

Media Release

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Cockburn's Aussie first anti-erosion reef trial to double in size after federal coastal emergency response grant

Main points:

- \$600,000 grant received from the Australian Government National Emergency Management Agency's Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program
- City will use funds to double the size of its engineered offshore fringing reef trial in North Coogee.

The City of Cockburn's Australian-first engineered offshore fringing reef in North Coogee is set to double in size.

The City has received a \$600,000 grant from the Coastal and Estuarine Risk Mitigation Program (CERMP) which is part of the Australian Government's National Emergency Management Agency funded by the Emergency Response Fund.

The grant will kickstart stage two of the wave attenuation reef program, adding underwater structures that will double its size at C.Y. O'Connor Beach.

City of Cockburn Coastal Management and Planning Engineer Sabina Rahman-Horstmann said the grant would allow the City to expand its trial of the existing concrete modular fringing reef, and continue working with nature to address coastal erosion.

"The expansion will offer further protection to an extended length of popular beachfront which is an erosion hotspot that has suffered the loss of more than 50m of shoreline over the past 20 years," Ms Rahman-Horstmann said.

"The 135-module artificial reef is the first of its kind in Australia designed to reduce the wave energy that causes beach erosion. It is seen as an alternative to the construction of obtrusive conventional structures like rock walls and groynes.



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“The existing reef and the extension will be closely monitored by The University of Western Australia’s Oceans Graduate School over the next three years to assess its effectiveness.

“The reef will also provide additional habit for marine creatures and amenity for the community as it’s likely to become a popular snorkelling site.

“Our community told us during extensive consultation in 2019 that it preferred the City consider other options to protect our coast rather than traditional hard structures like rock walls and groynes.”

On 3 December, the City will partner with Ozfish Unlimited, UWA and MMA Offshore – the company that installed the C.Y. O’Connor Beach fringing reef – for the Seeds for Snapper project.

Citizen science volunteers will release waves of seagrass seeds over the reef in the hope that they will sprout and take hold in the area, creating a habitat to help support native fish to flourish in Owen Anchorage.

Ms Rahman-Horstmann said seagrass restoration in the area would stabilise the sea floor, help reduce coastal erosion and supply additional habitat and breeding grounds for marine species. The City will contribute \$5,000 towards the project.

The City plans to install the next section of reef 100m offshore around April next year.

The latest round of CERMP funding was announced by Minister for Emergency Management, Senator the Hon. Murray Watt.

The program provides \$50m to Australian coastal and estuarine communities to help address the growing cost of adapting to coastal hazards management as a result of storm surges, flooding and inundation caused by the increasing severity of weather events.

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