



2017-18

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 Blayney 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 number of drinking water complaints received by Council was greater than last year but significantly less than the previous two years.
- ⬆️ Annual town water consumption in 2017-18 was significantly greater than in the previous three years.
- ⬆️ The average total waste generated per person in 2017-18 was considerably less than the previous two years.
- ⬆️ In 2017-18, Council's total operational greenhouse gas emissions continued to rise from previous years.
- ⬆️ The uptake of small scale renewable energy almost doubled from 2016-17.

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)	24	24	123	123	⬆️
	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	100	166	122	121	⬆️
	Landuse conflict complaints (number)	0	5	10	2	⬆️
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	0	0	0	0	➡️
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles	46	47	47	40	⬆️
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)		132,000	133,000	135,000	⬆️

⬆️ improvement ➡️ no or little change ⬆️ worsening trend

Note - the trend is based on comparing the average of the three previous 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)	0	0	0	0	→
	Total Area of State Forests (ha)	1,799	1,796	1,796	1,796	→
	Total Area Protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)		12,608	12,608	15,183	↑
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	126	126	126	472	↑
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)		245	216	216	↓
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	0%	0%	0%	0%	→
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	20	20	20	10	↓
	Roadside vegetation management plan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)	2	12	8	12	↑
Threatened Species	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number)	2	1	0	3	↑
	Fish restocking activities: native species (number)	11,000	8,000	10,000	15,000	↑
Noxious weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	64,000	64,000	66,100	36,000	↑
	Number of declared noxious weeds	125	125	95	95	↑
	Invasive species (listed noxious or WONS) under active management (number)	8	8	8	8	→

Towards Sustainability

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	4,002	6,090	5,830	4,690	↑
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	0	0	0	0	→
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	0.54	0.83	0.79	0.63	↑
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	\$310	\$370	\$400	\$412	↓
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	0	0	0	0	→
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	921	2,308	3,442	2,593	↑
Reduce	Garden organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	140	129	98	0	↓
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	0	4	10	7	↑
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	1,239	1,015	720	959	↓
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	167	138	98	129	↓
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	0	1	6	5	↓
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)			1	0	↑
	Road upgrades (km)			41	36	↑
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered (ha)		0		0	→
	Hazard reduction burns (number)	0	0	2	2	↓
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	648	417	522	439	→
	Council sustainability initiatives (number)			0	0	→
	Council mitigation initiatives (number)			0	0	→
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)	599	687	770	702	↓
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)	40	27	1,293	22	↑
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)	3	0	0	7,653	↓
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	305	344	401	460	↓
	Proportion of Council's electrical energy demand met from council-owned renewable energy infrastructure		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	→
	Council total operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ -e/year)	4,672	4,654	5,123	5,232	↓
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kw installed) (kW)	241	311	230	438	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed	9	8	4	6	↓

Water and Waterways

Issue	Indicator	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	Trend
Surface & Ground Water Quality	E.coli remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml)	0	0	194	0	↑
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number)	3	3	3	3	→
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	10	10	10	15	↑
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	0	0	78	0	↑
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	0	0	2	0	↑
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number)	0	0	0	0	→
Stormwater Pollution	Number of gross pollutant traps installed	2	2	2	2	→
	Total catchment area of GPTs (ha)	253	253	253	253	→
	Water pollution complaints (number)	0	0	0	0	→
Town Water Quality	Number of instances drinking water guidelines not met	0	0	0	0	→
	Number of drinking water complaints	40	21	5	17	↑
Dam Levels	Average dam levels	22.8%	14.2%			
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	62	46	50		
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	108	108	114		
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	702	722	737		
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	1.9	1.8	2.8		
	Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL)	0.01	0.25			
Council water consumption	Area of irrigated Council managed parks, sportsgrounds, public open space (ha)	24	24	24	24	→
	Water used by council for irrigation (including treated and untreated) (ML)	5	23	23	27	↓
Town water consumption	Annual metered supply (ML)		574		740	↓
	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	532	574	625	740	↓
	Average annual household mains potable water usage (kL)		177.7	170.2	156.1	↑
	Average level of water restrictions implemented	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	→
	Water conservation programs (number)	0	0	0	0	→

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)	0	350	450	115	↓
	Number of environmental community engagement programs	1	1	3	3	↑
	Number of growers markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	14	14	14	14	→
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	39	40	41	76	↑
	Inclusion in DCPs & rural strategies (Yes or No)	No	No	No	Yes	↑
	Extent of liaison with Indigenous communities (self-assessed from 0 = none to 3 = High)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	→
	Development approvals on listed Indigenous sites (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Number of Indigenous heritage management actions/responses	0	0	0	0	→
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (number)	13	14	15	15	→
	Locally listed heritage items (number)	350	345	342	345	→
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number)	2	2	2	6	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number)	1	0	0	0	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number)	12	9	8	6	↓

CASE STUDY: Neville Cemetery: Ecological Surveys (Blayney LGA)

Blayney Shire Council identified Neville Cemetery as an ideal location to monitor and maintain the delicate native flora and fauna of the area. Neville Cemetery is comprised of a well-developed perennial grassland dominated by native grasses and herbs.

The cemetery contains a high diversity of native forbs which have become locally rare and/or have a limited distribution across known populations.

Council engaged with stakeholders to assist in carrying out the work. Two mosaic burns were conducted, one in spring and another in the following autumn. These mosaic burns were conducted with the assistance and guidance of the Local Aboriginal Lands Council.

Following the burns, transects were identified to monitor what changes to the vegetation took place.

In the area which was subjected to a mosaic burn in spring 2015, there has been a significant improvement in infiltration capacity as the litter, perennial plant and cryptogam covers increased in depth with slight states of litter decomposition already becoming evident.

Following the second mosaic burn a higher diversity of native species was identified in both of the burnt locations. The highest diversity continued to be recorded in the 2015 spring burn area which had an increase from 30 to 38 native species per 0.04 ha plot. In the 2016 burn location, a total of 27 native species were recorded which is an increase from 15 native species recorded the previous year.

In the two unburnt control plots, the diversity of species was much lower.

Spring burning has shown positive ecological outcomes in the longer term despite the short term decrease in ecological function and integrity. Burning appears to have promoted species diversity by reducing the dense comparative ground covers, however it may also result in the grassland becoming more vulnerable to invasion by exotic species.

Following the success of the controlled mosaic burns Council is developing Shire-wide management plans for cemeteries, installing new rabbit proof fencing and fostering relationships with stakeholders to create a diverse seed bank.

To ensure the continued success of this project Council ensures that its staff always wash down and clean mowing equipment before entering a site to limit the introduction of weed species. Council has alternate mowing regimes in place for the Neville Cemetery when compared to the adjoining external cemetery areas.

Council received further funding to run the "Hollows for Habitat" program as a way to value-add to the works currently being carried out. Further planning will see interpretive signage and a mown walk way included at the Neville cemetery. All of this work has been carried out whilst the Cemetery has been active with burials and ceremonies.



Mosaic burns being conducted at Neville cemetery.



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