

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. It should be noted that the planned 2020 NSW Council elections were postponed until 2021.










This is a brief snapshot of data for the Mid-Western Local Government Area in 2019-20 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.

2019-20 Highlights

-  The number of drinking water complaints to Council dropped to its lowest level in the past four years.
-  Consumption of town water fell in comparison to the last two years.
-  Council's greenhouse emissions were at their highest level in the past four years.
-  Hazardous household waste was at its lowest level in the past four years.
-  There was a large increase in the uptake of small-scale renewable energy.



Land

| Issue | Indicator | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | Trend |
|----------------------------------|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| Contamination | Contaminated land sites - Contaminated Land Register (number) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |  |
| | Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (number) | 31 | 0 | 0 | 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 | 281 | 266 | 439 | 409 |  |
| | Landuse conflict complaints (number) | 36 | 30 | 39 | 44 |  |
| | Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha) | 0 | 0 | | 0 |  |
| Minerals & Petroleum | Number of mining and exploration titles | 149 | 16 | | 627 |  |
| | Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha) | 682,000 | 650,000 | 593,000 | 606,000 |  |

 improvement  no or little change  worsening trend

Note - the trend is based on comparing the average of the previous three years of reporting with 2019-20

Biodiversity

| Issue | Indicator | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | Trend |
|----------------------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Habitat Loss | Total area in the National Parks Estate (ha) | 100K | 100K | 101K | 101K | ↑ |
| | Total area of State Forests (ha) | 16,841 | 16,841 | 16,841 | 16,841 | → |
| | Total area protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha) | 5,689 | 8,253 | 8,253 | 8,253 | ↑ |
| | Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha) | 1,657 | 2,204 | 2,294 | 4,651 | ↑ |
| | Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha) | 1,301 | | 1,378 | 1,463 | → |
| | Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation | 73% | 75% | 75% | 75% | ↑ |
| | Habitat areas revegetated (ha) | 100 | 2 | 1 | 1 | ↓ |
| | Roadside vegetation management plan (Yes/No) | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | → |
| | Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha) | 0 | 15 | 0 | 0 | ↓ |
| Threatened Species | Threatened species listed (number) | | | | 181 | → |
| | Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number) | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ↓ |
| | Fish restocking activities: native species (number) | 124,000 | 55,005 | 39,750 | 47,500 | ↓ |
| Priority weeds and feral animals | Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number) | 38,334 | 27,667 | 29,000 | 30,000 | ↓ |
| | Number of declared priority weeds | 95 | 95 | 96 | 98 | ↓ |
| | Invasive species (listed priority or WONS) under active management | 24 | 19 | 21 | 17 | ↓ |

Water and Waterways

| Issue | Indicator | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | Trend |
|------------------------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Surface & Ground Water Quality | Average salinity levels in selected streams (EC) | 486 | 585 | 614 | 610 | ↓ |
| | <i>E.coli</i> remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | → |
| Riparian | Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number) | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | ↑ |
| | Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha) | 50 | 4 | 5 | 5 | ↓ |
| Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution | Load Based Licencing Volume (kg) | 14,567 | 12,012 | 10,605 | 24,172 | ↓ |
| | Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number) | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | ↑ |
| | Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number) | 20 | 5 | 7 | 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 | 1 | | 5 | ↓ |
| Town Water Quality | Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met | 77 | 34 | 26 | 27 | ↑ |
| | Number of drinking water complaints | 67 | 94 | 48 | 36 | ↑ |
| Dam Levels | Average dam levels | 48.0% | 45.0% | 37.0% | 29.0% | ↓ |
| Water extraction | Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources | 335 | | | 284 | ↑ |
| | Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL) | 38 | | | 28 | ↑ |
| | Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources | 2,307 | | | 2,583 | ↓ |
| | Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL) | 35 | | | 29 | ↑ |
| | Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL) | | | | 3.7 | |
| Council water consumption | Area of irrigated Council managed parks, sportsgrounds, public open space (ha) | 70 | 71 | 72 | 159 | ↓ |
| | Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML) | 175 | 236 | 192 | 209 | ↓ |
| Town water consumption | Annual metered supply (ML) | 1,931 | 2,190 | 2,019 | 2,104 | ↓ |
| | Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML) | 2,280 | 2,554 | 2,484 | 2,439 | ↑ |
| | Average annual household mains potable water usage (kL) | 192 | 214 | 198 | 200 | ↑ |
| | Average level of water restrictions implemented | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | ↓ |
| | Water conservation programs (number) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | ↑ |

Towards Sustainability

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

People and Communities

| Issue | Indicator | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | Trend |
|------------------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| Active community involvement | Environmental volunteers working on public open space (hours) | 186 | 272 | 141 | 171 | ↓ |
| | Number of environmental community engagement programs | 6 | 4 | 4 | 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 | 4,328 | 4,566 | 4,856 | 5,097 | ↑ |
| | Inclusion in DCPs & rural strategies (Yes/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) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | ↑ |
| | Number of indigenous heritage management actions/responses | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | ↓ |
| Non-Indigenous Heritage | NSW Heritage Items (number) | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | ↑ |
| | Locally listed heritage items (number) | 526 | 526 | 526 | 482 | ↓ |
| | Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | ↑ |
| | Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number) | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | ↓ |
| | Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number) | 41 | 9 | 29 | 61 | ↑ |

CASE STUDY: Waste Education (Mid-Western LGA)

During 2019, Impact Environmental Education developed and delivered waste and sustainability education modules to children around Mudgee, Dubbo and Narromine. These workshops educated and empowered teachers and students in primary schools and preschools to take action regarding reducing the amount of waste they consume. The program also encompassed site tours of local waste facilities for schools.

A total of 6,036 primary school students and 215 preschool students took part in sustainability education workshops across Mid-Western Regional Council, Dubbo Regional Council and Narromine Shire Council. These students came from 31 schools, this represents 76% of schools within the three local government areas being engaged. The three preschools engaged were all from the Mid-Western Regional Council area.

There were 212 students who took part in tours of the Waste and Recycling Facilities where they were able to experience waste management beyond the bin firsthand.

The workshops were developed, administered and delivered by Impact Environmental Education trained teachers. The workshops raised awareness of local waste management processes; the facilities now utilised locally and regionally for our waste; issues involving waste recycling and disposal; and, the need to reduce waste and optimise the use of the local collection systems and recycling initiatives. Workshops engaged students with activities to enable maximum absorption of information and to inspire environmental and natural resource conservation within the community.

The workshops also engaged 250 teachers. Teachers commented that the workshop made them think about their own habits in packing lunches and some were very passionate to follow up the sessions with actions to promote the 'waste-free lunch' message.

Teachers were surveyed after the sessions. When asked if they had learnt anything from the session 87% of responders answered 'yes' and over 97% of respondents indicated that they were likely to follow-up on the workshop content.



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