

Soils – New Horizons

Frequently Asked Questions

DPIRD's Soils – New Horizons program is a Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping (WFNM) initiative that supports evidence-based fertiliser decision-making in high-rainfall pasture systems. This program is the latest evolution of DPIRD's WFNM efforts, building on over 15 years of experience. Soils – New Horizons expands the WFNM approach across the entire >550 mm annual rainfall zone.

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Eligibility

The program is open to **beef, dairy, and sheep grazing enterprises** with at least **40 hectares of cleared, arable land used for hay or grazing** that is in the greater than **550mm rainfall zone** outside of *Healthy Estuaries WA* catchments (Figure 1).

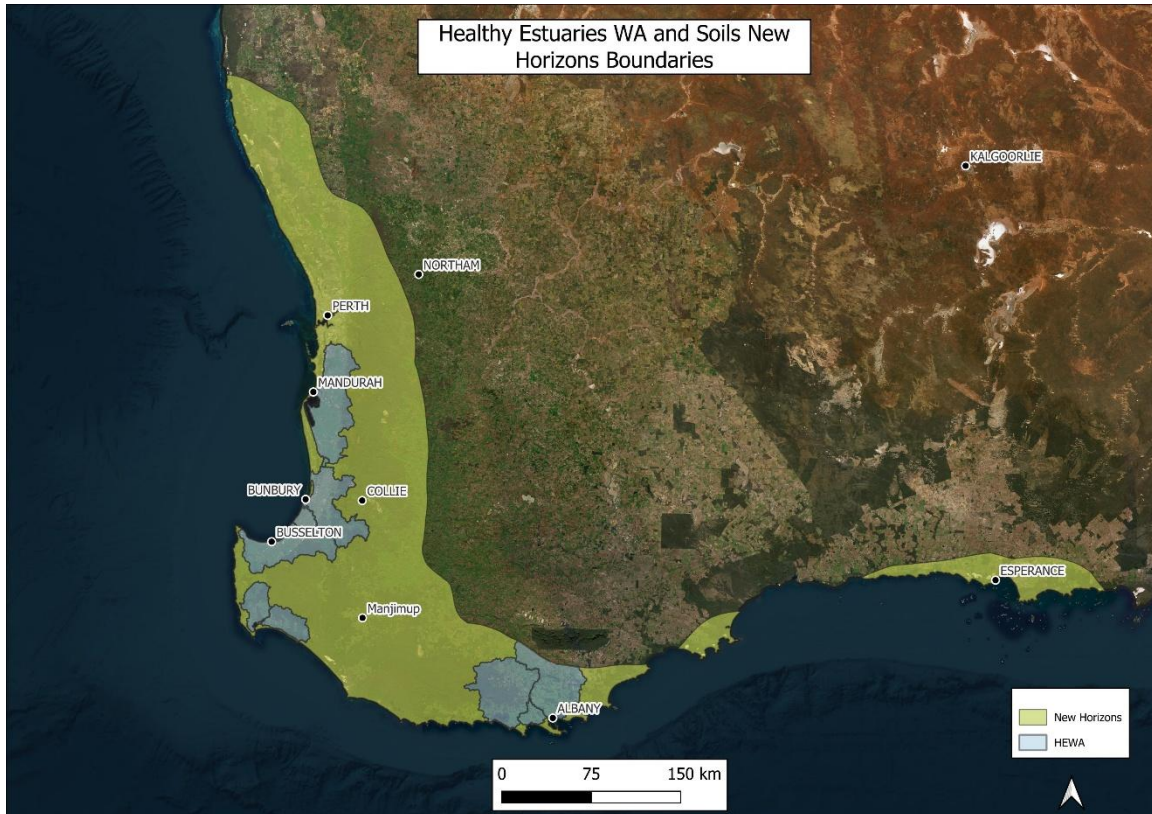


Figure 1: Boundaries for *Soils – New Horizons*

What is considered cleared, arable land?

Cleared, arable land includes:

- Cleared paddocks used for livestock pasture or hay production
- Cleared paddocks currently in crop that will go to livestock pasture or hay production in the same sampling year

Cleared, arable land **does not** include:

- Land not used for livestock pasture, such as holding yards
- Land vegetated with non-pasture species, even if grazed by livestock
- Orchards or vineyards where livestock graze
- Blue Gum plantations or other farm forestry areas where livestock graze
- Permanent cropping paddocks

Cost

How much will it cost me?

If you **have not participated** in a similar program before, the **cost to participate is \$300**.

If you have participated in a similar program since 2016, the cost is \$25 per paddock, with a minimum total cost of \$300.

As a program participant, you will have the option to purchase a soil sampling kit at a discounted price (one-time offer).

The **cost of the kit will be discounted by \$50 for each paddock** you sample and submit for analysis, **up to 12 paddocks** – a maximum discount of \$600, which covers the full cost of the kit.

When do I have to pay?

An invoice will be issued by DPIRD **after your property is sampled**.

Payment is due by **February 2027** and must be received **before you attend the workshop or receive your results**.

What would it cost to have this done commercially?

	Estimated value	Cost to new participants	Cost to previous participants
Soil sampling	\$750	\$300	\$25 per paddock for DIY sampling (minimum \$300)
Soil test analysis	\$50 per paddock		
Digitising farm map	\$400		
Nutrient mapping report	\$400		
Fertiliser workshop	\$700		
Agronomic advice	\$1000		
Total for a 15 paddock farm	At least \$4000 in value	\$300	\$375

Program Timeline

22 July 2026	Expressions of interest close.
29 July 2026	Farm map clearly identifying paddocks to be sampled due.
August 2026	Notification of EOI outcome
Sep - Nov 2026	Pre Surveys are taken.
Oct - Nov 2026	Training sessions held on DIY soil sampling techniques.
Nov 2026 - Jan 2027	Soil sampling period.
12 January 2027	Deadline for submitting soil samples.
Feb - Mar 2027	Local workshops to present your soil test results and explain how to interpret and use your nutrient reports.
March 2027	One-on-one agronomic advice sessions.

What happens if I miss the EOI cut-off date?

If you miss the EOI deadline, please still complete your details.

You will be placed on a **waitlist** and contacted for the **2027/28 sampling season**.

If you are still interested next season, **you won't need to resubmit your application** – only your updated farm map.

When should I sample my paddocks?

Soil sampling takes place during summer, from late **November 2026 to mid-January 2027**.

All samples **must be submitted to your catchment officer by 12 January 2027** to be included in the workshops. Your local catchment officer may provide a different date to account for courier time or other delays. **Late samples may not be accepted.**

When will I receive my soil test results?

Results will be presented at a workshop in **late February or early March 2027**. The workshop will guide you through interpreting your results and using your farm nutrient reports.

What happens if I need to fertilise my paddocks before sampling?

If you have applied urea, there is no issue – sampling can proceed as planned.

However, fertilisers that contain phosphorus (e.g. superphosphate), potassium (e.g. potash) and sulphur, or soil amendments like lime can affect test results. In these cases, sampling may need to be delayed.

Ideally, **avoid fertilising for at least three months before soil sampling**.

If this isn't possible, you will need to collect twice as many soil cores from fertilised paddocks, which increases the time and effort required for sampling.

Analysis

What will be analysed in my soil samples?

Your samples will undergo a standard agronomic test, which includes:

- pH (acidity)
- Phosphorus
- Potassium
- Sulfur
- Organic carbon
- Ammonium
- Nitrate
- Electrical conductivity
- Soil texture
- Phosphorus Buffering Index

Soil Sampling Process

How do I ensure I sample representatively?

You will be provided with:

- **Training** on how to collect soil samples correctly
- **Support** from DPIRD or your local catchment officer
- **Equipment** required for soil sampling

An instructional video demonstrating the sampling process is also available [here](#).

How do I access the soil sampling equipment, and what is included?

As a participant you have two options for obtaining the equipment:

- **Borrow** the sampling kit and return it once you're finished.
- **Purchase** the kit at a discounted price – [see details here](#).

The sampling kit includes:

- Soil auger
- Pogo stick sampler
- Bucket
- Pen
- Infographic card

Note: A drill and batteries are not included.

Soil sample bags will be provided for this season. If you continue sampling in future years, replacement bags can be easily sourced.



Figure 2: Soil Sampling Kit

What will I need to DIY soil sample my farm?

To collect your own soil samples, you will need:

- A **battery-operated 18V drill** with **spare charged batteries**
- A **mobile phone or tablet** with a SIM slot (no internet connection or SIM card required)
 - This will be used to record sampling locations
 - If you don't have a compatible device, one may be **loaned to you**
 - You will need to **download specific apps** before sampling
- **Time** to dedicate to soil sampling your farm. In most cases this takes less than a day to sample a farm (20-30 minutes per paddock).

Program requirements and obligations

What are my obligations in the program?

As a participant, you are expected to:

- **Submit all required details** about your nominated farm(s) by the stated deadlines.
- **Provide an accurate and legible farm map** showing:
 - Farm boundary
 - Paddock boundaries and names
 - Paddocks to be included/excluded from sampling
- **Allow access to your property** for initial sampling instruction
- **Complete both a pre- and post- program survey**
- **Attend a local workshop** to receive your results, understand them, and learn how to optimise fertiliser use
- **Use the evidence-based advice** provided by your soil test results and agronomic advice in the spirit of the program

What can I expect from involvement in the program?

As a participant, you can expect:

- Soil testing of **your chosen paddocks**
- Laboratory analysis through an **ASPAC-accredited lab**
- A **colour-coded set of nutrient maps and a tabular report** of your results
- A **local workshop** to help you interpret your results and report
- A **one-on-one session** with a DPIRD specialist or agronomist to explore your results further using the nutrient and lime calculators
- An estimated **\$4,000+ value**, for a modest financial contribution
- In most cases, a **significant reduction in fertiliser costs**
 - Past participants reported an **average saving of \$12,000** in phosphorus fertiliser
- Improved knowledge of **soil testing and nutrient requirements** on your farm
- Access to **expert guidance and sampling support**
- Access to **online nutrient and lime calculators**
- The opportunity to **connect with other local landholders** participating in the program

Other Resources

[Fit for Purpose Soil Sampling video](#)

[Nutrient calculator for high rainfall pastures](#)

[Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping webpage](#)

[Whole Farm Nutrient Mapping Facebook page](#)

Contact details

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Important Disclaimer

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