

The Coorong District Council

PO Box 28, Meningie Sa 5264 Tel: 08 8575 1008

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)
Jim Quinn	GradDipEH (final semester)	2 years	June 2005

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)

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

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
Alison Creaser	EHO	As required	14 years	01/10/2007

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.

Number (FTE) of Ancillary Staff that assist council to fulfil its responsibilities under the <i>Public & Environmental Health Act, 1987 (30 June 2009)</i>	
Immunisation Nurses	
Administration	0.1
Other (please specify)	

1.2 Staff Training

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

Training / Meeting Title	Organisation
Murray Mallee Inspectoral Group Meetings	<i>Regular meetings at different Councils within the Murray Mallee Region</i>
Departmental staff meetings	<i>Monthly Coorong District Council</i>
Disability Discrimination Act – Action Plans	<i>Local Government Association</i>
The Disability Community – Taking Control of what's possible Seminar	<i>Julia Farr Centre</i>
Listeria Seminar	<i>Australian Society for Microbiology SA Branch – Adelaide University</i>
Public & Environmental Health (Legionella) Regulations 2008	<i>Department of Health - Adelaide</i>
SA Rural Public Hospital Food Safety Plan Audits	<i>Accompanied Department of Health Auditor for 2 days whilst conducting Food Safety Plan Audits</i>
Coorong Community Links Advisory Group	<i>Regular meetings with Health organisations and Aged Care service providers in the District</i>
Murray Mallee Ageing Taskforce bi-monthly meetings	<i>Meetings with government and community Health organisations and Aged Care service providers in the wider Mallee Regional Area</i>
Evolution of Biological Diversity	<i>Flinders University Course – additional Science subject for Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice</i>
Physics for Life Sciences B	<i>Flinders University Course – additional Science subject for Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice</i>
Integrated Risk Management (Lead Auditor Training Food Safety)	<i>Department of Health Training (2 days) plus external assessments by SAI Global</i>
Diploma in Business (Quality Auditing)	<i>SAI Global – Department of Health sponsored training</i>
Ochre Indigenous Awareness Training	<i>TAFE SA – Murray Mallee Ageing Task Force – Murray Bridge</i>
RI Industries Septic Systems	<i>Product Information Session (1/2 day) - Adelaide</i>
HACC Peer Auditing	<i>Quality Management Services (QMS) workshop – Accepted as a Peer Reviewer for QMS (2 ½ day appraisal with peer)</i>

Logging in to Old Age	<i>Community Health Seminar – Tailem Bend District Hospital</i>
EHO – Authorised Officers Dealing with the Ombudsman	<i>Local Government Association - Adelaide</i>
Our Actions to prevent the Abuse of Older South Australians	<i>Aged Right Advocacy Service workshop – Murray Bridge</i>
Environmental Health Officer Training - Basic Plumbing Training Course 1	<i>TAFE SA – School of Plumbing Services, Regency Park</i>
BIOLYTIX BF6 Waste Control Systems	<i>Department of Health – Wastewater Management Section</i>
Social Determinants of Health and Well Being	<i>Flinders University Course –Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice</i>
Sustainable Development – Issues for Environmental Health	<i>Flinders University Course –Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice</i>
Environmental Health Principles and Frameworks	<i>Flinders University Course –Graduate Diploma of Environmental Health Practice</i>
Human Swine Flu Workshop for Local Government	<i>Department of Health Adelaide</i>

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	3	0	0
17	Control of offensive activities			
18	Discharge of wastes in a public place	2	0	0
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			
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).

The number of cats sheltered and fed within the premises by the occupants. The Council's Authorised officers assisted the RSPCA and occupants with the reduction and or removal of the animals from the properties in question.

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

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

To ensure that each case is dealt with appropriately (the provision of natural justice), the occupant must be allowed a reasonable amount of time to rectify the conditions based on the public health risk associated with the particular conditions. This can result in time consuming process of inspections and consultation before a satisfactory outcome is achieved.

In the cases reported to Council the occupants personal circumstances affected their understanding of the issues associated with sheltering and feeding such a large number of animals inside the dwelling.

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.

3 PRIORITY OF PUBLIC & ENVIROMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

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

As the drought has continued it has had a detrimental effect on the Lower Lakes and the Coorong estuary. Soil acidification is a worsening outcome for the Lower Lakes and will take many years to rectify.

The Lower Lakes lose approximately 800 gigalitres of water annually due to evaporation, exposing the lakebed soils to the air providing conditions that can promote acidification. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established a dust monitoring station, and conducted random rainwater tank testing (dipping for pH) to establish the public health effects from the windborne migration of the acidified soils. The EPA tests have taken place at Meningie (pH and dust monitoring) and Narrung (pH) during the first half of 2009. The monitoring will be an ongoing process of data collection and analysis to determine if there are any adverse health effects.

The Department of Environment and Heritage is undertaking a programme of machine seeding 500 ha of the exposed shoreline of Lake Albert. The seeding will see the lake become part of the country's largest ever riparian revegetation project.

The Coorong District Council is upgrading and expanding its Community Wastewater Management System (CWMS) to reduce the quantity of water removed annually from Lake Albert and the River Murray, by up to 55,000 and 89,000 kilolitres respectively. The CWMS upgrades will assist in drought proofing community facilities in Meningie, Tailem Bend and Tintinara.

With the current water restrictions in place the Council continues to receive enquiries regarding temporary and permanent grey water reuse systems. Staff have provided advice to residents outlining the current options available to them as well as directing them to the Department of Health's Wastewater website.

The heatwave conditions experienced during the 2008-2009 summer emphasised the impact 'hotter days' can have on the vulnerable members of our community, in

particular the elderly. To assist in dealing with any future incidences of heat related stress or trauma the Coorong District Council is considering a 'vulnerable population' heat policy inline with recommendations from the Office for the Ageing.

3.2 Prioritisation process

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

The Coorong District Council's Environmental Health Management Plan outlines environmental health priorities which have been identified from professional advice and consultation including, comment from the community through feedback forms and consumer surveys.

The Elected members of Council are an excellent conduit for the community to ensure issues are raised and provide an opportunity for discussing community concerns. Other avenues include;

All complaints and enquiries received from the community are referred to the relevant department within Council and actioned appropriately. Formal consultation is also undertaken with the community around specific issues such as asset management, business planning and strategic planning.

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

The Coorong District Council has developed a strategic plan outlining key priorities which are supported by the priorities listed in the Public and Environmental Health Plan, therefore underpinning the Council's legislative responsibilities.

In general public complaints are prioritised according to the public health risk associated to the issue. However, serious or immediate risks to public health are dealt with immediately.

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).

The Coorong District Council assists in the coordination of Home and Community Care services in line with the National Service Standards for the frail aged, younger people with a disability and their carers. The services are funded to assist eligible residents to remain living independently. The services provided by the Coorong District Council as part of this program include:

Home Maintenance

- Once a year gutter cleaning, rubbish removal, garden service.
- Minor plumbing (e.g. tap washers)
- Battery operated smoke detectors
- Security locks and devices

Home Modification (assistance recommended by an external occupational therapist)

- Installation of grab and hand rails
- Installation of ramps and steps
- Bathroom modifications

The Coorong District Council and the Raukkan Community Council representing the Ngarrindjeri People living on the Narrung peninsula, have signed a memorandum of understanding and work closely with the community to build a cooperative working relationship between the Coorong District Council and the Ngarrindjeri people on matters of public and environmental health and issues of shared interest.

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	4	3			3
Spa					
Hydrotherapy					
Waterslide					
Other					
Total	4	3			3

Any Additional Comments?

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					
Warm Water System					
Other					
Total					

Any Additional Comments?

No change since previous reporting period.

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	46	76	
Aerobic System	5	10	
Other (name)			
Total	51	86	

Any Additional Comments ?

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	
Number of School Clinics	9
Number of Internal (Council Staff) Influenza Clinics	
Number of External Influenza Workplace Clinics	3
Number of Other Workplace Clinics	
<i>Total</i>	<i>12</i>

4.5 **Notifiable Disease Follow Up**

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

Notifiable Disease	Number of Reports
Barmah Forest Virus	6
Ross River Virus	8
Campylobacter	3
Hepatitis A	
L. longbeachae	
Malaria	
Ornithosis	
Pertussis	19
Salmonella	
Cryptosporidium	
Haemophilus Influenzae	
Mumps	
Varicella	5
Shigella	3
TOTAL	44

Campylobacter

Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDBC) asked the Coorong District Council to follow up one case and interview the patient regarding personal hygiene. The patient was provided with information brochures and the Department of Health's (DoH) website address to assist the patient in acquiring further information.

Shigella

The Coorong District Council followed up three cases of Shigella as requested by the Disease Surveillance & Investigation Section of the CDCB. Interviews were conducted with the patients and family members and all forms and associated information were dispatched to CDCB as requested.

Printed fact sheets and additional information regarding Shigella were given to the patients and they were reminded during the interview to make sure that they applied thorough and proper hand washing and personal hygiene regimes. The patients were also provided with the DoH website address to assist them should they require further information.

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					
Hairdressing & Beauty Salons (including those that undertake skin penetration)	7	4			4
Other					
Total	7	4			4

Any Additional Comments ?

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	1	Y
Rodents	3	Y
Head Lice		
Flies		
Pigeons	2	Y
Scabies		
Cockroaches		
Bees	1	Y
European Wasps	5	Y
Other (please describe)		

Description of control program (identifying vector/pest and activity undertaken)

Mosquitoes

The owner of the property in question was advised to take corrective action to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes in an in-ground swimming pool, the result of poor maintenance procedures.

The Coorong District Council has a long term association with the Mosquito and Plant Research Laboratory from the Sansom Institute at the University of South Australia.

Through this association the Institute's project field officer provides a seasonal monitoring and spot control program within the Council area.

Council actively supports and promotes the Fight the Bite Campaign and delivers promotional material to all relevant businesses, tourism and community organisations as well as providing information to the residents through its community newsletter.

Rodents

Council received three reports towards the end of this reporting period. To help combat the seasonal increase in vermin activity the affected properties received rodent baits to assist in their eradication.

Pigeons

The Council worked with the local NRM officers to bait and remove the feral pigeons from the public areas around the historic railway building in Taillem Bend as well as those areas identified as breeding and or roosting sites.

A rural property was having difficulty with feral pigeons roosting in the eaves and open roof spaces. Council worked with local contractors to trap and bait the pigeons as well as assisting the elderly occupant to make repairs to the building.

European Wasps Report

There were five complaints received in regards to sightings of European Wasps in the last reporting period. Officers investigated the incidents; however, in two cases the identified wasps were actually native paper wasps. Officers provided European Wasp information pamphlets to the complainants and no further action was required.

For the third case, European Wasps were identified around the drying fruit on the owner's property. However, as the property fronted the River Murray, efforts to track and locate the wasps nest were unsuccessful. Council employees advised residents living in proximity of the affected property, to be vigilant and report any further sightings to the EHO.

For the two remaining cases, the sightings were confirmed as European Wasps and a contractor was tasked to remove a small number of wasps from the chimneys of two rural properties.

Head Lice

Council has a good working relationship with the seven schools in the area and provides advice and educational material to both the schools and parents as is required.

Bees

Council received one complaint during this reporting period. As a result Council arranged for a qualified contractor to remove the bees and secure the hive access point (the chimney) for an elderly resident.

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

No change since previous reporting period

4.9 Outline any preparation work done for Pandemic Flu

With the current rate of Swine Flu notifications, Council representatives attended information seminars and prompted the review of the arrangements in place with local medical services in the event of an outbreak.

The Coorong Emergency Management Plan will incorporate processes and procedures to deal with a pandemic flu outbreak.

4.10 Other

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 / NO

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 / NO

(If Yes, go to next item)

Provide a summary of how the Plan responds to the needs of the local community, how it is progressing and how regularly it is reviewed.

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.

The Council organised a Safe Food Handling Course in the last twelve months. Meningie was the venue for the November 2008 course with 44 participants attending. The Principal Lecturer from TAFE SA, Regency Campus facilitated the course.

Council purchased a series of storybooks/colouring-in books specifically designed to engage lower to middle primary school students. The booklets contained a positive environmental message highlighting the local government's involvement in these areas. The series consisted of four (4) booklets entitled;

- The Clean & Green Gang Discovers Recycling
- The Clean & Green Gang Discover How to Save Water
- The Clean & Green Gang Tackle Climate Change
- The Clean & Green Gang Discover Composting

To promote the Council's support for environmental educational the corporate logo was included on the front cover of each booklet. The Council's presented the series of booklets as class sets, to the seven (7) schools within the district.

The Council engages in the PetPep program, where Council employees provide information sessions through the local primary schools, area schools and kindergartens. The information includes human hygiene around pets as well as pet specific environmental health information. Several schools were involved in the program this year, enabling the pet hygiene and safety message to reach over 250 students.

Council produces a regular community newsletter that informs the community at large, of the current works projects and of the services that are available. There is a consistent contribution of materials and articles relating to a variety of Public and Environmental Health Issues.

The Coorong District Council is a strong advocate of the community consultation and feedback process as this enables the Council to determine and evaluate the impact of events on the regions population. In the last reporting period community consultation and feedback for issues such as Finance, Strategic Asset Management, the Sustainable Coorong Action Plan, Home and Community Care Services and a Disability Action Plan have been delivered, collected, analysed and the outcomes reported.

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)

The Council has information brochures on rainwater tanks and bore water use available from its three offices and provides advice to residents where applicable.

Australian Water Quality Centre performs regular inspections and water testing of the Council's bore at Peake, and provides regular reports of the water quality.

Council maintains three (3) reticulated water plants.

The Council's Asset Services department monitors the water quality at the pump inlets on a regular basis and high counts are referred to the EHO and where necessary the pump inlet sites are retested and then relocated if the subsequent readings are still high. Further information and consultation is sought from the Department of Health's Principal Water Quality Adviser as is required.

The EPA installed a dust monitoring and data recording station at Meningie side of Lake Albert, mirroring another monitoring site at Goolwa. Council assisted in the coordination of EPA access to properties within the Meningie and Narrung communities to enable rainwater tank testing (pH dipping) as part of the acid sulphate soils monitoring program.

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

SA Water conducts Phytoplankton monitoring of the lower lakes and notifies Council of the blue-green algae numbers from two sites around Lake Albert, they are the Meningie and Raukkan jetties. When there is a large bloom the Department of Health advises the public through newspaper advertisements.

With the receding water levels of Lake Albert, the exposed soils caused problems for people accessing the water. Warning signs were placed at strategic locations to

advise the public of the undulating lake floor and the possibility of sinking in the foreshore sand.

The Australian Water Quality Centre undertakes regular inspections and water testing of the Council's water supply at East Wellington Domestic Water Supply, the STEDS ponds inlet and outlet pipes at East Wellington, Tintinara, Meningie and Tailem Bend as well as the Tailem Bend waste depot and provides a detailed report of the water quality.

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

The Coorong District Council operates a two bin kerbside waste and recycling system. This includes weekly garbage collection and a monthly recycling collection.

The Coorong District Council manages two (2) land fillwaste disposal sites and four (4) transfer stations. All sites are EPA licensed.

Other services include:

- Drum Muster programs
- Mobile Phone recycling program throughout the region
- Hard rubbish collection

7.4 Monitoring of Contaminated Land

Council follows EPA guidelines for management of contaminated sites and holds a register of contaminated sites.

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

Information brochures are available from Council offices detailing the safe handling and removal of asbestos products.

Council maintains an EPA licensed asbestos dump.

Council provides needle containers in public toilets that are routinely checked and replaced by staff. A contractor regularly collects the used 'sharps containers' from Council depots.

7.6 Monitoring of Air Quality

No change since previous reporting period

7.7 Noise Complaint Investigations

Noise complaints received by the Council are referred to the EPA . However, Council has received several complaints relating to excessive noise from vehicles parked at a commercial premises adjacent to residential properties. This is an ongoing issue for the business concerned and with Council direction is working through the appropriate processes to resolve the problem.

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

The Council inspects recreational areas and boat ramp facilities for risk assessment, fire prevention and illegal use. The monitoring of recreational facilities close to the River Murray and Lower Lakes has increased due to the incidence of river bank slumping in the Council area. A management plan will be developed to assist the relevant departments to deal with the emerging problems associated with river bank slumping.

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

The Asset Services Department is undertaking the development of a Coorong Emergency Management Plan and a Business Continuity Plan. A project team including members from relevant departments is to be established and work will begin on developing a draft working document for the emergency management plan.

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

51 development applications were assessed in this reporting period

7.11 Other

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)

Date this report was / 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.