

Media Release

For immediate release

4 June 2014

Floating reed bed to be installed to help improve lagoon water quality

Following on from recent improvement works around the lagoon a 6x20m floating reed bed will be installed on the waters of the Wollundry Lagoon in a pilot project to help improve water quality.

Council's Plan of Management for the Wollundry Lagoon recommended the installation of 1000 m² of floating reed beds to aid in controlling nutrient accumulation and to help reduce algae.

"Floating reed beds remove suspended solids, nutrients, phytoplankton, and reduce biological oxygen demand which helps to improve the quality of the water in the lagoon which ultimately ends up in the Murrumbidgee River," Wagga Wagga City Council Environmental Management Team Leader Tony Phelps said.

"A locally growing Sedge, *Carex appressa*, will be planted on the \$15,000 reed bed which will be anchored to the bottom of the lagoon with sufficient freedom to float up and down with changing water levels."

The Wollundry Lagoon is a natural drainage basin for a large area of the city from the higher parts of Mount Austin, Turvey Park and central Wagga to Gurwood Street - covering an area of 539 hectares.

"Storm water from these areas carries litter and debris from the streets into the lagoon and as a result there are a number of pollutants in the lagoon including oils and fuels from cars, bird and animal faeces, organic matter from fallen leaves, nutrients from garden fertilizers and general litter," Mr Phelps explained.

"The reed beds are designed to allow the plant roots to grow deep in to the water to physically filter and remove algae-causing nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous. If this initial pilot project proves to be successful additional reed beds may be installed in the future.

"The new plants will take several months to establish within the lagoon and during that time protective bird netting will be necessary to protect the reed bed. After about six months the netting will be removed and the reed bed will add to the visual amenity of the lagoon, and provide potential habitat for water birds and turtles."

The 120m² floating reed bed will be installed on the northern side of the lagoon between Ivan Jack Drive and the Wollundry Bridge. Installation will begin on Monday 9 June.

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