State of the Environment Snapshot 2017–18

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 Bourke 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

- The average total waste generated per person fell to its lowest level in the past four years.
- Council's total operational greenhouse gas emissions in 2017-18 were at the lowest level in the past four years.
- The number of instances when drinking water guidelines not met was at their highest level in the past four years, however there were no drinking water complaints to Council.
- The uptake of small scale renewable energy was at its highest level in the past four years.
- The number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council was at its lowest 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)	0	0	0	0	→
	Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (number)	6	6	6	6	→
	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	27	26	15	21	↑
	Landuse conflict complaints (number)	1	2	1	2	↓
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	0	80	0	0	↑
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles	75	73	78	35	↑
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)		157,000	542,000	118,000	↑

↑ 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)	266,000	266,000	266,000	266,000	→
	Total Area of State Forests (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
	Total Area Protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)	100,000	100,000	100,000	181,000	↑
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	448	19	19	19	↓
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)			205,000	205,000	→
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	56%	56%	56%	56%	→
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	15	0	0	0	↓
	Roadside vegetation management plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
Threatened Species	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Fish restocking activities: native species (number)	21,438	50,455	28,940	5,000	↓
Noxious weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Number of declared noxious weeds	99	105	105	105	↓
	Invasive species (listed noxious or WONS) under active management (number)	10	11	11	11	↑

Towards Sustainability

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	2,224	2,710	2,316	1,650	↑
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	370	290	210	180	↑
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	0.87	1.04	0.91	0.67	↑
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	$265	$278	$279	$284	↓
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	0	0	0	0	→
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	883	0			
Reduce	Garden organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	491	369	348	420	↑
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	2	3	6	4	↑
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	0.3	25	308	276	↑
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	0.1	9	110	102	↑
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	21	17	19	15	↑
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)	0	0	1	0	↑
	Road upgrades (km)	101	65	56	62	↑
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
	Hazard reduction burns (number)		1		0	↑
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	359	365	340	319	↑
	Council sustainability initiatives (number)	0	5	5	5	↑
	Council mitigation initiatives (Number)	0	2	2	1	↓
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)					→
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)	0	0	0	0	→
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)	0	0	0	0	→
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	495	440	427	441	↑
	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)	3,706	4,051	3,803	3,284	↑
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kw installed) (kW)	518	458	261	565	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed	6	1	0	0	↓

Water and Waterways

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	1,947	969	1,035	1,633	↓
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	0	1	0	0	↑
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number)	1	2	3	1	↑
Stormwater Pollution	Number of gross pollutant traps installed	6	6	6	6	→
	Total catchment area of GPTs (ha)	88	88	88	88	→
	Water pollution complaints (number)	1	0	0	0	↑
Town Water Quality	Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met	2	2	2	6	↓
	Number of drinking water complaints	1	0	0	0	↑
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	119	95	99		
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	101	99	100		
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	664	667	678		
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	0.52	0.52	0.52		
	Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL)	0	0.02			
Council water consumption	Area of irrigated Council managed parks, sportsgrounds, public open space (ha)	160	160	160	160	→
	Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML)	0	0	0	0	→
Town water consumption	Annual metered supply (ML)	430	477	495	477	↓
	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	1,600	1,577	1,989	1,750	↓
	Average level of water restrictions implemented	1.0	1.0	0.0	1.0	↓
	Water conservation programs (number)	1	2	1	1	↓

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)	100	100	100	100	→
	Number of environmental community engagement programs	1	3	4	3	↑
	Number of growers markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	8	10	12	10	→
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	1,152	1,184	1,209	1,221	↑
	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)	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	→
	Development approvals on listed Indigenous sites (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Number of Indigenous heritage management actions/responses	0	0	1	2	↑
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (number)	6	6	6	6	→
	Locally listed heritage items (number)	34	34	34	34	→
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number)	1	1	1	1	→
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number)	0	0	0	1	↓
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number)		1	0	2	↑

CASE STUDY: Community-driven Asbestos Removal (Bourke LGA)

Bourke Shire Council, together with WasteAid, led a community-driven effort to remove asbestos and other dangerous waste from communities in Bourke Shire in the period July to December 2017. The project resulted in 36 cubic metres of asbestos and contaminated waste being removed from West Bourke. The project focussed on local training for Class B Asbestos Removal and use of local contractors, so that local capacity in asbestos remediation could be supported and strengthened.

The asbestos removal project developed community engagement with Nulla Nulla Local Aboriginal Land Council for asbestos awareness and safety. Asbestos risks were identified by Nulla Nulla LALC and WasteAid, where building materials from old houses have been removed, broken-down and disposed or left scattered. The weathering and further degradation of these materials causes asbestos fibres to become friable and airborne, leading to potential exposure and health risks. A community engagement campaign was built on local consultation and education to raise awareness and help identify areas contaminated with asbestos.

A total of seven blocks of land in West Bourke, approximately 130,000 square metres, were surveyed for materials suspected of containing asbestos. Fifteen of the 18 samples confirmed asbestos and a remediation plan was targeted at one block – selected to mitigate the most risk, and selected based on the available timeline and resources. This block successfully had asbestos removed, and another three blocks were partially remediated. Methods included scraping with machinery and hand-picking, with crews applying full safety protocols and controls and wearing full protective equipment. It is intended that this is the initial phase of total remediation of the area.

Guidelines from SafeWork NSW and the Australian Government Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency were applied to the project, with funding provided by the Office of Local Government. Dwayne Willoughby, Council's Manager Environmental Services, led the working group that directed the project. The working group sought outcomes to benefit Bourke Shire, and also assist in targeted asbestos remediation in Walgett Shire and Brewarrina Shire, and the establishment of a transferable, scalable and sustainable model for remediation of affected Aboriginal lands.

The project working group has produced a document outlining the Aboriginal Community-Based Asbestos Remediation model as well as an asbestos management guide for the Local Aboriginal Land Councils. It is now seeking to share its knowledge and data with heads of the Asbestos Coordination Authority in order to help reduce asbestos in other communities across NSW.

THE COUNCIL OF THE SHIRE OF BOURKE
GATEWAY TO THE FAR WEST

Bourke Shire Council
Council Office
29 Mitchell St
Bourke NSW 2840

Phone: (02) 6830 8000
www.bourke.nsw.gov.au

Mailing Address
Genreral Manager
Bourke Shire Council
PO Box 21
Bourke NSW 2840