

CITY OF MOUNT GAMBIER

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2008 / 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

To the SA Public & Environmental Health Council pursuant to Section 44 (1) of the

PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACT 1987

1 PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

1.1 Environmental Health Staff Numbers

Please provide a snapshot of council's environmental health workforce on **30 June 2009** by completing the tables below.

This information is requested to inform State and National environmental health workforce initiatives.

Permanent **full time** employed environmental health officers (approx 38 hours/week)
(30 June 2009)

Full name	Qualifications	EHO experience (years/months)	Commenced working for council (date)
Louise Jarvis	Bachelor of Environmental Health	1 year 7 months	22/06/09

Permanent **part time** employed environmental health officers **(30 June 2009)**

Full name	Qualifications	Average hours worked per week	EHO experience (years/months)	Commenced working for council (date)
nil				

Temporary contract employed environmental health officers (30 June 2009)				
Full name	Qualifications	Average contracted hours worked per week	EHO experience (years/months)	Contract start/finish dates
nil				

Contracted non-employee environmental health officers (30 June 2009)				
Full name	Qualifications	Average contracted hours worked per week	EHO experience (years/months)	Contract start/finish dates
nil				

Environmental health officer positions vacant (30 June 2009)				
Position type (fulltime/ part time/ contract)	Position hours/week	When the position was first advertised (date)?	Number of suitably qualified applicants (at 30/6/09)	Comments regarding this position.
nil				

Number (FTE) of Ancillary Staff that assist council to fulfil its responsibilities under the <i>Public & Environmental Health Act, 1987</i> (30 June 2009)	
Immunisation Nurses	
Administration	0.3
Community Health Officer	0.8

1.2 Staff Training

Detail training and development implemented during the financial year to maintain/develop EHO or ancillary staff skills and knowledge.

Mount Gambier Council highly values the ongoing professional development of Environmental Health staff and provided opportunities for staff to attend training, workshops and network with other Environmental Health professionals throughout the

year. Environmental Health Officers are active participants in the South East Local Government Inspectorial Group; this group meets quarterly and provides the opportunity for sharing of professional information amongst Environmental Health, Building and Planning Officers from seven Councils across the South East. Environmental Health staff attended training relating to;

- National Onsite and Decentralised Sewerage and Recycling Conference
- ETA trenching installation
- Legionella regulations for high risk manufactured water systems
- Safe environment policy development
- Public speaking
- Business Continuity Planning
- Climate Change Adaption

PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACT & REGULATIONS

Complete details of measures taken under Part III of the P&EH Act (protection of public health relating to sanitation, drainage and protection of water supplies) & P&EH Regulations (waste control).

Section No.	Type	No. of complaints received	No. of notices served	No. of court / appeals / expiations
Public & Environmental Health Act, Part III				
15 & 16	Prevention / offences re insanitary conditions on premises	19	2	
17	Control of offensive activities			
18	Discharge of wastes in a public place	1		
19	Private thoroughfare			
20	Provision of adequate sanitation			
21	Pollution of water			
22	Closure of water supplies			
Regulations 1995 - Waste Control				
Reg. 19	Maintenance orders		4	
Reg. 24	Connect to STEDS			

2.1 Monitoring and management of Insanitary Conditions

2.1.1 Please briefly describe the chief causes of insanitary conditions reported (eg hoarded materials, pest infestation).

Pest infestation remains the most common cause of complaint. Council conducts inspection of all properties where there is a concern that it may be in an insanitary condition. Council provides brochures and advice to both residential and commercial premises affected by pest infestation.

2.1.2 Please briefly describe the properties most implicated in the insanitary conditions reported (eg rental properties, privately owned).

The majority of complaints are regarding rental properties, both private rental and housing trust properties.

2.1.3 Please briefly describe the primary impediments to resolving the insanitary conditions reported.

Effectively controlling pest infestation (such as rodents) in a domestic situation can require a coordinated approach with neighbours working together to overcome the problem. Where a confirmed pest infestation arises as a result of an insanitary condition, Council also writes to neighbouring properties encouraging them to take appropriate action (e.g. not providing sources of food and removing accumulated vegetation/long grass).

2.2 Monitoring and management of Offensive Activities

- 2.2.1 Please briefly describe the offensive activities requiring the action described in the table above under the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987.

Two notices were served on a food business after they failed to adequately maintain their grease arrestor. An overflow of the grease arrestor occurred, causing the service of the first insanitary condition notice. After undertaking works to clean the premises the notice was lifted. An inspection was undertaken a fortnight later at the request of the liquid waste removalist, and another notice was issued after it became evident that equipment/materials had been masking some of the overflowed material.

There are a number of properties within the City that are on septic systems as sewer wasn't available or it was not financially viable to connect. A proportion of these existing systems are inspected each year. Where the infrastructure has been extended or upgraded allow for a viable connection to be made, a notice is served requiring the property owner to connect to sewer within a time period.

3 PRIORITY OF PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

3.1 List the more significant environmental health issues currently facing the local community and what is being done to address them

Council is currently undertaking a range of work to address the issues of environmental sustainability and climate change. Council has engaged, for the second year, a highly respected Climate Change specialist Dr. Steb Fisher and is undertaking a whole of Council Environmental Sustainability Audit, to identify and map critical issues. Council's environmental sustainability working party meet regularly with Council's Sustainability Officer, whose role it is to assist Council to achieve its environmental sustainability goals.

Water quality and quantity issues have been at the forefront of local environmental health issues. Mount Gambier is in the aquifer capture zone of the Blue Lake – which is the source of the town's drinking water. As all stormwater from Mount Gambier feeds into underground aquifers, hence the protection of the quality of this water resource is of critical importance.

Council's partnership with CSIRO has culminated in the production of a research paper, "Holistic solutions to management of on-site wastewater treatment systems over a karstic aquifer used for drinking water supplies." A number of recommendations were made at the completion of this project, which have been implemented, including, the development of a number of brochures relating to the different types of on-site wastewater treatment systems installed in Mount Gambier and annual inspections of a percentage of all on-site systems.

Food safety continues to be a significant Environmental Health issue for the Mount Gambier community. Environmental Health Officers conduct inspections, provide advice and conduct food safety awareness raising sessions, throughout the year. Council has continued to make available online the 'I'm Alert' Food Safety Training program for all food businesses operating in Mount Gambier. Council has also entered into a partnership with Tafe SA (Penola campus) to provide affordable short courses in food safety, as well as a longer session where participants develop a tailored food safety plan for their business.

3.2 Prioritisation process

3.2.1 How was council made aware of these priority issues (eg investigation, research, complaint)?

Council has a strong relationship with the local community and has developed a suite of approaches to involve, inform and engage on topical issues. This includes weekly radio interviews, newspaper articles, T.V. interviews, public forums, open days, and focus groups. Our professional officers are regularly asked to address local community groups and these forums provide the opportunity for sharing ideas. Our Council highly values being open and accessible and believes there is much value in promoting respectful dialogue, even when consensus cannot be reached.

3.2.2 How were these issues prioritised (number of people affected, risk, politics) ?

Issues are prioritised and resources (including time) are allocated with reference to the goals of the 'City of Mount Gambier Strategic Plan 2007-2012'. Where issues are complex, emerging overtime and involve a number of interrelated factors – Council seeks to provide local leadership which is evidence based and meets local needs.

Some environmental health challenges are well known and relatively straight forward; where appropriate a matrix risk assessment tool is used to provide a logical process to analyse and evaluate risk.

		Level of Risk			
		Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Consequences Likelihood	Unlikely	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	High	Very high
	Likely	Moderate	High	High	Very high
	Almost certain	Moderate	High	Very high	Very high

Level of Risk

- Low Record and monitor situation
- Moderate Manage through routine procedures and site visits
- High Prioritised action required in short term
- Very High Immediate corrective action required

3.3 Detail any programs specifically aimed at dealing with public health issues related to vulnerable groups in your community (eg aboriginal, migrants, and the aged).

Council is proactive in the development of projects for vulnerable populations. Within country SA there are high levels of depression and suicide amongst older males. Council is committed to reducing isolation within the community and is investigating the implementation of “a man’s shed.”

Council has one supported residential facility within its jurisdiction. The facility provides accommodation and some personal care services for a range of clients, including but not limited to residents with mental health issues, aging related ailments and drug and alcohol related issues. Council audits this facility annually and licenses its ongoing operation. Council is dedicated to supporting this facility where it is possible, as there are limited other options for these residents.

4 DISEASE CONTROL

4.1 Monitoring of Pools & Spas (public aquatic facilities) to minimise the incidence of water-borne illness (please complete the table below and provide details of any special activities, eg, training etc.)

Type of Pool	Number in area	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints	Number of Inspections related to complaints/investigations	Total number of inspections
Swimming	24	27			27
Spa	5	*			
Hydrotherapy					
Waterslide					
Other					
Total	29	27			27

*All spas' are co-located with a swimming pool and as such, are inspected at the same time.

4.2 Monitoring & investigation to minimise the incidence of Legionnaires Disease (please complete the table below and provide details of any special activities, eg, training, investigations etc)

Type of System	Number registered in area	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints	Number of Inspections related to complaints/investigations	Total number of inspections
Cooling Water System	5	9			9
Warm Water System	57	*			
Other					
Total	62				9

*These 62 systems are installed across 8 sites. Inspections have been recorded as per site, not per system.

4.3 Monitoring and control of Waste Control Systems (eg. septic tanks, STEDS, CEDS)

Type of System	Number of applications	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints
Septic Tank		10	
Aerobic System	6	11	
Other (name)			
Total	6	21	

The City of Mount Gambier has over 100 existing septic systems in areas not connected to sewer. As the City of Mount Gambier is in the capture zone of the Blue Lake only aerobic on-site waste water systems are now approved for new development in areas where sewer is not available. Council has implemented a system whereby a percentage of existing systems are inspected annually to ensure compliance with the relevant codes.

4.4 Immunisation programs

Please provide details on the number of clinics conducted during the reporting period

<i>Clinic Type</i>	<i>Number of Clinics</i>
Number of Council Operated Public Clinics	24
Number of School Clinics	24
Number of Internal (Council Staff) Influenza Clinics	2
Number of External Influenza Workplace Clinics	29
Number of Other Workplace Clinics	
<i>Total</i>	79

4.5 Notifiable Disease Follow Up

Provide details of actions resulting from notifiable disease notifications received from CDCB (insert a table if preferred)

Environmental Health Officers were contacted on one occasion by CDCB after a food handler had tested positive to campylobacter infection. The case was contacted and information was provided in relation to the illness, including the need to exclude themselves from food handling as well as the importance of thorough hand washing.

4.6 Monitoring of Hairdressing, Beauty & Skin Penetration businesses

Type of Facility	Number in area	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints	Inspections related to complaints/investigations	Total number of inspections
Tattoo Parlours & Body Piercing	1				1
Hairdressing & Beauty Salons (including those that undertake skin penetration)	42				11
Other					
Total					

Premises undertaking tattoo, body piercing, acupuncture or other skin penetration procedures are inspected 12 monthly. Beauty salons and hairdressers, who do not undertake skin penetration activities, are inspected on a rotational basis; where by risk assessment determines inspection frequency. Each premise has been provided with copy of the guidelines and relevant information sheets.

4.7 Monitoring and control of Vectors and Other Pests (include level of activity, control measures, number/regularity of complaints, education programs etc)

Vector or Pest	Number of Complaints	Control Program (Y/N) (Please provide further details below)
Mosquitoes		
Rodents	15	Y
Head Lice		
Flies		
Pigeons		
Scabies		
Cockroaches		
Bees		
European Wasps	6	Y
Other (please describe)		

Council undertakes the removal of bee hives on Council land. European wasp nests are inspected by Councils General Inspectors, and a professional contractor is engaged to remove these nests from private premises or on Council land.

Environmental Health Officers provided information brochures and advice to both residential and commercial premises affected by rodent infestation.

4.8 Monitoring & control of Animal Keeping Facilities *(eg. domestic animals, petting zoos, kennels)*

Council officers provide advice to owners of pet stores and kennels about the appropriate storage of food and disposal of wastes, to prevent odour and pest issues.

4.9 Outline any preparation work done for Pandemic Flu

No report.

4.10 Other

No report.

5 PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

5.1 Does Council have a current Public & Environmental Health Management Plan or Strategic/ Corporate Plan that forward plans the environmental health activities of Council?

YES

IF NO

Does Council expect to produce one within the next 2 years?

YES / NO

IF YES

Date commenced

Have details of the plan been provided in previous reports?

YES

(If Yes, go to next item)

6. HEALTH EDUCATION / PROMOTION & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Include Council initiatives, activities and programs designed to promote public health issues to the community including those delivered in partnership with others. (eg. training sessions, workshops, radio interviews, presentations / education sessions to schools/community groups, educational materials produced, newsletter articles, studies or trials). Provide details of consultation and community involvement, the variety of communication tools used (eg. local newspaper/radio, Council pamphlets, shopping centre displays) and how projects are evaluated.

Mount Gambier Council is involved in a diverse range of health promotion and community consultation activities providing a range of opportunities for the community to access Environmental Health information and be involved. Some of the activities include the following;

- The City of Mount Gambier is one of six Councils to participate in the pilot of the European EPODE (OPAL in Australia) programme which will prevent childhood obesity in a sustainable way, through the development of partnerships and the implementation of strategic resolutions to what is a global issue.
- The Environmental Health Division commissioned a local design company to create a full colour brochure promoting Environmental Health (attached). The brochure contains information on what is environmental health and shows authorised officers undertaking a range of environmental health related activities. The brochure is on display in the civic centre and is provided to schools when food safety training is provided to hospitality classes.
- The provision of suicide intervention skills training to organisations working with vulnerable populations. The training was provided to people to teach them how to intervene and prevent someone suicide.
- The Mount Gambier commissioned play, The Yum Yum Room, was performed during Come out week to sell out crowds. It is pleasing to see other councils supporting this initiative, and tailoring the play to reflect the issues within their community.
- The Mayoress Family Fun Day is an annual event. This provides an opportunity for the entire community to participate in a range of carnival style activities at no cost. The provision of these activities at no cost goes a long way to bridging the socio economic gap.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Provide details of activities designed to reduce and prevent exposure of individuals to health hazards. May include number/types of complaints received, issues dealt with, concerns, inventories held etc.

7.1 **Monitoring to ensure Potable Water** (eg. rainwater tanks, bores)

There are a number of irrigation bores located within the City which provide bore water extracted from the aquifer for domestic, recreational and agricultural purposes. A research project involving The City of Mount Gambier, CSIRO, District Council of Grant, Blue Lake Management Committee, EPA, SA Water, Department of Water, Land and Biodiversity Conservation and South East Natural Resources Management Board investigating the potential impact of onsite wastewater treatment systems on groundwater (including bore water) was completed. This project identified a number of ways Council can proactively protect the quality of potable water, including conducting inspections of existing systems.

7.2 **Monitoring to ensure Water Quality / Protection of Waterways and Catchments**

'Paws for the Blue Lake' is an annual event (walk with dogs) around the Blue Lake. The event encourages responsible dog ownership – including picking up after dogs, to prevent pollution from dog droppings.

7.3 **Waste Management Practices (domestic waste, landfills, green waste, recycling, solid waste, hazardous waste)** (eg. types and regularity of services)

Council has waste collection services available to residents incorporating household refuse, recyclables and organics. Household refuse is collected weekly from one 140 litre mobile garbage bin per property. A 240 litre recycling bin is collected on a fortnightly basis. A green organics service is also offered to residents, where a 240 litre bin is collected on a fortnightly basis. Council's waste transfer station is open to the public daily. Putrescible waste from the domestic waste collection service and the waste transfer station is taken to Council's Caroline landfill site. Hard waste from the waste transfer station is taken to a privately owned and licensed landfill site.

This year Council implemented a ban on e-waste entering its landfill, and as such these items are no longer able to be disposed of through the kerbside collection. All e-waste items are now directed to the waste transfer station, where Fluoro light globes are transported to Melbourne, and all other e-waste is transported to CRT in Adelaide for recycling. This initiative has been well supported by the community, with 24.5 tonnes of e-waste diverted from landfill.

7.4 **Monitoring of Contaminated Land**

Council's officers report on contaminated land when a section 7 statement (search) is lodged for a property with known site contamination.

7.5 **Monitoring and Control of Hazardous Substances** (eg. asbestos, medical waste)

Council is continuing to provide the safe disposal of sharps program. Council arranges for the disposal of sharps containers, so that they do not end up in general waste.

Councils Building Officers maintain an asbestos register and conduct a yearly audit of all Council owned infrastructure to assess the safety and or deterioration of the asbestos.

7.6 **Monitoring of Air Quality**

Council has entered into a partnership with the EPA on the smoke watch project. This project has many facets and combines air quality monitoring, community consultation and involvement, health promotion and sustainable wood heater use.

7.7 **Noise Complaint Investigations**

Council occasionally receives complaints from the public regarding construction noise during the summer months. These complainants are referred onto the EPA or the Police as Council does not monitor or address noise complaints.

7.8 **Monitoring and Control of Recreation Facilities** (eg. risk assessment of playgrounds, inspections of camping areas etc.)

Council Officers inspect all playgrounds, at least bi-annually, to conduct a risk assessment of each site and record any maintenance required.

7.9 **Emergency Planning Activities** (eg. disaster recovery / business continuity plans)

The South East Local Government Association represents Council on the Regional Disaster Planning Committee. Council has developed emergency contingency plans for stormwater flooding and is the response agency for flooding incidents. Council has recently produced a disaster recovery box as part of our business continuity planning.

7.10 **Rural and Urban Planning Activities** (eg. number of development applications assessed by EHOs)

Council assesses development applications in accordance with the Mount Gambier City Development Plan. As part of the process Council assesses the environmental impact of development and compliance with state and federal legislation. Environmental Health Officers assessed six applications containing aerobic waste control treatment systems, in new Country Living allotments.

7.11 **Other**

No report

8. **OTHER**

Please provide details of any other public & environmental health issues encountered by Council. (eg, complex investigations, participation in major events and festivals, strategic planning and implementation programs etc)

No report.

Date this report is to be presented to Council

18/08/2009

This report is to be submitted by 30th September 2009 in soft copy emailed to:

andrew.vickers@health.sa.gov.au

Please note that hard copies are no longer required to be sent to the Public and Environmental Health Council.