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Sound Budgeting for Cockburn Sound

Kwinana Industries Council says that a funding increase for the independent Cockburn Sound Management Council (CSMC) is essential to properly monitor the state of Cockburn Sound. The CSMC Budget was increased from \$250,000 to \$500,000 in the last Budget, falling short of the required \$700,000, and the Kwinana Industries Council is calling on the Environment Minister to finish off closing the gap this year.

"We have a seat on CSMC and there is a real concern that it is going to lose out again in this year's funding allocation", said KIC director Chris Oughton

"It is important to the community and to industry that we know the seagrass meadows in Cockburn Sound, which are a critical part of its ecology, are continuing to recover from the pollution of past decades. The only way for us to know is for it to be measured each year and that's why KIC has chipped in", Mr Oughton said.

As a result of the low funding level last year CSMC was not able to fund its annual seagrass monitoring work, despite the \$30,000 KIC gives to CSMC each year to help fund the work. Fortunately KIC stepped in and gave CSMC an additional \$25,000 to enable the work to be completed. Over the last six years, KIC has provided over \$200,000 to fund the CSMC monitoring program

"Kwinana industry pays in excess of \$1.5 million each year in licence fees and it seems only logical that some of this money is used to fund the watchdog," said Thys Heyns, KIC's President and BP's refinery manager. "Most industries with licences to emit to Cockburn Sound ended the practice long ago and are either recycling or disposing of liquid emissions in accordance with their licence conditions, but we are still paying the licence fees", he said.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Cockburn Sound Management Council was established in August 2000 to coordinate environmental planning and management of Cockburn Sound and its catchment. The Council has 23 members representing the community; recreation and conservation groups; industry; and Commonwealth, State and local governments.

A combination of community pressure, regulatory requirements and managerial commitment to operational change have combined to the point that all marine emission levels are well under the regulatory requirements and the quality of Cockburn Sound continues to improve.

Once a major source of pollution in the Sound, industry has cut its waste discharges by more than 95 percent. The largest source of emissions is now urban stormwater.