

# BEGA VALLEY SHIRE COUNCIL



## State of the environment report 2005/2006

A supplementary report



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**State of the environment report 2005/2006**  
**A supplementary report**

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Background .....	1
Indicators .....	1
<b>Atmosphere</b>	<b>2</b>
Air quality .....	2
Background.....	2
Assessment .....	2
Implications.....	2
Recommendations.....	2
Climate and climate variability .....	3
Background.....	3
Assessment .....	3
Implications.....	3
Recommendations.....	3
<b>Human settlement</b>	<b>4</b>
Community well being.....	4
Background.....	4
Assessment .....	4
Implications.....	4
Recommendations.....	4
Indicators .....	4
Infrastructure and services .....	5
Background.....	5
Assessment .....	5
Implications.....	6
Recommendation .....	7
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<b>8</b>
Background.....	8
Assessment .....	8
Implications.....	9
Recommendations.....	10
<b>Land</b>	<b>11</b>
Land quality.....	11
Background.....	11
Assessment .....	11

Implications.....	12
Recommendations.....	12
Land use and management .....	12
Background.....	12
Assessment .....	12
Implications.....	13
Recommendations.....	13

**Water - quality and use** **14**

---

Background.....	14
Assessment .....	14
Implications.....	15
Recommendations.....	15

**Where to from now?** **16**

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## Introduction

In line with the principles of ecologically sustainable development (E.S.D.) Council has a major role to play in the protection of the Shire's natural attributes for this and future generations. State of the Environment Reporting remains the best available mechanism to review and evaluate Council's work plans in relation to environmental management and ESD and to ensure that new goals are set for coming years.

This supplementary report meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and it also reflects the fact that environmental issues have become more important in the community. Council's main efforts with respect the State of the Environment reporting regime remain with the regional SoE report that is prepared in conjunction with the ACT Government and the Councils of the ACT Region. The next comprehensive SoE is due in 2008 and is also currently under production.

The 2004 comprehensive SoE report was released in 2005 and builds upon the baseline report that was released in 2000.

This 2005 / 2006 supplementary report provides "snapshots" of the condition of our local environment and outlines important changes in response to the impacts of human settlement.

[www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environment\\_Reports/Environment\\_Reports.htm](http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environment_Reports/Environment_Reports.htm)

## Background

The first formal assessment and reporting of environmental quality in the Shire occurred in 1993. State of Environment (SoE) reports have been completed annually, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, each year since.

In 1997 Council resolved to approach reporting on the state of our environment on a regional basis and the required comprehensive report was completed in conjunction with the Australian Capital Region. The 2000 and 2004 SoE Reports continued this process and will be used as Council's baseline for reporting into the future. Council has committed to the regional preparation of the comprehensive SoE in 2008. All SoE Reports are completed in accordance with s 428 of the Local Government Act 1993 and the provisions of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

## Indicators

As required in Clause 223 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 this supplementary report updates the trends able to be measured against the environmental indicators used in the 2004 comprehensive SoE report. If indicator changes have not occurred or if data was not able to be accessed then they have not been included in this supplementary report. The indicators included are listed below.

Condition Indicators	Pressure Indicators	Response Indicators
Water supply	Population growth	Material recycling and reuse
Drinking water quality	Solid waste	Water recycling and reuse
Population growth	Pest plant species	Controlling pest plants
Vegetation diversity	Hazardous waste	
Water use	Discharges to water	

# Atmosphere

## Air quality

### Background

Poor air quality affects us all. It can also have effects on most other living things, on ecosystems, on buildings and facilities as well as detracting from our enjoyment of our Shire.

Air quality is usually assessed by continuous or at least regular monitoring of various pollutants usually chosen because of their impact on health or because they contribute to the formation of other pollutants. Air quality monitoring is not conducted in the Bega Valley Shire. Motor vehicles are the main source of many air pollutants.

Also considered under air quality is the global issue of ozone depletion in the upper atmosphere. Ozone depletion results in increased amounts of ultra violet A and B radiation reaching ground level. National and international controls are relevant to this aspect and will be discussed in more detail in the 2008 comprehensive SoE Report.

### Assessment

Since the 2000 report air quality in the Shire has not generally been thought to have changed. Little specific information about air quality in the shire is known though there are obvious occasions where air quality may be impacted through activities such as road transport and preventative burning. Since the impact of bushfires in the last summer period there has been a significant move towards vegetation management with respect fires and this has led to an increase in control burns. Similarly air quality is likely to be worse in urban areas of the Shire owing to the use of solid fuel heaters. Industrial sources have thought to be relatively unchanged since the 2004 report and larger industries such as Bega Cheese remain regulated by the Department of Environment and Conservation.



### Implications

It is likely that there is little impact on human health in the Shire owing to air quality but without data any potential implications remain difficult to assess.

### Recommendations

- Educate and involve the community in understanding the importance of maintaining air quality.
- Continue to control and regulate the use of solid fuel heaters and the burning of vegetation particularly in urban areas of the Shire.

## Climate and climate variability

### Background

Any change in climate and its variability is a potentially serious issue for regional and national economies particularly those with reliance on the agricultural sector, itself reliant on climate for continued profitability. In addition to natural climate variability is the issue of human induced climate change now known as the enhanced greenhouse effect. This is discussed in greater detail in the 2004 SoE report.

Australia has a high reliance on fossil fuels for the production of energy and for transport. Any requirement to reduce this dependence will be a very considerable challenge. Town design and architecture are important aspects in conditioning a reduction in fossil fuel use.

### Assessment

Climate change is now a reality. The natural variability associated with climate in this part of the world via La Nina and El Nino is discussed in the 2004 SoE report. The emissions of greenhouse gases in the Shire are not measured though community awareness in the Shire has increased markedly. The Clean Energy for Eternity initiative has played a large role in the increased awareness of the issue through their community day on Tathra Beach in early 2006.

### Implications

The implications of climate change are enormous. Government involvement is required and has recently gathered momentum. Council's long term planning will need to recognise this and address the issues across the whole of its own operations including planning controls.

### Recommendations

- Join the Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) program and investigate options for reducing greenhouse emissions.
- Ensure CCP activities and milestones receive adequate resources to progress at a reasonable rate.

# Human settlement

## Community well being

### Background

The quality of life of people in the Bega Valley Shire, or their well being, is as much a result of the quality of our natural environment as of social and economic factors. Air quality, water quality, biodiversity, pest plants and animals, access to open space and bushland for recreation, and access to estuaries, lakes and beaches for recreation are but a few examples of how much the natural environment affects us.

Social and economic factors are important too. We have come to expect a certain standard of service provision as key to our well being, such as education, health, housing and many more. The well being of the community provides a basis for growth and development. The way in which we interact socially, at work or conducting business will have a significant impact on the nature of settlement and on the state of environment resulting from settlement.

### Assessment

Council staff estimate that the resident population in the Shire has increased by 460 people during the 2005 2006 reporting period. This figure is based on data provided by the ABS Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2004 – 2005 extrapolated at a growth rate of 1.4%.

Council has contributed considerable resources to social planning and this process has established a considerable amount to the discussion of the impact on the environment of human settlement. The 2000 SoE report also has very detailed discussion of the baseline indicators relevant to this issue.

[www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environment\\_Reports/Environment\\_Reports.htm](http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environment_Reports/Environment_Reports.htm)

### Implications

Refer to the social plan for further information.

### Recommendations

- Refer to the social plan for further information.

[www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Community/social\\_plan/social\\_planning.htm](http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Community/social_plan/social_planning.htm)

### Indicators

Refer to the 2000 and 2004 SoE report

[www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environment\\_Reports/Environment\\_Reports.htm](http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Environment_Reports/Environment_Reports.htm)

## Infrastructure and services

### Background

There have been considerable changes to many of the services and infrastructure provided by Council during the 2005 2006 period. The areas involved are Water Supply and Sewage Management, Solid Waste Management, and On-site Sewage Management (OSM).

### Assessment

#### *Water Supply and Sewerage Management:*

Water supply stabilised during this reporting period with no days of water restrictions reported. Dam fullness across all supply dams was a comparatively high 86%. (Refer to the 2004 SoE report for further details.)

Drinking water quality provided in the reticulated supplies remained of an excellent quality. 486 separate microbiological samples were taken to determine water quality and 99% met the health criteria. 41 chemical samples were collected for analysis during the reporting period and all met the relevant health criteria.

The Bega Valley Sewerage Program (BVSP) made substantial progress during 2005/06. The third of ten planned projects has been completed. Environmental improvements have resulted with two STP's upgraded (Tura Beach and Tathra) to meet current and mid term future performance and capacity demands and Cobargo has been sewered.

Environmental assessments for the Bega Sewage treatment plant (STP) replacement, Merimbula reclaimed water management upgrade, Bermagui STP upgrade and the Wallaga Lake sewerage scheme were also completed. The Bega and Merimbula projects received approvals and the Bermagui and Wallaga Lake projects were on public exhibition during the reporting period with approval received early in 2006 2007.

The Cobargo sewerage scheme was completed in May 2006 and connections commenced immediately. Final testing of the STP under load conditions will occur during the next reporting period however all pre commissioning has been satisfactorily completed.



Wolumla sewerage scheme is well advanced and is expected to be completed by the end of 2006. The Bega STP project construction is also well advanced and on schedule for completion in early 2007. Design work for the Candelo sewerage scheme is complete. These three schemes will be advanced and reported upon during the next reporting period.

#### *On-site Sewage Management:*

On site sewage management has been positively impacted by the progress made with the Bega Valley Sewerage project. The number of premises on septic systems will reduce greatly during the next reporting period as residents at Cobargo connect to the sewer and

as Wolumla, Kalaru, and Wallaga Lake become connected. During the reporting period inspections on a risk based basis continued with 5087 premises with OSM's registered and approved in the Shire.

*Solid Waste Management:*

Waste management continued to be well resourced and as such implementation of the 2020 Vision on Waste proceeded well during the reporting period.

On 1st July 2005 Council commenced a new kerbside recycling contract. Features of the new service were the provision of a more user friendly co-mingled recycling collection with a subsequent increased efficiency in resource recovery. During this reporting period 3,556.74 tonnes of recyclables were collected. This represented an almost tripling of the annual mass collected with the previous crate based system. Contamination was a low 1.04%. In addition recyclable drop offs at Council's recycling depots resulted in 11,000 litres of oil, 1995 vehicle batteries, 7891 cubic metres of garden organics, and 387.18 tonnes of scrap steel being diverted from landfill.



A pilot garden organics collection program was also introduced during this reporting period. Owing to the success of this trial Council has resolved to extend this service across the Shire during 2006 2007.

Household chemicals were again collected during the reporting period at Bega, Bermagui, and Pambula with 4167.50, 4632 .0 and 3341.50 kilograms respectively being collected and disposed of at approved facilities outside of the Shire.

**Implications**

Strategic Business Plans remain current for both Water and Sewerage management. The Sewer Project will continue to have a very large positive environmental impact. Drinking water quality provided by Council remains at a very high quality.



During the reporting period there were 143 unlicensed sewer discharges. These discharges are typically associated with wet weather events and minor blockages such as surcharging manholes. It is estimated that they involved a volume of 1475 kilo litres (kL) of effluent. Only 680kL of this volume was estimated at reaching waterways. All the discharges were investigated and major events were reported to the Department of Environment and Conservation as required. Remedial action including increased video surveillance of sewer mains and the like

were also implemented. Council protocol for reposes to these discharges was also reviewed during this reporting period and staff have been trained in its implementation.

The OSM program provides an effective mechanism to ensure OSM systems operate in accordance with health and environmental performance standards. Approximately 10% of premises inspected were required to augment their OSM systems within the following 12 month period.

The disposal of waste to landfill has reduced owing to the kerbside recyclables collection and the increase will grow with the kerbside garden organics collection gaining momentum. Mulch produced from this resource is very popular. Whilst waste collection and recycling has also progressed more information on the volume of waste produced per capita is required to ensure sustainable management. In addition as full cost recovery remains a valid goal in managing waste, the costs of controlling and regulating a growing waste dumping problem need also to be recovered.

### Recommendation

- Employ a Water Demand Management Officer and develop and implement a sustainable Water Demand Management Strategy.
- Continue to minimise overflows from the sewerage system especially during wet weather events and particularly close to sensitive or high risk areas such as oyster producing estuaries.
- Continue to protect and deliver optimum quality reticulated drinking water.
- Continue to implement the 2020 Vision on Waste.
- Adequately resource staff to effectively manage the growing waste dumping problem.
- Expand waste minimisation education and awareness programs to include changing community member's consumption behaviour.
- Continue the progressive upgrading of Councils' unsewered public amenities.
- Review DCP 5 to ensure that the risk management approach to the management of on site sewage management systems retains currency especially relating to the frequency of inspections and duration of approvals to operate such systems.

# Biodiversity

## Background

Fundamental to the concept of biological diversity (biodiversity) is the number and variety of individual species and of the ecological circumstances in which they live. Changes in the number and / or abundance of species, and changes to different ecosystems, are the most obvious factors that warn of possible changes in biodiversity.



The long-term survival of biodiversity - i.e. native species and ecological communities - depends on effective protection and management which are based on reliable data. High quality research and monitoring, supported by appropriate legislation to enable resource allocation for the preparation and implementation of protection and recovery plans, is fundamental to the conservation of biodiversity.

Effective protection and management of threatened species and ecological communities is essential to their long-term survival. Changes in landuse, loss of habitat, increased numbers of pest animals and plants (or even new introductions), tourism and recreation, are all threats that can impact on biodiversity. Appropriate conservation legislation, together with the preparation and implementation of protection and recovery plans, is fundamental to threatened species management. Fortunately such legislation is in place. What is needed are the resources for appropriate research and monitoring to prepare the necessary action plans and to implement them.

## Assessment

Progress towards better management and understanding of biodiversity conservation in Bega Valley Shire continued during the 2005 – 2006 reporting period. Projects to improve mapping of vegetation continued through the Department of Environment and Heritage, and the suite of incentive programs for freehold land continued under the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority's Voluntary Biological Diversity Conservation Strategy.

The reporting period saw the introduction of the Native Vegetation Act 2003, which included significant changes in the way applications for clearing of native vegetation were assessed. Among other things, the new legislation essentially requires any clearing of native vegetation to be offset with an area of native vegetation managed for conservation in perpetuity. Also introduced was the Threatened Species Amendment Act 2004 and the introduction of uncommenced amendments from 2002 to the Threatened Species Conservation Act. The changes were aimed at bringing threatened species legislation in line with native vegetation legislation. The key changes were:

- in urban and coastal areas – the integration of biodiversity into strategic land-use planning, improvements to the development assessment process, and the accreditation of flora and fauna consultants
- in rural areas – threatened species conservation embedded within native vegetation protection and incentives for landholders
- the listing of threatened species maintained as a scientific process and based on defined criteria
- transparent prioritisation of recovery and threat abatement actions
- upgraded enforcement and compliance provisions
- expert advisory councils to advise the Minister for the Environment on social, economic and biodiversity implications.



Weed management continues to consume resources and weeds remain a large threat to the protection of biodiversity. The impacts of climate change in this area alone may well be very significant. Bitou Bush (*Chrysanthemoides monilifera*) decreased in area by 200 hectares; Cape Broom (*Genista monspessulana*) decreased in area 40 hectares; and Serrated Tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) decreased in area by approximately 900 hectares.

Fireweed infestations are continuing to increase rapidly, with areas infested increasing by a further 10% in the past 12 months. Where previously found, Fireweed densities have significantly increased with many areas having dense infestations of over 35% of vegetation cover during the current reporting period. Newly infested areas are significant despite having relatively low-density infestations. They are cause for concern as current management practices make control of Fireweed difficult once it becomes established.

Other weeds that appear to be increasing in the area they infest in the shire include African Lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) (with the area of infestation increasing approximately 8% over that in 2000). While the area of infestation has increased, much is classed as rare and isolated and effective management programs at this level have a high chance of successful control.

Chilean needlegrass was found on several properties in a small area of the Shire. Inspection has revealed it covers 12 hectares. A vigorous inspection and management program has reduced the area and close cooperation with the affected landholders, on-going control and pasture rehabilitation programs make eradication likely within five years.

### Implications

Two species that occur in the Shire were added to Schedule 2 of the Threatened Species Conservation Act: Pomaderris Bodalla (a plant) and Callocephalon fimbriatum (Gang-gang Cockatoo). Two vegetation types that occur in the Shire were listed as Endangered Ecological Communities under Schedule 2 of the Act. They are themada grassland on sea cliffs and coastal headlands, and bangalay sand forest.

Changes to the Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 mean that Recovery Plans are no longer required to be produced. Instead, the recovery and threat abatement actions are listed under a Priority Actions Statement, which was exhibited as a draft during the reporting period. The Department of Environment and Heritage provide a database of recovery and threat abatement actions that is searchable by actions, geographic region, threatened species and key threatening processes. There are a total of 277 priority actions applicable to the Bega Valley Shire and they are grouped into 20 recovery strategies.

During the reporting period approximately 258 hectares of freehold land was included in contracts of various sorts under the SRCMA VBDC strategy to be managed for conservation outcomes.

Bega Valley Shire Council has identified nine priority weeds within the shire. Infestations of five of these species have increased in area within the shire during the current reporting period despite increased funding and management planning. Many of these have the potential to adversely impact on primary productivity and conservation values of native vegetation communities. St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), Paterson's Curse (*Echium* spp) and Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) are also poisonous to livestock.

Weed Management in the Shire has become much more effective following the development of the Bega Valley Shire Weeds Strategy in a series of NHT-funded community workshops held in 2001 to 2002 and an emphasis on education and awareness programs. Representatives of other land management agencies attended the workshops and committed to undertake weed management programs. Bi-annual local weed committee meetings are held when requested by community weeds groups. At these, Council and other agencies reported on progress and sought input from community members. Development of this work continues.

### Recommendations

- Continue to resource the biodiversity education program for staff.
- Develop and implement the Threatened Species Guide for staff and the wider community especially the development industry.
- Continue to identify and map all pest plant distribution and control areas.
- Advocate for increased funding and research into control mechanisms for fireweed.

# Land

## Land quality

### Background

Healthy land is needed to sustainably support a range of important landuses such as agriculture, urban development, waste disposal or transport infrastructure. For this reason, land quality, or the extent to which the soil resource is free from depletion or degradation, is of concern to many communities.

Ideally, land quality would be assessed in this report on the basis of fundamental soil properties which reflect the condition of the soil, and the actual and likely extent of degradation such as soil erosion and dryland salinity. Factors such as the occurrence of known contaminated sites or the detrimental effects of landfill are also considered.



Declines in land quality can often be remediated once the problem and its causes have been identified. This may mean applying lime or fertilisers, restricting areas to stock access, revegetating some agricultural catchments, imposing erosion control measures in urban development areas, changing to a more appropriate landuse, or simply not developing some areas of land identified as having a high risk of developing dryland salinity for instance.

Although they are difficult to map, soil properties such as the nutrient status and structural condition are important. Declining amounts of soil nutrients after continued harvesting can cause serious declines in the production of basic resources such as food if soil nutrients are not replaced. Similarly, the ability of plants to grow is much reduced in soils compacted by traffic, farm and construction machinery. There are also impacts on soil biota, and the way in which soils transfer water - leading to increased amounts of runoff following rainfall. Land reshaping for urban development is an important cause of a decline in land quality in urban areas.

Erosion and salinity can be of equal concern to urban areas due to the threat to road and building infrastructure. Further problems arise from rivers and lakes silting up as a result of sediment washed off construction sites and stream banks, and the generation of dust from soils that have had their surface structure destroyed.

### Assessment

Lands managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and N.S.W. State Forests are covered by Management Plans within those agencies. Relatively unchanged since the 2004 SoE report two major land uses in Bega Valley Shire are timber production and biodiversity conservation comprising approximately 33% and 38% respectively of the Shire. Of the remaining land approximately 22% is used for agricultural purposes. Further data on this issue can be found in the 2004 comprehensive SoE report.

Sedimentation and erosion continues to be a serious environmental problem in the Shire. Although complaints regarding erosion and soil loss are still not able to reported, anecdotally the number of complaints received has grown.

Land contamination remains relatively unchanged since the 2004 report. Works on the remediation of the large Mobil site are likely to commence during 2007.

### Implications

The implications of sedimentation and erosion, acid sulphate soils, and land contamination remain of concern. Changes since the 2004 SoE have not been able to be measured accurately owing to resource constraints. As such further information should be obtained by referring to the 2004 SoE report.



### Recommendations

- Review the Erosion and Sediment Control Policy and develop and implement a new Policy based on the “ NSW Soils and Construction- Managing Urban Stormwater Vol. 1” (the Blue Book).

## Land use and management

### Background

Using and managing land sustainably is fundamental to maintaining an acceptable quality of life. However, past landuse and land management practices and competition for land as the population grows have resulted in a legacy of lands that now have some landuse limitations due to development or varying levels of degradation.

Resolving conflicts over landuse is likely to become more of an issue as population growth increases demand for land for housing in otherwise high productivity farmlands, water supply catchments, lands of high conservation value, or previously contaminated lands.

The concept of best management practice is not new, but the actual practices that constitute best management change as our knowledge improves. We do know, now, for example, that managing vegetation cover effectively is an important step in caring for our land as well as native species and ecosystems, whether that cover is native forests, woodlands or agricultural crops and pastures.

### Assessment

Land use changes are not likely to be significant until such time as the issues associated with the comprehensive Local Environment Plan are resolved. Changes in employment lands in the Bega area are though likely during 2007.

There have been no changes to the heritage registers since the last report. Funding for heritage works also remained relatively unchanged since the last report.

### **Implications**

Council requires a much better understanding of the balance between landuse constraints and current landuse practices in the Shire but especially in the coastal zone where development pressures are growing rapidly.

### **Recommendations**

- Undertake an analysis of the importance of landuses and constraints in the Shire.

## Water - quality and use

### Background

The quality of our water directly affects the quality of our lives. We all depend on clean water for drinking, recreation, industry, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining the health and lifestyle of the region depends on the preservation of our wetlands, waterways, oceans and estuaries. Any interpretation of water quality must take into account the intended use, or uses, of that water.

Water quality is affected by a range of activities in the catchment. Inappropriate landuse can add sediment or other contaminants to groundwater and surface water; use of the water itself can concentrate pollutants or other substances in the water; runoff from urban and rural catchments can bring large quantities of unwanted substances into waterways if not properly treated.

Water is a scarce resource. It must be used wisely so that enough water is available for everyone. Supply must be adequate for conserving aquatic ecosystems, human use including recreation and consumption, and for production purposes such as aquaculture and agriculture.

### Assessment

It would appear that the waterways in the Shire remain in generally good condition, particularly when compared to other coastal regions, but protection of our waterways should remain a priority. There have been very few changes in the state of our aquatic environment since the original 1997 comprehensive report. The natural flow of water in our environment does not often match the demand for water by human settlement. The water cycle is intricately linked and so demand or water quantity pressures can readily place pressures on water quality. The record drought of recent reporting periods demonstrated this very clearly.



Estuary management now includes plans in place or in development for 5 estuaries in the Shire. Work on the development of an estuary management plan for the Bega River estuary at Tathra commenced during the reporting period and will be completed during 2006 / 2007. In addition the Department of Natural Resources pilot study to establish a sustainability assessment model for coastal lakes has involved studies of Merimbula and Back Lakes.

Treated effluent re-use continued to be a key option for effluent from the Bega, Tathra, Bermagui, Eden and Merimbula Sewerage Treatment Plants. 754 mega litres (ML) of treated effluent was used on local golf courses and farms during this reporting period. Further information on re-use strategies that have changed as a consequence of the Bega Valley Sewerage Project will be reported in the 2008 comprehensive SoE.

## Implications

Council undertakes water monitoring for statutory reasons and also usually only in response to incidents or complaints. Summer time beach watch monitoring at a number of popular swimming beaches is also undertaken annually. Results are a very high standard.

Much catchment work involves the jurisdictions of a number of Authorities and so continued involvement with the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority remains important. Valuable grant funding remains a key in the effective management of our water resources and efforts to secure this funding need to be greatly increased.

The implications of poor management of our estuaries can be significant. As such, continued work in the development of estuary process studies and estuary management plans is critical. This is important and also needs to be supported by broader coastal planning and management strategies to be sustainable. Funding of actions within the estuary management plans needs to be at least maintained if not increased.

## Recommendations

- To explore the implementation of the recommendations of the Final Report of the South East Water Quality project as it relates to future water quality monitoring.
- To continue working closely with the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority to achieve a cooperative approach to aquatic ecosystem management.
- To ensure Estuary Management Plans become incorporated into Council's core business and so ensure an adequate level of resources for implementation.

## Where to from now?

The SoE 2000 and 2004 Comprehensive Reports detail the condition of our environment. This Supplementary 2006 SoE Report briefly assesses the state of our environment for the period in terms of air, land, water, biodiversity and human settlement. It does rely strongly though on indicator information contained in the 2004 baseline Report and this report should be referred to for more detailed information on the indicators used and referred to.

The recommendations or objectives to be achieved in this report will be put forward in the Management Plan process for implementation where resources are available.

The approval of the Environmental Levy in 2005 as an ongoing permanent revenue stream for environmental management projects has delivered a means to advance the many initiatives recommended in this and future SoE reports. This important tool needs to be developed and used to the maximum extent possible to support and implement environmental management initiatives. This is especially important in areas where Grant funds are available as a potential doubling of available funds for project work is very achievable.