

State of the Environment Report

A State of the Environment (SoE) Report is an important management tool which aims to provide the community and Local Council with information on the condition of the environment in the local area to assist in decision-making.

Since 2007, the Councils of the Greater Central West Region of NSW (see map) have joined to produce Regional SoE Reports as part of Council reporting requirements.

NSW legislation means that Councils are not required to produce SoE reports each year, but in the year of the Council election. However, the participating Councils have decided to continue reporting on an annual basis so that they can provide a detailed SoE report that covers trends in the intervening years.

The 2020 Council elections were postponed until 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Being the year of the Council election, this SoE report responds to the requirement in the *Local Government Act 1993* that Councils measure and report on the progress of the environmental objectives or goals in their Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

This report lists Council's environmental goals, identifies appropriate indicators to measure them and briefly reports on trends in these indicators since the last Council election (2016). It also discusses any major environmental impacts on the environmental goals between 2016 and 2021.

Environmental Goals

In the Mid-Western Region CSP, there are three environmental goals under Outcome 2 – Conserving and promoting the natural beauty of our region:

1. Protect and enhance our natural environment
2. Provide total water cycle management
3. Live in a clean and environmentally sustainable way

Environmental Indicators

Over 100 indicators have been identified and used to measure the state of the environment across the Greater Central West region using data compiled over the past five years. The indicators are categorised into five themes:

1. Land
2. Biodiversity
3. Water and Waterways
4. People and Communities
5. Towards Sustainability

The table below shows how Council's Environmental Goals are measured by the Environmental Indicators detailed in the remainder of the report.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS	ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS
1. Protect and enhance our natural environment	Land, Biodiversity, People and Communities
2. Provide total water cycle management	Water and Waterways
3. Live in a clean and environmentally sustainable way	People and Communities, Towards Sustainability

Trends/Environmental Impacts

Land There was a significant increase in the number of development consents and building approvals over the past five years. The number of mining and exploration titles have decreased across the LGA with a slight decrease in the extent of mining.

Biodiversity The area of private land protected under voluntary conservation agreements steadily increased in the past five years. There was a high level of restocking of local waterways with native fish. The number of priority weeds identified across the LGA steadily rose.

Water and Waterways Both water pollution and drinking water complaints declined over the past five years. The irrigation footprint in the LGA remained the same over that period. Town water consumption declined over the past five years possibly reflecting increased water restrictions.

People and Communities The volunteering for environmental projects declined over the last five years. The number of indigenous sites identified on the AHIMS register rose steadily. Council maintained its strong management of indigenous and non-indigenous heritage in the last five years.

Towards Sustainability The amount of waste sent to landfill increased slightly over the past five years, and the community recycling rate declined. Council's greenhouse gas emissions decreased in 2020-21 and there was a significant increase in the uptake of small-scale renewable energy across the LGA.

Land

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Contamination	Contaminated land sites - Contaminated Land Register (number)	1	1	1	1	1	→
	Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (number)	31	0	0	0	0	↑
	Contaminated sites rehabilitated (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Erosion	Erosion affected land rehabilitated (ha)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Land use planning and management	Number of development consents and building approvals	281	266	439	409	688	↓
	Landuse conflict complaints (number)	36	30	39	44	49	↓
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	0			0	0	→
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles	149			627	218	↑
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)	682,000	650,000	593,000	606,000	606,000	↑

↑ improvement → no or little change ↓ worsening trend

Note - the trend is based on comparing the average of the four previous years of reporting with 2020-21

Biodiversity

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Habitat Loss	Total area in the National Parks Estate (ha)	100K	100K	101K	101K	101K	↑
	Total area of State Forests (ha)	16,841	16,841	16,841	16,841	16,841	→
	Total area protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)	5,689			8,253	6,987	↑
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	1,657	2,204	2,294	4,651	4,676	↑
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)	1,301		1,378	1,463	1,125	↓
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	73%	76%	73%	76%	77%	↑
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	100	2	1	1	10	↓
	Clearing complaints (number)	3	7	9	4	1	↑
	Roadside vegetation management plan (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)	0	15	0	0	0	↓
Threatened Species	Threatened species listed (number)				181	181	→
	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number)	2	1	1	1	0	↓
	Fish restocking activities: native species (number)	124K	55,005	39,750	47,500	88,673	↑
Priority weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	38,334	27,667	29,000	30,000	17,000	↑
	Number of declared priority weeds	95	95	96	98	104	↓
	Invasive species (listed priority or WONS) under active management	24	19	21	17	16	↓



Water and Waterways

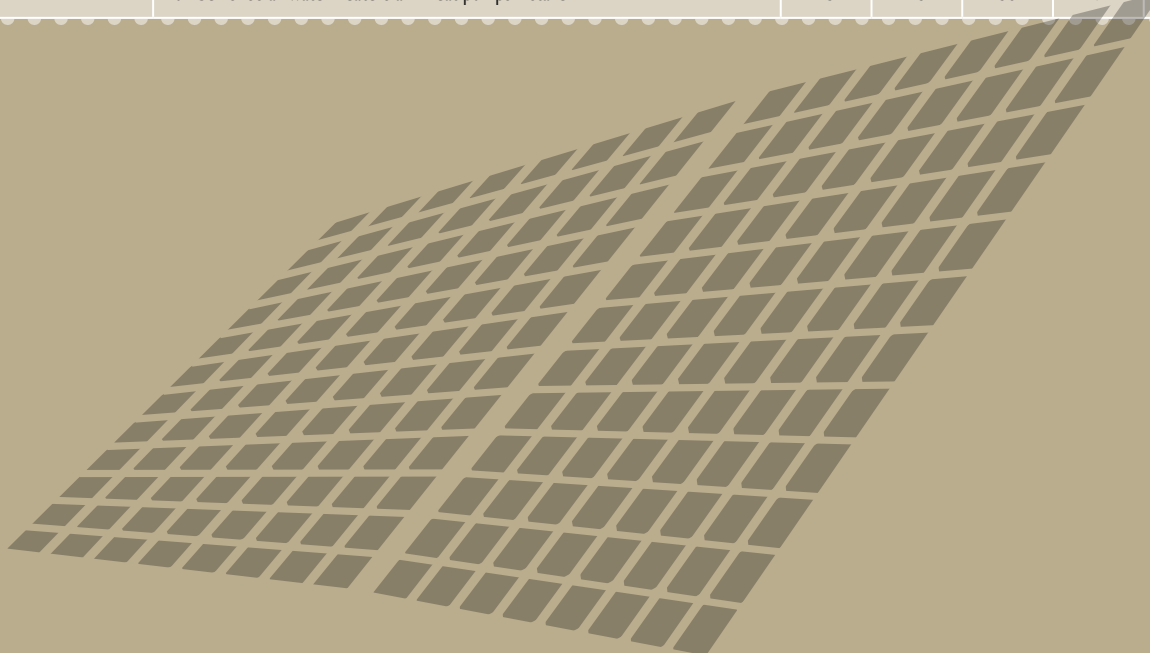
Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Surface & Ground Water Quality	Average salinity levels in selected streams (EC)	486	585	614	610	565	↑
	<i>E.coli</i> remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number)	1	2	2	2	2	↑
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	50	4	5	5	5	↓
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	14,567	12,012	10,605	24,172	17,601	↓
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	4	0	0	0	3	↓
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number)	20	5	7	5	13	↓
Stormwater Pollution	Number of gross pollutant traps installed	4	4	4	4	4	→
	Total catchment area of GPTs (ha)	118	118	118	118	118	→
	Water pollution complaints (number)	0	1		5	1	↑
Town Water Quality	Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met	77	34	26	27	18	↑
	Number of drinking water complaints	67	94	48	36	32	↑
Dam Levels	Average dam levels	48.0%	45.0%	37.0%	29.0%	30.0%	↓
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	335			284	325	↓
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	38			28	34	↓
	Actual volume extracted through surface water licences (GL)					2.6	→
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	2,307			2,583	2,579	↓
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	35			29	35	↓
	Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL)				3.7	3.5	↓
Council water consumption	Area of irrigated Council managed parks, sportsgrounds, public open space (ha)	70	71	72	72	85	↓
	Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML)	175	236	192	209	189	↑
Town water consumption	Annual metered supply (ML)	1,931	2,190	2,019	2,104	1,924	↑
	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	2,280	2,554	2,484	2,439	2,096	↑
	Average annual household mains potable water usage (kL)	192	214	198	200	162	↑
	Average level of water restrictions implemented	0	0	0	2	2	↓
	Water conservation programs (number)	0	0	0	1	0	↓

People and Communities

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Active community involvement	Environmental volunteers working on public open space (hours)	186	272	141	171	0	↓
	Number of environmental community engagement programs	6	4	4	4	0	↓
	Number of growers' markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	3	3	3	3	5	↑
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	4,328	4,566	4,856	5,097	5,243	↑
	Inclusion in DCPs & rural strategies (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Extent of liaison with Indigenous communities (self-assessed from 0 = none to 3 = High)	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	→
	Development approvals on listed Indigenous sites (number)	1	0	0	0	0	↑
	Number of indigenous heritage management actions/responses	0	0	1	0	1	↑
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (number)	14	14	15	15	15	↑
	Locally listed heritage items (number)	526	526	526	482	482	↓
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number)	1	0	1	1	1	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number)	1	2	0	2	0	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number)	41	9	29	61	24	↓

Towards Sustainability

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	22,639	21,783	19,789	20,617	23,591	↓
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	0.92	0.88	0.79	0.82	0.93	↓
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	\$375	\$383	\$500	\$517	\$517	↓
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	1,732	1,705	3,009	2,605	4,169	↑
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	6,284	4,948	13,288	2,519	22,661	↑
Reduce	Organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	3,363	2,277	3,330	3,031	4,414	↑
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	39	35	29	36	43	↑
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	3,113	4,222	1,680	3,090	2,652	↓
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	127	170	67	122	105	↓
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	25	48	8	30	0	↑
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)	1.1	0.25	0.55	0	2.0	↓
	Road upgrades (km)	83	71	55	59	80	↓
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered (ha)	710	0	0	0	7,229	↑
	Hazard reduction burns (number)	11	11	11	4	10	↑
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	1,956	1,817	1,980	1,916	1,861	↑
	Council sustainability initiatives (number)	0	1	3	1	0	↓
	Council mitigation initiatives (number)	1	0	0	0	0	↓
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)	5,867	6,315	6,100	5,938	5,749	↑
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)			9,003	6,604	4,382	↑
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	708	971	1,022	1,242	996	↑
	Proportion of Council's electrical energy demand met from council-owned renewable energy infrastructure	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.6%	↑
	Council total operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ -e/year)	24,215	24,401	25,978	27,067	23,691	↑
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kW installed)	1,216	1,889	3,219	3,710	4,971	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed	15	18	36	9	13	↓





Cygnets hatched at the new Putta Bucca Wetlands Extension in 2020. (Photo Mark Leary)



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