



Sound health a challenge for community

By MONIQUE MANNILE

DON'T blame industry — stormwater, contaminated groundwater and recreational impact are at the forefront of pressures on Cockburn Sound.

That's the message from Cockburn Sound Management Council, who spoke about the challenges confronting the Sound in a bid to change "tainted" and long-held perceptions at last week's Community and Industries Forum.

Management council coordinator Tom Rose said the Sound was extremely clean at present and there was no evidence that present industrial practices were causing any problem.

"Industry has cleaned up its impact on the Sound in remarkable ways," Dr Rose said.

"There is diminishing pressure

from industry although we are tracking atmospheric and thermal releases closely. There are more worrisome and growing pressures on the Sound rather than just industrial outputs."

A shift in pressure from industry to recreation, as well as ongoing groundwater, stormwater, wetland vegetation and infrastructure issues, meant it was hard to blame industry for any of the Sound's woes these days.

"Boating and fishing put a lot of pressure on the resources of the Sound. Catchment-based groundwater is a historical legacy," he said.

"We can't properly assess its impact yet. And stormwater drains and urban development has the potential to completely undo the gains we have made.

"Cockburn Sound is an extremely heavily used multiple-use area with

lots of existing and potential conflict."

Dr Rose called upon the community to put the past behind them and focus on the present, affirming that the management council would continue to monitor the Sound and provide good quality advice to ensure impact on the Sound was minimised.

Conservation of Rockingham Environment spokesman Allan Gade, who moved to Rockingham in the late '50s, said it was hard to forget how the Sound once was but he conceded that industry had worked hard to clean up its act.

He called on local and State governments and the community to continue to ensure the Sound stayed healthy.