



WALCHA COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

Supplementary state of the Environment Report
2011-2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Walcha Council Supplementary State of Environment Report 2011/2012 has been prepared in accordance with reporting requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* for the local government area of Walcha.

A summary of the main issues / activities for the separate environmental sectors discussed in the Report are outlined below:

LAND

- A draft LEP has been exhibited; its ultimate adoption will provide the framework for continued improvements in efficiency and liveability of a range of land uses throughout the LGA.
- For the majority of the 2011/2012 year seasonal conditions of the Walcha LGA have been considered satisfactory by the NSW Department of Primary Industries.
- The number of development approvals being sought in the shire has been decreasing gradually over the last five years.
- Work is continuing in the shire on the Hi-CUB (High Country Urban Biodiversity) *Apsley River Corridor and Walcha Woodlands Project* which aims to confront the degradation of riparian and urban bushland and the fragmented network of responses by institutional and community players.

AIR AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Home owners across the region have continued to take advantage of various government rebates during 2011/2012 to improve the environmental performance of their dwellings, such as rebates for installation of ceiling insulation and installation of solar hot water systems.
- The Walcha LGA generally experiences a high level of air quality and relatively low occurrences of atmospheric pollution, due mainly to limited urban development and the presence of few polluting industries.

WATER

- Council has continued quarterly water quality monitoring at two sites along the Apsley River, one upstream and the other downstream of Walcha Township. Key findings of the 2011/2012 period indicate an increase in the total suspended solids.
- Average water consumption per connection per day for the town of Walcha is 534 litres which falls below the Australian average of 650 litres of water per day.

- Water quantity is at sufficient levels to support consumers' needs at present, however some action is suggested to provide protection against drought.

BIODIVERSITY

- 184,000 hectares of land is protected under National Park Estate with the Walcha LGA
- Forests NSW currently manage 52,131 hectares of forests in the Walcha LGA
- Community groups have again highlighted concerns regarding firewood collection and illegal felling of trees along roadsides and travelling stock routes.
- The number of threatened flora and fauna species recorded in the Walcha LGA includes 44 fauna species and 25 flora species.
- The number of companion animal impoundments has decreased substantially.
- Council continues to advise owners of their responsibilities for animal management, which has seen a reduction in repeat offenders.
- Work on the HiCUB (High Country Urban Biodiversity) project has continued to gain momentum during 2011/2012 with various on-ground rehabilitation works along the levee banks.

WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY

- Council is actively involved in the Northern Inland Regional Waste Group and has undertaken programs to encourage greater recycling and improve waste management efficiencies.
- Council has resolved to convert the Walcha Waste Depot into a waste transfer facility in the later half of 2012. Part of this transition will also be to introduce a three bin system.
- Council undertakes a number of education programs to encourage food waste minimisation and recycling.
- There has been an increase in the amount of waste going to landfill across the region.
- The amount of recycling (kg) per capita has generally increased across the region over the 2011/2012 reporting period compared to the previous year.

NOISE

- The small number of noise complaints received by Council are all in relation to barking dogs.
- Contact with the offending dog owner to advise them of their responsibilities is Council's initial response which is most often successful in resolving the issue.

HERITAGE

- Council is continuing with the preparation of a community based heritage study in conjunction with the NSW Heritage Branch.

1. INTRODUCTION

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORTING – OVERVIEW

The NSW *Local Government Act 1993* requires all Councils to produce a State of the Environment Report as part of their annual reporting requirements. Comprehensive reports must be prepared for the year ending after election of councillors for the area. Local Government elections were held in September 2012, and as such, the 2011-2012 State of Environment Report is a supplementary report which provides up-dated data in relation to the environmental issues as may be relevant to the objectives for the environment established by the Walcha – 2025 Community Strategic Plan, adopted by Council in May 2011.

State of the environment reporting provides detailed information on the condition of the local environment and the human impacts on that environment. This information contributes to the management activities and decision making processes of Council, industry and the community in protecting and restoring the environment.

ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The role of NSW local government in the implementation of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles has been formally recognised by incorporating the principles of ESD in the NSW *Local Government Act 1993* and by requiring councils to manage their regulatory and service functions in an ecologically sustainable manner (Department of Local Government, *Environmental Guidelines – State of Environment Reporting by Local Government – December 1999*).

Ecologically sustainable development means an approach to using, conserving and enhancing natural resources so that ecological processes, on which all life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, is improved (COAG, 1992).

State of the environment reporting is recognised as a key mechanism for identifying and evaluating sustainability issues for local government, assessing progress towards sustainability and informing the decision making process and management activities of Council.

The following State of the Environment Report includes data that examines the effectiveness of the Councils' environmental management strategies and allows the performance of those strategies to be reviewed to determine gaps in the planning, delivery and management of services.

REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Pressure – State – Response Model

The pressure – state – response model is based on the concept of causality, i.e. human activities exert pressures on the environment which change its state, or condition. Society then responds to this change of state by developing and implementing policies and/or actions, which complete the cycle and influence the activities that exert pressure on the environment.

In the context of the Walcha Council State of the Environment Report, the pressure – state – response model enables reporting on:

- the pressures that human activities place on the environment – positive or negative effects;
- the state or condition of the environment – identifying changes or trends in the environment, quantifying the impact of activities and the effectiveness of responses; and
- the response of councils, government agencies, business and the community to the pressures on, and state of, the environment.

It should be noted that the pressure – state – response model does have some shortcomings. The implied cycle of cause and effect is simplistic and often there is not clear evidence linking pressures with changes in environmental state. It is not always easy to categorise indicators, as they may reflect aspects of state, pressure or response, depending on the way the issue is approached (Department of Local Government, *Environmental Guidelines – State of Environment Reporting by Local Government* – December 1999).

Environmental Themes

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires State of the Environment Reports to:

- (a) establish relevant environmental indicators for each environmental objective; and
- (b) report on, and update trends in, each such environmental indicator; and
- (c) identify all major environmental impacts (being events and activities that have a major impact on environmental objectives).

The Walcha Council Supplementary State of the Environment Report 2011-2012 examines data and trends for various environmental indicators based on the following broad environmental themes:

- land
- air
- water
- biodiversity
- waste
- noise
- aboriginal heritage
- non-aboriginal heritage

These environmental themes are consistent with those that have been reported in previous state of environment reports for the region and allow for comparison of information over time.

Environmental Indicators

The Pressure-State-Response model involves the measurement of a number of environmental conditions (indicators) to provide a picture of the environment. The criteria adopted in choosing these indicators are as follows:

- relevance - usefulness for users
- reliability - level of completeness, consistency, and accuracy of data
- timeliness - availability of data at a time suitable for reporting purposes
- sensitivity - able to show trends over time
- reproducible - well founded technically and able to take into account availability of resources
- policy linkage - linked to strategic goals
- utility - ability to be reproduced, over time, nationally and regionally.

The indicators identified in the Report are intended to be consistent with National, State and Regional indicators and be consistent over time. This intends to allow for monitoring results from national and state-based authorities to be included within the report (where relevant or available), ensure the report's relevance to national and state reporting processes and allow for environmental trends to be identified with greater reliability.

AIMS

The aims of the 2011-2012 Walcha Council Supplementary State of the Environment Report are to:

- compile and present data on the current state of the environment for previously identified environmental indicators across the Walcha Local Government Area;
- identify trends and report on changes in the environment from previous reports;
- satisfy the reporting requirements of the Local Government Act 1993;
- identify new or emerging issues within the Region;
- provide a basis for informing future Council Management Plans.

METHODOLOGY

The 2011-2012 Walcha Council Supplementary State of the Environment Report examines several environmental indicators grouped into eight key environmental themes, as outlined above.

Data for each of the environmental indicators has been obtained from Walcha Council, relevant State Government agencies, local community based organisations, local environmental groups and members of the public. Searches of the Internet were also conducted to collect relevant information.

Data gaps are identified within the report and are generally the result of an absence of any data, an inability of the relevant organisations to provide data within the period available, a lack of response or the relevant environmental indicator being a new or emerging issue.

Information presented in this report is generally defined by the boundaries of the Walcha Local Government Area. In some cases the local government boundaries do not correspond with Government agency boundaries (e.g. Catchment Management Authority boundaries) or other significant environmental areas. References are provided, where appropriate, to outline the relevance of information to the Council area.

Where possible, data is presented to illustrate:

- the current state of the environment, with regard to particular environmental indicators, within the Walcha Local Government Area during 2011-2012; and
- trends and changes that have occurred in relation to the respective environmental indicators within each local government area and across the broader region over time.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

Community consultation for the 2012-2012 Walcha Council Supplementary State of the Environment Report was undertaken by carrying out interviews and discussions in which views and details of local activities and projects were sought for inclusion in this report.

2. WALCHA COUNCIL REGION PROFILE

WALCHA COUNCIL REGION

For the purpose of this Report, the Walcha Council Region consists of the local government area (LGA) of Walcha. The Region covers approximately 640,028 Hectares (6,410 km²), with some 205,000 hectares of national park, wilderness and state forests.

The main river is the Apsley River that dissects the town of Walcha and contains a number of tributaries. The whole of the Apsley River is located within the Walcha LGA, it is a tributary of the Macleay River which it connects to at the south of the Shire; the Macleay River enters the Pacific Ocean at South West Rocks. The Apsley River is within the Macleay Catchment which forms part of the Northern Rivers Catchment Management Authority.

Walcha is located 1,067 metres above sea level on the eastern slopes of the Great Dividing Range at the south eastern edge of the Northern Tablelands of NSW (Tourism NSW 2005).

Average annual rainfall in the area is 815mm, the Walcha District is suited to all types of grazing pursuits, however wool and prime lamb production together with cattle breeding and fattening are the major grazing activities. Other significant industries in the area include forestry and tourism.

The Walcha LGA includes the surrounding villages of Woolbrook, Walcha Road, Yarrawitch, and Nowendoc. Approximately two thirds of the population lives in the Walcha Township whilst the remainder live in the surrounding rural areas of the shire.

Non-indigenous settlers first arrived in the Region during the early 1800's, attracted by initial growth in agriculture and mining. Development onwards from this period has left many items of historical importance which exist alongside a rich Aboriginal culture in this unique natural environment.

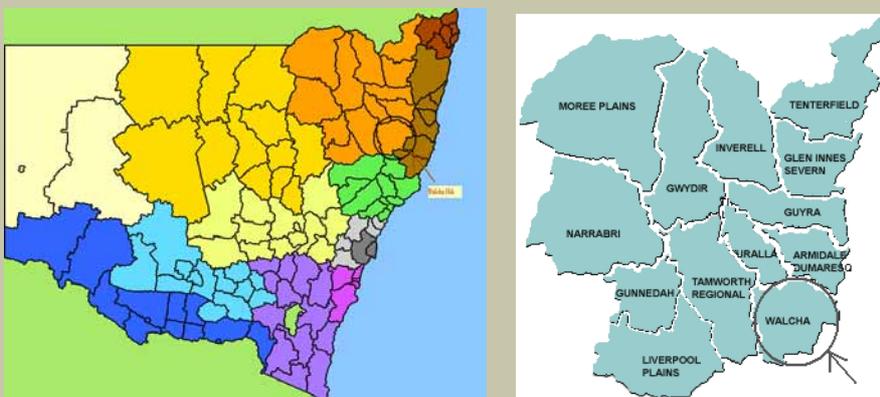


Figure 1: Location of the Walcha Council LGA within NSW

Source: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au



Figure 2: Walcha LGA Boundary
 Source: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

POPULATION

ABS statistics show Walcha’s population has remained moderately steady over the previous ten years with only slight fluctuations. Census data shows that Walcha’s population has fallen 9% in 2011 compared to the 2006 census. The median age of persons living in the shire is 44 compared to the Australian median age of 37. In 2011, 18.6% of the population were children aged between 0-14 years and 31.9% were persons aged 55 years and over.

Table 1: Population Summary for Walcha LGA

Year	WALCHA LGA
2001	3,307
2002	3,296
2003	3,289
2004	3,261
2005	3,290
2006	3,321
2007	3,306
2008	3,290
2009	3,283
2010	3,299
2011	3,021

Table 2: Age Summary for Walcha LGA (2006)

Age Group	No.	% Walcha LGA	% Australia
0-4 years	192	6.0	6.3
5-14 years	478	15.0	13.5
15-24 years	305	9.6	13.6
25-54 years	1,195	37.5	42.2
55-64 years	476	14.9	11.0
65+ years	541	17.0	13.3
Median Age		44	37

Table 3: Age Summary for Walcha LGA (2011)

Age Group	No.	% Walcha LGA	% Australia
0-4 years	182	6.0	6.6
5-14 years	380	12.6	12.7
15-24 years	320	10.6	13.3
25-54 years	1,029	33.9	41.8
55-64 years	464	15.3	11.6
65+ years	647	21.3	14.0
Median Age		44	37

CLIMATE

Topography is the most important factor that determines local rainfall, temperature and wind patterns. Altitude is closely related to maximum and minimum temperatures, with higher elevations experiencing longer periods between first and last frost and more extremes of cold during winter.

The area is located in the sub-humid temperate zone. Summers are short and mild and winters long and cold. Mean monthly maximum temperatures vary from 25.4°C in February to 11.7°C in July. Mean monthly minimum temperatures vary from 12.5°C in February to minus 2.9°C in July. Frosts occur throughout the year beginning in March and ending in December and it is not uncommon to have temperatures drop to minus 10 or 14°C during winter on the lower areas of Walcha. Snow also occurs an average of two (2) days per year.

The Walcha Region is dominated by cool, dry, west to south-westerly air supplied from the continental interior or from the southern oceans during winter, whereas summer months are predominantly easterly flows originating from the Tasman Sea. These airflows are then primarily responsible for the temperature and rainfall that is experienced in the region.

Airflows influence temperatures across the Region. Cold fronts that sweep across the region from the continental interior and southern oceans are responsible for the low temperatures that occur during the winter months, and conversely, the easterly airflow during summer months brings warmer conditions to the region.

Average annual rainfall is 815mm with December and January the wettest months and April and May the driest.

Table 4: Average Maximum Temperatures for Walcha Region 2001 and 2011

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Mean max temp °C 2001	29.5	28	23.6	20.8	15.4	15.2	13.0	13.5	18.2	19.7	21.4	26.2	20.4
Mean max temp °C 2011	27.6	27.6	23.6	20.1	15.7	12.9	11.8	15.0	18.1	19.1	24.6	21.5	19.8

Table 5: Average Minimum Temperatures for Walcha Region 2001 and 2011

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Mean min temp °C 2001	12.2	12.4	10.6	5.4	1.9	-1.2	-0.3	-1.8	1.8	3.3	6.7	9.4	5.0
Mean min temp °C 2011	14.3	13.9	12.5	4.4	-0.4	-0.6	-1.6	0.1	1.3	5.0	10.4	9.6	5.7

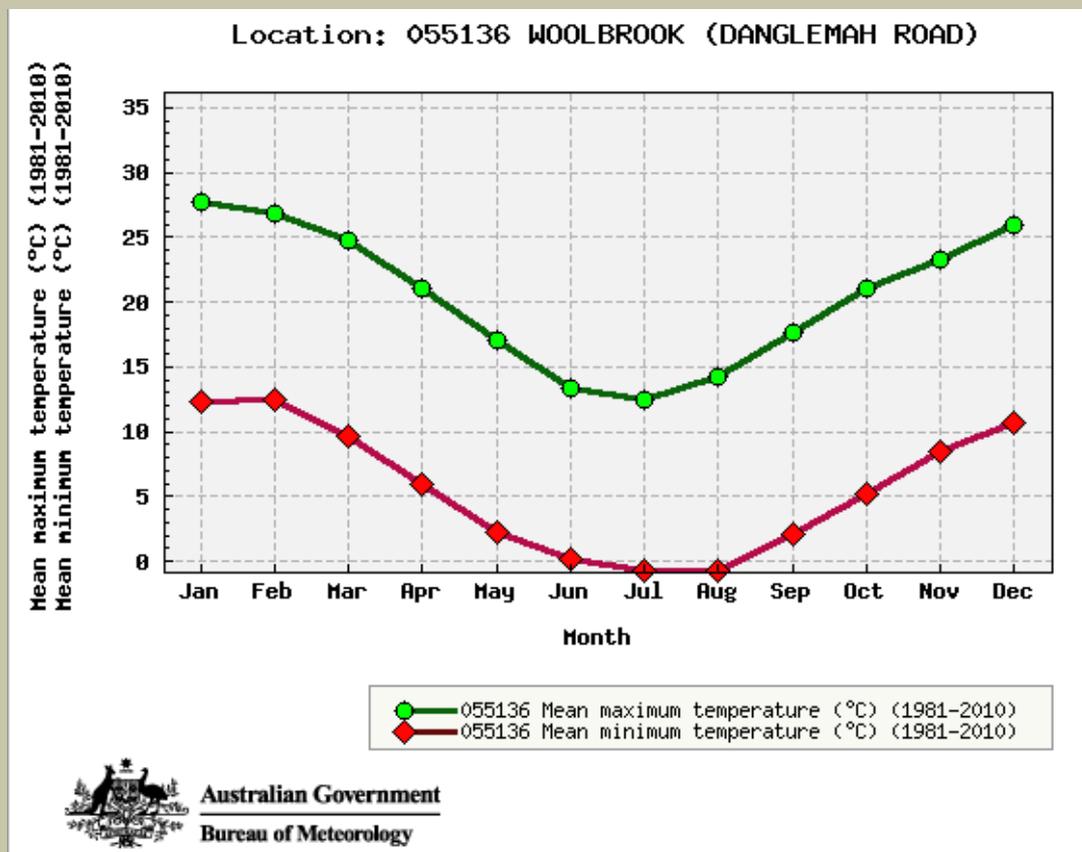


Figure 3: Average Mean Maximum and Minimum Temperatures – Walcha Region 1981 to 2010 (Bureau of Meteorology 2012)

Table 6: Monthly Rainfall for Walcha Region 2001 and 2011

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
mm 2001	73.8	18.6	185.5	26.1	34.8	18.6	54.8	41.7	36.6	73.8	149.3	92.9	806.5
mm 2011	93.4	32.6	105.8	57.4	94.4	23.5	14.6	60.6	110.9	83.7	164.0	111.0	951.9

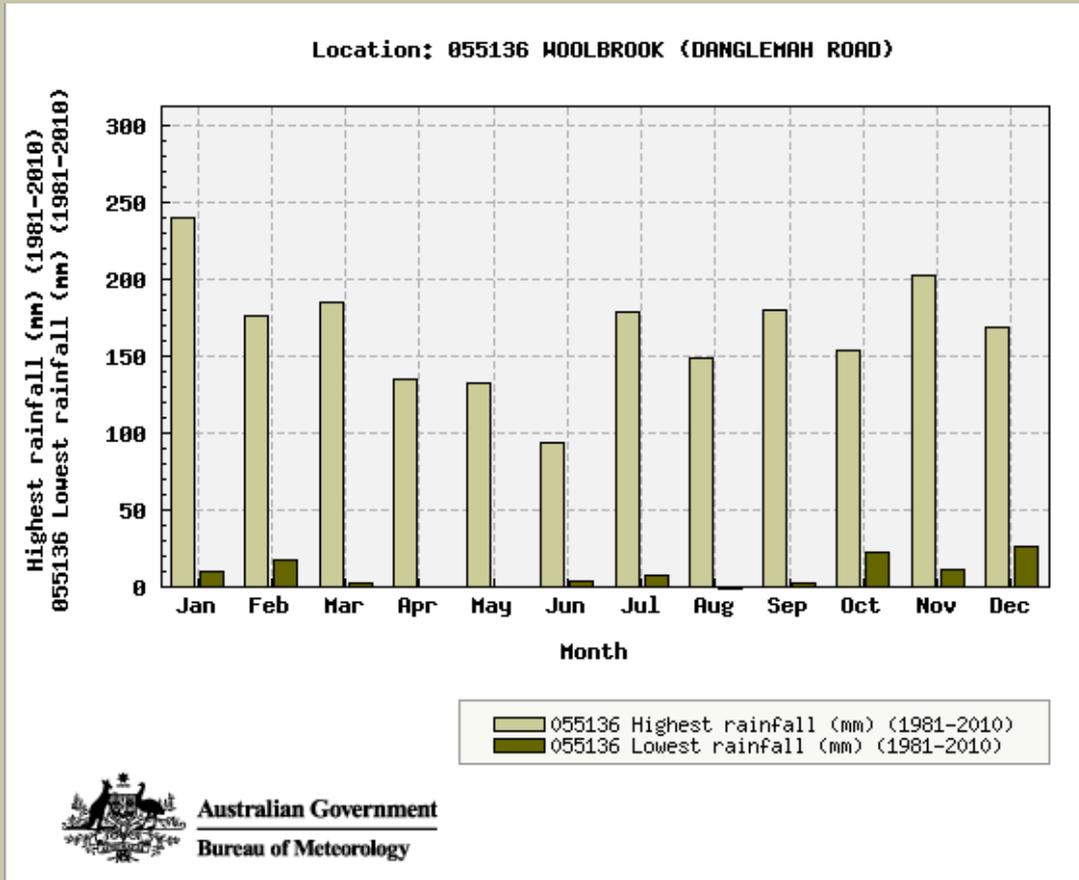


Figure 4: Highest and Lowest Monthly Rainfall – Walcha Region 1981 to 2010 (Bureau of Meteorology 2012)

3. LAND



LAND USE CHANGES

Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Links:

1.2.2 – Ensure that sufficient land is available to meet the demand for appropriate land uses.

1.2.3 – Prevent agricultural land from being developed in ways that reduce its productivity.

5.1.2 – Promote sustainable development and protection of our natural resources through the planning system.

STATE

Improving	A draft LEP has been exhibited which will introduce a range of zones to the urban area to encourage separate development types in specific areas reducing the potential for neighbouring conflicting land uses.
Improving	Additional industrial land has been made available to encourage and support increased development of that type.
Improving	The area for residential development has not been increased encouraging infill development to occur and town density to increase to make sufficient use of infrastructure whilst maintain the rural community amenity through maintaining a large 700m ² minimum lot size.

PRESSURE

Unknown	Population within the LGA remains steady so the demand for land for residential development also remains steady and it is unknown if increased pressure will be placed on existing rural and bushland areas.
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RESPONSE

Improving	The making of the Draft Walcha LEP 2012 and its ultimate adoption will provide the framework for continued improvements in the efficiency and liveability of a range of land uses through the introduction of additional land use zonings to support increased development such as large lot residential and rural small holdings, whilst maintaining other land uses such as primary production land.
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POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS**CSP Links:**

2.1.7 – Assist, support and encourage the establishment or expansion of local businesses.

2.1.8 – Promote Walcha’s suitability for the aged care community and associated industries.

2.1.10 – Provide the services that appeal to “young” workers e.g. childcare, medical, housing, sporting facilities and parks.

2.1.12 – Develop part time work initiatives with local tradesman and Council that provide rural children with the opportunity to stay within the community

2.1.13 – Support the employment of migrants that possess skills that are needed in the community.

STATE

Stable	Recent census data indicates that the population is remaining steady along with the age of people in Walcha also remaining steady, 2006 and 2011 census median age was 44.
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PRESSURE

Steady	The population is expected to remain steady, or slightly decrease by 500 people over the next 30 years, which will not increase demand for dwellings or services greatly, except in maintaining and improving existing services and advances in technology.
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RESPONSE

Reasonable	Implementing strategies to support business and jobs in the community to encourage people to stay within the community.
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COMMUNITY LANDS

CSP Links:

5.1.1 – Maintain and strengthen partnerships with organisations responsible for natural resource management.

5.1.5 – Protect and enhance biodiversity, native vegetation, river and soil health.

5.1.6 – Engage and support the community to undertake sustainable natural resource management and protect Walcha natural environment.

STATE

Stable	Council has continued to improve and enhance the environmental condition of its community land, principally through Landcare and the Apsley River Corridor and Walcha Woodlands rehabilitation project.
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PRESSURE

Steady	
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RESPONSE

Good	The making of the Draft Walcha LEP 2012 and its ultimate adoption will provide the framework for continued protection of community land through the zoning of public recreation land, prohibiting undesired development of this land.
Good	The part completion of the <i>Apsley River Corridor and Walcha Woodlands Project</i> with HiCUB which will ultimately connect two threatened woodlands and enhance the endangered ecological communities. The bush regeneration will eradicate environmental weeds and greatly benefit local biodiversity.

SOIL EROSION AND SALINITY

CSP Links:

5.5.1 – Protect and promote farming practices that are environmentally friendly.

STATE

Unknown	No specific details or mapping of areas affected by salinity or rising water tables are currently available for the Walcha LGA. However, it is recognised that parts of the Region are affected by salinity.
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PRESSURE

Steady	A lot of development sites are sloping with dispersible soils; Any development sites involving major earthworks will require protective measures and provide a source of pressure to erosion and sediment control requirements.
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RESPONSE

Reasonable	Conditions are placed on all development consents specifying erosion and sediment control requirements and these requirements are monitored throughout construction.
Limited	No specific activities relating to salinity have been undertaken during the current reporting period.

CONTAMINATED LAND

CSP Links:

Nil

STATE

Stable	Remediation plans and resultant action has resolved the issue of contamination at the “old mill site”.
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PRESSURE

Steady	Only occurs when activities are proposed for a particular site
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RESPONSE

Reasonable	Council will access sites when a development application is lodged
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FLOOD PRONE LAND

CSP Links:

Nil

STATE

Stable	The number and extent of flooding issues remain steady from when they were addressed in the 2009 Walcha Floodplain Risk Management Plan.
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PRESSURE

Increasing	Interest is sustained for development and subdivision proposals on flood prone land within the Walcha township.
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RESPONSE

Reasonable	Reinforcement of levee banks has been undertaken.
Reasonable	Restrictions on development are in place in areas where the land is likely to be subject to flooding e.g. minimum floor height controls, and filling and sediment controls.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	ANNUAL LEVEL 2010/2011	CURRENT TREND
LAND USE CHANGES		
Agricultural stocking rates:		
- Alpacas	1,363	1,342
- Beef cattle	619,366	717,131
- Camels	-	51
- Dairy cattle	11,022	6,753
- Deer	33,671	1,359
- Emus	9	2
- Goats	12,295	13,677
- Horses	20,315	6,476
- Llamas	-	3
- Ostrich	202	30
- Pigs	2,856	999
- Sheep	1,886,749	2,039,000
Percentage of land in drought	0%	0%
New road construction	-	8.92km
Number of development consents (DA & CDC)		
- subdivisions	6	3
- residential development	23	30
- industrial premises	1	-
- commercial premises	2	4
- other	6	10
Construction certificates issued	21	27
Occupation certificates issued	12	11
Subdivision certificates issues	8	7
Property vegetation plans notified	7	4
Number of fire permits issued	239	244
Number of RFS volunteer members	134	126
Number of incidents RFS responded to:	33	29
- grass / scrub / forest	9	10
- motor vehicle accidents	13	12
- other agency support	2	3
- planned hazard reductions	9	2
- local refuse facility fires	3	2
Number of quarries	27	27

POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Estimated population in Walcha Local Government Area	3,299	3,021
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COMMUNITY LANDS

Total area of community land

SOIL EROSION AND SALINITY

Number of complaints received relating to erosion and sediment control issues from construction sites	0	0
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CONTAMINATED LAND

Number of potential contaminated sites recorded			
Number of remediated sites			
Number of local pollution complaints received		0	0
Number of EPA licences			

FLOOD PRONE LAND

Number of properties potentially affected by flooding	Identified on flood prone land map	↔
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LAND USE CHANGES

The Walcha LGA covers an area of 6,410 km². Privately owned land within the Region is primarily used for agricultural purposes of wool and beef cattle production, with less than 5% of agricultural land under crops and minimal irrigated agriculture.

The land that is publicly owned includes uses such as National Parks, Forestry and travelling stock routes.

Draft land zonings for the Walcha LGA include:

- B2 Local Centre
- B4 Mixed Use
- E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves
- E2 Environmental Conservation
- E4 Environmental Living
- IN1 General Industrial
- R1 General Residential
- R5 Large Lot Residential
- RE1 Public Recreation
- RU1 Primary Production
- RU4 Rural Small Holdings
- RU5 Village

DROUGHT

Drought and the incidence or prevalence of drought conditions has a particularly strong influence on rural land use. The following maps prepared by the NSW Department of Primary Industries shows the agricultural conditions in NSW during 2011/2012. Walcha is part of the New England Region and the maps show that no part of the Walcha LGA were identified as being either “in drought” or “marginal” throughout 2011/2012.

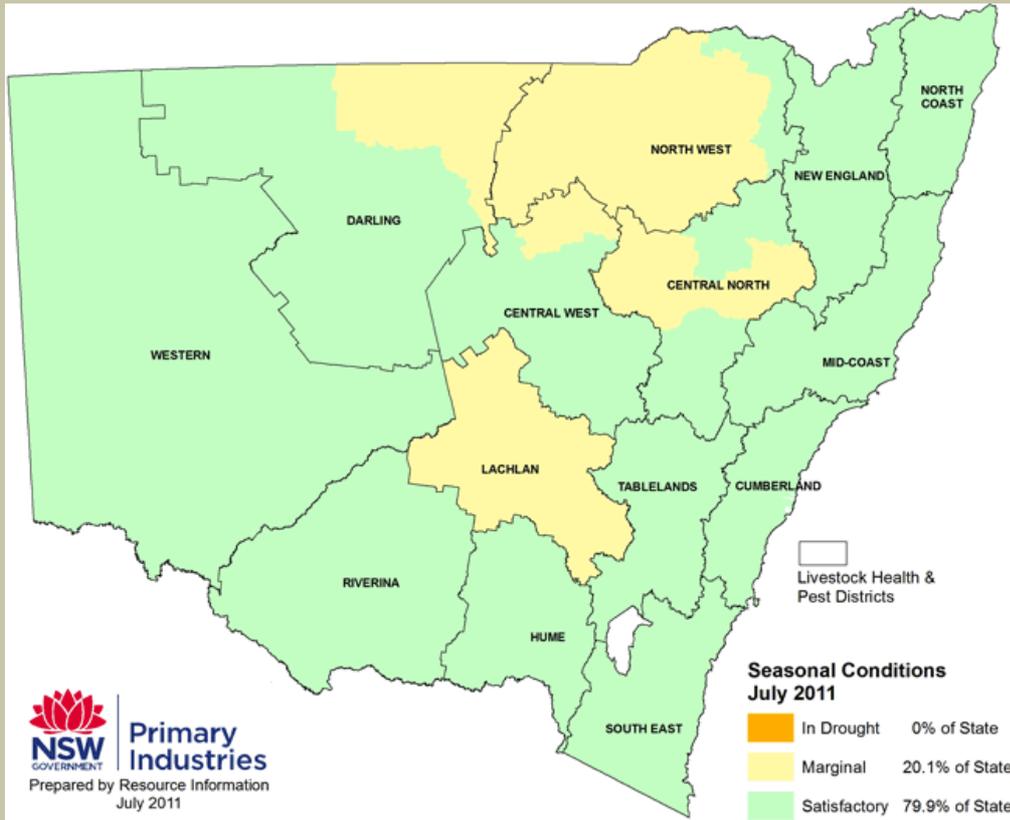


Figure 5: NSW Drought Declared Areas – July 2011
Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries

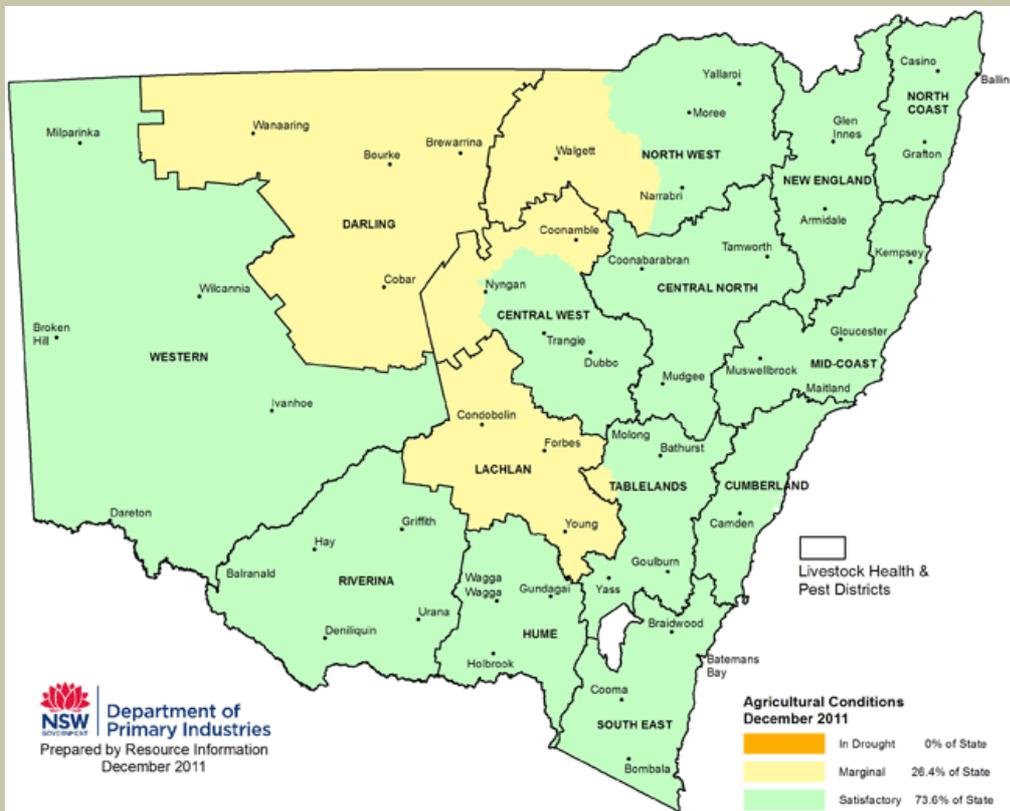


Figure 6: NSW Drought Declared Areas – December 2011
Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries

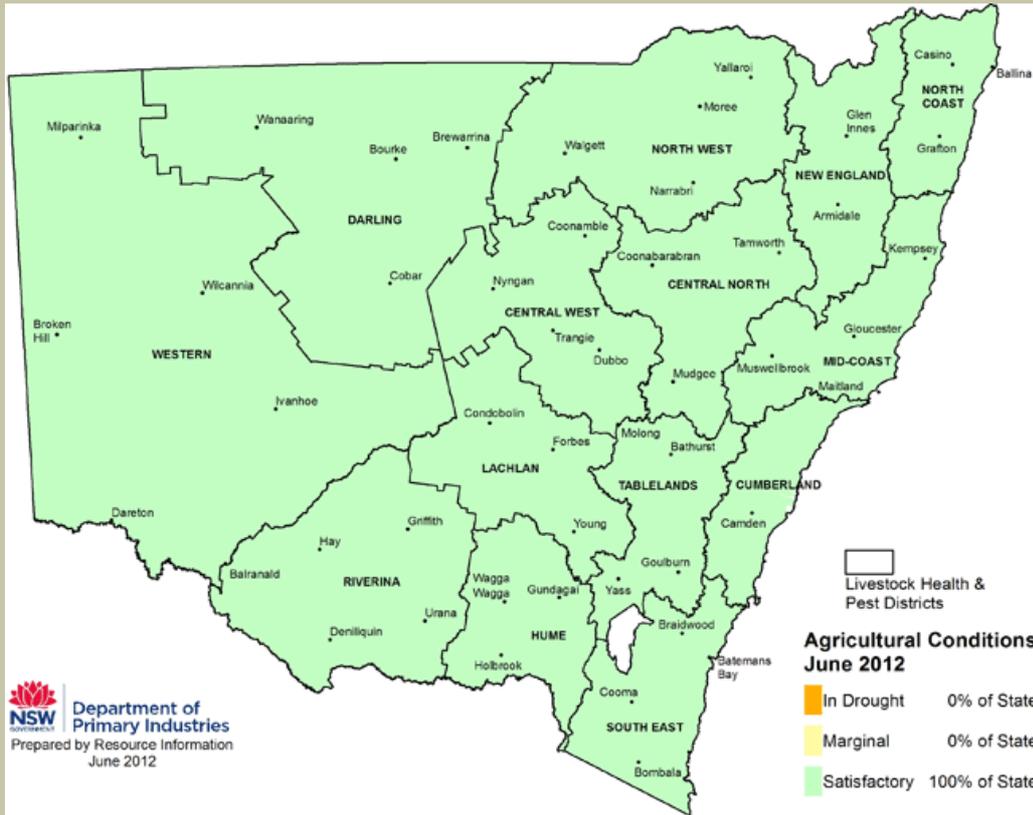


Figure 7: NSW Drought Declared Areas – June 2012
Source: NSW Department of Primary Industries

BUSH FIRE



Bush fires are recognised as a natural and recurring phenomenon that influence the environment and play a potentially significant role in the evolution and maintenance of both natural and cultural heritage values. Fires can also pose a significant threat to human life, property and the environment. Uncontrolled high intensity fires and a high frequency of fires have the greatest potential to harm the environment.

Bush fire management in rural areas of the Walcha LGA is carried out by the NSW Rural Fire Service – New England Zone (RFS). The National Parks and Wildlife Service and Forests NSW also carry out bushfire management on land under their control.

Table 7: Bushfire Hazard Reduction:

Fire Agency	Completed HR	Scheduled HR	Ha Area Burnt	Ha Mechanical HR
State Forest	0	1	0	0
NPWS	9	9	6141.88	32.572
RFS	4	4	7.54 + 2 piles	0
TOTAL	13	14	6207.85	32.572

4. AIR AND CLIMATE CHANGE



AIR POLLUTION

CSP Links:

5.1.3 – Promote activities that reduce the volume of greenhouse gas emitted into the atmosphere.

STATE

Good	The Walcha LGA generally experiences a high level of air quality and relatively low occurrences of atmospheric pollution, due mainly to limited urban development and the presence of few polluting industries.
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PRESSURE

Fair	<p>Air pollution related issues that have the potential to impact on air quality include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Particulate matter e.g. wood smoke, bushfires, dust - Odour - Greenhouse gas emissions - Motor vehicle use as motor vehicles remain the primary mode of transport within the Walcha LGA due to limited public transport and distance between urban centres - Unsealed roads through dust generated by vehicles using these roads
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RESPONSE

Fair	Council road sealing programs help to reduce dust generation.
Reasonable	Walcha Council did not undertake any air quality monitoring during the 2011/2012 reporting period. The absence of air quality monitoring by Council is consistent with the lack of complaints received by the Councils relating to air quality or air pollution issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CSP Links:

5.1.4 – Develop policies that address the impact of climate change on the community.

5.4.1 – Establish (with partners) alternate renewable energy supplies that will exceed the energy needs of our community.

STATE

Unknown	<p>It is estimated that by 2050:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the climate is virtually certain to be hotter - Rainfall is likely to increase in all seasons except winter - Run-off and stream flow are likely to increase in summer and autumn and decrease in spring and winter - Sheet, rill and gully erosion are likely to worsen on the western slopes and plains but gully erosion on the tablelands is likely to ease on the most vulnerable soils - Soil acidification problems are likely to ameliorate on the tablelands and slopes - Floods are likely to increase in frequency and intensity, particularly along smaller streams - Levees are likely to be less effective at protecting towns - Widespread changes to natural ecosystems are likely. Highly vulnerable ecosystems include higher altitude ecosystems, inland wetlands and highly fragmented ecosystems - Plant cover is likely to decline on the drier central western slopes and plains but to increase on the warmer tablelands. - Changes in the fire regime are likely to have widespread impacts.
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PRESSURE

Increasing	Activities affecting or creating additional pressure with respect to climate change are many and varied and extend beyond the boundaries of the Walcha LGA; these may include an increasing population, motor vehicle registration, land clearing, and continued pressure on electricity consumption.
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RESPONSE

Reasonable	Council and community groups are continuing to proactively educate and campaign for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
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ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	ANNUAL LEVEL 2010/2011	CURRENT TREND
AIR POLLUTION		
Number of premises with EPA air licences	2	↔
Number of premises not compliant with EPA air licences	0	↔
Number of complaints received in relation to air pollution	0	↔
Number of registered vehicles in the Walcha LGA (RTA NSW):	3,043	3,126
- passenger	1,025	918
- off road	387	903
- people movers	10	12
- small buses	12	6
- buses	16	16
- mobile homes	3	3
- motor cycles	116	122
- scooters	4	3
- light trucks	1,136	803
- heavy trucks	225	231
- prime movers	83	87
- light plants	9	6
- heavy plants	17	16
Road sealing	0	8.92km
Method of travel to work		
- car, as driver	718	
- car, as passenger	62	
- truck	39	
- motorbike / scooter	11	↔
- bicycle	3	
- walk	116	
- public transport	0	
- work at home	345	
- other	17	
Extent of bicycle lanes, cycleway by distance in km's	2.45km	↑

5. WATER



The Walcha LGA straddles the watershed of the Great Dividing Range and includes part of the Macleay River Catchment draining to the east.

The main issues for surface water within the Walcha LGA relate to water quality and river health in the streams that pass through urban centres or provide drinking water; this includes the Apsley River and MacDonald River.

DRINKING WATER QUALITY

CSP Links:

5.3.1 – Implement the recommendations of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy and other water and sewer management plans.

5.3.2 – Provide additional off creek storage capacity to drought proof Walcha while minimising the impact of water extraction from the MacDonald River.

5.3.3 – Identify possible new water sources.

5.3.4 – Promote water use efficiency and water saving.

STATE

Good	Water quantity is at sufficient levels to support consumers’ needs at present, and the quality of the water is also good. Some action is suggested to provide protection against drought.
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PRESSURE

Increasing	<p>The issues and activities placing pressure on water and water quality within the Walcha LGA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - urban storm water pollution - land and waterway management (e.g. riparian areas, point source pollution) - industry, infrastructure and development - management of potable water supplies (e.g. blue-green algae blooms, water treatment methods) - water quantity - availability of information and resources (lack of community education, specialist technical staff and funding).
Increasing	<p>The potential for climate change to impact on water and water quality has been highlighted, with the following risks identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in water table - increased algal bloom in water supply - reduction in non-reticulated water supply for rural / domestic use - reduction in surface water available for agricultural use - reduced health of waterways due to sedimentation and eutrophication - increased flooding in low lying developed areas/extended flood range - loss of aquatic ecosystem service/value - increased risk of dam failure - inadequate stormwater infrastructure capacity resulting in larger floods - increased potential for water borne diseases

RESPONSE

Reasonable	Periodic monitoring of water quality is one of the main measures used for determining the state of water resources within the Walcha LGA
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FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM HEALTH**CSP Links:**

5.1 Walcha's distinct and diverse natural environment will be protected and enhanced

5.1.5 Protect and enhance biodiversity, native vegetation river and soil health.

5.1.7 reduce the impact of invasive species

STATE

Good	
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PRESSURE

Increasing	Activities that occur in both the rural and urban environments places pressures on our river systems.
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RESPONSE

Walcha Council is participating in and benefiting from activities emanating from the HiCUB (High Country Urban Biodiversity) project, funded through the NSW Environmental Trust. Further details of HiCUB activities, including riparian restoration works, are outlined in Part 6 – Biodiversity.

STORMWATER**CSP Links:**

Nil. NOTE No data available

STATE**PRESSURE****RESPONSE****ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS****ANNUAL LEVEL
2010/2011****CURRENT
TREND****DRINKING WATER QUALITY**

Average Walcha dwelling (connection) water consumption per day	570.30L	534L
Average Walcha monthly water consumption	15.09ML	15.1ML
Average Walcha monthly rainfall	69.8mm	75.2mm
Number of new water connections	5	2
Compliance with National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) – Drinking water quality	Yes	↔
Number of premises with EPA water licences	3	↔
Number of premises not compliant with EPA water licences	1	↔
Number of water quality complaints received		

FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

Number of Apsley River health complaints receive	0	↑
Compliance with river flow and water quality objectives in the catchment based on river or water management plans	Yes	↔
Extent of coverage of riparian vegetation		

STORMWATER

Number of stormwater pollution complaints received 0 ↔

DRINKING WATER QUALITY

WATER QUALITY MONITORING - APSLEY RIVER

Walcha Council undertakes quarterly water quality monitoring at two sites along the Apsley River. One site is located upstream and the other downstream of Walcha township in order to determine the type and level of pollution, if any, that may be generated from the Walcha urban area.

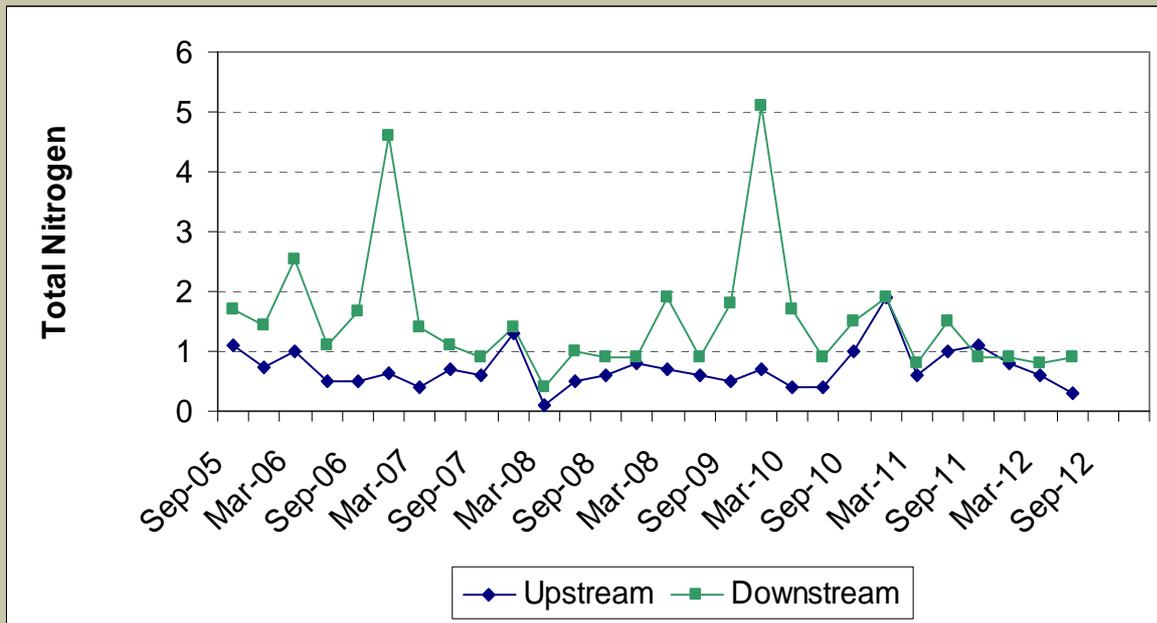


Figure 9: Apsley River total nitrogen levels

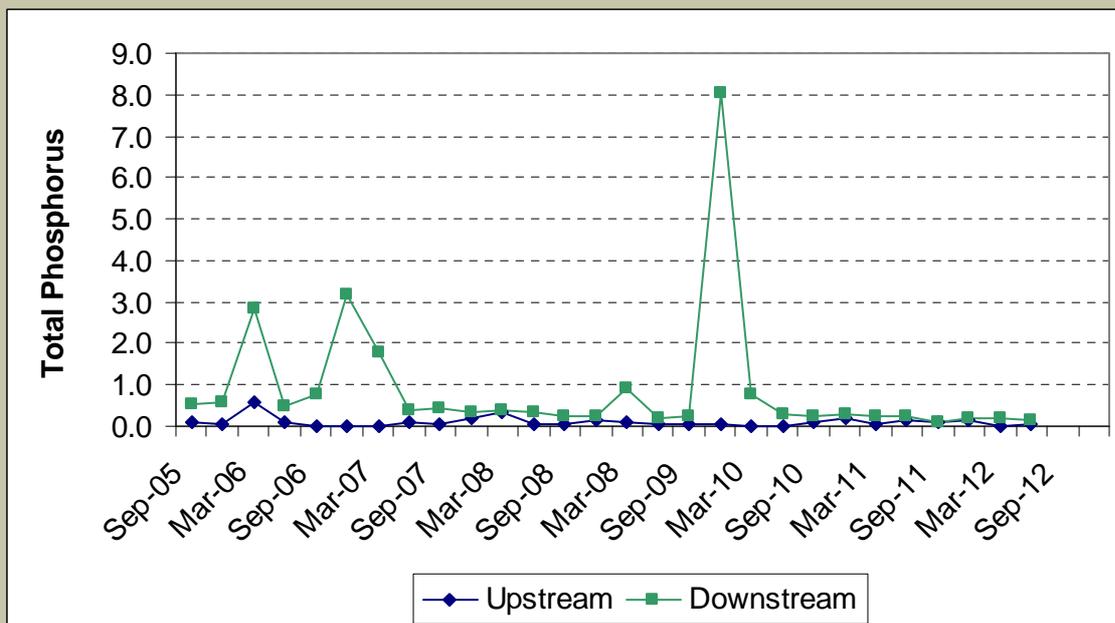


Figure 10: Apsley River total phosphorus levels

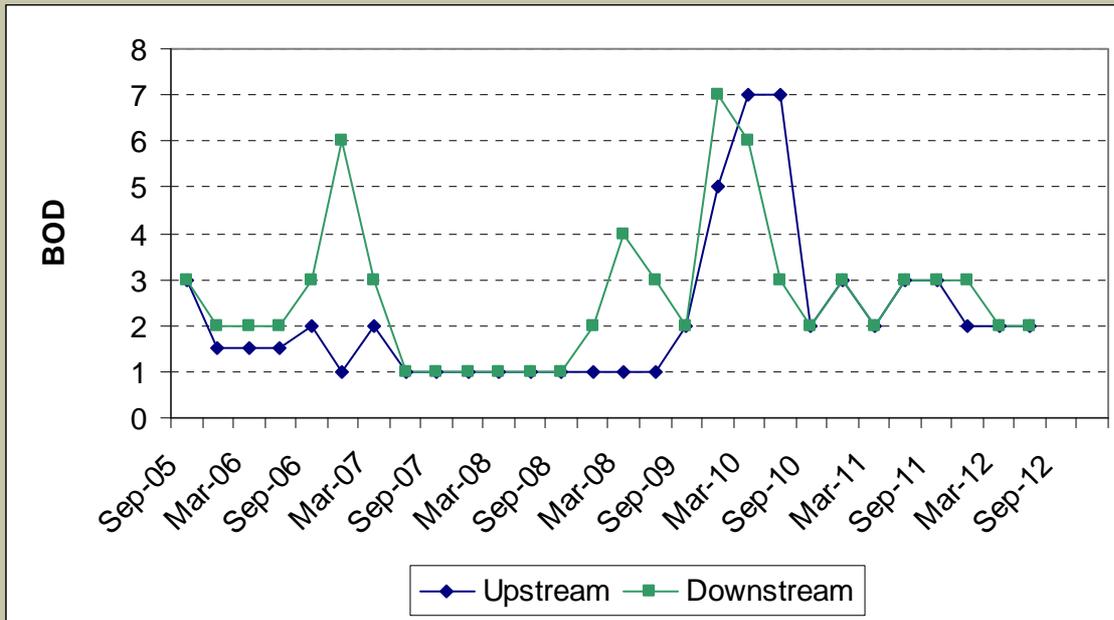


Figure 11: Apsley River biological oxygen demand

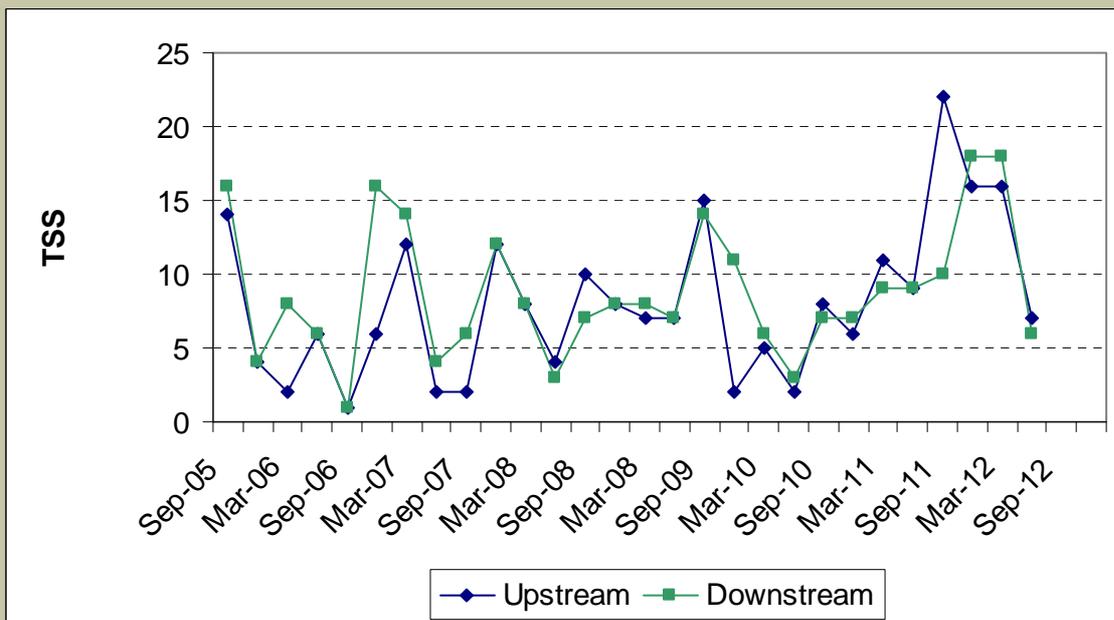


Figure 12: Apsley River total suspended solids

Key findings of the water testing for the 2011-2012 period highlight an increase in the total suspended solids and that more consistent data is being recorded.

6. BIODIVERSITY



The Walcha LGA supports a unique biodiversity as a result of the varied topography, climate, soil type and land use. The Walcha LGA contains one area of international significance, being the Oxley Wild Rivers National Park which is a World Heritage Site.

The Walcha LGA lies largely within the area defined as the New England Tableland Bioregion. A description of the bioregion can be found in the Comprehensive Southern New England State of the Environment Report 2008-2009.

TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS

CSP Links:

5.1.5 – Protect and enhance biodiversity, native vegetation, river and soil health.

5.1.6 – Engage and support the community to undertake sustainable natural resources management and protect Walcha’s natural environment.

STATE

Stable	A large percentage of land in the Walcha LGA is protected under National Park Estate. The environmental indicators used in this report suggest that biodiversity is in a stable state.
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PRESSURE

Increasing	<p>Activities and issues that have been identified as impacting or creating pressure on biodiversity within the Walcha LGA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - weed infestation - feral animals – predation, competition and disease transmission - removal and loss of habitat / vegetation - collection of fire wood from roadsides and travelling stock routes (TSR) - bush fires - low level of, and access to, knowledge and awareness - disease and infection (e.g. mistletoe and Phytophthora cinnamomi – a fungus that causes dieback in trees) - management of travelling stock routes - climate change impacts such as loss of non-urban vegetation and change in species composition of local environment.
Increasing	<p>Degradation of aquatic habitats / riparian areas and altered water regimes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - changes in water table – impacts on water quality - increased algal bloom in water supply - reduced health of waterways due to sedimentation and eutrophication - loss of aquatic ecosystem service / value

RESPONSE

	<p>Three of the Namoi sub-catchments (the Upper and Mid Macdonald and the Cockburn River catchments) which are within the Walcha shire boundary are currently working with landholders to improve the condition and reduce the critical threats to upland wetlands in the target area.</p>
	<p>Apsley River project</p>

WEED CONTROL

CSP Links:

5.1.7 – Reduce the impact of invasive species.

STATE

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PRESSURE

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RESPONSE

Improving	<p>NEWA 2011/2012 program included:</p>
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- All roadsides treated for noxious weeds as per annual spray program.
- Coolatai grass program in areas east of Walcha completed.
- Walcha Parks treated for Broad leafs and Bindii eye using Kamba M.
- Walcha street program completed
- Roadside Furniture (Guide posts/Guard Rails) treated.
- Water storage areas/Waste Transfer Stn's/Treatment plants treated for noxious weeds.
- Pesticides Notification plans on Council and NEWA websites.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	ANNUAL LEVEL 2010/2011	CURRENT TREND
TERRESTRIAL AND FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS		
Amount of National Park Estate within the Walcha LGA	184,000ha	184,000ha
Forests NSW managed forest in Walcha LGA		
- native forest	45,604ha	45,604ha
- native forest mixed	20ha	20ha
- planted forest hardwood	312ha	312ha
- planted forest softwood	6,195ha	6,195ha
Companion Animal impounding:		
- number impounded	61	28
- number released	40	20
- number destroyed	21	8
Number of recorded threatened species (NSW Atlas):		
- Fauna: amphibia	4	4
- Fauna: Aves	22	22
- Fauna: Mammalia	17	17
- Fauna: Reptilia	1	1
- Flora	25	25
Number of records of fauna species	2,082	2,082
Number of records of flora species	169	169

TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS

FIREWOOD COLLECTION

A submission from National Parks Association of NSW - Armidale Branch (Armidale NPA) and Birds Australia – Northern NSW Group (BANN) has identified the following issues in relation to biodiversity and suggested various strategies to address these issues.

- firewood collection and illegal felling of trees for fence posts

NPANSW - Armidale Branch continues to note the impact of firewood collection and illegal felling of trees on remnant native vegetation values of roadsides and travelling stock routes and reserves.

“Uncontrolled firewood collection threatens endangered species and endangered ecological communities as well as other species that are declining, especially if it happens in Mugga Ironbark patches (core habitat for endangered Regent Honeyeater) or the Box-Gum and Ribbon/Mountain Gum woodlands (EEC’s common on roadsides and TSRs, but often altered irreparably in adjoining properties). Felling of standing dead trees reduces the standing tree hollows needed by many bird and bat species to nest or roost (standing dead trees as well as maturing live trees can be very valuable). Removal of fallen dead wood reduces the vertebrates and invertebrates associated with large woody debris that are essential food for many declining bird species.”

Suggested actions include:

- that firewood collection on sensitive roadside and TSR ecosystems is unsustainable and should be reduced and controlled
- that measures are required to discourage wood heating in towns and villages for this reason rather than just for smoke reduction to reduce air pollution. It is not enough just to encourage people to dry their firewood to reduce smoke pollution.
- that projects to set up plantations for sustainable firewood supply should be strongly supported
- renewed commitments to effective roadside environmental management plans, including:
 - instructions to all Council staff to avoid all unnecessary felling of trees during routine road maintenance or reconstruction practices, ensuring absolutely minimum damage to, or felling of trees in known significant areas such as Mugga Ironbark patches.
 - education workshops be conducted for road maintenance staff on recognition of environmental values of roadside vegetation, and sustainable management of those values
 - roadsides should be re-surveyed to update maps of significant roadside vegetation and associated management information and signage provided
 - Livestock Health and Pest Authority being contacted to ask for an MOU or collaboration in promoting and implementing the above measures.
 - Ecological / biodiversity values should be listed and explained in roadside signage and in Council notices to ratepayers, noting that:
 - i. tree-felling is illegal on all Crown land, roadsides and TSRs, and penalties apply for offences.
 - ii. areas of significant roadside communities such as Mugga Ironbark patches and known Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs) are identified, in which all plants are protected and firewood collection not permitted.

WEED CONTROL

Invasion by weeds is one of Australia’s most serious and expensive land degradation problems. A weed is generally characterised as a plant growing where it is not wanted or where it was not originally present that will cause impact on agriculture, human health and the environment.

A weed is declared noxious because its control will provide a benefit to the community over and above the cost of implementing control programs.

Continuity in weed management provides benefits for local communities. New England Weeds Authority (NEWA) as a single purpose County Council has a major role to play in reducing the impacts from weeds declared noxious in the New England & Northern

Tablelands region. Noxious weeds officers are the first line of defence against noxious weeds in NSW.

The NEWA area is comprised of Armidale Dumaresq, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha Local Government Areas. The Authority covers some 18,255 sq km's with a rolling three year inspection program, and is also responsible for weed control on 4,000 km's of Council road reserves.

The Authority also provides advice on weed control and weed identification, private works on request and general enquiries.

What NEWA does:

- **Exclude** - prevent the establishment of new weed species in our region;
- **Eradicate or contain** - eliminate or prevent the spread of new weed species in our region;
- **Effectively manage** - reduce the impacts of widespread invasive weed species;
- **Educate** - ensure community, industry and government stakeholders have the knowledge to identify and manage invasive weed species.

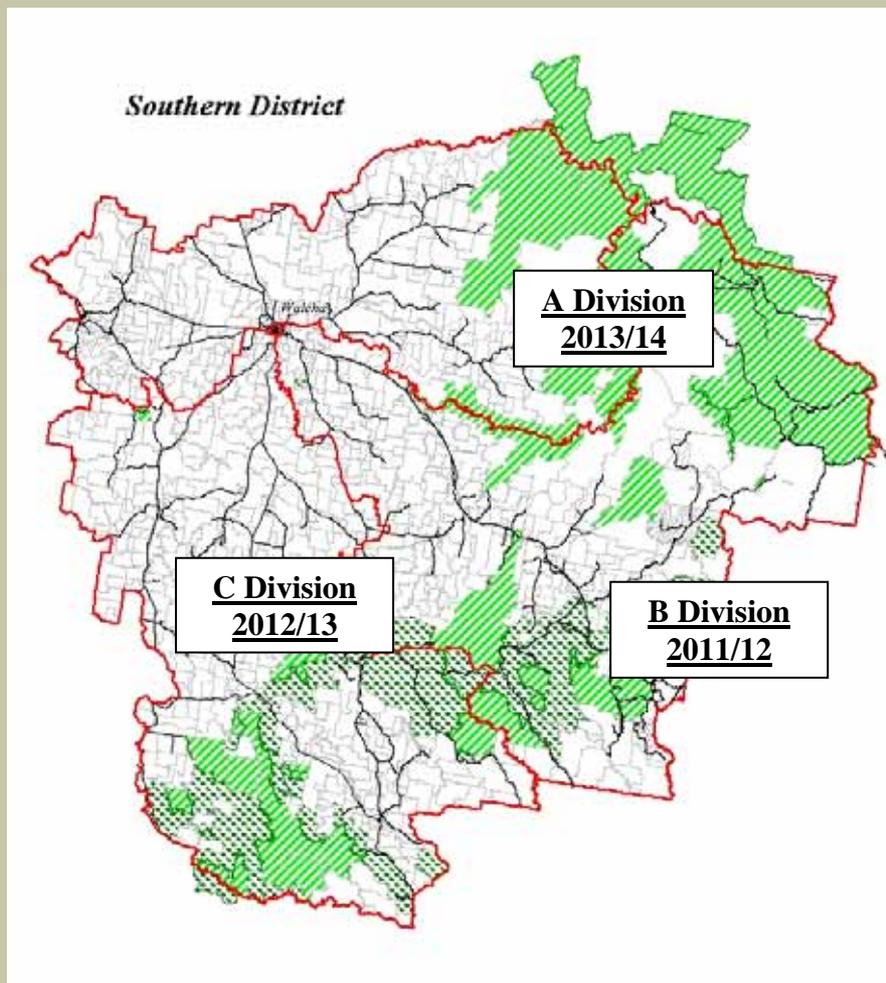


Figure 13: Weeds Southern District

Table 8: NEWA Weeds Action Plan Regional Measurable Outcomes / Inspections

Inspections	NEWA Regional Targets	Walcha Council Inspections
Nurseries	10	3
Rural Outlets	8	0
ARTC - No.	3	0
ARTC - Ha.	25	0
Weekend Markets	5	2
Dept of Lands - No.	4	3
Dept of Lands - Ha.	300	110
Nat Parks/Reserves - No.	4	5
Nat Parks/Reserves - Ha.	15,000	15,700
Aquaria/Pet shops	2	1
LH&PA Reserves - No.	5	12
LH&PA Reserves - Ha.	2,500	300
Gravel Quarries	40	31
Machinery Dealers	0	0
Grain Handling Sites	0	0
Border Crossings	0	0
Recreational Areas - No.	10	0
Recreational Areas - Ha.	400	0
Wetlands	1	0
Saleyards	3	1
Machinery Wash down Bays	0	0
Other	0	0
Roadside Truck Stops	10	0
No Booklets to New Landowners	55	0
Private Property High Risk areas - No.	500	37
Private Property High Risk areas - Ha.	100,000	33,680
PP HR Re inspections - No.	100	15
PP HR Re inspections - Ha.	20,000	21,862
Roadside Inspections High Risk Pathways - Km.	640	270
Roadside Inspections High Risk Pathways - Ha.	12,800	540
Waterways High Risk Pathways - No.	20	6
Waterways High Risk Pathways - Ha.	4,000	615
Private Property Inspections - No.	1,000	202
Private Property Inspections - Ha.	200,000	66,238
Private Property Re Inspections - No.	120	4
Private Property Re Inspections - Ha.	22,000	2,635
Private property Waterways - No.	45	0
Private property Waterways - Ha.	2500	0
Roadside Inspections - Km.	3,489	102
Roadside Inspections - Ha.	69,780	204
Landowners Contacted/ Inspection Process	1,125	51

Stakeholders/Coordinated Programs	250	3
Other Council Lands - No.	5	1
Other Council Lands - Ha.	25	3
TSRs - No.	1	13
TSRs - Ha.	2	290

Table 9: Extension Activities 2011/2012 carried out

Extension Activity	Council Area	Date Achieved
Walcha Show	Walcha	9, 10 March 2012
Timber Expo	Walcha	3 December 2011
Weeds Presentation Essential Energy	Walcha	19 December 2011
Weeds Field Day Yarrowitch	Walcha	11 April 2012

The 2011/2012 season saw a change in the New England Weeds Authority operational program where staff and resources work together to address the weed control program throughout the Authority's area.

In 2011/2012 the following programs were completed in the Walcha region.

- All roadsides treated for noxious weeds as per annual spray program.
- Coolatai grass program in areas east of Walcha completed.
- Walcha Parks treated for Broad leafs and Bindii eye using Kamba M.
- Walcha street program completed
- Roadside Furniture (Guide posts/Guard Rails) treated.
- Water storage areas/Waste Transfer Stn's/Treatment plants treated for noxious weeds.
- Pesticides Notification plans on Council and NEWA websites.

7. WASTE AND RESOURCE RECOVERY



Walcha Council continues to operate a licensed waste management facility, being the Walcha Waste Depot, 49 Aerodrome Road Walcha; along with two rural landfills to service small settlements and rural communities, being the Woolbrook Landfill, 150 Campfire Road Woolbrook; and the Nowendoc Garbage Depot, 47 Tops Road Nowendoc.

Walcha Council is actively involved in recycling, working to reduce overall waste generation and improving waste management.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

CSP Links:

- 5.2.1 – Develop and promote programs that increase the participation of the community in recycling and reducing waste going to landfill.
- 5.2.2 – Implement alternate and affordable processes that reduce waste going to landfill.
- 5.2.3 – Identify possible new solid waste disposal sites.
- 5.2.4 Monitor and oppose any move to apply the Waste and Environment Levy on the Walcha Local Government Area.
- 5.2.5 Manage solid waste in an efficient, affordable and sustainable manner.

STATE

Stable	In late 2011 Council resolved to convert the Walcha Waste Depot to a
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	waste transfer facility in the later half of 2012. Part of this transition will also be to introduce a three bin system. This will reduce the size of the general waste bin from 240 litres to 140 litres, increase the recycle bin from 40 litres to 240 litres, and add a 240 litre green waste bin for garden waste.
Improving	Council sells all plastic and paper recyclables to IMPACT recycling, Glass to VISY recycling and iron to ONE STEEL recycling.
Stable	Council engages contractors to monitor groundwater in three monitoring wells, surface water in two ponds and leachate monitoring within the current cell. The results for 2011/2012 were stable, as per previous years.

PRESSURE

Increasing	There is increased pressure from the stable population but growing consumption habits of the Walcha LGA residents. Operation costs of waste management facilities are increasing, along with NSW Government landfill charges; and a potential future price on carbon pollution. Waste generated continues to adversely affect the environment as does emerging problematic waste streams such as eWaste and fluorescent light globes.
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RESPONSE

Improving	The DrumMuster collection method was altered to allow drop-offs by appointment rather than specified days, which saw an increase in the number of bins deposited.
Improving	Separate recycle facilities have been provided to commercial premises. Fees and charges have been applied depending on the type, size and frequency of the service.
Improving	Council interacted with local groups, neighbouring Councils and schools in organising programs such as the “Love food hate Waste” program to encourage food waste minimisation and recycling.
Improving	The Northern Inland Regional Waste Group (NIRW) conducted projects / strategies including chemical cleanout, drum muster, green waste processing, concrete crushing, metal collection, battery collection, oil and paint collection, florescent lighting collection, Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) and Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) study for LSR Landfill, sharps disposal bins, true cost of landfill study, educational material, and road signs to reduce litter.
Improving	EnviroMentors (formerly Waste Watchers) visited schools in the area during Term1, 2012. The ‘In The Bin’ program targeted primary students from Kindergarten to Year 6 empowering students with a greater understanding correct bin usage, sorting waste, landfill, recycling and composting.

Improving	A vehicle survey and a waste survey (void space consumed) were undertaken as a recommendation in the Walcha Waste Management Options Report.
Improving	<p>The NIRW projects Walcha Council participated in were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chemical Cleanout - drumMuster - Waste >Art & Design competition - Scrap Metal and Battery recycling - Use of the NIRW Waste Education Trailer at the Walcha Festival October 2011 - Used Oil Program - e-Waste recycling (partnering with Uralla Shire Council) <p>Benefits include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the development and implementation of regional programs. - being a member encourages cooperation between member Councils and external stakeholders (contractors) to the benefit of all. - the groups reach helps to identify and investigate all opportunities in the provision of waste management services, in achieving waste avoidance and waste minimisation. - the groups waste management issues are represented by NIRW as one voice in response to State & Federal Government initiatives or directives.

EFFLUENT MANAGEMENT

CSP Links:

5.3.1 – Implement the recommendations of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy and other water and sewer management plans.

5.3.4 – Promote water use efficiency and water saving.

6.4.3 – Manage the water and sewerage systems at Summervale

STATE

Stable	
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PRESSURE

Minimal	
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RESPONSE

Reasonable	Council undertakes daily monitoring and monthly lab analysis of flows through its tertiary treatment pond and outflows along with river water quality monitoring. Results have remained stable and required no specific action.
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Reasonable	Council currently reuses approximately 5% of the water from its sewer treatment plant.
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ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	ANNUAL LEVEL 2010/2011	CURRENT TREND
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT		
Number of waste management facilities	3	3
Number of waste collection services:		
- Residential	775	729
- Non residential	78	78
- Commercial / business	145	150
Amount of waste collected:	1,736 tonnes	2,727 tonnes
- Domestic, commercial & industrial	1,545 tonnes	2,427 tonnes
- Construction & Demolition	191 tonnes	300 tonnes
Amount of waste deposited to landfill	1,421.80 tonnes	2,304 tonnes
Amount of domestic waste deposited to landfill	1,244 tonnes	1,257 tonnes
Amount of waste generated per capita (per person per annum)	0.95 tonnes	1.1 tonnes
Amount of recyclables collected:	314.20 tonnes	423 tonnes
- Metals	17%	37%
- Paper / cardboard	61%	39%
- Glass	19%	21%
- Plastics	2%	2%
- Aluminium	1%	0.4%
- Batteries	-	-
- Other	-	0.6%
Amount of recyclables generated per capita (per person per annum)	0.18 tonnes	0.14 tonnes
Proportion of waste diverted from landfill to recycling	18%	16%
Amount of green waste collected / deposited	-	720 tonnes
Number of DrumMuster drums collected	3581	4163

8. NOISE



NOISE POLLUTION

CSP Links:

Nil

STATE

<p>Good</p>	<p>Noise pollution and issues associated with noise generation are generally not significant environmental problems across the Walcha LGA. A small number of noise complaints are usually received by Council each year, but historically these tend to be isolated incidents or noise related to an identifiable point source.</p>
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PRESSURE

<p>Stable</p>	<p>Barking dogs continue to be the greatest source of noise complaints for the Council. There has been no noticeable change to this situation during 2011/2012. Other pressures include urban noise (including loud music, air-conditioners, etc.); industry; noise from rural activities; transport; and waste management activities.</p>
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RESPONSE

<p>Limited</p>	<p>Presently there is no regular noise monitoring undertaken by the Council. Any monitoring that is carried out is usually in response to complaints or specific issues.</p>
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Reasonable	Land use zoning within the urban area of Walcha and consideration of potential noise generation during the development assessment process help to confine potentially noisy activities to suitable areas while establishing appropriate conditions for operation of such activities.
Reasonable	The Council endeavours to respond promptly to noise complaints, and in doing so, seek to minimise potential impacts on residents and the environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	ANNUAL LEVEL 2010/2011	CURRENT TREND
NOISE POLLUTION		
Number of noise complaints received by Council	8	5
Complaints relating to barking dogs	8	5
Number of premises with EPA noise licences	1	1
Number of premises compliant with EPA noise conditions licences	1	1

9. HERITAGE



The Walcha LGA has an extensive and diverse heritage relating to its Aboriginal and European occupation. There is a strong awareness and appreciation of heritage in the region as reflected in the preparation of heritage studies, identification, restoration and preservation of buildings and places, public education and promotion of heritage.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

CSP Links:

Nil

STATE

Unknown	The extent of Aboriginal heritage can sometimes be difficult to ascertain due to sensitivities associated with identifying and publicising sites of significance
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PRESSURE

Increasing	A limited understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and heritage and limited knowledge regarding the location of significant sites, can make it difficult to preserve Aboriginal sites and artefacts and can result in loss of Aboriginal heritage.
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RESPONSE

Limited	<p>OEH is the lead agency responsible for the protection of Aboriginal artefacts. There have been no new studies relating to Aboriginal Heritage during 2011/2012. Council is continuing with the preparation of its Community Based Heritage Study that will incorporate Aboriginal Heritage.</p> <p>Aboriginal sites and cultural heritage are to be taken into consideration in the assessment of development applications and amendments to the Walcha LEP.</p>
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NON-ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

CSP Links:

Nil

STATE

Stable	<p>Council is continuing with its preparation of a Community Based Heritage Study. Heritage items currently listed in the Walcha LGA includes 19 of local significance and 5 of state significance, nil heritage conservation areas, and one archaeological site</p>
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PRESSURE

Increasing	<p>Pressure is increasing due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development (new development, urban consolidation, inappropriate redevelopment / restoration, impacts on streetscape); - a lack of understanding and community values of heritage significance resulting in deterioration and damage of heritage items; - management of information and loss of historical knowledge; and - insufficient funding and difficulty in obtaining funding for heritage work
Increasing	<p>A noticeable increase in the installation of alternative energy technologies (e.g. photovoltaic panels and solar hot water systems) has created pressure in relation to the aesthetic value of streetscapes in heritage conservation areas and adjacent to heritage items.</p>

RESPONSE

Improving	<p>No new heritage studies were completed in the Walcha LGA during 2011/2012. However, Council is continuing with its preparation of a Community Based Heritage Study in conjunction with the NSW Heritage Branch.</p>
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ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS	ANNUAL LEVEL 2010/2011	CURRENT TREND
ABORIGINAL HERITAGE		
Number of aboriginal sites	136	136
Number of Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits (AHIP)		
NON-ABORIGINAL HERITAGE		
Number of heritage sites:		
- local significance	19	19
- state significance	5	5
Number of archaeological sites	1	1
Heritage study undertaken	In progress	In progress
Level of external funding obtained for heritage based projects	\$0	\$0
Number of interim heritage orders issued	0	0