



# Watchdog of the Sound

By **YVONNE THOMPSON**

COCKBURN Sound Management Council co-ordinator Dr Tom Rose gave a presentation on the history and condition of Cockburn Sound and the challenges it faces in the future at the recent Communities and Industries Forum.

Dr Rose emphasised the role of the management council was that of a “watchdog” that reported findings.

He said the future held challenges for Cockburn Sound because of the diverse use by the full range of the Kwinana industries, commercial shipping, the Navy, commercial fishing and recreational and tourism activities.

He said that the new balance created in the Sound could only be sustained by careful management and well-informed decision making in the future.

“Future new harbour/port facilities will have implications on the health of the Sound, and the water will not reach the pristine condition it was in before the impact of pollution from industry in the 1970’s and 80’s,” Dr Rose said.

“It will take thousands of years to regenerate the loss of about 75 per cent of the Cockburn Sound sea-grass beds.”

Dr Rose said that since the management council was established in 2000 it had made an important contribution to the health of the Sound through scientific re-

search and monitoring programs. It has initiated a system of reporting issues and breaches of standards by stakeholders and governments and presents report cards on the health of the Sound to the wider public at information forums.

The management council co-ordinates remedial action in the event of breaches of environmental conditions and also provides advice on major development proposals.

It also contributes to the shaping of ministerial and licence conditions and other provisions that can minimise impacts on the complex environment of the Cockburn Sound.

Recent report cards have required action to be initiated in Careening Bay on Garden Island where vessel antifouling paint agent TBT (organometallics) from Navy vessels has affected the sediment which remains in place for many years.

Action on TBT was also required in the moderate protection zone at the Kwinana Bulk Terminal after testing in March 2007.

Both sites recorded imposex in marine snails in 2005.

Similar action was required in Jervoise Bay.

Along the Rockingham foreshore bacterial enterococci have been confirmed in the past — and remedial action is being carried out by Rockingham City Council through changes in stormwater drainage.

Investigations continue.