

State of the Environment Snapshot

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.

Changes to NSW legislation mean that Councils are no longer required to produce SoE Reports each year, but only once every four years, 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 Regional SoE report that covers trends in the intervening years.

This is a brief snapshot of data for the Mid-Western Local Government Area in 2017-18 across a range of environmental indicators as shown in the tables below. The tables provide an understanding of trends by comparing this year's data with an average of previous years. The Council snapshot report should be read in conjunction with the 2017-18 Regional SoE report.

2017-18 Highlights

- ↑ There was a large increase in the amount of roadside vegetation rehabilitated (see Case Study)
- ↑ The number of instances when drinking water guidelines were not met was at the lowest level in the past four years.
- ↓ Council's total operational greenhouse gas emissions were at their highest level in the past four years.
- ↑ The total waste entombed at primary landfills was at its lowest level in the past four years.
- ↑ Small scale renewable energy uptake was at its highest level in the past four years.



Land

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Contamination	Contaminated land sites - Contaminated Land Register (number)	1	1	1	1	→
	Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (number)	29	31	31	0	↑
	Contaminated sites rehabilitated (number)	0	0	0	0	→
Erosion	Erosion affected land rehabilitated (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
Land use planning and management	Number of development consents and building approvals	376	319	281	266	↑
	Landuse conflict complaints (number)	28	20	36	30	↓
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles	160	152	149	133	↑
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)		480K	682K	650K	↓

↑ improvement → no or little change ↓ worsening trend

Note - the trend is based on comparing the average of the previous three years of reporting with 2017-18

Biodiversity

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Habitat Loss	Total Area in the National Parks Estate (ha)	100K	100K	100K	100K	→
	Total Area of State Forests (ha)	16,837	16,827	16,841	16,841	→
	Total Area Protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)	5,689	5,689	5,689	8,253	↑
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	1,381	1,384	1,657	2,204	↑
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)		1,449	1,301	1,301	↓
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	73%	75%	75%	76%	↑
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	5	1	100	2	↓
	Roadside vegetation management plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)	0	0	0	15	↑
Threatened Species	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number)	3	1	2	1	→
	Fish restocking activities: native species (number)	146,000	125,000	124,000	55,000	↓
Noxious weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	41,000	42,332	38,334	27,667	↑
	Number of declared noxious weeds	132	132	95	95	↑
	Invasive species (listed noxious or WONS) under active management (number)	27	30	24	19	↓

Water and Waterways

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Surface & Ground Water Quality	Average salinity levels in selected streams (EC)	587	559	486	585	↓
	<i>E.coli</i> remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml)	2	0	0	0	↑
	Average Total Nitrogen in selected streams (mg/L)	0.63	0.55			
	Average Total Phosphorus in selected streams (mg/L)	0.04	0.04			
	Average Turbidity in selected streams (NTU)	12	15			
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number)	3	0	1	2	↑
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	7	0	50	4	↓
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	15,144	11,130	14,567	12,012	↑
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	0	1	4	0	↑
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number)	1	3	20	5	↑
Stormwater Pollution	Number of gross pollutant traps installed	4	4	4	4	→
	Total catchment area of GPTs (ha)	118	118	118	118	→
	Water pollution complaints (number)	0	3	0	1	→
Town Water Quality	Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met	138	149	77	34	↑
	Number of drinking water complaints	100	48	67	94	↓
Dam Levels	Average dam levels	46.5%	41.4%			
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	325	304	335		
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	38	38	38		
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	2,346	2,279	2,307		
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	33	32	35		
	Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL)	3.4	2.8			
Council water consumption	Area of irrigated Council managed parks, sportsgrounds, public open space (ha)	70	70	70	71	↓
	Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML)	138	146	175	236	↓
Town water consumption	Annual metered supply (ML)	1,945	1,949	1,931	2,190	↓
	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	2,384	2,320	2,280	2,554	↓
	Average annual household mains potable water usage (kL)	200.2	200.3	191.5	213.8	↓
	Average level of water restrictions implemented	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	→
	Water conservation programs (number)	0	0	0	0	→

Towards Sustainability

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	26,711	28,568	22,639	21,783	↑
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	0	0	0	0	→
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	1	1.18	0.92	0.88	↑
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	\$289	\$364	\$375	\$383	↓
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	52	0	1,732	1,705	↑
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	3,935	4,333	6,284	4,948	↑
Reduce	Organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	2,603	2,484	3,363	2,277	↓
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	0	14	39	35	↑
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	2,886	2,518	3,113	4,222	↑
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	120	104	127	170	↑
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	32	11	25	48	↓
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)	1	2	1	0.25	↑
	Road upgrades (km)	74	95	83	71	↑
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered (ha)	0	0	710	0	↓
	Hazard reduction burns (number)	6	19	11	11	↑
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	2,023	2,176	1,956	1,817	↑
	Council sustainability initiatives (number)	1	1	0	1	↑
	Council mitigation initiatives (number)	0	1	1	0	↓
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)	6,136	6,156	5,867	6,315	↓
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)	0	0	0	0	→
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)	10,752	5,313	7,863		
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	1,132	975	708	971	↓
	Proportion of Council's electrical energy demand met from council-owned renewable energy infrastructure	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	→
	Council total operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ -e/year)	22,132	21,803	24,215	24,401	↓
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kW installed)	995	1,264	1,216	1,889	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed	31	49	15	18	↓

People and Communities

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Active community involvement	Environmental volunteers working on public open space (hrs)		70	186	272	↑
	Number of environmental community engagement programs	5	5	6	4	↓
	Number of growers markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	3	3	3	3	→
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	4,162	4,302	4,328	4,566	↑
	Inclusion in DCPs & rural strategies (Yes or No)	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	→
	Development approvals on listed Indigenous sites (number)	6	4	1	0	↑
	Number of indigenous heritage management actions/responses	0	1	0	0	↓
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (number)	13	13	14	14	↑
	Locally listed heritage items (number)	526	526	526	526	→
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number)	1	1	1	0	↓
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number)	1	0	1	2	↓
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number)	9	6	41	9	↓

CASE STUDY: Roadside Reserve Extension Project (Mid-Western LGA)

In 2017, Mid-Western Regional Council was awarded a grant of \$60,000 from Central Tablelands Local Lands Service Targeted Ecosystems Program to assist in the enhancement of high conservation value roadside vegetation throughout the LGA.

Council developed a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan in 2011 which mapped all of the roads in the region as having high, moderate or low conservation value. This plan was used to identify areas to target for this project.

The project involved employing a casual Weeds Officer to work with one permanent Council Weed Officer to control weeds along roadsides classed as having high or moderate conservation value. Council spot sprayed along 642 km of roadside during a six month period. The casual Weeds Officer gained valuable experience and on-the-job training, and has gone on to permanent employment with Council's weeds department.

Council also advertised funding for landholders interested in undertaking planting projects adjacent to high or moderate conservation value roadsides. Council received 42 applications and selected eight landholders to plant 2,200 tubestock plants, the aim of which was to extend the roadside vegetation into private property and improve the habitat linkages.

Land adjacent to EEC and/or known threatened species habitat was highly prioritised and landholders who could provide in-kind assistance in the form of fencing, ripping and slashing were also prioritised.

Planting was done by a contractor using locally-sourced stock. A total of 15.7 ha was planted which resulted in 216 ha of improved connectivity. All landholders agreed to the continued maintenance of the plantings on their property.

Council worked with Watershed Landcare and the Mudgee Local Lands Service to engage landholders and promote the project.



Roadside extension onto private property near Windeyer.



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