

# MEDIA RELEASE

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**David J. Lennon**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Artificial Habitat Pilot Program - a Western Australian first in Canal Enhancement**

In an Australian first, a consortium of Peel regional organisations, including the Peel Region Fish Stocking and Management Association, the Peel-Harvey Catchment Council, the Water & Rivers Commission, the Department of Fisheries, Local Governments and the Peel Development Commission, are investigating innovative ways to enhance the underwater environment in the man-made canal estates of the Peel region.

Funding for the project has been provided by the Peel Development Commission, through the Regional Development Scheme, the Water and Rivers Commission and the Peel Region Fish Stocking and Management Association.

Marine consultant David Lennon, of David J Lennon & Associates, has been commissioned to make recommendations for up to 3 sites that would benefit from habitat enhancement. He has had extensive experience in this field both nationally and internationally.

"Our aim is to examine ways to maximise productivity, effectiveness and environmental diversity," said David.

David recently spent a week in the Mandurah area conducting a site assessment of the canal estates and local waterways, and meeting with local key stakeholders. He congratulated the project partners and local developers for their interest in seeking ways to enhance the environment below the waterline.

"We are witnessing the birth of the next phase of canal and coastal technology" explained David. "Developers have begun to incorporate nature reserves, bird roosts, and better stormwater management among other above ground design features, but still tend to ignore the significant potential to create and enhance habitat below the waterline."

David says that in nature the land and sea are intrinsically connected and it makes sense to incorporate this into the design.

"The project partners are absolutely committed to enhancing our living environment and are excited to be at the cutting edge of canal enhancement technology" says the Peel Development Commission's Environmental & Cultural Development Manager, Christine Steer.

One of the methods of being considered to enhance the habitat in the canal waterways is the deployment of hollow concrete dome structures of various sizes into non-navigable areas within the canals. More than 500,000 similar structures have been deployed in over 3,200 projects worldwide, but this will be the first on the West coast of Australia.

"These structures are designed to create maximum surface area to attract marine life; they are natural in appearance and blend in with the environment, they are extremely stable and have a life span of approximately 500 years in seawater." says David.

Recommendations for the canal enhancements will be delivered to the project Steering Group by June when a decision will be made on how to proceed. Implementation of this trial process will include monitoring and evaluation of results.

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For more information please contact:

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