



2019-20

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 Blayney 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

- ↑ Consumption of town water fell to its lowest level in the past three years.
- ↓ There were the highest number of drinking water complaints to Council in the past four years.
- ↓ The number of hours that environmental volunteers worked on public open space was lower than the three previous years.
- ↑ The amount of organics collected and diverted from landfill was considerably higher than the past three years.
- ↑ Council's electricity and fuel consumption reduced significantly from last year.

Land

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Trend
Contamination	Contaminated land sites - Contaminated Land Register (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Contaminated land sites - potentially contaminated sites (number)	123	123	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	110	121	136	115	↑
	Landuse conflict complaints (number)	10	2	0	0	↑
	Loss of primary agricultural land through rezoning (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
Minerals & Petroleum	Number of mining and exploration titles		6		96	↓
	Area covered by mining and exploration titles (ha)	133,000	135,000	136,000	141,000	↓

↑ improvement → no or little change ↓ worsening trend

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

Biodiversity



Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Trend
Habitat Loss	Total area in the National Parks Estate (ha)	0	0	0	0	→
	Total area of State Forests (ha)	1,796	1,796	1,796	1,796	→
	Total area protected in Wildlife Refuges (ha)		15,183		14,533	↓
	Area protected in conservation reserves & under voluntary conservation agreements (ha)	126	472	126	296	↑
	Extent of Traveling Stock Reserves in LGA (ha)			237	245	↑
	Proportion of Council reserves that is bushland/remnant vegetation	0%	0%	0%	0%	→
	Habitat areas revegetated (ha)	20	10	1	1	↓
	Roadside vegetation management plan (Yes/No)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	→
	Roadside vegetation rehabilitated (ha)	8	12	0	0	↓
Threatened Species	State Threatened species (number)				63	
	Threatened species actions implemented (e.g. PAS, recovery plans) (number)	0	3	3	3	↑
	Fish restocking activities: native species (number)	10,000	15,000	16,000	0	↓
Priority weeds and feral animals	Fish restocking activities: non-native species (number)	66,100	36,000	65,000	56,000	↓
	Number of declared priority weeds	95	95	96	98	↓
	Invasive species (listed priority or WONS) under active management	8	8	8	8	→

Towards Sustainability

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Trend
Waste Generation	Total waste entombed at primary landfill (tonnes)	5,830	4,690	4,620	5,192	↓
	Total waste entombed at other landfills (exc recyclables) (tonnes)	0	0	0	0	→
	Average total waste generated per person (tonnes)	0.79	0.63	0.63	0.70	↓
	Average cost of waste service per residential household	\$400	\$412	\$404	\$380	↑
Hazardous/Liquid Waste	DrumMuster collections (number of drums)	0	0	0	0	→
	Household Hazardous Wastes collected (kg)	3,442	2,593	3,233	3,308	↑
Reduce	Organics collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	98	0	224	351	↑
	E-Waste collected (diverted from landfill) (tonnes)	10	7	20	8	↓
Recycle	Volume of material recycled (tonnes)	720	959	935	570	↓
	Volume of material recycled per person (kg)	98	129	127	77	↓
Littering and illegal dumping	Number of illegal waste disposal complaints to Council	6	5	4	5	→
Engineering, Infrastructure and Civil Works	New road construction (km)	1	0	0	0.2	↑
	Road upgrades (km)	41	36	36	26	↑
Risk Management	Flood management plans/ flood mapping - increase in area covered (ha)		0	0	0	→
	Hazard reduction burns (number)	2	2	0	0	↑
Climate Change Mitigation	Office paper used by Council (A4 & A3 reams)	522	439	464	490	↓
	Council sustainability initiatives (number)	0	0	0	0	→
	Council mitigation initiatives (number)	0	0	0	0	→
Council Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Annual electricity consumption for Council controlled facilities (MWh)	770	702	982	807	↑
	Annual natural gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (Gj)	1,293	22	40	2,078	↓
	Annual bottled gas consumption for Council controlled facilities (L)	0	7,653	8,206	8,210	↓
	Total fuel consumption (KL)	401	460	685	410	↑
	Proportion of Council's electrical energy demand met from council-owned renewable energy infrastructure	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	5.0%	↑
	Council total operational greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ -e/year)	5,123	5,232	5,804	6,003	↓
Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Small scale renewable energy uptake (kW installed)	230	438	723	704	↑
	Number of solar water heaters and heat pumps installed	4	6	8	4	↓

Water and Waterways

Issue	Indicator	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Trend
Surface & Ground Water Quality	<i>E.coli</i> remote from wastewater treatment plants (per 100ml)	194	0	440	112	↑
Riparian	Riparian vegetation recovery actions (number)	3	3	3	3	↔
	Riparian vegetation recovery area (ha)	10	15	5	5	↓
Industrial/ Agricultural Pollution	Load Based Licencing Volume (kg)	78	0	46	7,631	↓
	Exceedances of license discharge consent recorded (number)	2	0	0	0	↑
	Erosion & Sediment Control complaints received by Council (number)	0	0	0	1	↓
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	5	17	12	22	↓
Dam Levels	Average dam levels	84.0%	76.0%	39.0%	16.0%	↓
Water extraction	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from surface water sources	50			60	↓
	Volume of surface water permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	114			105	↑
	Number of Water Supply Work Approvals from groundwater resources	737			832	↓
	Volume of groundwater permissible for extraction under licences (GL)	2.8			2.8	↔
	Actual volume extracted through groundwater licences (GL)				0.8	↔
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)	23	27	40	36	↓
Town water consumption	Annual metered supply (ML)		740	691	661	↑
	Annual consumption (Total from WTP) (ML)	625	740	691	661	↑
	Average annual household mains potable water usage (kL)	170.2	156.1	170.5	165.5	↑
	Average level of water restrictions implemented	0.0	0.0	2.0	5.0	↓
	Water conservation programs (number)	0	0	0	0	↔

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)	450	115	154	100	↓
	Number of environmental community engagement programs	3	3	3	3	↔
	Number of growers' markets/local food retailers specialising in local food	14	14	14	5	↓
Indigenous Heritage	Number of Indigenous sites on AHIMS register	41	76	77	79	↑
	Inclusion in DCPs & rural strategies (number)	0	1	1	1	↑
	Extent of liaison with Indigenous communities (self-assessed from 0 = none to 3 = High)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	↔
	Development approvals on listed Indigenous sites (number)	0	0	0	0	↔
	Number of Indigenous heritage management actions/responses	0	0	0	2	↑
Non-Indigenous Heritage	NSW Heritage Items (number)	15	15	15	15	↔
	Locally listed heritage items (number)	342	345	345	345	↑
	Actions to protect non-Indigenous heritage (including management plans) (number)	2	6	12	10	↑
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists demolished/degraded in past year (number)	0	0	0	0	↔
	Heritage buildings on statutory heritage lists renovated/improved in past year (number)	8	6	1	1	↓



CASE STUDY: Refurbishment of the Sewage Treatment Plant Wetlands (Blayney LGA)

Since 1998, the treated effluent water from the Blayney sewerage treatment plant was pumped to the former Cadia dewatering facility which was closed down in late 2019. Fortunately, this water is now being discharged through the Blayney Shire Council wetlands system.

Blayney Shire Council has made a significant investment to refurbish the sewage treatment plant wetlands to a functional state in order to receive water from the effluent treatment process.

The wetland system incorporates a large sedimentation pond where suspended solids are removed from the system. The water then flows through a series of three wetland cells where it is cleaned through a natural filtration system. Macrophytes - a range of native reeds and rushes carefully selected for the site - provide a natural filtration process which removes organic compounds that can negatively impact on water quality.

The wetlands have sprung to life with the return of water, and the replicated natural system not only cleans the water before being returned to the Belubula River, it is already providing a haven for native birdlife that have been impacted by the ongoing drought.

Birds have returned to the wetlands in great numbers with a range of species already utilising the site following restoration works. An additional benefit is the increased water added to the Belubula River every month.

This project has provided great benefits for our local environment. The primary aim is to use these constructed wetlands as a natural biological filter, in order to exceed the industry standards for treated water, but the flow on effects for birdlife, and the return of water to the Belubula River is already having positive impacts on local wildlife.



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