

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 2016-17 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 2016-17 Regional SoE report.

2016-17 Highlights

- ↑ The number of drinking water complaints to Council in 2016-17 were lower than the average of the three past years.
- ↑ The annual town water consumption was at its lowest level in the past four years.
- ↓ The volume of material recycled per person in 2016-17 was greater than last year but less than the average of the last three years.
- ↑ Council reduced its use of office paper to the lowest level in the past four years.
- ↓ Council's total operational greenhouse gas emissions were at the highest level in the past four years.



Land

Issue	Indicator	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Trend
Contamination	Contaminated land sites - Contaminated Land Register (Number)	1	1	1	1	→
	Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (Number)	29	29	31	31	↓
	Contaminated sites rehabilitated (Number)	0	0	0	0	→
Erosion	Erosion affected land rehabilitated (ha)	1	0	0	0	↓
Land use planning and management	Number of development consents and building approvals	431	376	343	562	↓
	Landuse conflict complaints (Number)	12	28	20	36	↓
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	19	0	0	0	↑
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles	166	160	152	149	↑
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)			480,000	682,000	↓

↑ improvement → no or little change ↓ worsening trend

Note - the trend is based on comparing the average of the previous three years of reporting with 2016-17

Biodiversity

Issue	Indicator	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Trend
Habitat Loss	Total Area in the National Parks Estate (ha)		100,000	101,000	100,000	→
	Total Area of State Forests (ha)		16,818	16,808	16,841	→
	Total Area Protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)	7,652	5,689	5,689	5,689	↓
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	1,381	1,381	1,384	1,657	↑
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)			1,449	1,301	→
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	71%	73%	75%	75%	↑
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	1	5	1	100	↑
	Roadside vegetation management plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)		0	0	0	→
Threatened Species	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (Number)	0	3	1	2	↓
	Fish restocking activities: native species (Number)	87,155	146,000	125,000	124,000	↑
Noxious weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	39,000	41,000	42,332	38,334	↑
	Number of declared noxious weeds	118	132	132	95	↑
	Invasive species (listed noxious or WONS) under active management (Number)	27	27	30	24	↓

Water and Waterways

Issue	Indicator	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Trend
Surface & Ground Water Quality	Average salinity levels in selected streams (EC)	536	587	559	486	↑
	E.coli remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml)	0	2	0	0	↑
	Average Total Nitrogen in selected streams (mg/L)	0.58	0.63	0.55		
	Average Total Phosphorus in selected streams (mg/L)	0.04	0.04	0.04		
	Average Turbidity in selected streams (NTU)	9.4	12	15		
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (Number)	2	3	0	1	↓
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	2	7	0	50	↑
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	79,379	15,144	11,130	14,567	↑
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	3	0	1	4	↓
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (Number)	3	1	3	20	↓
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	0	3	0	↑
Town Water Quality	Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met	74	138	149	77	↑
	Number of drinking water complaints	61	100	48	67	↑
Dam Levels	Average dam levels	52.8%	46.5%	41.4%		
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	325	325	304	335	↓
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	36	38	38	38	↓
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	2,239	2,346	2,279	2,307	↓
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	31	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	70	→
	Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML)	109	138	146	175	↓
	Annual metered supply (ML)	2,023	1,945	1,949	1,931	↑
Town water consumption	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	2,505	2,384	2,320	2,280	↑
	Average annual household mains potable water usage (kL)	221.0	200.2	200.3	191.5	↑
	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	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	22,811	26,711	28,568	22,639	↑
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	0	0	0	0	→
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	0.96	1.11	1.18	0.92	↑
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	\$349	\$289	\$364	\$375	↓
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	1,164	52	0	1,732	↑
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	4216	3,935	4,333	6,284	↑
Reduce	Organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	3,388	2,603	2,484	3,363	↑
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	0	0	14	39	↑
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	4,014	2,886	2,518	3,113	↓
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	168	120	104	127	↓
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	14	32	11	25	↓
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)	1	1	2	1	↑
	Road upgrades (km)	51	74	95	83	↓
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered	0	0	0	710	↑
	Hazard reduction burns	9	6	19	11	↑
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	1,984	2,023	2,176	1,956	↑
	Council sustainability initiatives (Number)	0	1	1	0	↓
	Council mitigation initiatives (Number)	0	0	1	1	↑
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)	5,248	6,136	6,156	5,867	↓
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)	0	0	0	0	→
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)	10,752	10,752	5,313	7,863	↑
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	1,020	1,132	975	708	↑
	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)	21,594	22,132	21,803	24,215	↓
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kW installed)- data collected 30 July 2017	1,022	995	1,264	1,216	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed	41	31	49	15	↓

People and Communities

Issue	Indicator	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Trend
Active community involvement	Environmental volunteers working on public open space (hrs)	150		70	186	↑
	Number of environmental community engagement programs		5	5	6	↑
	Number of growers markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	2	3	3	3	↑
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	3,613	4,162	4,302	4,328	↑
	Inclusion in DCPs & rural strategies	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)	0	6	4	1	↑
	Number of Indigenous heritage management actions/responses	4	0	1	0	↓
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (Number)	13	13	13	14	↑
	Locally listed heritage items (Number)	526	526	526	526	→
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (Number)	0	1	1	1	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (Number)	0	1	0	1	↓
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (Number)	4	9	6	41	↑

CASE STUDY: Detention Basin Enhancement Project (Mid-Western LGA)

In October 2016, Mid-Western Regional Council was awarded a grant of \$22,000 from Central Tablelands Local Land Services to assist in the restoration and enhancement of five detention basins and three drainage lines in west Mudgee.

Detention basins are used to retain coarse sediments from runoff and are typically the start of a treatment train. They prevent downstream environments from becoming smothered in sediment, by reducing flow velocity and encouraging sediments to settle out of the water column.

Well-designed detention basins and drainage reserves provide environmental benefits by filtering the water before it reaches river systems thus improving water quality, and offering important urban vegetation for native fauna particularly for bird species in terms of linkage value as well as habitat.

Earthworks were undertaken to transform bare detention basins into artificial wetland spaces. Once earthworks were completed they were planted out with wetland vegetation species. These works increase the biodiversity of the area, provide valuable migratory bird habitat by facilitating open water connections and filter the stormwater before it enters the Cudgegong River. Furthermore, they can now be used for passive recreation. Interpretive signs were installed next to two of the basins along the cycleway to educate the community about the importance of stormwater management.

Five basins and three drainage lines within the Cudgegong River catchment were rehabilitated with native vegetation by the Green Army team and during community planting days such as National Tree Day and a preschool planting event. There were 1,265 trees and shrubs planted and 2,170 wetland plants.

Planting the basins and associated drainage reserves with native vegetation provides valuable habitat to native fauna. Species planted included those known to be critical habitat for a number of threatened bird species in the area including the Regent Honeyeater and Glossy-black Cockatoo.



Detention basin restoration, west Mudgee.



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