



## *Media Statement*

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June 4, 2008

### **'Benwenerup: A management plan for Stokes Inlet'**

The management plan for Stokes Inlet was formally released last Friday (May 30) by Alan Longbottom, a community member of the steering group overseeing preparation of the plan.

In a ceremony at the inlet, Mr Longbottom congratulated all members of the group on their contribution to the preparation of the plan, and the co-operative nature of their work.

Mr Longbottom said this partnership work with the Department of Water (DoW) enabled the plan - '*Benwenerup: A management plan for Stokes Inlet*' - to be prepared on time and under budget, despite it being prepared over a shorter time period and with a lower budget than any estuary plan to date on the South Coast.

"I would particularly like to thank DoW's project officer Mieke Bourne, for the tremendous amount of enthusiasm and hard work over the past 18 months. Without her efforts the plan would not have been possible," Mr Longbottom said.

Department of Water's Albany program manager, Chris Gunby, said other speakers at the launch included the Esperance Regional Forum, which will now be taking the lead in implementing the plan; and South Coast NRM Inc that provided financial assistance for the plan's preparation.

Mr Gunby said the Department of Environment and Conservation assisted with the launch and updated those in attendance with details of exciting new facilities being created at the park, following the major fire and flood events over the last few years.

He said the plan is the first of its type for the inlet, and provides strategies and actions designed to protect the inlet and its high social and economic, as well as environmental, values.

The six management strategies in the plan are: improvement of inlet water quality, management of fish stocks, recommendations for access and public use, protection and enhancement of historic and Aboriginal cultural values, protection and enhancement of animal and plant values and communication and education.

There has been considerable community and agency involvement in the plan, demonstrated by the audience of over 30 people that gathered to officially celebrate its launch. Following its launch, agencies and the local community will now be busy progressing its implementation, and funding has already been provided through South Coast NRM. The plan is available at <http://portal.water.wa.gov.au/portal/page/portal/WaterManagement/Waterways/RiversEstuaries> and printed copies will be available after the launch by contacting 08) 9842 5760.

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