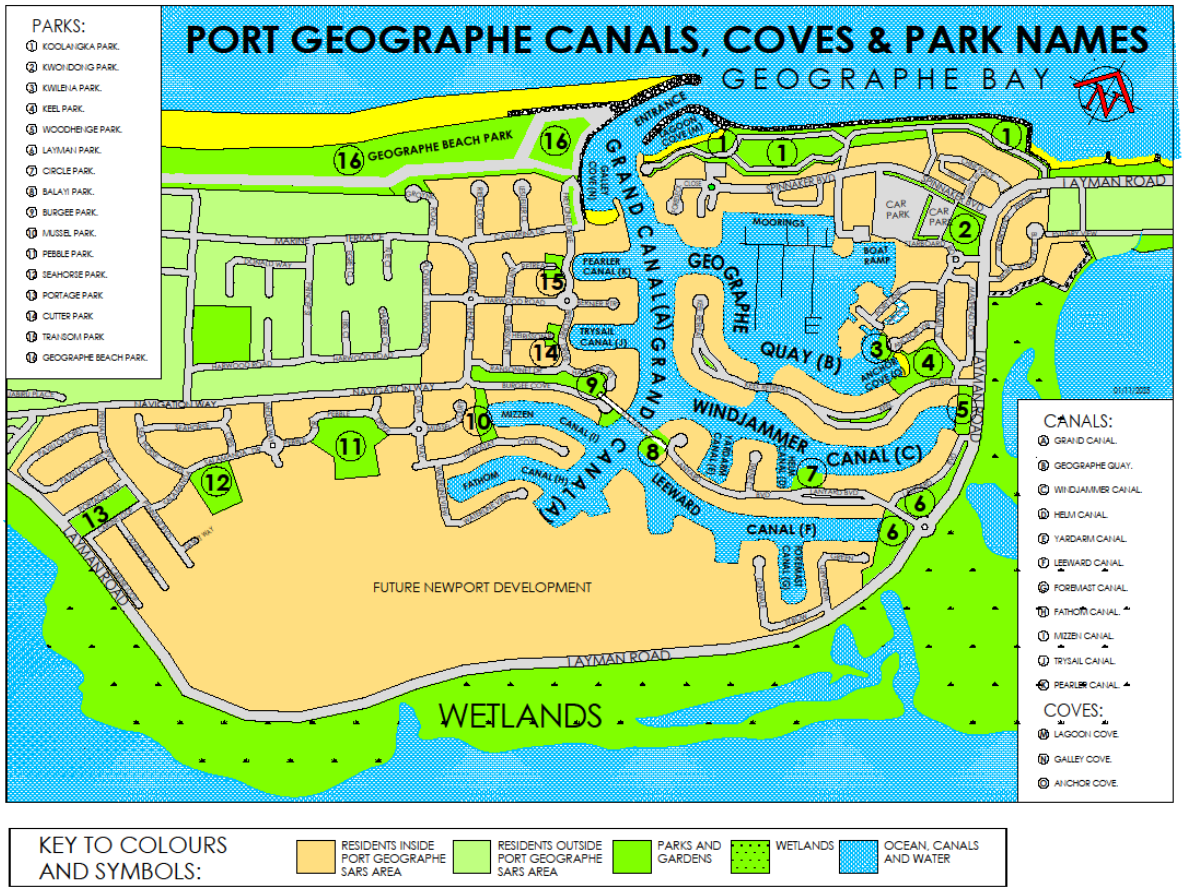
Port Geographe Landowners Association (including Residents, Wonnerup and Geographe Beach Affiliates) Newsletter. November 2026

Image by P Brinsden.



Members portal coming soon

We talked about the new PGLOA members' portal at the AGM, and it's now nearly ready to open to everyone. The main reason for a portal is so you can pay your membership online by card and set it to renew automatically each year and you never have to do a bank transfer again if you don't want to.

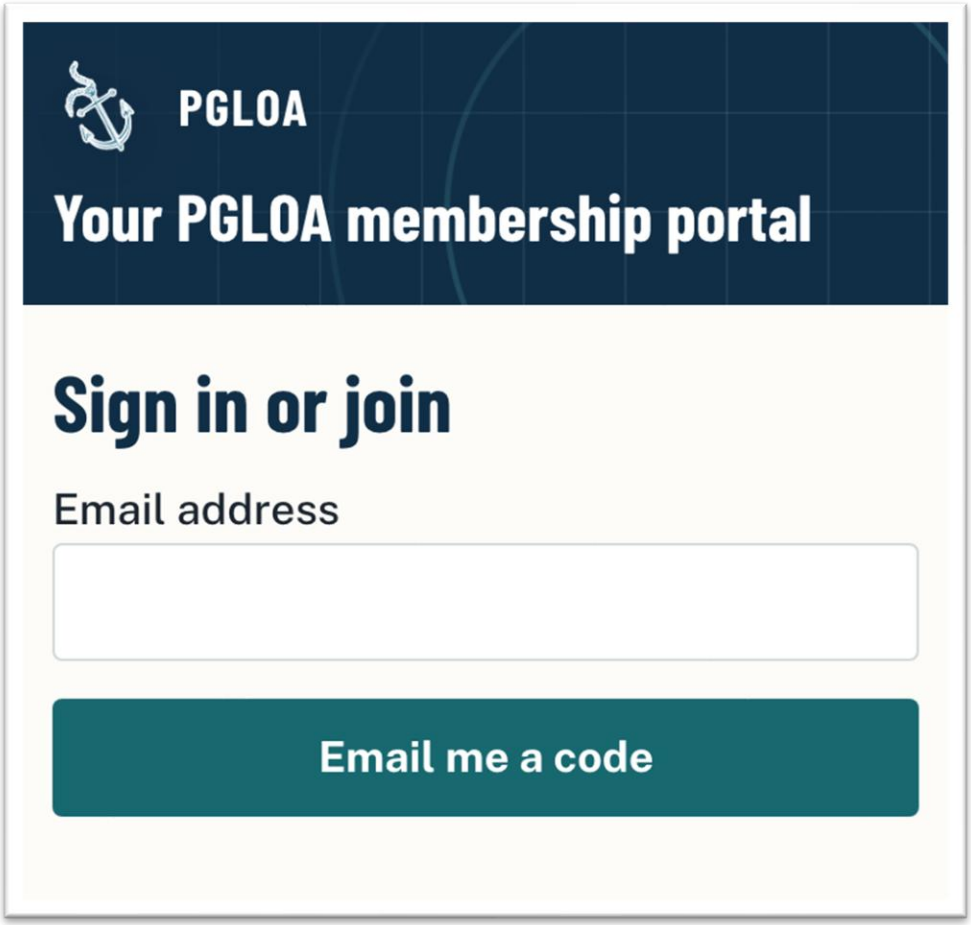


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Figure 1 Sign in to the PGLOA Members Portal

It's also where you'll be able to join if you aren't a member yet, add any other email addresses in your household to receive the newsletter and change any other PGLOA settings we may add in the future.

This will reduce the administration burden on the committee and hopefully makes it easier for new members to join.

Signing in is just your email address and a 6 digit code we email you, so there are no passwords to remember.

Most of the Committee have had a go at it over the last week and helped iron out a few kinks. When it is ready, we will send everyone an email from the PGLOA address with a link to sign in. Keep an eye out for it (it may end up in your junk or spam folder).

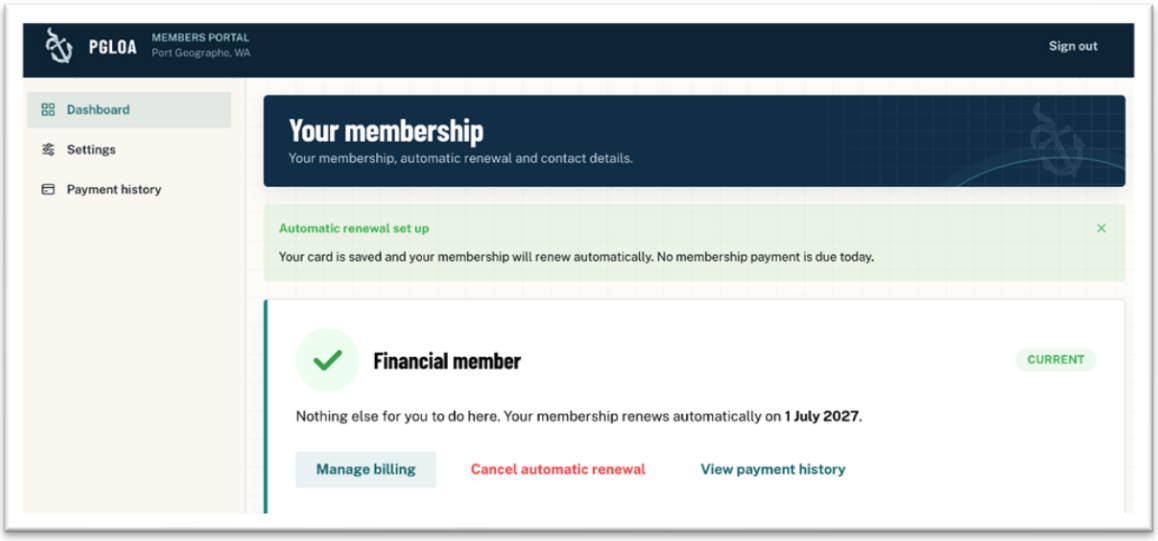

Figure 2 Members Portal.

Wonnerup Shipwreck

One of the mysteries about Wonnerup and Busselton relates to a shipwreck in the Vasse Wonnerup Estuary in a place known as the "Deadwater". Early English settlers described a shipwreck on which children sometimes played. Regrettably the wreck was broken up and valuable items such as those made of iron (in short supply in the early days of colonial settlement) were salvaged. The origin of the wreck, and what it was doing in the estuary, have never been determined. Modern Marine Archaeologists have not been able to find the remains of the wreck, so the name of the ship or its origin remains unknown.

Breakwater, Groyne or Seawall?

The terms breakwater, groyne, and seawall refer to similar things but there are differences.

The term **breakwater** refers to a marine structure, commonly made of large rocks (but can be concrete or timber). The key feature is that its purpose is to protect the entrance to a port or marina from wave action. Commonly there will be a navigation mark at the end of the structure to guide boats into the port.

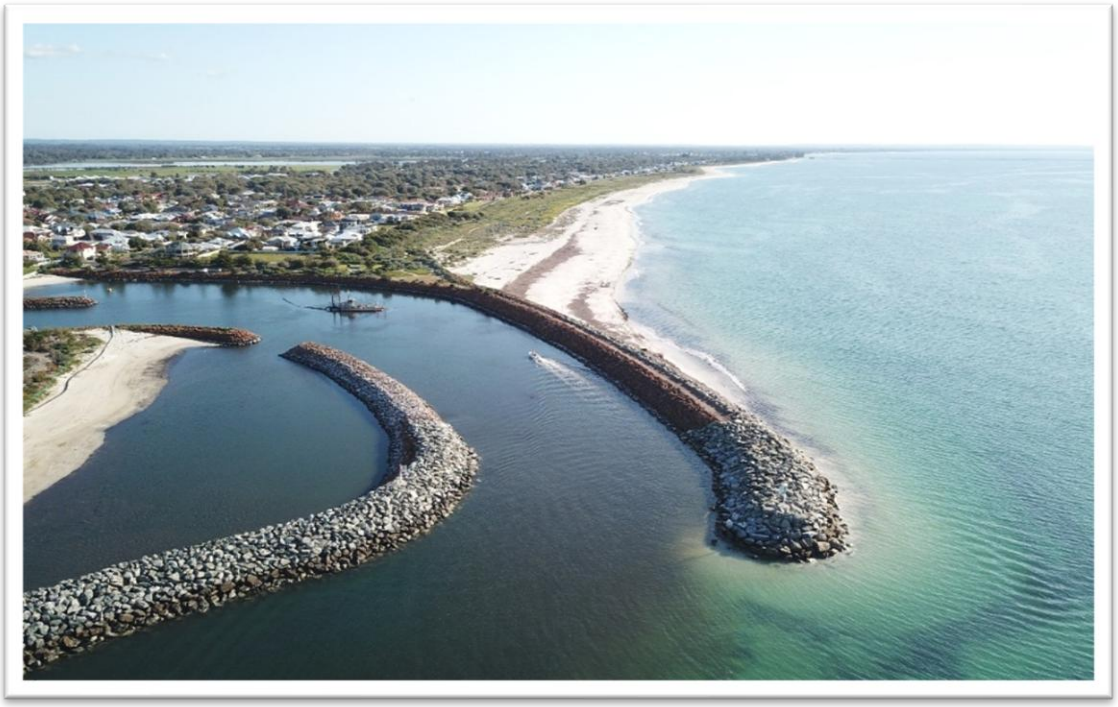

Figure 3 Breakwaters at Port Geographe. Photo by B Earl

A **groyne** may look like a breakwater but has a different purpose. A groyne typically runs at right angles to the beach, and its primary purpose is to trap sand and manage erosion. Groynes may be constructed of large rocks, timber or sandbags.



Figure 4 Rock Groyne at Wonnerup.

A seawall is a coastal defence structure built parallel to the shoreline. Its primary purpose is to protect inland areas and infrastructure such as roads, powerlines, water supply, telecoms and buildings from erosion. Seawalls may be constructed from concrete, steel (sheet piles), timber or large rocks. If the face is constructed of rock laid back at a flat angle it may also be called a revetment.

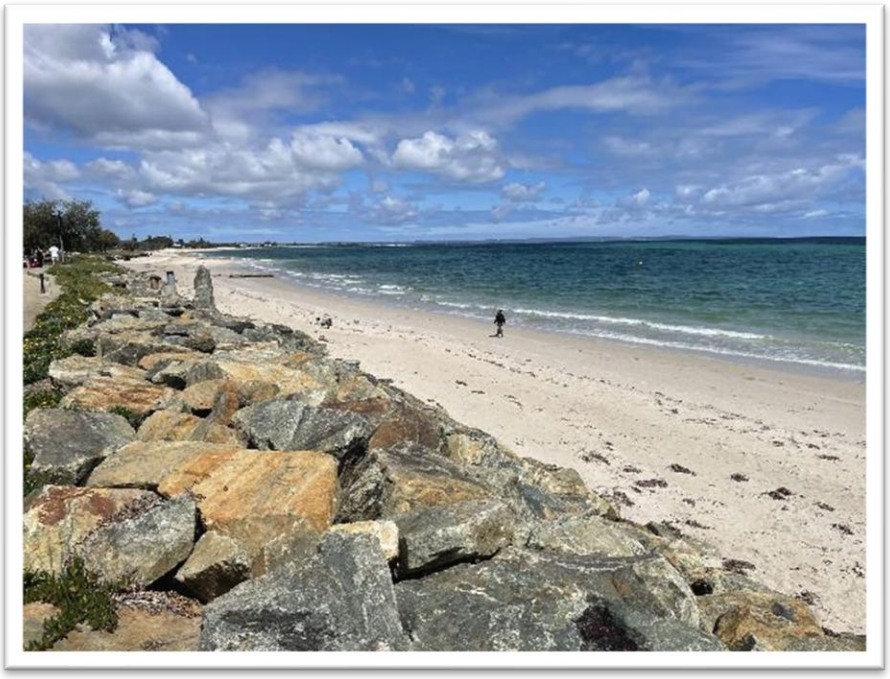

Figure 5 Rock Seawall West of the Busselton Jetty

Another coastal protection structure is a **nearshore artificial reef**. There aren't any of these yet in the City of Busselton. There are deep offshore artificial reefs as fish attractors but not nearshore coastal protection reefs. Building a nearshore artificial reef that will be effective in reducing coastal erosion is not just a matter of dumping some large rocks, old concrete culverts or car bodies offshore and hoping for the best. Not all artificial reefs have been successful in reducing coastal erosion. Very detailed design and modelling is required. Quite a bit of research on artificial reefs has been conducted at the University of Western Australia in recent years. A near shore artificial reef has been constructed in the City of Cockburn and is being monitored.

PGLOA has advocated for a study to assess whether a near shore artificial reef would be appropriate for Wonnerup. Designing and building an artificial reef for Wonnerup has some challenges:

1. Sand loss is the result of two mechanisms: A longshore current from West to East that takes sand slowly but over much of the year, and major storms that rip sand out quickly.
2. Accumulation of seagrass wrack on the beach may be increased.
3. To be effective an artificial reef must be shallow enough to cause waves to break. Major storms in Geographe Bay are commonly associated with some tidal surge. The right elevation for the top of the reef for minor storms may not be the same as for a major storm event.
4. An artificial reef will cost many millions of dollars. A detailed study (without building a reef) will likely cost more than $100,000.

Wonnerup Beach is an opportunity for an artificial reef pilot study, as increased coastal protection will be required from Wonnerup to Dunsborough as sea levels rise.

Canal Christmas Lights and Cruise



Figure 6 The Christmas Lights Competition is Almost Here.

The Port Geographe Christmas Lights Competition is back again this year and it's only a few weeks away now! Aigle Royal Group are running it and there's $20,000 in prizes up for grabs, including six $1,000 prizes just for people who've never entered before.

If you're on the canals, decorate the canal facing side of your house and enter at portgeochristmascruise.com.au before Friday 4 December. If you entered last year your old entry will already be there and you'll keep the same number.



Figure 7 Christmas Lights Cruises.

Not on the canals? You can still come and see it all. The Christmas cruises go through all the canals on lots of nights between Friday 4 December and Christmas Eve, and tickets are $21 on Eventbrite: https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2026-port-geo-christmas-cruise-tickets-2002607083696. You can also vote for your favourites from the shore by scanning the QR code on each house's sign.

The Smell from Dredge Discharge

There is sometimes a smell, a bit like rotten eggs, coming from the dredge discharge where the discharge is located onshore. That smell is predominantly Hydrogen Sulphide (H_2S).

H_2S is created when dead seagrass settles to the seabed and begins to rot. If the water is calm or the seagrass is covered with sand, anaerobic bacteria convert the sulphates in the seagrass to sulphide. When the dredge discharges sand with seagrass on the beach, as part of replenishment works, H_2S is released.

Human reaction to odours varies a lot with genetic, cultural, and health factors plus past experiences. What one person regards as a sewage like stink, for another it may evoke childhood memories of holidays at the seaside.

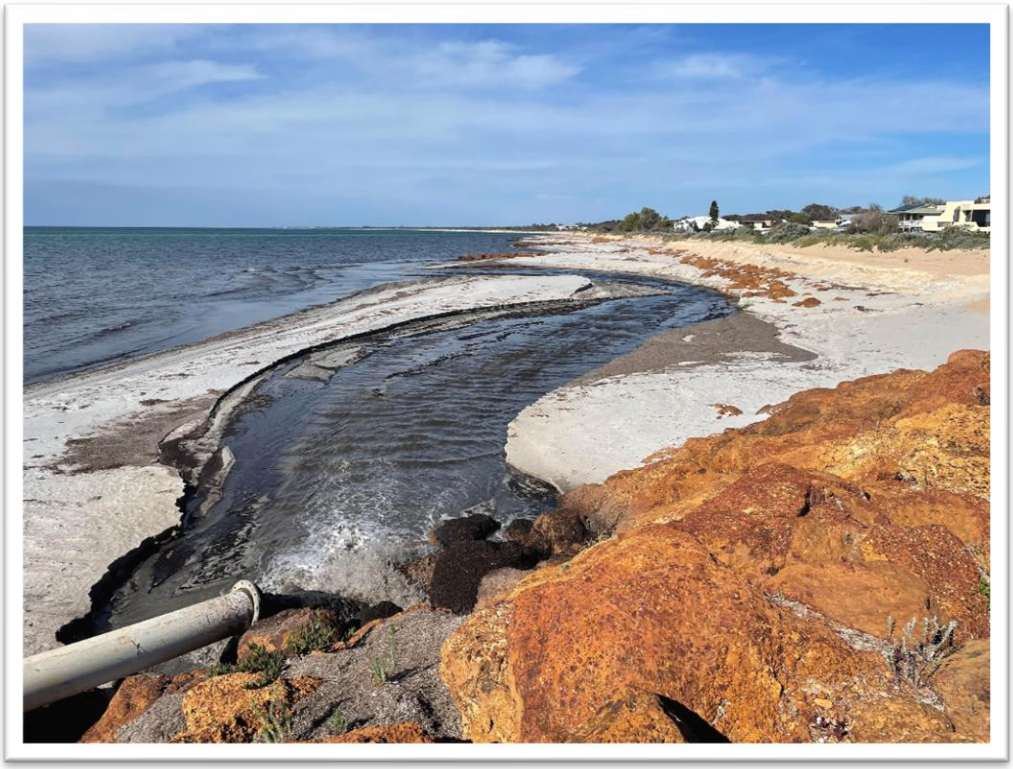

Figure 8 Dredge Discharge on Wonnerup Beach.

To be able to provide objective data on the odour, from dredge discharge, to the Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure (DTMI) and the City of Busselton, PGLOA is purchasing a Hydrogen Sulphide Detector that gives a reading in parts per million. This will also allow a comparison of measured levels with Environmental Health Limits.

Resident Access to Wonnerup Beach

Access to Wonnerup Beach West of the Captain Baudin layby on Layman Road, has been poor for much of 2026. A major storm in late May to early June, eroded the beach leaving a steep scarp that was a challenge for even the most able bodied. In October and November 2026, access was restricted by works associated with dredge disposal. I have been advised that the part of the beach affected by dredging disposal will be tidied up and works related access restrictions lifted by 17 December 2026. Physical access to the beach will likely still be poor for those with mobility issues. The City of Busselton is planning a major erosion study for Wonnerup Beach. PGLOA will request that a beach access track, compliant with Australian Standard 1428.1, be included in any future enhancement of the Wonnerup Beach seawall.



Figure 9 Access Restriction due to Works on Wonnerup Beach

PGLOA COMMITTEE 2026-27

Chair	Geoff Cocks (chair@portgeographe.com.au)
Deputy Chair	Mike Cann
Secretary	Brooke Neal
Treasurer	Pete Keynes
Committee	David Eyres
	Tanya May
	Lisa Shreeve
	Andrea Hesling
	Darren McNab
	Peter Jodrell
	Peter Maccora (ex Officio, Coasts, Waterways)
	Anton McLachlan (ex officio, Coasts)
Email	info@portgeographe.com.au

PGLOA Membership

If you are not already member and would like to join, there is an application form attached to this newsletter. Ordinary membership is available to residents, leaseholders (including leased pens at the Marina) and landowners over the age of 18, within the Port Geographe Specified Area Rate zone. Affiliate membership is available to residents and landowners (over the age of 18) in Wonnerup and Geographe. Alternatively you will be able to join via the portal when it is opened.

Application for PGLOA Membership 2026-27

Membership of the Port Geographe Landowners Association Inc. is open to all landowners, leaseholders (including pens at the Marina) and residents over 18 living within the Port Geographe development. If you pay a Specified Area Rate for Port Geographe or the property you live in is subject to the Rate as part of Council rates, then you are eligible to join. Persons from outside the Specified Area Rate zone, including Wonnerup residents and residents near Geographe Beach, are welcome to join as Affiliate members.

I/WE……

RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

……

……

POSTAL ADDRESS (if different to residential address):
……..

……

BEING THE OWNERS/RESIDENTS OF:

……

……

PORT GEOGRAPHE, 6280 (If not Port Geographe, please show suburb and postcode)
Mobile:……..

Email:…….

I/WE WISH TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP/AFFILIATE (cross out the non applicable category) MEMBERSHIP OF THE PGLOA. I HAVE PAID THE MEMBERSHIP FEE OF $30 BY BANK TRANSFER. Email this form to info@portgeographe.com.au. Once the portal opens you will be able to join and pay online,

……

(SIGNED)

……..

(DATE)

To pay by direct debit, our bank details are:

BSB 036-123

Account Number 186479.

(Please reference your name and street if paying by Electronic Funds Transfer or over the counter at the bank and email info@portgeographe.com.au when payment is made).