



Ashfield
Council

State of the Environment Report 2009-2010



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1 Introduction

Welcome to Ashfield Council's sixteenth State of the Environment (SoE) Report. This snap shot report provides an update on the status of the Ashfield environment as well as the projects undertaken during the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010.

1.1 What is State of the Environment Reporting?

State of the Environment (SoE) reporting is a continuous process that provides the community with a summary of the physical condition of the environment within the Ashfield Local Government Area (LGA). It also informs the community and Council of the impacts we are having on our environment.

The SoE also highlights the activities that Council, the community and businesses have undertaken to protect and enhance our environment. Council uses the information contained within the SoE Reports to develop environmental initiatives and targets for both corporate and community action.

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires that NSW councils produce an annual SoE Report. The Act requires councils to produce a Comprehensive report every four years in November following local council elections. Supplementary reports are prepared in the intervening years. The last Comprehensive report was prepared last year for the 2004-09 period. This year's report is a Supplementary report.

1.2 What do we report on?

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to report on eight key environmental areas:

- Land
- Air (Atmosphere)
- Water
- Biodiversity
- Waste
- Noise
- Aboriginal Heritage
- Non-Aboriginal Heritage

For this report Land, Noise, Aboriginal Heritage and Non-Aboriginal Heritage have been combined into a single theme titled Human Settlement. This format matches the reporting methodology used in the 2004-09 Comprehensive SoE.

1.3 Movement Toward Sustainability

In the summary tables in this SoE Report we have included an indication where Council and the community are heading with regard to sustainability. This is illustrated by the following three symbols:



Trend toward sustainability



Trend away from sustainability



No apparent trend or change toward or away from sustainability

2 Human Settlement

Located within the Inner West of Sydney, the Ashfield Local Government Area (LGA) covers approximately 8.3 square kilometres, and includes the suburbs of Ashfield, Haberfield, Summer Hill, the eastern part of Croydon and fringes of Hurlstone Park and Ashbury.

The Ashfield LGA, like its neighbouring Councils, has been shaped by a rich European History. The history of the area combined with its close proximity to the City and the increasing density of development has resulted in the environment being significantly altered from its pre settlement state with few natural areas remaining.

2.1 Pressures

2.1.1 Urban Redevelopment and Increasing Residential Density

The Ashfield LGA is a highly urbanised and densely populated area. The population currently stands at 40,113 (2006 Census).

2.1.2 Open Space

Population increases and more dense developments put pressure on our already limited open space. Drought and other external pressures compound these pressures.

2.1.3 Traffic and Roads

Ashfield LGA currently has some 112km of sealed roads including two of the busiest main roads, Parramatta and Liverpool Roads. Increasing traffic volumes and car ownership can lead to a quick decline of the road surface and shortens the time period between major resurfacing works.

2.1.4 Graffiti, Littering and Illegal Dumping

Graffiti and illegal dumping are increasing issues within highly urbanised areas like Ashfield.

2.1.5 Noise Pollution

Noise is an inescapable part of modern, urban life. Noise pollution can be defined as any unwanted or offensive sounds that intrude and disturb our daily lives. High-density living and mixed-use development have seen an increase in noise pollution.

2.2 State

2.2.1 Urban Redevelopment

Council receives many development applications each year, most of them are for alterations and additions to the existing housing stock rather than for new residential developments and this is reflected in the decreased number of multi-unit projects in the Ashfield area.

2.2.2 Traffic and Roads

The road network is in a constant state of flux and Council continues to use a priority system to determine which roads require maintenance works.

2.2.3 Graffiti, Littering and Illegal Dumping

Public amenity is of great importance to Council and we continue to monitor and act on incidences of graffiti and illegal dumping within the LGA.

2.2.4 Noise Pollution

There are many sources of noise pollution within the Municipality and each year Council receives numerous noise complaints, with barking dog complaints being the most frequent.

2.2.5 Aboriginal Heritage

Prior to European settlement Ashfield was home to Aboriginal people from the Eora group. The Eora group consisted of several smaller groups or 'bands.' Eight bands have been identified along the Parramatta River. Two of the eight bands, the Cadigal and Wangal most likely lived in the area that now makes up the Ashfield Municipality.

2.2.6 European Heritage

The Ashfield Local Government Area contains numerous examples of built structures and town planning design that showcase various eras of architectural and urban design typical of the Sydney Metropolitan Area in the 19th and 20th centuries.

There are over 895 heritage-listed items in the Ashfield Municipality. These listings include individual properties, groups of housing, whole heritage conservation areas and municipal structures and assets.

There are 16 conservation areas including: North Summer Hill, Gads Hill, Victoria Square, Prospect Hall, Quarantine Ground, Tintern Road, Oaklands Avenue, Birriga Road, Holwood Avenue, Oak Street, Bridges Avenue, Wetherill Street, Rose Street, Lang Street and Haberfield Conservation Areas.

2.2.7 Multicultural Heritage

The Ashfield Municipality is one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in Australia with 51% of the population born overseas. Those born overseas from a non-English speaking background are predominantly from China and Italy. Historically there has also been a high Polish community in the LGA and currently there is a trend towards an increase of migrants from other parts of Asia, including India.

2.3 Responses

2.3.1 Managing our Parks

Council continues to maintain and enhance its local parks and reserves through the development of Masterplans and Plans of Management. More recently this has seen a review of the hiring system for ovals and playing fields in order to allow for adequate resting and renewal between seasons.

Council is also keen to utilise emerging technologies to improve the quality and efficiency of our open spaces while reducing their ecological footprints. Examples include:

- The installation of a large stormwater harvesting system at Pratten Park, which will afford a better quality playing surface without increased use of potable water; and
- The development of a park lighting design for Ashfield Park to examine ways of reducing the energy demands of this park, without reducing amenity or safety.

2.3.2 Strategic Planning and Development Approvals

The development of Council's new Local Environment Plan (LEP) project progressed during 2009/10.

A draft Urban Planning Strategy was completed, which includes a stand alone part entitled "A More Sustainable Environment". This section makes reference to town planning considerations for impacts on the Parramatta River and Cooks River systems, regional pedestrian trails associated with the "Greenways" project, encouraging energy efficient buildings, and making more use of public transport.

A major change proposed in the Strategy is to create an "Enterprise Zone" for a greater range of business development along Parramatta Road, a precinct serviced by public transport, including parts within walking distance to the Summer Hill train station. This has potential to explore possibilities for "greener" commercial buildings along the road, and promote part of its proximity to the local train station and potential future regional pedestrian trails.

The draft Urban Strategy was also influenced by the scope of Council's draft Community Strategic Plan, and community consultation carried out in 2009, as required by the "Integrated Planning" concept for local government.

Council's The Development Assessments Team have also been working hard to maintain improved Development Application (DA) assessment times.

2.3.3 Cooks River to Iron Cove GreenWay

Council continues to act as the lead Council in the implementation of the Cooks River to Iron Cove GreenWay Sustainability Project. This is a \$1.83 million grant project awarded through the NSW Government Environmental Trust Urban Sustainability Program. The Project involves four partner councils - Ashfield, Marrickville, Leichhardt and Canterbury - working together with local stakeholders to develop a best practice model for sustainable management of a Greenway, linking the Cooks River and Iron Cove. The aim is to create a corridor, which will be a public asset, providing a habitat for biodiversity, alternative transport options and a focus for community involvement.

The Project is now into its second year of works and a significant milestone has been reached with the State Government announcing its commitment to building the GreenWay Trail and allocating areas for bushcare works as part of the light rail extension. Other major achievements include the development of a recognisable logo, launch of a new GreenWay website, completion of a GreenWay Flora and Fauna Literature Review, social profiling of the GreenWay catchment, and dissemination of an information flyer and community survey.

2.3.4 Illegal dumping, Littering and Graffiti Action

Council continues to target the antisocial and environmentally damaging practices of illegal dumping, littering and graffiti. Programs and initiatives carried out in 2009-10 included:

- The continued implementation of Council's Illegal Dumping Awareness Campaign which involved the development of new flyers, postcards, signs and stickers that inform residents of the issues of illegal dumping, the fines associated with dumping and alternative waste removal options that residents can access. This information has been produced in English and three community languages. The campaign also targeted multi-unit dwellings through the production of educational signage for communal notice boards and bin bays.
- The continuation of the Ashfield Clean Team. This highly visible team undertakes specialist tasks including the removal of graffiti, posters and unauthorised signage, rubbish collection and road and footpath sweeping.
- The continued implementation of the 'Don't be a Tosser' anti-littering media campaign, which has involved newspaper ads, information on Council's website, personal ashtray giveaways, face-to-face communication at community events, and large, highly visible roadside billboards.

2.3.5 Heritage Restoration and Promotion

Council promotes the conservation of heritage items through listing them in our Local Environment Plan. Educational brochures are also given to owners, builders and renovators to help assist with the heritage considerations of any redevelopment. In addition, Council employs heritage consultants to assist with heritage assessment during any development involving heritage items or areas.

2.3.6 Aboriginal Heritage

Council continues to acknowledge our Indigenous communities through Welcome to Country activities at Council events and acknowledging these communities and the original custodians of our land at the start of Council Meetings.

Council has a Local Multicultural Ethnic Affairs Committee, is part of the ANTAR (Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation) Group and is currently developing a Reconciliation Action Plan.

2.3.7 Noise

Council acts to reduce noise by placing conditions of consent on developments to limit the hours of operation at building sites. This helps to minimise the impact of the noise on the surrounding properties.

Ashfield Council also educates residents on responsible pet ownership. Council Officers have powers under the Companion Animals Act 1998 to resolve barking dog complaints in an equitable manner.

3 Atmosphere

Air quality is an important community and environmental issue. The NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) reported in their 2006 “Who Cares about the Environment” survey that air quality ranked as one of the most important environmental issues in NSW. It is estimated that around 1.2 million tonnes of pollutants enter Sydney’s air each year, with motor vehicles contributing approximately 75% of this material.

Council is committed to acting on air quality issues and adopted the Local Action Plan to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in 2007 to set our program for action on this area into the future.

3.1 Pressures

3.1.1 Motor Vehicle Emissions

Motor vehicle emissions are the most significant source of urban air pollution within the Ashfield LGA. They are also a significant contributor to increased greenhouse gas emissions. Two major regional roads, Parramatta and Liverpool Roads, transverse the Municipality and as a consequence many thousands of cars pass through Ashfield each day.

3.1.2 Other Emissions

Smoke from incorrectly used solid wood fire heaters is a significant contributor to air pollution. In addition to this, dust pollution from construction and demolition works and to a lesser extent pollution from small businesses all impact on air quality. The high urban development of the Ashfield LGA compounds these problems as there are limited vegetated areas to help offset the impacts of air pollution.

3.1.3 Energy Consumption










In Australia, 90% of household energy comes from fossil fuels such as coal. This creates greenhouse gas pollution resulting in climate change. One tonne of greenhouse gas would fill a family home and Australian households produce an average of eight tonnes of greenhouse gas every year (Department of Environment & Climate Change (DECC) 2008).

3.2 State

Motor vehicle emissions are a significant contributor to air pollution within the LGA, and increasing vehicle ownership and use will continue to impact on air quality within the region. Vehicle registration statistics (see Table 1) obtained from the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) indicate that the total number of vehicles registered in the Ashfield LGA is increasing.

On a more positive note, electricity consumption decreased in both the residential and large business sectors, with residential energy use declining by almost 4% and large business energy use decreasing by 13%. Small business energy use marginally increased by 1.4% over the period. Council has also made some savings in its energy use and this is further reflected in a reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Table 1 – Ashfield LGA Emissions and Movement Toward Sustainability

Environmental Indicator	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	Movement toward sustainability
Number of motor vehicles registered	17,103	17,401	17,466	17,695	20,984	
Electricity consumption (MWh)						
Residential	No data	87,489	86,652	81,844	78,657	
Small business	No data	47,731	42,477	43,207	43,810	
Large business	No data	54,047	54,205	48,698	42,243	
Council electricity consumption (MWh)	No data	1,817	1,806	1,602	1,579	
Council greenhouse gas emissions (Tonnes CO ₂)	5,587	5,471	5,617	5,378	5,304	
No. of people travelling to work via public transport	No data	6,612	No data	No data	No data	
No. residential fridges collected by Fridge Buyback	No data	47	No data	58	39	
Tonnes CO ₂ avoided	No data	425	No data	889	312	

3.3 Response

3.3.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Abatement

Council is committed to acting on climate change and is actively working to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Council joined the Cities for Climate Protection Program in 2002/03 and completed three Milestones of this program. The CCP program has now ended but Council's commitment to act remains.

Actions undertaken during 2009/10 to reduce our Greenhouse Gas Emissions include:

- Promoted energy reduction to residents through the Eco Challenge, a project that encourages residents to improve the sustainability at home by learning about sustainability and completing challenges;

- Worked toward installing solar panels at Haberfield Library to reduce energy consumption and educate residents about solar technologies;
- Facilitated improved corporate energy management through establishing and driving the Water and Energy Management Committee, which includes representatives from all high-energy using areas of Council;
- Engaged a consultant to complete an energy audit at Council's Depot;
- Continued to use B20 (a biodiesel/ diesel mix) in all of Council's plant vehicles; and
- Worked toward more energy efficient lighting in Ashfield Park through improving the lighting design. Consultants have been engaged to design a more energy efficient system in the Park, which will be implemented into the future.

3.3.2 Promotion of Cycling

Council continues to work on improvements to the bicycle network as well as promote cycling amongst the community. In 2009/2010 Council promoted cycling through the following:

- Finalised the Ashfield Bike Plan 2010, which maps out activities for the next four years to facilitate better cycling conditions throughout the LGA;
- Completed installation of more than 400 bicycle lane markings on roads throughout the Ashfield LGA;
- Held bicycle safety courses for Council staff and the community through the GreenWay Sustainability Project;
- Distributed cycling route information at community events and through Council's Customer Service Centre;
- Developed a bike map in consultation with Ashfield Bicycle Users Group (AshBUG) and hosted this on Council's website; and
- Installed bicycle parking hoops in the Summer Hill Shopping Precinct.

4 Water

A catchment is an area where water is collected by the natural landscape. In a catchment, all rain and run-off water eventually flows to a creek, river, lake or ocean, or into the groundwater system. We all live, work and play in catchments, and it is important to remember that our actions can have an impact on a waterway even if they are several kilometres away. Rain falling in our catchment will collect any pollutants left behind and through the stormwater system these pollutants will end up in a river, lake or ocean.

The Ashfield LGA lies within two catchments - the Parramatta River and Cooks River. The two main water ways with the LGA are the Hawthorne and Dobroyd Canals.

Water is an essential resource without which life could not be sustained. The continuing drought and dry conditions are a serious concern to Council and the Ashfield community. The Ashfield LGA receives all of its potable water via the Sydney Water supply network. With the help of a new stormwater harvesting project at Pratten Park, Council now uses treated harvested stormwater to water some recreational areas.

4.1 Pressures

1.1.1 Stormwater Pollution

Human activities within the catchment have increased the amount of pollutants entering the system. Land use changes over time from grassland and bushland to industry and residential developments have had a big impact on the water quality in the Parramatta and Cooks River. Added to this are the everyday activities that impact on the health of our waterways including littering, sweeping down pathways and driveways into the street and gutter, not maintaining vehicles properly and not picking up dog droppings when walking dogs.

1.1.2 Water Consumption

Increasing population and economic growth means increasing water needs. Sydney is using water at an unsustainable level and current growth predictions suggest that there will not be enough supply to meet future water demands.

4.2 State

Sydney Water maintains two litter booms to collect litter and other gross pollutants from the Dobroyd and Hawthorne Canals, and this data provides an indicator of stormwater quality in the Ashfield LGA. Table 2 illustrates that the amount of litter collected from these booms has decreased over the past year, indicating an improvement in water quality in the LGA (note that works on channel walls in Dobroyd Canal meant that litter booms were not acting as usual during this period).

Table 2 also shows the water consumption across the LGA and within Council. Consumption across the LGA has increased by 58,475 kL. This increase is due to an increase in water use in houses and units – both in total as well as per household. Figure 1 shows a comparison between the water consumption per property in Ashfield LGA and Sydney-wide. It can be seen that consumption in units and houses in Ashfield is comparable with that of wider Sydney, while commercial and industrial properties in Ashfield consume much less water than in wider Sydney. The property types that fall into the ‘Other’ category vary significantly between Council areas, so comparison of water use in this category is not necessary.

Table 2 indicates that Council’s own water use declined by 3,674 kL over the 2009/2010 period, which is positive, particularly considering the increase in use associated with the building of Council’s new civic centre.

Table 2 – Water indicators and Movement Toward Sustainability

	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	Movement toward sustainability
Litter collected- Dobroyd Canal (m ³)	20.24	9.65	9.36	18.8	8.5 ¹	?
Litter collected – Hawthorne Canal (m ³)	27.10	35.05	36.6	32.4	24.2	😊
Water use Ashfield LGA total (kL)	3,863,933	3,773,491	3,567,613	3,749,939	3,808,414	😞
Water use Houses Total (kL)	1,611,054	1,547,677	1,458,509	1,512,369	1,541,309	😞
Water use average/ household (kL)	231	222	209	216	220	😞
Water use units total (kL)	1,527,332	1,533,411	1,465,622	1,550,561	1,588,821	😞
Water use average unit (kL)	159	159	157	157	161	😞
Water use commercial total (kL)	380,819	436,017	396,346	467,076	456,165	😊
Water consumption other (kL)	312,092	224,177	216,884	199,554	205,090	😞
Water use Ashfield Council total (kL)	41,062	32,815	36,788	49,248	45,574	😊

¹Works on channel walls in Dobroyd Canal meant that litter booms were not acting as usual. Movement toward sustainability cannot be accurately reported.

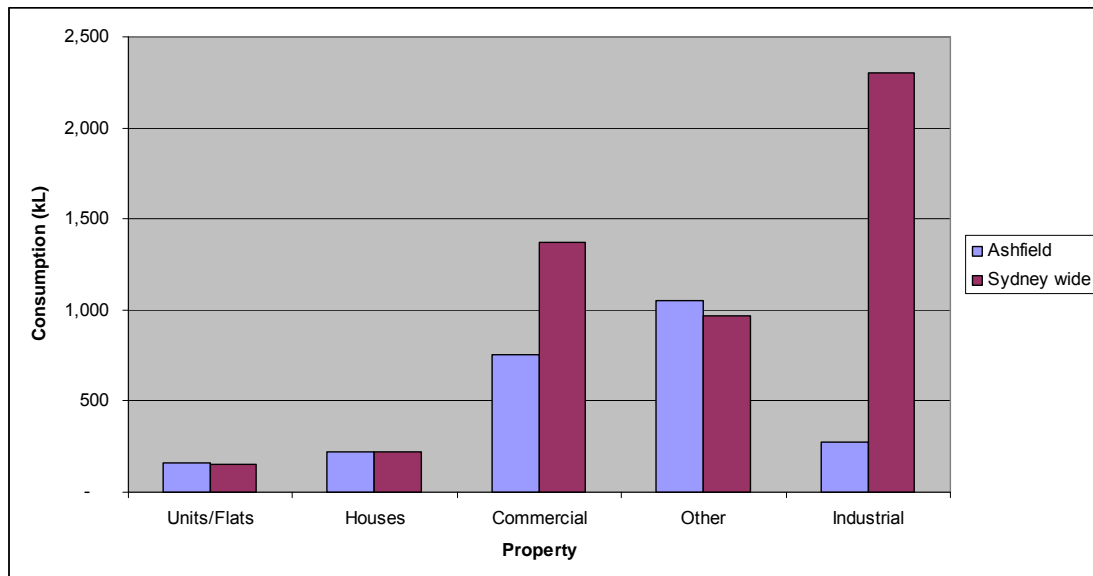


Figure 1 Comparison between Ashfield and Sydney-wide Average Water Consumption per Property type

4.3 Response

4.3.1 Water Conservation

Council is a committed member of the Sydney Water Every Drop Counts Business Program, which assists Council to monitor and measure water use. Council has also recently completed an annual review of the Water Savings Action Plan, which enables Council to plan and measure water-saving projects throughout the LGA. Works undertaken to reduce water consumption in the 2009-2010 period include:

- Facilitated improved corporate water management through establishing and driving the Water and Energy Management Committee, which includes representatives from all high-water using areas of Council;
- Finalised Council's Integrated Water Management Plan, which looks at water management and conservation, including stormwater management and water quality issues;
- Devised and agreed upon a Council-wide water reduction target as well as individual targets for high-water using sites;
- Installed rainwater tanks at the Summer Hill Community Centre, saving 31 kL of water per year;
- Installed a rainwater tank to be used for toilet flushing, and upgraded toilets and showers at Centenary Park, saving 243 kL per year;
- Upgraded amenities at the Ashfield Aquatic Centre to water saving models, saving 337 kL of water per year;

- Upgraded amenities at the Council Depot, saving 32 kL of water per year;
- Upgraded Yeo Park amenities, saving 86kL per year;
- Relined the rotunda moat at Yeo Park to fix leaks, saving 2000 kL; and
- Upgraded the grandstand and amenities and installed a rainwater tank with submeter at Pratten Park.

4.3.2 Water Education

Educating residents, schools and community groups about water conservation is a key priority for Council. Water education activities undertaken in 2009/2010 include:

- Promoted water conservation to residents through the Eco Challenge, a project that encourages residents to improve the sustainability at home by learning about sustainability and completing challenges;
- Completed a Litter Prevention Campaign in partnership with Canterbury Council, aiming to reduce litter and improve water quality as a result across the two LGAs;
- Installed educational signage at the Pratten Park Stormwater Harvest Project to inform and educate residents about Water Sensitive Urban Design; and
- Held an information day for residents in Ashbury regarding installation of a rain garden as part of the Cooks River Sustainability Initiative.

4.3.3 Catchment Management

Council is an active member of two regional Catchment Groups, the Parramatta River Catchment Group and the Cooks River Foreshore Working Group. These groups work on a number of programs to improve water quality and environmental health within the River Catchments. Ashfield has been closely involved with the following Catchment Management programs during 2009/2010:

- **The Cooks River Sustainability Initiative (CRSI)**
Ashfield is one of eight Councils partnering in the CRSI. The Initiative is funded through the NSW Environmental Trust's Urban Sustainability Program and aims to:
 - Improve the quality of the water that flows into the Cooks River,
 - Create new relationships within and between councils and the community that will provide long term benefits for the Cooks River, and
 - Develop visions and action plans for the six subcatchments targeted through this program.

Council has been working with the CRSI team, Canterbury Council and the community on the Ashbury Subcatchment Management Plan. The CRSI Team and Council officers are already working to implement projects from this draft plan.

- **The “Working Together to Sustain the Parramatta River” Grant Project**

Ashfield is also a partner in this program which is funded through the NSW Environmental Trusts Urban Sustainability Program. This project enabled Council to grow its corporate knowledge of Water Sensitive Urban Design principles and practice through facilitating workshops and study tours attended by Council officers.

- **The Iron Cove Water Quality Improvement Project**

Ashfield Council is partnering with Leichhardt and Marrickville Councils in this regional grant being lead by Leichhardt Council. This project will improve water quality in Iron Cove through installation of a filtration device at Hawthorne Canal. The Project has received \$1.6 million in funding through the NSW Environmental Trust Urban Sustainability Program and will be rolled out over the next 2.5 years.

5 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of all life forms – animals, plants and microorganisms, and the number of species and the genes they contain.

The Ashfield LGA was transformed into an urban landscape many years ago and much of the natural vegetation that was once present in the area was cleared in the process. Thus, whilst the term biodiversity refers to all living things, for the purposes of this State of Environment Report, we will mainly be focusing on the plants and animals that occurred in the LGA prior to European settlement. These living things form part of Ashfield's natural heritage.

5.1 Pressures

5.1.1 Urban development

Urban development reduces the amount of habitat available for wildlife and the few areas of habitat remaining in the LGA are fragmented and isolated, making it difficult for wildlife to move between pockets, should food sources or breeding sites be disturbed.

Urban development also brings with it other pressures on biodiversity including companion animals (e.g. dogs and cats) that prey on or otherwise harass native animals; introduced pest species (e.g. foxes, rabbits, myna birds & rats) that prey on or compete with native species; and introduced plants that escape from local gardens to become weeds in our environment.

5.1.2 Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds are species that have been declared noxious under the Noxious Weeds Act 1993. These weeds are declared for their potential to: impact on human health (such as asthma weed), become an economic pest, or be an invader of natural systems.

5.2 State

The LGA has been cleared of most of its natural vegetation since early European settlement and only a few small areas of remnant vegetation remain. There are two endangered ecological communities still represented in the area. Remnant species from the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest community can be found at Ashfield Park, Ashfield. This community would have once covered the ridgelines of Ashfield all the way down to the Cooks River. The other community, Sydney Coastal Estuary Swamp Forest Complex is now confined to a few remaining swamp mahogany trees (*Eucalyptus robusta*) in Robson Park, Haberfield.

The lack of large areas of vegetated land makes it difficult for larger fauna to live within the LGA. Possums are accustomed to living within urban areas and as such are able to live within our boundaries. Whilst the LGA may be void of larger fauna, there is quite an abundance of bird life.

5.3 Responses

5.3.1 Biodiversity

Council currently undertakes a number of programs to support and improve biodiversity in the local area. Much of this work is done as a matter of course through our normal operations.

New activities include:

- Participation in the Growers for Greenspace Program. This is a regional grant funded program, the idea for which originated in Ashfield Council. The program involves local residents receiving TAFE accredited training, equipment and support to grow native, locally occurring seedlings in their own homes. Once they are of a suitable size and maturity the seedlings are donated to local bushcare groups for use in bushcare/revegetation sites; and
- Participation in the Biodiversity Awareness Training for Outdoor Officers Pilot. This project was run through the Parramatta River Catchment Group (PRCG) of which Ashfield is a partner Council. The project involved the development of a set of biodiversity protection and enhancement principles for Council Parks and Reserves staff. These principles were then presented in a training module to key staff from PRCG Councils, and an accompanying booklet is being produced. The aim of the project is to improve awareness and understanding amongst outdoor staff of the importance of maintaining habitat for native species through activities such as 'no-mow zones', not clearing understorey, minimising/optimising chemical pesticide use, not removing habitat features, e.g. rocks, fallen branches, etc. The training was well received by officers representing Ashfield Council.

Ongoing activities include:

- Supporting Schools to establish native plant areas through tree giveaways in conjunction with National Tree Day (over 200 native trees and shrubs were donated to schools in 2010);
- Continued implementation of "No Mow" zones in Robson Park, William Street Reserve, Richard Murden Reserve, Cadigal Reserve and a small section within Ashfield Park;
- Planting native street trees through our Street Tree Program;
- Undertaking understorey plantings to support the remnant vegetation in Ashfield and Robson Parks;
- Giving out native species during the annual plant giveaway at the Carnival of Cultures. For the first year only native species were given out at the 2009 Carnival and this will continue into the future;
- Providing information on native plants and the Backyard Buddies program at Council events such as Local Government Week; and

- Providing information to the community on biodiversity through Council's website with links to the Inner West Environment Group's website.

Council has a long established and supportive relationship with the Inner West Environment Group (IWEG). The IWEG currently maintain two large bush regeneration areas within the Ashfield LGA in Richard Murden Reserve and Cadigal Reserve. Council provides this group with mulch and other support including funding for bushcare training of new volunteers, and through the GreenWay Urban Sustainability Project Grant we hope to encourage more volunteers to this Group to ensure their great work will continue into the future.

5.3.2 GreenWay Sustainability Project

The GreenWay Sustainability Project is a \$1.83 million grant project awarded through the NSW Government Environmental Trust Urban Sustainability Program. The GreenWay Sustainability Project will see the four partner councils of Ashfield, Marrickville, Leichhardt and Canterbury work together with local stakeholders to develop a best practice model for sustainable management of a public asset - a Greenway - linking the Cooks River and Iron Cove. The aim is to create a corridor providing habitat for biodiversity, alternative transport options and a focus for community involvement.

A key focus of the GreenWay Sustainability Project is biodiversity. The Project will fund the employment of a part time Biodiversity Officer until early 2012. The Biodiversity Officer will be working on the development of a regional Biodiversity Conservation Plan that will encompass conservation (and as such habitat creation) on public and private lands within the four Local Government Areas involved in the GreenWay project. There will also be much focus through the GreenWay project on recruiting additional volunteers to undertake bush regeneration and other biodiversity related projects such as bird surveys within the four Council areas and there are funds available through the grant to support this work.

5.3.3 Weed Management

Council is working to improve its actions on weed management and reduction. We have been an active participant in the Sydney Weeds Committee; through which we identify initiatives to reduce weed invasion throughout the LGA. During 2009/10 Ashfield also partnered with Canterbury and Rockdale Councils to employ a Part Time Noxious Weeds Officer. The Noxious Weeds Officer undertook significant weeds education within the three Council areas hosting workshops and speaking at Council events including the Canterbury and Ashfield Environment Expo and the Ashfield Carnival of Cultures. Other activities undertaken by the Weeds Officer included the production of a new weeds flyer to raise the awareness of two problem weeds in Ashfield, Asthma Weed and Privet as well as training for internal staff.

6 Waste

In general waste consists of any material or substance that has no further use and has been discarded. A substantial amount of waste is generated from human activity. If waste is not disposed of appropriately it can cause pollution which leads to adverse impacts on the environment. Some waste is now recognised as a resource that can be reused or recycled.

6.1 Pressure

- Increasing amount of waste generated;
- Limited capacity of current landfill sites and a demand for alternative disposal methods; and
- Broader environmental impacts associated with landfill sites, such as production of methane gas and groundwater contamination.

6.2 State

Council collected 16,036 tonnes of material through its domestic waste collection service in 2009/2010. 38% of this material was diverted from landfill through Council's recycling and garden organics services.

Table 3 shows the amount of waste collected in Council's kerbside and clean up collections, and a breakdown of the material collected. The Table also shows the proportion of total waste (either kerbside or clean up) by component. For example, in 2009/10 4,195 tonnes of material was collected in Council's domestic kerbside recycling service, which represents 26% of all kerbside waste collected. Movement toward sustainability has been assigned based on proportion of waste, rather than volume, except for the total kerbside and cleanup waste.

Table 3. Waste – Volume and proportion collected and Movement Toward Sustainability (all units in tonnes)

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Movement toward sustainability
Domestic waste (to landfill)	9,997 65%	9,335 63%	10,406 62%	10,303 64%	9,999 62%	☺
Domestic recycling	4,266 28%	4,353 29%	4,217 26%	4,075 26%	4,195 26%	☹
Domestic garden organics	1,028 7%	1,129 8%	1,751 11%	1,601 10%	1,842 12%	☺
Total Domestic Kerbside Collection	15,291	14,817	16,374	15,979	16,036	☹
Cleanup – Recyclable	29 3%	44 4%	31 3%	No data	28 2%	☹
Cleanup – Garden organics	84 8%	54 5%	159 15%	170 19%	201 18%	☹
Cleanup - Landfill	897 89%	894 90%	845 82%	734 81%	900 80%	☺
Total Cleanup	1010	992	1035	No data	1129	☹

The total amount of waste collected in Council’s kerbside waste services has increased by less than one percent over the past year. Despite this, the proportion of waste sent to landfill has remained static from the previous year, as has the recycling rate. Garden organics recycling has increased by 2% of the year, from 10% to 12%, which is significant, given that more than 50% of all households in the LGA are apartments.

The total amount of waste collected by Council’s clean up services has increased by 94 tonnes from 2007/2008 (no data was collected for recycled materials in 2008/2009 so a comparison with this year is not possible). This represents an increase of 9% over this two year period, and Council will investigate ways to reduce the amount of waste disposed of during cleanups. Despite this increase in material collected, the proportion sent to landfill has decreased from previous years and the trend of increased garden organic recycling has continued.

6.3 Response

Waste management and minimisation is an integral part of Council’s core service. We have a comprehensive domestic waste service that continues to meet community needs and standards. Council has a number of education

programs to support these services. Key action areas include improving our domestic waste service by broadening the materials being collected as well as education to reduce the production of waste, appropriate recycling practices and illegal dumping prevention. More information on the actions undertaken by Council in 2009/2010 targeting these areas is included below.

6.3.1 Waste Management (Domestic Waste Collection)

Council's domestic waste service includes the collection of garbage, recyclables and garden organics. Council also provides a twice yearly general clean up service and four phone in collections per household per year. Council has implemented many programs to improve our waste collection service during 2009/2010. These programs have largely aimed to provide alternative waste disposal options, and include:

- Provision of funding to The Bower Reuse and Repair Centre to support the reuse and referral service. This service provides solutions for residents who wish to dispose of unwanted goods;
- The continuation of a mattress recycling program. This program was originally trialled in November 2008, and now forms part of Council's regular clean up collection service;
- The continuation of the Sharps Disposal Program. This program involves four chemists in the Ashfield LGA who provide a drop off point for sharps used for medical purposes (contained within approved sharps disposal containers). Council then organises and funds a medical waste collection service to collect and dispose of these sharps containers safely;
- Continuation of mobile phone recycling through the Mobile Muster program; light globe recycling and cork collection programs. Residents can drop off their unwanted items to the collection point in Council's Customer Service Centre; and
- Continued promotion and support of the Household Chemical Cleanout Program. The NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water runs this free service throughout NSW. Ashfield actively promotes this program to residents to ensure chemicals are appropriately disposed of.

6.3.2 Waste Education and Community Action

Ashfield has an active waste education program that includes the provision of general information such as annual recycling calendars to support our domestic waste collection service and more specific education programs and activities that target areas of waste minimisation, recycling, littering and illegal dumping. In addition Council conducts environmental workshops that engage our community in actively managing waste. Programs carried out in 2009/10 include:

- School education – members of Council’s Sustainability Team visited preschools and child care centres to run workshops on worm farming and composting, and generally educate the children on recycling.

Council also engaged Keep Australia Beautiful to run their Waste Watchers Program in schools within the LGA. The program provides curriculum based education focusing on being waste wise at home and at school;

- National Recycling Week events – In November 2009 Ashfield Council partnered with Leichhardt Council to run a clothes swap event. The event ensured that good quality items of clothing were recycled rather than being thrown away;
- Community engagement and education – through Council’s new Eco Challenge Program, participating residents learnt about waste minimisation and completed tasks and challenges in their own home to reduce the amount of waste they produce;
- Community environmental workshops – Through the Treading Lightly program, Council has offered a number of waste related workshops to residents throughout the 2009/2010 period. Workshop topics included Green Renters, Organic Gardening, Composting and Worm Farming, Living with Less Chemicals and Growing Food in Small Spaces. Ashfield Council has partnered with Leichhardt, Strathfield, Burwood and Canada Bay Councils to deliver the Treading Lightly program, enabling a greater number and variety of workshops to be held;
- Litter Prevention Program – In partnership with Canterbury Council and support from The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), Council conducted an education campaign targeting the ongoing environmental problem of general litter in the Ashfield and Canterbury Local Government Areas (LGAs). The campaign utilised multiple media formats in an attempt to reach the varied communities in the area, including CALD groups. English and translated newspaper advertisements were placed in numerous local newspapers, translated and English radio advertisements were aired on local radio stations, Adshel bus shelter and train station advertising panels were used to target road users and those using public transport. Ashfield Council ran our own face-to-face education campaign using posters and stickers as well as personal butt bins;
- Illegal Dumping Prevention Program – In partnership with the Department of Environment Climate Change and Water Ashfield Council completed the Illegal Dumping Action Planning Tool Pilot Program. Through this program Council produced and utilised a variety of materials aimed at educating the community about illegal dumping and how to responsibly dispose of waste. Materials produced for the program include temporary signage for hotspot areas; postcards letterbox dropped when dumping has occurred; mayoral column

educating residents about illegal dumping; information placed on Council's website; landscaping and planting of a hotspot area as a pilot project, and placement of signage in this area; stickers to be placed by Community Enforcement Officers on illegally dumped materials; stickers to be placed by residents on booked-in clean up material; multi-language educational flyer distributed to residents; multi-language fridge magnet distributed to residents; and educational signage for bin bays and noticeboards in multi-unit dwellings.

As a result of the Program, the number of illegal dumping incidents reported decreased, while the number of phone-in clean ups increased, indicating that residents are more aware of appropriate rubbish disposal methods; and

- Waste education materials – Council continued to promote waste education through production and distribution of materials that assist in the delivery of our waste collection services. During 2009/10 new educational graphics were produced for Council's kerbside collection services. These graphics are used in letters, as well as on Council's recycling calendar. A new recycling fridge magnet was also produced.