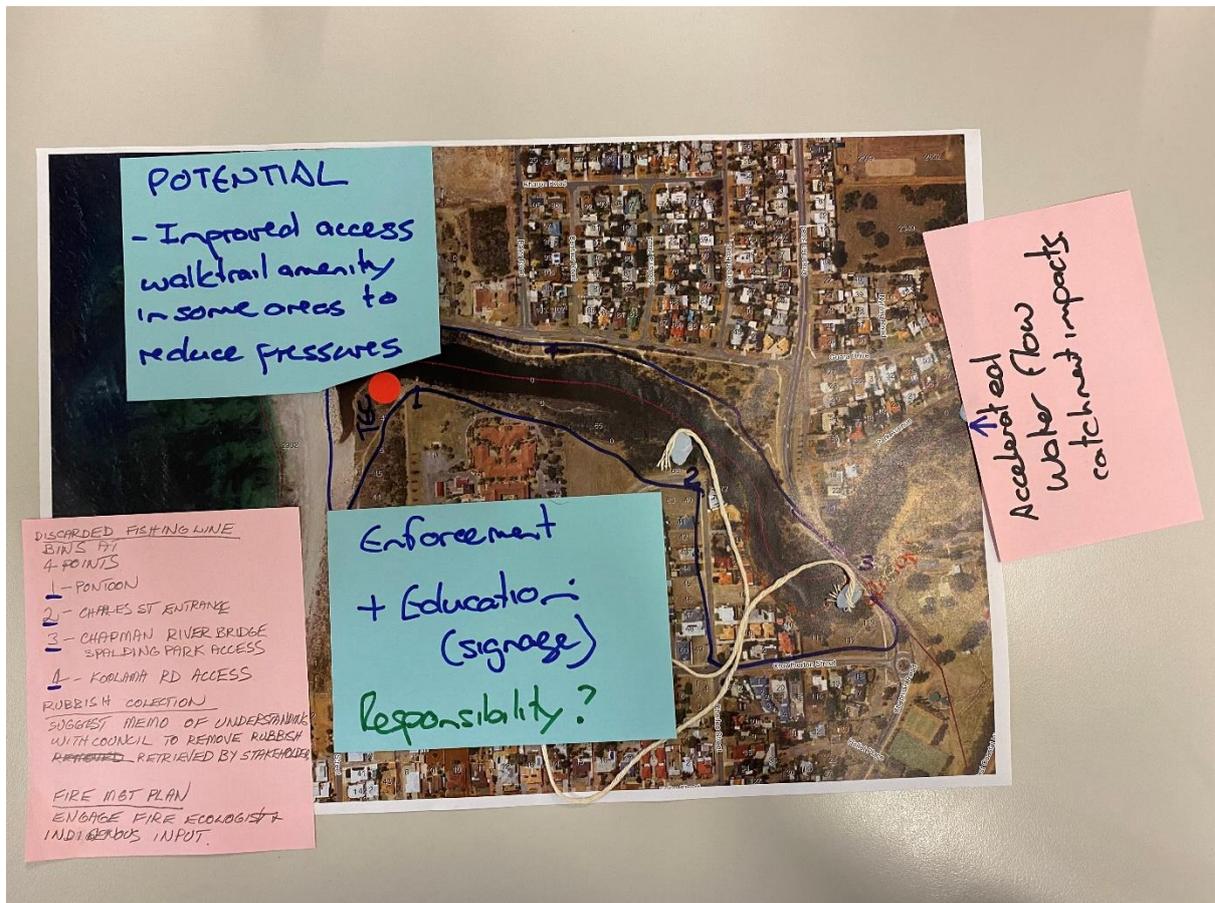
- Look at wildlife corridors to larger landscape
- “community of care” for Country = kids engaged/educated differently = same family/kids = targeted intervention = change attitude = respect
  - Fisherman, motorbikes
- Change in tenure = feel
  - Change in behaviour/respect as in nature (reserve)
    - Nature protection area vs. park = recreation
  - Not in suburbia, in the “hood”, in Mad Max wonderland etc...
- Signage in need (identified by red circles on group map)
  - Things for kids to do as alternatives to current behaviours
- As shown on group map:
  - Signage at marked spots
  - Identified areas for concerns (on northern side): drug deals, rabbits, motor bike entry points (cut up dune)
  - River energy, slow water upstream & pools etc
  - Erosion buffer and catch silt/sand/materials to rebuild and absorb energy (on south side, identified on group map)
  - Protect dune -> keep out ocean (at river mouth, as identified on group map)



Group 1 concerns and solutions as spatially represented on the group map.

- Group 2:
- Discarded fishing line bins at 4 points:
    1. Pontoon

2. Charles St entrance
  3. Chapman River bridge Spalding park access
  4. Koolama Rd access
- Rubbish collection: suggest memo of understanding with council to remove rubbish retrieved by stakeholders (& community)
  - Fire management plan: engage fire ecologist and indigenous input
  - Potential: Improved access walk trail amenity in some areas to reduce pressures
  - Enforcement and education (signage) – responsibility? (particularly for area 2 and 3 as identified on group map)
  - Accelerated water flow catchment impacts (from upstream)
  - TEC and areas of erosion identified on group map

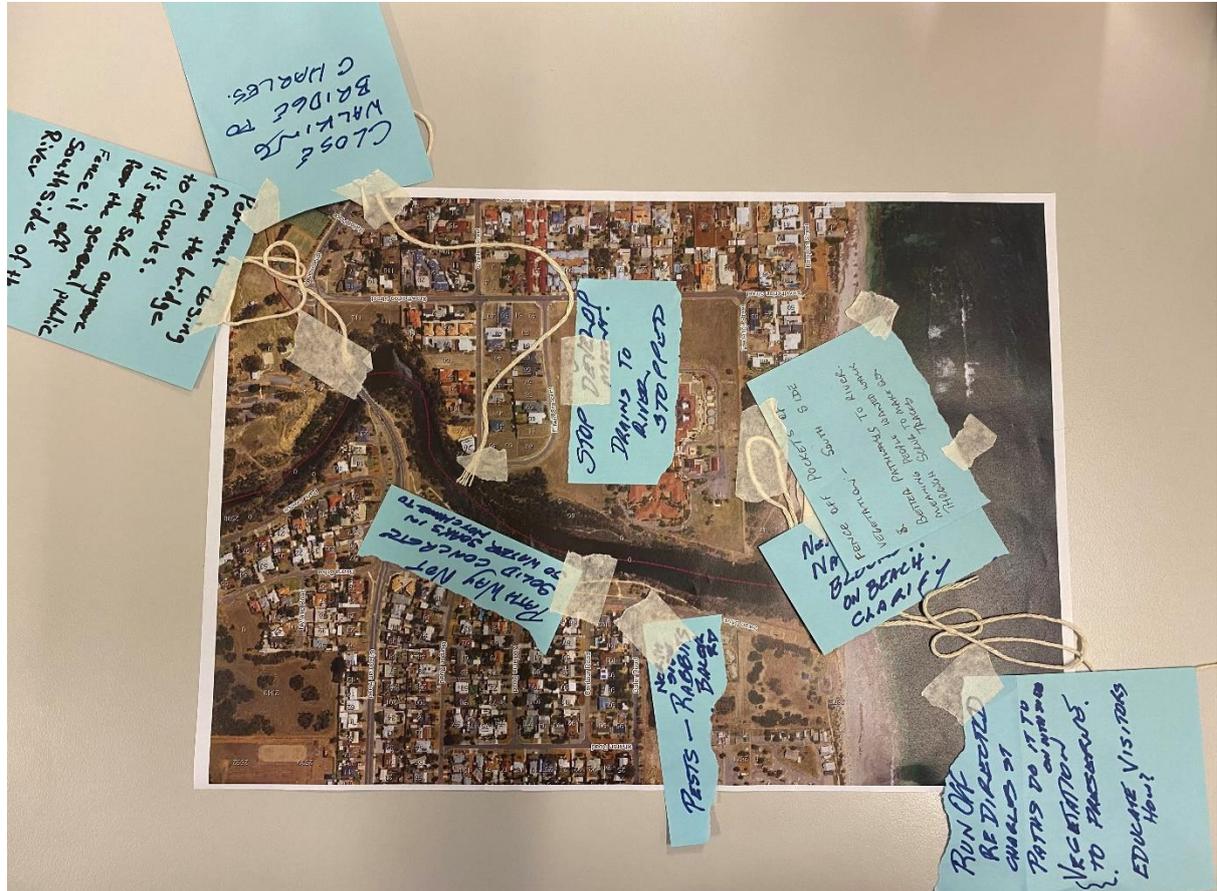


Group 2 concerns and solutions as spatially represented on the group map.

**Group 3:**

- Close walking trail; bridge to Charles
- Permanent closing from the bridge to Charles St. It's not safe anymore for the general public. Fence it off south side of the river
- (On northern side) Pathway not solid concrete so water soaks in
- Pests – north side rabbits, Baler Rd
- Run off redirected Charles St paths do it too on north side
  - Vegetation to preserve
  - Educate visitors
- Fence off pockets of vegetation – south side (between Nazareth House and Beach, as marked on group map)

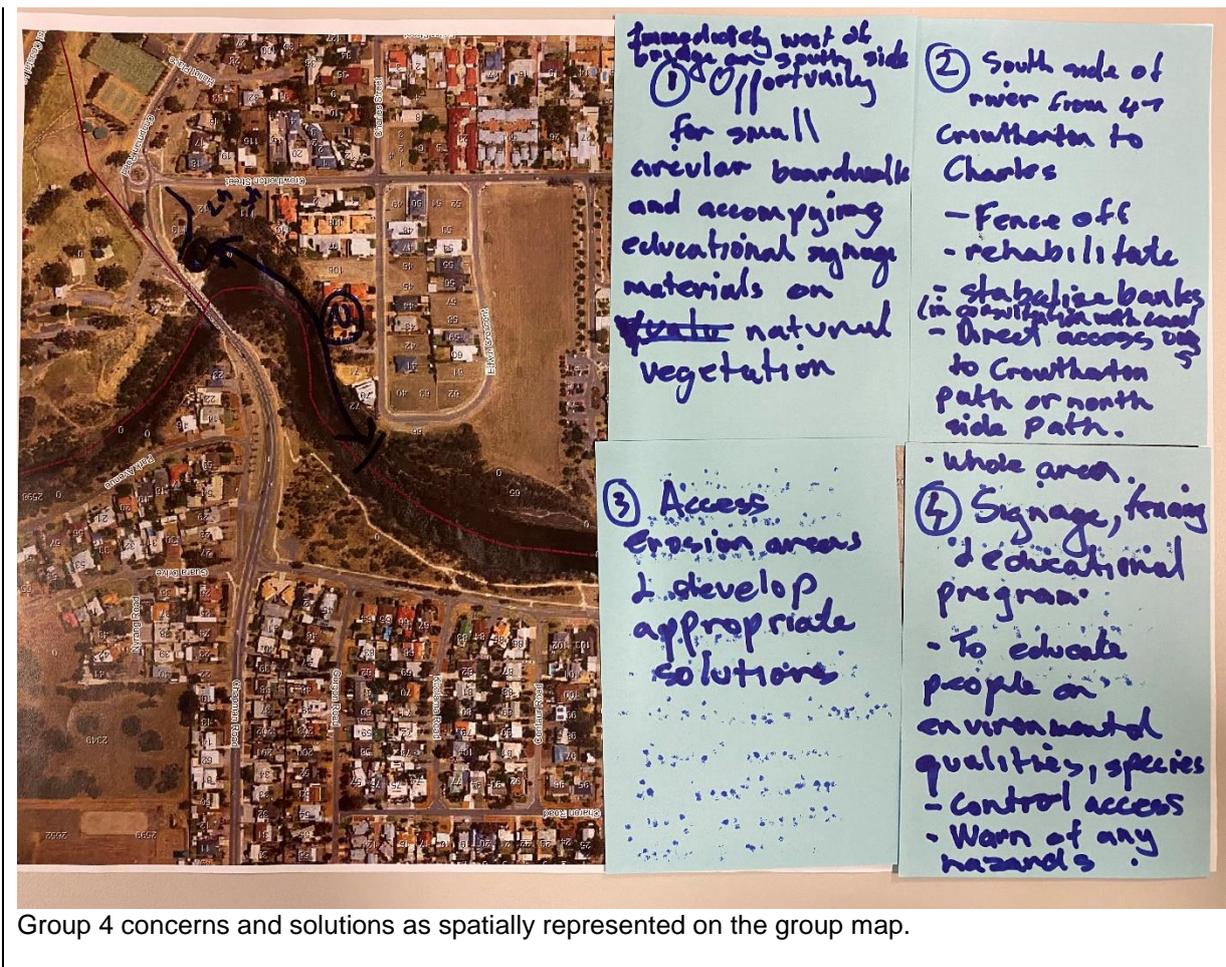
- Better pathways to river, meaning people wanted walk through scrub to make own tracks
- Stop development. Drains to river stopped (Edwin Crescent, as marked on group map)



Group 3 concerns and solutions as spatially represented on the group map.

Group 4:

- Immediately west of bridge on south side (as shown on group map):
  1. Opportunity for small circular boardwalk and accompanying educational signage materials on natural vegetation
  2. South side of river from 47 Crowtheron to Charles
    - Fence off
    - Rehabilitate
    - Stabilise banks (in consultation with land owners)
    - Direct access to Crowtheron path or north side path
  3. Access erosion areas and develop appropriate solutions
  4. Whole area: Signage, fencing and educational program
    - To educate people on environmental qualities, species
    - Control access
    - Warn of any hazards



## 4 Survey Results

An online survey was used to collect input from community members and stakeholders unable to attend the in-person workshop.

The survey received a total of four responses by Geraldton locals, 50% of participants live within ~2.5km of the Chapman River Estuary. 50% of participants visit the Estuary multiple times a week.

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| <b>What do community members and stakeholders value about the Chapman River Estuary?</b> | Walking (x4)<br>Bird watching (x4)<br>Photography (x2)<br>Dog walking<br>Cycling<br>Fishing<br>Kayaking<br>Nature appreciation<br>Relaxing, peaceful and tranquil area (x3)<br>The diversity of wildlife in this small corridor of land<br>Sunrises<br>Birdlife<br>Unique area |
|--|--|

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p>Natural area, environmental values<br/>Full of history (Aboriginal and early settler)</p>   |
| <p><b>What are community members and stakeholders concerned about at the Chapman River Estuary?</b></p> | <p>Environmental damage caused by fishing<br/>Environmental damage caused by motor bikes<br/>Rubbish<br/>Vandalism in the park area<br/>Grafitti around the bridge area<br/>Lack of respect for the area<br/>Antisocial behaviour (abusive language, threatened violence)<br/>Dogs of leads (danger to themselves, other dogs and people as well as riverbanks and wildlife)<br/>Locating used syringes (usually located at the west end on the coastal area) and where people walk with their kids and dogs<br/>Water quality<br/>Declining riparian vegetation<br/>Weeds (x2)<br/>Feral species impact on wildlife<br/>River health issues</p>   |
| <p><b>Ideas for Action Plan</b></p>   | <p>Keep the south side of the river closed from the bridge to the north end of Charles street<br/>Increase City of Geraldton Ranger presence (deterrent for a lot of these negative behaviours)<br/>Perhaps development of a specific Ranger program for local people through NACC or the City of Geraldton specifically for Chapman River utilising this as a training ground for perhaps students studying environmental science, Certificates in land management etc. (this serves multiple purposes - provision of education opportunities for students, potential ongoing employment, developing understanding and commitment to the area with a desire to educate and protect)<br/>Concentrated program/media/installation of recycling stations/education in relation to impact of rubbish being dumped in and around the park and river area<br/>Promote the area as a natural environment (steer away from the label Chapman River Regional Park - impression of a park environment for playing / recreational etc. whereas it should be more directed at a natural area full of natural beauty and to be protected with minimal impact .....e.g. Chapman River Nature reserve .....)<br/>Provision of fishing line disposal points to encourage people to do the right thing (there have been incidents of birds getting tangled in fishing line and unable to get away and have died as a result of this)<br/>Installation of suitable CCTV cameras in and around strategic areas of the park<br/>Identifying areas that could be utilised as education points around the area<br/>The maintenance of the paths on both sides of the river so walkers can do a circuit from Spalding park.<br/>More weed control (mostly couch), develop an artificial wetland to treat storm water runoff on north side of estuary, restrict access to river bank to discreet nodes<br/>Development of an art project inviting local youth to become involved and something structured i.e. they could paint some of the birds/animals/flora</p> |

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on the bridge instead of the graffiti that is currently being put on there (pride and ownership as well as education)

Education is the key

Implementing that dogs have to be on lead and even consider areas where dogs are not permitted to protect the wildlife

Ongoing involvement of local school groups in projects (as the kids are the future of the planet and their involvement is critical). Schools or students could be involved in for example:-

1. Development of art works for the park;
  2. Ongoing monitoring
  3. Adopting sections of the park as theirs for tree planting, weed control etc. as part of their school curriculum;
  4. Organised school trips e.g. kayak excursions down the river;
- Invitation to local Aboriginal people to have perhaps bush tucker tours, awareness tours etc. to encourage people to develop greater understanding of the area and its significance
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## 5 Next Steps

Draft plan to discuss at Workshop 2 – Feedback on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May

Incorporation of further target group or individual survey responses

Final Report Due 30<sup>th</sup> June

Link to online survey:

<https://forms.gle/buF4DLCL9dGiy3bo9>