

# Moree Community Sharps Program

**COUNCIL NAME**

Moree Plains Shire  
Council

**WEB ADDRESS**

[mpsc.nsw.gov.au](http://mpsc.nsw.gov.au)

**SIZE**

17,928 square  
kilometres

**POPULATION**

13,429

## Overview

Growing public concern for incorrectly discarded syringes in the area, Moree Plains Shire Council developed a project to improve the safe and correct disposal of sharps in the community. The project involved data collection, installation of additional sharps bins in 12 locations, a public awareness campaign and proactive audits to validate outcomes. The program has resulted in a downward trend in incorrect disposal of sharps.



## Background

In August 2013 Council was contacted by the local paper regarding an article that they were intending to write about incorrectly discarded syringes. With the obvious growing public concern supported by statistics collected by Council since 2010, Council determined that a cohesive proactive program was necessary. The objective was to reduce the number of incorrectly disposed sharps in Moree. This project is locally significant and addresses a public health concern of the Moree community.

## Implementation

**1. Collection of statistics on incorrect sharps disposal hotspots**

Data was collected from June 2010 to June 2013 on numbers of sharps found in general waste collection, public footpaths and open space. The data was used to request funding from NSW Ministry of Health to increase and promote awareness of disposal options in Moree, particularly in areas that the data suggested were hotspots.

**2. Provision of increased disposal options**

\$24,000 was provided by NSW Ministry of Health for the installation of sharps bins in 12 locations in Moree. The installation was completed in April 2014.

### 3. Public awareness campaign on disposal options

Council distributed media releases and promoted the program on its website and Facebook page as well as publishing an information brochure, which provided the location of sharps bins and other useful information.

### 4. Proactive audits of parks and open spaces

Outdoor staff were appropriately trained using funding from NSW Ministry of Health, and staff undertake daily audits of Moree parks and open spaces for incorrectly disposed sharps.

### 5. Collection of statistics on correct and incorrect sharps disposal and comparison with #1.

Data collection continues. There has been a significant increase in sharps captured in the new bins since the implementation of this program.

## Outcomes

Early statistics indicate a downward trend in incorrect disposal and a significant increase in sharps captured in the new bins since the implementation of this program. Improved awareness of the issues has resulted in other government agencies providing enhanced support services to the community.

Council staff continue to collect data on incorrectly discarded sharps found in our parks and open space areas. Further, other agencies are also providing statistics on sharps collected from derelict buildings in town.

## Key Learnings

There were some initial ill-feelings from some community members when the bins were installed. Some people felt that the bins were being provided specifically for those using illegal drugs and were concerned about the image that this portrays. However, through the communication campaign, Council are communicating that these bins are a community service for all sharps users – for those with medical conditions as well as those with animals requiring injections. Since commencing this campaign, the community have viewed the program positively.

Although funding from NSW Ministry of Health for the project has concluded, staff remain committed to promoting this in the community. Council is currently preparing a funding submission for the purchase of additional bins for placement in Moree and to extend the program to outlying villages. If successful, funds will also be used to continue the awareness campaign and additional staff training.

## Contact

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**This project was the 2014 winner of the Community Sharps Management Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards.**