



# **SUPPLEMENTARY STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT 2007**



Prepared by  
Gloucester Shire Council  
August 2007

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**Acknowledgement:**

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

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## **MAYORS MESSAGE**

This year's annual State of the Environment Report is supplementary to previous reports and the extensive report developed for the 2004 reporting period. It provides additional information and where available updated information on the state of the environment in the shire.

The report aims to identify and highlight areas of significant environmental change. These changes can then be monitored and where necessary managed in a sustainable manner. I therefore submit the 2007 Supplementary State of the Environment Report to the community for your consideration.

## **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.

The last comprehensive State of the Environment report was prepared in 2004 and shall be prepared every 4 years, coinciding with the end of the financial year of the general Council elections.

Supplementary reports are prepared each year in the interim. Council has produced this supplementary report for the year ending July 2007.

## **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 km<sup>2</sup>.

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."

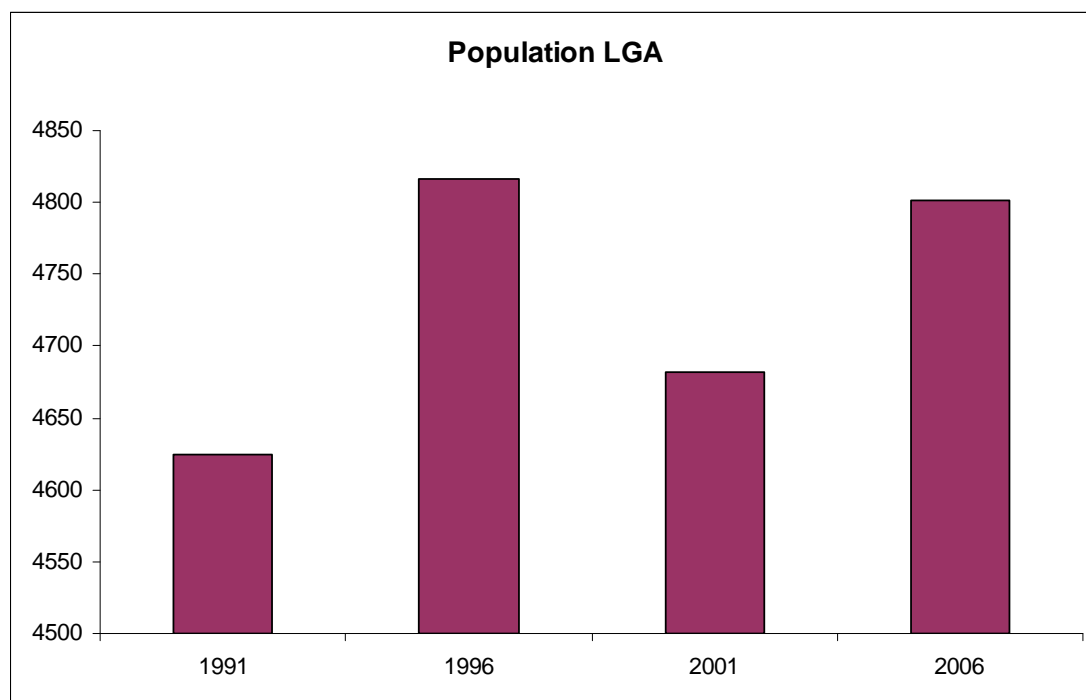
## **HUMAN SETTLEMENT**

### **POPULATION**

Demands for infrastructure, including housing, energy, water, transport and waste disposal, are increasing as the population grows. Supplying this

infrastructure results in changes to land uses and other impacts on the environment. Sound planning can minimise and manage these impacts.

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.

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number of Persons</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
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.

<b>Income</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>Australia</b>
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.

<b>Family Characteristics</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>% of Total Families</b>
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.

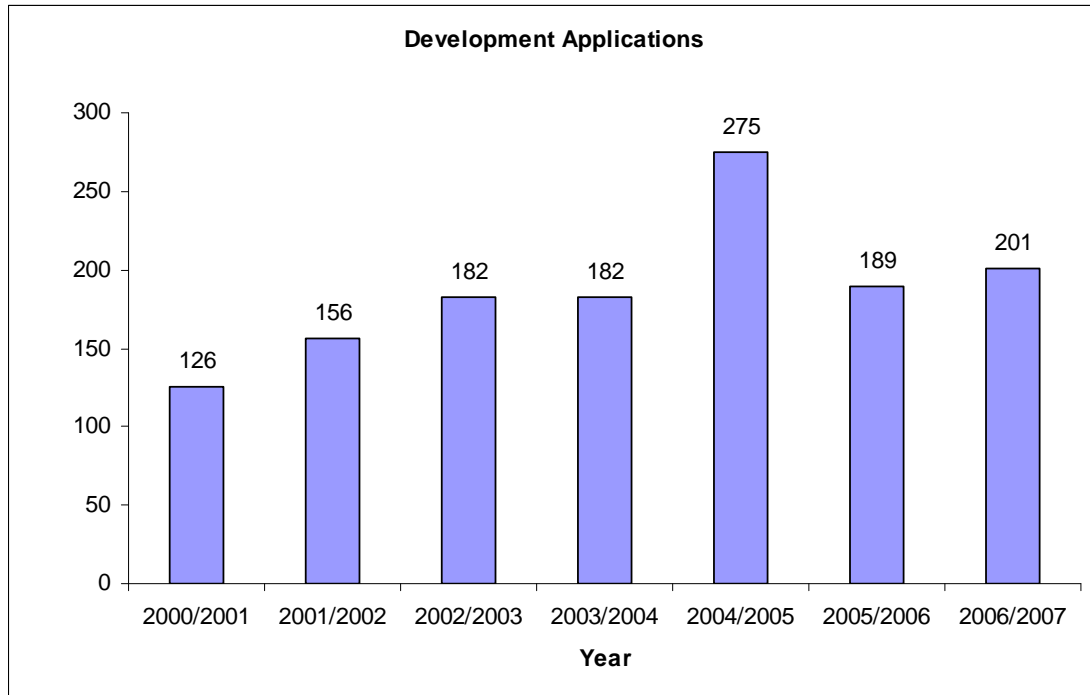
<b>Dwelling Characteristics</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>Australia</b>
Median rent (\$/weekly)	125	190
Median housing loan repayment (\$/monthly)	1078	1300
Average household size	2.3	2.6
Average number of persons per bedroom	1.1	1.1



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.

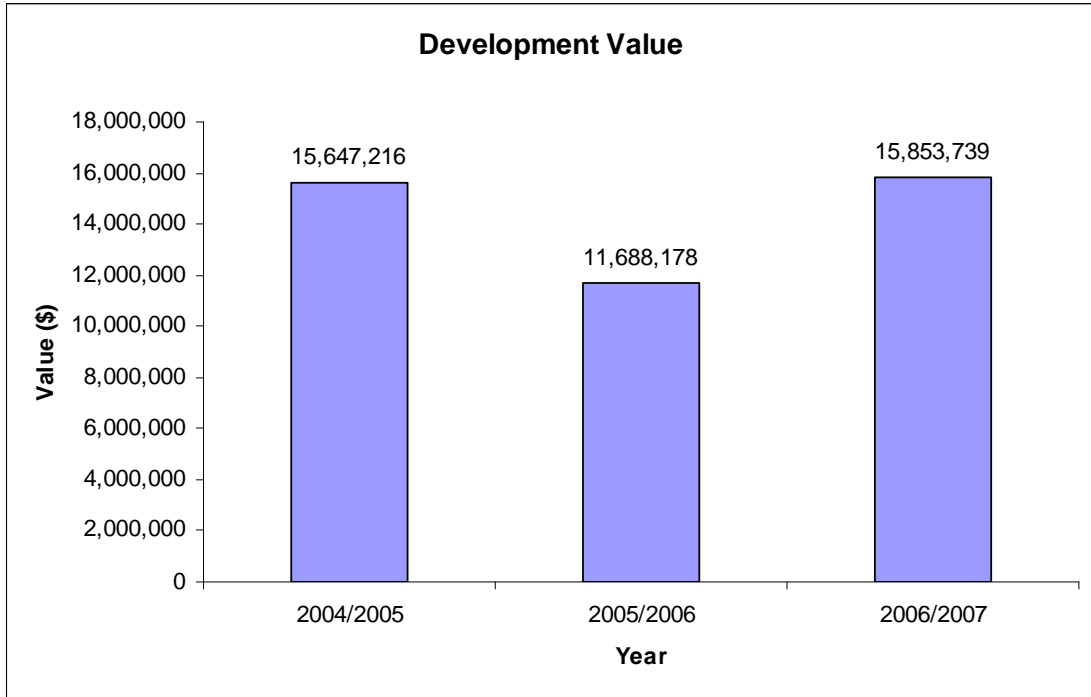
## DEVELOPMENT

The number of development applications determined by Council during the reporting period was 201, up compared to last years figure.



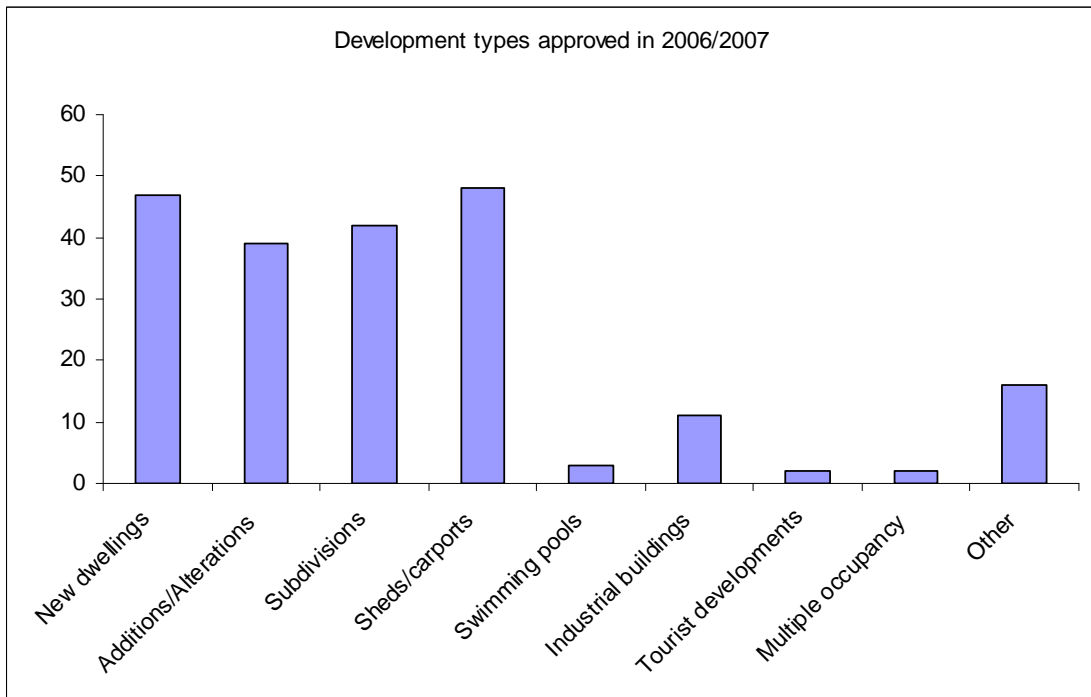
**Figure 2. The total number of development application determined during 2006-07.**

The value of development during the reporting period was significantly higher compared to last year as illustrated by figure 3 below.



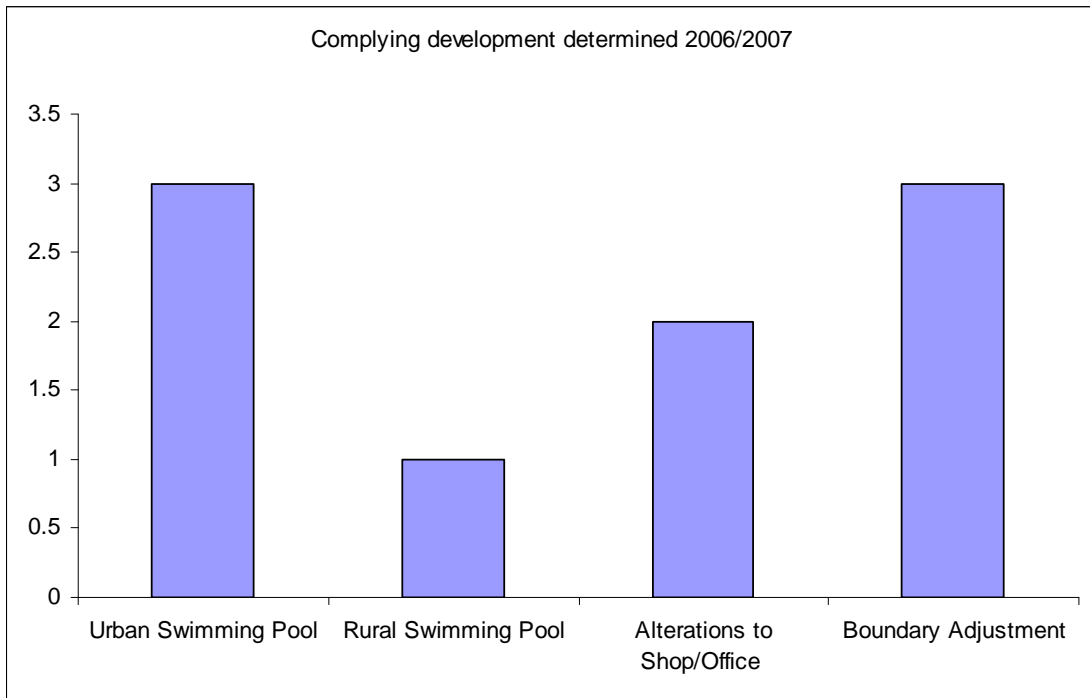
**Figure 3. The value of development approved during 2006-07.**

The type of development approved during 2006-07 primarily consisted of new dwellings, alterations/additions, subdivisions and sheds/carports as illustrated in figure 4 below.



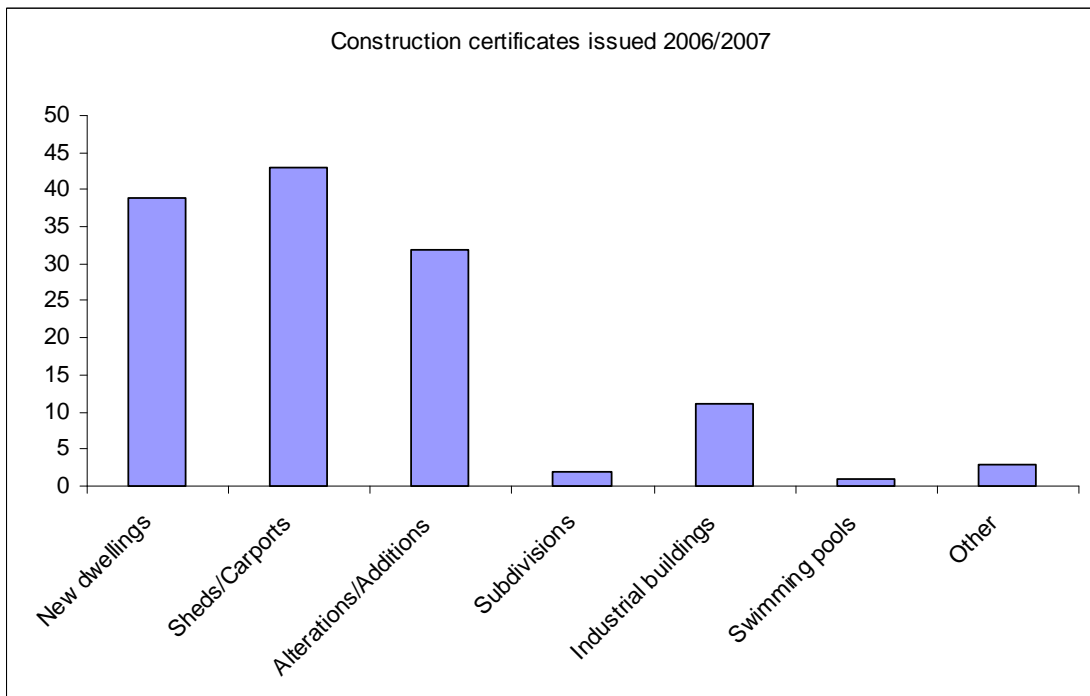
**Figure 4. The types of development determined during 2006-07.**

The type of complying development determined in 2006-07 is illustrated in figure 5 below and primarily consists of swimming pools and boundary adjustments.



**Figure 5. The types of complying development determined in 2006-07.**

The number and type of construction certificates issued in 2006-07 is illustrated in figure 6 below and primarily consists of sheds/carports, new dwellings and alterations/additions.



**Figure 6. Types of construction certificates issued in 2006-07.**

## 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 7. 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.

## EASY BEING GREEN FUNDRAISING

In September 2006 Council partnered with Easy Being Green and promoted the distribution of free Climate Change Starter Packs.

Council's contribution played a significant part in helping to distribute over 500,000 Climate Change Starter Packs to residents of NSW and ACT. The packs contained six energy saving light globes and for eligible households, a water saving showerhead.

Council helped distribute 47 Climate Change Starter Packs throughout the Shire which is the estimated equivalent of:

- Taking 10 cars off the road permanently

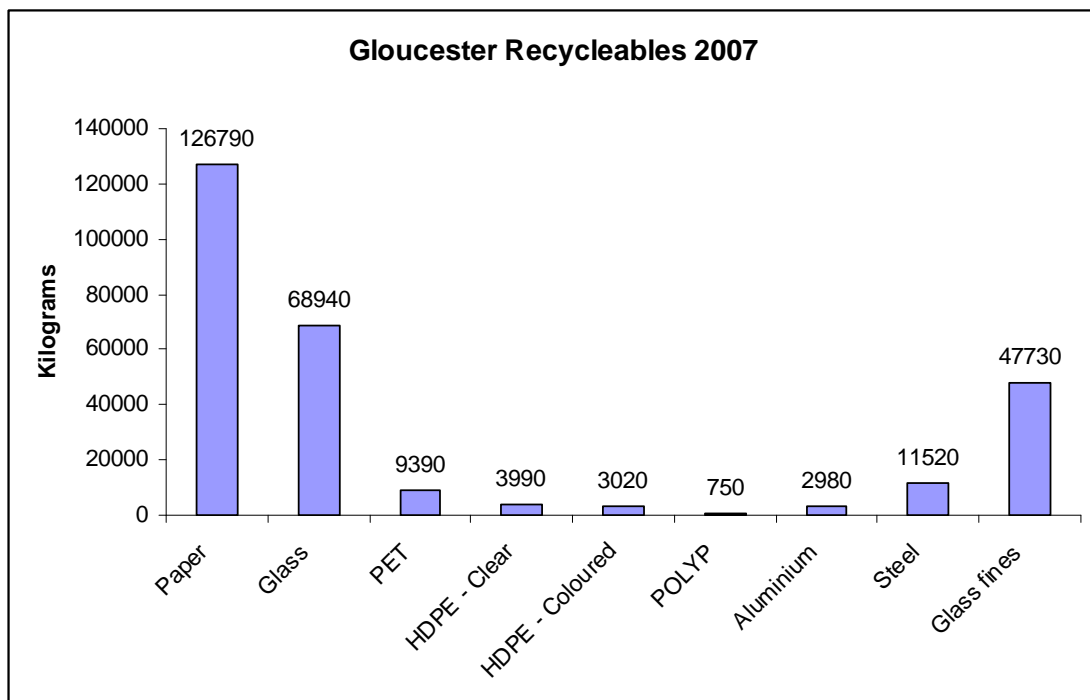
- Saving 690 thousand litres of water per annum

As part of the agreement with Easy Being Green \$94 was raised. This was donated to Rookhurst Public School to assist with environmental projects.

## WASTE

### RECYCLING

Recyclables collected from the kerbside during the reporting period.



### 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.

In June Council upgraded the compound at the waste depot by doubling its size. The compound will now hold approximately 2000 drums. Council processed approximately 955 containers during the reporting period.

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

### MOBILE MUSTER

During the reporting period a total of twenty-eight (28) mobile phones were collected and sent off for recycling under the mobile muster campaign.

In the month of June twelve (12) mobile phones were collected and sent for recycling under the tree planting promotion. For each phone recycled during June one tree was planted by mobile muster.

## COMMUNITY SHARPS MANAGEMENT



Council received funding from the NSW Health Department for the purchase and installation of two community sharps disposal bins in Gloucester.

The bins are located in car parks behind the Billabong Park toilets and the Majestic Arcade.

Council also developed and distributed an informational brochure to the local medical centre, community groups, pharmacy and hospital.

## ILLEGAL DUMPING

Council continues to investigate incidents of illegally dumped rubbish both on private property and Council owned land.

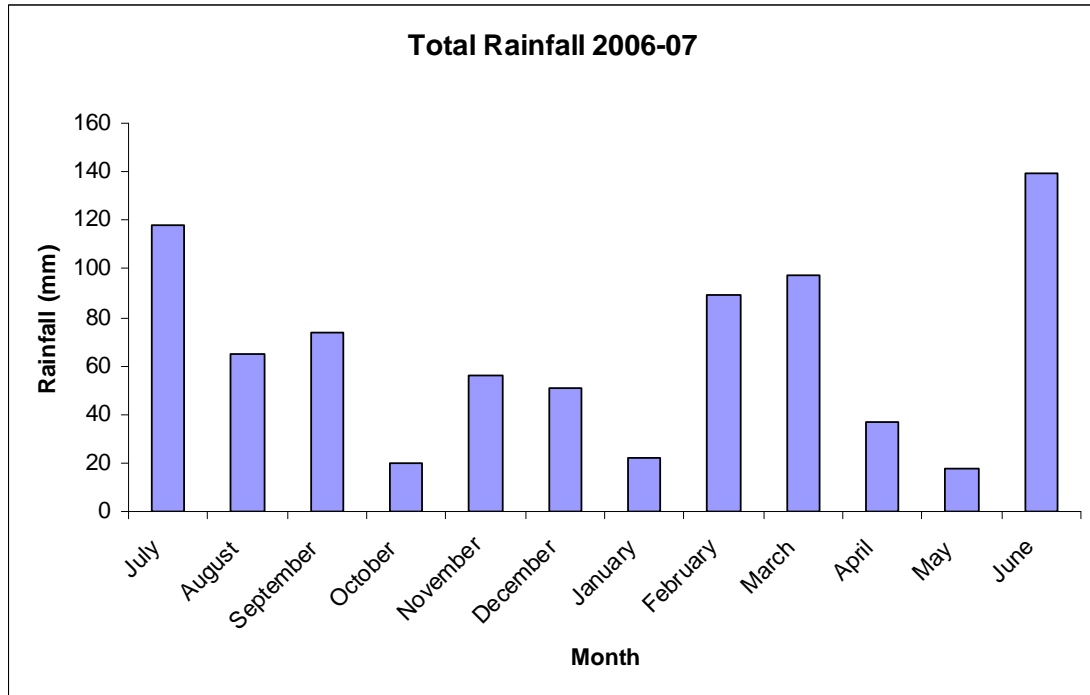
Signs have been erected in most Council reserves advising persons that the bins provided are for visitors to the area. However a significant amount of domestic household waste continues to be removed by Council.



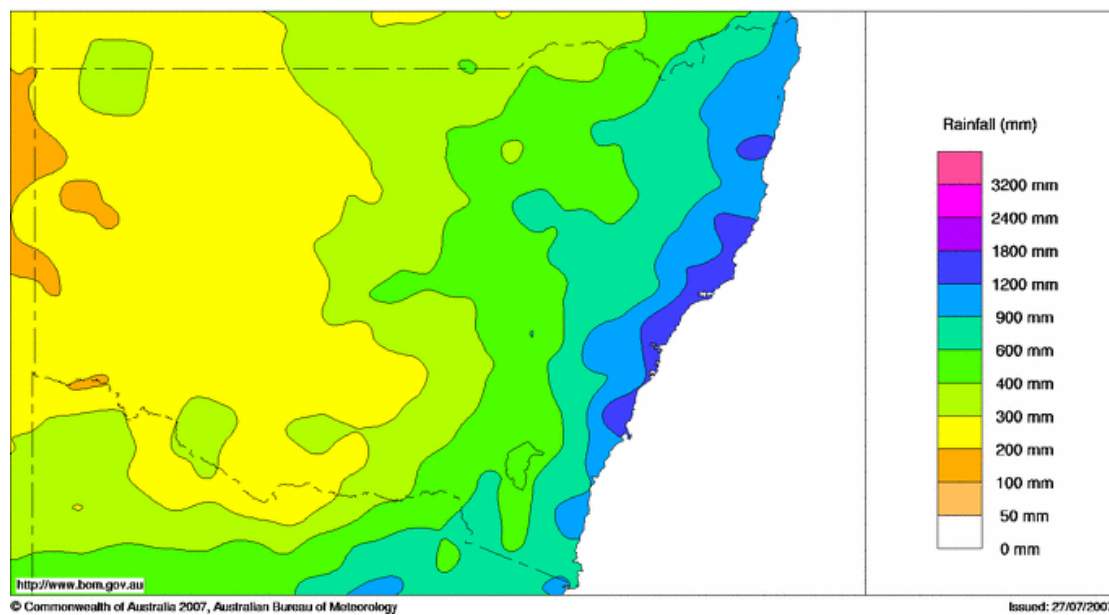
# WATER

## RAINFALL

Rainfall recorded during the reporting period at Gloucester Rural Fire Service.



New South Wales Rainfall (mm) 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007  
Product of the National Climate Centre



## **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 one sample taken from Barrington on 7 November 2006 failed to meet the NSW Health Departments Drinking Water Guidelines.



## **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 for residential properties in NSW.

Residents have been encouraged to take advantage of the State Government program.

## **RIVER WATER QUALITY**



Council has recently started measuring some basic water quality parameters from the major river systems in the Gloucester catchment area. The initial results indicate that the rivers are exceptionally healthy.

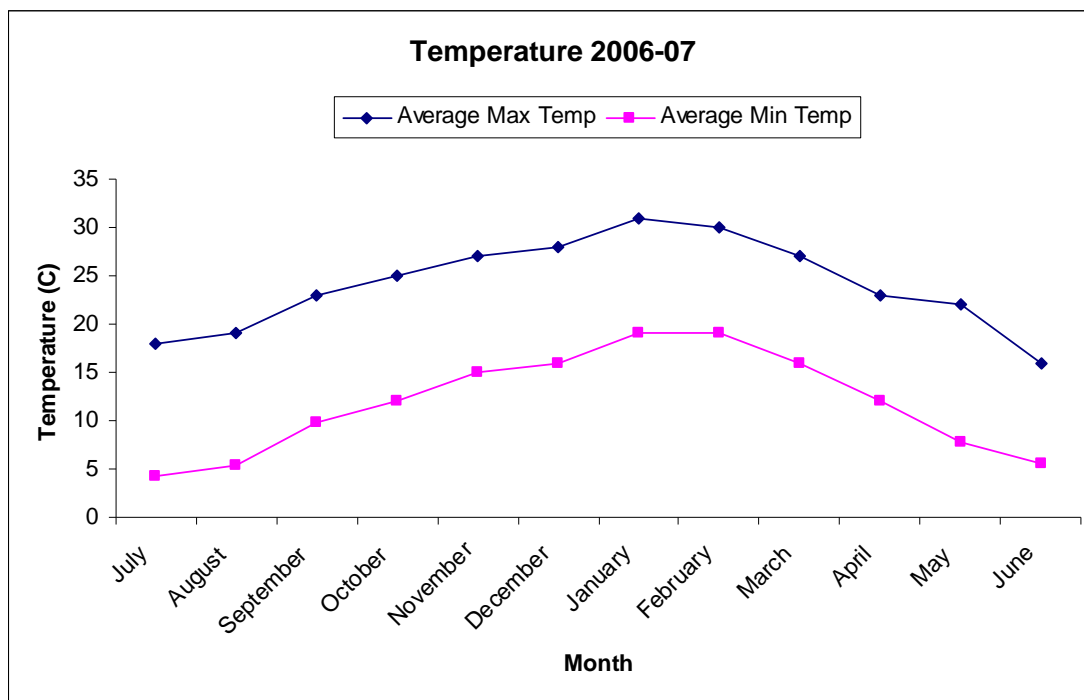
Council will continue to monitor the rivers to ensure water quality remains constant.



# AIR

## TEMPERATURE

The average minimum and maximum temperatures recorded during the reporting period at the Gloucester Rural Fire Service.



## BUSHFIRE



A total of 42 bush/grass fires were recorded in the Gloucester local government area during the reporting period. Of these fires 36 were grass fires and the remaining 6 were bushfires. It is estimated that the fires burnt an approximate area of 2184 hectares. The Rural Fire Service issued 434 permits for hazard reduction works during the fire season for an approximate area of 3866.5 hectares.

# LAND

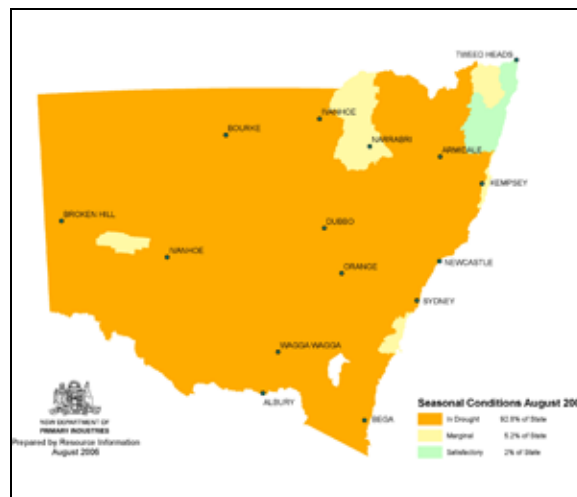
## DROUGHT

The State's producers continue to be seriously affected by this ongoing drought – generally regarded as the worst we have seen in 100 years. The Department of Primary Industries in NSW releases a new drought map each month. The drought maps 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 for the area
- pasture availability
- climatic events such as frosts
- seasonal factors such as pasture growing seasons

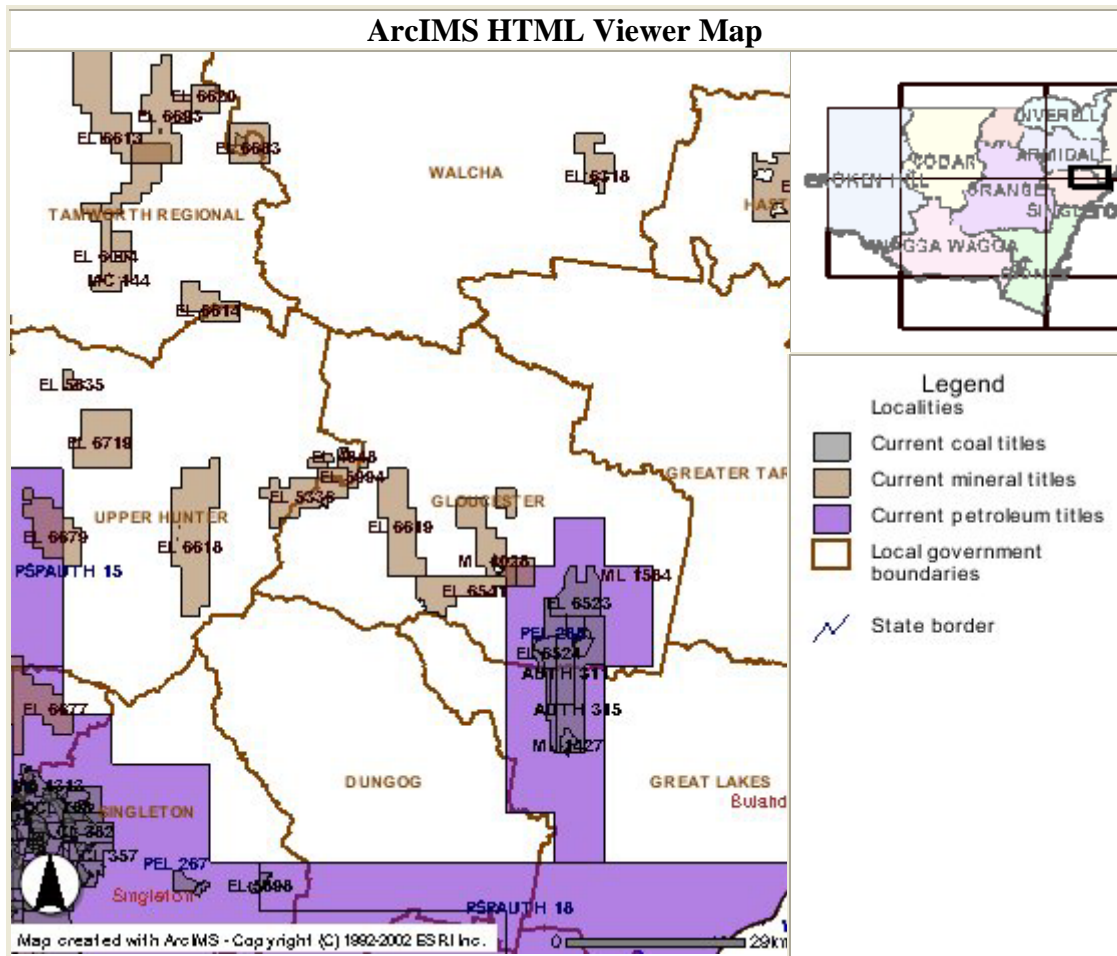
Declarations for the Gloucester area are provided below.

Month	Declaration
July 2006	Drought
August 2006	Drought
September 2006	Drought
October 2006	Marginal
November 2006	Marginal
December 2006	Marginal
January 2007	Marginal
February 2007	Drought
March 2007	Marginal
April 2007	Marginal
May 2007	Marginal
June 2007	Satisfactory



## EXPLORATION & MINING ACTIVITIES

The map below illustrates the current mineral, petroleum and coal titles current as at 7 August 2007 in the Gloucester local government area.



## GAS EXPLORATION

Molopo Australia Limited holds Petroleum Exploration Licence 285 over an area of approximately 1,050 km<sup>2</sup> in the Gloucester Basin. In Petroleum Exploration Licence 285 Molopo has 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.

Molopo's activities are currently concentrated on production testing to demonstrate the potential for commercial gas production within the Stratford Coal Bed Methane Prospect and completion of further exploration drilling beyond the Stratford Prospect to ascertain the potential size of the Coal Bed Methane resource (Molopo.com.au).

The figures below illustrate the size and extent of the drilling operations being conducted within the Gloucester Basin.



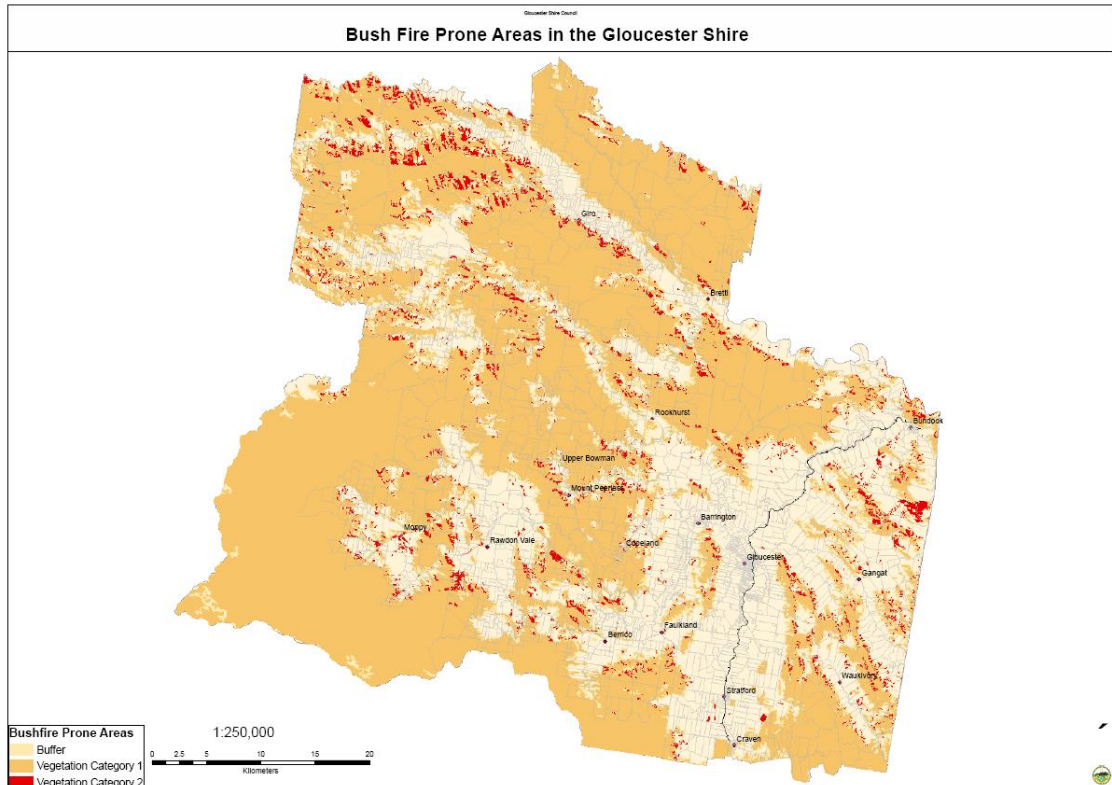
**Figure 8. Drill rig in operation adjacent Bucketts Way (Source: Molopo Pty Ltd).**



**Figure 9. Old drilling site adjacent Wenham Cox Road.**

## BUSHFIRE

The NSW Rural Fire Service has released an updated edition of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006. 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.



## ROADS

Council has a bitumen seal extension program, which has added over 70 kilometres of bitumen over the last 10 years.

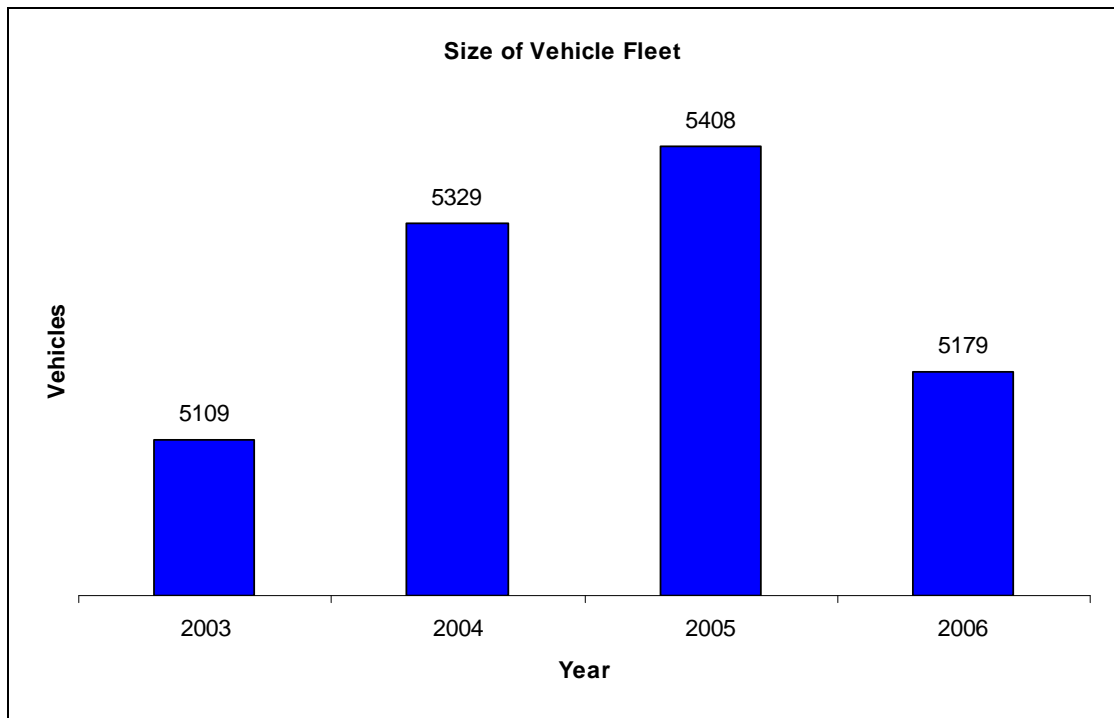
## BRIDGES

Council is building a new bridge over the Gloucester River. A by-track has been constructed for use while the new bridge is under construction.



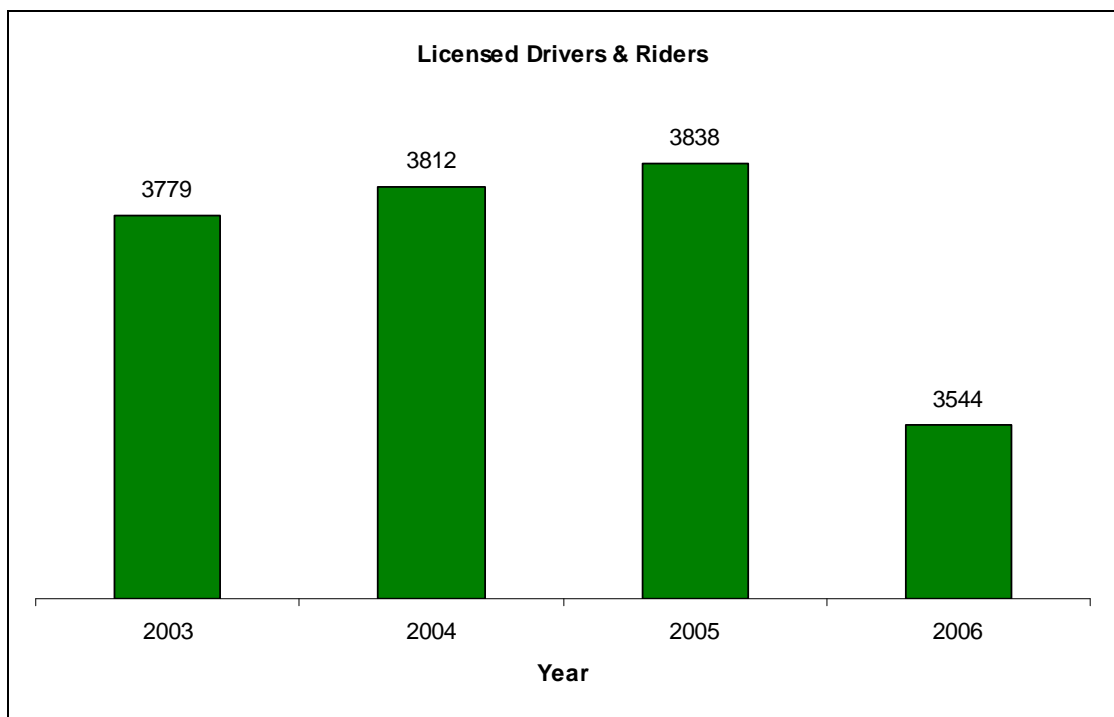
## REGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLES

The number of registered vehicles in the Gloucester local government area was 5179 as at 30 June 2006 (RTA statistics).



## LICENSED DRIVERS & RIDERS

The number of licensed drivers in the Gloucester local government area was 3544 as at 30 June 2006 (RTA Statistics).



## LICENCE TYPES

License holders and licence type in Gloucester as at 30 June 2006 (RTA).

Learner	P1	P2	Unrestricted
108	89	99	3249

## NOXIOUS WEEDS



Over 400 properties were inspected and 40 letters were sent to landowners who required control measures to be carried out on their properties.

Council adopted a Notification of Pesticide Spraying Policy, Noxious Weeds Policy and twenty three Class 4 Management Plans.

During the year a static weeds display was set up at the library for Weed Buster Week and the Gloucester Show.

## BIODIVERSITY

### THREATENED SPECIES

Threatened species recorded since 1980 in the Gloucester local government area (NPWS Wildlife atlas database July 2007).

Fauna	Status
Davies' Tree Frog	Vulnerable
Glandular Frog	Vulnerable
Stuttering Frog	Endangered
Speckled Warbler	Vulnerable
Rufous Scrub-bird	Vulnerable
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Vulnerable
Glossy Black-Cockatoo	Vulnerable
Black-necked Stork	Endangered
Wompoo Fruit-Dove	Vulnerable
Superb Fruit-Dove	Vulnerable
Olive Whistler	Vulnerable
Grey-crowned Babbler (eastern subspecies)	Vulnerable
Powerful Owl	Vulnerable
Masked Owl	Vulnerable
Sooty Owl	Vulnerable
Eastern Pygmy-possum	Vulnerable
Spotted-tailed Quoll	Vulnerable
Brush-tailed Phascogale	Endangered
Parma Wallaby	Vulnerable

Brush-tailed Rock-wallaby	Vulnerable
Red-legged Pademelon	Vulnerable
Eastern Freetail-bat	Vulnerable
Broad-toothed Rat	Vulnerable
Broad-toothed Rat at Barrington Tops	Endangered
Yellow-bellied Glider	Vulnerable
Squirrel Glider	Vulnerable
Koala	Vulnerable
Rufous Bettong	Vulnerable
Long-nosed Potoroo	Vulnerable
Grey-headed Flying-fox	Vulnerable
Large-eared Pied Bat	Vulnerable
Eastern False Pipistrelle	Vulnerable
Golden-tipped Bat	Vulnerable
Little Bentwing-bat	Vulnerable
Eastern Bentwing-bat	Vulnerable
Large-footed Myotis	Vulnerable
Greater Broad-nosed Bat	Vulnerable
Eastern Cave Bat	Vulnerable
Stephens' Banded Snake	Vulnerable
<b>Flora</b>	<b>Status</b>
White-flowered Wax Plant	Endangered
Veined Doubletail	Vulnerable
Slaty Leek Orchid	Vulnerable
Polblue Eyebright	Vulnerable
Fragrant Pepperbush	Vulnerable
Broad-leaved Pepperbush	Vulnerable

The Catchment Management Authority is beginning to deliver an increasingly wide range of incentives that are intended to conserve biodiversity through improved management of habitats.

Nature-based tourism continues to be a significant component of Australia's economy, but this is often not reflected in the level of management resources provided to conservation agencies to protect biodiversity values in parks.

## NOISE

### BARKING DOGS



Of all noise related complaints received by Council during the reporting period approximately 90% related to barking dogs in the township of Gloucester.

Council has adopted procedures for dealing with barking dog complaints as outlined in its Companion Animal Management Plan.



## **CROWING ROOSTERS**

Council is receiving an increasing number of complaints about noise from crowing roosters in Gloucester.



Council has no policy for the keeping of animals, including roosters, in the residential areas of Gloucester.

Council has been enforcing 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.

## **HERITAGE**

### **EUROPEAN HERITAGE**

The Gloucester Local Environmental Plan 2000 aims to conserve the European heritage of the Gloucester area. There are various items and areas of heritage significance listed in the Local Environmental Plan.

### **ABORIGINAL HERITAGE**

The Department of Environment and Conservation have indicated that there are 32 known Aboriginal cultural heritage sites recorded within Gloucester.

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