

POLLUTION AND ILLEGAL DUMPING



Pollution is the release of harmful substances into our surroundings which impacts on the health of the natural environment such as our waterways, land and air. As well as affecting our environment, pollution can also impact on our health and wellbeing. Substances such as litter, sediment, fumes from cars, excessive noise and chemicals are all classified as pollution. Most pollutants fall under one of four main categories. These are air, water, noise and waste.

To reduce the amount of pollution entering the environment, the government has developed the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act). Council officers are authorised to respond to complaints and issue notices and fines under the POEO Act. In addition, in an endeavour to further protect the health of the Macquarie River and local creeks, Council regularly conducts education programs to raise community awareness about the effects of pollution on our health and the environment.

TYPES OF POLLUTION

Types of pollution include wood smoke, water pollution, noise pollution, litter, illegal dumping and land contamination. Pollution can be reported to the authoritative body using the Reporting Pollution section of this webpage.

WOOD SMOKE

There are many substances in the air which may impair human health as well as the health of plants and animals, or reduce visibility. During the winter, the smoke from domestic wood heaters causes a lot of air pollution and is a common complaint dealt with by Council. Wood smoke pollution affects everyone. It is bad for your health and the health of others in your community.

Simple ways of helping to reduce wood smoke include: burning only dry wood; never letting your heater smoulder overnight; keeping the fire lively and bright; checking to see if your chimney is smoky; and having your chimney cleaned every year.

Under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act (POEO Act)* Council Officers have the power to issue smoke abatement notices and on-the-spot fines to occupiers that allow 'excessive smoke' to be emitted from chimneys on or in residential premises. A smoke abatement notice directs a householder to undertake necessary improvements, maintenance or repairs to ensure that excessive smoke is not emitted from their chimney.

To find out if your chimney is too smoky, and for more tips on reducing wood smoke, download Dubbo Regional Council's Wood Smoke

Brochure (7.2MB), contact Council or visit the EPA's webpage Reducing Wood Smoke Emissions. To find chimney and stove cleaning services in your Council area, contact your local wood heater retailer.

WATER POLLUTION

EPA's webpage Water outlines that water pollution can be caused by both point source (such as industrial and treated sewage discharges, illegal dumping, boat leaking oil etc) and diffuse sources (stormwater runoff from agriculture and urban areas containing sediments, organic matter, chemicals, litter etc). Both these types of pollution have a negative effect on the health of our local waterways. The wide range of potential water pollution sources means that the EPA shares responsibility for enforcement of the water pollution provisions under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act (POEO Act)* with local councils and many other agencies that also have powers of enforcement.

Local government has a significant on-ground presence under the POEO Act. While the EPA regulates licensed premises and State or public authorities, councils regulate other activities through notice and enforcement powers. Dubbo Regional Council also undertakes a number of activities to reduce water pollution, outlined in the Council webpages: Council's water and sewer responsibilities, stormwater management, and water quality and treatment. Residents are encouraged to play a role in protecting our water resources by reporting water pollution incidents to the EPA Environment Line or to contact Council.

NOISE POLLUTION

Noise can be annoying, interfere with speech, disturb sleep or interfere with work. Prolonged exposure to loud noise can also result in increased heart rate, anxiety, hearing loss and other health effects. The impacts of noise depend both on the noise level and its characteristics and how it is perceived by the person affected.

In NSW, noise pollution is regulated through the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (POEO Act)*. The *POEO (Noise Control) Regulation 2008* also sets certain limits on noise emissions from motor vehicles, vessels and domestic use of certain equipment. The EPA shares responsibility for enforcing noise control regulations with local government, NSW Police and NSW Roads and Maritime Services. Nuisance dogs and cats are covered by the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, and enforced by local government, for more information view Council's webpage [Lost, Stray or Noisy Animals](#).

It is important for anyone involved in resolving disputes over noise pollution to realise that what is music to one person might be offensive noise to another. In responding to noise complaints, an authorised officer will take the approach of what a 'reasonable person' would consider offensive. Residents are encouraged to find out more about noise pollution by visiting the EPA's webpage [Noise](#).

LITTER

Every year 25,000 tonnes of litter is tossed in NSW. Litter damages our natural environment, harms wildlife, can injure people and makes our spaces less safe. Littering also costs tax payers a lot of money. Cigarette butts make up half of the litter in NSW - they do not easily break down in the environment and leach toxic chemicals into waterways. Other common litter includes small pieces of paper, chip and confectionery wrappers, fast-food packaging, bottle caps, glass pieces, glass alcohol bottles, plastic straws and soft drink bottles (both plastic and metal). Simple ways of helping to reduce litter everyday include putting rubbish in a bin or taking it with you, keeping a bag in the car to collect rubbish and cigarette butts, and encouraging others to pick up litter. Council officers are authorised to issue fines relating to the unlawful deposit of litter, including that deposited from motor vehicles. Residents may also directly report littering from a motor vehicle through the EPA's webpage Report Littering.

ILLEGAL DUMPING

Illegal dumping is the unlawful deposit of waste, larger than litter, onto land or into water. It includes waste materials that have been dumped, tipped or otherwise deposited onto private or public land where no licence or approval exists to accept such waste. Illegal dumping varies from small bags of rubbish in an urban environment to larger scale dumping of waste materials in isolated areas, such as bushland. Illegal dumping includes illegal land filling, which is waste used as fill material with the consent of the owner or occupier of the land but without the necessary Council or EPA approvals. Residents are encouraged to call the EPA Environment Line (details on the EPA webpage Environmental Line) on sighting dumped waste that poses an immediate risk to the

environment or to human health, is dumped in water, or is a large incident (more than 2 trailer loads). For smaller incidents of illegal dumping residents are encouraged to contact Council. For further information on illegal dumping legislation, strategies, prevention, reporting (including RIDonline), clean up, and education visit EPA's webpage Litter and Illegal Dumping.

LAND CONTAMINATION

Land may become contaminated through exposure from chemicals, oils, asbestos and other substances. It can arise from a range of activities that took place on the land or at an adjacent site. It can also result from air emissions, diffuse sources (e.g. stormwater) or polluted groundwater. Land contamination can have significant impacts on human health and the environment. It can also limit the current land use and future land development potential.

The most effective way to avoid land contamination is to ensure appropriate chemical handling and storage, correct waste disposal, and proper building and site management; more information on these topics are available at EPA's webpages Chemicals and Managing Industrial Waste, as well as Council's webpage Builders and Developers. If you suspect your land is contaminated or you are responsible for contamination you have a duty of care to contact the EPA or Council. For further information view EPA's webpage Contaminated Land or download Council's Contaminated Land and You Booklet (4.2MB).

The management of contaminated land in NSW consists of two tiers. Firstly, the EPA uses its powers under the *Contaminated Land*

Management Act 1997 (CLM Act) to deal with site contamination that is significant enough to warrant regulation under the Act given the site's current or approved use. Secondly, local government deals with 'other contamination' through the planning and development process and under *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)*. The EP&A Act aims to ensure that land is not allowed to be put to a use that is inappropriate because of the presence of contamination. The Act incorporates mechanisms to ensure that Council consider contamination issues when they are making rezoning and development decisions; provides information about land contamination on planning certificates (Section 149 of the EP&A Act); maintains a register of contaminated and potentially contaminated land; and facilitates and controls land remediation through the State Environmental Planning Policy 55 - Remediation of Land (SEPP55).

MAKE A REPORT

In most cases, concerns about pollution should be referred to the source or person causing the problem. The contact telephone numbers on this page should be used when an approach to the person causing the problem has not been successful. To report polluting incidents please refer to the contact table below. All reports are treated as highly confidential and will be dealt with accordingly. Further information is available from the Office of Environment and Heritage's webpage [Pollution](#).

MAKE A REPORT TO DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL

02 6801 4000

council@dubbo.nsw.gov.au

Submit an online report to Council (Please select 'Other Enquiry', you will be required to create an account and log in.)

MAKE A REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY

131 555

info@environment.nsw.gov.au

Submit an online report to EPA

IF YOU HAVE FOUND, OR SEEN, ILLEGAL DUMPING

Submit an online report to RIDOnline

MAKE A REPORT TO NSW FIRE BRIGADE

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Emergencies only where resources are not available to contain material released in a pollution incident, which could potentially threaten public health, property or the environment.

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