



SUPPLEMENTARY STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2008



Prepared by
Gloucester Shire Council
August 2008

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Acknowledgement

Material used in the preparation of this document is acknowledged within the relevant sections of the report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	2
MAYORS MESSAGE	6
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	7
<u>BACKGROUND</u>	7
<u>HUMAN SETTLEMENT</u>	8
POPULATION	8
DEMOGRAPHICS	8
DEVELOPMENT	10
BASIX	12
ROADS	13
BRIDGES	14
<u>LAND</u>	15
DROUGHT	15
EXPLORATION AND MINING ACTIVITIES	16
GAS EXPLORATION	17
BUSHFIRE	18
<u>WATER</u>	19
DRINKING WATER QUALITY	19
RAINFALL	19
RAINWATER TANK REBATE	19
RIVER WATER QUALITY	21
<u>AIR</u>	22
TEMPERATURE	22
WIND SPEED, PRESSURE AND HUMIDITY	23
AIR QUALITY	24
<u>BIODIVERSITY</u>	24
THREATENED SPECIES	24
NOXIOUS AND ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS	26
<u>WASTE</u>	27
GARBAGE DEPOT	27
RECYCLING	27

MOBILE MUSTER	28
DRUM MUSTER	28
SHARPS MANAGEMENT	28
ILLEGAL DUMPING	29
<u>NOISE</u>	<u>29</u>
GENERAL	29
STATFORD COAL MINE	29
<u>HERITAGE</u>	<u>30</u>
EUROPEAN HERITAGE	30
INDIGENOUS HERITAGE	30

Mayors Message

Welcome to the 2008 State of Environment Supplement Report. This report outlines the changes and progress trends that affect the state of the environment for the Gloucester Shire area.

We continue to move forward and progress within the region whilst working to make better decisions to protect our environmental and social assets of the community. The report shows that new innovations are being adopted to ensure that the concept of Ecological Sustainable Development is implemented through council, business and community activities.

I therefore submit the 2008 Annual State of Environment Report to the community of the Gloucester Shire for your consideration



Julie Lyford
Gloucester Shire Mayor

INTRODUCTION

People value the environment as part of their lives, placing it third after family and friends. It is therefore important to recognise the quality of our environment and monitor the impacts and changes that may lead to its degradation.

One of the purposes of preparing the State of the Environment report is to systematically monitor environmental performance so that measures can be identified to improve the quality of our environment and track the success of our management decisions.

The State of the Environment Report is Council's and the community's annual environmental 'report card' and, as such, provides relevant information for Council policies and programs.

BACKGROUND

The Gloucester Local Government Area is located in the north-eastern corner of the Hunter region, approximately 120 kilometres north of Newcastle. The shire encompasses an area of approximately 2,952 km².

Gloucester Shire forms a significant catchment for the Manning River, with four main river systems, these being the Gloucester, Barrington, Barnard and Avon Rivers. The Barrington Tops National Park and large areas of State Forest encompass areas of steep topography. These areas are relatively pristine with a high conservation value, representing a significant ecotourism resource for the area.

Gloucester Shire Council has a commitment to the community through its Corporate Objectives to "To enhance the quality of life in the Gloucester Shire through the provision of services based on sound economic, social and environmental planning."

HUMAN SETTLEMENT

Demands for infrastructure, including housing, energy, water, transport and waste disposal, are increasing as the population grows (as indicated by the 2006 census). Supplying this infrastructure results in changes to land uses and other impacts on the environment. Sound planning can minimise and manage these impacts.

POPULATION

Historical records indicate a steady total population growth since 1911 within the Shire. Preliminary statistics released from the 2006 census indicate a total population of 4802 persons.

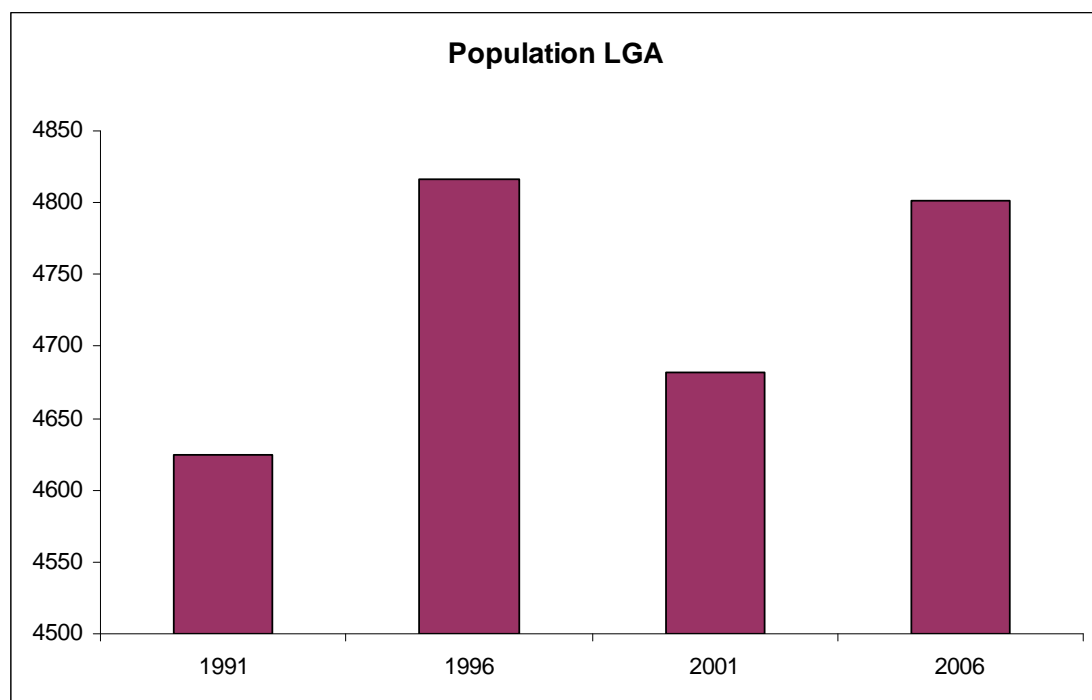


Figure 1. Gloucester Census Population by Local Government Area.

The drop in the population recorded in 2001 is primarily attributable to changes in the working environment of the Timber, Dairying and Agricultural industries in addition to reductions in employment opportunities.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population growth in Gloucester has been accompanied by changes in the age structure, the average number of people per household, and the composition of households. Shifts in demographics drive changes in land use and demand for the various housing types which best accommodate different household structures, age groups and lifestyles.

Table 1. Gloucester Population 2006 Census.

Person Characteristics	Number of Persons	% of Population
Total persons	4802	-
Males	2353	49
Females	2449	51
Indigenous persons	171	3.6

In the 2006 Census of the total population 49% were males and 51% were females. From the 2006 census data the median age of persons in Gloucester was 46 years, compared with 37 years for persons in Australia. Of the total population in Gloucester 3.6% were Indigenous persons, compared with 2.3% Indigenous persons in Australia.

Table 2. Gloucester Population Age Structure 2006 census.

Age Group	Number of Persons	% of Population
0-4 years	224	4.7%
5-14 years	646	13.5%
15-24 years	420	8.7%
25-54 years	1658	34.5%
55-64 years	783	16.3%
65 years & over	1069	22.3%

In the 2006 Census 18.1% of the population usually resident in Gloucester were children aged between 0-14 years, and 38.6% were persons aged 55 years and over. The median age of persons in Gloucester was 46 years, compared with 37 years for persons in Australia.

Table 3. Gloucester Income (15 years & over) 2006 Census.

Income	Gloucester	Australia
Median Individual Income (\$/weekly)	343	466
Median Household Income (\$/weekly)	665	1027
Median Family Income (\$/weekly)	846	1171

In Gloucester the median weekly individual income for persons aged 15 years and over who were usual residents was \$343, compared with \$466 in Australia. The median weekly household income was \$665, compared with \$1,027 in Australia. The median weekly family income was \$846, compared with \$1,171 in Australia.

Table 4. Gloucester Family Characteristics 2006 Census.

Family Characteristics	Gloucester	% of Total Families
Total Families	1393	-
Couple families with children	496	35.6%
Couple families without children	725	52%
One parent families	157	11.3%
Other families	15	1.1%

In the 2006 Census, there were 1,393 families in Gloucester 35.6% were couple families with children, 52.0% were couple families without children, 11.3% were one parent families and 1.1% were other families.

Table 5. Gloucester Dwelling Characteristics 2006 Census.

Dwelling Characteristics	Gloucester	Australia
Median rent (\$/weekly)	125	190
Median housing loan repayment (\$/monthly)	1078	1300
Average household size	2.3	2.6
Average number of persons per bedroom	1.1	1.1

In Gloucester the median weekly rent was \$125, compared to \$190 in Australia. The median monthly housing loan repayment was \$1,078, compared to \$1,300 in Australia. The average household size was 2.3 and the average number of persons per bedroom was 1.1.

DEVELOPMENT

The number of development applications was slightly lower during the reporting period compared to the number received in the previous year as illustrated in Figure 2.

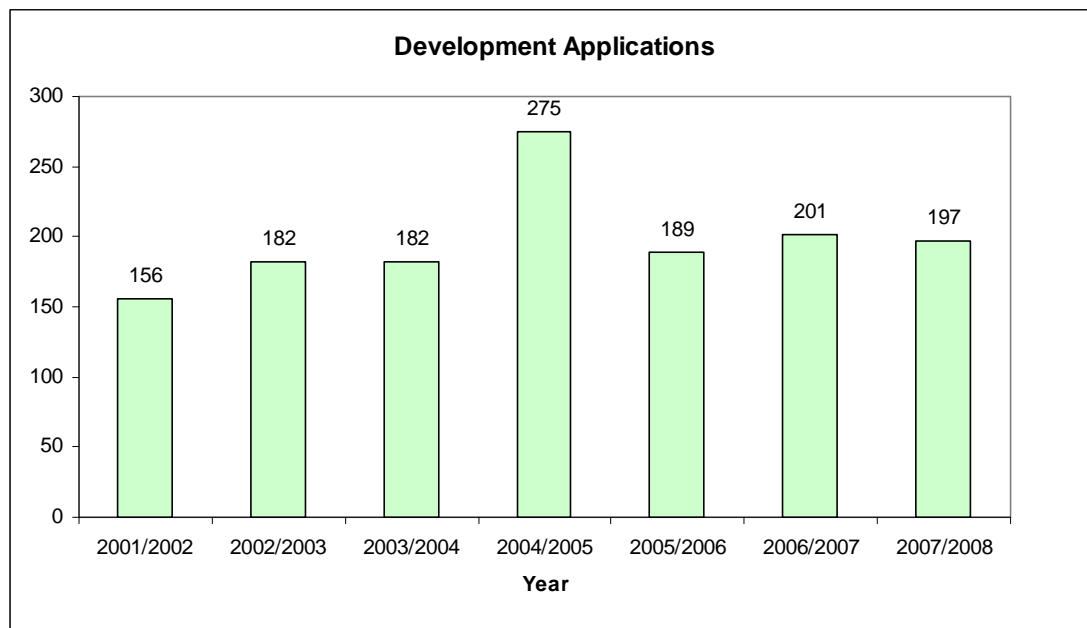


Figure 2. The Total number of development applications determined during 2007-08.

The value of development during the reporting period was lower than the previous years as illustrated below in Figure 3.

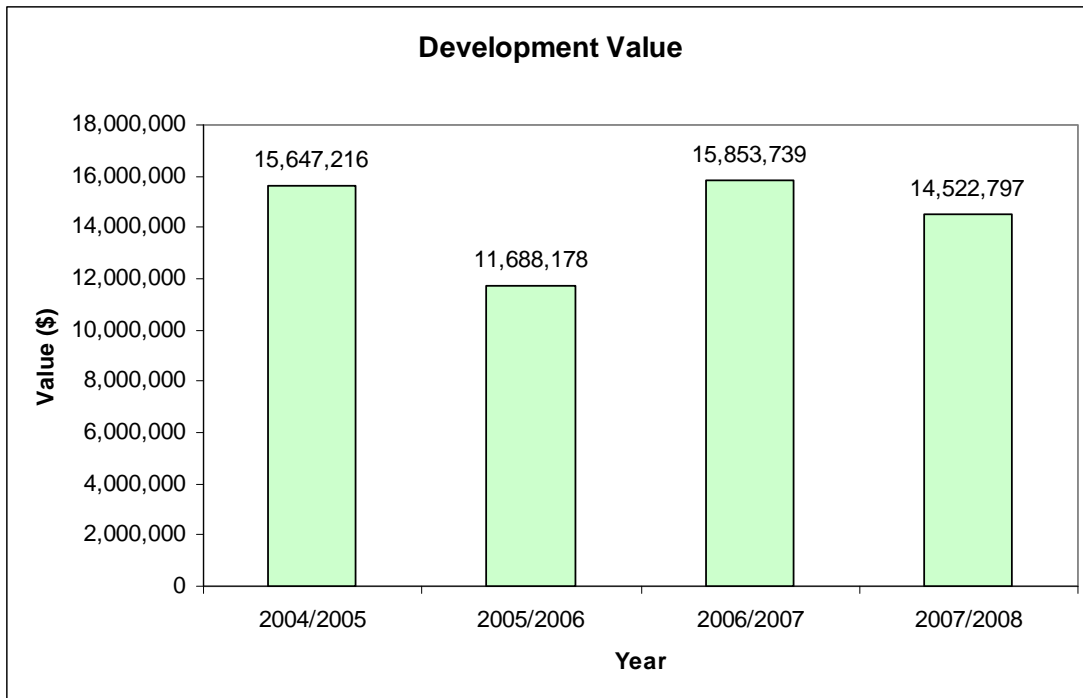


Figure 3. Value of development approved during 2007-08 compared to previous years

The types of development approved during 2007-08 primarily consisted of new dwellings/alterations/additions and sheds/carports as illustrated by Figure 4.

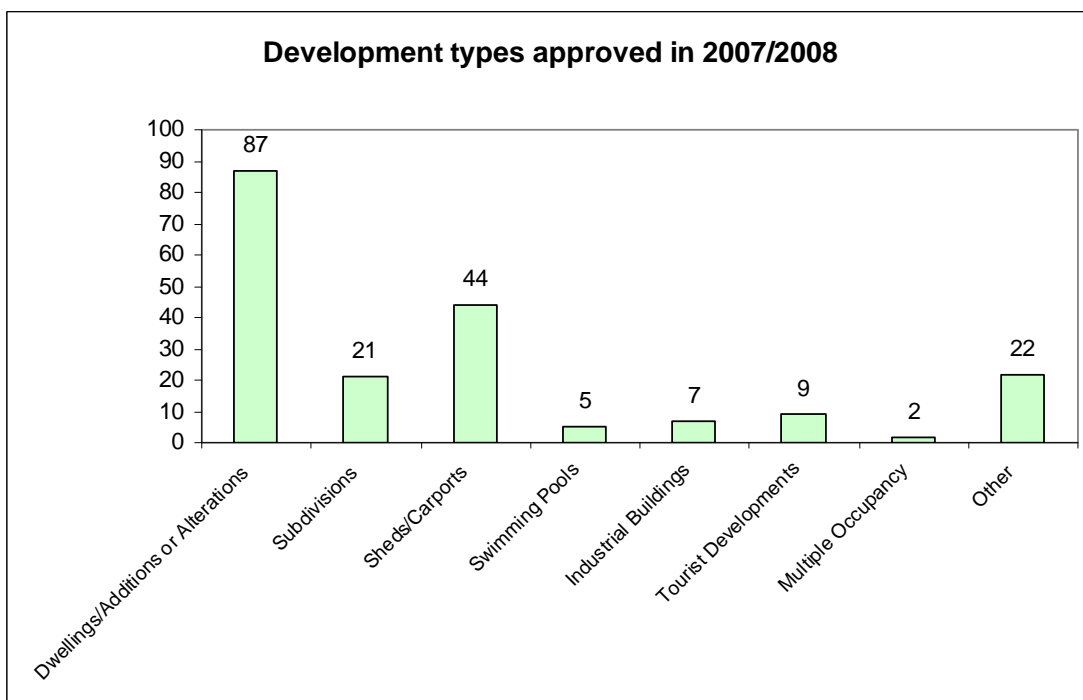


Figure 4. Types of development determined during 2007-08.

BASIX

The Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) was introduced in 2004 as a New South Wales planning requirement that aims to reduce the environmental impacts of new dwellings and more recently alterations and additions.



Figure 5. Sustainable housing features encouraged by BASIX for new developments.

BASIX, the Building Sustainability Index, ensures homes are designed to use less potable water and be responsible for fewer greenhouse gas emissions by setting energy and water reduction targets for houses and units.

Since 2004 all new homes in the Gloucester local government area have incorporated water and energy efficient design in accordance with BASIX.

Council Administration Building Extensions

During the reporting period Council commenced the expansion of the administration building. The extension has included many sustainable features including:

- the installation of rainwater tanks,
- connections for solar power,
- the roof, walls and ceiling are all insulated,
- incorporated passive solar design
- Energy saving light fittings and reduced hot water storage
- Water efficient toilets and taps to reduce water usage
- All the landscaping will be utilising drought tolerant plants reducing irrigation running times

Council is currently investigating funding options for the installation of solar panels on the building as part of Councils commitment to being more sustainable and setting an example to the local community.



Figure 6. New Council building with installation being installed and high windows for passive solar design, and nearing completion

ROADS

Council has a bitumen seal extension program, during the last reporting period under the Roads to Recovery Program which was expended on seal extensions on Scone Road (1 km), Bowman Farm Road (1 km) and Waukivory Road (1 km).

Bucketts Way:

\$30M has been spent on the upgrading of Bucketts Way with commencement of works in the 2000/2001 financial year. All upgrade works have now been completed with the only outstanding project being the duplication of Broad Gully bridge, just south of Gloucester.

Thunderbolts Way:

Approximately 4.5 kilometres of Thunderbolts Way was upgraded and widened this year including works near the Bowman Farm Rod intersection and near the Woko Road intersection.

This work was carried out under an RTA REPAIR Program which provided 50% of the \$800,000 cost. The remaining 50% is borne by Council from its maintenance grant for Thunderbolts Way.

BRIDGES

Council is responsible for some 275 bridges, large culverts (greater than 6 metres in length) and causeways. The refurbishment and upgrade of these structures is in line with Council's long term plan to reduce future maintenance costs and provide improved levels of service. Upgrade works during the reporting period included the replacement of Quarry Bridge on Glen Ward Road, replacement of Geales Yard Bridge on Craven Plateau Road, the refurbishment of Mines Bridge on Old Copeland Road and the construction of a temporary heavy vehicle by-pass bridge on Fairbairns Road.

Gloucester River Bridge Replacement:

The completion of the Gloucester River Bridge occurred in June with the \$1.4M project coming in under budget. \$700,000 was received under a State Timber Bridge Replacement Program with the remaining \$700,000 being met from loans.



Figure 7. The old Gloucester River Bridge and the new Gloucester River Bridge June 2008

Fishways:

Native fish, including the recreationally important Australian bass, now have access to over 300km of upstream habitat, thanks to changes to two causeways in the Gloucester region.

Gloucester Shire Council, the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Streamline River Restoration have worked together to improve fish migration at Rocky Crossing on the Barrington River and Higgins Crossing on the Gloucester River. Rock-ramp fishways have been built at both causeways.

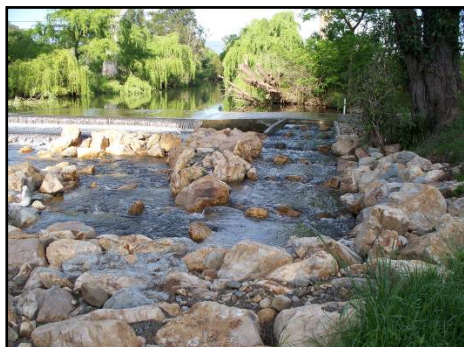


Figure 8. Fishway at Higgins Crossing

LAND

DROUGHT

The State's producers can be seriously affected by drought. The Department of Primary Industries in NSW releases a new drought map each month. The drought maps are available on their web site and are prepared from information provided by the 48 Rural Lands Protection Boards around the state. Drought classification of an area takes into account the following factors:

- A review of historic rainfall records of the area
- Pasture availability
- Climatic events such as frosts
- Seasonal factors such as pasture growing seasons

Declarations for the Gloucester area are provided below.

Table 6 Monthly Drought Declarations

Month	Declaration
July 2007	Satisfactory
August 2007	Satisfactory
September 2007	Satisfactory
October 2007	Satisfactory/Marginal
November 2007	Satisfactory/Marginal
December 2007	Satisfactory
January 2008	Satisfactory
February 2008	Satisfactory
March 2008	Satisfactory
April 2008	Satisfactory
May 2008	Satisfactory
June 2008	Satisfactory

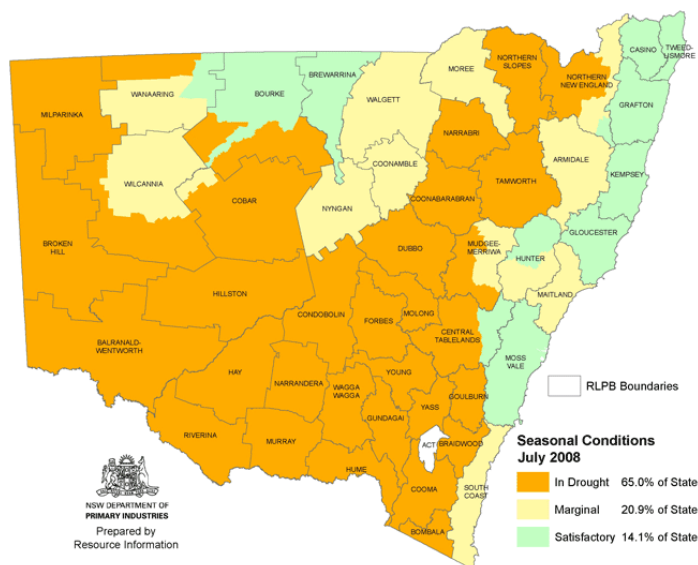


Figure 9. Drought Declaration Map for July 2008

EXPLORATION AND MINING ACTIVITIES

The map (Figure 10) below illustrates the current mineral, petroleum and coal titles for the Gloucester local Government Area. The changes since the last reporting period are the issuing of a 12 month petroleum title licence to Pangaea Oil and Gas Pty Ltd that is due to expire on 6 June 2009, and reduced number of mineral titles. Coal titles remain unchanged.

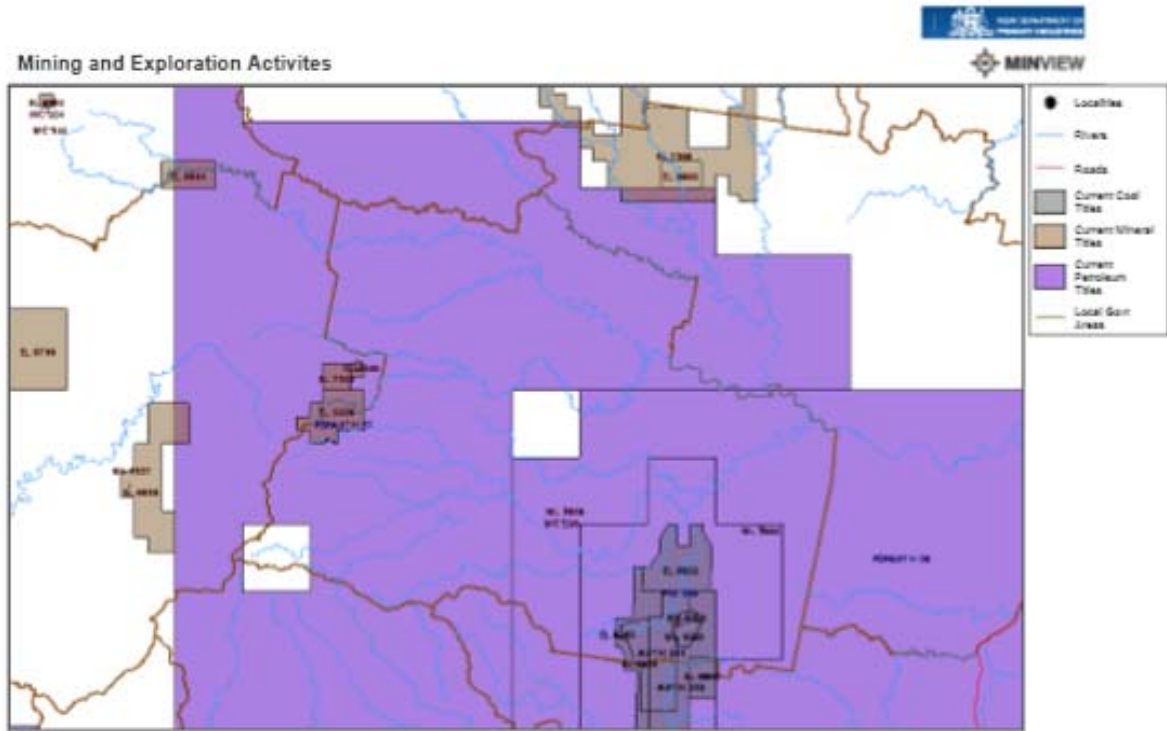


Figure 10. Current Mineral, Petroleum and Coal titles as at October 2008

GAS EXPLORATION

Lucas Molopo Australia Limited holds Petroleum Exploration Licence 285 over an area of approximately 1,050km² in the Gloucester Basin. In Petroleum Exploration Licence 285 Molopo holds a 30% interest and the A.J Lucas Group of Companies, through its subsidiary Lucas Coal Seam Gas Pty Ltd ("Lucas") currently holds the other 70% interest.

Lucas Molopo's activities during the reporting period moved the focus from exploration to testing and preparation for production following confirmation in February this year with independent certification of 2P (proved and probable) reserves of 170.2 billion standard cubic feet of gas.

A formal development proposal has been lodged with the NSW Department of Planning and consultation with authorities, landowners and other stakeholders is underway. (www.molopo.com.au and www.lucas.com.au)



Figure 11 Map of Licence PEL285 (from www.molopo.com.au)

BUSHFIRE



During the reporting period a total of 20 Bush/grass fires were recorded burning 2925 hectares, with approximate breakdown of 2420.1ha on grass land fires and 505ha on forested areas. National Parks and Wildlife Service also had bushfires that burnt a further 707ha.

The Rural Fire Service issued 248 permits for burning during the fire season with an approximate area of 1170ha.

Other state agencies including National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forests NSW, and Dept of Lands have been carrying out controlled burns and trail maintenance towards bushfire prevention during the last reporting period.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has released an updated edition of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006, which is still current. The document applies to all development applications on land that are classified as bushfire prone land on Council's Bushfire Prone Land map. The map has been updated and is available for viewing at Council's Administration Centre.

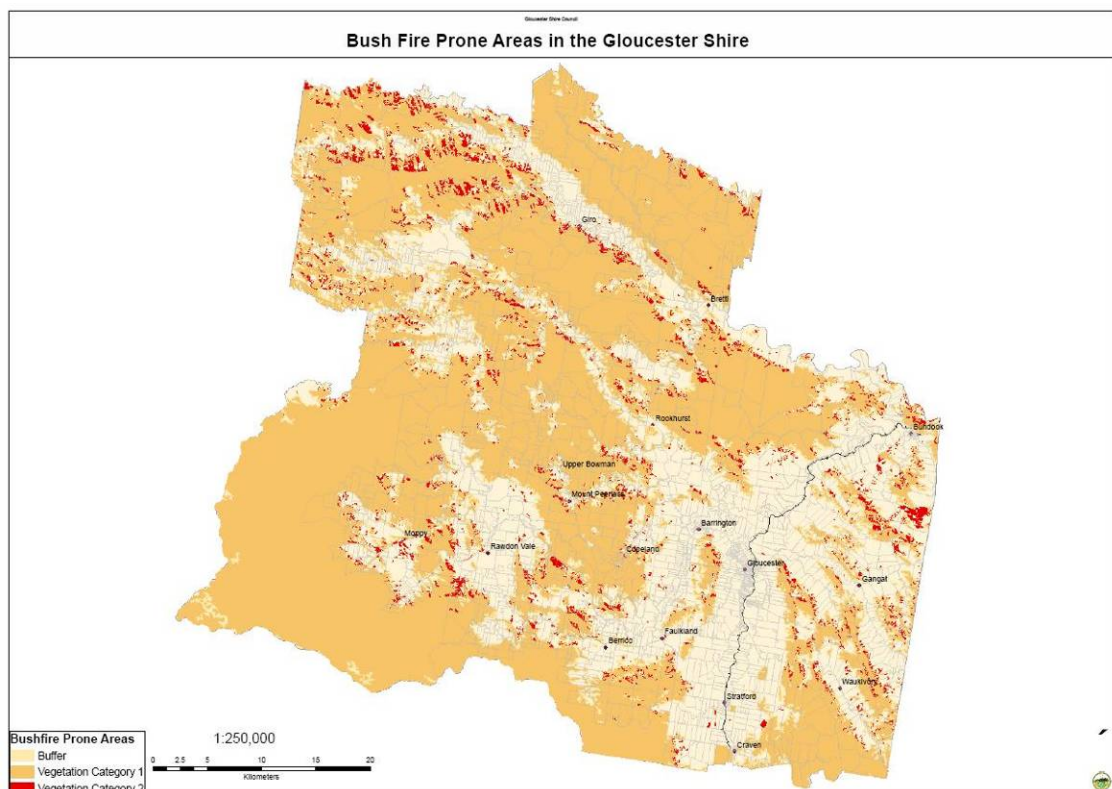


Figure 12. Bushfire Prone Areas in the Gloucester Local Government Area 2006

WATER

DRINKING WATER QUALITY

Council conducts weekly water samples of drinking water supplied to the residents of Gloucester and Barrington. Of all samples conducted during the period several samples during April and May from Barrington failed to meet the NSW Health Departments Drinking Water Guidelines. In response to the failures council notified all residents to boil their water before use. Council also flushed the water mains through the affected area to assist in improving the quality.

RAINWATER TANK REBATE



The Rainwater Tank Rebate is part of the NSW Government's \$310 million Climate Change Fund which is helping business, households and government save energy and water. The rebate is available for the installation of any new rainwater storage system (minimum of 2000Lt capacity) for residential properties in NSW installed between 1 July 2007 to June 30 2009.

Residents have been encouraged to take advantage of the State Government program. Information can be accessed on the Department and Climate Change website www.environment.nsw.gov.au

RAINFALL

Figure 13 shows the rainfall recorded during the reporting period at the Gloucester Rural Fire Service. Figure 14 gives the annual rainfall distribution for July 2007 to June 2008 showing Gloucester in the 1200mm range area. Figure 15 shows monthly average rainfall variations over a 5 year period starting in 2003.

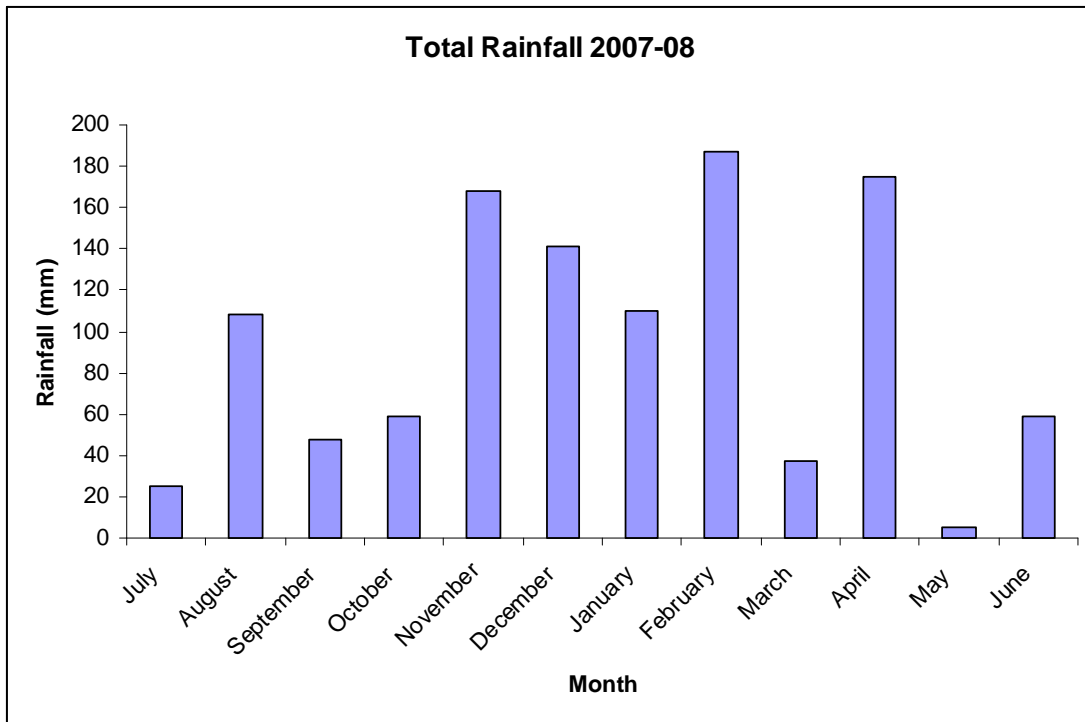


Figure 13. Annual Rainfall figures

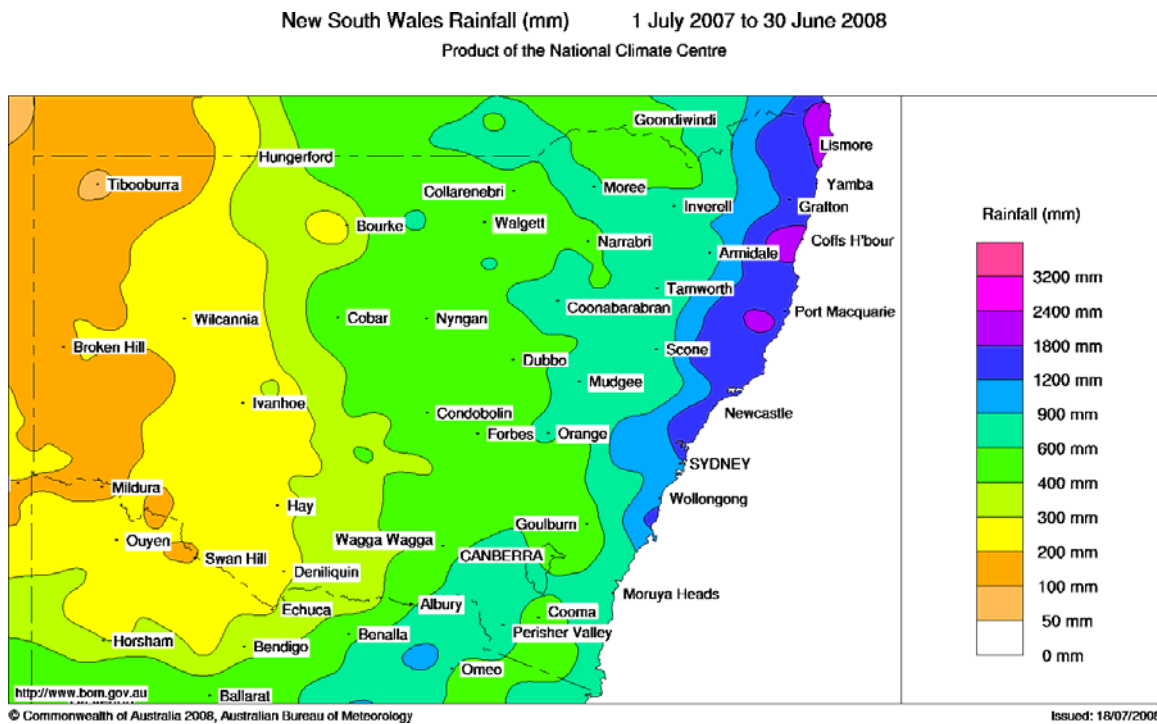


Figure 14. Rainfall Distributions for July 2007 to June 2008

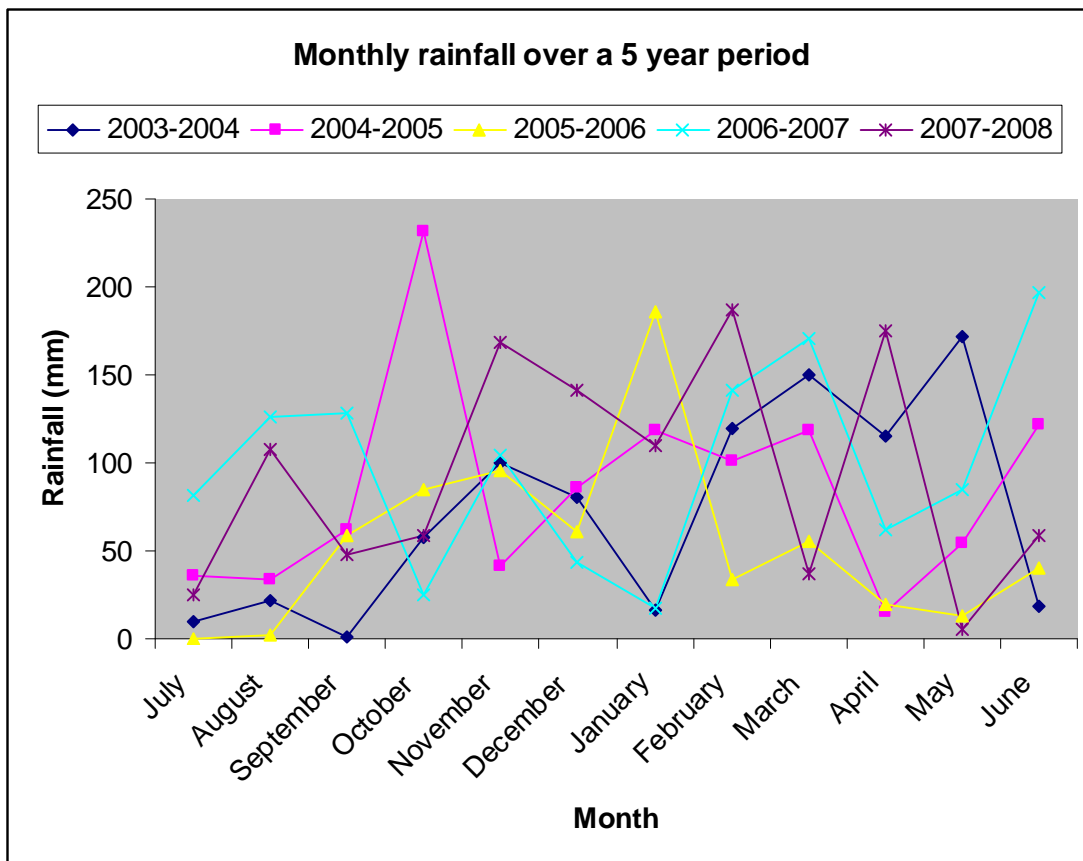
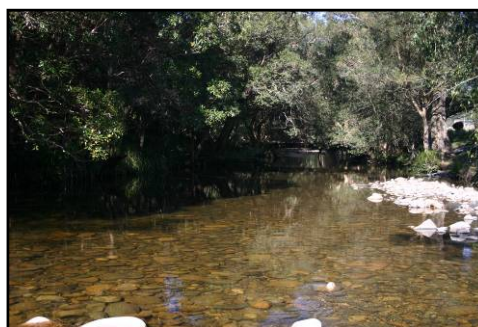


Figure 15. Monthly rainfall data over a 5 year period

RIVER WATER QUALITY

Council has commenced measuring some basic water quality parameters from the major river systems in the Gloucester catchment area.

Due to faulty equipment all measurements taken during the reporting period can not be used for reporting purposes as they may be inaccurate.



The equipment has since been repaired and new data will be collected for the next reporting period.

AIR

TEMPERATURE

Figure 16 shows the average minimum and maximum temperatures recorded during the reporting period at the Gloucester Rural Fire Service. Figures 17 and 18 show the pattern of maximum and minimum temperature ranges from 2003 to 2008 indicating annual variation of temperature ranges.

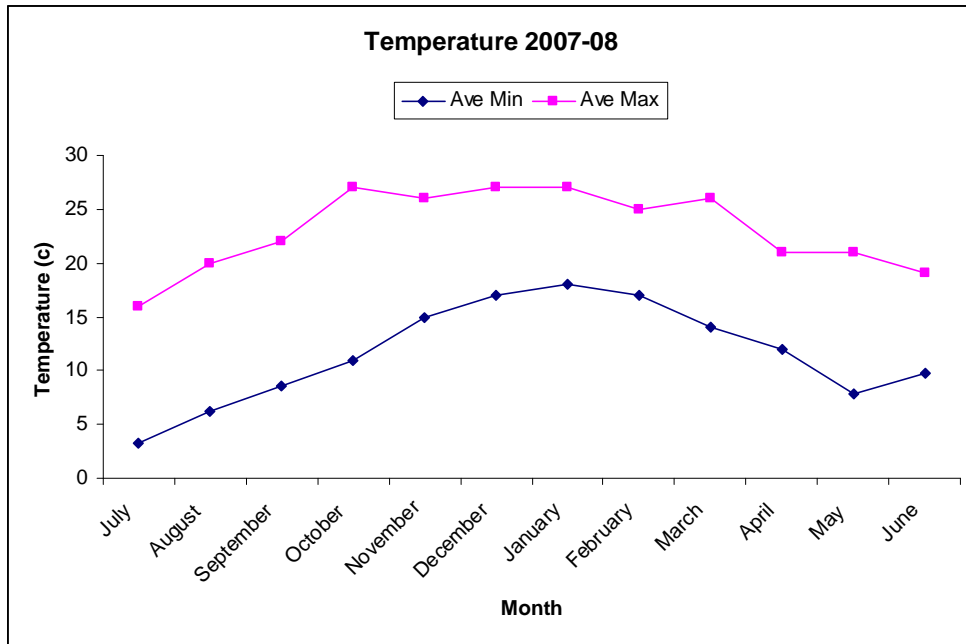


Figure 16. Average minimum and maximum temperatures

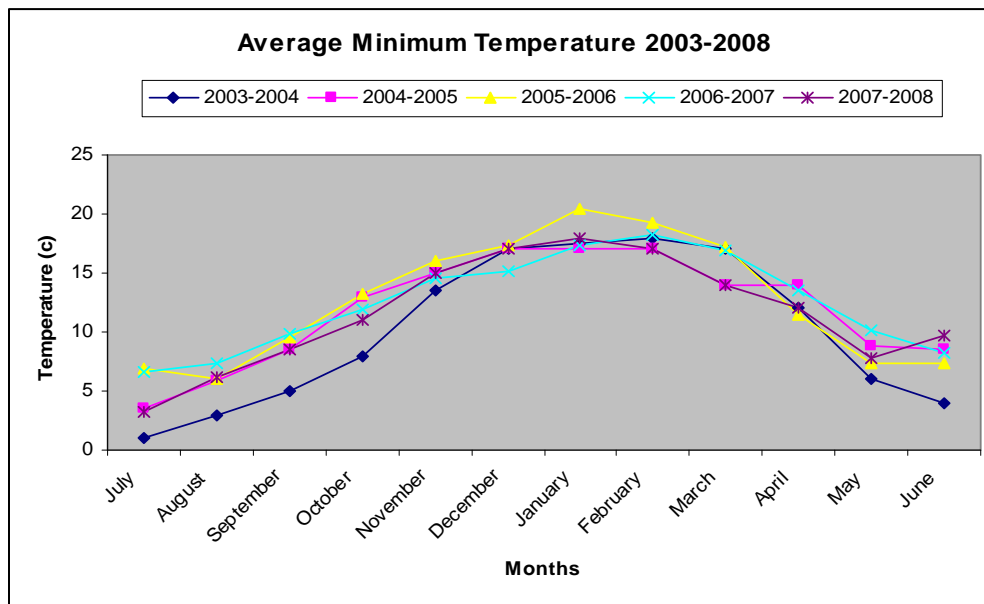


Figure 17. Minimum Temperature Range between 2003 and 2007

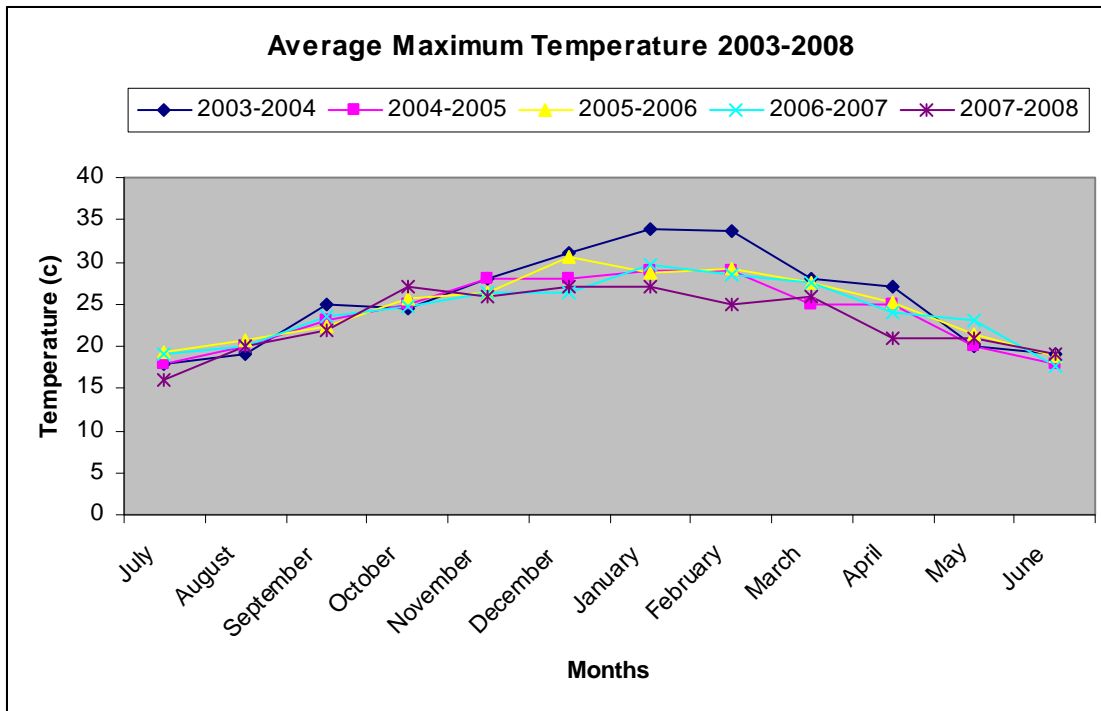


Figure 18. Maximum Temperature Range between 2003 and 2007

WIND SPEED, PRESSURE AND HUMIDITY

There is no long-term wind, Barometric pressure data available for the Shire of Gloucester, with the nearest monitoring station at Taree airport.

Table 7. Average wind speed, pressure, and humidity for the months of Sept 07 to June 08

Month	Wind Speed (km/hr)	Barometric Pressure (hPa)	Humidity (%)
September 2007	19	1015.2	56
October 2007	21	1012.3	52
November 2007	19	1015.3	63
December 2007	20	1013.2	65
January 2008	20	1012.0	69
February 2008	17	1011.1	70
March 2008	17	1017.6	56
April 2008	15	1017.5	66
May 2008	12	1018.6	55
June 2008	14	1020.5	65

AIR QUALITY

Air quality can be affected by a range of factors. The main localised air pollution issue for Gloucester is smoke from prescribed and un-prescribed burns in the local area. Whilst fire is a key management tool, management alternatives, like slashing for small prescribed burns would assist in the reduction of localised problems.



Figure 19 Example of localised Air Pollution

BIODIVERSITY

THREATENED SPECIES

Table 8 identifies current known Threatened species recorded since 1980 in the Gloucester local government area (NPWS Wildlife atlas database Oct 08). The highlighted species have been added to the Wildlife atlas database since the last reporting period.



Figure 20 The Brush Tailed Rock Wallaby, one of the Threatened Species that if found in Gloucester Local Government Area.

Table 8. Current threatened species listed for the Gloucester local government area

Fauna – Common Name	Scientific Name	Status
Booroolong Frog	<i>Litoria booroolongensis</i>	Endangered
Davies' Tree Frog	<i>Litoria daviesae</i>	Vulnerable
Glandular Frog	<i>Litoria subglandulosa</i>	Vulnerable
Stuttering Frog	<i>Mixophyes balbus</i>	Endangered
Speckled Warbler	<i>Pyrrholaemus saggitatus</i>	Vulnerable
Rufous Scrub-bird	<i>Atrichornis rufescens</i>	Vulnerable
Gang-gang Cockatoo	<i>Callocephalon fimbriatum</i>	Vulnerable
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	<i>Calyptorhynchus lathamii</i>	Vulnerable
Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	Endangered
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus magnificus</i>	Vulnerable
Superb Fruit-Dove	<i>Ptilinopus superbus</i>	Vulnerable
Olive Whistler	<i>Pachycephala olivacea</i>	Vulnerable
Grey-crowned Babbler (eastern subspecies)	<i>Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis</i>	Vulnerable
Powerful Owl	<i>Ninox strenua</i>	Vulnerable
Masked Owl	<i>Tyto novaehollandiae</i>	Vulnerable
Sooty Owl	<i>Tyto tenebricosa</i>	Vulnerable
Eastern Pygmy-possum	<i>Cercartetus nanus</i>	Vulnerable
Spotted-tailed Quoll	<i>Dasyurus maculates</i>	Vulnerable
Eastern Quoll	<i>Dasyurus viverrinus</i>	Endangered
Brush-tailed Phascogale	<i>Phascogale tapoatafa</i>	Endangered
Common Planigale	<i>Planigale maculate</i>	Vulnerable
Parma Wallaby	<i>Macropus parma</i>	Vulnerable
Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby	<i>Petrogale penicillata</i>	Vulnerable
Red-legged Pademelon	<i>Thylogale stigmatica</i>	Vulnerable
Eastern Freetail-bat	<i>Mormopterus norfolkensis</i>	Vulnerable
Broad-toothed Rat	<i>Mastacomys fuscus</i>	Vulnerable
Broad-toothed Rat at Barrington Tops	<i>Mastacomys fuscus</i>	Endangered
Yellow-bellied Glider	<i>Petaurus australis</i>	Vulnerable
Squirrel Glider	<i>Petaurus norfolcensis</i>	Vulnerable
Koala	<i>Phascolarctos cinereus</i>	Vulnerable
Rufous Bettong	<i>Aepyprymnus rufescens</i>	Vulnerable
Long-nosed Potoroo	<i>Potorous tridactylus</i>	Vulnerable
Grey-headed Flying-fox	<i>Pteropus poliocephalus</i>	Vulnerable
Large-eared Pied Bat	<i>Chalinolobus dwyeri</i>	Vulnerable
Eastern False Pipistrelle	<i>Falsistrellus tasmaniensis</i>	Vulnerable
Golden-tipped Bat	<i>Kerivoula papuensis</i>	Vulnerable
Little Bentwing-bat	<i>Miniopterus australis</i>	Vulnerable
Eastern Bentwing-bat	<i>Miniopterus schreibersii oceanensis</i>	Vulnerable
Large-footed Myotis	<i>Myotis adversus</i>	Vulnerable
Greater Broad-nosed Bat	<i>Scoteanax rueppellii</i>	Vulnerable
Eastern Cave Bat	<i>Vespadelus troughtoni</i>	Vulnerable
Stephens' Banded Snake	<i>Hoplocephalus stephensii</i>	Vulnerable
Flora	Scientific Name	Status
White-flowered Wax Plant	<i>Cynanchum elegans</i>	Endangered
Milky Silkpod	<i>Parsonsia dorrigoensis</i>	Vulnerable
Barrington Tops Ant Orchid	<i>Chiloglottis platyptera</i>	Vulnerable
Veined Doubletail	<i>Diuris venosa</i>	Vulnerable
Slaty Leek Orchid	<i>Prasophyllum fuscum</i>	Vulnerable
Willi Willi Zieria	<i>Zieria lasiocaulis</i>	Endangered
Polblue Eyebright	<i>Euphrasia ciliolate</i>	Vulnerable
Fragrant Pepperbush	<i>Tasmannia glaucifolia</i>	Vulnerable
Broad-leaved Pepperbush	<i>Tasmannia purpurascens</i>	Vulnerable

NOXIOUS AND ENVIRONMENTAL WEEDS



Councils management of noxious and environmental weeds involves, spraying, fire management in areas near fire trails, village reserves and the waste management centre, education, working with other regional organisations and notifications. All noxious weeds are mapped on Councils GIS system. See Figure 22 for a sample of a weed location map.

Figure 21 Cats claw Creeper

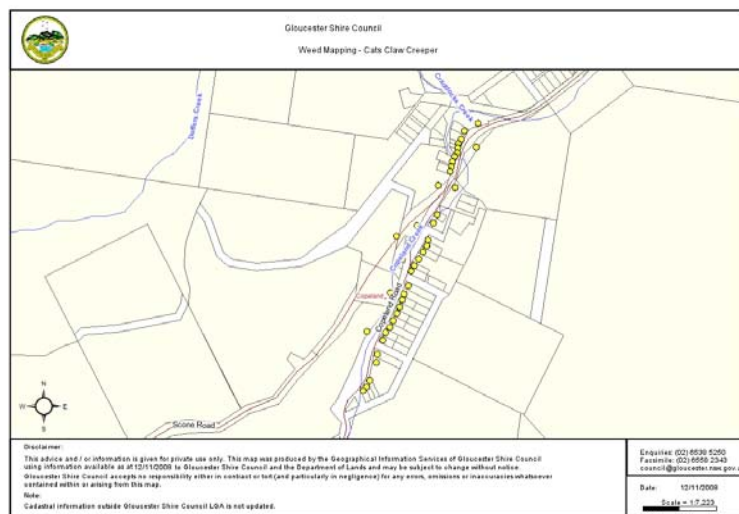


Figure 22 Sample Map of Cats Claw Creeper in Copeland district

During the reporting period over 440 properties were inspected (up 10% on the last reporting period) and 18 letters were sent to landowners who required control measures to be carried out on their properties. The number of letter sent is down 50% on the last reporting period indicating that control in the region is improving.

Council adopted a Notification of Pesticide Spraying Policy, Noxious Weeds Policy and twenty three Class 4 Management Plans. Council also works with the Mid North Coast Weeds Advisory Committee on weed matters including education. Articles are run in the Town and Country Magazine on noxious and environmental weeds and the best eradication methods. In the last reporting period council has and is still working with the Mid North Coast Weed Advisory Committee and the Catchment Management Authority to target weed management in the riparian areas of the region.

During the year council staff has conducted field and information days at the sale yards, the Gloucester Show and a field day specifically on Lantana Management. The staff have attended field days conducted by the Catchment Management Authority to further their skills base.

WASTE

GARBAGE DEPOT

Rehabilitation work has been conducted including revegetation works, grass works and bank re-alignment. This work is all part of the annual rehabilitation contribution heading towards the closure of the Gloucester Waste Depot scheduled for 2013.



Figure 23 Gloucester Waste Depot Rehabilitation progress

RECYCLING

Recyclables collected from the kerbside during the reporting period have increased by 41 630kg compared to the previous reporting period are graphed in Figure 24.

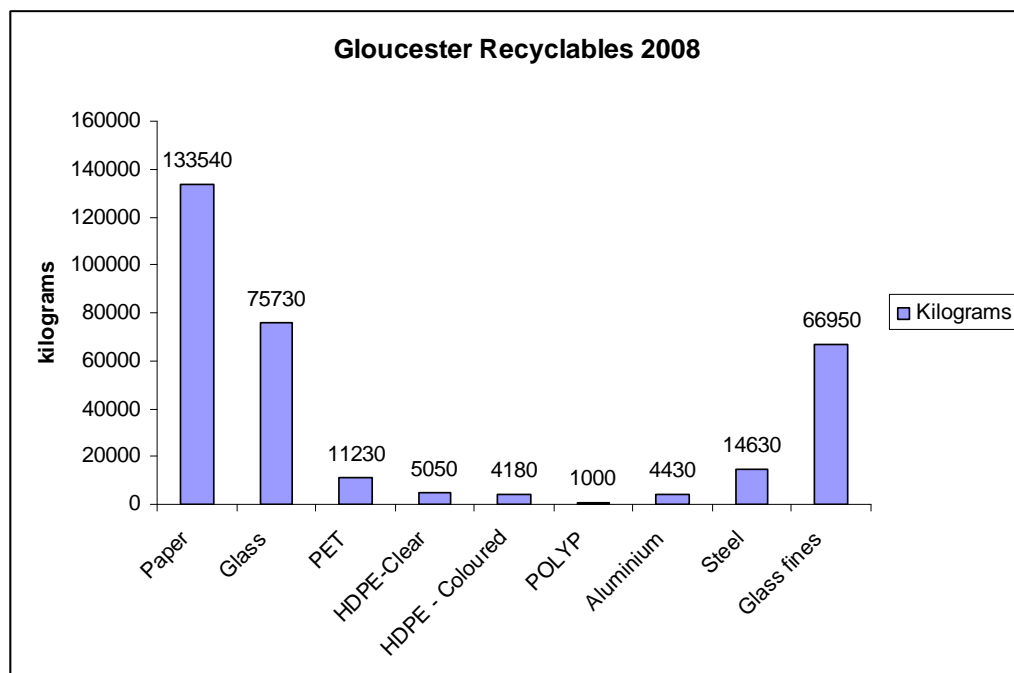


Figure 24. Recyclable Materials collected from Gloucester July 2007 to June 2008

MOBILE MUSTER

Council continues to support and take part in the mobile muster campaign. The last reporting period saw the collection of 45 mobile phones and chargers. It is envisioned that the muster be promoted to ensure the continued support by the local community.

DRUM MUSTER

Drum muster is the national program for the collection and recycling of empty, cleaned, non-returnable crop production and on-farm animal health chemical containers. Council is a partner in the program and provides a collection point at the Gloucester Waste Depot for these containers.

Council processed approximately 1600 during the last reporting period.



Figure 25 DrumMuster Collection point as Gloucester Waste Depot

The processed containers are made into a variety of products that include wheelie bins, outdoor furniture, irrigation pipes, guideposts and reflectors.

SHARPS MANAGEMENT

During the reporting period Council widely distributed brochures on safe sharps disposal and the location of the new sharps disposal bins that were installed in the prior reporting period.

Council has also recorded a decrease in the number of sharps sightings and reports from staff, contractors and the community.

ILLEGAL DUMPING

Council continues to investigate and follow up incidents of illegal dumping in the local government area. The main instances of illegal dumping occurring are residents dumping domestic waste in waste bins provided for visitor use in public areas.

NOISE

GENERAL

Of all the noise related complaints received by Council during the reporting period approximately 75% related to crowing roosters and barking dogs in the suburban areas. The other complaints covered a wide variety of noise issues.

Council manages barking dog complaints through its Companion Animal Management Plan, and enforces the keeping of roosters under the Local Government Orders Regulation in which poultry may be kept given that they do not become a nuisance to adjoining properties.

STATFORD COAL MINE

Stratford Coal Mine (SCM) has a Noise Management plan in place that details monitoring, reporting and management requirements in respect to noise that the SCM operations.

During the reporting period the SCM Annual report June 2008 detailed that SCM received 10 noise related complaints, this was an increase of 2 complaints from the previous years. The majority of complaints were in relation to night time noise (operations between 10pm to 7am Monday to Saturday and 10pm to 8am).

HERITAGE

EUROPEAN HERITAGE

Gloucester Local Environmental Plan 2000 (LEP) aims to conserve the European heritage of the Gloucester area. There are various items listed and areas of heritage significance are listed in the plan under schedule 5. The LEP is currently under review by Council.

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE

The Department of Environment and Climate Change have indicated that there are 32 known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites recorded within Gloucester as at July 2007.

Table 9. Known Indigenous cultural heritage sites for the Gloucester Local Government area

Site Feature	Number
Artefact	14
Burial	1
Ceremonial Ring (Stone or Earth)	6
Conflict	2
Grinding Groove	2
Stone Arrangement	1
Modified Tree (Carved or Scarred)	6
Total	32