

SUPPLEMENTARY

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT,

WEDDIN SHIRE

2006 - 2007

Prepared for:

**Weddin Shire Council
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

Weddin Shire Council is required under the Local Government Act to prepare a Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the year ending 30th June, 2007.

Such a Supplementary Report must:

- [i] identify any new environmental impacts since the Council's last State of the Environment Report, and
- [ii] update the trends in environmental indicators that are important to each of the eight environmental sectors specified in section 428 [2] (c) of the Local Government Act

These eight environmental sectors are:

- [i] land,
- [ii] air,
- [iii] water,
- [iv] biodiversity,
- [v] waste,
- [vi] noise
- [vii] Aboriginal heritage, and
- [viii] non – Aboriginal heritage,

In relation to each such environmental sector, the report must consider any

- management plans relating to the environment,

- special council projects relating to the environment, and
- the environmental impact of council activities.

1.2 Relevant Catchment Management Targets

Weddin Shire is located within the Lachlan Catchment Management Authority area and therefore has an obligation to contribute to the achievement of the land and water management and biodiversity / native vegetation management targets established for the catchment..

While many individual targets have been recently set by the LCMA, and are relevant to Weddin Shire and its people, there are a number that have direct implications for local government councils in the catchment – including Weddin Shire Council.

The most important of these are:

- **MT5** – By 2016 ten Councils within the catchment have prepared and are implementing local biodiversity strategies consistent with the National and State Biodiversity Guidelines for local government.
- **MT6** – By 2016 all regional and local land use strategies and environmental planning instruments incorporate provisions which incorporate provisions which support the protection of environmental assets for the sustainability of the landscape and its native flora and fauna.
- **MT7** – By 2016 twenty councils are managing roadside reserves in line with Roadside Vegetation Management Plans.
- **MT11** – By 2010 an Integrated Weed Management Strategy will be developed. By 2016 priority actions identified in the Integrated Weed Management Strategy will be implemented.
- **MT12** – By 2010 an Integrated Pest Animal Management Plan will be completed. By 2016 populations of priority environmental pest animals will be controlled and suppressed in accordance with the pest animal management plans.
- **MT18** – By 2016 ten councils have adopted and are implementing an Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan

These recently established targets will influence Council decisions and policies over the next decade.

2 REPORT FOR 2006 - 2007

A Comprehensive State of the Environment Report was prepared by Weddin Shire Council for the year 2003 - 2004.

Any changes in the situation described in 2003 - 2004 Report, and the supplementary reports prepared in 2005 and 2006, are outlined below under the headings of the eight environmental sectors noted in the Act.

2.1 Land

2.1.1 Shire Area

There were no changes to the total area within Weddin Shire during the 2006 - 2007 year.

2.1.2 Major Centres and Population

The total Weddin Shire population recorded at the last census in 2006 is 3646 - a reduction from 3656 in 2001. However, it should be noted that the reduction in population occurred between 2001 and 2003 and that the number of residents has increased by 35 since 2003

2.1.3 Land Use Planning in Weddin Shire

The Weddin LEP 2002 was gazetted on 1st July, 2002 and replaced the Grenfell IDOs.

Zonings under this LEP are as follows

- 1[a] - agricultural zone - 333,184 ha
- 1[ci] - rural residential zone - 203 ha
- 1[cii] - small farm zone - 286 ha
- 1[ciii] - rural retreat zone - 950 ha
- 2[t] - township zone - 475 ha
- 2[v] - village zone - [Village of Quandialla 162 ha], [Village of Caragabal 36 ha], [Village of Greenethorpe 57 ha], [Village of Bimbi 12 ha].
- 8 - national parks and reserves zone - 10, 432 ha

This LEP remains in force.

2.1.4 Land Use

Land use patterns within Weddin Shire continue to be similar to those of previous years.

The summer 2006 harvest of winter grains crops was relatively poor due to drought. Patchy storm activity was recorded in the Shire over the early months of 2006 and the prospects for the winter grain crops appeared good after autumn rains encouraged the sowing of large areas.

No detailed livestock production figures are available for the Shire, but many properties are carrying reduced stock numbers because of the drought and the retained stock have in generally been hand-fed for at least part of the report year.

No additional lands have been added to the National Parks in the Shire during the year.

During the reporting year, Council gave development consents for a gold mine located at Bumbaldry and a new poultry farm.

2.1.5 Natural Resource Management and Surveys

Landcare groups continued to function to address natural resource management issues in the Shire although the drought reduced activity in many areas. No additional groups were formed during the year and none were disbanded.

The current list of Landcare groups in Weddin Shire is as follows:

- Brundah Landcare Group
- Caragabal Landcare Group
- Emu Creek Landcare Group
- Eualdrie Valley Landcare Group
- Grenfell Urban Landcare Group
- Nags Head Bridge Landcare Group
- Pinnacle Landcare Group
- Upper Barbingal Creek Landcare Group
- Warraderry Landcare Group
- Weddin West Landcare Group
- Wheogo Landcare Group
- Yuline Landcare Group

No additional land resource surveys dealing with soils or geology within Weddin Shire were published during the year to add to the knowledge about these resources within the Shire boundaries.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to the land resources of the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on the land resources of the Shire during the reporting year.

2.2 Air

There have not been any specific studies of air quality in Weddin Shire that have provided additional air quality data during the year under review.

With regard to industry, Council applies the following conditions to reduce air pollution:

[a] activities must be carried out in a manner that will minimise emissions of dust from the premises.

[b] dust generated by an activity must be prevented from polluting any natural waterway and it is the operator's responsibility to control dust generated by an activity.

[c] if odour or dust becomes a nuisance to neighbours, then the operator must take all necessary actions to reduce the nuisance to acceptable levels. This may involve increased landscaping, dust suppression measures or changes to work practices.

No instances of significant air pollution were reported to Council and no litigation in relation to air pollution was commenced during the year.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to air quality in the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on the air quality in the Shire during the reporting year.
- Council continues to ensure that industries that have a potential to impact on air quality use management practices and appropriate technology to minimise this possibility.

2.3 Water and Water Quality

No sewerage or pollutant spills that might impact on water quality occurred in the Shire during the year.

No additional studies of water quality within the Shire were published during the year.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to the water resources of the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on the water resources of the Shire during the reporting year.

2.4 Biodiversity

2.4.1 Fauna Studies

No new fauna studies were carried out in the Shire during the 2004-2005 year.

2.4.2 Vegetation Studies

The Lachlan CMA has a current project that involves surveying the remnant vegetation along roads within the Shire. Progress in this area has been slow during the year.

2.4.3 Threatened Species, Endangered Ecological Communities and Recovery Plans

2.4.3.1 Threatened Fauna Species

During the year, there have been no records of additional threatened fauna species being found within the Weddin Shire. There are twenty two threatened fauna species recorded from Weddin Shire to the 30th June, 2007 that are listed in the Schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995.

These are:

Australian Bustard [*Ardeotis australis*] [listed Endangered]

Barking Owl [*Ninox connivens*] [listed Vulnerable]

Bilby [*Macrotis lagotis*] [listed as Presumed Extinct]

Black-chinned Honeyeater [eastern subspecies] [*Melithreptus gularis gularis*] [listed Vulnerable]

Brown Tree-creeper [eastern subspecies] [*Climacteris picumnus victoriae*] [listed Vulnerable]

Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby [*Petrogale penicillata*] [listed Endangered]

Diamond Firetail [*Stagonopleura guttata*] [listed Vulnerable]

Eastern Long-eared Bat [*Nyctophilus timoriensis*] [listed Vulnerable]

Gang-gang Cockatoo [*Callocephalon fimbriatum*] [listed as Vulnerable]

Gilbert's Whistler [*Pachycephala inornata*] [listed Vulnerable]

Grey-crowned Babbler [eastern subspecies] [*Pomatostomus temporalis*] [listed Vulnerable]

Hooded Robin [south-eastern form] [*Melanodryas cucullata cucullata*] [listed Vulnerable]

Koala [*Phascolarctos cinereus*] [listed Vulnerable]

Major Mitchell's Cockatoo [*Cacatua leadbeateri*] [listed Vulnerable]

Painted Honeyeater [*Grantiella picta*] [listed Vulnerable]

Regent Honeyeater [*Xanthomyza phrygia*] [listed Endangered]

Speckled Warbler [*Pyrrholaemus sagittatus*] [listed Vulnerable]

Spotted-tail Quoll [*Dasyurus maculatus*] [listed Vulnerable]

Square-tailed Kite [*Lophoictinia isura*] [listed Vulnerable]

Superb Parrot [*Polytelis swainsonii*] [listed Vulnerable]

Swift Parrot [*Lathamus discolor*] [listed Endangered]

Turquoise Parrot [*Neophema pulchella*] [listed Vulnerable]

These species constitute the list of fauna species that must be considered by Council in assessing the likely environmental impact of developments within Weddin Shire.

2.4.3.2 Threatened Flora Species

The four threatened flora species that are listed in the Schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995 and that have been recorded from Weddin Shire to 30th June, 2007 are:

Austrostipa wakoolica [a Speargrass] [listed Endangered]

Goodenia macbarronii [a herb] [listed Vulnerable]

Diuris tricolor [Pink Donkey Orchid] [listed Vulnerable]

Leionema sympetalum [Rylstone Bell] [listed Vulnerable]

This list is based on the records contained in the 'Atlas of NSW Wildlife [Department of Environment and Conservation website] and the National Herbarium [Royal Botanic Gardens website].

2.4.3.3 Endangered Ecological Communities

During the year the '*Inland Grey Box Woodland in the Riverina, NSW South Western Slopes, Cobar Peneplain, Nandewar, and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions*' was listed in the Schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act by the NSW Scientific Committee. This community is common within Weddin Shire.

This brings to a total of four, the number of Endangered Ecological Communities that occur within Weddin Shire. The other three communities are:

- Myall Woodland in the Darling Riverine Plains, Brigalow Belt South, Cobar Peneplain, Murray Darling Basin, Riverina and NSW South Western Slopes Bioregions;

- White Box - Yellow Box - Blakely's Red Gum Woodland Community; and
- Fuzzy Box Woodland on Alluvial Soils of the South Western Slopes, Darling Riverine Plains and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions Endangered Ecological Community.

Impacts of proposed developments within Weddin Shire on all of these communities must be addressed in environmental assessments prepared for areas where it occurs in the Shire.

2.4.3.4 Threatened Species Recovery Plans

During the year the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service prepared a number of draft and approved Recovery Plans for Threatened species that are listed in the Schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act.

Under section 70 of that Act, any public authority identified in a Recovery Plan as being responsible for implementation of measures included in the Plan must report annually in its State of the Environment Report on the actions taken to implement those measures.

During the 2006-2007 reporting year there were no Recovery Plans approved that require Weddin Shire Council to implement any aspects of the plan.

Perusal of the total listing of Approved Recovery Plans on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website indicates that there are no threatened species recorded for the Shire for which final Recovery Plans have been approved.

2.4.3.5 Endangered Populations

There are no Endangered Flora or Fauna Populations listed for Weddin Shire in the Schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995.

2.4.3.6 Critical Habitat

There are no areas of Critical Habitat listed for Weddin Shire in the Schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995

2.4.3.6 Key Threatening Processes

There are a number of processes that have been gazetted as Key Threatening Processes under the provisions of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, 1995.

Eighteen Key Threatening Processes listed in Schedule 3 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act that apply, in practice, in Weddin Shire. These are:

- Alteration of the Natural Flow Regimes of Rivers and Streams and their Floodplains and Wetlands
- Anthropogenic Climate Change

- Bush Rock Removal
- Clearing of Native Vegetation
- Competition and Grazing by the Feral European Rabbit, *Oryctolagus cuniculus* L.
- Competition from Feral Honeybees, *Apis mellifera* L.
- High Frequency Fire Resulting in the Disruption of Life Cycle Processes in Plants and Animals and Loss of vegetation Structure and Composition
- Infection of Frogs by Amphibian Chytrid Causing the Disease Chytridiomycosis
- Infection of Native Plants by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*
- Introduction of the Large Earth Bumblebee, *Bombus terrestris*
- Invasion of Native Plant Communities by Exotic Perennial Grasses
- Predation by *Gambusia holbrookii* [Girard, 1859] [Plague Minnow or Mosquito Fish]
- Predation by the European Red Fox, *Vulpes vulpes* [Linnaeus, 1758]
- Predation by the Feral Cat *Felis catus* Linnaeus, 1758]
- Predation, Habitat Degradation Competition and Disease Transmission by Feral Pigs, *Sus scrofa* [Linnaeus, 1758]
- Psittacine Circoviral [beak and feather] Disease Affecting Endangered Psittacine Species and Populations
- Removal of Dead Wood and Dead Trees
- Competition and Habitat Degradation by Feral Goats

Under this Act, the National Parks and Wildlife Service must prepare a Threat Abatement Plan that identifies actions required to be taken and identifies the responsible authorities, including local government councils.

Perusal of the Threatened Species Conservation Act schedules indicates that there are no Threat Abatement Plans that apply within Weddin Shire and which require any action by Council.

2.2.4 Protected Matters Under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act – Fauna and Flora

The Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act [EPBC Act] provides protection for matters [places, species, communities etc] of national environmental significance that have been included in the listings under the Act.

A Protected Matters Search of the EPBC Act database indicates that the following are located, occur or are likely to occur within Weddin Shire or within the same river catchment:

- One Threatened Ecological Community
- Fifteen Threatened Species
- Twelve Migratory Species
- Two State Natural Heritage Areas [Weddin Mountains and Conimbla National Parks]

2.4.5 Clearing of Native Vegetation

Two applications to clear native vegetation within the Shire were approved by the Lachlan CMA during the reporting period. One application involved the clearing of 71.4 hectares of invasive native scrub and the other involved clearing of 354 paddock trees. The offset for the latter clearing required the conservation of 21.7 hectares of native vegetation.

2.4.6 Native Tree Planting

Drought conditions resulted in few native trees and shrubs being planted in the Shire during the year under Landcare programs or by landholders whose properties are located outside the various Landcare group areas

2.4.7 Weed Control

Council has continued its direct weed control activities on Council controlled lands. In addition, infestations of noxious weeds on private lands and those controlled by other public bodies have been monitored and appropriate action has been taken, to ensure suppression, where this has been needed.

Following a Government review of noxious weed species in New South Wales during the last reporting year, there are now ninety seven weed species or species groups are declared noxious within Weddin Shire. Many of these species do not occur within the Shire but have been added to the noxious weed list following their declaration as noxious weeds for the whole of New South Wales.

The listing of these species is contained on the NSW Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture website.

Council's direct expenditure on noxious weed control during the year was \$61,680..

2.4.8 Feral Animal Control

Feral animal control continues to be carried out in the Shire on individual landholders' properties as well as on the two National Parks in the Shire.

Control activities have been directed at feral goats, feral pigs, rabbits and foxes.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to biodiversity within the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant detrimental impact on biodiversity within the Shire during the reporting year.

2.5 Waste Management

2.5.1 General Waste Management

There have been no significant changes in the volume of waste handled at Council's landfill sites. A combined total of 3363 cubic metres of waste was collected by Council at the Caragabal, Quandialla and Grenfell tips during the year

Management procedures used in the past have been maintained and no problems have been experienced. Separation of glass, paper, metal, oil, tyres and green waste streams continued during the year.

During the year, Council continued its metal recycling program with 75 tonnes being recycled. In addition, 9.6 tonnes of glass, 0.6 tonnes of aluminium, 60 tonnes of paper, 4.3 tonnes of plastic were recycled at the Grenfell tip.

[b] Sewerage

No changes have occurred in the management of sewerage effluent and solids. The management processes reported on previously continue to operate successfully.

There were no upgrading works carried out on existing sewerage systems during the year and there were no sewerage spills recorded although 34 sewer chokes had to be removed..

[c] Contaminated Sites

No new contaminated sites were identified in the Shire during the report year.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to waste management within the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.

- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on waste management within the Shire during the reporting year.

2.6 Noise

Council experiences very few problems with noise from industry or traffic. There were no significant problems during the year.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to noise abatement in the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on noise levels or on noise abatement in the Shire during the reporting year.

2.7 Aboriginal Heritage

No studies relating to the Aboriginal heritage within Weddin Shire have been carried out during the year and no additional listings of such sites have been made in the Register of the National Estate or the NSW National Trust Register.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to Aboriginal heritage within the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on sites or other aspects of Aboriginal heritage within the Shire during the reporting year.

2.8 Non-Aboriginal Heritage

No additional listings have been made in the Register of the NSW Heritage Office..

Council continues to retain a consultant heritage adviser to assist staff and residents in the conservation of heritage sites within the Shire.

WEDDIN SHIRE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES:

- Council has not developed any new management plans related to non-Aboriginal heritage within the Shire, nor has it any ongoing plans of this nature.
- No Council activities or activities of individuals or corporations have had a major or significant impact on sites or other aspects of non-Aboriginal heritage within the Shire during the reporting year.