



Lithgow City Council

State of the Environment Report



2006/07

Contents	
Aim of the State of the Environment Report	2
State of the Environment Report Framework	2
Land	2
State of Land	2
Pressure to Land	3
Response to Land	3
Current Actions 2007/08	5
Air	5
State of Air	5
Pressure to Air	5
Response to Air	5
Current Actions 2007/08	5
Water	6
State of Water	6
Pressure to Water	7
Response to Water	8
Current Actions 2007/08	9
Biodiversity	9
State of Biodiversity	9
Pressure to Biodiversity	9
Response to Biodiversity	9
Current Actions 2007/08	10
Waste	10
State of Waste	10
Pressure to Waste	11
Response to Waste	11
Current Actions 2007/08	11
Noise	11
State of Noise	11
Pressure to Noise	12
Response to Noise	12
Current Actions 2007/08	12
Heritage	12
State of Heritage	12
Pressure to Heritage	13
Response to Heritage	13
Current Actions 2007/08	13

Aim of State of the Environment Report

The State of the Environment Report 2006/07 is a supplementary report which aims to identify any new environmental impacts since the 2005/06 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 2006/07 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 2005/06 Figure	→
Decreasing from the 2005/06 Figure	←
Equal to the 2005/06 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.

Land

State of Land

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

Indicator - Population	2006/07	Trend
Total population	19,756	←

The total population figure of 19,756 was the population on Census night in August 2006. The trend from 2005/06 is showing a decreasing population due to the 2005/06 figure of 20,889 being the Estimated Resident Population. However, when comparing the 2001 Census population of 19,197 and the 2006 Census population of 19,756, the population of the Local Government Area has grown by 559 persons in the reporting period.

Indicator – Development Applications & Construction Certificates	2006/07	Trend
Number of development applications & construction certificates	470	←

Pressure to Land

Pressures to land include:

- The Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the Blue Mountains Conservation Society and the Colo Committee have proposed extensions to the Gardens of Stone and Blue Mountains National Parks and the establishment of new State Conservation Areas. The proposal centres on the Lithgow Local Government Area.
- 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 continues to advise that the new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan for the Lithgow Local Government Area is due for completion by April 2009.
- The management of rural lands in terms of landuse planning and the upcoming new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan was identified as a major issue for the community during consultation on the Strategic Plan.
- The prolonged dry conditions in the Local Government Area for some time have resulted in a greater bushfire threat.
- The need to have plans of management for community lands.

Response to Land

The responses to the state and pressures of land during 2006/07 includes:

- The Department of Environment and Conservation prepared an Assessment Report on the **Gardens of Stone Stage 2 Proposal – State Conservation Areas and Park Extension** in August 2006. In summary, the report states:
 - Mount Airly is the subject of a proposal for the establishment of a state conservation area, of which the reservation will not proceed until the Department of Primary Industries – Minerals and Centennial Coal are satisfied with the arrangements.
 - The Western Escarpment is part of the Blue Mountains Public Lands Rationalisation Project which is still ongoing.

- Arrangements are in place to secure Canyon Colliery site for addition to the Blue Mountains National Park.
- The Department will explore the possibility of the reservation of Ben Bullen and Wolgan State Forests with State Forests and the Department of Primary Industries – Minerals in the medium term.
- The broader Newnes Plateau area should not be pursued for reservation along with the Blackfellows Hands reserve, the Crown land near Clarence and the Hassans Walls and Zig Zag Crown reserves.
- The reservation of two small areas along the eastern edge of Newnes Plateau and adjoining the national park should be pursued in the medium term.
- The **Strategic Plan** was adopted by Council at its meeting of 18 June 2007, following community consultation on the Draft Local Profile, Draft Discussion/Issues Paper and the Draft Strategic Plan (Min No. 07-251). It sets a direction for the Local Government Area over the next 10 to 20 years and informs Council's planning and on-the-ground activities through its management and operational plans.
- The **Amended Marrangaroo Structure Plan** was adopted by Council at its Policy and Strategy Committee meeting of 5 February 2007 (Min No. 07-15) as the plan identifying the highest and best use of lands within the Study Area. This Plan provides a mixture of land uses including highway business services, employment generation, large lot residential, urban, private open space and commercial recreation and tourist accommodation.
- The NSW Government announced on 8 February 2007 the establishment of an **independent inquiry into rural land use in the Central West** to listen to the community and local councils. In summary the inquiry involved the following terms of reference:
 - Establish the extent, value and location of agriculture in the Central West Region of NSW.
 - Identify the key land use planning threats to its ongoing viability.
 - Assess the net benefit of agricultural land uses in terms of economic, social and environmental benefits.
 - Advise on a preferred land use planning approach to ensure the continuation of agriculture, which takes into account social, economic and environmental factors. The approach is to identify an appropriate mix of strategic, statutory and incentive based mechanisms.
 - Provide specific advice on establishing minimum lot sizes and/or subdivision constraints through Local Environmental Plans and the appropriateness of the Department of Primary Industries' methodology for determining minimum lot sizes, including the issue of off-farm income.

The report of the Central West Rural Lands Panel was not released prior to 30 June 2007.

- The Rural Fire Service started the **Bushfire Danger Period** a month earlier.
- A draft **plan of management** for sportsgrounds was being prepared as at 30 June 2007.
- At the **2006 Tidy Towns Awards**, the following were nominated by the Lithgow Tidy Towns Committee and were forthcoming to the Local Government Area:
 - Lithgow was second in Category E of the Overall Tidy Towns Award.

- The Fire, Forge and Furnace project won Category E of the Cultural Heritage Award and the Lithgow and District Community Nursery won Category E of the Wildlife Corridors and Conservation Award.
- Lithgow was highly commended in Category E of the Litter Prevention Award, Friendly Town Award and the Civic Partnership Award.

Current Actions 2007/08

The following actions are planned for 2007/08:

- Preparation of the Land Use Strategy, development control plans, development contribution plans, economic and retail strategies, the comprehensive Local Environmental Plan and plans of management for community lands.

Air

State of Air

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

Indicator – Air Pollution Complaints	2006/07	Trend
Number of solid fuel heater complaints	29	→

Pressure to Air

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

In addition, in 2006/07, Council approved the installation of 5 solid fuel heaters, of which 1 heater is located in an area where natural gas is available.

Response to Air

The response to the state and pressures of air during 2006/07 includes:

- The replacement of 7 coal heaters with cleaner heating alternatives under Council's **Alternate Fuel Rebate** at a cost of \$4,300.

Current Actions 2007/08

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

Water

State of Water

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

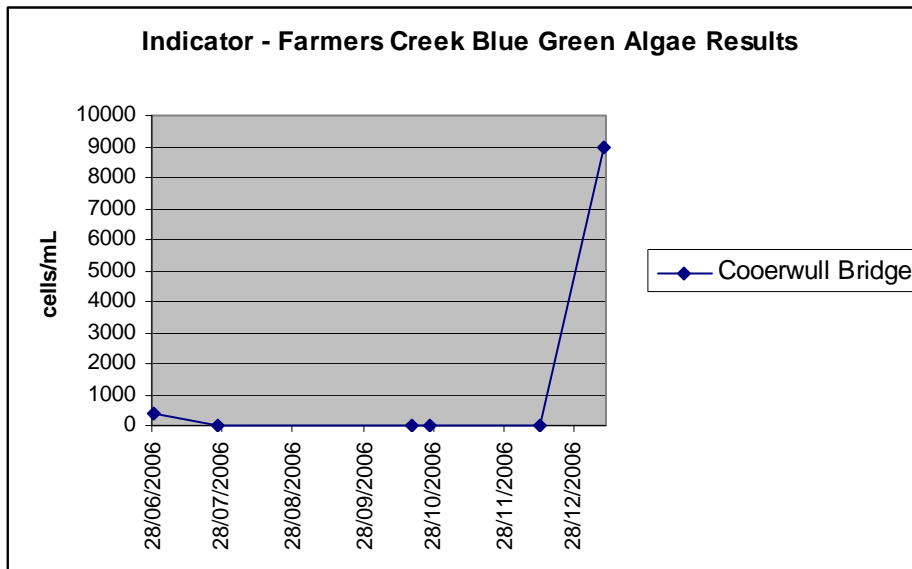
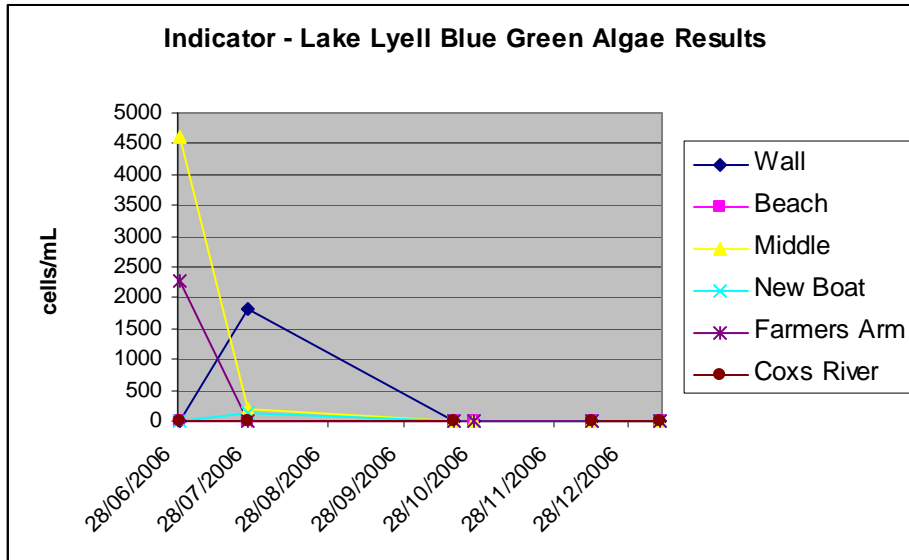
Indicator – Farmers Creek Microbiology Percentage Meeting the Drinking Water Guidelines	2006/07	Trend
Total coliforms	69%	←
E coli	100%	=

Indicator – Fish River Microbiology Percentage Meeting the Drinking Water Guidelines	2006/07	Trend
Total coliforms	83%	→
E coli	95%	→

Indicator – Farmers Creek Chemistry Parameters Not Achieving 100% Compliance with Drinking Water Guidelines	2006/07 (% Not Complying)	Trend
Aluminum	8%	→
Iron	8%	→

The chemical samples taken from the Fish River Water Supply complied with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Indicator – Water Consumption	2006/07 (Kilolitres)	Trend
Domestic	1,149,513	←
Commercial	557,233	←



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

Indicator – Drought Status	2006/07 (months)	Trend
Drought	12	→

Pressure to Water

Pressures to water include:

- The drought and the subsequent effects on 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. Council is applying for amendments to these conditions.
- 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. The hearing was still to take place as at 30 June 2007.

Response to Water

The responses to the state and pressures of water during 2006/07 includes:

- 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).
- Council is **trading part of its unused Fish River Water Allocation** with Delta Electricity (Min No. 06-344).
- 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).
- Council at its Policy and Strategy Committee Meeting of 7 May 2007 resolved to adopt a **water savings scheme** which provides rebates for the installation of rainwater tanks, water efficient dishwashers and washing machines (Min No. 07-156). As at 30 June 2007, 6 applications had been lodged.
- 250 showerheads were replaced by AAA showerheads as part of Council's **AAA Showerhead Program**.
- The Metropolitan and South Coast Regional Algal Coordinating Committee did issue **algal alerts** on Farmers Creek during the year.
- 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). This activity was underway as at 30 June 2007.
- 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 as at 30 June 2007.
- Works to divert the backwash waters from discharge into Farmers Creek to the existing sludge lagoons at the Oakey Park Water Treatment Plant have commenced.

Current Actions 2007/08

The following actions are planned for 2007/08:

- Review and implement the Drought Management Plan.
- Construct infrastructure for a bulk water supplier.
- Continue backwash diversion works at the Oakey Park Water Treatment Plant.
- Construct Stage 2 augmentation of the Lithgow Sewerage Treatment Plant.
- Undertake a feasibility study for the combining of the Portland and Wallerawang Sewerage Treatment Plants.
- Council has committed to a comprehensive assets management system which will be commenced in this and subsequent financial years.

Biodiversity

State of Biodiversity

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

Indicator – Threatened Flora Species	2006/07	Trend
Number of vulnerable species	49	→

Pressure to Biodiversity

The continuing 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 2006/07 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.

Current Actions 2007/08

The main activity for 2007/08 is the completion of the abovementioned grant programs.

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	2006/07 (tonnes)	Trend
Angus Place Garbage Depot	712	→
Capertee Garbage Depot	878	→
Cullen Bullen Garbage Depot	732	→
Glen Davis Garbage Depot	96	←
Wallerawang Garbage Depot	620	←

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	2006/07 (kilograms)
Aluminum	5
Glass	225
HDPE	39
Paper	572
PET	42
Steel	37
TOTAL	920

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 2006/07 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 2007/08

The following actions are planned for 2007/08:

- 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.
- Council has committed to a comprehensive assets management system which will be commenced in this and subsequent financial years.

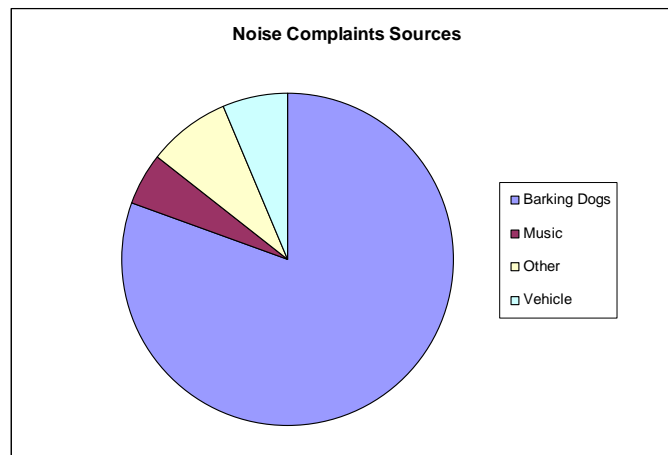
Noise

State of Noise

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

Indicator – Noise Complaints	2006/07	Trend
Number of complaints	137	→

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 2006/07, 80% were attributed to barking dogs.

Response to Noise

The response to the state and pressure of noise during 2006/07 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 2007/08

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 2006/07 are illustrated using the following indicators.

Indicator – Aboriginal Heritage Sites	2006/07	Trend
Number of Aboriginal Sites	507	→
Number of Aboriginal Features	577	→

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

Indicator – Heritage of State Significance	2006/07	Trend
Number of items listed on the State Heritage Register	21	=

Pressure to Heritage

The heritage advisor program and local heritage fund was not provided in 2006/07 as Council did not have the services of a heritage advisor.

Response to Heritage

The response to the state and pressure of heritage during 2006/07 includes:

- Discussions have occurred with the Heritage Office with the view to recommencing the **heritage advisor program** in 2007/08.
- Council at its meeting of 21 May 2007 (Min No. 07-204) resolved to defer the **Heritage Local Environmental Plan** so that it occurs in conjunction with the preparation of the comprehensive Lithgow Local Environmental Plan.
- The Governor of New South Wales has reserved the **Hartley Historic Site** under the provisions of section 30A(1) of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974.

Current Actions 2007/08

The following actions are planned for 2007/08:

- Provide a heritage advisor program.
- Develop criteria and sponsor the presentation of the John Wellings Heritage Award.
- Review the Evans, Lithgow and Rylstone heritage studies and combine to inform the comprehensive Lithgow Local Environmental Plan.