



FORBES SHIRE COUNCIL

State of the Environment

2016/16

INTRODUCTION

This State of the Environment Report is prepared in accordance with Section 428A of the Local Government Act 1993 and prepared in conjunction with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines as described under Section 406 of the same Act.

The key element required of Forbes Shire Council in the preparation of this State of the Environment Report is that reporting is completed against the environmental objectives identified in Council's Community Strategic Plan 2013-2023.

The purpose of the Reports is to:

- establish relevant environmental indicators;
- report on and update trends for each such environmental indicator; and
- identify all major environmental impacts on the agreed environmental objectives.

State of the Environment Report aims to provide the community with information on the condition of the environment in the Forbes Local Government Area.

FORBES LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

Forbes is situated in the heart of the Lachlan Valley, approximately 390km west of Sydney. The Forbes Local Government Area (LGA) covers 4,718km² and has a population of approximately of 9,759 people (*source: 2014 population estimates, ABS website*) with approximately 1,600 people living outside the Forbes town boundary. The LGA includes the village areas of Bedgerabong, Wirrinya, Corinella, Garema, Warroo and Ootha – all village centres are located within approximately a 50km radius of Forbes, with the exception of Ootha, which is located 70km to the west.

Forbes offers a unique blend of modern lifestyle in a historic setting with high quality communication infrastructure and road networks, which make Forbes an attractive business location. Forbes is a major urban centre positioned on the Newell Highway halfway between Brisbane and Melbourne. This strategic location makes Forbes accessible to a catchment population of 65,000 people within a 100km radius. Forbes offers excellent facilities and services for families and competitively priced residential and industrial land, with Council taking a proactive role in attracting business and industry to the area.

The Forbes economy represents approximately 4% of the Central West Regional economy with a gross regional product of \$398.3M. The largest sectors in the Forbes economy are agriculture (\$97.1M GRP value), construction (\$32.6M GRP value), education and training (\$32M GRP value), retail (\$27.4M GRP value) and health care (\$27.3M GRP value). The main industries for employment in Forbes are agriculture, health care, retail, education and training, light industrial and accommodation (*source: Invest NSW Central West website*).

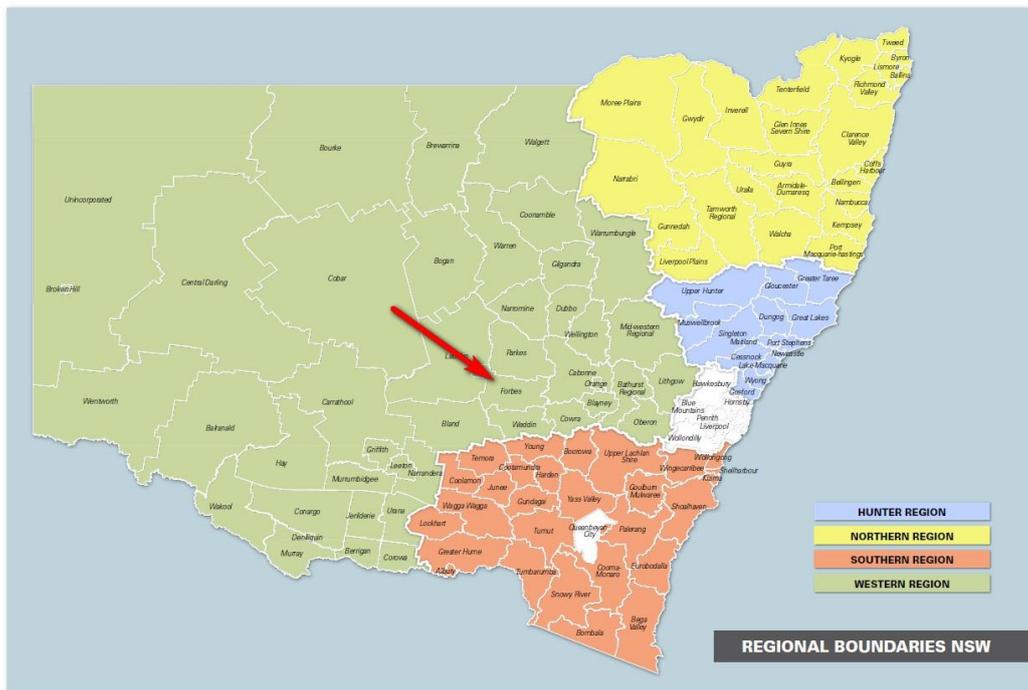


Figure 1: Forbes LGA is located in the NSW Department of Planning's Western Region in relation to the entire state.

Year	Total Population
1986	11,282
1991	10,889
1996	10,574
2001	10,143
2006	9,178
2010	9,495
2014	9,759

Figure 2: Forbes LGA snap shot of population over 30 years. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics – Census 2006, Census 2011, National Regional Profile 2016).

Employment by Industry	1996	2001	2011
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (%)	916	938	746
Mining (%)	30	17	109
Manufacturing (%)	461	313	225
Electricity, gas, water and waste services (%)	54	33	47
Construction (%)	234	213	214
Wholesale trade (%)	228	301	152
Retail trade (%)	468	530	424
Accommodation and food services (%)	178	169	225
Transport, postal and warehousing (%)	111	105	155
Information media and telecommunications (%)	32	30	12

Financial and insurance services (%)	73	69	54
Rental, hiring and real estate services (%)	120	179	35
Professional, scientific and technical services (%)	125	131	183
Administrative and support services (%)	314	310	70
Public administration and safety (%)	345	259	194
Education and training (%)	20	28	365
Health care and social assistance (%)	118	118	424
Arts and recreation services (%)	40	9	19
Other services (%)	91	127	136
Total employed (no.)	3958	3979	3789

Figure 3: Forbes LGA snapshot of employment by industry. *Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data 1996, 2001 and 2011*

ABOUT FORBES' STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT (SOE) REPORT

This report documents Council's progress and achievements in implementing the community strategic plan as relates to the environmental indicators of Land and Land Use, Water and Waterways, Biodiversity, Waste and Sustainability, People and Communities during the period September, 2012 to September, 2016.

Land and Land Use

Strategy L2: Council complies with key legislation governing local government

L2.2 Compile with statutory obligations for development control, environmental health and animal control

Council encouraged all developers and builders to attend pre-lodgement meetings with 578 held during 2012/16.

There were 366 development applications and complying development certificates for residential works worth a total value of \$39,235,999 and 246 development applications for non-residential development worth a total value of \$40,767,696.

In 2014/15 Council became an active member of the Centroc Planners Technical Group, which provides guidance in the development of the Regional Growth Plan.

Strategy NE1: Use legislation, planning controls and regulations to protect the environment within Council's sphere of influence.

NE1.1 Provide planning provisions that minimise the impact on the environment.

NE1.2 Comply with Council's environmental management statutory obligations.

- The Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan came into effect in 2013.
- In assessing Development Applications, Council takes into consideration environmental planning legislation and guidelines in accordance to those plans as well as Council policies and other legislation.
- Annual reports were submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority throughout the 4 year term showing compliance to the Central West Livestock Exchange, Sewer Treatment Plant, Water Treatment Plant and Daroobalgie Waste Depot licences.
- The Water Treatment Plant gained 100% compliance for the term in satisfying the conditions of the licence.

- Council continued to undertake the operation of the Daroobalgie Waste Depot in accordance with the licensing conditions. An audit of the facility by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2015/16 resulted in a favourable outcome.

Strategy NE3: Enhance natural water course and Lake Forbes.

NE3.1 Manage the beauty, natural environment and attraction of Lake Forbes and Forbes aquatic areas

- In 2016, Council commenced the development of a master plan for Lake Forbes and the Aquatic Area. Workshops were held with members of Council's Environment Advisory Committee to identify areas suitable for developing as part of the master plan.
- Further bank re-stabilisation works on the main foreshore of the Aquatic Area commenced as programmed in mid-2016, however the completion was deferred due to wet weather. The stabilisation product is made with earth filled geofabric bag containers. Once fully positioned the section of the bank will be back filled with earth for revegetation.
- Council successfully obtained a grant in 2014 for the completion of the 10km walking track around the Aquatic Area and linking to Lake Forbes. Council received the funding from the NSW Government as part of its program to promote walking and cycling in 2012. The shared pathway now extends around the Aquatic Area and continues alongside Racecourse Road, joining back into the pathway at Bundaburrah crossing. The total cost of the project was \$1.3 million and was funded 50-50 by Council and grant funding.

Strategy P2: Present a clean, attractive and accessible town.

- P2.1 Ensure that public places are clean and well maintained throughout the year**
- P2.2 Mobility access in Forbes Shire is maintained to meet the community's needs**
- P2.3 Encourage partnerships other stakeholders to promote town pride**

- Gardens, landscape and open space areas were maintained in accordance with the Asset Management Plan and in line with Council's resources.
- Council's s.355 Access Committee identified a number of issues and made recommendations to Council for the provision of additional disabled parking spaces and accessibility laybacks to the footways within the Central Business District. Council undertook a major review of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan in 2015/16 and the plan is expected to be implemented by June 2017.

Water and Waterways

Strategy I1: Deliver a secure and quality water supply to the community.

- I1.1 Manage the Shire's water supply in line with best practice requirements**
- I1.2 Ensure the security of water to Forbes Shire to meet the needs of the community**
- I1.3 Provide quality treated water to Forbes Shire to meet the needs of the community**
- I1.4 Facilitate a secure and quality water supply to village areas**

- Council has secured its long-term water supply through the \$2 million third bore project constructed near Lachlan Valley Way. This bore will be used in times of water scarcity, severe drought, mechanical failure or contamination, to complement the two existing bores. Increased rotation of the bores will also have the added benefit of reducing pressure on the aquifer. The third bore allows seven megalitres per day to be pumped into the Forbes Treatment Plant which also supplies the villages of Calarie, Daroobalgie, Gunningbland, Bogan Gate, Trundle and Tottenham.

Strategy I3: Delivery of stormwater management services to the community.

I3.1 Manage the Shire's stormwater network in line with best practice requirements

- The Stormwater Asset Management Plan was implemented in 2014/15.

- In 2015/16 numerous stormwater maintenance projects were completed including the cleaning of the Lawler Street drainage network. Work on the drainage extension to South Forbes was postponed to consider options for a stormwater detention and development area, which could reduce the size and the cost of the upgrade required.

Waste and Sustainability

Strategy I5: Provide an efficient waste management system promoting minimisation and recycling.

- I5.1 Provide a waste and recycling collection service**
- I5.2 Improve waste reduction and recycling practices**
- I5.3 Manage the operation of Council's waste landfill depots**
- I5.4 Provide disposal options for non-landfill or recycling waste**

- Council has had an active role on the Netwaste Regional Domestic Waste and Recycling Contract Management Committee during the term.
- The new kerbside food and organics waste service commenced in April 2016 and Council now collects 3598 recycling bins fortnightly, 3196 residual domestic bins fortnightly, 3245 food and garden organics bins weekly, 736 commercial residual bins weekly and services 276 street litter bins.
- There were a number of regional initiatives Council participated in through Netwaste including scrap metal collection, wood and timber mulching, household chemical cleanout collection, kerbside bulky waste collection, Waste 2 Art program, regional waste tender, organics management study and used motor oil collection.
- Council has been successful in receiving a number of grants for its waste management. In 2013/14 Council received a grant of \$262,415 from the Environmental Trust to assist with the introduction of the organics collection and processing service. Council successfully obtained project grants of \$93,531 to develop a Community Recycling Facility at Daroobalgie Waste Depot in 2014/15 and received \$155,461 for environmental improvements to the Bedgerabong, Ootha, Warroo, Garema and Wirrinya waste depots.
- Council engaged an independent landfill planning consultant to develop a Rural Waste Facilities Option Plan and provide a cost assessment of all of Council's rural landfills. Council has engaged the rural communities and is developing a final options paper for determination in late 2016.

COUNCIL DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL: 28,780 LITRES OF USED MOTOR OIL, 1595 TONNES OF SCRAP METAL, 2507.42 TONNES OF DOMESTIC RECYCLABLES, 11,800M³ OF GREENWASTE MULCH AND 10,123KG OF PROBLEM WASTE

Strategy I2: Delivery of quality sewerage management services to the community.

- I2.2 Maintain efficient and effective operations of the Sewer Treatment Plan in accordance with licensing requirements.**

- Discharged samples from the Sewer Treatment Plant are monitored for compliance with Council's Environment Protection Act licence. All parameters complied at 100% over the four year period.

Strategy NE4: Reduce carbon footprint.

- NE4.1 Actively pursue reduction of carbon footprint from energy consumption within Council's sphere of influence**

- In 2013 Council adopted the *Integrated Energy Management Plan* and conducted level two energy audits for the Central West Livestock Exchange, Town Hall and Water Filtration Plant.
- Energy use has been reduced at the CWLE and the Town Hall by replacing existing lights with LED lights. Electricity costs have been reduced by the installation in 2013 of power factor correction equipment at the Water Treatment Plant, Town Hall and the Town Pool.
- A review of Forbes Shire Council's energy usage was started in 2015/16. The implementation of the energy reduced plan is expected to commence in the 2016/17 year.

Biodiversity

Strategy NE2: Sustainable use and management of our natural resources and open spaces.

NE2.1 Manage the community's open spaces in accordance with Open Spaces Asset Management Plan

NE2.2 Control and promote noxious weed eradication

NE2.3 Develop and maintain a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan

- Open spaces were managed and condition inspections completed in accordance with *Open Space Asset Management Plan* throughout the term. A 10-year renewal program was developed in 2013/14 with playground infrastructure replaced at Apex Park and Nelson Park in May 2014 and May 2015 respectively.
- General vegetation control was carried out on state and regional road shoulders, around the Homemaker Centre, Central West Livestock Exchange, Central Business District, urban footpaths, drains, laneways, parks and sporting facilities during the term.
- The annual weed control program was implemented over the four year period. Major weeds identified and sprayed included African Boxthorn, Wild Radish, Coolatai Grass, St Johns Wort, Scotch Thistle, Bathurst/Noogoora Burr, Silverleaf Nightshade and Spiny Burrgrass.
- Numerous educational and information days were held throughout the term to promote the awareness obligation and control mechanism of noxious weeds. Council also actively participated in the Lachlan Valley Weed Advisory Committee's education and media campaigns including ECO Day and weed identification days.
- Commenced the development of a Roadside Vegetation Management Plan and Glove Box Guide. The final draft has been completed and is scheduled to be implemented in late 2016.

COUNCIL MAINTAINS 30 PARKS AND 14 SPORTING GROUNDS AND FACILITIES IN THE FORBES LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

People and Communities

Strategy NE5: Recognised as environmentally conscious community.

NE5.1 Community involved in environmental initiatives through the Environment Advisory Committee

- Council's Environment Advisory Committee addressed environmental issues and completed actions as identified in the *Environment Advisory Committee Strategy 2015-2020*, which was adopted in August 2015.
- Some of the other initiatives of the Environmental Advisory Committee included the finalisation of the Parkes Road landscaping plan and identifying the Aquatic Area for development as a biodiversity walkway for incorporation into the Lake Forbes master plan.
- Council has also conducted a number of events coinciding with becoming an environmentally conscious community. In 2012/13, Council received grant funding to continue the Love Food Hate Waste Project, which is an initiative of the Environment Protection Authority. Free supermarket tours with the community dietician were held as part of the project and focused on packaging and labelling and the importance of writing a shopping list to reduce waste.
- Another initiative undertaken by Council to eradicate pollution in the Local Government Area is Clean Up Australia Day. Clean Up Australia Day is held annually on the first Sunday in March. A schools clean-up day is also held on the Friday before the community clean-up. The event is always well supported by Forbes residents and over the past three years, the clean-up has taken place around Lake Forbes and Bedgerabong Road.

Strategy P4: Significant Heritage sites to be protected and maintained.

P4.1 Partner with other stakeholders to protect and maintain significant sites

- Council's s.355 Heritage Advisory Committee met on a bi-monthly basis throughout the term. The Ben Hall Festival was held in 2015. Forbes Heritage Week was celebrated throughout the term and was rebranded to Forbes Heritage in 2016.
- Council received funding in 2013-2014 from the NSW Heritage Office for assistance in engaging a Heritage Advisor and operating the Forbes Local Heritage Fund. The Heritage Advisor now visits Forbes six times a year and has provided assistance to more than 40 owners of items of heritage significance.
- The Heritage Advisor also assisted in the judging of the Forbes Medal, facilitated a number of workshops and was involved in Forbes Heritage events throughout the term. Council provided funding through the Forbes Local Heritage Fund for items of heritage significance. During the term assistance was provided to the Forbes Library for building renovations, the Forbes and District Historical Society for the restoration of the Ivel tractor.