

# EXCELLENCE IN THE ENVIRONMENT AWARDS



## COUNCIL NAME

Goulburn Mulwaree  
Council

## WEB ADDRESS

[www.goulburn.nsw.gov.au](http://www.goulburn.nsw.gov.au)

## SIZE

3,220 square  
kilometres

## POPULATION

31,554

## Call Before You Clear

The 'Call Before You Clear' campaign was developed to address a significant increase in illegal clearing across the Goulburn LGA. Goulburn Mulwaree Council partnered with NSW Government agencies to educate the community and businesses on native vegetation preservation and vegetation clearing regulations. The project fostered ongoing improved interagency cooperation and led to streamlined processes.

### Background

By late 2023, Council had observed a steady increase in unauthorised clearing cases across the LGA, rising from 12 complaints in 2020 to 41 in 2023. This four-year trend, totalling 112 complaints, included a concerning rise in instances of large-scale illegal clearing, which had a significant detrimental impact on local habitat and remnant vegetation. Council officers also identified a lack of understanding and collaboration between regulatory agencies.

### Implementation

Council reached out to other government agencies to understand their approaches to regulating unauthorised clearing and to assess whether they had seen similar increases in reports and confirmed breaches.

Council established a working group, comprising of internal staff and NSW Government staff from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, and Local Land Services. The working group aimed to identify collaboration opportunities for investigations and to determine approaches to reduce illegal clearing.

The group developed the 'Call Before You Clear' campaign to increase community awareness of vegetation clearing regulations and the importance of conserving native vegetation for the local environment and community. Together they created a series of targeted factsheets that were accessible and tailored for landowners, businesses, and other types of stakeholders.

The campaign was widely publicised through local newspapers, radio channels, social media, council events and the resources were mailed to 14,600 households and stakeholders.



## Outcomes

The 'Call Before You Clear' campaign has been widely praised for raising awareness of the local environment and consequences of illegal clearing. Preliminary data has shown an increase in clearing-related enquiries prior to the activity being undertaken, and a decrease in illegal clearing complaints.

The first educational fact sheet in the series has been published, with subsequent editions planned, focusing on biodiversity, threatened species, and cultural heritage. The resources can be used by other agencies and the program may be rolled out to other LGAs.

The campaign has enhanced interagency communication and collaboration, resulting in joint inspections and streamlined complaints processes. It has also led to a more comprehensive understanding of each agency's roles, priorities and processes for investigation and regulation of unauthorised clearing.

## Key Learnings

The project highlighted the importance of meaningful collaboration with other organisations and that working together can yield far greater results than operating in isolation. Information sharing and aligning processes and resources significantly enhanced Council's ability to address unauthorised clearing.

The campaign revealed gaps in public understanding, underscoring the need for clear, accessible resources to encourage voluntary compliance and protect biodiversity effectively. Council has witnessed the importance of responding to community feedback and tailoring future initiatives to meet evolving needs.

A major takeaway from the project was the value of a proactive, ground-up approach, which demonstrated the potential for replicating this model across other significant issues and across other LGAs.

## Contact

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