Friends of Perry Lakes
Conserving. Monitoring. Protecting.

Friends of Perry Lakes



Annual Report, 2025-2026

1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026

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Photo credit: Olly Berry

SECTION 1

AN OVERVIEW OF FRIENDS OF PERRY LAKES

Our Purpose

To participate in and advocate for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of the Perry Lakes and Alderbury Reserve natural environment, infrastructure and cultural heritage for the enjoyment of current and future generations

Our Objectives

- Provide support, advice and an independent voice to the Town of Cambridge (ToC) on matters relating to the conservation, restoration and enhancement of Perry Lakes.
- Provide resources (volunteer time, funding, equipment) to complement and assist ToC in the monitoring, maintenance and improvement of Perry Lakes.
- Provide an opportunity for like-minded community members to enhance their health and wellbeing through participation and social interaction on activities relating to the management of the site.
- Raise awareness of the natural and cultural significance and history of the area to residents and users so they can support its conservation.

Our History

In 2021, the Town of Cambridge published its ten year management plan and masterplan for Perry Lakes Reserve for 2021-2031. The plans were endorsed by Council in November 2021 and included an objective to 'Encourage community stewardship of the site through the establishment of a Friends of Perry Lakes group'. [1]

[1] Members of ToC Friends Groups share the common goal of conserving and protecting a natural area. The type of activities undertaken by a group depends on the level of expertise of its members, the goals of the group and the management requirements of a reserve. Further information on the purpose and management of Friends groups within the Town of Cambridge is available here.

In October and November 2021, the Town hosted two community meetings to seek interest in forming the group. Around 30 people attended each meeting and on 10 November 2021 an acting committee was appointed to consider what steps needed to be taken to formalise the group. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on 15 February 2022 where it was agreed that the group should become incorporated and voting for a new committee took place.

On February 18, 2022 the Friends of Perry Lakes became incorporated

Our Members

158
members

56
family memberships

36
individual memberships

At the end of the 2025-26 financial year we had 158 members

Comprising

- 56 family memberships
- 36 individual memberships

At the time of writing (October 2026) memberships are 126

Membership fees remain at $40 for families and $30 for individuals for the financial year



Our Strategic Plan

The strategic plan developed in 2022 remains one of our guiding documents and we have worked hard to progress those objectives over the past year.

Friends of Perry Lakes Strategic Plan

2030 Vision: *Perry Lakes is a healthy and thriving natural environment that is a sanctuary for wildlife and the community*

Strategic Priorities and Objectives: 2023-2025

Enhance Habitats for Native Species

- Participate in the control and elimination of **targeted weeds**
- Participate in **native vegetation** re-establishment
- Advocate for enhanced native vegetation planting increasing **habitat establishment** and community enjoyment

Support Healthy Water Quality and Levels

- Understand impact of **water levels** on flora and fauna and advocate to maintain levels that support wildlife year round
- Influence water level and quality **monitoring** actions and broad communication of results
- Engage the community to identify and prevent **pollution**

Enhance Fauna Populations and Diversity

- Understand current **fauna populations** and their dynamics and monitor indicators of ecosystem health
- Understand **habitat needs** of fauna occupying Perry lakes and surrounding parklands to inform advocacy efforts
- **Enable the community** to increase their knowledge, appreciation and guardianship of native fauna

Connect People

- Establish a sustainable, interesting and meaningful **membership offering**
- Establish sustainable **management committee** processes that actively engage members and utilise their skills
- Develop **effective relationships** and trust with key stakeholders including the Town of Cambridge





SECTION 2

GOVERNANCE

Management Committee

The following individuals were elected to the management committee at the 2025 AGM.

Role	Name
Chairperson	Martyn French
Deputy Chairperson	Peter Griffiths
Secretary	Caroline Mitchell
Treasurer	Cathy Wallace
Communications and Digital Co-ordinator	Brett Heil
Education and Events Co-ordinator	Nolan Penning
Science Co-ordinator	Don McFarlane
Wildlife Co-ordinator	Andrew Burbidge
Works Co-ordinator	Tony Harding

All committee position terms expire automatically at the next AGM but existing committee members may be re-elected. Committee member backgrounds, our constitution and terms of reference are available on our website (https://friendsofperrylakes.org).

Chairperson's Report

The last year has been a very productive one for Friends of Perry Lakes (FoPL), thanks in no small part to an effective management committee and the many contributions of our members. The current state of the Reserve is a testament to the efforts of our members in supporting the revegetation, weed control and lake water replenishment programs of Town of Cambridge (ToC), though much is still to be done.

Our role in providing a community voice to ToC on the management and development of Perry Lakes Reserve continues to expand. In addition to providing an independent opinion on plans for revegetation and weed control in the Reserve, committee members have provided advice on the operation of the water diversion system for the lakes and are planning our contributions to the recently established ToC Wetlands Advisory Group. In addition, we have provided a commentary on the Perry Lakes Flora Survey 2025-2026 and the Galup and Perry Lakes Reserve Fauna Survey 2025 commissioned by ToC.

Education about the natural environment in the Reserve for FoPL members and local community has been a cornerstone of our activities since the formation of FoPL and there have been exciting developments during the last year. At the last AGM, a new committee position was created to support the development of a citizen science program. This has progressed well, as will be outlined by Don McFarlane in his report. Major improvements in our digital technology platforms, including a new website, are in progress and will facilitate citizen science and education programs, as will be outlined by Brett Heil in his report. Planning for improvements to information posters is also well-underway. Finally, our relationships with Friends of Bold Park (FoBP) remain strong and have enabled us to take part in several joint educational sessions.

We were successful in obtaining grant funding to support these activities during the year:

1. $1300 as a Town of Cambridge Community Organisation Support Grant to purchase portable signs that will inform the public about FoPL activities in the Reserve, and to replace information posters on ToC notice boards.
2. $47,380 as a Community Stewardship Grant from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) to support the citizen science program, contribute to the enhancement of public education resources in the Reserve and substantially improve the digital information systems that are required to support these and other FoPL activities.

The committee is pursuing registration of FoPL as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), as well as applying for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with the ATO so that tax-deductible donations can be received. We have obtained advice from committee members of FoBP, who have recently undertaken these procedures. Changes to the constitution will be needed to obtain DGR status and a subcommittee has been established to review the constitution. A special general meeting will be held next year for members to consider and approve the amended constitution.

Finally, Nolan Penning will leave the Committee after this AGM and I would like to acknowledge the many contributions that he has made to the Committee over several years, including the roles of Secretary and Education and Events Co-ordinator. Thankfully, he will continue to assist Tony Harding in leadership of the Works team.

Martyn French
Chair

SECTION 3

FINANCES

Treasurer's Report

Income for 2025/26

Friends of Perry Lakes are in a positive financial position with money in the bank and no liabilities. Membership income is up slightly from 2024/25

$47,379.90
Grant - DPIRD

Summary of Expenses for 2025/26

Education and Events

- AGM $420
- PlantFest $420
- Expenses for talks made up the balance

Communications and Digital

- Logo Upgrade $300
- Website improvements $602

Works

- Tools and equipment $1982.00 (Asset List available on request)

A new expense for the year was bank charges for setting up a CommBiz account so that two signatories (Treasurer and Chair) could authorise payments online. This was a requirement of the bank and a necessity when the Treasurer and Chair are in different parts of the world. An Income and Expenditure Statement for the financial year is provided below.

Cathy Wallace
Treasurer

Income and Expenditure Statement (1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026)

Item	Amount ($)	Total ($)
Bank Balance 1 July 2025		**6,894.21**
30 June 2025 Qtr BAS refund	54.00	**54.00**
		6,948.21
Income		
Membership 2025/26	2,900.00	
Membership 2026/27	1,020.00	
Grant - Town of Cambridge	1,790.00	
Grant - DPIRD	47,379.90	
FoPL Shirts	389.98	
Cash Donations	1,380.00	**54,859.88**
Expenditure		
Bank Charges	5.29	
Education and Events	908.14	
Incidentals	33.77	
Grant - Town of Cambridge (refund)	489.61	
Grant - DPIRD	-	
Insurance	997.60	
Shirts	-	
Subscriptions	54.55	
Tools & Equipment	1,981.88	
Communications & Digital	902.14	**5,372.98**
		56,435.11
30 June 2026 Qtr BAS payment due	4,619.79	**4,619.79**
Bank Balance 30 June 2026		**61,054.90**
Bank Balance made up as follows:		
FoPL Funds	7,754.82	
30 June 2026 Qtr BAS payment due	4,619.79	
ToC Grant	1,300.39	
DPIRD Grant	47,379.90	**61,054.90**
Assets		
Cash at Bank	61,054.90	
Shirts	760.00	
Plant & Equipment	3,896.52	
	65,711.42	

SECTION 4

COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Deputy Chairperson's report

In May 2026, our application for a Community Stewardship Grant from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development was successful, with $47,379 (exc. GST) awarded for the 12 months commencing 1 June 2026.

The project aims to establish a long-term, community-driven monitoring programme by:

- Implementing a comprehensive ecological assessment framework.
- Creating a publicly accessible database for lake managers and the community.
- Encouraging community participation in ecological monitoring and data collection.

The grant supports two main areas of activity:

1. Upgrading our Citizen Science Initiatives – Equipment, Data Collection and Analysis

We are expanding our monitoring capabilities through the following activities:

- **Wildlife monitoring:** Acquiring equipment to monitor and quantify the diversity and abundance of native fauna in and around the two lakes, and to help identify threats posed by feral animals.
- **Water-quality monitoring:** Expanding our water sampling and analysis programme in the lakes and at their major water sources, including the Herdsman Main Drain.

Water samples are being analysed at UWA's Forensic and Analytical Chemistry Laboratory to determine nutrient concentrations in the lakes. This laboratory analysis complements our ongoing monthly monitoring of other water-quality parameters, including dissolved oxygen, pH and salinity, using our Hanna multiparameter probe.

2. Dissemination of Information and Community Engagement

This initiative focuses on communicating information about FoPL, our activities and the results of our data collection to the wider community. A major upgrade of our website is well underway, and planning has commenced on the refurbishment of the four existing signboards around the reserve, and the installation of new, highly visible and more informative signage. Community engagement sessions will complement these initiatives. The first, Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives, was held in July and was well attended and well received.

Together, these initiatives will strengthen our understanding of the ecological health of Perry Lakes, help provide early warning of environmental degradation, and support the timely implementation of preventative measures.

Peter Griffiths
Deputy Chair



Works Co-ordinator's Report

Works Planning

Collaborative planning with the Town of Cambridge was conducted throughout the year and resulted in improved management of revegetation areas, co-ordinated weed control and site preparation for planting in 2026. Regular meetings with ToC have been requested but were constrained due to the Town's lack of resources.

On-Going Weeding

84
volunteers

~125 hrs
of on-ground effort

well over
350hrs
of weeding and tidying

We ran 7 monthly Group Weeding sessions with a break in the hot months from December – March. A grand total of 84 volunteers put in ~125 hrs of on-ground effort with those ever popular sociable morning teas afterwards. A big thanks to all and to those who helped out with morning teas and brought along special cakes, biscuits and other tasties!

In addition, the weekly "Weed Warriors" as well as other enthusiastic members continued to patrol the Reserve hunting and bagging weeds. Over the year these volunteers committed well over 350hrs of weeding and tidying and have made such a difference in keeping weeds at bay.

Big thanks to all who have helped out and made the Reserve and the revegetation areas look so fantastic! Glad to report through the joint effort of ToC & FoPL, the weed load is generally under control.



Planting

4,500
native seedlings

Around
75
FoPL members and guests

around
260
hours

In June 2026, ToC provided 4,500 native seedlings, comprising ~1,100 wetland and ~3,400 dryland species for FoPL to plant.

Experience gained from previous planting ensured PlantFest26 was well organised and supported and hence very successful. Around 75 FoPL members and guests participated over 2 weekends in June with some final planting completed in July. The main planting was on the west side of West Lake with infill planting at a further 5 sites within established revegetation areas. Because planting was done across numerous sites it required our volunteers to put in around 260 hours to complete. This is an amazing effort and thanks and well done to all!

Thanks also to Cambridge Scouts who again assisted our planting in 2026 – the "Scout Infill" area between the Lakes just south of the Scout Hall is looking terrific.

Learnings from PlantFest 26 are (i) reduce the number of planting areas to make things more manageable, (ii) focus on new revegetation areas over infill sites and (iii) improve co-ordination with ToC in relation to site preparation.

Development of Revegetation Areas

Since its formation in 2021, FoPL has planted around

20,000

native plants

Since its formation in 2021, FoPL has planted around 20,000 native plants.

Visiting the Reserve now, it is clear that revegetation has broadly been very successful and has contributed greatly to the ecological enhancement, as well as the aesthetics of Perry Lakes. Planting since 2024 has adopted ideas from the Ecological Study which Natural Area Management undertook for FoPL in the manner of planting vegetation in "palettes" to somewhat mimic nature, allowing pathways between plantings and maintaining lake views. This structure is now becoming evident, particularly along the west side of West Lake where one can make out swathes of grasses, clumps of mid-level shrubs and some patches of what hopefully will become stands of banksia trees.

Feedback we receive from both FoPL members and other members of the local community is overwhelmingly positive, so again a big thanks to all our volunteers for all their efforts as we progress the ecological improvement of Perry Lakes Reserve.

Tony Harding
Works Co-ordinator

Education and Events Co-ordinator's Report

We had a few good events this year, but unfortunately we got off to a delayed start as I came back from Europe quite sick and took a while to get better and organised.

Sunday 19 April - On site morning tea

A 'walk and talk' around the lakes followed by a morning tea at "the Shed. Tony updated members on revegetation progress and Don and Brett talked about water levels and pumping progress.

Monday 25 May - Revegetation Talk

A very informative evening talk was held with about 35 members attending the Cambridge Bowling club to kick off the "PlantFest" season. There were three speakers. Firstly, Katija McNeil who talked about her family's large wheatbelt revegetation project. Tony Harding then talked about his Northumberland rewilding of family land adjacent to remnant ancient forest in a land dotted with Roman ruins. I then brought us back down to (local) ground with a talk contrasting Perry Lakes and Bold Park initiatives over the last three years.

Thursday 25 June - Joint event with FoBP - Dryandra Talk

48 People attended Bold Park Eco centre to hear Paul Brown talk about the fauna of the Dryandra. There was an opportunity to buy a copy of his new book, which provides a useful guide to the many species now only found there. The talk was promoted in the Post newspaper and approximately 30 attendees were not FoBP or FoPL members, so it was positive to see good community engagement.

Tuesday 4 August - Joint event with FoBP - Fungi Talk

Roz Hart enthralled approx 50 people with a talk on Fungi and Landcare in the Tamala Room of the Eco Centre. Roz is one of a few fungi experts in WA and concentrated on the importance of fungi in our forests and bushlands rather than showing a whole lot of pretty mushrooms. The event was again well-promoted in the Post with more attendees from the public than FoPL or FoBP. Roz sold many copies of her book so was very happy with the night.



As I am leaving my position at this AGM, I suggest the following for running talks:

It is difficult to get relevant speakers who haven't recently talked to other related groups, so joint talks with FoBP make a lot of sense. It also ensures decent numbers of attendees and FoBP are well coordinated in venue setup and catering.

It is essential to advertise in the Post newspaper, which is very supportive of community groups. This really boosted our events' attendance numbers. Asking for a $3 "donation" for members and $5 for non-members resulted in about $80 revenue after costs (speaker gift, catering).

Allowing 30 minutes for mingling and refreshments **before** talks works better than a light supper after, as people are usually keen to get home after the talk. It also gives leeway for those struggling to get to the venue after work at 6.30pm.

Nolan Penning
Education and Events Co-ordinator



Communications and Digital Co-ordinator's Report

This year we continued to improve how we communicate with members and the wider community, one step at a time. We are developing a refreshed brand and building towards a regular schedule of email newsletters, social media posts and event promotion, and each step builds on the last.

Our biggest project was the Community Stewardship Grant (CSGS25009), which has shaped much of our communications work. It funded the joint "Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives" public event with the Friends of Galup, which 70 people attended. The event covered the science of our lakes, the community's views, and the wellbeing benefits of green and blue spaces.

The grant also supports our new website, which is well advanced on a staging site with our web developer. It will give members a new experience, with much more science, data and education content. A member survey gave us useful insight into what members think and would like to see, and it is informing this work. We have also simplified our email, calendar and membership renewal processes. The new brand will launch with the website, which we expect in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Our Citizen Science Initiative has grown alongside this work. The Water Quality Group is recording data at several local sites, and the Perry Lakes Bird Squad logs sightings through the Birdly app. We are now setting up centralised data storage so that records from every group are held securely in one place and are easier to analyse and share.

PlantFest 26 was again a highlight, with around 4,800 plants going in the ground in June. Clear, timely communication beforehand helped us reach new people, and turnout on the day reflected that. Our social morning teas continue to bring members together.

I would like to thank the members who quietly support our activities: those who bring morning tea, help at events, and turn up for weeding and planting days. Our work depends on you.

As a volunteer-led organisation, we have a dedicated group and a lot to build on. In 2027, our priorities are to launch the new website and brand, settle into a reliable routine of newsletters and social media, and keep telling our story. We invite new members to join us, particularly anyone with skills in writing, photography, social media or video, to help us do even more conservation and citizen science work.

Brett Heil
Communications and Digital Co-ordinator

Wildlife Co-ordinator's Report

FoPL members continue to report sightings of Quenda and nesting Oblong Turtles. These useful observations are added to databases.

Quenda have become established in Perry Lakes Reserve and are using the areas revegetated by FoPL members for both food (it's easy to see their diggings) and shelter. Sightings of juveniles show that breeding is occurring. Quenda arrived at Perry Lakes from Bold Park, where they moved from Lake Claremont via the Cottesloe Golf Club golf course. Quenda were translocated to Lake Claremont a few years ago.

Nesting turtle numbers are low, reflecting the many years of inadequate water levels and deaths due to vehicles and foxes. Often female turtles walk long distances, often over roads into peoples' gardens or into Bold Park, trying to find a suitable nest site. They need soft, but firm, sandy soil and the lawns around the lakes are not suitable.

Some members are using BirdLife Australia's Birdata app to record waterbirds in both lakes, but we need more people making more observations to allow useful analyses. Training sessions can be arranged.

The data we have show that as the water depth in both lakes increased, more deep water birds such as blue-billed ducks and musk ducks are using the lakes. On the other hand, wading birds that need shallow water have declined in abundance. Waterbirds that utilise wetland margins are now almost absent.

Analyses of available waterbird data by habitat groups are shown in the figures below.

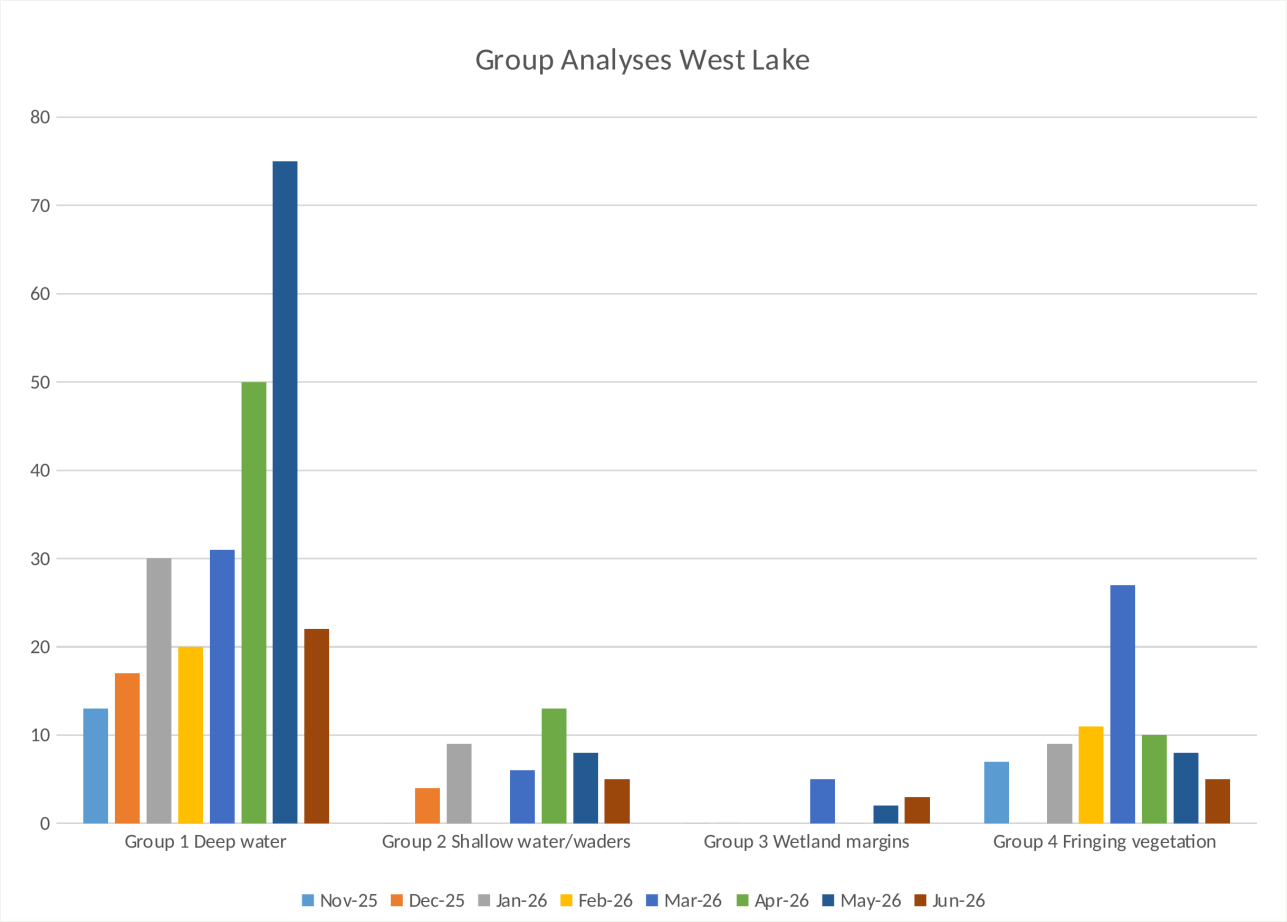
Breeding of some waterbird species has been observed over the past winter and spring. Australian wood duck ducklings have recently been seen on lawns near the edge of the lakes, but have been preyed on by ravens and other predators. It's important that dogs be kept on a lead and pet cats are not allowed to roam.

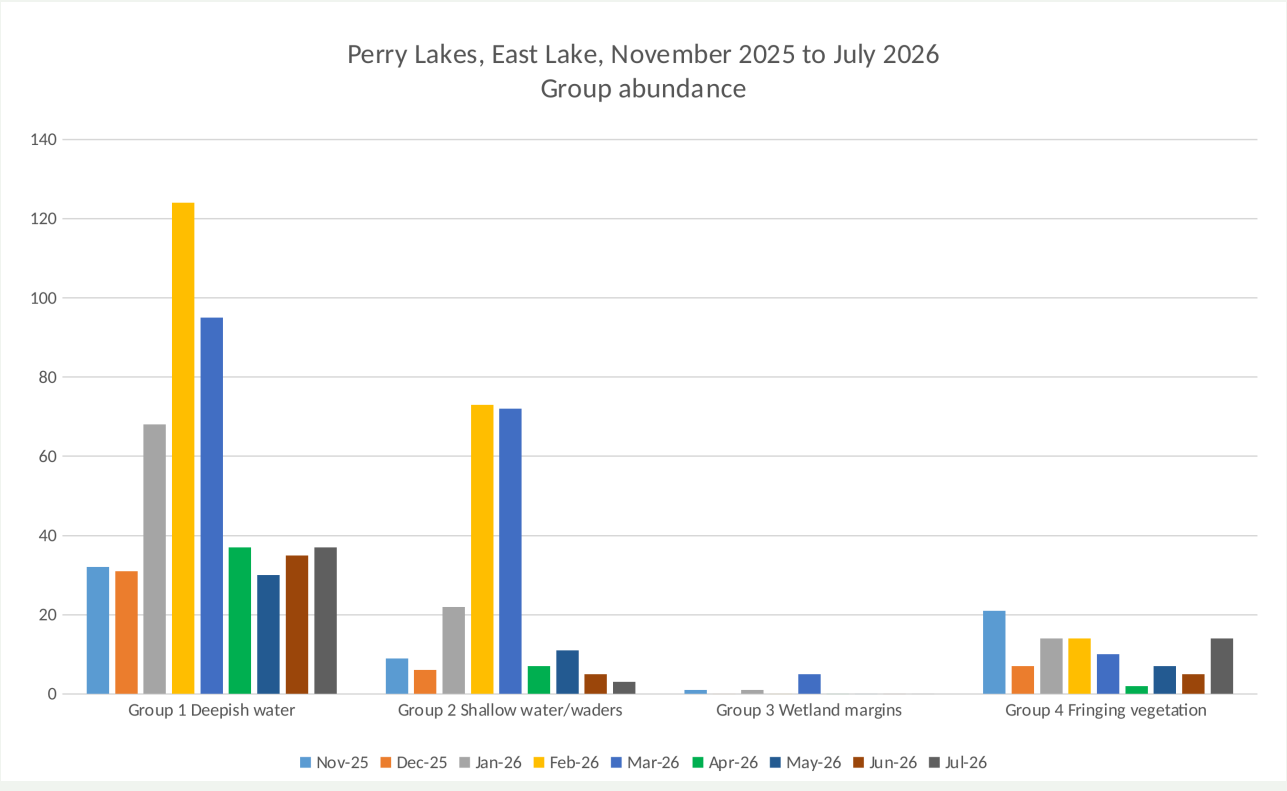
Frogs have also become scarce as they need aquatic plants in which to shelter, call and breed and most frog species do not do well in deep water with no vegetation.

The Committee is developing an optimal water depth plan to discuss with the Town of Cambridge.

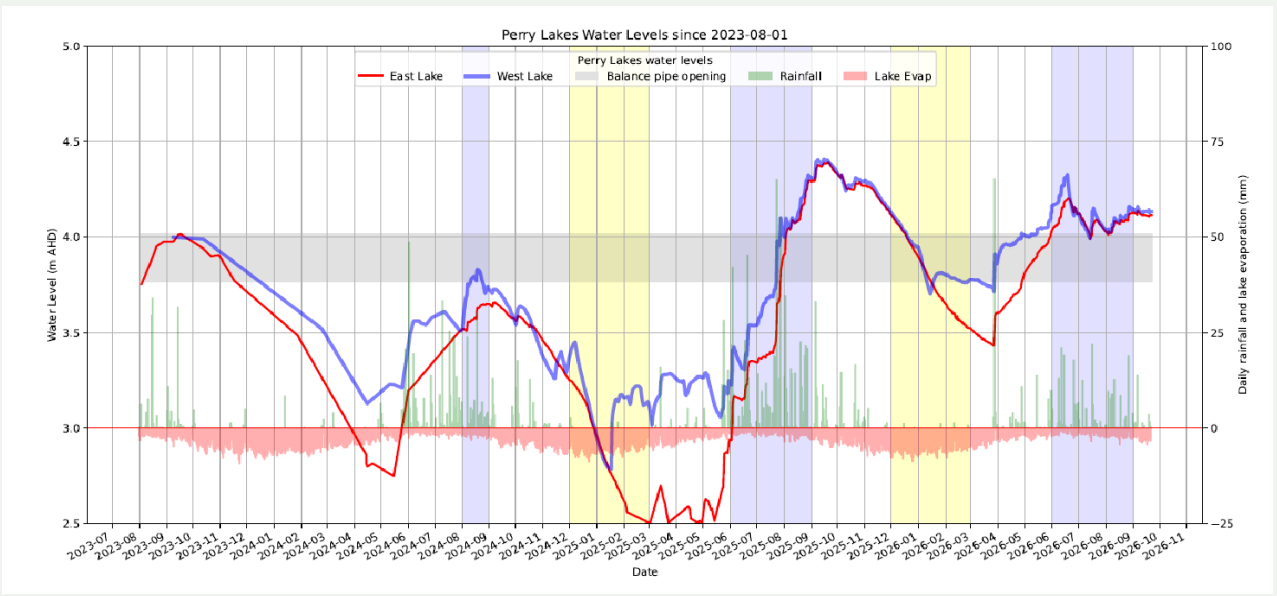
Andrew Burbidge
Wildlife Co-ordinator

wildlife@friendsofperrylakes.org


Group Analyses West Lake
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Group 1 Deep water
Group 2 Shallow water/waders
Group 3 Wetland margins
Group 4 Fringing vegetation
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26


Perry Lakes, East Lake, November 2025 to July 2026
Group abundance
140
120
100
80
60
40
20
0
Group 1 Deepish water
Group 2 Shallow water/waders
Group 3 Wetland margins
Group 4 Fringing vegetation
Nov-25
Dec-25
Jan-26
Feb-26
Mar-26
Apr-26
May-26
Jun-26
Jul-26

Science Co-ordinator's report



In June 2025, East Lake was dry and West Lake was very low (see figure below). A wet winter and pumping of water from the Herdsman Main Drain (HMD) raised levels to their highest in over 50 years. This prevented a major outbreak of Typha domingensis in West Lake, the death of Schoenoplectus in East Lake and the gradual death of flooded gums (Eucalyptus rudis) that had entered the lakes in the previous dry decades. As a result, both lakes now have larger open water areas, and the islands are becoming more visible. The rapid rise also resulted in sedges planted by FoPL volunteers being inundated and lost. After a storm in late March, pumping was more important than rainfall in raising lake levels in the early 2026 winter.

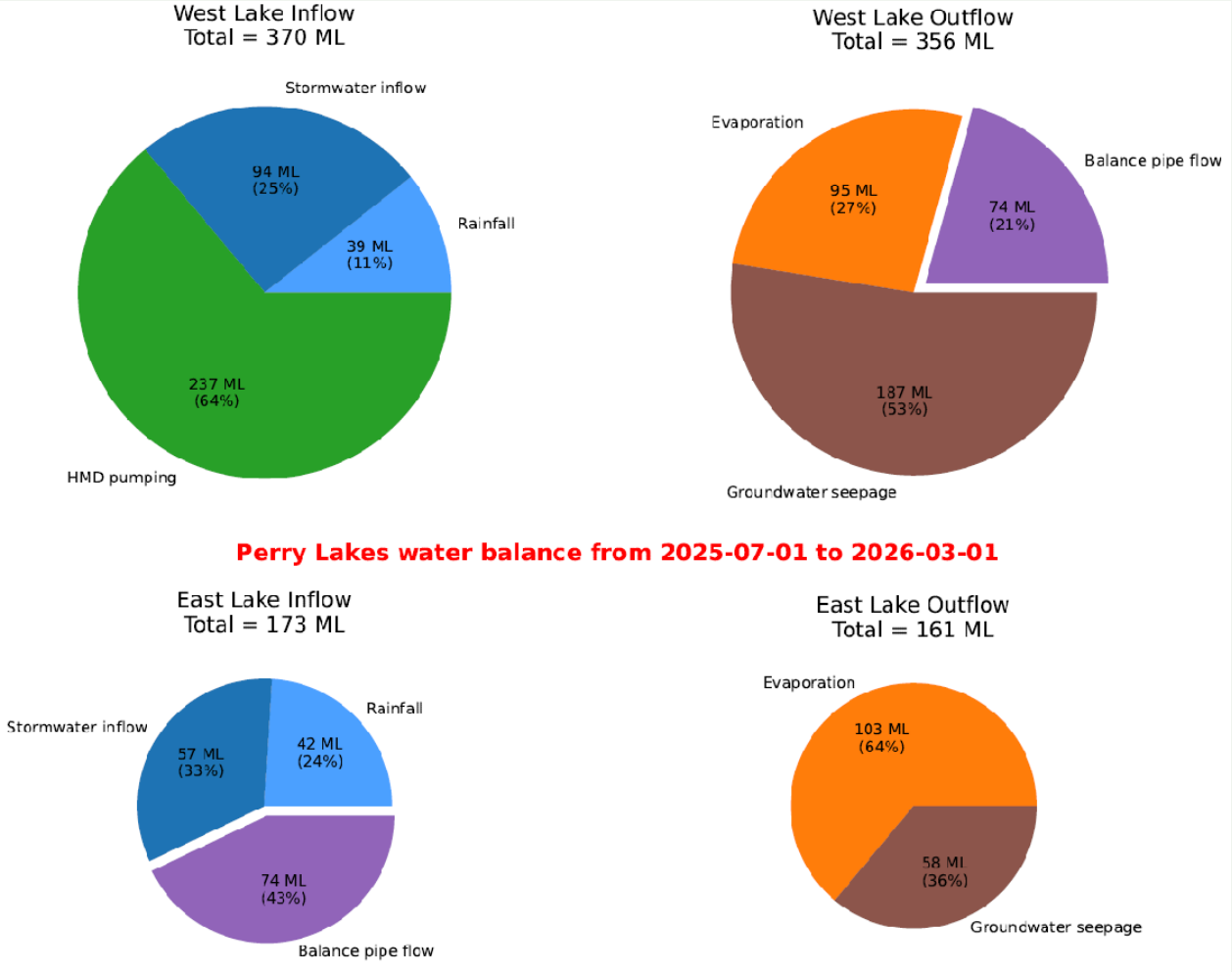
We plan to develop an optimal seasonal water level regime that manages values associated with the environment (fauna, weeds), social wellbeing (aesthetics) and economic (pumping and nutrient management costs).

Both lakes now have instruments supplied by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) that record lake levels every hour and post them on a website each day. There is also a nearby Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) weather station so the water balance of both lakes can be estimated (see figure below).

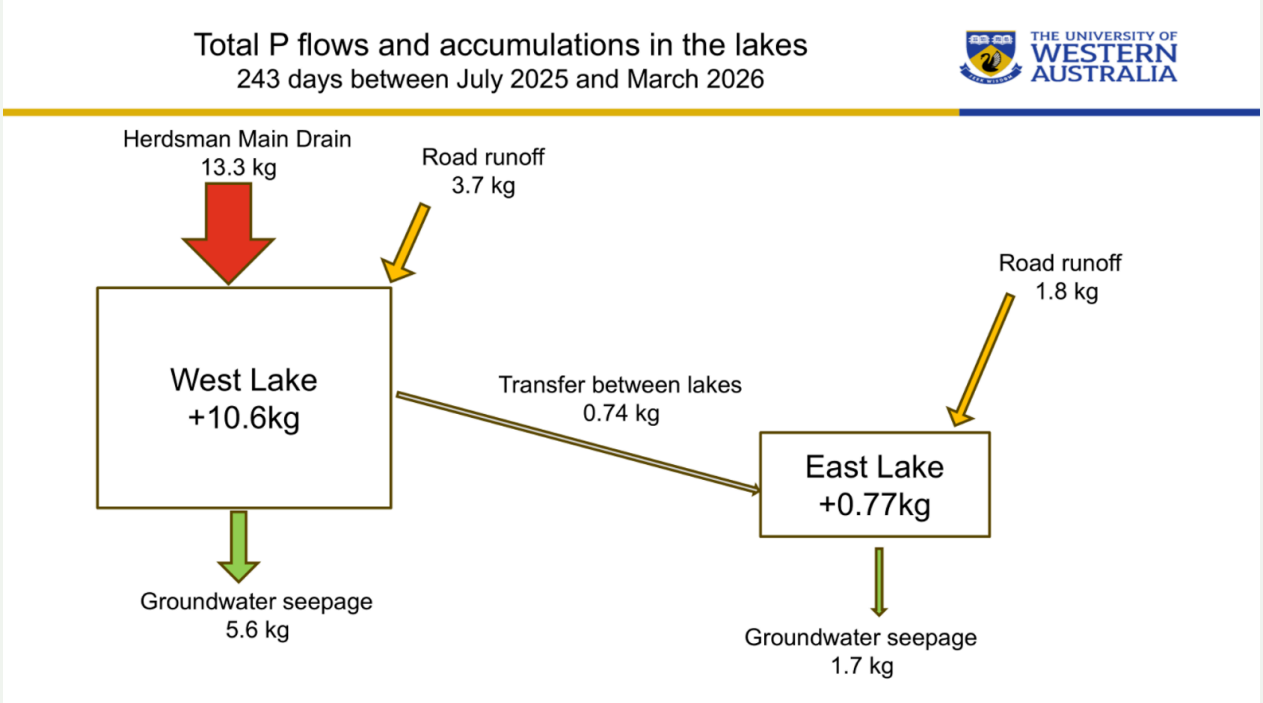
There is a large contribution of HMD water into West Lake, followed by road runoff and finally rainfall. Losses are mainly via seepage, then evaporation and flow into East Lake via a balance pipe. For East Lake the largest contribution is water transferred from West Lake, then stormwater inflows and finally direct rainfall. Losses are evaporation and groundwater seepage. This lake is less leaky than West Lake.

Citizen Scientists took abiotic water quality readings (e.g. pH, temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, oxidation reduction potential) about every five weeks using a probe provided by the Town and orthophosphate readings using an instrument purchased with FoPL funds. These measurements have shown the impact of fresh, cold water entering from roads and the addition of more saline water containing phosphorus and nitrogen from the HMD.

Groundwater levels were also taken during the year. These showed a close connection between the aquifer and the lakes (i.e. they are not perched).



For West Lake the main input of P is from the HMD, over 3 times that from roads. Seepage losses help offset inflows but are based on limited analyses. About 16 kg of P may accumulate in the lake each year. For East Lake, the transfer of P from West Lake is about half that from roads. Over 1.2 kg of P accumulates each year. Water quality and macroinvertebrate measurements indicate West Lake is more at risk of eutrophication than East Lake which coincides with the P balances estimates.



The success of a Natural Resource Management Community Stewardship Grant has greatly expanded water quality measurements in 2026/27 (results not reported here).

Don McFarlane
Science Co-ordinator

CONTACT US

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Friends of Perry Lakes
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