

## **Ashfield Flats Master Plan 2024/2025 Financial Year Annual Report**

### **Executive Summary**

The Ashfield Flats Master Plan was prepared by Urbaqua in 2024 for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), together with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH), the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), Water Corporation and the Town of Bassendean. The Master Plan was endorsed by the Town of Bassendean Council at the 30 April 2024 meeting.

Several key recommendations from the Ashfield Flats Master Plan commenced in the 2024/25 financial year, including:

- Hamilton Street Reserve Urban Forest Expansion, with 26 semi-mature native trees planted in June 2025 with \$3,350 secured through an Urban Greening Grant. The Urban Greening Grants Program is delivered by the Town of Bassendean with the support of WALGA and funded by the Government of Western Australia.
- Commencement of several TEC and foreshore protection actions, with funding from the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program. This project is funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, with the support of the Town of Bassendean, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the Bassendean Preservation Group.

## 1. Introduction

The Ashfield Flats Master Plan was prepared for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA), together with the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH), the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), Water Corporation and the Town of Bassendean to provide guidance for the management of Ashfield Flats in Bassendean. The Master Plan aims to achieve the objectives and principles of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*, relevant Swan Canning Planning and Development Policies, Plans and Procedures, the draft Lower Swan Locality Plan, draft State Planning Policy 2.9: Planning for Water, and the Swan Canning River Protection Strategy. The Objectives of the Master Plan are to

- Allow for the protection and adaptation of unique environmental qualities.
- Connect people with nature and support community wellbeing.
- Provide opportunities for knowledge sharing.
- Deliver sustainable and coordinated management.

The Master Plan, completed by DBCA in February 2024 and endorsed by the Town of Bassendean Council at the 30 April 2024 Ordinary Meeting of Council, included 45 management actions. The purpose of this document is to provide the community with a summary of the progress towards completion of these actions.

Key activities undertaken in 2024/2025 Financial Year included:

- Commencement of works under the Urban Rivers Catchments Program (URCP). This project is funded by the Australian Government's Natural Heritage Trust under the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program, with the support of the Town of Bassendean, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the Bassendean Preservation Group.
- Hamilton Street Reserve Urban Forest Expansion, with 26 semi-mature native trees planted in June 2025 through a \$3,350 Urban Greening Grant. The Urban Greening Grants Program is delivered by the Town of Bassendean with the support of WALGA and funded by the Government of Western Australia.

## 2. Ashfield Master Plan Objectives and Status

Action	Comments	Status
<b>Objective 1: Allow for the protection and adaption of unique environmental qualities</b>		
1.1.1 Protect the TEC from uncontrolled access through fencing including areas to the east of the TEC	Town of Bassendean liaised with relevant landowners, DBCA and the local fire station to discuss the proposed fence alignment and access requirements for each organisation. Installation of the fencing will be undertaken in the 2025/26 Financial Year as part of the URCP works.	In Progress
1.1.2 Monitor and record the eastward movement of the Coastal Saltmarsh vegetation complexes.	Quadrats were established in May 2025 by DBCA, Town of Bassendean and Bassendean Preservation Group. Baseline data was collected, including photos of each quadrat. Monitoring will be undertaken annually in spring and autumn until February 2028 as part of the URCP grant work. The monitoring schedule will be reviewed upon the completion of the URCP grant project.	Ongoing
1.1.3 Monitor changes in hydrology affecting the TEC and undertake remedial works if possible to reduce this change.	Hydrological monitoring is expected to commence in spring 2025.	Not Started
1.1.4 Undertake appropriate weed management including removal of East Coast casuarina species.	A contract to undertake weed mapping in Ashfield Flats was awarded in May 2025; with the weed mapping scheduled to occur in spring 2025. Weed maps will be used to prioritise weed control efforts in the Flats. Both weed mapping and prioritised weed control will be undertaken as part of the URCP project. The Town has continued to undertake weed control in Town managed areas of Ashfield Flats, as part of the 10 Year Management Plan for Ashfield Flats (2021-2031).	In progress
1.2.1 Implement the Town of Bassendean Sandy Beach Reserve foreshore works	The draft design of the Sandy Beach Foreshore Restoration Plan (FRP) was completed in the first half of 2025. Traditional Owner consultation will be undertaken in the 2025/26 Financial Year to finalise the design. Implementation is expected to be complete prior to April 2026. Design works were cofunded through the DBCA Riverbank grants program with implementation works to be funded through the URCP grant.	In progress

Action	Comments	Status
1.2.2 Undertake staged works to stabilise the foreshore through bioengineering, and pockets of fenced revegetation at least 30m wide, as indicated on the Master Plan. Fencing to be visually permeable and able to be removed when vegetation is sufficiently established. Vegetation selection to favour ground covers, sedges and tall trees to facilitate views to the river from the foreshore paths.	Design and implementation of a FRP for the section of foreshore between Sandy Beach and the boardwalk is being funded under the URCP grant. An experienced consultant was engaged in May 2025 to develop an FRP. The FRP design is projected to be completed in December 2025 and implementation should commence spring/summer of 2026/27.	In progress
1.2.3 Acknowledge the failing condition of the revetment west of Kitchener drain through signage that indicates the area will increasingly be subject to flooding and encourage access to Hardy Rd along the Kitchener St drain.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
1.2.4 Monitor sea level rise and implement responsive management actions based on these experiences where required to protect agreed social or environmental values	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
1.3.1 Investigate feasibility and develop a concept to modify the western bank of the Chapman St drain north of the TEC (in Hamilton St parkland, Chapman North), minimising the impact on existing trees, to reduce the steepness of the bank and revegetate with appropriate local native species to provide additional area for water quality treatment and reduce flow velocities.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
1.3.2 Explore the opportunity to construct an additional “low flow” pathway through the parkland into the existing wetland area just south of the Kitchener St drain to provide water quality treatment of the frequent events while the larger (and cleaner) events can bypass and continue to discharge into the Swan River (Derbarl Yerrigan).	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started

Action	Comments	Status
1.3.3 Ensure any drainage upgrade works are undertaken in collaboration with DBCA and consistent with the intent of this Master Plan.	No actions required in 2024/25	Ongoing
<b>Objective 2: Connect people with nature and support community wellbeing</b>		
2.1.1 Identify and establish a future pedestrian path located along the foreshore at approximately 0.8m AHD to provide access in most weather conditions.	Works are being funded through the URCP grant. An experienced contractor was engaged in May 2025 to develop the Boardwalk to Sandy Beach FRP, and this includes determining the final location of the new path alignment and construction design to ensure the hydrology of the Flats was not impacted. The path design will be completed in 2025, with installation expected to occur in 2026.	In progress
2.1.2 Extend the boardwalk to allow for tidal movements into and out of the wetland while providing an accessible path in most weather conditions.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.1.3 Provide a new path connection from the Sandy Beach jetty to the car park and create an informal track through the southern fenced area at Sandy Beach to encourage better connection between the jetty and carpark.	Works in progress as part of the Sandy Beach FRP project, scheduled to be completed April 2026 (see 1.2.1)	In progress
2.1.4 Consider additional signage or improved access at an appropriate grade along the Kitchener Drain to Hardy Rd to facilitate a better connection for cyclists to the surrounding road network and Route ID 2954 in the Perth and Peel Long-Term Cycle Network.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.1.5 Explore solutions for low intervention access to the Roy Hookway Platform from the current westernmost boardwalk extent when seasonal access is no longer viable	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.1.6 Consider need for access by Aboriginal people for bush tucker or traditional medicines	Contract for Aboriginal Heritage Consultation works was awarded and initial contact made with Whadjuk Aboriginal Corporation in May 2025. Consultation is expected to occur in 2025/26	In progress

Action	Comments	Status
2.1.7 Consider the need for universal access as part of any upgrade.	See 2.1.1	In progress
2.1.8 Plan to remove the existing path material prior to failure, so it does not contribute to erosion or become a safety hazard. Information on path condition to be provided to the community through the Town's annual report. Revegetate the area.	The path is currently in usable condition and does not require removal. Several sections of the path show signs of deterioration.	Not started
2.2.1 Plant canopy trees on both sides of the new path to provide shade and install appropriate seating. Choose tree species that provide ability for views through the foliage on maturity (but still provide canopy coverage).	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.2.2 Expand urban forest coverage within Hamilton Reserve with a focus to improve local biodiversity and complement the parkland setting, while minimising bushfire risk.	Completed with 26 semi-mature native trees planted in June 2025 with \$3,350 secured through an Urban Greening Grant.	Completed
2.2.3 Formalise the circuit around Ashfield Flats through improved wayfinding including signage that indicates some of the paths may not be useable in certain weather conditions	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.2.4 Explore the opportunity for a bird hide near Kitchener North.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.2.5 Construct a pedestrian bridge over the Chapman St drain in Chapman North that also provides a place to view the wetland habitats. Consider widening the boardwalk in a few locations and the inclusion of seating.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.2.6 Allow overflow parking at Sandy Beach adjacent to the formal car park (on DPLH-managed land) in area unaffected by future inundation	Advice received from DPLH that the WAPC's position is that Bush Forever sites should not be used for any form of commercial purpose, which would preclude use of this area for overflow parking.	Unable to be completed

Action	Comments	Status
2.3.1 Retain access to the water in defined areas where a sandy foreshore already exists (see Master Plan)	Access to water has been retained in the draft Sandy Beach Reserve FRP, and the consultant has been directed to retain access in defined locations in the Boardwalk to Sandy Beach FRP	In progress
2.3.2 Retain views to the river and wetland in agreed locations through active management of vegetation and/or establishment of viewing platforms/boardwalks.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
2.3.3 Remove some trees at the base of the Lookout to assist with retaining the views from the public realm across the wetland. Any vegetation removal should not impact the stability of the bank	Action being undertaken by DPLH, and commence in 2025. Works are being undertaken in a staged manner over 3 years, with completion expected in early 2028. The initial phase aimed at removing excess canopy and midstory to initiate the restoration of the viewing corridors. DPLH have also engaged contractors to manage revegetation and associated weed control of the bank.	In progress
<b>Objective 3: Provide opportunities for knowledge sharing</b>		
3.1.1 Partner with Whadjuk and Nyungah people to better understand local cultural knowledge and values and develop a framework for sharing this knowledge in a culturally safe manner.	See 2.1.6	In progress
3.1.2 Investigate dual naming of Ashfield Flats.	See 2.1.6	In progress
3.1.3 Establish ongoing relationships/partnerships with Whadjuk and Nyungah groups, including youth, to assist with ongoing management of the Master Plan area.	See 2.1.6	In progress
3.2.1 Investigate opportunities for interpretation walking trails including artwork, text and illustrative signage that is non-intrusive in scale and character.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
3.2.2 Provide information to visitors about pressures on and changes in the local environment to promote understanding, support for coordinated action and stewardship.	Ashfield Flats Master Plan provided online by DBCA. Additional information provided at 2025 Wetland Conference to attendees	Ongoing

Action	Comments	Status
3.2.3 Develop online and physical information signage to improve awareness and education of the Ashfield Flats natural assets and processes including flooding and sea level rise.	Ashfield Flats Master Plan provided online by DBCA. Additional information provided at 2025 Wetland Conference to attendees	In progress
3.2.4 Facilitate walking tours for locals and visitors to learn and appreciate the heritage and cultural values of the Master Plan area.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
<b>Objective 4: Deliver sustainable &amp; coordinated management</b>		
4.1.1 Key stakeholder agencies to continue to collaborate and agree on an integrated approach to the long-term management of Ashfield Flats	Stakeholders have collaborated in the implementation of the URCP grant project. A stakeholder meeting was held between DBCA, DPLH and Town of Bassendean in February 2025 to discuss implementation of the URCP grant and management after the grant's completion. See also 1.1.1.	Ongoing
4.1.2 Work together to develop an implementation plan that is supported by the key stakeholder agencies	As above	Ongoing
4.1.3 Monitor the delivery of actions and share progress periodically with the community.	<p>Communication of actions with the community has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community meeting held at Ashfield Sports Club in July 2024, as requested by the Ashfield Community Action Network, with DBCA and Town staff in attendance to provide information regarding the Master Plan</li> <li>- News article posted September 2024 announcing funding received through the Urban Greening Grants program for Hamilton Street Reserve Urban Forest Expansion. <a href="#">News Story - Hamilton Street Reserve Urban Forest Expansion » Town of Bassendean</a></li> <li>- September 2024 Thrive newsletter promoted the Hamilton Street Reserve Urban Forest Expansion</li> <li>- Mailout on Hamilton Street Reserve Urban Forest Expansion to adjacent residents and property owners completed April 2025, advising of project details and inviting participation in the planting</li> </ul>	Ongoing

Action	Comments	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- News article posted January 2025, announcing the Town receiving the URCP grant <a href="#">News Story - Town of Bassendean Secures Nearly \$2 Million for Ashfield Flats Master Plan Implementation » Town of Bassendean</a></li> <li>- Facebook item posted in January 2025 announcing the Town receiving URCP funding.</li> <li>- February 2025 Thrive newsletter promoted the Ashfield Flats Master Plan Implementation and URCP funding.</li> <li>- Email update to mailing list announcing the Town receiving URCP funding.</li> <li>- Addition of the Ashfield Flats Master Plan Project and URCP funding to the Environmental Projects page on the Town website <a href="#">Environmental Projects and Living Streams » Town of Bassendean</a></li> <li>- This report covering items progressed in the 2024/25 financial year.</li> </ul>	
4.1.4 Work with the Department of Transport to seek a solution that better manages speeding boats in this section of the river.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
4.2.1 Dogs are to be on-lead in all areas, apart from the TEC (dogs prohibited) and the designated off-lead area.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
4.2.2 Designate and sign post the dog off-lead areas.	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started
4.3.1 Ensure fire access tracks are managed to ensure they are continuous and provide safe access/egress for emergency services personnel and appliances.	See 1.1.1	In progress
4.3.2 Explore the opportunity to incorporate Aboriginal Cultural values into the future wildfire management regime	No actions undertaken in 2024/25	Not started

Action	Comments	Status
4.4.1 Work with SERCUL to develop a revegetation strategy to reduce mosquito numbers while minimising impacts on the TEC.	Meeting was held on site with Dr Rose Weerasinghe (SERCUL) and representatives from DBCA, Town of Bassendean and Bassendean Preservation Group In March 2025. Recommendations were provided on opportunities and methodologies for revegetation, weed control and mosquito management. Recommendations will be incorporated into revegetation works moving forward.	In progress
4.4.2 Maintain appropriate access to areas requiring mosquito control to enable agreed management activities to be undertaken.	Town's Environmental Health Officer consulted during the fence design process to ensure access was maintained for mosquito control, see 1.1.1	In progress