

State of the Environment Report 2016–21



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 strategies in their Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

This report lists Council's environmental strategies, 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 strategies between 2016 and 2021.

Environmental Strategies

In the Bourke Shire CSP, there are three environmental strategies under the objective Environmental Sustainability:

1. Managing the built environment sustainably
2. Securing sustainable water and wastewater for all
3. Ensuring our heritage and culture are respected.

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 Strategies are measured by the Environmental Indicators detailed in the remainder of the report.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY	ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS
1. Managing the built environment sustainably	Land, Biodiversity, Water and Waterways, People and Communities, Towards Sustainability
2. Securing sustainable water and wastewater for all	Water and Waterways
3. Ensuring our heritage and culture are respected	People and Communities

Trends/Environmental Impacts

Land The number of development consents has remained relatively constant over the past five years. Although the number of mining titles has remained the same over the past two years, the area of mining has increased.

Biodiversity The area of land in the national park estate increased over the last five years. There was a large number of native fish restocked into the Darling River in 2020-21 reflecting improved flows.

Water and Waterways There was an increase in surface water and groundwater irrigation activity in the LGA in the past five years. Local town water consumption was relatively consistent although there was less water use during the drought.

People and Communities There was a significant increase in the number of hours spent in volunteering for environmental projects. The number of indigenous sites identified on the AHIMS register rose steadily over the past five years.

Towards Sustainability The annual amount of waste generated per person has risen over the past four years, with the lowest amount of garden organics diverted from landfill being in 2020-21. Council's greenhouse gas emissions were at their lowest level in the past three years.

Land

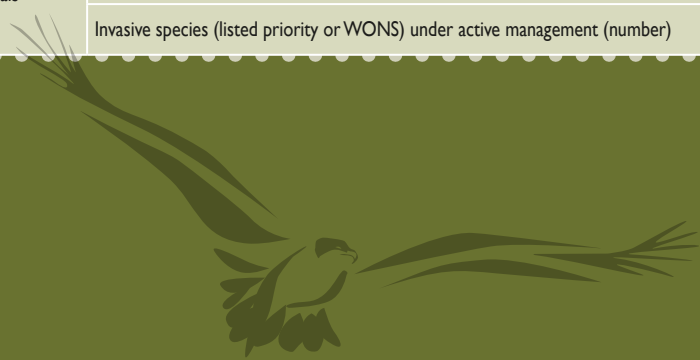
Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Contamination	Contaminated land sites - Contaminated Land Register (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (number)	6	6	6	6	6	→
	Contaminated sites rehabilitated (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Erosion	Erosion affected land rehabilitated (ha)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Land use planning and management	Number of development consents and building approvals	15	21	17	12	18	↓
	Landuse conflict complaints (number)	1	2	0	1	1	→
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles				18	18	→
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)	542,000	118,000	189,000	229,000	342,000	↓

↑ 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)	266,000	266,000	266,000	266,000	273,000	↑
	Total area of State Forests (ha)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Total area protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)				181,000	132,000	↓
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	19	19	19	368	366	↑
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)			206,000	226,000	227,000	↑
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	56%	56%	58%	58%	58%	↑
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Clearing complaints (number)	1	0	0	0	1	↓
	Roadside vegetation management plan (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)	0	0	2	0		→
Threatened Species	Threatened species listed (number)				83	82	→
	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Fish restocking activities: native species (number)	28,940	5,000	0	0	53,226	↑
Priority weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Number of declared priority weeds			85	83	91	↓
	Invasive species (listed priority or WONS) under active management (number)	11	11	9	10	10	→



Water and Waterways

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Surface & Ground Water Quality	<i>E.coli</i> remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	1,035	1,633	1,412	3,208	1,174	↑
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number)	3	1	2	0	0	↑
Stormwater Pollution	Number of gross pollutant traps installed	6	6	6	6	6	→
	Total catchment area of GPTs (ha)	88	88	88	88	88	→
	Water pollution complaints (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Town Water Quality	Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met	2	6	9	8	22	↓
	Number of drinking water complaints	0	0	4	0	0	↑
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	99			92	116	↓
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	100			99	146	↓
	Actual volume extracted through surface water licences (GL)					117	→
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	678			690	696	↓
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	0.52			3.8	3.7	↓
	Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL)				1.6	1.3	↑
Council water consumption	Area of irrigated Council managed parks, sportsgrounds, public open space (ha)	160	160	160	160	160	→
	Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML)	0			0	0	→
Town water consumption	Annual metered supply (ML)	495	477	445	345	448	↓
	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	1,989	1,750	1,156	1,204	1,204	↑
	Average annual household mains potable water usage (kl)				0.0	0.0	→
	Average level of water restrictions implemented	0.0	1.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	↑
	Water conservation programs (number)	1	1	1	2	2	↑

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)	100	100			200	↑
	Number of environmental community engagement programs	4	3	2	4	3	→
	Number of growers' markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	12	10	6	4	2	↓
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	1,209	1,221	1,337	1,359	1,378	↑
	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)				3.0	3.0	→
	Development approvals on listed Indigenous sites (number)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Number of indigenous heritage management actions/responses	1	2	1	1	1	↓
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (number)	6	6	6	6	6	→
	Locally listed heritage items (number)	34	34	34	34	34	→
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number)	1	1	1	1	1	→
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number)	0	1	0	0	0	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number)	0	2	3	3	1	↓

Towards Sustainability

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	2,316	1,650	2,021	1,763	2,197	↓
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	210	180	115	108	112	↑
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	0.91	0.67	0.81	0.72	0.88	↓
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	\$279	\$284	\$285	\$285	\$285	↓
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	0	0	0	0	0	→
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	0	0	0	0	0	→
Reduce	Organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	348	420	333	229	210	↓
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	6	4	2	3	8	↑
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	308	276	157	240	4	↓
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	110	102	60	93	2	↓
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	19	15	8	4	5	↑
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)	1	0	0	34	3	↑
	Road upgrades (km)	56	62	77	37	71	↓
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered (ha)	0	0	100	100	0	↓
	Hazard reduction burns (number)		0	1	5	15	↓
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	340	319	374	370	384	↓
	Council sustainability initiatives (number)	5	5	4	4	4	↓
	Council mitigation initiatives (number)	2	1	3	3	3	↑
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)						→
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)						→
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)						→
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	427		441	602	606	↓
	Proportion of Council's electrical energy demand met from council-owned renewable energy infrastructure				0.0%	0.0%	→
	Council total operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ -e/year)	3,803	3,284	3,450	3,607	3,391	↑
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kW installed)	261	565	246	371	477	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed			0	0.97	0	↓



CASE STUDY: Fish Restocking Program (Bourke LGA)

Bourke Shire Council partnered with the local 'Aint caught Nuffin' fishing club gaining funding through the 'dollar for dollar' native fish restocking program.

The aim of the program is to enhance recreational freshwater fishing opportunities to support local communities in stocking native fish species and to increase community and industry involvement in, and awareness of responsible stocking.

The restocking program is helping to promote the values of sustainable fishing by providing a sense of community ownership and responsibility for our native freshwater fisheries.

Fish stocking can provide many benefits such as creating new fisheries or augmenting existing ones and is recognized for its importance to the community in terms of quality recreational fishing, conservation outcomes, employment and subsequent economic benefits that have grown in response to the activity.

Through the joint program, a total of 31,818 juvenile fingerlings were released consisting of 18,182 Golden Perch and 13,636 Murray Cod. The fingerlings were placed and let go into targeted areas of the Darling River within the Bourke Local Government Area.



Release of fingerlings into the Darling River.



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