

Lithgow City Council

State of Environment Report

2007/2008



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Aim of State of the Environment Report

The State of the Environment Report 2007/08 is a supplementary report which aims to identify any new environmental impacts since the 2006/07 State of the Environment Report and updates trends in environmental indicators that are important to each environmental sector.

State of the Environment Report Framework

The State of the Environment Report 2007/08 addresses the environmental sectors of Land, Air, Water, Biodiversity, Waste, Noise and Heritage. The condition of each sector is discussed in terms of the Pressure-State-Response model which is defined and reads within the Report as:

- **State** identifies and describes the current state of the environment.
- **Pressure** identifies and describes the pressure that human activities put on their immediate environment and natural surroundings.
- **Response** identifies and describes the actions of Council, government agencies, industry and the community to the state and pressures of the environment.

Changes to the state of the environment are reported using the symbols below to illustrate the change for each indicator since the 2005/06 State of the Environment Report.

Increasing from the 2006/07 Figure	→
Decreasing from the 2006/07 Figure	←
Equal to the 2006/07 Figure	=

This report should be read in conjunction with the following State of the Environment Reports:

- State of the Environment Report 2003/04
- State of the Environment Report 2004/05
- State of the Environment Report 2005/06
- State of the Environment Report 2006/07.

Land

State of Land

Changes to the state of land during 2007/08 are illustrated using the following key indicators.

Indicator - Population	2007/08	Trend
Total population (2006 Census)	19,756	=

There have been no significant developments or changes to employment within the 2007/2008 reporting period to indicate a significant change in population.

Indicator – Development Applications & Construction Certificates	2007/08	Trend
Number of development applications & construction certificates approved	354	←

Pressure to Land

Pressures to land include:

- NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change continue to investigate the establishment of new State Conservation Areas around the Gardens of Stone and Blue Mountains National Parks.
- There is a shortage of available, well located, clustered and serviced industrial or business park type land within the Lithgow Local Government Area.
- The Department of Planning requires the Lithgow Local Government Area to complete a new principle Local Environmental Plan in accordance with the Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans 2006) and an endorsed Land Use Strategy.
- The issue of increasing rural living opportunities versus the protection of resource and environmentally sensitive lands remains.
- The need to have plans of management for community lands.

Response to Land

The responses to the state and pressures of land during 2007/08 includes:

- The Blackfellow Hands Shelter and Complex, located north of Lithgow has been declared an Aboriginal Place under Section 84 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.
- The Minister for Planning and Primary Industries released the Report of the Central West Rural Lands Panel on 22 August 2007. The major recommendations of the Panel included:
 - Retaining existing minimum lot sizes, which may be varied by Councils but only based on appropriate criteria;
 - Retaining existing rights to build new homes on rural land based on subdivisions that have already been approved;
 - Preparation of a new State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) to support a strategic approach to rural planning across councils and manage land use conflicts;
 - Removal of concessional lot provisions on rural land – which have been misused in the past through a SEPP;

- Establishing an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel to advise councils on development applications that fall outside of normal planning controls but may be subject to exceptional circumstances within appropriate criteria;
- Requiring new local environmental plans (LEPs) to recognize the changing face of agriculture, such as smaller farms, share farming, leasing of farms that may consist of a number of separate holdings;
- The outcomes of the Panel could be extended across other rural areas within the State.
- In response to the Panel's findings, State Environmental Planning Policy (Rural Lands) 2008 has been gazetted and took effect in May 2008. This SEPP applies to the Lithgow Local Government Area and:
 - Introduces rural planning principles to provide guidance for Council when preparing its new LEP or amending LEPs;
 - Introduces rural subdivision principles to provide guidance for Council when reviewing existing minimum lot sizes and environmental protection zones;
 - Enables subdivision of rural land for the purpose of primary production below the minimum lot size without allowance for a dwelling;
 - Introduces heads of consideration for the assessment of rural land use conflict when councils consider development applications for rural areas
 - Removes concessional lots provisions from the LEP to minimise land use conflicts and fragmentation of rural lands;
 - Enables the Minister to identify State significant agricultural land and limit certain types of development on such land'
 - Enables the Minister to establish rural lands planning panels to provide advice to the Director-General on development that propose to vary development standards.
- Significant data sets have been made available by government agencies to assist in the preparation of a new principle LEP such as Stage 1 Strategic Land and Water Capability Assessment Threshold Data relating to lands within the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment and Environmentally Sensitive Areas mapping across the LGA.

Current Actions 2008/09

The following actions are planned for 2008/09:

- Preparation of a Land Use Issues Paper and Land Use Strategy
- Preparation of a Draft Economic Development Strategy
- Preparation of Development Contributions Plans and Development Servicing Plans
- Commencement of the preparation of a Comprehensive Development Control Plan/s.
- Commencement of the preparation of Community Lands Plans of Management.

Air

State of Air

Changes to the state of air during 2006/07 are illustrated using the following key indicator.

Indicator – Air Pollution Complaints	2007/08	Trend
Number of solid fuel heater complaints	12	←

Pressure to Air

The use of coal and wood heaters continues to be the main source of air quality complaints received by Council.

Response to Air

The response to the state and pressures of air during 2007/08 includes:

- The replacement of 5 coal heaters with cleaner heating alternatives under Council's **Alternate Fuel Rebate** at a cost of \$3,100.

Current Actions 2008/09

Council's Alternate Fuel Rebate will continue with a budget of \$8,000.

Water

State of Water

Changes to the state of water during 2007/08 are illustrated using the following key indicators.

Indicator – Farmers Creek Microbiology Percentage Meeting the Drinking Water Guidelines	2007/08	Trend
Total coliforms	78%	→
E coli	100%	=

Indicator – Fish River Microbiology Percentage Meeting the Drinking Water Guidelines	2007/08	Trend
Total coliforms	89%	→
E coli	99%	→

Indicator – Farmers Creek Chemistry Parameters Not Achieving 100% Compliance with Drinking Water Guidelines	2007/08 (% Not Complying)	Trend
Aluminum	40%	→
Iron	20%	→

Indicator – Fish River Chemistry Parameters Not Achieving 100% Compliance with Drinking Water Guidelines	2007/08 (% Not Complying)	Trend
Turbidity	7%	→
Aluminium	7%	→
Iron	21%	→
True Colour	7%	→

Indicator – Water Consumption	2007/08 (Kilolitres)	Trend
Domestic	1,128,691	←
Commercial	452,554	←

Blue Green Algae

Date	Coerwull Bridge Cells/ml	Brays Lane	Date	Lake Lyell (middle)	Lake Lyell (boat ramp)	Lake Lyell (beach)
Oct 07	0	0	0			
Nov 07	0	0	0			
Jan 08	3250	0	0	0		
Feb 08	0	0	0	0	230,900	0

Blue green algae was absent at Lake Wallace and Pipers Flat Creek at Wallerawang, on Council's sampling dates.

Indicator – Drought Status	2007/08 (months)	Trend
Drought	4	←

Pressure to Water

Pressures to water include:

- The ongoing drought in the Oberon area effected the water levels of the Oberon Dam and therefore the access to water from the Fish River Water Supply System.
- The Department of Primary Industries prepared a report in 2006 to identify and prioritise all road crossings that were acting as fish barriers within the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Area. In the Lithgow Local Government Area, 14 potential fish passage barriers were assessed, with 8 recommended for remediation.
- The pollution studies and reduction programs as detailed in the respective Environment Protection Licences require the completion of certain upgrade works at the Lithgow and Wallerawang Sewerage Treatment Plants by 31 December 2006 and 30 June 2009 respectively. Council applied for amendments to these conditions during 2008/09.
- The Environment Protection Authority initiated prosecution proceedings against Council for failure to comply with the Environment Protection Licence for the Oakey Park Water Treatment Plant, in particular the requirements to provide a backwash option study and line the sludge lagoons by December 2005. Council entered a plea of guilty to the offences and was fined a total of \$48,750. It also agreed to pay \$20,000 costs to the EPA and entered into undertakings to construct a backwash diversion system and line 2 sludge lagoons. These works were completed within the terms of the undertaking prior to all milestone dates.

Response to Water

The responses to the state and pressures of water during 2007/08 included:

- At its meeting of 21 May 2007, Council adopted revised residential **water restrictions** from 1 June 2007 across the Local Government Area and proposed water restrictions for commercial and industrial consumers (Min No. 07-196). These restrictions applied throughout 2007/08.
- An activity to **construct infrastructure for a bulk water supplier** has been included in the Management Plan 2007/08 to 2009/10 (Min No. 07-258).
- An algae alert was issued for Farmers Creek in March 2008 in response to high Algae numbers from Council's Sewerage Treatment Plant.
- Council adopted the augmentation concept for the **Lithgow Sewerage Treatment Plant Stage 2** on 4 September 2006 (Min No. 06-282) and approved the

Development Application for Stage 2 works on 16 April 2007 (Min No. 07-136). On 21 May 2007, Council resolved to call tenders for the design and construction of Stage 2 (Min No. 07-202). NSW Department of Commerce were subsequently engaged to undertake design of the works.

- Also, at its meeting of 4 September 2006, Council resolved for the General Manager to explore the option of combining the **sewage treatment for Portland and Wallerawang** into a single option (Min No. 06-282). This activity was underway throughout 2007/08.

Current Actions 2008/09

The following actions are planned for 2008/09:

- Construct infrastructure for a bulk water supplier.
- Review and implement the Drought Management Plan.
- Commence construction of Stage 2 augmentation of the Lithgow Sewerage Treatment Plant.
- Decide on option of combining of the Portland and Wallerawang Sewerage Treatment Plants or proceeding with the upgrade of two standalone plants.
- Council has commenced the production of Asset Management Plans through participation in the NAMS.PLUS system.

Biodiversity

State of Biodiversity

Changes to the state of biodiversity during 2007/08 are illustrated using the following key indicator.

Indicator – Threatened Flora Species	2007/08	Trend
Number of vulnerable species	49	=

Pressure to Biodiversity

Drought, the presence of pest animals, the loss of habitat and invasion of weeds has the potential to impact on flora and fauna species.

Response to Biodiversity

The response to the state and pressure of biodiversity during 2007/08 includes project planning and the on the ground activities as part of the undertaking of grant programs within the Capertee, Hartley, Lithgow and Wolgan Valleys. These projects include activities to protect and enhance the habitat of endangered species, removal of pest animals and weeds

and the rehabilitation of eroding land. The planning and undertaking of these grant programs have involved to date and will continue to involve the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority, the Lithgow and District Community Nursery and the Lithgow Oberon Landcare Association.

- The Land Use Strategy and comprehensive Local Environmental Plan will consider the Bathurst Copper Butterfly Recovery Plan.
- Hyde Park Reserve, Londonderry Reserve and Hartley Reserve were the subject of extensive soil conservation, bush regeneration and weed eradication.
- Soil conservation works around Glen Alice farming properties.
- Hassans Walls Reserve weeds eradication program.

Current Actions 2008/09

The main activities for 2008/09 are the:

- Hassans Walls Reserve weeds eradication program and improvements to lookouts and surrounds.
- Save Our Swamps Program supported by an Urban Sustainability Grant in conjunction with the Blue Mountains City Council.
- On going land care projects in association with Green Corp.

Waste

State of Waste

Changes to the state of waste during 2006/07 are illustrated using the following key indicators.

Indicator – Total Waste to Landfill	2007/08 (tonnes)	Trend
Angus Place Garbage Depot	502	←
Capertee Garbage Depot	631	←
Cullen Bullen Garbage Depot	296	←
Glen Davis Garbage Depot	96	=
Wallerawang Garbage Depot	841	→

It should be noted that these figures are estimates as there are no weighbridge facilities at any of the sites.

Indicator – Total Recycled from Kerbside Collection	2007/08 (tonnes)	Trend
Aluminum	4	←
Glass	138	←
HDPE	25	←
Paper	464	←
PET	21	←
Steel	16	←
TOTAL	668	←

Pressure to Waste

The diminishing amount of available landfill space and the occurrence of unauthorised fires remain as a pressure on waste management in the Lithgow Local Government Area.

Response to Waste

The responses to the state and pressures of waste during 2007/08 includes:

- The Development Application for the **Proposed Blackmans Flat Waste Management Facility** was approved by Council at its Finance and Services Committee Meeting on 4 December 2006 (Min No. 06-427).
- The fencing of **Angus Place and Capertee Garbage Depots** were completed.

Current Actions 2008/09

The following actions are planned for 2008/09:

- Design and construct the Blackmans Flat Waste Management Facility.
- Prepare Closure Plans for all existing garbage depots.
- Review waste management facilities and recycling services within the Lithgow Local Government Area.
- Construct a waste transfer station at Tarana and Glen Davis/Glen Alice.
- Conduct community education and marketing campaign aimed at improving the amount of recyclables collected at the kerbside.

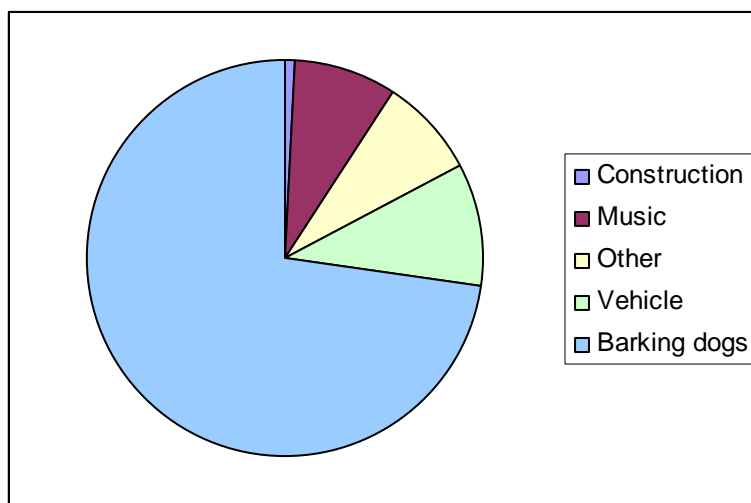
Noise

State of Noise

Changes to the state of noise during 2007/08 are illustrated using the following key indicators.

Indicator – Noise Complaints	2007/08	Trend
Number of complaints	121	←

The sources of noise detailed in the above complaints are illustrated in the following graph:



Pressure to Noise

Of the noise complaints which Council received in 2007/08, 72% were attributed to barking dogs.

Response to Noise

The response to the state and pressure of noise during 2007/08 includes:

- The resolution of noise complaints through a **mediated and agreed solution prior to enforcing legislation**.
- Council provides for **hire citronella collars** which discourage dogs from barking.
- Council applies **conditions to development consents** to minimise/restrict noise which will be generated from the proposed development and/or to minimise noise being received at the proposed development from noise sources such as traffic and rail.

Current Actions 2008/09

Council will continue to respond to complaints and impose/enforce conditions of development consent.

Heritage

State of Heritage

Changes to the state of Aboriginal heritage during 2007/08 are illustrated using the following indicators.

Indicator – Aboriginal Heritage Sites	2007/08	Trend
Number of Aboriginal Sites	517	→
Number of Aboriginal Features	588	→

Changes to the state of non-Aboriginal heritage during 2006/07 are illustrated using the following indicator.

Indicator – Heritage of State Significance	2007/08	Trend
Number of items listed on the State Heritage Register	22	→

Pressure to Heritage

The heritage advisor program and local heritage fund was not provided in the first half of 2007/08 as Council did not have the services of a heritage advisor.

The recommendations of the Lithgow Heritage Study 2000 have not been implemented.

Response to Heritage

The response to the state and pressure of heritage during 2007/08 includes:

- Appointment of a heritage advisor.
- Reinstatement of the heritage advisor program and local heritage fund.
- The Blackfellow Hands Shelter and Complex, located north of Lithgow has been declared an Aboriginal Place under Section 84 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974.
- A review the Lithgow, Evans and Rylstone heritage studies to inform the preparation of the Land Use Issues Paper, Land Use Strategy and principle Local Environmental Plan.

Current Actions 2008/09

The following actions are planned for 2008/09:

- Continue a heritage advisor program.
- Continue to sponsor the presentation of the John Wellings Heritage Award.
- Complete the review of the Lithgow, Evans and Rylstone heritage studies and combine recommendations to inform the Land Use Issues Paper, Land Use Strategy and principle Lithgow Local Environmental Plan.