

ANNUAL NUTRIENT SURVEY for Local Government Authorities

2021 City of Rockingham Nutrient Management Score Card

The Swan and Canning River systems, and many wetlands, are suffering from regular, and sometimes toxic, algal blooms. These blooms occur due to excessive inputs of nutrients, particularly phosphorus and nitrogen, combined with low water flows and warm temperatures. Local authorities are responsible for nutrient use and management on turfed areas and in reserves, in drainage systems and in local planning decisions and thus have the opportunity to lead the community by setting examples in best practice.

Each year Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in Perth are surveyed on their nutrient practices by the Phosphorus Awareness Project of the South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL). The survey is broken up into different sections including nutrient monitoring, fertiliser applications, nutrient management, nutrient education, water quality monitoring and development control. The results from the questions asked in the survey have been used to provide a Score Card for each LGA that responded and clearly show how the LGA is performing and where and how improvements can be made. LGAs should also refer to the Annual Nutrient Survey for Local Government Authorities Results 2021 report (www.sercul.org.au/fertilisewise) for further recommendations on how to implement nutrient Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Please note that not all of the questions asked in the survey were used to determine the overall best management practice score. Any additional information about nutrient practices provided by an LGA is summarised at the end of this scorecard.



BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE SCORE 2021

Overall BMP: **63% ABOVE AVERAGE**

The City of Rockingham has been above average in implementing Best Management Practices in 2020/21. Further improvements can be made in the areas of fertiliser applications, nutrient management, water quality monitoring, development control and nutrient education.

RESPONSE KEY:

BMP has been achieved BMP has NOT been achieved Not Applicable Response not assessed

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (BMP) KEY:

Excelling Above Average Average Below Average Unsatisfactory

NUTRIENT MONITORING

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SECTION BMP
Are regular soil tests &/or leaf tissue analyses conducted in waterbodies?	YES	EXCELLING
Is analysis conducted by a lab affiliated with ASPAC?	YES	
Is plant available phosphorus in the soil measured using an appropriate test?	YES	
Are rates of phosphorus determined by soil testing and Phosphorus Retention Index (PRI) results?	YES	

The City conducts soil tests and leaf tissue analysis for sports fields, irrigated parks, and foreshore areas. It is recommended that this practice continues and if these areas are irrigated that moisture testing also be conducted.

FERTILISER APPLICATIONS

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SECTION BMP
Are there foreshore reserves and parks in the LGA?	YES	AVERAGE
Is fertiliser added to foreshore reserves and parks?	YES	
Does the fertiliser contain phosphorus?	YES	
Is it a controlled release, low water soluble fertiliser?	YES	

A buffer zone immediately adjacent to waterbodies should be established in which no fertilising takes place. The width of the buffer zone should be determined by factors such as the site condition and function, however, if possible, it should be at least 50m. Outside the buffer zone, if fertiliser is to be applied it should be a controlled release, phosphorus free, low water soluble fertiliser that is applied according to soil testing and leaf tissue analysis. If the area is irrigated moisture testing should also be undertaken.

The same fertiliser was used on active, passive and foreshore areas at the same rates of application. The fertiliser choice and rate of application should be based on the results of testing and analysis and the conditions and uses of the site. Fertiliser should not be applied in summer.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SECTION BMP
Are structural BMPs in place to reduce nutrients entering rivers and wetlands?	UNSURE	BELOW AVERAGE
Are non-structural measures in place to prevent nutrients from grass clippings entering waterbodies via stormwater drains?	YES	
Are there deciduous trees in parks and streetscapes?	YES	
Are non-structural measures in place to prevent nutrients from deciduous leaves entering waterbodies via stormwater drains?	YES	
Are there non-structural measures in place to prevent nutrients from sediment entering waterbodies via stormwater drains?	NO	
Is a Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plan (NIMP) implemented for streetscapes?	NO	
Is there a policy to use local native plants as the first choice in public (LGA) and private (developers) landscaping?	NO	

It is recommended that the City have structural measures in place, such as infiltration, conveyance or detention systems, to reduce nutrients entering waterbodies. Non-structural measures should also be put in place to prevent nutrients from sediment entering waterbodies via stormwater drains (refer to main report for measures that can be implemented). Streetsweeping, for example, can be utilised for sediment removal in much the same way as it is used for grass clippings and deciduous leaves. It is recommended that no further deciduous trees be planted on road verges or near waterbodies. A NIMP should be implemented for streetscapes and a policy should be developed to use local native plants as the first choice in landscaping.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SECTION BMP
Are wetlands regularly monitored for nutrient levels?	NO	ABOVE AVERAGE
Are stormwater drains regularly monitored for nutrient levels?	YES	
Are compensating basins regularly monitored for nutrient levels?	YES	

The City monitors stormwater drains and compensating basins that are under their control for nutrient levels, however, did not report on whether they report these results to the local community. It is recommended that the City regularly monitor wetlands, stormwater drains and compensating basins for nutrients and report the results to the local community. SERCULs Water Quality Monitoring Team can assist LGAs with undertaking this work and can be contacted on 9458 5664.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SECTION BMP
Are there provisions in the Town Planning Scheme or Planning Policies to enforce environmental conditions on development?	YES	ABOVE AVERAGE
Do you impose conditions on development which include Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plans (NIMPs)?	YES	
Do you have mechanisms in place to regulate sediment management?	NO	

The City reported having no mechanisms in place to regulate sediment management. It is recommended that the City have mechanisms in place to regulate sediment management, monitors these for compliance and prosecutes developers that are not complying (refer to main report for measures that can be implemented).

NUTRIENT EDUCATION

QUESTION	RESPONSE	SECTION BMP
Are dog poo bins and bags provided in parks and foreshore reserves?	YES	ABOVE AVERAGE
Are measures taken to educate the public about not feeding bread to waterbirds in foreshore reserves and parks?	YES	
Are ratepayers provided with advice on best practice in fertiliser management according to soil type?	NO	

It is recommended that the City provide ratepayers with advice on best practice in fertiliser management according to soil type. SERCUL has a Fertilise Wise brochure that can be sourced for free from SERCUL and distributed to ratepayers at LGA locations. The City can also link its website to the Fertilise Wise page of SERCULs website (www.sercul.org.au/fertilisewise).