Why do we need nutrient management?
Reducing the over-application of agricultural fertiliser is the most cost effective long term intervention to prevent further deterioration of the Peel-Harvey and Swan Canning estuaries. Agriculture in the coastal plain catchments contributes approximately 80% of the total phosphorus inflows into the Peel-Harvey estuary and approximately 33% of the total phosphorus inflows into the Swan Canning estuary. Available research suggests that approximately 70% of agricultural land in the Peel-Harvey coastal catchment does not require additional phosphorus application to maintain farm productivity, whilst an even greater over application of phosphorus is evident in the Swan Canning coastal catchment.

Research suggests that if phosphorus was applied, based on soil testing calibrated for local soil types, then phosphorus losses from agriculture in these coastal plain catchments could be reduced by 25% with substantial savings to farmers.

Nutrient management program in the Green Growth Plan

Through the draft Green Growth Plan, it is proposed that a mandatory targeted soil testing program be implemented to reduce the over-application of fertilisers in the Peel-Harvey and Swan Canning coastal catchments as well as to improve soil productivity, agronomic yield and economic outcomes for agricultural fertiliser users. The proposed program consists of three parts:
- soil testing;
- agronomic advice and reporting; and
- a targeted extension program.

This proposed program will apply to properties greater than 40 hectares in the Peel-Harvey and Swan Canning coastal catchments where the land is used for commercial agricultural production. Landholders covered by the regulations will be required to undertake and submit a valid soil test at least once every three years and receive independent agronomic advice prior to the fertiliser application. It is proposed that participation in the program be mandatory due to the limited uptake of previous voluntary programs. It is anticipated that the State Government will cover the cost for the first round of testing and agronomic advice for affected landholders.

Benefits of the nutrient management plan
The implementation of this program will aim to:
- improve agricultural fertiliser use efficiency whilst maintaining or improving soil productivity and yield;
- improve farm economic performance through increased knowledge and awareness of good fertiliser management practice; and
- reduce harmful nutrient loss into waterways in the Swan Canning and Peel-Harvey catchment systems.
Figure 1: Spatial extent of the Peel-Harvey coastal catchment and associated land use

Legend:
- Major town (>5000)
- Town (500-5000)
- Minor town (<500)
- River
- DOW Catchment
- Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain catchment area

Land use:
- Grazing:
  - Cattle
  - Sheep
  - Mixed Grazing
  - Mixed Livestock
- Horticulture:
  - Horticultural Crops
  - Viticulture
  - Turf
  - Garden Nursery / Centre
- Cropping:
  - Crops, Hay and Silage
- Intensive animal production:
  - Intensive Animal Production
- Lifestyle:
  - Lifestyle
  - Lifestyle - Animal Keeping
  - Recreation - Golf and Horse Sports

Map showing the spatial extent of the Peel-Harvey coastal catchment and associated land use with various symbols and color codes indicating different types of land use and infrastructure.
Figure 2: Spatial extent of the Swan-Canning coastal catchment and associated land use