

# THE FLOW



**STORM SEASON  
OUTLOOK: MORE  
FLOODING AND  
CYCLONES?**

**SQIDEP VERIFIED  
PRODUCTS**



**WHY PRIORITISE  
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**NOOSA RIVER  
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Cover image: Rozelle Interchange, Ecoceptor Sydney NSW 2021

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## A NOTE FROM OUR GM



### ANDY HORNBUCKLE

SPEL GENERAL MANAGER

## IT'S NOT BEEN EASY

The past eighteen months have been anything but ordinary. The pandemic has affected all of us on a personal level and has presented significant challenges to businesses and industries everywhere—the stormwater industry being no exception. As we continue to adapt to COVID-19's long-term impacts, it is more important than ever to find motivation and inspiration in our work.

Amidst the uncertainty and ever-evolving challenges that the pandemic poses to businesses, SPEL remains steadfast in fulfilling its mission to secure a clean Joy in Water experience for everyone and for future generations. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide stormwater treatment solutions across Australia throughout these unprecedented times. And we thank our customers for their continuous support and partnership in delivering improved stormwater management outcomes.

## FINDING INSPIRATION IN EACH OTHER

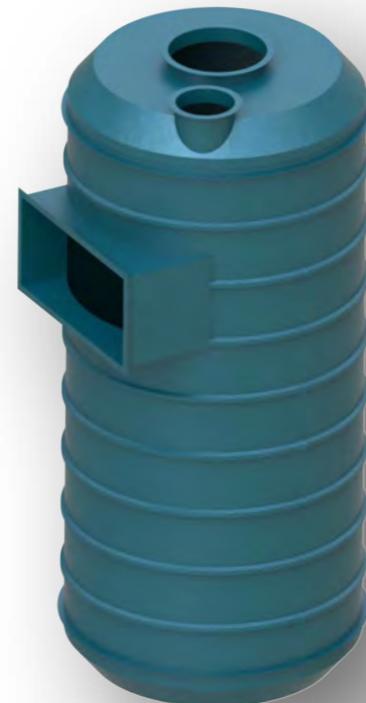
I want to offer special thanks to all SPEL staff for their professionalism, dedication and persistence in delivering excellent service to our customers despite the pandemic's disruptions. I would also like to thank them for supporting each other beyond work. Over the past year, I have witnessed team members stand by each other through COVID scares, keep colleagues updated on the latest public health advisory, and offer levity and a sympathetic ear to boost morale.

I am fortunate to be in an organisation where teamwork extends beyond work, and where the camaraderie and support networks resemble that of one big family. These are the intangible yet vital assets that will continue to drive SPEL through and beyond COVID-19's challenges and difficulties. Our staff's dedication to our customers and each other gives me reason to be optimistic that we will come out the other side of this pandemic even better and more resilient.



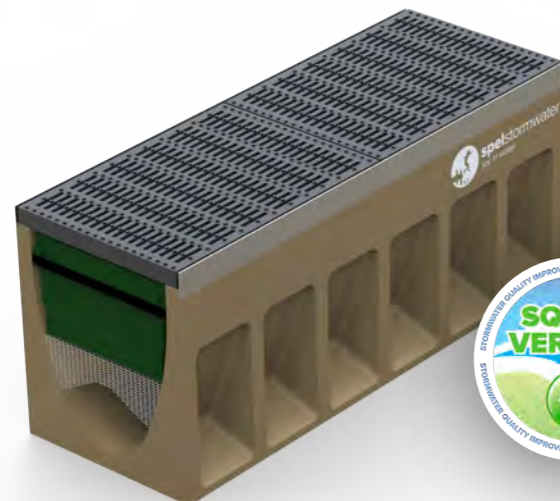
# SPEL NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

It has truly been an eventful and challenging year. Despite new and ongoing difficulties, we are deeply grateful to our staff, clients, and partners for what we have accomplished over this period. These achievements only inspire us to keep putting in the hours and we look forward to taking more positive steps in the coming months.



## SPEL'S VORTCEPTOR GROSS POLLUTANT TRAP GAINS COUNCIL APPROVAL

Following a rigorous evaluation process, the Vortceptor GPT received Blacktown City Council's stamp of approval. Consultants can now confidently specify this product in their development applications to meet the local government area's standards for stormwater management.



## SPEL HYDROCHANNEL IS NOW SQIDEP VERIFIED

We are delighted to share that the Hydrochannel—SPEL's decentralised stormwater treatment solution—has been assessed and certified under the Stormwater Quality Improvement Device Evaluation Protocol (SQIDEP). Established and overseen by Stormwater Australia, SQIDEP provides a uniform set of criteria through which the performance of stormwater control measures and technologies can be independently field-tested, monitored, and reported. We are pleased to now have a second SPEL product verified under SQIDEP, the first one being our modular bioretention system, SPELbasin.



## LAUNCH OF A NEW PRODUCT: SPELVAULT

SPELVault is our range of precast concrete tanks, proudly manufactured at SPEL's own production facility. Our manufacturing process uses the latest Engineering precast technologies, including 50MPa concrete and a variety of reinforcement to enhance structural strength.



## SPEL'S NEW PRODUCTION FACILITY IN QLD

Early in 2021, a new SPEL facility became fully operational in QLD. The facility houses our production team who are responsible for manufacturing SPEL's own precast modular concrete tanks. SPEL also has capabilities for fabricating Fibre-Reinforced Polymer products (FRPs) and rotational moulding.



## GREAT PLACE TO WORK CERTIFICATION



SPEL is now officially a Great Place to Work! We thank our staff for their overwhelming support and endorsement for the company to achieve this certification. More importantly, we congratulate our colleagues for building a work culture that makes this company what it is—a place where people feel included, valued and empowered. The certification will help more professionals identify SPEL as a great place to progress their careers. It will also allow more clients to discover SPEL as a great business partner with happy and motivated staff.

## SPEL CPD WEBINAR SERIES

SPEL regularly hosts free Continuing Professional Development webinars led by experts in stormwater management, design, and construction. Visit our CPD Webinars page to register for an upcoming event or access a previous webinar and earn your CPD certificate today. <https://spel.com.au/webinar>





# FEATURED SPEL PROJECTS

## ROZELLE INTERCHANGE: STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IN TRANSPORT

NSW's population is expected to grow by an average of over 100,000 people each year until 2041. In Greater Sydney, the population projection for 2036 is approximately 6.6 million. That is 133,000 more people than the previous projections from 2016\*. With a growing population, the state is anticipating major challenges to infrastructure, especially when it comes to transporting people within and around Sydney's urban centres. To help address future challenges to mobility, the state has invested in WestConnex motorway scheme—a predominantly underground network of tunnels connecting Greater Sydney's South West, Inner West, and Western suburbs and business districts.

Part of this network is the Rozelle Interchange, a three-storey junction beneath Sydney's Inner West suburbs. Together with the Iron Cove Link, it will provide an underground motorway interchange to City West Link and serve as a bypass of Victoria Road between Iron Cove Bridge and the ANZAC Bridge. It is also expected to serve as a link between Westconnex and the future Western Harbour Tunnel, which will run underneath Sydney Harbour.

### MITIGATING THE INTERCHANGE'S STORMWATER IMPACT

As with any development, the Rozelle Interchange is expected to have impacts on erosion and urban stormwater. To help prevent excess sediment and construction materials from entering stormwater and potentially affecting Sydney Harbour, SPEL Stormwater was contracted to supply five Ecoceptor gross pollutant traps (GPTs) for the project.

The SPEL Ecoceptor GPT is a vertically configured stormwater quality improvement device. It is independently tested and certified for hydraulic efficiency and the capture of pollutants. It also effectively separates sediments and light liquids (petroleum hydrocarbons) from stormwater. Moreover, the Ecoceptor's fibreglass construction makes it cost-effective to transport. Its light weight also allows for easy maneuvering and installation using only an excavator—this makes it a great solution for sites with very limited space.

\*Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, NSW Government. 'Population'. Accessed: October 2021. URL: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Research-and-Demography/Population-projections>



## LILYVALE POWERLINK: KEEPING ENERGY TRANSMISSION ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

In 2015, Queensland set the ambitious target of powering 50% of its economy through renewable energy by 2030\*. Thanks to the state's investment in large scale renewable energy projects, coupled with strong promotion and uptake of rooftop solar, Queensland is well on its way to reaching that target. Approximately 20% of the state's electricity is now generated via renewable sources.

One of the critical projects supporting this renewable energy boom is Powerlink's Lilyvale Solar Farm Connection Project in Central Queensland. The project involved the construction of a new substation and short transmission lines to connect the 100MW solar farm to the high voltage electricity transmission network.

By supplying Hydrocarbon management units for the many substations throughout QLD such as the new Powerlink substation in Lilyvale, SPEL is honoured to play a critical part in helping the state reach its renewable energy targets.

### SAFEGUARDING AGAINST OIL SPILLS

Transformers are at the heart of all substations as they are responsible for regulating the incoming and outgoing electric currents and voltage. To protect the transformer's components from overheating, transformers usually

contain mineral oil which acts as an insulator. However, the oil may spill if the transformer's components become damaged. Therefore, it's critical to have a robust containment system in place that would prevent oil spills and potential contamination of the surrounding land.

SPEL took charge of the supply and retrofit installation of a Puraceptor system for the Powerlink substation in Lilyvale. In case of a spill, the Puraceptor is designed to hold the maximum anticipated volume of oil spillage. It is also fitted with an automatic closure device, ensuring that any captured fluids are securely contained even in the event of a substation explosion and power failure.



\*Department of Energy and Public Works, Queensland Government. 'Achieving Our Renewable Energy Targets'. Accessed October 2021. URL: <https://www.epw.qld.gov.au/about/initiatives/renewable-energy-targets>



# WANDANA HEIGHTS: MAKING STORMWATER TREATMENT VISIBLE IN GEELONG



## BAFFLE BOX INSTALLATION AT WANDANA

Managing stormwater runoff from a 200-lot hillside residential development is, to say the least, an engineering challenge. However, our VIC team was more than thrilled to answer the call and contribute to this new project at one of Geelong's most sought-after suburbs, Wandana Heights.



We delivered a SPEL Baffle Box GPT that provided primary treatment for the greenfield site's whopping 1.6 million litre SPELChamber Detention tank and stormwater treatment train. While that expected volume of stormwater alone is enough to raise the project's profile as a feat of engineering, what makes the project a real standout is the decision to incorporate a stormwater education element via the use of the Baffle Box with the SPELView Cover and educational signage.

## STORMWATER UNBAFFLED

While stormwater management is crucial to protecting the health of our waterways and preventing flooding, most members of the public are largely unaware of stormwater management systems and how important they are. A big part of this has to do with the invisibility of stormwater devices as most of them remain hidden underground. Now, however, the out-of-sight-out-of-mind approach is in the past. The Baffle Box is the future.

While Baffle Boxes are installed at a subsurface level, each of these stormwater systems are topped by the SPELView cover, a steel mesh cage that protrudes above ground. This setup allows people to see down into the Baffle Box's inner workings while the steel mesh acts as a protective barrier. Passersby can watch as the Baffle Box works to remove gross pollutants from stormwater and gain an appreciation of how much pollution can be diverted from entering waterways downstream.



A Baffle Box installation with educational signage from another SPEL project.

Pictured (right): The project site's 1.6 million-litre SPELChamber Detention tank for which the Baffle Box provides primary stormwater treatment.



# FLETCHER'S SLIP IN PORT ADELAIDE: BUILDING A STORMWATER SMART COMMUNITY



Situated 14 kilometres northwest of the Adelaide CBD, Fletcher's Slip lies within the historic district of Port Adelaide. With plans underway for open and shared space as well as commercial and residential development, the former shipping and industrial harbour is evolving into a contemporary mixed use urban area. Being a waterfront site, ensuring good stormwater quality is a key priority for Port Adelaide developments.

## STORMWATER SOLUTIONS FOR A WATERFRONT COMMUNITY

Port Adelaide's Fletcher's Slip Precinct is part of a 14-hectare site where 500 homes are planned for construction\*. To protect the community's waterfront amenity, the development proposal allocates a significant portion of the site for open space and stormwater infrastructure.

We were honoured to deliver a large SPEL Stormceptor unit and a SPEL Hydrosystem treatment train to a townhouse development within the precinct. The Stormceptor is a Stormwater Quality Improvement Device (SQID) that promotes the separation of total suspended solids, light liquids, and gross pollutants from the stormwater it retains.



Pictured (top right): A Stormceptor installation from another SPEL project. Pictured (bottom left): A Stormceptor-Hydrosystem treatment train to be installed at another project site.



The Stormceptor's design ensures that the pollutants do not become re-suspended in the captured stormwater, maintaining the treatment process even in flood and tidal zones.

Meanwhile, the SPEL Hydrosystem is a German-engineered specialist stormwater filter. The Hydrosystem uses an up-flow filtration process, which allows it to remove stormwater pollutants efficiently even with a minimal head drop between the inlet and the outlet. This feature makes the Hydrosystem a suitable stormwater treatment solution for relatively shallow sites that experience heavy traffic and pollution.

\*Source: Renewal SA, Government of South Australia. Fletcher's Slip and North West. Accessed October 2021. URL: <https://ourport.com.au/precinct/fletchers-slip-north-west/>



# TEAM MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



## Q&A WITH MATTHEW SCARLETT



SPeL is excited to welcome one of our newest team members, Matthew Scarlett, who will be spearheading our operations in New Zealand. We recently caught up with Matthew for a little Q&A.

### WHEN DID YOU JOIN SPEL & WHAT'S YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

I joined SPEL in June 2021 and my title is Business Development Manager. What this means in practice is speaking to the right people in the industry to get the best possible understanding of the market and its inherent challenges and then figuring out how we can solve those challenges with tried and tested solutions from the SPEL range.

### WHAT SKILLS & QUALITIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO BECOMING A VALUABLE MEMBER OF THE STORMWATER INDUSTRY?

Curiosity, asking the right questions from the right people, a thirst for knowledge, a level of technical ability and enthusiasm for the industry.

### WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE SPEL?

I worked at an industrial pump company for 20 years selling pumps for pumping anything from sulphuric acid to blood to sewage to tallow. It was quite a technical role which I really enjoyed.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

I can actually make a difference to the environment by reducing pollution in stormwater with our innovative treatment solutions. I love the fact that I can get a win/win outcome where the engineers get flexibility in design and the local authority gets high treatment levels with low maintenance costs.

### WHAT ARE YOUR INTERESTS OUTSIDE OF WORK?

I have a house that is 110 years old that always seems to need something doing to it! And whenever I can get away from that my time will be spent with my family or out running on a new trail somewhere.

# STORMWATER STORY

## WHY PRIORITISE STORMWATER EDUCATION?

Stormwater management is a team sport. Reducing stormwater runoff and pollution requires the collective effort of stormwater managers, local government, industries, and communities. To ensure the long-term health of our waterways, we need a holistic approach to controlling stormwater runoff—one that employs control measures to treat existing stormwater issues and one that addresses the source of runoff at the same time. Community education on stormwater impacts can play a significant role in both facets of stormwater management.

### RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS TO REDUCE STORMWATER IMPACTS

When we think about reducing stormwater volume and pollution, it is intuitive for us to think of solutions in terms of physical control measures and infrastructure. However, there is something to be said as well for investing in solutions that use social capital to ensure stormwater issues improve in the long-term. Social capital is the collective networks of relationships among the people that enable them to function better as a society. It gives community members the capacity to work together in resolving social and environmental problems.

The impacts of stormwater runoff affect everyone. However, increasing stormwater volume and pollution remains a largely invisible issue. They only become noticeable when it's too late—when streets are inundated

or when natural bodies of water are covered with algae blooms.

Educating members of the public on how their daily activities can either help improve or exacerbate stormwater issues can help stem such impacts at source. Raising communities' awareness about their role in protecting the health of local waterways can be a powerful tool for changing individual behaviours that contribute to stormwater pollution and volume.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The lion's share of responsibility for ensuring that adequate stormwater control measures (SCMs) are in place falls on the shoulders of Councils. However, given the balance of other public infrastructure that Councils need to provide, funding for SCMs can lag behind budget allocations for sewage and drinking water infrastructure. In local government areas all around Australia, this challenge is compounded by increasing urbanisation which leads to increased impervious surfaces and the subsequent rise in stormwater volume that Councils have to deal with.

Councils need to invest more in SCMs to keep up with their communities' stormwater needs. But to justify more substantial budgets for stormwater infrastructure, Councils need the support of their community members. And in order to drive support for stormwater infrastructure, people must first be aware of their importance. Therefore, educating communities about stormwater issues and control measures is essential to the long-term sustainability of stormwater infrastructure.



As members of the stormwater industry, we can help increase public awareness of stormwater issues and control measures by making our work more visible. For instance, we can deploy educational signages that point out the presence of SCMs in public spaces and explain their function. We can also collaborate with local governments and non-profit organisations in holding public outreach and educational activities.



# SQIDEP VERIFIED PRODUCTS

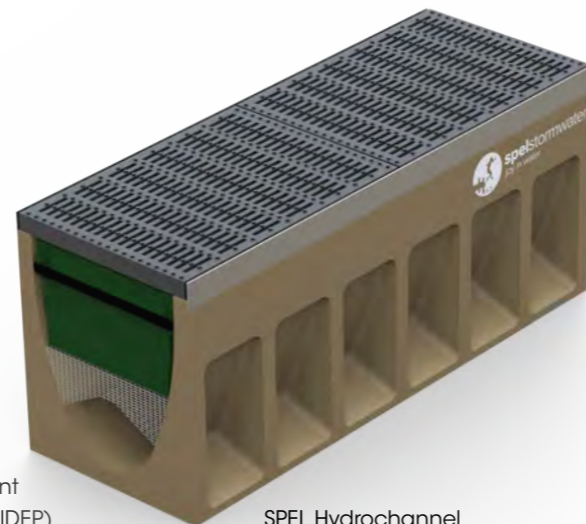


## THE IMPORTANCE OF SQIDEP TO STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

In any industry, standardisation drives innovation and adherence to best practices. It is essential in keeping businesses and professionals following best practice when it comes to delivering responsive solutions, products, and services that serve the general public. Standardisation is even more crucial in our industry, as we are responsible for putting in the stormwater management systems and devices that protect our waterways from pollution and degradation.

It is imperative that these systems and technologies are monitored and evaluated for performance

according to a rigorous set of standards. There must be assurance that they will deliver on desired water quality outcomes, for if they fail the communities we serve may have to deal with the long-term environmental consequences. For this reason, standards and verification processes like the Stormwater Quality Improvement Device Evaluation Protocol (SQIDEP) are critical to the business of stormwater management.



SPEL Hydrochannel



SPELBasin



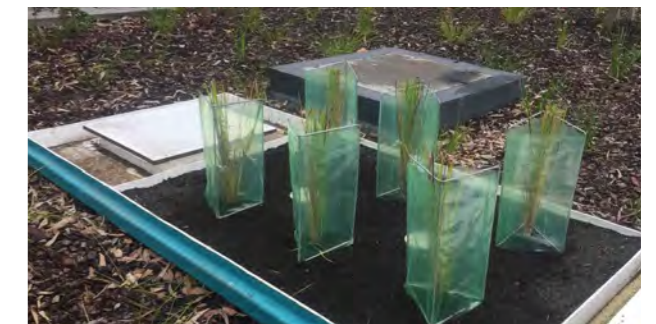
## HOW DOES SQIDEP WORK?

SQIDEP is an independent evaluation process for stormwater treatment devices. It provides a uniform set of criteria to which treatment technologies can be field-tested, evaluated, and reported. Stormwater Australia is the custodian of SQIDEP and facilitates applications from companies seeking to validate their technology's performance through SQIDEP's rigorous criteria.

Applicants are assigned independent evaluators by SQIDEP's governance panel, which consists of seasoned stormwater professionals. Stormwater Australia ensures that the evaluators are free of any conflict of interest. The evaluators then review the applicant's technology performance claims, the body of evidence submitted to support these claims, and the quality assurance project plan for any field tests undertaken. The evaluators may require the applicant to submit further information before making their final report to the governance panel. Based on the final report, the governance panel decides whether to reject or accept the application for SQIDEP verification certification.



SPEL Hydrochannel



SPELBasin


## SQIDEP VERIFIED SPEL SOLUTIONS

Ever in support of standardisation and excellence in stormwater management, SPEL Stormwater has verified two of its proprietary technologies under SQIDEP. These technologies are the SPEL Hydrochannel and SPELBasin.

The Hydrochannel is designed to provide stormwater treatment at surface level, making the device quick and easy to install and removing the need for confined space work. Its modular design treats stormwater in two steps; first, solids and particulates are settled; second, nutrients are removed from stormwater as they are absorbed into the Hydrochannel's filter matrix.

The SPELBasin on the other hand is a modular bioretention and filtration system. Its size and treatment capacity make it ideal for stormwater applications that require high pollutant reduction in a small footprint. It can be used in a wide range of configurations and is able to accommodate variable pipe sizes or runoff directly from its built-in curb or drop inlet. The SPELBasin's versatility allows for both new development and retrofit applications.





# TROPICAL CYCLONE TASHA OVER NORTHEASTERN AUSTRALIA IN 2010

**ALTHOUGH SHORT-LIVED, TASHA WAS A DEVASTATING CYCLONE THAT EXACERBATED THE 2010-2011 QUEENSLAND FLOODS, CAUSING WIDESPREAD DAMAGE TO PROPERTY AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPACTING THOUSANDS OF LIVES**

# STORM SEASON OUTLOOK: MORE FLOODING AND CYCLONES

As Australia's climate continues to change, the chances for more extreme weather grow. According to CSIRO and other agencies, studies have proven that the frequency of severe weather such as thunderstorms, intense rains, hot weather, and flooding has significantly increased over the last 60 years. The increase in severe weather patterns creates new challenges for businesses, governments and Australian communities, ensuring their infrastructure can cope with these events.<sup>1</sup>

During the wet season in 2010 and 2011, Tropical cyclone "Tasha" made landfall between Cairns and Innisfail, forming into a tropical low. It combined with a trough during a La Niña event, flooding QLD and NSW, equivalent to the size of Germany and France combined. Over 2.5 million people were affected, 33 deaths and 78% of QLD was declared a disaster zone. The total economic cost of this event was estimated to be more than \$5 billion.<sup>2</sup>

According to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology's October 2021 forecast<sup>3</sup>, the chance of another La Niña weather event affecting northern and eastern Australia is now at 70%. This is approximately triple the average likelihood. La Niña causes the coral sea to warm, bringing more moisture into the atmosphere, more precipitation and higher flooding risk. Australia has already seen above-average rainfall this year from January 1st to September 30th, the effects from a Negative Indian Ocean Dipole. In some regions, water storage and dam levels are high.

In addition to La Niña, northeast Queensland has an increased risk of cyclone activity predicted between October 2021 and April 2022. These weather predictions are not dissimilar to the 2010 - 2011 weather patterns that caused the devastating flooding.

As predictions for our upcoming wet season become even more concerning, the question remains—are we prepared for another significant flooding event? Can our existing infrastructure cope? In the next issue of The Flow, we will look into adaptive strategies and measures implemented by communities, industry and governments to address increasing challenges of flooding and stormwater management.

<sup>1</sup>CSIRO. "Climate change in Australia". Accessed October 2021. URL: <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/environmental-impacts/climate-change/climate-change-information>

<sup>2</sup>Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry 2012. Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Final Report. Accessed October 2021. URL: <http://www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au/publications/final-report/>

<sup>3</sup>Bureau of Meteorology. "Climate Driver Update". Accessed October 2021. URL: <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/enso/>



# JOY IN WATER FEATURE

Pictured: A flyover shot of the Noosa River Oyster Bed restoration sites. Image courtesy of Noosa Integrated Catchment Association.

## THE NOOSA OYSTER ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT

We know that protecting the health of our waterways for future generations is a collective responsibility and effort. Apart from stormwater industry practitioners, there are other actors and stakeholders working tirelessly to help secure our clean water future. For this issue of The Flow, we'd like to share and celebrate the efforts of The Nature Conservancy, who are working to restore oyster beds and help raise water quality in the Noosa River.



A close-up of Noosa oysters. Image courtesy of The Nature Conservancy.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Noosa Shire Council and the Noosa community are working together with project partners to rebuild rock oyster beds in the Noosa River. Oyster beds are natural structures that filter the water and provide food-rich habitat for a diversity of fish species. To give the reader an idea of just how amazing these oysters are:

A hectare of oyster bed can filter 2.7 billion litres of seawater (equivalent to 1,080 olympic size pools) and remove 142 kg of Nitrogen and 22 kg of Phosphate per year.\* By bringing back these native shellfish reefs, the project will help to keep Noosa's much-loved estuary clean and clear and teeming with marine life.

The project's rationale for restoring rock oyster ecosystems is based on local technical assessments of the historic presence of oysters in the Noosa River. Project design and implementation are supported by a technical advisory group composed of key technical staff from government agencies, traditional owners, ecologists, and TNC's restoration experts. Furthermore, the application of shellfish ecosystem restoration methodologies in Noosa have been tried and tested and are accredited internationally by the International Society for Ecological Restoration.

### CHALLENGES AND ASSETS TO RESTORATION

One of the key challenges in getting the project up and running was getting buy-in from local stakeholders. TNC's Queensland Oceans Coordinator, Craig Bohm, shares, "a lot of work

was needed early on to explain TNC's mandate, project restoration methodology and independence from local politics. Many people were not very familiar with TNC or its extensive work in the marine restoration space, TNC being generally a quiet achiever. This created a few questions about our intent and abilities, which we have mostly overcome." Craig remarked how raising community awareness about the project and sharing information openly and honestly remains central to building local trust and support.

To promote awareness and get the public involved in the project, TNC is leading activities that the community can engage with such as shell recycling and oyster gardening. Apart from serving as engagement tools, these activities also provide the dried oyster shells and 'seeded' oyster shells placed among the rocky foundations of the oyster reefs.

Craig shares some of their key learnings in undertaking this restoration project, "Engage early and engage often. Be humble and respectful. Do not overstate the potential benefits of the project. Be sure that the core objective of the project is understood widely, and that it is understood that this objective drives the direction of the project."

Learn more about the Noosa Oyster Ecosystem Restoration Project by visiting TNC's website

[www.natureaustralia.org.au](http://www.natureaustralia.org.au)

SPEL IS A PROUD SUPPORTER OF



STORMWATER SHEPHERDS

Stormwater Shepherds are an environmental not-for-profit committed to restoring health to our waterways by stopping plastic and urban pollution at the source & for all lifeforms to enjoy clean water for future generations.

### PLEASE SUPPORT STORMWATER SHEPHERDS

Stormwater Shepherds's Zero Pollution Ambassador Shop proudly works with Australian owned companies selling Australian-made products when available.

Your kind purchase will contribute to supporting:

**Positive Action** – purchasing equipment for community clean-ups

**Sharing Knowledge** – informing and researching the latest pollution facts and its effects on all lifeforms

**Advocacy** – working with councils and governments nationwide on the importance of well-managed stormwater

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ISSUE # 4 | NOV 2021



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