

**APPENDIX 2C.**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO  
NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

## **A) PLANNING**

### **Wellington Shire Council**

The first Wellington Local Environment Plan (LEP) was implemented in 1987 followed by a second LEP gazetted in 1995.

Declining population numbers due to property amalgamation are a problem within the Wellington Shire. The council has introduced a subdivision policy, which does not allow the construction of a second home on a property. This policy may potentially inhibit population growth within the Shire. Council has an active policy of trying to attract industry to the shire. Development Applications are not required for developments within the shire except for intensive development.

The village of Yeoval is zoned as General Rural 1A by Wellington Shire, whereas the portion in Cabonne Shire is zoned Village.

Wellington Council is collating much of their data, including some vegetation mapping, using the Geographical Information System - Map Info.

### **Dubbo City Council**

The area west of the Little River and north of Toongi is the only part of the Little River Catchment within the Dubbo Shire. It is classified as Zone 1 A – General Rural. The Dubbo Local Environmental Plan 1997 - Rural Areas was gazetted in 1998 and Council plans to update this every five years. The City of Dubbo is covered by a separate LEP. This is to ensure that a buffer zone remains between the rural areas and the expanding urban area.

Rural zones have a minimum of 800 ha, whereas urban areas are zoned in lots of 25 ha. This difference has been determined as being necessary to maintain agricultural productivity, but may cause some potential for conflict between hobby and commercial farms. Council's key objective in rural areas is production, and population growth could lead to loss of production.

The Dubbo LEP - Rural Areas is based on the 1995 Dubbo Rural Area Development Strategy, which resulted from a series of public meetings. A number of objectives were defined in the strategy to protect agricultural production. The requirements to meet these objectives are specified for each zone within the LEP. The different objectives are:

Development opportunity objectives - agriculture, transport, tourism, forestry, mining, recreation, settlement and cultural heritage.

Environmental management objectives - waterways and flooding, aquifers, erosion, dryland salinity, wildlife habitats and contaminated land.

Development Applications (DA) are assessed against the 6 environmental heads of consideration. A DA and consent is required for cotton development, but not for other irrigation development. Dubbo is the only council in the state which requires a DA for cotton.

Dryland salinity is a major issue facing within the urban area of Dubbo City Council. Large sums of money have been invested at Troy Gully by the council & DLWC to manage the salinity.

Dubbo City Council has a GIS unit to manage its data acquisition.

## **Cabonne Shire Council**

The Cabonne Local Environmental Plan was first implemented in 1991, and has been amended several times since then. A new LEP should be gazetted in 2000. Most of the Little River Catchment within the Cabonne Shire Council is zoned as 1(a) - General Rural. The villages of Cumnock and Yeoval are zoned as 2(v) - Village. Parts of the villages and the hamlets of Baldry and Obley are also classified as zone 1(c) - Rural Small Holdings.

Cabonne Council is developing a GIS system and have cadastre data from LIC data, as have the Bushfire Service. GIS information is being used for property boundaries, cadastre, on site effluent data, noxious weeds monitoring and as a planning tool.

Cabonne Council is strongly influenced by rural residential expansion and intensive agriculture such as viticulture around Orange, rather than the larger areas of extensive agriculture such as the dryland farming areas in the north west of the Shire. In an attempt to slow the decline in the populations of the villages, strategies for rural development were explored under the SARD program (Resources for Regions – Small Towns projects). Cabonne Council is also targeting farmers in the Hawkesbury to relocate to Cabonne where land is more plentiful and development pressures are less. There is currently some debate in Council regarding the need for Development Applications for intensive agriculture.

The development of Cadia Mine is an issue in Cabonne Shire. Cabonne Council own a lime quarry at Molong which has a forty year span and produces around 75 000 tonnes per year. Another mine has a sixty year span and produces 60 000 tonnes per year. These mines are an important financial asset to Council.

As part of the management planning process, local government budgets are done using five year financial plans. Councils start to consider their annual financial plan in October – November the previous year, for preparation in February – March. These proposals go on exhibition in April – May for six weeks and then become operational in July. Groups need to get involved during the draft exhibition of the proposed planning and financial processes if they want to influence council landuse policy and expenditure.

There are opportunities to bring together catchment management planning and Council activities through the State of the Environment reporting to ensure that land management issues are identified. The State of the Environment report should be used as a working document by Councils and others to set policies and strategies relating to the environment.

## **B) WEEDS**

Macquarie Valley Weeds Advisory Council provides a means of cooperation between the Upper Macquarie Shires of Cabonne, Wellington, Orange, Dubbo, Narromine, Gilgandra and Parkes. In the Cabonne Shire, weeds are mostly a grazing issue in the Tablelands region and along the rivers. There is a weeds section within council. However, through the Macquarie Valley Weeds Advisory Committee a regional approach to weeds is being adopted. This will be part of CentROC (Wellington and Cabonne Shires), who will work closely with OROC.

Wellington Shire is very concerned about weeds, especially along the river. Poor access and low awareness increases the problem. Weed control may need to be linked to the control of pest animals, as animals can act as a vector for the spread of weeds. Council believes that Management Plans are necessary for all declared noxious weeds; currently, only a plan for blue heliotrope has been prepared.

Wellington Shire wants to develop a strategy for weed control, but for this to be effective they need the cooperation of Dubbo and Cabonne Shires. This needs to happen quickly while there is still the chance of gaining control over the weeds, and before the production base is significantly affected. At present Wellington feels there is inadequate coordination between councils and insufficient allocation of resources to adequately address weeds issues.

Global Positioning System (GPS) systems are being used in Wellington Shire as part of the annual weed management review. The weeds officers can accurately plot weed infestations using GPS.

## **C) VEGETATION**

The Cabonne Shire has supported tree nurseries at Molong Central School and Molong Catholic Primary; however, these are not well utilized. They would like to see Greening Australia help to link these nurseries with the wider community.

There are some opportunities for farmers to compost materials and the Business Enterprise Centre in Orange and Cabonne Councils are looking for areas of development, as are the Central West Regional Development Board. In the future there may be potential for carbon credits for the planting of vegetation.

Vegetation remnants and reserves in Wellington Shire have been mapped in the GIS. Mt Arthur Reserve, to the west of Wellington the town and just outside the Little River catchment, is Crown Land and is run by a Trust.

The Dubbo City Council has been active in promoting the bush and the Parks and landcare section has developed a Bushcare kit.

## **D) WATER QUALITY**

Dubbo Town Water Supply (TWS) is drawn from the Macquarie River and underground aquifers. There is an increasing trend to surface water supply as the aquifer supplies are diminishing. Dubbo is situated near a major recharge area to its north and east. DLWC has produced groundwater vulnerability maps of whole area. Water quality sampling to ensure adequate standards for human health is also undertaken at a number of sites.

Geurie and Wellington also rely on the Macquarie River for their water supply. A Streamwatch program is run within schools in Wellington as well as regular DLWC monitoring.

In some years, the water quality in the Bell and Macquarie River is so bad it is unsuitable for swimming in the river. This may be due to very high counts of Blue Green algae in the Macquarie, particularly when flows are very low.

### **Septic Systems**

Septic systems are a major issue in Yeoval and Cumnock. The soils are poorly suited to effluent disposal. In very wet winters, when the soil is already saturated, septic waste may seep from the surface. Rating began in July 1999, to finance the construction of a new sewage system in Yeoval which should begin in 2000. It may be as long as four years in some villages in the Cabonne Shire areas, before sewerage construction is complete. Groundwater and surface water is monitored by PPK

**Biosolids**

Sydney Biosolids sends about 80% of the biosolids to the Cabonne Shire (mainly west of Molong/Cudal). Biosolids are also being spread in the Toongi district in the Dubbo Shire. Until July 1999, the EPA required a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for each property where biosolids were used. However, now there are no licenses required to spread biosolids – but the responsibility rests with the operator or landholder to ensure that no pollution occurs. This has reduced councils' involvement with the issue. Cabonne Council also determined that biosolids were "ancillary" to agriculture and so no Development Application was required. Dubbo also does not require a DA.

**Floodplain Management**

A floodplain management plan is now being developed by Dubbo City Council for flood defined land along the Macquarie and Talbragar Rivers. Wellington Shire Council already has a flood study for the Bell and Macquarie Rivers within the urban areas. Irrigation within the shire is largely by centre pivot. Wellington Council does not want to see earthworks constructed along the Macquarie River.

**CONTACTS:**

Bob Stewart, Planning, Cabonne Shire Council

DH Ramsland, General Manager, Wellington  
Owen Johns, Director, Technical Services, Wellington  
Sid Craythorne, Planning, Wellington Shire Council

Doug Herd, Director, Environmental Health, Dubbo  
John Davis, Manager, Environment and Health, Dubbo  
Ken Rogers, Director, Parks and Landcare, Dubbo

Central West Planning Group  
Central West Regional Development Board  
Business Enterprise Centre, Orange  
Dubbo City Development Corporation (Peter Hancock, CEO)