

state of city end of council term report 2012–2016



acknowledgement

Blue Mountains City Council acknowledges that the City of Blue Mountains is located on the traditional lands of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples.

Blue Mountains City Council recognises the unique position of Aboriginal people in the history and culture of the Blue Mountains. It is acknowledged that Aboriginal people in the Blue Mountains have strong and on-going connections to their traditional lands, cultures, heritage and history. Aboriginal people are recognised as the “Traditional Owners of the land” and it is important that this unique position is incorporated into community protocols, official ceremonies and events.





Message from the Mayor	4
Your Councillors	5
1 Introduction	7
2 City Highlights	15
3 Key Council Achievements 2012–2016	25
4 Natural Disasters: A City United	34
5 Civic Leadership	45
6 Looking After Environment	67
7 Looking After People	85
8 Using Land	109
9 Moving Around	121
10 Sustainable Economy	133
Blue Mountains Sustainability Model	146

contents

Supplementary Document: Data Sheets

The Data Sheets referenced in this report are provided in a separate supplementary document entitled [State of City End of Council Term Report 2012–2016 Data Sheets](#).



Message from the Mayor

Over the past four years significant progress has been made by the Council and the community in implementing our Community Strategic Plan and seeing the achievement of our Community Vision for a more sustainable Blue Mountains – environmentally, socially and economically.

This report outlines the progress made and highlights the importance of the Council, community and different levels of government working together, to ensure the unique character of the Blue Mountains as A City Within A World Heritage National Park is retained for future generations.

Key Council achievement highlights for 2012-2016, detailed in this report, include:

- Being assessed “Fit for the Future” by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal;
- Leading recovery from the October 2013 bushfires on behalf of the NSW Government;
- Completing the Local Environment Plan 2015 and accompanying Development Control Plan 2015 and advocating to State Government for key provisions to be retained to protect village character and natural environment;
- Improving financial sustainability of the City through implementing our Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability;

- Upgrading waste and resource recovery facilities at Blaxland and introducing new household services including a new green bin collection for garden vegetation;
- Improving accessibility and transport including resealing and maintaining the City’s road network, implementing the Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program, upgrading the Hazelbrook Commuter Carpark and the Summerhayes Park Carpark, improving capacity and accessibility at the Glenbrook Commuter Carpark and developing the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan;
- Developing the Blue Mountains as a centre of culture and creativity through completing the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub;
- Delivering a range of community and recreation facilities including for example the new Katoomba Library, the Hazelwood Child Care Centre, new and improved skate facilities in Katoomba, the Glenbrook Swimming Pool filtration upgrade and all year round Learn to Swim facility, Mt York Heritage Conservation Reserve and commencement of the Greater Blue Mountains Trail;
- Establishing a Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith and Hawkesbury councils to achieve efficiencies and enhanced regional outcomes;
- Advocating to State and Federal Governments on the proposed Western Sydney Airport and its potentially adverse impact on the Blue Mountains;
- Improving and revitalising our town centres including Lawson town centre civil infrastructure redevelopment and restoration of Heatherbrae House, Pioneer Place Katoomba Stage 1 upgrade and provision of new and improved toilet facilities in Lawson, Hazelbrook and Leura; and
- Establishing the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise to strengthen the local economy.

I commend this important report to you. It provides valuable information that will inform the next update of our Community Strategic Plan.

I thank the community, local organisations and other agencies who have all worked together with Council staff and contributed to the achievements outlined in this report.

Thank you to the elected Council 2012–2016 for their leadership in implementing our Community Strategic Plan. I have felt deeply honoured to serve with them. I also want to thank the staff of this wonderful organisation. I admire them greatly.

Together we are building a successful future for the Blue Mountains.

Mark Greenhill, OAM
Mayor

Your Councillors

WARD 4 **Warrimoo to Lapstone**

(Left to right):
Councillor Mark Greenhill, OAM (Mayor)
Councillor Anton Von Schulenburg
Councillor Brendan Christie



WARD 3 **Faulconbridge/ Springwood to Valley Heights**

(Left to right):
Councillor Daniel Myles
Councillor Brendan Luchetti
Councillor Mick Fell



WARD 2 **Wentworth Falls to Faulconbridge/ Springwood**

(Left to right):
Councillor Annette Bennett
Councillor Chris Van der Kley (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Romola Hollywood



WARD 1 **Mount Tomah, Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine, Bell, Mount Victoria to Leura**

(Left to right):
Councillor Sarah Shrubbs
Councillor Michael Begg
Councillor Don McGregor



together



introduction





About this Report

State of City End of Council Term Report 2012–2016

This report outlines the progress made by our community and Council over the past four years in working together to implement our Community Strategic Plan – *Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025* and its six Key Directions.

It provides a snapshot of the state of the City of Blue Mountains in 2016 and our progress against key performance measures, using the six Key Directions of our Community Strategic Plan.

Our Six Key Directions

Civic Leadership – *Inspiring leadership*

Looking After Environment – *An environmentally responsible city*

Looking After People – *An inclusive, healthy and vibrant city*

Using Land – *A liveable city*

Moving Around – *An accessible city*

Sustainable Economy – *An economically sustainable city*



lead

CIVIC LEADERSHIP



protect

LOOKING AFTER ENVIRONMENT



care

LOOKING AFTER PEOPLE



live

USING LAND



move

MOVING AROUND



thrive

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level plan in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework that each NSW council is required to follow. It sets out the vision and aspirations of the community for the Blue Mountains for all of us to achieve – community, Council and other organisations and levels of government. The plan presents the objectives and strategies for realising the aspirations of our community for the City of Blue Mountains.



Report Overview

This report includes the End of Council Term Report for 2012–2016, which summarises progress made by the elected Council during their term of office in implementing the Community Strategic Plan. A more detailed assessment of these achievements is provided in the Annual Reports of the Council available on the Council's website.

The Council has been reporting every four to five years on the state of our City and our progress towards achieving our Community Strategic Plan. This report addresses the Council's commitment to the community – that we will regularly assess our progress and, if necessary, reset our course to ensure we stay on track.

Within this report, section 1 introduces the report and provides background on our Community Strategic Plan.

Section 2 presents highlights of the City of Blue Mountains with interesting facts about our city, our history, our towns and villages, our people, our economy and the big picture.

Section 3 is a summary of the Council's 2012–2016 key achievements for each of our six Key Directions, as well as a summary report card on the progress made by the Council against its four year Strategic Priority Commitments and Outcomes.

Section 4 features natural disasters that have occurred in the Blue Mountains during 2012–2016, with a particular focus on the October 2013 bushfires.

Sections 5 to 10 present the progress made against targets and performance measures for each Key Direction, as well as the key achievements and actions against our objectives and strategies set by the Community Strategic Plan.

The evidence supporting our performance assessment is presented in a separate supplementary document to this report entitled State of City End of Council Term Report 2012–2016 Data Sheets.

sustainable blue mountains **our community vision**



A more sustainable **Blue Mountains** **—environmentally,** **socially and** **economically.**

In 2025, we live in vibrant, healthy communities. Our towns and villages are distinctive and contained. We have maintained the bush between our settlements and protected the World Heritage environment that surrounds us.

Our local economy is strong and diversified, providing employment, educational and learning opportunities appropriate to our location, in a World Heritage environmental area.

We promote safe, accessible and environmentally responsible ways for people to get to where they need to go. We use our available resources wisely, ensuring their fair distribution.

Caring for each other, we sustain our communities. We recognize all Blue Mountains people, especially our children and young people in whom we inspire the values that create a more sustainable future.

We celebrate the rich creativity, culture and heritage of the Blue Mountains. People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and enjoy equal rights. We acknowledge Aboriginal communities in the Blue Mountains, past and present.

We have enhanced our Blue Mountains identity while forging strong regional partnerships. Our civic and community leadership and governance are inspirational, at one with the community.

The Blue Mountains is recognised nationally and internationally as a centre for learning about sustainable communities.

guiding principles

improving our decision-making

If we are to achieve a more sustainable Blue Mountains, our decision-making at every level – individual, household, town, city, regional and global – needs to promote sustainability. Improving the decision-making of the Council, other levels of government and of the community, is therefore an essential driver for achieving more sustainable action.

strengthening our assets

It is important that the actions taken strengthen, and not erode, the condition of the natural, built and human capital and assets supporting our quality of life. Understanding the impact of our actions is important in tracking our progress towards becoming a more sustainable city.

a partnership approach

Taking action in partnership with other stakeholders is critical to the achievement of a more sustainable Blue Mountains. Not only do such partnerships achieve a shared vision and goals, they also enable more effective and efficient use of limited resources and provide a means of distributing the costs involved in taking action.

social justice

Social justice means that the rights of all people in our community are considered in a fair and equitable manner. While equal opportunity targets everyone in the community, social justice targets groups of people who are marginalised and disadvantaged.

sustainability

Taking action to improve our quality of life supports the achievement of a sustainable city which is environmentally responsible, uses resources wisely, contributes to the creation of liveable, vibrant communities with a sense of place and belonging and is fair and equitable to others – including future generations.

These principles have formed an integral part of the Blue Mountains Sustainability Model (see page 146), developed in conjunction with our community.



Council Vision and Mission



Our Vision
To build a successful future for the Blue Mountains.

Our Mission
Improving the well-being of our community and the environment.

Our Values
We are committed to our values and behaviours and live them every day. They define who we are and serve as our guide to become the organisation we aspire to be.

 Working Together	We work collaboratively and support each other to achieve success <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I support and encourage others• I share information and keep others informed• I take time to recognise and celebrate success
 Work Safe Home Safe	We keep ourselves, our workmates and our community safe every day <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I always work safely even when busy• I take care of my own health and wellbeing and support others to do the same• I speak up if something is not right and report unsafe acts
 Service Excellence	We deliver our service standards to all our customers – internal and external <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I take time to understand customer needs• I always respond politely• I do what I say I will do
 Value for Money	We always look for quality and for innovative solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I make the best use of resources• I look for better ways to work• I avoid “band-aid” solutions
 Trust & Respect	We treat all people fairly with sensitivity and respect <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am open and honest with people• I listen and value others point of view• I take time to understand the role of others
 Supporting Community	We work in partnership with, and advocate for, our community and environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I build positive relationships• I welcome and consider all feedback• I act now with the future in mind

Role of the Council

The role of Blue Mountains City Council is critical in the implementation of our Community Strategic Plan – a plan for all of us to achieve. The Council is the only level of government holistically managing the Blue Mountains Local Government Area.



the Council as steward

The Blue Mountains is one of only two cities in the world surrounded by a World Heritage Area and sits within the Sydney drinking water catchment servicing 1.7 million people. This presents additional responsibilities and costs for the Council as steward of a City in a World Heritage National Park. This includes managing the impact of development on the environment, protecting and conserving world heritage natural values and protecting the health of drinking water catchments.



the Council as leader and advocate

The Council leads the governance and management of a City with an area of 1,431km² and a population of close to 80,000 spread across 27 towns and villages. The Council engages, consults and partners with community on their needs and required levels of service, advocates to other levels of government for services and funding and works in a multitude of ways to improve the well-being of our community and financial sustainability of our City.



the Council as service provider

The Council allocates over \$100 million each year to the provision of an extensive range of services to meet community needs and priorities. The Council more than matches every dollar paid by ratepayers for service delivery with funding from other sources, including grants. Services provided include transport and public accessibility, waste resource management, town centres, community development, emergency management, economic development, sport and recreation, family day care and libraries, for example.



the Council as asset manager

The Council is responsible for managing significant natural assets that underpin the identity and health of the region. The natural environment managed by the Council includes 10,000 hectares of bushland, 300 kilometres of creeks, 20 hectares of open freshwater bodies, 500 hectares of Endangered Ecological communities. Supporting the delivery of services, the Council manages over \$1 billion worth of built assets. The maintenance and renewal of these assets is critical to sustaining our quality of life and meeting the needs of residents and visitors to the City.

our built assets

- 678 km sealed roads
- 74 km unsealed roads
- 175 km footpaths
- 31 bridges
- 105 parks
- 66 playing courts
- 17 pools in five locations
- 6 skate parks
- 15 public halls and meeting places
- 1 cultural centre
- 1 theatre and community hub
- 151 bus shelters
- 11 child care and preschool buildings
- 523 km kerb and gutter
- 7,935 drainage pits
- 120 km walking tracks
- 22 sports grounds
- 6 libraries
- 28 emergency buildings
- 88 public toilets
- 9 cemeteries
- 2 waste management facilities
- 1 dam
- 1 commuter car park





city highlights



City of Blue Mountains

City in a World Heritage National Park

Located on the western fringe of the Greater Sydney Region, the City of Blue Mountains is one of only two cities in the world surrounded by a UNESCO declared World Heritage National Park. With a spectacular environmental setting, the Blue Mountains is home to a community of nearly 80,000 people residing in 27 towns and villages located over 100 kilometres of mountainous terrain.

The key challenge for the City of Blue Mountains is how we can foster social and economic well-being, whilst maintaining and protecting the surrounding World Heritage environment for future generations to come.



our city

The City of Blue Mountains stretches across the Great Dividing Range and provides a major road and rail transport link between urban Sydney and the more rural central west areas of NSW.

The transition through a series of distinct Blue Mountains towns and villages over the Great Dividing Range, and the scenic landscapes of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, tells you that you have left the metropolitan area and are travelling through a different and unique place.

Many Blue Mountains residents work in metropolitan Sydney and many of the services we regularly use are located in metropolitan Sydney. We benefit from direct transport links to major economic centres in Western Sydney and Sydney's central business district. A railway line with regular train services passes through most of our towns and villages, making the Blue Mountains more accessible than other areas on the fringe of Sydney. Rail and road transport links also support our tourism industry, making it easy for tours and independent travellers to visit.

Most residents live in properties that directly connect to bushland and within relatively small hamlets and villages. Despite our unique peripheral urban fringe character, the Blue Mountains is considered by the State Government to be part of the Greater Sydney Metropolitan Area.

The Blue Mountains natural areas provide a significant recreation and tourism resource for Greater Sydney and the world. They also play a significant role in providing high quality drinking water to Sydney, as much of the City, south of the highway, drains into Lake Burrangorang.



our history

Our city includes areas that are of great Aboriginal cultural significance. We respect our Aboriginal community and celebrate their success in achieving recognition for their places and knowledge.

The Blue Mountains area has been the home to Aboriginal people for thousands of years. The region covers large parts of the traditional lands of the Gundungurra and Darug language/tribal groups. The Aboriginal history of the area is significant and includes pre-contact and post-contact representations. For Aboriginal people this is not just historically important but also important today, as cultural connections are ongoing.

The post contact history of the Blue Mountains began with the first crossing by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813. The Great Western Highway still largely follows the route they took. The development that followed initially supported settlers making the journey over the Blue Mountains and then tourists keen to enjoy the natural beauty of the area. Many of the attractions built in this first phase of tourism continue to be major draw cards, including major hotels like The Carrington and The Hydro Majestic and facilities including heritage walking trails.

Two hundred years after Europeans crossed the Blue Mountains there are still many Aboriginal people with traditional connections to this 'Country', living in the region. There are also vast amounts of cultural sites in the Blue Mountains that not only illustrate Aboriginal cultural heritage but are an important legacy for present and future generations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

our towns and villages

We are a Blue Mountains community, and a series of communities. Each town and village has its own character and distinctive features. Many of our towns and villages are long established and have distinctive heritage buildings.

We are a low density city comprised mainly of single detached dwellings on large blocks. Ribbons of development often extend out along ridge lines with a single road and housing backing onto bush. Our proximity to natural areas supports lifestyle and leisure interests, but has inherent bushfire and environmental degradation risks that require management.

Our population is changing and is becoming steadily older. Our housing diversity is not changing at the same pace as the changing needs of our population (see Data Sheet 064).

Our residential areas are surrounded by bushland of World Heritage significance. This bushland backdrop underpins our quality of life, and attracts many visitors to our City, with tourism being a mainstay of our local economy.

Increasingly, our community is becoming more digitally connected. Between 2006 and 2011 the percentage of households with an internet connection rose from 69% to 81% (see Data Sheet 065), and in 2016 work has commenced to connect Blue Mountains households to the National Broadband Network (NBN).

We have more cars, and are travelling less by public transport. We are an environmentally-aware city, but we are becoming ever-more dependent on access to private transport. The average number of train trips made each day has fallen to 15,000, a drop of almost 12% since 2004. The fall in patronage, however, is not evenly spread, with barrier counts up at Katoomba and Blackheath stations (see Data Sheet 086).

Fewer people are using public transport to travel to work. In 2011, only 11.5% of employed people used public transport to travel to work. This is a significant drop from 17.7% in 1991. In comparison, in Greater Sydney, the use of public transport for travel to work in 2011 was almost 20% (see Data Sheet 035).

The volume of traffic on the highway has remained relatively stable (see Data Sheet 102), however the proportion of traffic travelling through the Blue Mountains appears to have increased. The upgrade of the highway to Katoomba was completed in 2015 providing a four-lane dual carriageway from Lapstone to Katoomba (see Data Sheet 139).

The number of heavy vehicles on the Great Western Highway has more than doubled from 572 in 2013 to 1208 in 2015 (see Data Sheet 139).

The safety of our roads is improving with fewer deaths and injuries as a result of crashes. In 2013, there were 165 reported crashes resulting in 207 casualties. This is a 10% drop in crashes and a 22% drop in casualties from 2011 (see Data Sheet 087).

quick facts

- The Blue Mountains is one of only two cities in the world surrounded by a World Heritage National Park.
- Our Council is one of only four classified under the Australian Classification of Local Governments as Category 12 – Large Fringe City with a population between 70,001 and 120,000.
- The City of Blue Mountains covers an area of 1,431 km² with 70% comprising World Heritage National Park, of which only 11% is available for settlement.
- In 2011, 92% of dwellings in the City were separate houses, compared to an average of 59% in Greater Sydney.
- In 2011, there were 45,000 vehicles in the City, 10,000 more than in 1996.
- Heavy vehicles make up 9.5% of traffic passing through Mount Boyce on the Great Western Highway.
- There is much more traffic on the highway in the Lower Mountains, with traffic counts at Mount Boyce being less than half those at Faulconbridge.
- In 2015, the Blue Mountains had the cheapest land for housing in Sydney.
- In 2011, 6.2% of Blue Mountains residents came from a non-English speaking background, compared to an average of 26.3% in Greater Sydney.
- On average, 10,000 people visit the Blue Mountains every day.



our people

Our City population is growing slowly. Almost 80,000 people were estimated to live in the Blue Mountains in 2015. Our average annual rate of growth has been well below the growth rate for NSW and Australia. Forecasts for growth until 2031 vary from 81,400 residents, under a scenario based on no change from the current growth evidence, to 97,300 residents, in projections prepared by NSW Planning and Environment.

Our population is less likely to leave the Blue Mountains than people living elsewhere in Sydney. In 2013–2014 only 5.75% of our residents moved out of the City (see Data Sheet 078). Residents tend to move into the Blue Mountains from the east and move out to the west. Between 2006 and 2011, the highest net gain of residents was from Penrith (+392), with the highest net loss being to Lithgow (–302).

We are a city of families and older people. The Blue Mountains population is ageing at a faster rate than Greater Sydney (see Data Sheet 076). People in the 35–44 year age group, and their young children, make up most of the net movement into the Blue Mountains.

Our distance from the CBD, and most major educational institutions, means that many young people move away from the Blue Mountains for education, career opportunities and the desire to live a more urban lifestyle.

The Blue Mountains is more affordable and liveable than many other urban areas. Compared to metropolitan Sydney, the Blue Mountains provides affordable housing, excellent facilities for families and a safe and caring community. The 2015 Urban Living Index gave the suburbs from Lapstone to Springwood the top score in Greater Sydney for affordability. These suburbs also scored well on the community and employability components. They were ranked 108 out of Sydney's 228 suburbs for urban liveability, which is a much higher ranking than other areas on Sydney's fringe. This combination of affordability and liveability makes the Blue Mountains an ideal choice for many families.

Families have tended to be strongly attracted to the Lower Mountains, where 41% of households have children – much higher than the average of 31% for the Blue Mountains.

Who lives in the Blue Mountains changes from west to east. In the west, residents are more likely to be retirees. In the east residents are likely to be part of a young family. The differences across the City have a big impact on the needs of our residents and required service delivery in the different parts of the Blue Mountains Local Government Area (LGA).

We are an ageing community, and many people in the Blue Mountains live alone. The proportion of residents over 65 is increasing faster than the average for Greater Sydney. By 2031, one in four people, or as many as 24,000 Blue Mountains residents, could be 65 or more years old. Our housing stock of primarily detached dwellings on large lots may not be the optimum housing option for many of our older residents.

We have not become as ethnically diverse as other parts of Sydney. Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of residents from a non-English speaking background did not change (see Data Sheet 066).

We are a helping community with a much higher rate of volunteering (23.4%) than the average for Greater Sydney (15.1%) (see Data Sheet 114). The large number of people working in bushcare to help conserve our World Heritage environment is just one example of how many of us are prepared to volunteer and help out.



We are a City of the Arts and have many people engaged in the arts, and deriving some of their income from creative activity, than any other part of NSW, except for the City of Sydney. We have developed an artistic community of sufficient size to generate its own momentum. This creative energy benefits the entire community, through exhibitions, performances and cultural diversity. People involved in the creative industries are more likely to live in Katoomba, Leura or Blackheath.

We value, enjoy and will enthusiastically lobby and take direct action to protect our natural environment.



our economy

The Blue Mountains economy is growing (see Data Sheet 073). The proportion of NSW jobs located within the Blue Mountains has remained stable at 0.57%, with 20,902 jobs in the Blue Mountains in 2014–2015 (*Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research*).

Residents consistently rate the generation of local employment opportunities as an important issue (see Data Sheet 074). Increasing the range of industries and business opportunities supporting our local economy, could support the generation of local employment opportunities.

Tourism is a critical component of the local economy, and is growing. The total number of visitors in 2015 was close to 3.6 million, and grew by over 20% from 2011 to 2015 (see Data Sheet 104).

Our levels of tourism have been affected by natural disasters. Major bushfires can affect perceptions of the Blue Mountains as a safe and beautiful place to visit. Visitor expenditure in the region was increasing faster than the NSW average until 2013, and was on track to meet Destination NSW target of doubling visitor expenditure by 2020. However, a downturn in tourism following the 2013 bushfires affected all tourism ventures and required a targeted advertising campaign and funding. The 2015 visitor expenditure could indicate the start of a recovery in tourism expenditure (see Data Sheet 104).

Blue Mountains businesses tend to be small businesses. In 2011 there were 5,607 registered businesses in the Blue Mountains, of which 97% were small businesses, employing fewer than 20 people, while 87% had less than five employees.

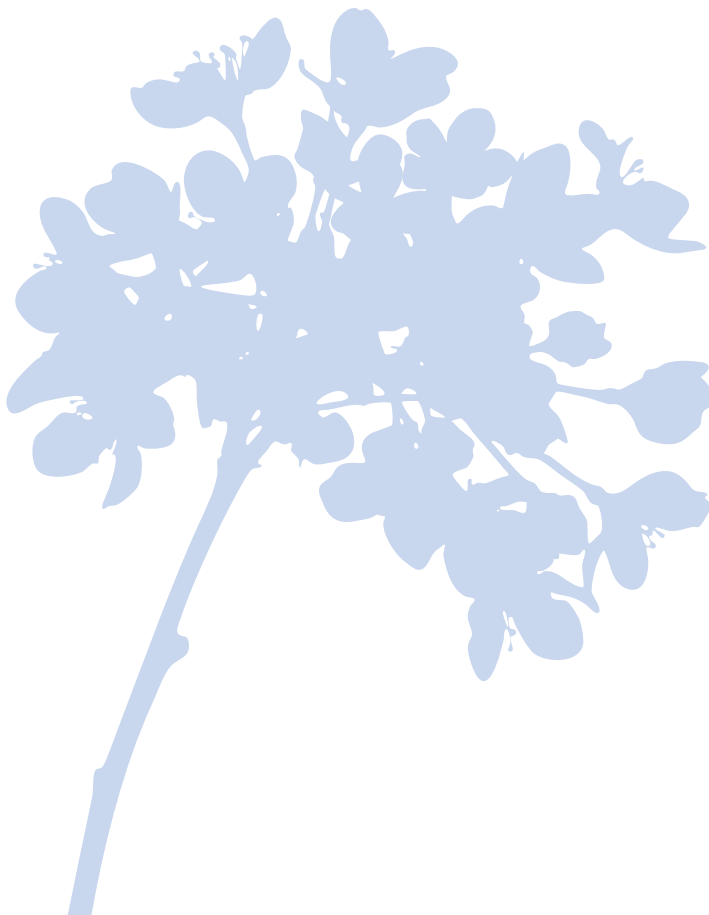
Blue Mountains residents are more likely to work from home than the average resident in Greater Sydney. In 2011, 6.3% of the workforce worked from home compared to 4% for Greater Sydney.

The two key District Centres for the City are Katoomba in the Upper Mountains and Springwood in the Lower Mountains. Both of these centres have been impacted by having a number of shop vacancies in the last two years from 2014–2016 (see Data Sheet 143). While the number of shop vacancies is reducing, having vacancies impacts on the vitality of these retail centres.

Good road and public transport links, especially between the Blue Mountains and Sydney, are essential to supporting the tourism economy of the region and also in providing residents with access to employment opportunities. Blue Mountains residents working outside the LGA take advantage of the good transport links to the west through Penrith and Parramatta, to Sydney. Penrith (18%) and the City of Sydney (7%) capture the most residents who work outside the Blue Mountains, with less than 10% of residents nominating a work location that was not on this spine.

Our ageing population will demand more specialised community, health and recreational services to support them as they get older. This will include services that help people to remain in their homes, such as domestic and health care services. Businesses that understand and are able to respond to the needs of our ageing population are likely to find increased opportunities in the region over the next twenty years.

Our regional and rural context has low rates of agricultural land-use and development compared to other Greater Sydney regions. Across the City, only 140 properties are rated farmland.



city highlights 2012–2016



Our Council has been declared Fit for the Future by the NSW State Government as it continues to provide civic leadership for the City in a World Heritage National Park and strengthen partnerships with the community and with neighbouring councils in Greater Sydney.

The upgrade of the highway from Lapstone to Katoomba has been completed improving our connections and providing a 4 lane dual carriageway. This 25-year project was completed in 2015.

Many of the homes destroyed in the 2013 bushfires have been rebuilt. The ongoing recovery from this natural disaster is demonstrating the resilience of our community.

Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2015 has been made and it continues to protect the City's special village character and natural environment.

Our town centres remain distinct and vibrant and have been improved. Our heritage villages continue to serve residents and offer unique visitor experiences. Many centres have seen their infrastructure upgraded and some have had major investments in retail space. Lawson town centre has been completely rebuilt following the highway widening.

The vitality and cultural experiences offered by our City continue to grow. The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood have significantly enhanced our ability to support the arts and provide cultural experiences.

We have strengthened our partnership with our Aboriginal citizens. The Gully is recognised as an Aboriginal Place. An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) with the Gundungurra is now in place for the use and management of land and water south of the Great Western Highway.

Our popularity as a tourism destination has been increasing. Blue Mountains National Park was the most visited National Park in NSW in 2014.

A strategic focus on the Scenic Southern Escarpment has seen the facilities in, and around, Echo Point Katoomba, renewed to provide the best possible visitor experience for this iconic attraction. Echo Point was rated as the highest performing Visitor Centre in NSW in 2014/15 by Destination NSW with 530,000 visitors. Additional grant funding of over \$3 million received in 2016 will further develop this escarpment as a major visitor precinct.

Major investments in tourism have seen the iconic Hydro Majestic re-opened with expanded and upgraded facilities. Scenic World has renewed its facilities and created a major event in Sculpture at Scenic World. Facilities in our natural areas have been upgraded with major heritage walks in the National Parks such as the Grand Canyon being renewed.

Our community has worked together to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. This has extended the life of Blaxland Waste Management Facility, the City's only landfill, with cost saving and environmental benefits to the community.

big picture

climate

Climate is changing. It is predicted that the Blue Mountains could experience increased temperatures of 2°C, decreased annual rainfall and increased summer wind speeds of 10% by 2050. Already, highlighted by the Bureau of Meteorology, there is a pattern of an earlier-than-usual fire season, due to the combination of dry fuels, high temperatures and strong winds. Significant snow events and large hailstones have also been noted.

partnerships

Blue Mountains City Council has entered into a Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith and Hawkesbury councils, with the aim of achieving cost savings from economies of scale, enhanced regional advocacy and improved regional planning outcomes.

planning

The Greater Sydney Commission was created in 2015 and is responsible for metropolitan planning in a partnership between the State and Local Governments. The Commission is working closely with local councils. District plans are being drafted and will be exhibited in January 2017.

The Blue Mountains is part of West Planning District with Penrith and Hawkesbury councils. The challenge for the Blue Mountains, being part of the West District, is that our community and rate of growth are very different from the district overall. Greater Sydney, and Western Sydney, continue to grow at a much faster rate than the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains LGA, together with Hawkesbury and Penrith LGAs, is part of the Sydney West District. This district is projected to grow by more than 111,800 people over the next 20 years.

housing

Land and housing values are rising faster in Greater Sydney than in the Blue Mountains. Upward pressure on house prices, driven by increased investor activity, has not been as strong in the Blue Mountains. This means that the Blue Mountains has remained relatively more affordable for housing than the rest of Sydney (see Data Sheet 142).

services

Penrith has been identified by the State Government as a Strategic Centre and a health and education hub. Nepean Hospital and Western Sydney University (Kingswood Campus) provide access to high-level facilities for Blue Mountains residents. New urban areas have been developed around Penrith, including a major precinct north of Penrith station. Penrith already provides employment for a significant number of Blue Mountains residents, and this can be expected to increase. A focus on higher order services in Penrith will benefit Blue Mountains residents, improving access to a greater range of services and facilities.

infrastructure

The Australian Government released a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek, together with a draft Airport Plan in late 2015. This major infrastructure proposal could have a wide range of significant impacts on the Blue Mountains community, environment and local economy.

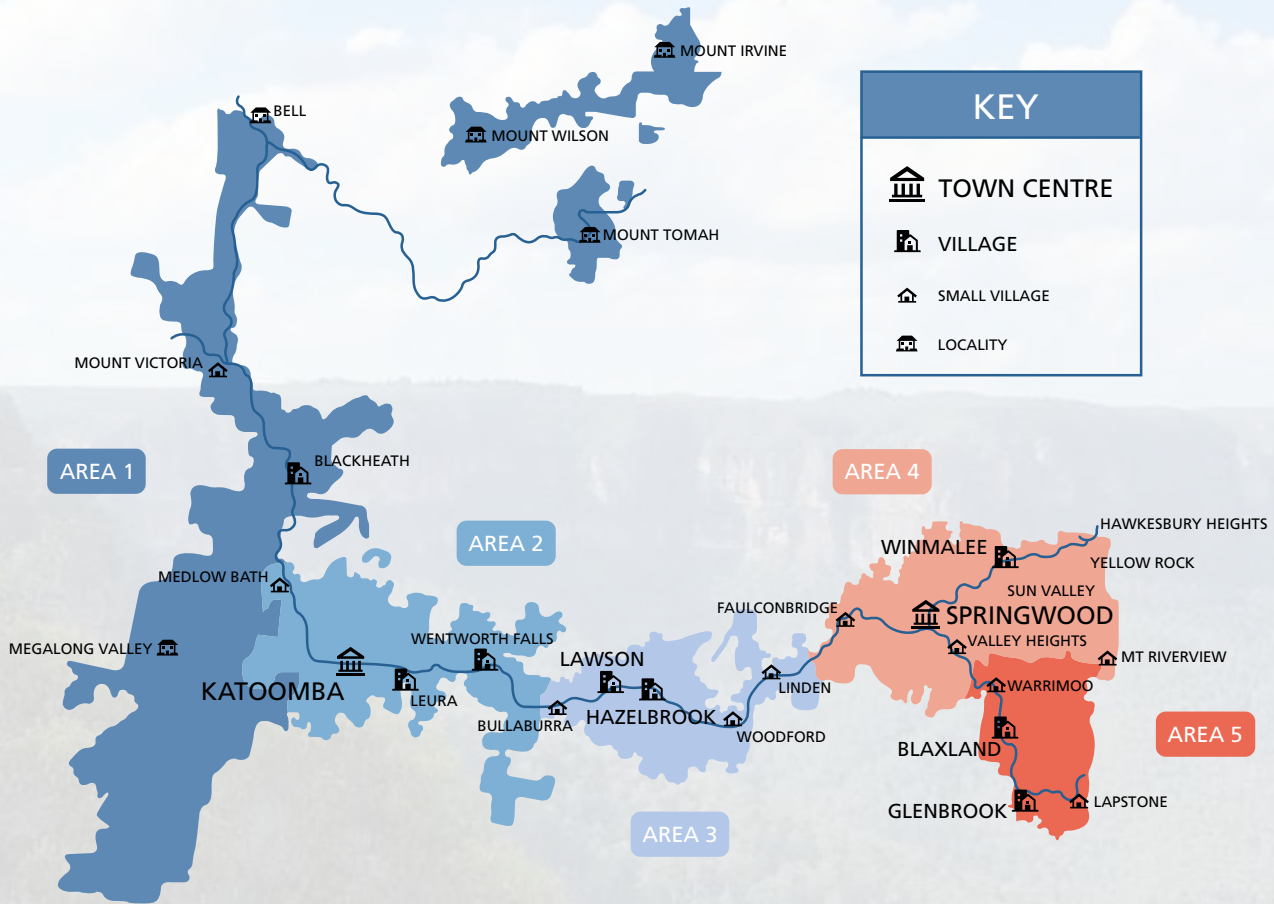
Of particular concern is the inadequacy of the Environmental Impact Statement and community engagement implemented to date, given the potentially significant adverse impact on quality of life, the health of the community and on the World Heritage environment from the proposed scale of the airport, flight paths and hours of operation.

Long-term upgrades to the transport system could change accessibility for Blue Mountains residents, especially to employment opportunities on Sydney's fringe. The proposed Outer Sydney Orbital and Bells Line of Road/M7 Castlereagh Connection will provide increased capacity to the North West and South West growth centres and could free up local roads.

nbn

The introduction of the National Broadband Network (NBN) has enhanced the digital capacity of the City, supporting a further increase in the number of Blue Mountains residents working from home either in a home-based business or remotely.

Blue Mountains Council Planning Areas



Comparison of Key Characteristics of Blue Mountains Planning Areas with Blue Mountains Local Government Area (LGA), Western Sydney, NSW and Australia

	Planning Area 1 WEST	Planning Area 2	Planning Area 3	Planning Area 4	Planning Area 5 EAST	Blue Mountains LGA	Western Sydney	NSW	Australia
Median age	46	46	40	40	39	42	36	38	37
Median weekly household income	\$937	\$910	\$1,272	\$1,527	\$1,672	\$1,270	\$1,447	\$1,237	\$1,234
Couples with children	17.5%	20.1%	33.3%	38.2%	40.9%	31%	35%	32%	31%
Older couples without children	11.2%	9.8%	7.1%	9.4%	9.3%	9%	8%	9%	9%
Medium and high density housing	3.1%	14%	3%	7.8%	4.2%	8%	40%	31%	25%
Households with a mortgage	28.4%	29.6%	47.2%	43.8%	43.6%	39%	33%	32%	33%
Median weekly rent	\$254	\$263	\$282	\$310	\$319	\$280	\$351	\$300	\$285
Households renting	20.8%	25.4%	13.8%	14.4%	12.8%	19%	30%	29%	29%
Non-English speaking backgrounds	5.9%	8.5%	5.9%	5.4%	5.5%	6%	26%	19%	16%
Bachelor Degree or higher	25.3%	24.2%	24.3%	24%	27%	24%	24%	20%	19%
Public transport to work	8.1%	8.4%	13%	11.9%	13.7%	12%	20%	14%	10%
Unemployment	4.8%	7.1%	4.9%	4.2%	2.2%	5.00%	5.80%	5.90%	5.60%

Significantly higher than Blue Mountains average
 Significantly lower than Blue Mountains average



together



key council achievements 2012–2016



2012–2016 key achievements by

1

civic leadership

- Led the October 2013 bushfire recovery on behalf of State Government
- Achieved a “Fit for the Future” result for the Council in 2015 (one of only seven councils in the Sydney region)
- Substantially improved the financial sustainability of the City and the Council through implementing our Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability
- Engaged the community on options for “Resourcing Our Future” resulting in community endorsement for a special rate variation
- Developed the Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith and Hawkesbury councils
- Implemented best value service reviews including Sealing of Unsealed Roads, Visitor Information Centres, Tourist Parks, Bulky Waste Pick-up and Fleet
- Successfully lobbied the State Government to retain key elements to protect our character and environment in the Local Environmental Plan 2015
- Advocated to the State and Federal Governments on the potential adverse impact of the proposed Western Sydney Airport

2

looking after environment

- Implemented projects to maintain health and diversity of Blue Mountains native flora, fauna, habitat and ecosystems
- Monitored the health of Blue Mountains waterways and water catchments
- Upgraded the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility to extend the life of the landfill, increase resource recovery, protect the environment and reduce CO₂ emissions
- Developed new household resource recovery and waste services including a green bin collection for garden vegetation and a new booked bulky waste collection service and kerbside chipping service
- Significantly reduced the amount of waste to landfill per resident
- Invested in our natural and cultural heritage including upgrade of the Mount York Heritage Conservation Reserve and the Gully Interpretive Walk, Katoomba
- Worked with community and all levels of government to manage and reduce the impact of the City on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area
- Supported and facilitated over 500 conservation volunteers working on Swampcare, Bushcare, Streamwatch, Trackcare and Landcare

3

looking after people

- Supported community health and well-being through provision of community, cultural, recreational and sporting services and facilities
- Contributed to caring and inclusive community through supporting 2013 bushfire recovery process, becoming a Refugee Welcome Zone, celebrating National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week and International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT)
- Led and facilitated the Blue Mountains Stronger Families Alliance (SFA)
- Supported community development for people of all cultures, ages and life stages, including people with disabilities and their carers
- Supported the Blue Mountains being a vibrant centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning
- Completed major new community and cultural facilities including the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub at Springwood, the Hazelwood Childcare Centre and the refurbishment of Heatherbrae House in Lawson
- Completed skate parks in Katoomba, the upgrade of Glenbrook Swimming Pool as an all year Learn to Swim facility and supported the Katoomba Street Art Walk project
- Contributed to a safer community through the Crime Prevention Plan for the Blue Mountains in partnership with key agencies and organisations

6 key directions

4

using land

- Managed the impact of development on the built and natural environment
- Completed the Local Environmental Plan 2015 and accompanying Development Control Plan 2015, and successfully advocated to State Government to retain provisions for protection of the City's village character and natural environment
- Supported the rebuilding of bushfire affected homes and infrastructure
- Strengthened liveability, vibrancy and safety of towns and villages
- Redeveloped Lawson town centre and provided public domain infrastructure and landscaping following highway widening
- Provided new toilet amenities and upgraded public toilet facilities in key areas
- Implemented town centre cleansing, landscaping and beautification works
- Completed master plans for Springwood town centre, the upgrade of Pioneer Place, Katoomba and for Blackheath town centre
- Re-established eight Alcohol Free Zones in town centres

5

moving around

- Resealed and maintained parts of the City's extensive road network
- Implemented the Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program resulting in improved service to residents and reducing on-going maintenance costs
- Developed key accessibility and transport plans and policies, including the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan, the Road Reseal Policy, the Bike Plan and options for managing the impact of tourist buses on Leura village centre
- Supported the provision of improved parking within town centres and at key destinations
- Provided sustainable choices for moving around through provision of footpaths and bike paths, including the Great Blue Mountains Trail and upgrades to commuter car parks at Glenbrook and Hazelbrook
- Established Good Neighbourly Agreement, a partnership with the Heavy Vehicle Industry and the RMS to better manage the impact of heavy vehicles on our roads
- Supported community transport through provision of a community access bus in partnership with GREAT Community Transport
- Coordinated the Blue Mountains Integrated Transport Forum and the Local Traffic Committee



6














sustainable economy

- Supported a vibrant and strong economy to increase local employment
- Established the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise to strengthen and diversify the local economy
- Secured a National Stronger Regions Grant of \$3.592 million to revitalise Katoomba Falls precinct and the Southern Scenic Escarpment
- Contributed to the development of a sustainable tourism industry through Visitor Information Centres and investment in nature-based recreational facilities and infrastructure, including walking tracks and lookouts, a range of amenities, infrastructure and services in towns, recreation and tourism precincts
- Worked closely with Destination NSW, the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise, the Regional Strategic Alliance and the tourism industry to explore options for a sustainable regional tourism model into the future
- Provided a competitive advantage for local made produce and hand-crafted products through creation of the MTNS MADE brand
- Supported our status as an innovative learning region within a World Heritage Area through cultural programs, community learning activities, exhibitions and performances
- Supported youth and community employment initiatives including the Green Army team


Achievements against the Council's










The table below presents a summary report card on the progress made by the elected Council against its four year Strategic Priority Commitments and Outcomes (as of June 2016). These priorities were set and reviewed by the Council in a series of annual Leadership Strategic Planning Workshops conducted in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

 Completed
  Ongoing


Priority Commitments/Outcomes	Status
1. Civic Leadership Providing civic leadership and advocating on behalf of our community	
Focus on bushfire response, recovery and preparedness	
Focus on bushfire preparedness and learning	
Councillors to review strategic direction annually	
Complete review of organisational structure within the term of the Council	
Complete Councillor training and induction program and maintain currency	
Respond to Local Government Reforms The Council responded and made submissions to State Government/ IPART on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Local Government Act • Review of Local Government • Review of Reporting and Compliance Burdens on Local Government • Review of Local Government Rating System • Review of Fit for the Future Criteria • Review of Local Council Fit for the Future Proposals 	
Advocate on behalf of the community on key issues:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLEP 2015 – Continued advocacy to protect village character and natural environment and achieved meeting with Minister for Planning in September 2015 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer Subsidy – Council established the strategic setting for management of State Government response and secured reprieve for local residents 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council continues to engage with State Government regarding key issues with waste management and resource recovery including abolition of the Environment Waste Levy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing Our Future – Council staff engaged with IPART throughout the process and advocated the Councils case for a special rate variation as endorsed by the community 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocated with Destination NSW to hold a strategic forum on options for Destination Tourism in the Blue Mountains 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully delivered Community Bicentennial Crossing events in partnership with the community and delivered upgrade to Mount York 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Sydney Airport – advocated on behalf of the community relative to the potential adverse Impact on residents and the environment, implemented awareness and information strategy for residents 	













Strategic Priority Commitments & Outcomes

 Completed
  Ongoing

Priority Commitments/Outcomes	Status
2. Financial Sustainability – Living Within our Means	
Council commitment to Financial Sustainability and Quality Services – Council agreed to develop the approach to engage with the community on SV1 and Special Variation to rates SV2	
Submission of SV2 application to IPART	
Implement 6 Point Financial Sustainability strategies and 10 year Resourcing Strategy:	
1. Avoid Shocks 2. Balance the budget 3. Managing Borrowings Responsibly 4. Increase Income 5. Review and Adjust Services 6. Increase advocacy and partnerships (Significant progress made against each of the six strategies)	
Consolidate our business activities financial reporting	
Report impacts of cost shifting in 6 monthly reports	
3. Maintaining and Managing our Assets Sustainably	
Responsibly managing maintenance and renewal of assets within available resources using a risk based approach	
Engage community on further special variations to rates to meet assessed funding requirements	
Implemented the Resourcing Our Future community engagement process in 2014 resulting in a successful community-endorsed application for a special rate variation (SV2) in 2015	
Improve our approach to asset management delivering the Council's commitments to meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit for the Future targets • The State Government expectations • Value for money services to the community (New 2016–2017 Priority)	

Achievements against the Council's

 Completed
  Ongoing


Priority Commitments/Outcomes	Status
4. Service Reviews – Effective, Efficient and Affordable Services Reviewing and providing affordable and value for money services	
Ongoing review of services and service levels	 
Adjusting service levels to achieve affordable levels of provision within available funding	
Engaging community on proposed adjustments to services and service levels	
Develop a service provision policy and delivery framework Blue Mountains City Council Service framework: Guidelines for Achieving Best Value Services developed and adopted by the Council June 2013 and revised November 2015	
Commence the strategic review of the sustainable level of service that the Council provides overall, to inform future decision-making and priorities (New 2016–2017 Priority)	
5. Towns and villages Retaining the character and improving our Towns and Villages and Supporting local Economy	
Improving the look, feel and maintenance of our towns and villages	 
Holistic place management and planning to achieve quality outcomes	
Improve accessibility and transport 2013/14–2015/16 works program completed	
Enabling and facilitating local economy and employment	
6. Completing Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	
Consolidating our Local Environmental Plan commensurate with LEP 2005 outcomes and a city surrounded by World Heritage National Park LEP 2015 gazetted December 2015	











Strategic Priority Commitments & Outcomes

 Completed
  Ongoing

Priority Commitments/Outcomes	Status
7. Completing Major Projects	
Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub, Springwood	✓
Blaxland Resource, Recovery and Waste Management Facility Upgrade	✓
Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Katoomba Library	✓
Mount York Heritage Conservation Reserve	✓
Restoration of Heatherbrae	✓
Gully Interpretive Walk	✓
Katoomba Skate Parks	✓
Hazelwood Childcare Centre, Hazelbrook	✓
Katoomba/Waratah Streets Roundabout and Stage 1 Pioneer Place Upgrade	✓
Complete Civil Infrastructure Lawson adjoining new shops/town centre	✓
Complete the new Leura amenities	✓
Successful RDAF Grant for \$500,000 for the Greater Blue Mountains Trail – implement project	✓
Sealing of unsealed roads	✓
Glenbrook Swimming Pool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enclosure for Learn to Swim and heated pool • Upgrade of Filtration Plant and Pipe Work and isolate Learn to Swim pool for year round use 	✓
8. Managing our Waste and Resources	
Developing our Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy	✓
Reducing waste to landfill (green waste/other resource recovery)	✓
Reducing our CO ² emissions	➔










Achievements against the Council's

 Completed
  Ongoing

Priority Commitments/Outcomes	Status
9. Strengthening Governance and Risk Management	
Improving our decision making and strengthened our governance	
Making best practice enterprise risk management a normal part of our business – using it to prioritise decision making and reduce costs	
Continuing our focus on improving workforce safety	
Improving our marketing and communications	
10. One Organisation – Working Together Effectively	
Adopting the Organisational Vision, Mission and Values into the Four Year Delivery Program	
Introducing Best Value Councillor Advisory Group (BVCAG) to review services and business improvements	
11. Fit for the Future (FftF)	
Prepare FftF submission and report to Council in June 2015 prior to sending to the State Government The Council was determined to be Fit for the Future by the State Government in November 2015	
Commit to the FftF targets – whilst acknowledging the unique challenges faced by the Council in being a City surrounded by a World Heritage Listed Area – and maintain the best value decision-making frame to maximise the outcomes for the community from the special rate income: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use the best value decision making framework in decision making • The Best Value Advisory Group considers progress against the FftF benchmarks twice yearly (New 2016–2017 Priority)	
12. Establishment of the Strategic Alliance	
Report to the Council on the outcomes of the Strategic Alliance negotiations on the cooperation and Management Agreement, as the initial stage to take the initiative to maturity	
Formally establish the Regional Strategic Alliance	

Strategic Priority Commitments & Outcomes

 Completed
  Ongoing

Priority Commitments/Outcomes	Status
13. Review of Local Environmental Plan (LEP) policies	
Develop the program for review of LEP 2015 and foreshadowed time lines, to be reported to the Council for approval in June 2015	
14. Increase focus and priority on business Improvement, efficiency and innovation	
Continue to review services and operational efficiencies supporting Fit for the Future	
Consider opportunities for organisational structural alignment to improve service delivery and efficiencies	
Identify and prioritise internal services for review to maximise efficiencies and improve service levels in conjunction with Councillors (New 2016–2017 Priority)	
Design and implement “organisation wide” business improvement framework and methodology (New 2016–2017 Priority)	
Develop Workplace Management Strategy to support and influence innovation and efficiency (New 2016–2017 Priority)	
15. Develop a Concept Plan to upgrade Springwood Library as a full District Library	
Develop a concept plan and estimate costing as a prospectus for grant opportunities at the appropriate time	
16. Position the Council to be more proactive in communicating and engaging with the community	
Develop a communication plan that provides communication support for Councillors in dialogue with the community and to provide a structured way of communicating with the broader community to keep them informed	
Develop an organisational wide approach to corporate communications community engagement and marketing (New 2016–2017 Priority)	

Natural Disasters: A City United

The Blue Mountains region is well known for its unique landforms and bushland – a feature that attracts many visitors and residents. The occurrence and management of natural disasters in the Blue Mountains is an inherent issue of mountain life and is supported by substantial resource dedication of governments, community sector and emergency services volunteers. The region is prone to extreme weather events of snow, fire, storm and wind damage. It goes without saying that our emergency management capability in the Blue Mountains is exceptionally high.

The geography of the Blue Mountains is also responsible for the pattern of development in the region. The establishment of towns and villages along mountainous ridgelines and valleys exposes settlements to high bushfire risks, due to the close proximity of buildings to the bushland interface and the rugged geological landform. Access for fire-fighting and evacuation is inherently difficult in many parts, and it is not uncommon for access to be limited to one road in and one road out.

Our emergency services, community and government response and resilience to disaster were all put to the test in October 2013 when bushfires in the region required the largest response and recovery efforts ever seen in the state of New South Wales.





october 2013 bushfires: united in crisis

Red October in the Blue Mountains

In the month of October 2013, the Blue Mountains region was impacted by a series of fires, the scale and intensity of which had not been seen for many decades. These fires formed part of a tough month for the Emergency Services, dubbed 'Red October'. This period was described by NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons as "one of the most significant fire emergencies our State has experienced for many years."



NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons briefing Quentin Bryce, Governor General of Australia, and Mayor, Cr Mark Greenhill

Three fires ravaged the Blue Mountains region: the State Mine Fire, the Mt York Road Fire and the Linksvew Road Fire – which collectively burnt 67,876 hectares of land. The fires burned between 16 October and 19 November 2013, totally destroying 197 houses and causing variable property damage to a further 700 or more properties. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of all involved, there were no lives lost.

The community was kept informed through a range of channels, including conventional and social media platforms, Emergency Alert text and voice messages, door-knocking and community meetings. All channels were widely used. Between 13 and 26 October, 12,500 Blue Mountains residents attended at least one RFS community meeting.

State Mine Fire

The first and largest of the Red October fires, the State Mine Fire, started around midday on 16 October 2013 at the Marangaroo Army base, located several kilometres north-west of Lithgow. The fire quickly burned into an area of rugged terrain and large fuel loads, which was largely inaccessible to fire-fighters. The fire went on to threaten the townships of Oakey Park, Clarence, Dargan, Bell, Mt Wilson, Mt Irvine, Mt Tootie, Berambing, Bilpin and Mountain Lagoon.

Thanks to the work of the local Emergency Services, interstate crews from Victoria and Tasmania and local communities, damage and destruction of property was limited. In all, five houses were lost and one was damaged, however there was extensive damage to the trains and buildings at the historic Zig Zag Railway site.



Zig Zag Railway site

Mount York Road Fire

This was the second fire to occur, starting around 12.30pm on 17 October 2013, and the second largest, covering an area of 9,383 hectares. Burning adjacent to the State Mine Fire, the Mount York Road Fire spread rapidly. Nine houses were destroyed along with numerous sheds and other property, all within the first afternoon of the fire, and with most losses occurring along St. George's Parade in Mount Victoria. The Mount York Road Fire continued to burn for 22 days.

Linksvew Road Fire

The most destructive of the three fires, the Linksvew Road Fire, started around 1:30pm on 17 October 2013, eventually consuming 3,631 hectares of land, destroying 185 homes and damaging a further 620 properties. The fire burned for 27 days, threatening and causing destruction in and around Faulconbridge, Springwood, Winmalee, Yellow Rock and Mt Riverview.

Most of the loss and damage occurred in the first few hours of the fire, and was focused around the area of Emma Parade, Buena Vista Road, Heather Glen Road, Moray Street, Singles Ridge Road and Purvines Road, with several additional houses lost in Paulwood Avenue and Hawkesbury Road.



damage and losses

Private Dwellings

The cost estimate for private property building damage requiring development approval is in the order of \$60 million. Most effected homes were built prior to the introduction of State-level bushfire planning regulations in 2002, but were exposed to substantial bushfire risk, with more than 80% of these homes located in close proximity to bushland. Consequently many fire-affected property owners found they were grossly underinsured when it came to rebuilding to current building standards. The issue of underinsurance has been a significant impediment to timely recovery and rebuilding.

Infrastructure

Local infrastructure damage to public assets was in the order of \$70,000. This includes items such as signs, guard rails, road damage and drainage pipes, pits, and culverts, but excludes the cost of replacement street trees. Additionally, there was \$1.8 million worth of damage to water and sewer assets and a further \$1 million damage to power infrastructure. Repairs were carried out to 37 pressure sewer systems on affected properties and 110 water meters and 182 gas meters were replaced.

Approximately 5,000 homes were without power, but were reconnected within four days. Damage to poles, cables and transformers was estimated at \$1 million. Power was lost to sewerage pumping stations and generators were deployed until power was restored. Sydney Water estimated \$1 million was required to complete sewerage works for destroyed properties. Gas supply was disconnected to 766 properties but restored to unaffected streets within two days.

Economic

The bushfires also caused widespread disruption to the local economy. An economic impact assessment organised by Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise estimated that the impact from the fires on the Blue Mountains tourism industry alone was a loss of up to \$71 million during the first 15 weeks following the fires. The final figure for the economic impact is anticipated to have been much higher. It would have included output and asset losses from a number of areas, including direct loss by home-based businesses in the fire-affected areas, loss of customers due to restricted access caused by the fire, and impacts on businesses whose owners and/or staff were otherwise engaged in fire-fighting activities. Unfortunately, given the highly variable nature of these businesses and their losses, the exact economic damage caused by the fires cannot be calculated. There were many anecdotal reports of home-based businesses directly impacted by the fires. This data was not captured in the recovery process.

Environmental

The fires had an immediate and significant effect on natural systems and ecosystems, particularly vulnerable and endangered ecological communities in the fire affected areas. The intensity of the fires led to the exposure of soils, which posed risks of erosion and sedimentation in local waterways, and damaged sewer infrastructure and subsequent sewer overflows presented additional threats to the environment. Post-fire weed germination and invasion threatened ecological integrity in some areas, and additional native vegetation was lost to post fire clearing and clean up activities. A large number of fire damaged trees were removed from roadsides, other public areas and private property. The impact on native wildlife is difficult to quantify but is likely to have been considerable.

Approximately 38,000 tonnes of material required disposal, which is equivalent to over one year of local landfill capacity.

Social

The personal impacts from these bushfires are substantial and wide-ranging. Many residents reported psychological trauma and mental suffering due to events they experienced during the bushfires, including being unable to reach and assist loved ones in the fire affected area, having to flee the fire, and remaining to defend their homes. For many, feelings of fear, isolation and dislocation from the community were common experiences. Those that did not suffer property loss were also affected. The estimate of population directly affected by the fire impact was around 3,500 people.

People in the region were also impacted by health risks from poor air quality due to smoke, pollution of drinking and household water and loss of services including power and phone connections. Many residents suffered anxiety and trauma due to their inability to get to family who were at risk. This included school children who remained at schools until safe evacuation could be supported. It also included those that were at home at the time and had to escape the fire, and those that remained to defend their home. Schools in the area were closed for a period of time.

The number of companion animals lost in these fires is unknown but is likely to have been significant. The subsequent impact on fire affected residents cannot be quantified, but companion animals are often seen as equivalent to family members, so such losses may have caused substantial stress and grief. It is known that over 380 domestic animals were evacuated and cared for by the Department of Primary Industries and supporting organisations. These included over 100 horses, 119 chickens, 54 dogs and 42 alpacas.



short-term recovery

Recovery Co-ordination

Immediately following the declaration by the State Government of a Natural Disaster Area and State of Emergency for the region, the Blue Mountains Bushfires Recovery Team was set up. Former RFS Commissioner and Member for the Blue Mountains, Phil Koperberg AO AFSM BEM, was appointed to the position of Blue Mountains Bushfire Recovery Coordinator to co-ordinate and lead the recovery and re-building activities for the affected areas.

The Council established recovery committees for buildings, environment, social well-being and economy. They also sought valuable advice from Australian Red Cross and some of the Victorian Councils that experienced the 2009 Black Saturday fires.

A recovery centre opened on 22 October 2013 at the Uniting Church in the Springwood town centre. Government welfare agencies and Council staff were stationed here for several months to manage registration of affected residents and offer a wide range of services.

Short to long-term needs requiring management include mental health support for all ages; programs to retain social cohesion, immediate housing needs, re-building and legal advice; financial support and counselling; increasing demand for medical services; tourism disruption; and co-ordination of clean-up operations.

Donations and Relief

The disaster attracted widespread and international exposure. Relief aid organisations such as Habitat for Humanity, Samaritan's Purse, local churches, Australian Red Cross and Salvation Army were on hand early to assist residents. Unfortunately, the management of large volumes of publicly-donated goods became a challenge for local organisations and the types of goods donated were not always of great value to affected residents. The community sector learnings from this experience were that future disaster communications should advertise 'send money, not goods'.

"Send money, not goods"

An enormous amount of volunteer hours were put into managing donated goods. The largest issue with donated goods, apart from the sorting and date checking required, was the disposal of:

- Rubbish;
- Out-of-date food and beverages;
- Partially-used products (especially personal hygiene products);
- Damaged goods;
- Inappropriate donations; and
- Unusable bulk items.

The disposal of these items came at a significant financial cost.

Following the fires numerous agencies, organisations and individuals came together to support the affected communities through donations of money, time, expertise and goods. Substantial public money was raised for relief aid through the establishment of a Mayoral Relief Fund by the Council. This was a significant initiative benefiting those most in need.

The Mayoral Relief Fund raised a total of \$3.4 million in donations which was collected and the entirety of the funds raised distributed via an independent Committee to the affected communities. Following the Fund's success and substantial positive impact, the Council passed a resolution to establish a Fund in perpetuity, so that it may be utilised in the case of any future natural disaster in the Blue Mountains.

Bushfire Support Programs

The NSW Ministry for Police and Emergency Services (MPES) initiated and engaged the local Gateway Family Services to run the 'Step by Step' bushfire recovery service program. The program provided a direct point of contact to those affected by the fires and helped them through either direct assistance or referrals to relevant organisations. The program's most utilised services were those related to financial support, counselling, goods and services to aid recovery and referrals to Council for further assistance with particular matters.

The whole local community services sector came together efficiently and led agencies, neighbourhood centres and churches to continue supporting psycho-social and recovery aid work to this day.

Building Information

Council, supported by the Rural Fire Service (RFS), established a dedicated re-build service centre providing free, timely and consistent advice, immediately after the October 2013 bushfires. The service operated from the Council's Springwood Office until May 2014. The service was well received with almost 200 bushfire-affected residents seeking advice on development applications to re-build. Council continues to provide the advice to any fire affected residents as required.

"I'm humbled to live in a community, a nation, in which the list of contributors is too great to name."

—Mayor Mark Greenhill

(first anniversary of Blue Mountains bushfires October 2013)

Clean-up Operations

As soon as the immediate impact of the bushfire had passed the clean-up operations began. This was a complex and lengthy activity requiring the participation and co-ordination of a number of organisations.

The fire predominantly occurred in areas of heavy tree coverage, leaving many weakened and destroyed trees in its wake. Given the significant danger these at-risk and dangerous trees posed to the safety of workers and community members, teams from the Australian Defence Force and emergency services organisations were assembled to quickly and safely remove identified trees.

Springwood street mural dedicated to the emergency service agencies and volunteers



The amount of waste created by the fire was substantial – approximately 38,000 tonnes – far more than could be accommodated at the Council's only landfill. This resulted in the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) preparing an Emergency Waste Management Plan, and negotiating for disposal of fire affected waste at Lithgow City Council Waste Management Facility and a private landfill at Kemps Creek.

One of the most dangerous types of waste was newly-exposed asbestos, contained in the damaged homes and buildings. The scale of the asbestos clean-up required was unprecedented in NSW and required the involvement and collaboration of the Council and several State Government agencies, including the NSW Environment Protection Authority, the NSW Ministry of Health, and WorkCover NSW.

An Asbestos Working Group was formed and identified sites of asbestos contamination or risk. NSW Public Works then co-ordinated the application of blue-coloured PVA spray glue to debris on properties identified as potentially being contaminated by asbestos. This enabled easy visual identification, so asbestos areas were not accidentally damaged further. It also prevented further release of asbestos fibres to help make the area safe and reduce the risk of exposure. Air quality monitoring reported that no airborne asbestos fibres were detected during or after this process. The agreements with the private landfill at Kemps Creek and with Lithgow City Council extended to include acceptance of the asbestos-contaminated waste for special disposal.



Tree clearing of a dangerous tree by the National Parks and Wildlife Service

Long-term recovery

Funding and Structure

Mr Koperberg handed over recovery co-ordination to a Council-led Local Recovery Team in March 2014. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Council and the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services was also signed, setting out the implementation of the Community Recovery Fund (CRF) awarded to Council under the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). The CRF funded a Council-led Recovery Team for a period of two years. In addition, \$972,500 was made available to the local community to support social and economic recovery, resilience and preparedness initiatives.

The aim of the Community Recovery Fund is to assist the community and Council to deal with recovery issues as well as developing capabilities, community strengths and business skills so as to minimise the impact of future disasters.

In accordance with the MoU, a recovery governance structure was implemented. The Local Recovery Steering Group had representation from all levels of government and key NGOs. This governance arrangement proved effective in promoting shared responsibility. The Local Recovery Steering Group received progress reports from the Local Community Reference Group (fire affected residents, the local neighbourhood centre, and Principals from affected schools) and the Well-being Sub-committee, representing key recovery workers from local service, church and not for profit organisations.



Members of the Local Recovery Steering Group:

Mayor, (Deputy Mayor)
Nominated Councillors
State Member of Parliament
Federal Member of Parliament
General Manager, BMCC
Director of City Services, BMCC
Red Cross
Ministry of Police and Emergency Services
Dept. of the Premier and Cabinet
Dept. of Education and District Co-ordination
Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise
Recovery Manager
Chair, Local Emergency Management Committee

Council-led Recovery Operations

The Recovery Team established key conduits to recovery support, monitored recovery progress and implemented strategies to improve the preparedness and resilience of the wider-community. The first year of recovery co-ordination focused on high demands for direct customer service and problem solving, establishment of communication methods, committees, contact management and renewal and social programs. The management of the one-year anniversary event was a significant activity. Following the first anniversary, committees became more focused on strategic matters concerning the management of future disasters and building community resilience.

Red Cross – Council Co-working Arrangements

The Council entered into a co-working arrangement with the Red Cross, which enabled their two-year appointed Project Officer to be based at the Recovery Team office in Springwood. This arrangement provided Council with direct access to Red Cross disaster recovery training and resources. Red Cross enabled improved awareness of the importance of psychosocial recovery, needs data through four outreach door-knocks, several 'communicating in recovery' programs, guest speakers from other disasters, publication resources for preparedness and disaster assistance. It also enabled capacity building, of the local community sector and the Council, to respond to future events.



Mayor, Cr Mark Greenhill (right) and Cr Mick Fell, Chair of the Community Reference Group (left)

Salvation Army Long-term Support

The Salvation Army's recovery support was led by the local Lower Blue Mountains Corps. A Community Development Officer has been in place for over two years supporting those impacted to access other services including counselling, financial counselling, employment services, family tracing, liaison with insurers and builders, assisting with statutory declarations, locating and organising replacement documents and conducting enquiries on their behalf.

The Salvation Army Relief and Recovery funds were distributed in phases, which continued until two years after the event. The distribution of funds aimed to support various needs as they arose throughout the phase of recovery. Following the initial allocation of crisis relief funds, phased-in grants were offered (conditions applied). These included support for re-build, home relocation costs, kids, camps, workforce training, respite, counselling, leisure activities, personal restoration (recovery), household preparedness, rental assistances and landscaping for occupancy.

Well-being Health Support

The Nepean-Blue Mountains Medicare Local team, based in Penrith, set-up a psychological support service for individuals in the community experiencing trauma, stress, depression, anxiety, grief and loss. The entity was immediately challenged with building the capacity of health professionals to respond appropriately in a trauma informed manner.

Lions International

The local Lions Project Recovery dedicated funds to provide rebates on development applications and stamp duty, and provision of white goods and tool hire vouchers to families who had totally lost their homes and who are re-building or relocating in the Blue Mountains.

Re-build Advisory Centre with Rural Fire Service

Blue Mountains City Council, with assistance from the NSW Rural Fire Service and Penrith City Council, established a dedicated Rebuild Advisory Centre at its Springwood office to assist fire affected residents with the recovery and rebuilding of homes and properties destroyed in the October 2013 bushfires. The Centre was staffed by development assessment officers/building surveyors together with Rural Fire Service officers providing pre-lodgement advice on development applications, assessment of bushfire attack level (BAL) ratings and expedited processing of development applications and construction certificates for fire affected residents. The average gross processing of applications for the rebuilding of fire affected properties was significantly reduced as a result of this service.

Officers from the Council attended and delivered rebuilding information presentations at a number of public information meetings immediately following the fires. The Council also manned an information display stand at the Blue Mountains Rebuild Expo organised by the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise and held at the Springwood Sports Club on 22 February 2014.

The Council erected a pop-up centre in Springwood to expedite assessment of Development Applications and improve access to building information for Winmalee and Yellow Rock fire-affected residents.

community response

The response from the community was defined by its strength, diversity and the substantial positive impact it had. Countless community groups, organisations and individuals donated their time, skill, funds and expertise to the people and communities affected by the fires. As noted by the Blue Mountains Bushfires Well-being Sub-committee, "It is impossible to over-emphasise the centrality of local community sector organisations, and community services more broadly, to disaster/emergency recovery. No relief and recovery effort, let alone longer-term individual and community renewal, can be effectively undertaken without the active participation and engagement of these services."

The emergency preparedness capability of the Well-being Committee grew throughout the co-ordinated effort. Community resilience development work has continued to be led by the peak body for the local community services sector, Mountains Community Resource Network. They published their own "lessons learned" report, highlighting areas of opportunity for improved co-ordination with the community sector.

These include evacuation centres; recovery centres; place-based recovery responses; communications; donated goods and services; and supporting the supporters.

In response to their identified needs the Local Emergency Management Committee established a new Local Recovery and Resilience Sub-committee to incorporate the aspects of community well-being.

October 2015 Community Survey on key challenges faced (highest to lowest)

1. Dealing with re-building
2. Making decisions for the future
3. Financial management
4. The Class Action
5. Work/career
6. Health
7. Handling information
8. Finding another house to buy
8. Family Relationships, including partner
9. Dealing with Blue Mountains City Council
10. Social relationships
11. Dealing with recovery services and organisations
12. Other
13. State Government response
14. Federal Government response
15. Education

Community Response Highlights

The Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre held a series of eight information seminars, titled Insurance: A Burning Issue. These seminars informed affected residents on how to navigate their way through the insurance claims process. They featured guest speakers with expertise in insurance matters, Council staff, and residents sharing their experiences.

The Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise was also heavily involved in the recovery efforts, including economic impact assessments and advice to affected businesses. Their flagship project was the creation, organisation and implementation of the National Bushfire Building Conference and Expo, a two-day event. The Conference brought together over 160 professionals from the building, design and planning industries to discuss and develop innovations for building in bushfire-prone areas. The Expo was a community event attended by over 1,500 people and designed to showcase leading products and services necessary for bushfire prone homes. It also acted as a community forum featuring various presentations and discussions, all aimed at equipping community members with the information they needed to build or re-build in a bushfire zone.



Re-build Expo held in 2014

This conference is Australia's only national forum focused on exploring best practice building for bushfire-prone areas. It was established by the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise with the aim of becoming an ongoing event. It aims to be a vehicle for the strategic development of a centre of excellence in bushfire building and design in the Blue Mountains.

Resilience and Preparedness Group

The Well-being Group initiated a Resilience and Preparedness Working Group. This community-led group were highly successful in 2014 in securing grant funds to initiate resilience and preparedness programs. They ran, often in partnership with Red Cross and Rural Fire Services, programs, which included Meet Your Street, More than A Fire Plan, Heads up for Fire, and volunteer upskilling and preparedness workshops for community organisations. The group continue to operate today with the assistance of the Mountains Community Resource Network.

Rate of Re-building

Two years after the fires 47% of the 197 homes destroyed have had new Construction Certificates issued and 117 new dwelling applications have been approved. The progress of re-building will go on for many more years. By the second year of recovery there was a growing need to support landowners with landscaping advice for bushfire prone areas. Faith-based and community service organisations and TAFE provided physical and financial support to complete landscape works.

"I don't think any of us will recover completely from the bushfires. They profoundly changed us and we are still feeling post-trauma symptoms. My husband and I feel 'lost' and have no motivation to do things. The children are coping well, but my youngest child is scared to travel away from home."



—Affected Resident








blue mountains natural disasters a snapshot of the last 4 years




2012

Date	Disaster Type	Affected Area	Impact
October 2012	 Snow	Upper Blue Mountains	Widespread tree damage, closure of the Great Western Highway, Bells Line of Road, local roads, and railway line. Impacts lasted less than 24 hours.
December 2012	 Fire	Kedumba Walls, Wentworth Falls	540 hectares of Blue Mountains National Park burnt. Fire located 15km south of Wentworth Falls, took a week to contain.




2013

Date	Disaster Type	Affected Area	Impact
March 2013	 Flood	Wentworth Falls	Homes around Sinclair Crescent were affected by water, and a number of bush walkers were briefly stranded.
September 2013	 Fire	Winmalee to Hawkesbury Heights	Strong winds fanned a Hazard Reduction, causing it to break containment lines. Fire caused property damage, including extensive damage to gardens and personal property. No homes lost.
October 2013	 Fire	Springwood, Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Mount Victoria, Bell, Mount Wilson	197 homes destroyed, thousands of residents affected. The worst natural disaster in the history of the Blue Mountains. See feature article for more information.

2014

Date	Disaster Type	Affected Area	Impact
October 2014	 Snow	Upper Blue Mountains	Closure of the Great Western Highway, Bells Line of Road, and the Darling Causeway. Impacts lasted less than 24 hours.
November 2014	 Fire	Cahill's Lookout, Katoomba	One home destroyed, extensive damage to visitor infrastructure at the lookout. The fire took a week to contain.
November 2014	 Fire	Warrimoo to Blaxland	Closure of the Great Western Highway and rail line for several hours.

2015

Date	Disaster Type	Affected Area	Impact
March 2015	 Storm	Springwood to Falconbridge	Widespread damage to homes and vehicles from large hailstones.
July 2015	 Snow	Middle to Upper Blue Mountains	Extended closures of Great Western Highway and Bells Line of Road. Transport routes closed overnight and in following days, due to hazardous driving conditions.
July-August 2015	 Fire	Wentworth Falls	Fire in inaccessible area, burned for two days before strong winds fanned the blaze, impacting homes in Wentworth Falls. Minor property damage. Fire took a week to contain.

together



civic leadership



civic leadership

inspiring leadership

together we lead

A sustainable city has inspiring civic leadership, which includes all levels of government, community and business providing leadership, and acting in the broader interests of the community.

It embraces leadership in public affairs and human actions affecting the whole community.

It aspires to transform local communities into better places for all residents to live.

values, aspirations and aims

We value our inspirational civic and community leadership whose stewardship and decision-making benefits present and future Blue Mountains residents.

Our leaders work effectively with the community and other agencies to achieve a more sustainable Blue Mountains, environmentally, socially and economically.



objectives

- Objective 6.1** The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability
 - Objective 6.2** The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership
 - Objective 6.3** The community is informed, consulted and engaged
 - Objective 6.4** The Council provides value for money services
 - Objective 6.5** The Council, other levels of government and the community work together to implement Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025
 - Objective 6.6** Sustainable services, assets and infrastructure are provided in the City
-

challenges and opportunities

- Other levels of government and the community working with the Council to implement the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan;
- Continuing to strengthen the financial sustainability of the Council through implementing the Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability, ensuring NSW Government Fit for the Future targets are met by 2020;
- Continue strengthening the Council's skills, capacity and systems for sustainably managing over \$1 billion worth of built assets and significant natural assets;
- Many NSW councils, including Blue Mountains City Council, have not been able to fund required built infrastructure renewal and maintenance due to the following:
 - Costs increasing greater than revenue;
 - While Local Government is responsible for delivering approximately 36% of the nation's infrastructure it only receives approximately 3% of national taxation revenue;
 - Constrained capacity for local government to increase rate revenue as a result of NSW Government-imposed rate pegging over the past 38 years, limiting the amount by which councils can increase their rates – irrespective of the amount real costs have risen; and
 - Significant additional cost burdens from the shifting of responsibilities from Federal and State Governments to Local Government without corresponding funding.
- Continuing to ensure effective engagement and consultation of the community in civic and City matters; and
- The Council continuing its focus on reviewing its service delivery and resource allocation to ensure value for money and maximising outcomes for the community.

Progress Measures

Civic Leadership

These are the measures we agreed would tell us if progress is moving in the right direction for Civic Leadership.

This report shows targets met or not met, as well as those that have remained steady at the 2012 performance level. The following table shows the 2012–2016 results. The Data Sheets referenced below provide the trend data supporting the outcomes.

✓ Target Met ➔ Performance Maintained ✗ Target Not Met

Civic Leadership				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
6.1 The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability	Council's Long-term Financial Plan (LTFP) performance measures including:			
	– Operating Result (including capital and excluding depreciation)	Improve against LTFP annual targets set (see Data sheet)	✓	DS 088
	– Operating Result (excluding capital and Including depreciation)	Improve against LTFP annual targets set (see Data sheet)	✓	DS 088
	– Unrestricted current ratio	Ratio of 1.5 or better	✓	DS 089
	– Debt service ratio	< 10%	✓	DS 090
	– Rates and annual charges coverage	> 40%	✓	DS 091
	– Building and infrastructure renewal ratio	Improve against LTFP annual targets set (see Data sheet)	✗	DS 092
	External grant funding obtained by the Council that supports implementation of the Community Strategic Plan	Increase	✓	DS 149
6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership	Council Annual Community Survey measures for:			
	– Overall community satisfaction with Council performance	Increase	✓	DS 095
	– Overall community satisfaction with Councillor performance	Increase	✓	DS 095
	– Overall community satisfaction with staff performance	Increase	➔	DS 095
	– Perception of overall value for money against services received	Increase	✓	DS 116

Civic Leadership				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership	Council's Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) performance measures including:			
	– Quality of Leadership	Increase	✓	DS 094
	– Overall Community satisfaction Council performance	Increase	✓	DS 095
	– Delivery Plan outcomes achieved	90%	✓	DS 096
	– Employee satisfaction	Increase	✓	DS 097
	– Workplace injuries	Decrease	✓	DS 098
	– Workers compensation premium costs	\$500,000 by 2023 On target	✓	DS 099
	– Employee retention	95% by 2023 This target has been achieved in 2014/15	✓	DS 100
	– Employee attendance	98% by 2023 On target	✓	DS 101
6.3 The community is informed, consulted and engaged	Satisfaction with level of Council information provided and consultation implemented	Increase	✓	DS 136
6.5 The Council, other levels of government and the community work together to implement Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025	BM Service Inter-agency established and meeting on a regular basis	Establish	✗	Not Applicable
6.6 Sustainable services, assets and infrastructure are provided in the City	Implementation of the Council's Asset Management Strategy including:			
	– Asset Management Improvement Plan	Annual actions/ targets achieved	✓	Not Applicable
	– Condition of assets	Improve	✗	Not Available

Achievement Highlights

Civic Leadership

Civic Leadership – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 6.1 The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability

Over the past four years the Council has significantly strengthened its financial sustainability through implementing its adopted Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability.

This is evidenced by the Council being assessed as “Fit for the Future” by the independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) – one of only seven councils in Metropolitan Sydney – in November 2015. The Council was deemed to have satisfied set criteria relative to financial sustainability, efficiency, infrastructure and service management, with specific benchmarks to be met by 2019–2020.



See Data Sheets:

DS 088 Operating Result

DS 089 Unrestricted Current Ratio

DS 090 Debt Service Ratio

DS 091 Rate of Annual Charges Ratio





Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.1 The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability

Strengthened the financial sustainability of the Council through implementing the Long-term Financial Plan and its strategies

Substantial progress in implementing each of the Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability with detailed reporting In Annual Reports. In summary, the Council has:

1. Avoided Shocks

- Through sound long-term financial planning; and
- Having \$30.4 million (June 2016) in secured investments to fund future commitments and hedge against risks.

2. Balanced the Budget

- Over 10 years of balanced cash budgets with small end of year surplus;
- Over \$15 million in savings achieved over the past four years from cost reduction and efficiency initiatives; and
- Steady progress being made In reducing deficit Operating Result (including depreciation and excluding grants) and on track to achieve surplus result by 2020.

3. Managed Borrowings Responsibly

- Borrowed responsibly within Local Government industry standards to fund essential infrastructure that supports community and inter-generational equity; and
- Borrowing reduction plan is on target – \$45.9 million (as at 30 June 2016) reducing to \$16.8 million by 2024.

4. Increased Income

- Successfully implemented a two-stage approach in close consultation with community for increasing income through community endorsement for two special rate variations in 2013 and 2015;
- Over \$5.8 million in additional income over past four years from Tourism Parks, commercial property and investment fund; and
- Over \$40 million in grant funding received for key infrastructure projects.

5. Reviewed and Adjusted Services

- Continually reviewed services to increase revenue, reduce costs and provide best possible services to community, within available funding, including, for example: Light Vehicle Fleet; Resource Recovery and Waste Management; Sealing of Unsealed Roads; Tourist Parks and Visitor Information Centres.

Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.1 The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability

Strengthened the financial sustainability of the Council through implementing the Long-term Financial Plan and its strategies

6. Increased Advocacy and Partnerships

- Formed a Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith and Hawkesbury councils to achieve cost-savings and enhanced advocacy and regional planning outcomes;
- Increased advocacy to other levels of government for a fair share of funding, and reduced cost-shifting and built partnerships to achieve positive outcomes for the Blue Mountains;
- Successfully advocated to the State Government on bushfire recovery, the Draft Local Environmental Plan 2015, 2015 community-endorsed Special Rate Variation, the sewerage pump-out subsidy, the Destination NSW Tourism Forum and the Community Bi-centennial Crossing events; and
- Advocated to State and Federal Government representatives on the inadequacy of the Environmental Impact Assessment and community engagement processes for the proposed Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek.

Completed 10-year Environment Levy program using the levy to leverage further grant funds, achieving best value from community funding to restore and protect the natural environment. Over \$4.6 million in additional grant funding obtained over the 10 years of the program.

Engaged with the community to achieve affordable and acceptable levels of service – including further rate variations to enable delivery of priority projects

“Whole of City” community engagement processes were implemented in 2012 and 2014 on options for achieving affordable and acceptable levels of service. As a result of these engagement processes, successful special rate variation applications were made to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in 2013 and 2015.

In 2012, community endorsement was obtained for implementing a one-year on-going special rate variation to fund asset maintenance and renewal works for roads, stormwater, park facilities and playgrounds.

In 2014, community endorsement was obtained, through the Resourcing Our Future engagement process, for implementing a four-year special rate variation to stop the decline in the City's \$1 billion worth of built assets, improve built infrastructure, improve emergency preparedness and response, and continue to protect the environment.

In 2015, the Council resolved to implement a new green bin service following an extensive community engagement process. Over 9,000 submissions were received confirming high support for the introduction of green bins to collect garden organics fortnightly.



Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.1 The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability

Facilitated and sought the contribution of other levels of government to resourcing implementation of the Community Strategic Plan

Examples of major State and Federal grants successfully obtained since 2009 that are supporting achievement of key objectives of the Community Strategic Plan include:

- Over \$2.5 million in environmental grants;
- \$9.5 million to upgrade the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood;
- \$5.9 million to relocate and upgrade the Lawson Town Centre due to the widening of the Great Western Highway;
- \$5 million to build the regional Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, new Katoomba Library and Civic Centre;
- \$3.5 million for the development of the Blue Mountains Business Park in Lawson; and
- Over \$4 million in State and Federal grant funding to revitalise Katoomba Falls precinct and the Southern Scenic Escarpment.

Identified and implemented innovative and creative solutions to strengthen the financial sustainability of the Council and the City

Initiated a Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith and Hawkesbury councils to achieve cost-savings and enhanced advocacy and regional planning outcomes

Implemented a range of initiatives/reviews to identify innovative ways of reducing costs, while maintaining and improving service delivery, including, for example:

- Investing in a heated pool enclosure at Glenbrook Swim Centre to enable year-round swimming and classes, and generating additional on-going annual revenue;
- Implementing the sealing of unsealed roads program resulting in improved service levels for residents and reduced annual maintenance costs;
- Obtaining additional revenue from contracting the Roads and Maritime Service (RMS) to be part of the Council's front counter "one stop shop"; and
- Establishing a Property Disposal and Investment Program to accumulate income from land and property for re-investment and capital purposes.

Civic Leadership – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership

Over the past four years the Council has implemented a range of initiatives and programs to strengthen its civic leadership and governance. Particular focus has been given to:

- Refreshing the Council's Vision, Mission and Values;
- Improving organisational decision-making within an enterprise risk framework, and strengthening audit and risk processes;
- Taking a neutral stance on whether or not to proceed with special rate variations, and instead being guided by the views of the community – evidenced through results of comprehensive engagement processes;
- Strengthening integrated planning and reporting to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Council and the City of Blue Mountains;

- Completing an audit and review of existing policy;
- Supporting the professional development of Councillors and staff;
- Implementing the Council's Workforce Management Strategy; and
- Reforming the rating structure, whilst ensuring hardship support mechanisms are in place for ratepayers experiencing financial hardship.

Results of independently-conducted annual community surveys show a steady increase in community satisfaction with the overall performance of the Council and Councillors. There has also been a steady increase, since 2011, in resident perceptions that they are getting value for money from rates paid.

Major decisions of the Council, such as deciding to apply for the 2015 Resourcing Our Future Special Rate Variation, demonstrate how the Council is endeavouring to work in partnership with the community to make evidence-based decisions in a fair and transparent manner.

See Data Sheet:

DS 095 Community Satisfaction with Council

Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership

Implemented initiatives to further strengthen effective and efficient corporate governance, including enterprise risk management, safe work practices, access to information, legal and compliance activities

Ensured decision-making processes are open, transparent, accountable and informed by sound integrated planning

Engaged employees in the update and development of the Council's Vision, Mission and Values.

Commenced implementation of the Safety Improvement project in 2015–2016 as a major Business Improvement Program initiative.

Strengthened risk management by establishing a risk management development program and framework. A comprehensive program is being implemented to support the maturity of the organisation in continuously improving its decision-making processes using a risk management approach.

Since 2015, an annual internal audit action plan has been developed and implemented that addresses identified priority risk areas.

Established an "External" Audit Committee to strengthen governance and enterprise risk management.

The Council has focused over the past four years on good corporate governance, including regular updates to policies such as the Internal Audit Policy, the Privacy Management Plan and the Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy, and improving the delegation and complaint management systems.

A review and update of existing Council policies was significantly progressed in 2015 to confirm relevance, ensure alignment between policies and identify policy gaps.

All reports to the Council include a "Sustainability Assessment" of any proposed recommendations relative to their environmental, social, economic and civic leadership impact, as well as a financial and legal impact assessment.

Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership

<p>Ensured the Council operates in a business-like manner, and supported transparent and fair allocation of resources and best value services and facilities</p>	<p>Internal audits have been implemented to strengthen business practices and processes in key areas, including, for example: tender and procurement; crisis management; payroll; accounts payable; resource recovery and waste management; and electronic records management.</p> <p>A Best Value Councillor Advisory Group (comprising all Councillors) was established to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and guide where money was spent to get the best long-term value; • Identify initiatives and innovations that could reduce net long-term operating and maintenance costs; and • Provide guidance and direction on engaging community on how the Council will live within its means. <p>Through this initiative, services have been reviewed and business efficiencies identified. Priority focus has been given to “best value” assessment of proposed expenditure to ensure community outcomes are maximised in the most cost-effective and efficient way. A best value approach is guiding the allocation of funding in the Council’s four and one year Asset Works Program.</p> <p>“Best Value” decision making criteria and principles were adopted to guide significant Council and organisational decision making to support achievement of a “Fit for the Future” Council.</p>
<p>Supported the professional development of elected Councillors in fulfilling their leadership roles and meeting their statutory responsibilities</p>	<p>Over the past four years Councillors have been provided with professional development and training opportunities to ensure they are supported in fulfilling their leadership roles.</p> <p>Every year since 2012, Councillors have participated in a strategic workshop to set the direction of the Council and define priorities and outcomes for the year and the four-year term of the Council.</p> <p>The leadership that the Council has provided has seen successful outcomes for the Local Environmental Plan 2015, the special rate variations obtained in 2013 and 2015, and the Council being assessed as Fit for the Future by the NSW State Government.</p> <p>The performance of the Council against its 2013–2017 Delivery Program commitments is summarised at the front of this report.</p>
<p>Completed the reform of the Blue Mountains rating structure to achieve a more fair, broadly uniform and less complex rating system</p>	<p>A major reform of the rating structure, implemented over a three-year period to lessen the effects of changes on impacted ratepayers, has ensured rating structures are simple and fair, broadly uniform and compliant with the Local Government Act 1993.</p> <p>This reform involved the compression of the highest and lowest ad valorem rates within the Residential and Business categories, moving towards a single rate and a single category for each by 2014–2015.</p>

Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership

Implemented the Council's Workforce Management Strategy to ensure a highly safe, skilled and engaged workforce delivering service aligned to the Council's Vision, Mission and Values

Over the past four years good progress has been made in implementing the five Priority Focus Areas of the Workforce Management Strategy (WMS), including:

Priority Focus 1 – Safe and Healthy:

- Business Improvement Program;
- Workforce Safety Improvement Project being implemented;
- Work Life Balance Program being developed;
- Workforce Well-being Program being developed; and
- Injury Management Process enhanced.

Priority Focus 2 – Skilled and Responsive

- Trainee, Apprentice and Cadet Program developed and being implemented;
- Employee Development Program being implemented;
- Employee Development Plans implemented; and
- Management Development Program implemented.

Priority Focus 3 – Committed and Engaged

- Workforce values and behaviours developed and implemented;
- Leadership Development Program developed and implemented;
- Workforce Participation Strategy developed and implemented;
- Reward and Recognition Program reviewed; and
- Whole of organisation "Team Brief" process introduced.

Priority Focus 4 – Systems and Processes

- Safety Management System reviewed and under development;
- Payroll services reviewed and improved;
- Learning management system developed and implemented; and
- Equal Employment and Opportunity Management Plan developed.

Priority Focus 5 – Plan and Review

- Workforce Management Strategy (WMS) progress tracked and reported;
- Annual employee survey conducted and results used to inform organisational improvements;
- People metrics regularly reported; and
- Workforce profiles developed.



Achievement Highlights

Civic Leadership

Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.2 The Council provides transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership

Implemented the legislatively required Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and tracked progress of the Council and of the City

Since 2010, the Council has continued to strengthen its response to meeting requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, meeting requirements for:

- Engaging community on the update of the 10-year Community Strategic Plan;
- Developing a 10-year Resourcing Strategy to support targeted implementation of the Community Strategic Plan over time;
- Developing a four-year Delivery Program and a one-year Operational Plan;
- Assessed progress in implementing the Delivery Program and Operational Plan through quarterly reporting to the Council; and
- Assessing progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan through four-yearly State of City and End of Council Term reporting, as evidenced by this report.

Managed Council information in a strategic, integrated and accessible way to support effective and efficient service delivery

Commenced a review and major update of the Council's website to improve its performance in providing information and supporting Council service delivery

Strengthened the Council's integrated information management through establishing a Corporate Communications and Marketing section and developing an organisational approach to corporate communications, community engagement and marketing.

Completed a review of the Council's electronic records management in 2016. This included a review of existing record management practices and capabilities across the organisation.



Civic Leadership – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 6.3 The community is informed, consulted and engaged

In accordance with its Community Consultation Policy, the Council implemented a range of initiatives over the last four years to inform, consult and pro-actively engage with the community.

In 2014, the community was engaged on options for Resourcing Our Future, resulting in 4,312 submissions from the community following implementation of a range of consultative engagement and information processes. In 2015, engagement of residents on resource recovery and waste management options, including a possible green bin service, resulted in over 9,000 submissions.

The high level of community participation in these processes reflects the readiness and desire of the Blue Mountains community to be engaged and consulted on important matters.





Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.3 The community is informed, consulted and engaged

Ensured the community has access to relevant information and opportunities to be engaged and consulted on decisions, policies and plans that affect them

Implemented comprehensive “whole of City” community engagement processes on three major issues including:

- Options for Resourcing Our Future;
- Local Environment Plan 2015; and
- Household waste and recycling services – Have Your Say on a Green Bin.

The Council uses both traditional and innovative communication and engagement methods to ensure every community member has the opportunity to be informed and can find out more in the easiest and most convenient ways. These include:

- Council Meetings and Councillor Briefings;
- The Blue Mountains City Council website;
- The quarterly newsletter “News from the Hill” sent to all ratepayers;
- The Blue Mountains Gazette;
- Community forums, workshops and public meetings;
- Resident and ratepayer surveys of representative samples of the population;
- Public exhibitions of plans and project initiatives; and
- The Blue Mountains Have Your Say website.

The Blue Mountains Have Your Say website is a new online forum for the community to provide feedback to the Council on key projects, initiatives and issues. At any time residents can go to this website to see current consultations, find out more and make a contribution.

Every year the Council’s customer service responds to 85,000+ calls, serves 28,000 customers, answers 19,000 pieces of correspondence within 15 business days, and deals with 12,000+ customer service requests for everything from fixing a pothole to removing graffiti.

Implemented the council’s Consultation Policy and ensured methods of consultation used were appropriate and, where necessary, included representative engagement in order that the voice of the broader community could be heard

The Council’s consultation has been implemented by staff with a wide range of information, consultation and engagement processes being used.

Since 2009, the Council has been undertaking an independent telephone survey of randomly selected residents. This survey, which is now conducted every two years (previously conducted annually), asks a range of consistent questions to assess community priorities and satisfaction with the Council’s service delivery.

Results of the Community Survey inform the Council’s service delivery planning. Many of the Progress Measures in this report are derived from this survey.

Representative community engagement processes, including a range of statistically significant community and ratepayer surveys, have been used to inform decision-making of the Council on special rate variation options.

Achievement Highlights

Civic Leadership

Civic Leadership – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 6.4 The Council provides value for money services

Feedback from the Blue Mountains community tells us that resident's perception of the value for money they receive from Council services is steadily increasing.

This Community Survey result reflects on the Council's high level commitment to continuously improving and reviewing service delivery to ensure value for money, and the achievement of cost savings, efficiencies and additional income, where possible, while maximising outcomes for the community.

See Data Sheet:

DS 116 Community Perceived Value for Rates Paid



Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.4 The Council provides value for money services

<p>Reviewed Council services on a regular basis to ensure value for money and relevance in meeting community needs</p>	<p>Over the last four years the Council has continued to review its service delivery. Service review examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the management and operation of the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility, resulting in the Council taking back management of this facility from a contractor, with an immediate saving of \$100,000 and estimated annual on-going savings of more than \$100,000; • Review of the Council's Bulky Waste Collection Service resulted in a more responsive "booked" service better suited to meeting the needs of residents with on-going annual savings of more than \$50,000; • Review of costs associated with maintaining gravel roads, resulting in a permanent sealing program with annual on-going savings and improved levels of service for residents; • Review of the Council's vehicle fleet in 2014–2015, reducing the fleet by 13 vehicles with annual on-going cost reductions and savings; • Review and renovation of the Council's Tourist Parks at Blackheath and Katoomba, resulting in increased bookings, improved customer satisfaction and increased net return to the Council; and • Review of the Visitor Information Centres, resulting in annual losses of more than \$200,000 being turned into small annual profits. <p>The Council adopted the "BMCC Best Value Service Framework: Guidelines for Achieving Best Value Services that Meet Community Needs" in June 2013.</p> <p>Following a review of this framework in 2015, a revised version of these guidelines was adopted by the Council in November 2015.</p> <p>Improved tracking of continuous improvement, cost saving and income generating initiatives, with the development of an in-house database to capture initiatives and estimated savings.</p>
<p>Implemented strategic procurement to achieve cost savings and improved governance</p>	<p>Implemented a strategic procurement program to achieve cost savings.</p> <p>Initiatives under this program have included a Light Vehicle Fleet Review, an Energy Aggregation Review, and a review of Asphalt and Associated Products – with over \$500,000 annual cost savings achieved.</p>
<p>Strengthened continuous improvement of service delivery and supporting business systems</p>	<p>Established a "whole of organisation" Business Improvement Program area which will project manage implementation of a rolling program of business improvements, with initial focus to be given to improving workforce safety and improving the Council's procurement process.</p>

Civic Leadership – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 6.5 The Council, other levels of government and the community work together to implement Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025

The Council, other levels of government and the community have worked together over the past four years in a range of ways to deliver positive outcomes for the Blue Mountains.

Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.5 The Council, other levels of government and the community work together to implement Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025

Improved planning and coordination between government and non-government agencies to support implementation of the Community Strategic Plan	<p>The Blue Mountains Local Emergency Management Committee is chaired by the Council and involves many stakeholders, including government departments and non-government organisations, involved in land management and emergency services within the City. It is responsible for preparing a Local Emergency Management Plan.</p>
	<p>The Council implemented a State Agency Forum in March 2016 to obtain input from state agency representatives into the update of the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan. Over 20 agencies attended and provided valuable input in consultation with key Council staff.</p>
Harnessed the skills and capacity of the broader community to support implementation of the Community Strategic Plan	<p>The Council has continued to harness the skills of the wider community in a range of ways including, for example, the contribution of volunteers to Bushcare, Trackcare, Swampcare, Landcare and Streamwatch.</p>
Support establishment of a local inter-agency to facilitate coordination and collaboration between heads of key Blue Mountains service providers	<p>The Council has not yet progressed establishment of a local agency forum with heads of different key service providers.</p>
	<p>The Blue Mountains Community Inter-agency is a regular forum established by the Mountains Community Resource Network comprising key stakeholders of the local community services sector including community organisations, charities and local government service providers.</p> <p>The Council provides a small amount of funding to resource the inter-agency through the Community Assistance Program.</p>



Achievement Highlights

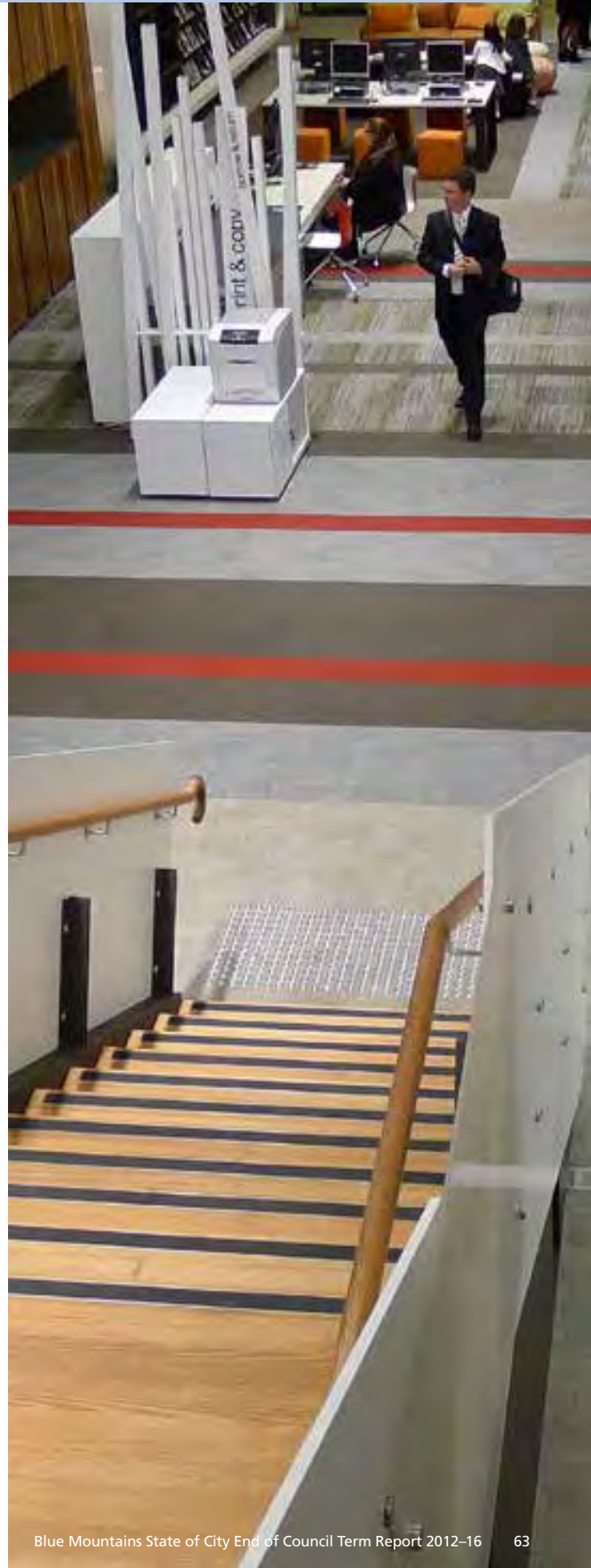
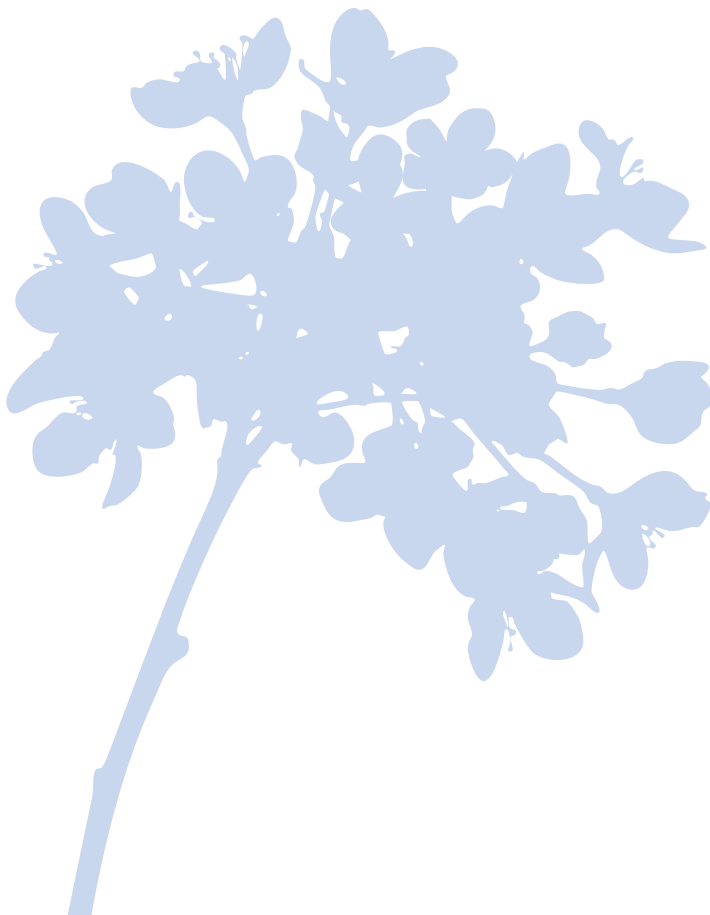
Civic Leadership

Civic Leadership – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 6.6 Sustainable services, assets and infrastructure are provided in the City

The Council is committed to responsibly managing the maintenance and renewal of its \$1 billion worth of built assets and extensive invaluable natural assets, within available resources.

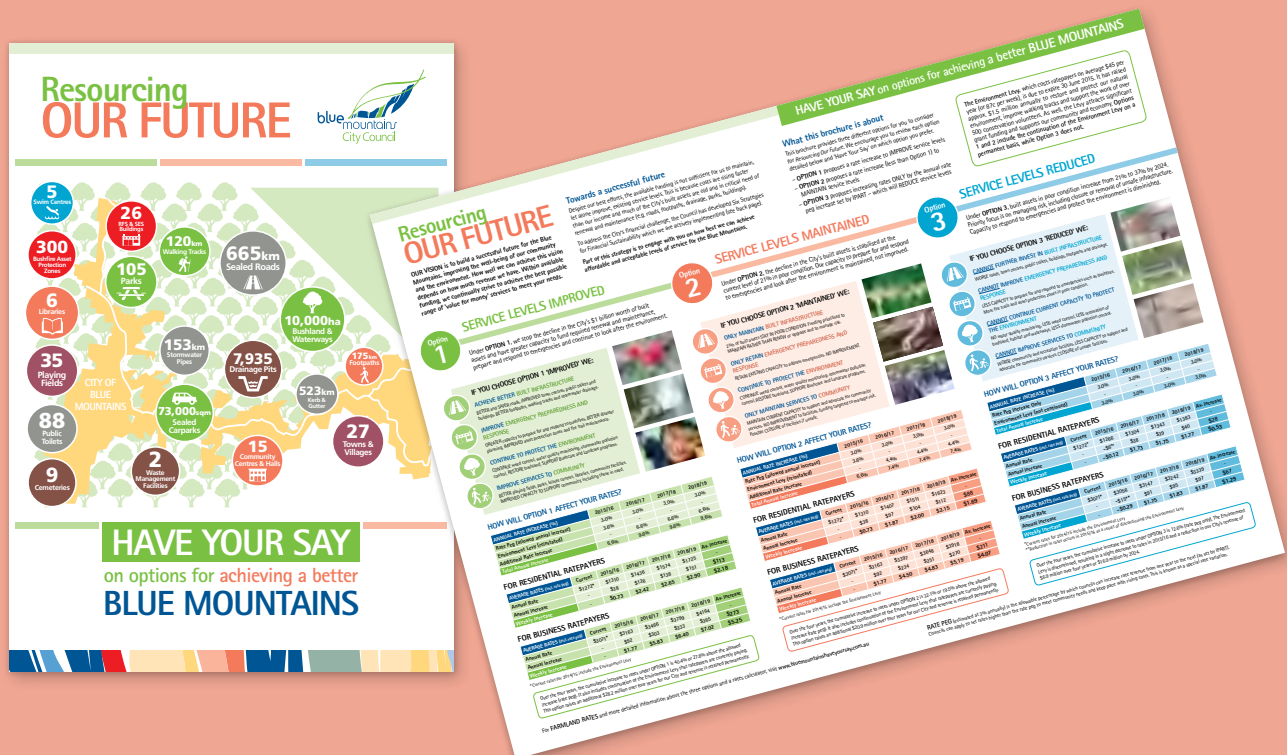
Over the past four years the Council has given major focus to improving and strengthening asset management and funding. The approval of the special rate variations in 2013 and 2015 will provide required additional funding to reverse the decline in the City's built infrastructure and maintain natural assets.



Civic Leadership – Key Council Contributions

Objective 6.6 Sustainable services, assets and infrastructure are provided in the City

Supported and advocated for the development of required services, facilities, infrastructure and technology solutions to achieve our Community Strategic Plan	<p>The Resourcing Our Future community engagement process implemented in 2014 resulted in a successful application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in 2015 for a four-year rate increase.</p>
	<p>The Council has worked with relevant agencies and organisations to advocate for timely provision of National Broadband Network service for Blue Mountains residents and businesses.</p>
	<p>More than \$40 million in grant funding has been obtained since 2009 to support the development of required infrastructure and facilities to revitalise the Blue Mountains and meet the needs of the community and the environment.</p>
Implemented the Council's Asset Management Strategy, Policy and Plans to support responsible management of built and natural assets within available resources	<p>The Council's Asset Management Strategy, Policy and Plans were updated in 2014–2015 to support the Council's community engagement process on Resourcing Our Future and the 2015 special rate variation arising from this process.</p> <p>An Asset Management Improvement Plan has been developed and is being implemented in stages. Initial focus of this plan has been on completing an assessment of the condition of built and natural assets, developing a schedule of required on-going monitoring and inspection of assets, improving the asset register data, reviewing and, where possible, enhancing the adequacy of existing asset management data capture systems.</p>
	<p>Priority focus in 2016–2017 is being directed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring adequate investment in sustainable asset management; • Commencing work on planning for future asset needs for the City; • Implementing "best value" decision-making on the allocation of funding for the Asset Works Program; and • Progressing spatial mapping of the status of Council-owned assets across the City.
Advocated for the City of Blue Mountains to continue to be identified as a distinct region to support and promote the unique character and values of the Blue Mountains	<p>The Council made submissions to the State Government on the Review of Local Government and the Review of Local Council Fit for the Future Proposals which expressed the Council's desire and case for remaining as a distinct region and stand-alone council.</p>
	<p>As a result of the Council's Fit for the Future submission to the NSW State Government, in November 2015 Blue Mountains City Council was assessed as being Fit for the Future and was able to remain as a stand-alone council.</p>



Resourcing Our Future

The Resourcing Our Future engagement process resulted in community endorsement for a special rate variation to achieve better infrastructure, improve emergency preparedness and response and continue to protect the environment.

This successful application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in 2015 for a rate increase provides needed additional funding to ensure built assets are able to be maintained and improved in line with community expectations.

Without this additional revenue, the Council forecast that the proportion of built assets in poor condition would increase from 21% in 2015 to 37% by 2024.

Due, however, to community endorsement in 2014, through the Resourcing Our Future engagement process, the Council is now able to use this funding to stop the decline in the City's \$1 billion worth of built assets, improve our emergency preparedness and response, and continue to protect our valued World Heritage natural environment.

Thank you to the Blue Mountains community for supporting our efforts to protect, improve and maintain our valued assets and environment for future generations.

together



looking after environment



looking after environment

an environmentally responsible city

together we protect

An environmentally responsible city is concerned with the human impact on the natural environment and how resources are used. The natural environment is valued for its intrinsic nature and role in maintaining all forms of life.

With an awareness of global and local issues, the City respects, conserves and restores the environment and avoids development in areas that are ecologically sensitive or prone to natural hazards.

The importance of retaining natural areas within the urban footprint, including open space for active and passive recreation, is understood.

values, aspirations and aims

We value our surrounding bushland and the World Heritage National Park.

Recognising that the Blue Mountains natural environment is dynamic and changing, we look after and enjoy the healthy creeks and waterways, diverse flora and fauna and clean air.

Living in harmony with the environment, we care for the ecosystems and habitats that support life in the bush and in our backyards.

We aim to conserve energy and the natural resources we use and reduce environmental impacts by living sustainably.

By 2025, we are a more environmentally responsible City.



objectives

Objective 1.1 The health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat and ecosystems are maintained

Objective 1.2 The health of waterways and water catchments is maintained

Objective 1.3 City activities contribute to a healthy atmosphere and resilience and adaptation to climate change

Objective 1.4 Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way

Objective 1.5 The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Blue Mountains World Heritage environment

challenges and opportunities

- Managing development to minimise impacts on the environment including those impacts associated with development, land clearing, pollution, weeds, feral and domesticated animals, groundwater extraction and disruption, sewage overflows, the release of effluent and chemicals into streams and the interface between urban and natural areas;
- Ensuring the Council's Local Environment Plan continues to protect the City's village character and natural environment;
- Managing urban runoff amidst the challenging geography of the Blue Mountains, where ridge top towns and villages drain to sensitive downstream environments within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWH) and drinking water storages;
- Climate changes influencing the resilience of our natural systems and changing the patterns of bushfire, storm and snow events;
- Protecting biodiversity in one of the most bushfire-prone areas of Australia;
- Fostering social and economic well-being while protecting the GBMWH;
- Managing our water as a valuable environmental and social resource;
- Lifting water quality outcomes requires consideration of alternative technologies such as Water Sensitive Urban Design;
- Improving the sustainability of the city through reduced carbon emissions and reducing and avoiding waste;
- Extending the life of the landfill available locally at the Blaxland Waste Management facility; and
- Potential development of the Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek and its possible adverse impact on quality of life and on the World Heritage Blue Mountains environment and its internationally recognised natural values.

















Progress Measures

Looking After Environment

These are the measures we agreed would tell us if progress is moving in the right direction for *Looking After Environment*.

This report shows targets met or not met, as well as those that have remained steady at the 2012 performance level. The following table shows the 2012–2016 results. The Data Sheets referenced below provide the trend data supporting the outcomes.

 Target Met
  Performance Maintained
  Target Not Met

Looking After Environment				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
1.1 The health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat and ecosystems are maintained	Area of Council-managed native habitat restored subject to active restoration or rehabilitation	Increase		Not Available
	Hours of participation in Council-sponsored community environmental conservation programs	Increase		DS 004
	Gap between community satisfaction and Importance with respect to natural environment	Decrease the gap		DS 135
	Condition of natural assets managed by the Council	Maintain		Not Available
1.2 The health of waterways and water catchments is maintained	The number of urban water monitoring sites with quality ratings of 'good' to 'very good'	Increase		DS 009
	Gap between community satisfaction and importance ratings for clean creeks and waterways	Decrease the gap		DS 033
1.3 City activities contribute to a healthy atmosphere and resilience and adaptation to climate change	Estimated greenhouse gas emissions from waste facilities	Decrease	Unknown	Not Available
	Blue Mountains community greenhouse gas emissions estimated from energy consumption	Decrease		DS 003
	Length of bike path/pedestrian links within and between towns	Increase		DS 029
	Number of private motor vehicles owned	Decrease		DS 019
1.4 Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way	Waste to landfill per capita tonnes	Decrease		DS 067
	Waste material disposed per capita tonnes	Decrease		DS 067
	Total amount of resource recovered (tonnes)	Increase		Not Available
	Volume of potable water used in the City each year (litres)	Decrease		DS 140
	No coal seam gas exploration or extraction	Zero		N/A
1.5 The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Blue Mountains World Heritage environment	Funding contribution of Local, State and Federal Governments to environmental partnership projects	Increase		DS 016
	Number of hours invested through government agency partnership environmental projects with Aboriginal communities	Increase		DS 144

Looking After Environment – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 1.1 The health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat and ecosystems are maintained

In partnership with the Council, the Blue Mountains community has continued to look after the environment over the past four years. Most significantly, the area of Council-managed habitat subject to active restoration or rehabilitation has increased over 2012–2016.

The Council, with community, has implemented a range of initiatives including weed control, water quality monitoring, storm water pollution control, bushland restoration and support to environmental care programs.

Our natural areas are highly valued and our residents are active in working in partnership with the Council to keep them in good condition. This has been achieved through voluntary participation in programs, supported and resourced by the Council, including Bushcare, Streamwatch, Landcare, Trackcare and Swampcare. In addition, the Council runs “Connect with Nature” programs with our local schools including Bioblitz, Connecting Kids With Creeks and Catchments and Bush Trackers in partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The Council has continued to implement a range of environmental programs to protect endangered and vulnerable ecological communities including targeted habitat restoration.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 018 Endangered and Vulnerable Ecological Communities
- DS 004 Bush Regeneration Hours

Objective 1.1 is supported by the LEP 2015 Aim 2(e) to conserve and enhance, for current and future generations, the ecological integrity, environmental heritage and environmental significance of the Blue Mountains.

The enactment of this planning instrument is a major achievement that will provide a land use management regulatory framework that aims to protect the health and diversity of native flora and fauna, habitat and ecosystems within the Blue Mountains LGA and the GBMWA.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.1 The health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat and ecosystems are maintained

Protected, nurtured and valued the different flora, fauna, ecological communities and habitats and conserved threatened species	Implemented targeted habitat restoration and weed control programs in bushland reserves, and conservation landscapes including Blue Mountains Swamps, Sun Valley Cabbage Gum Forests, and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forests, and developed materials such as brochures as part of community awareness campaigns.
	Provided technical advice to support remediation on private properties containing endangered ecological communities.
	Adopted policy positions on issues that would affect the natural environment including formally opposing recreational hunting in national parks in NSW.
	Supported community conservation programs, including Bushcare, Landcare, and the Rural Practice Improvement Programs.
Managed the urban-bushland interface to minimise urban development impacts on the environment from human settlement including weeds, urban runoff, feral and domestic animals	Implemented the Council's Weed Strategy, including implementing a public land weed control program targeting urban areas in all townships, combined with a private land inspections program with over 10,000 private property inspections between 2012 and 2016.
	Developed a noxious weed mapping system to record the exact locations of highly invasive weeds on public and private properties, providing a useful management tool to monitor, evaluate and report on the spread of highly invasive weed species.
	Improved mapping of vegetation on private land, through the Local Environmental Plan process. Future programs will extend this work to the Council's reserved lands.
	Implemented the Septic Safe Program and managed dumped rubbish, to protect the natural environment from pollution.
	Adopted an improved procedure for environmental assessment under part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, guiding staff in good environmental practices for development projects in the City.
Restored and rehabilitated degraded and disturbed natural areas	Implemented the degraded lands restoration program at North Katoomba and North Leura quarries, Terrace Falls Reserve South Hazelbrook, Knapsack Park Glenbrook and East Blaxland, protecting downstream natural systems from erosion and sedimentation.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 1.2 The health of waterways and water catchments is maintained

Monitoring of our urban waterways indicates that the majority are in good condition, with high quality water enabling sensitive aquatic life to thrive. Protecting urban streams is of particular importance to conserve the high value downstream environments of the World Heritage Area and Sydney's drinking water supply.

Sub-catchment planning for Leura Falls Creek has been led by the community working with Council. This integrated approach includes many partners, aided by a \$150,000 WaterNSW grant to construct a series of water sensitive storm water treatment systems in the Leura Falls catchment.

The Council has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with WaterNSW under the Priority Pollutants Program, to audit and improve the management of storm water and on-site sewerage systems throughout the Blue Mountains. New developments in South Leura Industrial area have incorporated water sensitive urban design such as rain gardens installed as part of the Home Hardware site development.

The health of waterways is fragile and needs constant attention. The impact of pesticide released via a storm water outlet into Jamison Creek at Wentworth Falls in 2012 is an example of the damage that a single act can cause. In this case the contaminant was one commonly used for termite control and resulted in over 1000 dead freshwater crayfish. Monitoring of creek health indicates that there has been a remarkable recovery observed in Jamison Creek since this event, assisted by proximity to unaffected waterways, which allowed the movement of fauna back into the affected waterway.

A key achievement over the past 10 years has been the reduction in sedimentation in Yosemite Creek. Pictured is the transformation from 2005 to 2015 showing the restoration of the Minnehaha Falls plunge pool that was previously filled with sediment

Minnehaha Falls



2005



2015

Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

At Popes Glen in Blackheath a wetland system has been freed of weeds and restored over many years by the community with innovative restoration practices. Council has supported this project through the Save Our Swamps program.

The final sections of the highway upgrade at Bullaburra, Lawson and Wentworth Falls included bio-retention systems/rain gardens as a result of the combined efforts of the State Government, community and Council working together for better outcomes. This work was recognised with a Storm water Industry Association Award.

Innovation has also been part of the story of restoring Glenbrook Lagoon, with the construction of a series of Storm water Quality Improvement Devices. These devices have improved the quality of water entering the lagoon.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 009 Urban Water Quality – Stream Ratings
- DS 033 Clean Creeks and Waterways

Glenbrook Lagoon



before



after



Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.2 The health of waterways and water catchments is maintained

Protected, maintained and enhanced the health of the city's natural waterways and water catchments and protected groundwater resources

Partnered with community and Water NSW to commence the restoration of Leura Falls Creek, aiming to improve creek condition by constructing pollution-trapping storm water treatment systems within the catchment, restoring degraded creek sections and running hands-on education workshops for local businesses and residents.

Installed the Echo Point rain garden, which captures water for reuse in the toilet block in the Visitor Information Centre. The detention of this water helps to reduce flooding of the Visitor Information Centre and undercutting of the roadway as well as better managing runoff into the World Heritage area.

Implemented the annual Aquatic Monitoring and Action Program collecting, analysing and reporting on data to assess the health of the City's waterways, and to prioritise sites for protection and restoration. This included macro-invertebrate and water quality testing of sites across the local government area each year. There was a particular focus on Jamison Creek and also on monitoring the effects of the 2013 bushfires.

Restored creek lines and wetlands including installing soft engineering techniques to address storm water damage on Blue Mountains swamps and waterways.

Improved water quality at Glenbrook Lagoon by designing and installing three new gross pollutant traps and bio-filtration systems (rain gardens). The systems are designed to reduce storm water damage in the lagoon by capturing and filtering storm water before it enters the lagoon. Monitoring shows that the new systems reduce bacteria and nutrients entering the lagoon by up to 90 percent. The Council was also awarded a 2014 Local Government NSW Excellence in Environment Award: Highly Commended, for removing two aquatic Weeds of National Significance (Cabomba and Salvinia) from Glenbrook Lagoon – a successful seven-year restoration program involving the local community.

Reduced local flooding through improved storm water management.

Coordinated a range of community engagement programs to inspire action to protect Blue Mountains creeks, lakes and lagoons. Programs included workshops for residents of priority catchments such as Leura Falls Creek and Bioblitz events for local schools throughout the Blue Mountains.

Commenced a program to seal unsealed roads, which will assist in reducing sediment runoff into creeks.

The Council's Development Control Plan (DCP) 2015 now includes a Water Sensitive Urban Design section. In addition, improved water quality has become a focus of consideration by the Council and WaterNSW in assessing development applications.

Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 1.3 City activities contribute to a healthy atmosphere and resilience and adaptation to climate change

Our community and Council have reduced greenhouse emissions through the installation of alternative energy technology including solar panels and heat pumps. Many public and private buildings have installed solar panels to offset the use of greenhouse gas producing electricity.

The proportion of dwellings with solar connections in the Blue Mountains is more than double the average for NSW.

Bike paths have been created and improved, increasing the opportunities for people to travel by bike and to exercise. Mountain bike trails and bike paths also attract visitors and are one of the many elements of our tourism industry.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 141 Solar Panels
- DS 029 Cycleways



Objective 1.2 is supported by the LEP 2015 Aim 2(g) to preserve and enhance watercourses, groundwater, riparian habitats, wetlands and water quality within the Blue Mountains, the Hawkesbury-Nepean River catchment and Sydney's drinking catchments.

Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.3 City activities contribute to a healthy atmosphere and resilience and adaptation to climate change

Implemented initiatives that contribute to a healthy atmosphere including reduction in greenhouse emissions across the city	Improved landfill gas management at Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility by constructing a new landfill gas management system in February 2015 to capture landfill gas emissions and help reduce odour.
Supported reduced reliance on private motor vehicles	Developed strategies and plans to support non-car transport options, including the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan.
	Hosted the annual Bike Week program, providing information and instruction on bike safety, riding skills and the enjoyment of cycling.
	Renewed footpaths and constructed new shared footpaths to encourage walking and cycling, with new share footpaths constructed at: Taringa Street, Blaxland; Great Western Highway, Katoomba; Park and Green Streets, Glenbrook; and Scott Avenue and Railway Parade, Leura.
	Upgraded commuter car parks at Glenbrook and Hazelbrook to improve pedestrian access, with funding from Transport NSW.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 1.4 Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way

A comprehensive waste strategy has been developed by the Council and implemented for the City, encouraging a greater level of recycling and waste minimisation.

In July 2016, green bins were introduced for residential areas in response to community consultation undertaken as part of developing the overall Waste Strategy.

Blue Mountains currently disposes of all of its household waste within a single landfill at Blaxland. Once this landfill is full, the Council will need to find alternative means of waste disposal outside the LGA.

Our community has significantly reduced the amount of waste going to landfill by 37% over the past decade. This represents a huge reduction which will extend the life of the current landfill beyond 2030.

Energy consumption across the City has fallen by 15% since 2008–2009. The installation of energy saving devices such as solar panels and LED lighting has contributed to this result.



Water use within the City rose after the last major drought in 2010. However, since 2013, water use has decreased.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 003 Electricity Consumption
- DS 067 Waste to Landfill
- DS 140 LGA Potable Water Use
- DS 141 Solar Panels



Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.4 Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way

Minimised waste and developed a comprehensive waste management strategy for the City in consultation with the community

Completed an updated Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy, which gives guidance on dealing with significant waste management issues such as organic waste in the domestic waste stream.

Completed major works at the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility, including: gatehouse upgrade; construction of a Resource Recovery Centre; landfill gas management system; and completion of the new waste cell (Stage 3). These upgrades will ensure we manage our waste in an environmentally responsible way with rigorous stormwater and vegetation protection and the capture of landfill gas emissions, as well as improving opportunities for recycling and re-use of waste.

Introduced a new kerbside chipping and bulky waste booked service providing a more flexible and responsive service for residents, and improving resource recovery.

Awarded contracts to introduce a new green bin service in 2016–2017 that will see 4,000 tonnes of organic waste recycled instead of landfilled each year, extending the life of our landfill beyond 2030. This initiative was supported by a NSW Government grant of \$1.26 million to offset the costs of establishing the green bin service and fund a community education program.

Improved management of problem waste, by establishing a chemical collection facility at Katoomba Waste Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility. The Community Recycling Centre for problem wastes such as batteries, paint and fluorescent light globes began operating after additional support from the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

Implemented various resource saving initiatives at Council facilities, including installation of water harvesting systems as part of the construction of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, installation of solar water heaters and air handlers at Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre and improving lighting and air conditioning systems at Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.

Introduced a computer and television recycling drop off service at the Katoomba Waste Management Facility. The free service is available to all residents and small businesses in the Blue Mountains. The computer and television recycling drop off service is funded and operated by the manufacturers and importers of TVs, computers and associated computer products as part of the Federal Government legislation, the Product Stewardship Act, 2011.

Implemented the Business Waste Reduction Project (Organics Trial) engaging businesses to find alternate uses for organic waste and reduce the amount going to landfill. This project partnered with Earth Recovery Australia to set up Blue Mountains Food Rescue, pelletised waste from a wood working business for use as fuel in slow combustion heaters and created over 90 tonnes of compost a year from landscaping waste.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.4 Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way

Implemented community engagement and education on responsible resource use	Developed an online composting and worm farming education program for residents.
Conserved, managed and recycled water as a valuable resource	Invested in drainage infrastructure to improve the management of storm water to mitigate its impacts, including the construction of new or replacement pipes or culverts at: Bonton Street, Springwood; Falcon Street, Hazelbrook; Homedale Street, Springwood; Cliff Drive, Leura; and in various locations in Wentworth Falls.
Advocated to other levels of Government for No Coal Seam Gas extraction in the City of Blue Mountains	Adopted policy positions on natural resource issues, including formally opposing coal seam gas exploration and mining practices in the Blue Mountains and the GBMWA.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 1.5 The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Blue Mountains World Heritage environment

The Blue Mountains LEP 2015 has been made. It is unique in NSW and continues the strong measures to protect the unique environmental values of the Blue Mountains that have been a feature of planning controls in the Blue Mountains. This planning instrument is strongly supported by the community.

The Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWhA) continues to be managed co-operatively by all levels of Government. The strength of this co-operative agreement has been increased through the making of the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement for the management of land and water south of the highway.

The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mount Tomah is one of the key attractions building on the World Heritage Significance of the Blue Mountains. Recent facility upgrades have supported its continued focus for tourism in the region.

See Data Sheet:

- DS 016 Environmental Grants



Objective 1.5 is supported by the following LEP 2015 aims:

Aim 2(a) To maintain the unique identity and values of the “City within a World Heritage National Park”;

Aim 2(d) To ensure that development does not result in adverse impacts on the values of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area; and

Aim 2(f) To identify and conserve the distinct Aboriginal and European cultural heritage of the built forms and landscapes of the Blue Mountains.





Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.5 The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Blue Mountains World Heritage environment

Ensured that the city's Local Environmental Planning instruments continue to protect the unique environmental values of the Blue Mountains	Completed the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2015 and the new City-wide Development Control Plan conforming to the NSW Government's standard template, but also incorporating many provisions specific to the Blue Mountains' environmental and social values, including land use objectives, a high threshold for storm water entering the national park, and a schedule to protect unmapped vegetation.
Worked to protect Blue Mountains World Heritage values	Advocated and made a submission on behalf of the community on the negative impacts of the proposed Western Sydney Airport at Badgerys Creek, including impacts on public health, air quality, on tourism and the liveability of the Blue Mountains, and threat to the GBMWH. A.
Worked in partnership with Aboriginal communities to manage country respecting traditional Indigenous Knowledge	Worked in partnership with the Gully Traditional Owners Co-Management Committee, including finalising the Gully Interpretive Walk.
	Became a party to the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement, involving extensive discussions and negotiations. The Council is one of a number of parties to the agreement. The agreement resolves the Council's obligations under the Native Title Act 1993 resulting from the Gundungurra Native Title Claim, by reaching agreement with the Gundungurra people to consult on certain matters relating to management of Country in the Blue Mountains. The Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement was determined by the National Native Title Tribunal to satisfy the relevant requirements of the Native Title Act 1993.
Increased community engagement, education and capacity for living sustainably within the Blue Mountains World Heritage environment	Ran programs to involve Aboriginal communities in the management of the City's natural areas, focusing on application and maintenance of cultural practices, maintaining connection to Country and community capacity building, such as the Garguree Swampcare, Garang Landcare, Birriban Landcare, Gibbergunyah Bushcare, and Gulunga Bushcare.
	Supported community conservation programs, including Bushcare, Landcare, Streamwatch, Trackcare and the Rural Practice Improvement Programs.
	Designed and implemented a pilot Bioblitz environmental education program, with 130 students from Blackheath, Katoomba North, Katoomba and Wentworth Falls Public Schools. Held in The Gully, a place of Aboriginal significance in Katoomba, students connected with nature in an outdoor classroom, learning about local Aboriginal heritage and culture, water quality testing, water bugs and caring for the bush.
	Designed and implemented numerous environmental education and engagement initiatives to foster community understanding of the unique values of our natural environment, to better understand local environmental issues and take action to protect and restore local bushland and waterways. Initiatives included Bushtrackers, Bioblitz, Clean Up Australia Day, Bush Backyards Habitat Conservation program, Living Creeks program, and Weedbusters displays.

Achievement Highlights

Looking After Environment

Looking After Environment – Key Council Contributions

Objective 1.5 The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Blue Mountains World Heritage environment

Engaged community in the preparation of an application to IPART to ensure we continue protecting the Blue Mountains environment following expiry of the Environment Levy

Successfully completed implementation of the 10-year Environment Levy program in June 2015. Over 10 years the Environment Levy not only provided additional funding for environmental programs but also attracted over \$3.6 million in additional environmental grants for the City. Following the cessation of the Environment Levy program on 30 June 2015, the Council engaged with the community on a further special rate variation for environmental programs, along with improvements in other service areas.

Ensured continued funding to protect the Blue Mountains environment beyond 2015. The Council was successful in obtaining community support and the approval of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in 2015 for a four-year special rate variation that includes funding to continue protecting the environment.



The people involved in Looking After Environment include:

community

- Residents
- Landholders
- Visitors

council

- Blue Mountains City Council
- Adjoining Local Government Areas

government

- Australian Government: Department of the Environment
- Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Botanic Gardens and Centennial Parklands division of the Office of Environment and Heritage
- Crown Lands, a division of the NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- NSW Sport and Recreation
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services
- National Parks and Wildlife Services, a division of the Office of Environment and Heritage
- NSW Department of Education
- NSW Fisheries
- NSW Forests
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW State Emergency Service
- Office of Sport, an agency of the Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Water NSW

ngos and community groups

- Aboriginal communities and organisations
- Community volunteer groups including Bushcare, Landcare, Streamwatch and Swampcare
- Blue Mountains Conservation Society
- Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute
- Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Advisory Committee

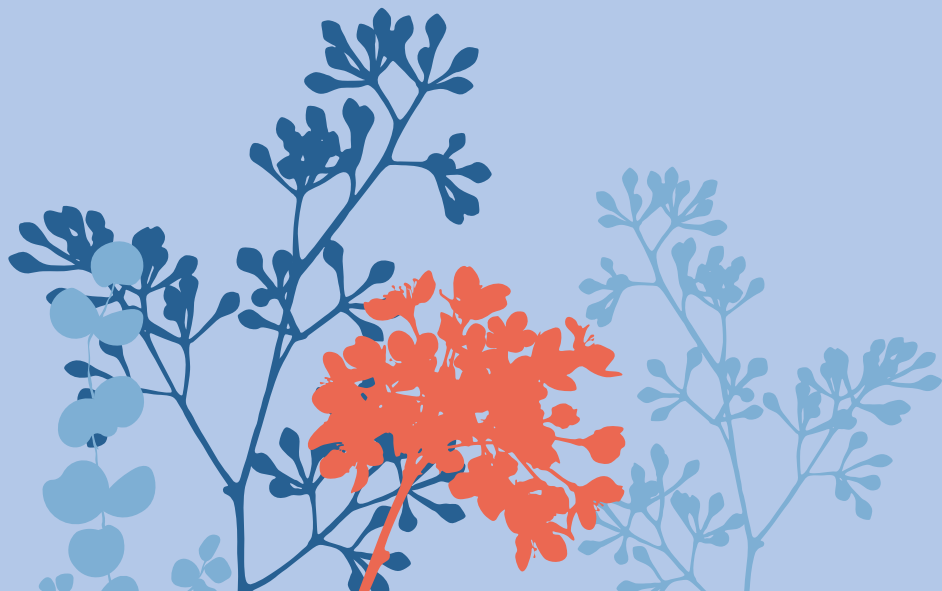
businesses

- Environmental management and monitoring businesses
- Tourism operations
- Nature based tourism operators
- Green energy providers
- Waste contractors

council advisory committees

- The Gully Cooperative Management Committee
- Mid Mountains Sustainability Reference Group
- Blue Mountains Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee
- Glenbrook Erskine Creek Catchment Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee
- Hazelbrook and Woodford Creeks Catchments Advisory Committee
- South Lapstone, South Glenbrook and South Blaxland Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee
- Highway Water Issues Working Group
- Waste and Resources Reference Group

together



looking after people



looking after people

an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

together we care

An inclusive, healthy and vibrant city is concerned with the well-being of all residents.

It plans for and meets diverse needs, providing people with access to the basic resources required to live. Diversity enriches the city and makes it more exciting and vibrant. The fair distribution of resources fosters a stable and healthy community. Better health for all is promoted through local health services and in the way the city is designed. Sustainable food initiatives, including access to fresh local produce, are supported. Community expression, creativity and cultural development are encouraged. Learning is understood to be a life-long enriching process.

values, aspirations and aims

We value our strong, connected communities that support people throughout their lives, from childhood to old age. Blue Mountains people have fair and equitable access to essential services and facilities.

We have safe, healthy environments in which people of all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds can live, work and play. Our young people have hope for the future and opportunities to live and work in the Blue Mountains.

Building on our rich cultural heritage and inspirational natural environment, we are an exciting centre of learning, culture and creativity.

By 2025, we have become a more inclusive, healthy and vibrant City.



objectives

Objective 4.1 Community health and well-being is maintained and improved

Objective 4.2 Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive

Objective 4.3 The City is recognised as a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning

Objective 4.4 The population has a healthy balance of people of different ages and life stages

challenges and opportunities

- Providing the required level of services across 27 dispersed towns and villages;
- The ageing of the Blue Mountains population which:
 - Places increased pressure on community services;
 - Highlights the importance of older people, and all age groups, maintaining active healthy lifestyles; and
 - Increases the need for the planning of services, facilities, housing and public space to address the requirements of older people.
- Addressing the significant differences in well-being and health between Upper Blue Mountains and Lower Blue Mountains;
- Insufficient affordable housing in the Blue Mountains to meet the needs of low income residents;
- The NSW Department of Family and Community Services is partnering with the private sector and the not-for-profit sector to develop new social housing models that may benefit the Blue Mountains;
- Reforms, changes and cut-backs to welfare and community services programs by the NSW and Australian Governments are impacting Blue Mountains residents and the community services sector;
- Addressing the needs of people with a disability and their carers in the Blue Mountains;
- Optimising the potential benefits for Blue Mountains people with a disability from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS); and
- Becoming a City and community that is more resilient and prepared for bushfires and other natural disasters.

Progress Measures

Looking After People

These are the measures we agreed would tell us if progress is moving in the right direction for *Looking After People*.

This report shows targets met or not met, as well as those that have remained steady at the 2012 performance level. The following table shows the 2012–2016 results. The Data Sheets referenced below provide the trend data supporting the outcomes.

✓ Target Met ➡ Performance Maintained ✗ Target Not Met

Looking After People				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
4.1 Community health and well-being is maintained and improved	Percentage of residents assessed as "having poor health behaviours" as presented in the Blue Mountains LGA Epidemiology Profile	Decrease	✓	DS 109
	Proportion of residents who are disadvantaged socio-economically	Decrease	Not Available*	DS 054
	Condition of Council sport and recreation facilities and their fitness for purpose	Maintain	✓	Not Available
	Condition of Council-managed walking tracks	Maintain	✗	Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for clean safe healthy living environments	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 115
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for parks and playgrounds	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 121
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for ovals and sporting grounds	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 042
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for swimming pools	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 040
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for community centres and halls	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 045
4.2 Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive	Proportion of residents who believe they belong in the community	Increase	Not available	Not available
	Proportion of residents who have a non-family member to turn to in times of crisis	Increase	✓	DS 024
	Proportion of children scoring "not developmentally vulnerable" when starting school	Increase	✗	DS 103
	Number of residents who have completed a Bush Fire Survival Plan	Increase	Not Available	Not Available
	Condition of Council fire trails and RFS/SES buildings and their fitness for purpose	Maintain	✓	Not Available
	Total number of RFS/SES volunteer participation hours per year	Increase	✓	DS 146

Looking After People				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
4.2 Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive	Achievement of identified actions in the Blue Mountains Bush Fire Risk Management Plan	Achieve set actions	Not Available	Not Available
	Number of domestic squalor cases supported/resolved	Maintain/Increase	✓	Not Available
	Percentage of toilet facilities in the LGA that are unisex and accessible	Increase	✓	DS 007
	Percentage of people who volunteer	Increase	Not Available*	DS 114
4.3 The City is recognised as a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning	Condition of Council cultural facilities and their fitness for purpose	Maintain	✓	Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for libraries	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 133
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for cultural and arts facilities	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 072
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for heritage values/building	Decrease the gap	✗	DS 037
	Condition of Council library buildings and their fitness for purpose	Maintain	Not Available	Not Available
	Number of formal courses retained/promoted (Nepean Community College)	Maintain/Increase	✓	DS 147
	Retention and expansion of TAFE and Community College courses (Nepean Community College)	Maintain/Increase	✓	DS 147
4.4 The population has a healthy balance of people of different ages and life stages	Percentage of population under 50 years	Increase	Not Available*	DS 010
	Percentage of young people (15–24) living in the City	Increase	Not Available*	DS 113
	Gap between satisfaction with, and importance, for children and families having access to needed services and facilities	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 134
	Gap between satisfaction with, and importance, for young people having access to needed services and facilities	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 134
	Gap between satisfaction with, and importance, for older people having access to needed services and facilities	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 134

*Awaiting results of 2016 Census

Looking After People – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 4.1 Community health and well-being is maintained and improved

Our community health and well-being is improving. Blue Mountains residents are making healthier lifestyle choices, in line with changes across Australia. We are smoking less and drinking less. Our rate of smoking has sharply declined and is now slightly below the national average at 15%. The number of residents who consume alcohol to harmful levels has decreased slightly. We are doing better than the state and national average for these indicators.

The proportion of residents who are obese has remained unchanged at around 25% bringing the Blue Mountains close to the national average.

Blue Mountains residents feel healthier than the average for NSW and more feel they are in good or better health now than 10 years ago. In 2013, 88% of Blue Mountains residents felt their health was good or better, which is a higher percentage than in 2005, and more than for NSW and Australia. Community survey data shows that the vast majority of Blue Mountains residents 'feel they belong' in their community – 85% in 2016, compared to 80% in 2010.

The latest available Census data (2011) indicates that compared to other NSW LGAs, the Blue Mountains LGA has lower levels of socio-economic disadvantage. However, on a range of variables – including income and home ownership – residents in the Lower Mountains are more advantaged than residents in the Upper Mountains. Compared to Sydney, there is less diversity in housing types in the Blue Mountains. Changing demographics, including ageing of the population and outflow of younger age groups, indicates the diversity of housing stock may need to be increased to meet local housing needs.

Our community is working together with agencies and NGOs in many areas. Blue Mountains community organisations and the Council work closely with the NSW Department of Family and Community Services, the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care and the NSW Attorney-General's Department to meet the needs of Blue Mountains residents, the Blue Mountains community and community and social priorities.

The Mountains Community Resource Network (MCRN) is the peak body for community organisations in the City of Blue Mountains supporting a sustainable community sector by bringing organisations together, building capacity and advocacy. This peak body links together many of the key community services essential in meeting the priority needs of Blue Mountains residents, especially the vulnerable and at risk.

These services include the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre, Neighbourhood Centres, the Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS) and the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre.

Community networks play an important role in improving the quality and effectiveness of community services and advocating for community services that meet the needs of Blue Mountains residents. There are a diverse range of important community services networks, including:

- Blue Mountains Community Care Forum;
- Blue Mountains Elder Abuse Collaborative;
- Blue Mountains Coalition Against Violence and Abuse;
- Blue Mountains Youth Mental Illness and Substance Abuse Network; and
- BMCC Youth Council.

The Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) was established by the Council in partnership with key child and family service organisations. The SFA is a collaboration and partnership between over 40 child and family community organisations that aim to improve the health and well-being of Blue Mountains children and families. The SFA has introduced new models in the human services sector to improve services for Blue Mountains residents and has developed a Child and Family Plan to assist guiding the direction of child and family services in the Blue Mountains.

Our children are on track to start school, with a lower proportion (18.3%) being assessed as developmentally vulnerable in one or more areas than the NSW average (20.2%) in 2015. This proportion is, however, higher than was reported for the Blue Mountains in the 2009 and 2012 Australian Early Development Census.

The Blue Mountains community has continued to be a leader in implementing sustainable living initiatives, including: the Blue Mountains Food Co-op; Slow Food in Katoomba; the Blue Mountains Permaculture Institute; community gardens; and school gardens.

Over the past four years Blue Mountains City Council has continued to work with a range of government agencies and local organisations to address the needs of residents living in domestic squalor. This issue affects the frail-aged, people with disabilities and people with a mental illness.

To address this issue the Council initiated the Blue Mountains Domestic Squalor and Hoarding Working Group and developed the Blue Mountains Domestic Squalor Information Package to assist agencies dealing with people in domestic squalor. In 2014, this work was extended to include the development of The Domestic Squalor and Hoarding Information Kit for Residents.



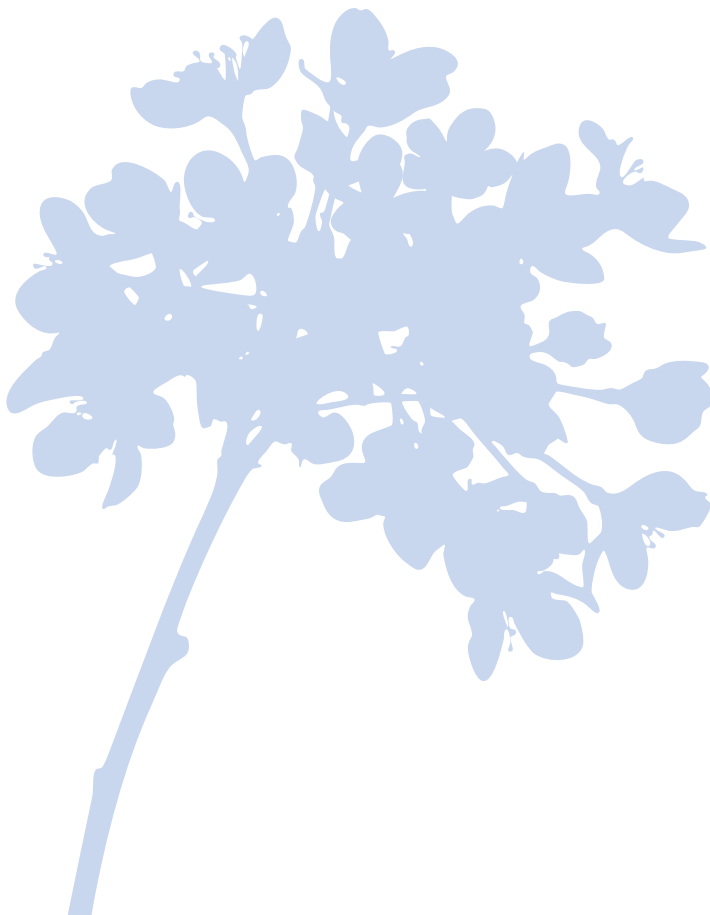
Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

See Data Sheets:

- DS 006 Education Status
- DS 010 Population – Under 50 Years
- DS 021 Sense of Belonging
- DS 024 Crisis Support
- DS 053 Percentage of Residents Who Smoke
- DS 054 Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage
- DS 055 Self-rated Health Assessment
- DS 064 Housing Diversity
- DS 076 Persons 65 Years and Older
- DS 109 Blue Mountains Resident Health
- DS 113 Persons Aged 15–25 Years

Objective 4.1 is supported by LEP 2015 Aim 2(p) to integrate development with transport systems and promote safe and sustainable access opportunities, including public transport initiatives, walking and cycling.



Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.1 Community health and well-being is maintained and improved

Facilitated community access to community, cultural, recreational and sporting services and facilities that meet needs and support health and well-being	<p>Provided community access to a range of community, sporting and recreation facilities including community halls, meeting spaces, community centres, libraries, aquatic and leisure centres (providing pools, gyms, sporting courts, and a range of fitness and leisure opportunities) sports grounds, tennis courts and an extensive network of walking tracks and lookouts.</p>
	<p>The Council adopted a new Swimming Pools Inspection Program, protecting the health and safety of young children.</p>
	<p>Provided Blue Mountains community service organisations with operating premises within Council buildings including the Mountains Community Resource Network, neighbourhood centres, youth centres and services, child care centres.</p>
	<p>Completed the Lower Blue Mountains Sports Field Study, with the Council endorsing the resulting strategies to guide the management and development of sporting venues. The strategies endorsed will allow a more equitable distribution of sports ground use to help minimise wear on sports fields across the City.</p>
	<p>Coordinated and supported the Blue Mountains Sports Council that fosters the appreciation, development and maintenance of sporting facilities, clubs and opportunities in the Blue Mountains. The Sports Council also assists clubs in the application process for grants; makes recommendations to the Council for the Asset Works Program; selects projects for the expenditure of sports fee income; and assists with dispute resolution over the booking and use of Council sporting facilities.</p>
	<p>Completed Plans of Management for Council recreational lands including Medlow Bath Park, Batman Reserve Springwood, Kingsford Smith Memorial Park Katoomba, and Springwood Country Club Site.</p>
Supported increased community participation in physically active, fit and social lifestyles	<p>Invested in Glenbrook Pool, with the installation of a new filtration plant, improving water quality and clarity and a new heating system maintaining the water temperature at a comfortable 27 degrees. A retractable pool enclosure was also installed over the program pool at Glenbrook, which enables a year round swim school achieving the target of over 2,000 children enrolled in the Learn to Swim program, leading to a 20% increase in pool customers and increased pool programs.</p>
	<p>Improved skating facilities, at Goldsmith Place and Melrose Park in Katoomba. The existing Goldsmith Place skate park was made more interesting and modern for skaters, and more usable for visitors. In response to an identified need for junior skating facilities in the Upper Mountains a new skate park was created at Melrose Park.</p>
	<p>Constructed and opened the first accredited downhill mountain bike track in the City at Knapsack Reserve, Glenbrook, in partnership with mountain bike riders. A 1,150m downhill track for experienced riders has been constructed including ecological restoration, extensive track closure and rehabilitation and the installation of signage across the Reserve and a new volunteer Trackcare group to foster sustainable trail maintenance has been established.</p>



Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.1 Community health and well-being is maintained and improved

<p>Supported implementation of the Stronger Families Alliance and the Child and Family Plan</p>	<p>Facilitated and coordinated implementation of the Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) comprising 46 government and non-government organisations working together to build better outcomes for children and youth in the Blue Mountains. The Council has played a leading role in developing and facilitating Implementation and reporting on the Blue Mountains Child and Family Plan.</p> <p>Over the past four years the SFA has continued to facilitate better outcomes for children and families through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster, better co-ordinated, more comprehensive service delivery; • Improving the capability of organisations to match children to the right service; • Delivering new programs and initiatives for prevention and early intervention; and • Involving new stakeholders in the focus on creating a child and family friendly City of Blue Mountains.
<p>Implemented innovative and preventative community development initiatives that contributed to social justice, well-being and which have addressed the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged</p>	<p>Endorsed and supported implementation of the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Advisory Council's (AAC) Strategic Plan 2013–2016. This Plan guides outcomes that address the priority needs of the local Aboriginal community.</p>
	<p>Convened a range of Blue Mountains community committees informing the development of programs and priorities including the Blue Mountains Seniors Advisory Committee, the BMCC Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Blue Mountains Coalition Against Violence and Abuse.</p>
	<p>Adopted and commenced implementation of the "Options to Reduce Youth Alcohol Related Harm in the Blue Mountains Action Plan". This Plan emphasises a coordinated harm minimisation approach with partners and stakeholders.</p>
	<p>Implemented the Midnight Basketball Program which is a social inclusion program aimed at helping at risk young people identify and embrace positive opportunities.</p>
	<p>Adopted a marriage equality proclamation.</p>
	<p>Implemented the Aboriginal Men and Youth Program – a diverse program for Blue Mountains Aboriginal men and boys that aimed to increase understanding of culture, improve health and well-being and resilience. The program included: cultural days, health and fitness activities and workshops, a "Youth Boxing for Life" program, art workshops and exhibitions, outings, youth school holidays programs and an Aboriginal Film Festival.</p>
<p>Encouraged sustainable living and food initiatives that contribute to community health and well-being</p>	<p>Coordinated and supported the work of the Blue Mountains Domestic Squalor and Hoarding Working Group.</p> <p>Supported the community garden initiative at North Katoomba and encouraged sustainable living including composting and worm farms through environmental education initiatives.</p>



Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.1 Community health and well-being is maintained and improved

Facilitated provision of well-designed, accessible and affordable housing to meet diverse community needs

The Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan have supported provision of well-designed and accessible housing meeting diverse community needs.

In 2015 the Council commenced a review of the Blue Mountains local housing strategy to inform planning for the future housing needs of the community. The strategy, which will be completed in 2017, focuses on how best we can meet the changing housing needs of the local community and ensure there is housing available for residents at all stages of life. Preliminary work has identified that the demographic structure of the Blue Mountains is changing with the ageing of the population, increasing numbers of lone person and childless households resulting in smaller household sizes.



SFA

The Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) is a network of people and organisations working together to build better outcomes for children and youth in the Blue Mountains. It focuses on the well-being and resilience of children and young people, with a cradle-to-career approach.

The SFA is a pioneering network of people working together for the future of our youth. The Alliance has come a long way since 2006, when a handful of child and family organisations were convened by the Blue Mountains City Council and the Mountains Community Resource Network to find more effective ways of supporting children's developmental outcomes. Powered by the knowledge that strong, healthy children are the bedrock of enduring communities, the group was concerned with the rising number of children who were needlessly falling through the cracks because services for children worked in isolation from each other.

The group developed a profound yet simple vision for itself: a plugged-in network of people with a shared purpose – to enhance connections with all local families and guarantee speedy specialist help for children with complex needs.

In 2010 the Alliance published its blueprint for change, The Child and Family Plan, which describes a collaborative service system that tackles problems such as child abuse and neglect, isolation, and the literacy divide.

The Alliance now has 46 member organisations including representatives from non-profit and voluntary groups, business and government service providers.

Alliance members are united in their work through The Child and Family Plan and through a disbursed leadership governance structure that supports self-starting programs and initiatives across the Blue Mountains.

Over the past four years the SFA has continued to facilitate better outcomes for children and families through:

- Faster, better co-ordinated, more comprehensive service delivery;
- Improving the capability of organisations to match children to the right service;
- Delivering new programs and initiatives for prevention and early intervention; and
- Involving new stakeholders in the focus on creating a child and family friendly City of Blue Mountains.

In 2012, the SFA expanded to include a focus on creating child-friendly initiatives designed to enhance family life in the Blue Mountains.

In 2015, in response to teachers and health professionals detecting an increase in anxiety, behavioural problems and self-harm among teenagers, the SFA integrated young people aged 12–18 into its programs. 46 Alliance partners now take a 'cradle-to-career' approach in the best interests of children aged up to 18.

In 2016, an externally-commissioned evaluation found that responses to the Alliance's work was "extremely strong" and that the Alliance had been successful in working towards the aspirations of the Child and Family Plan by creating programs and initiatives "that support great outcomes for children and families".

alliance members

- Early Childhood Care and Education Providers
- Primary and High Schools
- Aboriginal Services
- Community, Women's, Mental, Primary and Allied Care Health Services
- Child, Youth, Family and Disability Services
- Community Development and Neighbourhood Centres
- State and Federal Government
- Voluntary Local Government Organisations including Community Development, Recreation, Parks, Libraries and Economic Development
- Environmental Services
- Businesses
- Churches

program snapshot

2013 bushfire response

The Alliance network responded swiftly and smoothly to the 'Red October' 2013 bushfires. Their reach was extended to include the police and emergency services. New programs were rapidly developed to obtain the right help needed for children and young people, including a counselling service and a vacation care program for children whose homes had been damaged or destroyed.

bush trackers program

The Bush Trackers program encourages families to use the Blue Mountains World Heritage Park as their backyard by providing maps for bush walks. Children were provided with diaries to record their favourite walks, and their words and artwork now feature in 18 maps available online and in shops, schools and tourism outlets.



child and youth consultation program

Children, young people and their communities across the Blue Mountains are being consulted about what makes a child-friendly and youth-friendly community. Results of the consultations are fed back to community and council services and used in the Council's planning process.

connecting up services for vulnerable children

For the first time disparate professionals working in domestic violence, family support, community health, disability, mental health and drug and alcohol have aligned their practices and set up new referral pathways to get help to at-risk children who are often overlooked in service delivery.

paint the blue read program

Led by lovable Mascot, Billy Booksie, the Paint the Blue Read program promotes the value of early literacy development in children 0-5 years and shows parents how to use stories, rhymes and songs at home to ensure their children arrive at school ready to start reading.

positive education program

This program promotes good mental health in middle childhood and teenage years by teaching resilience and mental fitness skills in schools.

school-centred community hub program

This program provides practical prevention and early intervention through five hubs that together reach 12 Blue Mountains schools. Parents get linked to each other and can receive advice or service support without a formal referral.

multi-sector professional development program

A program of events that brings national experts to a diverse range of Blue Mountains professionals. By learning together in teams, professionals get on the 'same page' about how to provide the best services possible to children and young people.

Looking After People – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 4.2 Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive

Based on the results of the Council's bi-annual community survey of residents, the vast majority feel their neighbourhood is a safe place to live – 94% in 2016 compared to 90% in 2010.

We are a volunteering community with a higher rate of volunteering than Greater Sydney or NSW. The willingness to volunteer is matched by the range of opportunities to volunteer in our City, including, for example, volunteering for: Meals on Wheels; Visiting Nursing Homes; the State Emergency Services; Blue Mountains City Art Gallery; Community Carers; and Neighbourhood Centres.

Our six Neighbourhood Centres provide many local services assisted by volunteers. Neighbourhood Centres are an important element in supporting community resilience, particularly when responding to emergencies, as evidenced in the October 2013 bushfires. The Community Connections: Older and Vulnerable Community Members Project was a partnership project between Katoomba and Springwood Neighbourhood Centres, Charles Sturt University and the Council. The project developed strategies to better plan for vulnerable and ageing populations both in day-to-day life and in emergencies.

We are getting better at supporting people with disabilities, through initiatives such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This scheme will improve the quality of life for eligible people with a disability. The NDIS commenced in July 2015 in the Nepean Blue Mountains (NBM) region for children and young people aged less than 18 years. The NBM was the first region in which the NDIS was implemented (not just trialled) in Australia. By June 2016, the NBM region had 2,000 children and young people receiving the NDIS. The full NDIS will be rolled-out in the NBM commencing 1 July 2016.

Disability inclusion concerns everyone – all levels of Government, local communities and community organisations. The NSW Disability Inclusion Act requires all Councils to have a Disability Inclusion Action Plan in place by July 2017. The Council has established a Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee to assist with disability inclusion.

The Blue Mountains community is welcoming, and acknowledges that diversity in the population supports a strong community. There are a number of groups and networks for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer people (LGBTIQ). The groups include Pink Mountains, Bush Lemons, the Three Sisters and the Blue Mountains International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) group. In 2016, the Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber launched a Pink Business chapter, recognising Blue Mountains LGBTIQ residents. The Pink Chapter has a focus on the opportunities that marriage equality will present for the region.

The Blue Mountains community works on a diverse range of migrant and refugee issues. The Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group is a long established group that has been working on refugee and asylum seeker issues.

In 2015, the Council reconfirmed its commitment as a Refugee Welcome Zone. The Mountains Community Resource Network convenes the Mountains Multicultural Inter-agency that advocates on behalf of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse residents.

The Blue Mountains community has zero tolerance for Domestic Violence. There are Blue Mountains Specialist Women's Domestic Violence services delivering a range of programs and services for women and children experiencing and/or escaping Domestic Violence. These include: the Blue Mountains Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Scheme; women and children refuges; and counselling groups.

The Blue Mountains Coalition Against Violence and Abuse (CAVA), convened by the Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre, plays an important co-ordinating role, providing training of workers and advocacy to government on Domestic Violence issues such as the defunding of special women's refuges across NSW and the adequate funding of the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Scheme.

The City of Blue Mountains is more prepared for bushfire disasters than many other bushfire prone areas. Research carried out after the 2013 bushfires found that 83% of Blue Mountains residents surveyed were able to describe their bushfire plan compared with 67% of Wingecarribee residents and 48% of Port Stephens residents.

Our RFS volunteers support our ability to respond to bushfire emergencies. Every year RFS volunteers give over 50,000 hours in the Blue Mountains. In 2013, this tripled to nearly 210,000 volunteer hours.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

Our planning for emergencies is comprehensive and integrated, and has improved. Our City is vulnerable to various natural disasters, including snow, storm and local flooding events, as well as bushfires. The Blue Mountains Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) was finalised in June 2016, through the Local Emergency Management committee convened by Council. This new LEMP is being used by Regional Management Officers as an example of best practice in their work with other committees. The State Emergency Service (SES) has developed a Snow Plan and is developing a Storm and Local Flood Plan.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 017 Indigenous Residents
- DS 114 Volunteer Residents
- DS 146 RFS and SES Volunteer Participation Hours

Objective 4.2 is supported by LEP 2015 Aim 2(i) to limit exposure to bushfire hazards and to ensure that development of bushfire prone land incorporates effective measures that protect human life, property and highly valued environmental and other assets from bushfire, without unacceptable environmental impacts.

Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.2 Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive

Supported the creation of a safe, caring, inclusive Blue Mountains

Advocated to the Australian and NSW Governments on behalf of residents and community services for appropriate funding and improved social outcomes on a range of social justice and funding issues focusing on the most vulnerable and at risk Blue Mountains residents, including:

- Emergency financial relief;
- Funding of community services providing for the most vulnerable residents;
- Domestic violence services and funding for specialist women's refuge funding across NSW, the Women's Domestic Violence and Court Advocacy Scheme;
- The "Social and Safe" and bullying prevention programs in schools;
- Specialist homelessness services and support services; and
- Funding for aged and disability services.

Supported Blue Mountains Specialist Women's Domestic Violence Services, in partnership with CAVA, organising community awareness raising White Ribbon events and initiatives, including the Mayors White Ribbon Day Breakfast, International Human Rights Day Vigils and fundraising Domestic Violence gigs.

Participated in the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) committee: The IDAHOT committee organises a range of events including the raising and flying of the Rainbow Flag and community commemorations and celebrations.

Completed the Community Connections: Older and Vulnerable Community Members project. This project informed the development of the BMCC Ageing Strategy 2016–2026.

Adopted the Companion Animals Management Plan (Cats and Dogs) 2014–2017, a strategic document that seeks to balance traditional regulatory activities with non-regulatory strategies that encourage and promote responsible pet ownership.

Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.2 Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring and inclusive

Led the recovery from the October 2013 bushfires	Following the devastating impact of the October 2013 bushfires, the Council led the local recovery effort funded by the State and Federal Governments. This involved working with a range of agencies to assist residents from affected areas with access to support service information, advocacy, and special events. There has been sustained effort from the Local Recovery Steering Group, Local Community Reference Group, and Well-being sub-committee in supporting the recovery work.
	The Council dedicated significant resources and expertise in response to the October 2013 bushfires, an unprecedented natural disaster with the loss of almost 200 homes. The Council worked in collaboration with the NSW and Australian Governments, emergency services, utility and land management agencies, and community services. A Mayoral Relief Fund was established with the Council distributing over \$3.14 million in funds to fire affected residents.
	The Council supported a number of events marking the October 2013 Bushfire Anniversary Commemoration. These events provided an opportunity to bring people and communities back together as many people were displaced as a result of the bushfires. The bushfires resulted in a loss of 197 houses with many more sustaining damage.
Improved the resilience of systems within the city for adapting and responding to natural disasters	Completed the five yearly surveillance report review for Wentworth Falls Dam and commenced implementation of the action plan to ensure the continuing satisfactory performance and future integrity of the dam.
	Developed and adopted flood plans, including the Hazelbrook and Woodford Creek Catchments Mainstream and Overland Flow Flood Study, and the Lapstone, South Glenbrook and South Blaxland Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan, assisting with planning for potential property modification, response modification and flood modification measures.
Supported and partnered with emergency services to deal with threats to the City	Worked in partnership with organisations such as the Rural Fire Service, Fire and Rescue NSW and the State Emergency Service, to build community resilience through engagement, communication, and education.
	Further developed the Council's planning, response and recovery frameworks, to protect staff and customers in the event of an emergency, and to ensure business continuity during and after disaster events.
Promoted volunteering programs that support the City's priorities	Promoted and coordinated a range of volunteer programs for town centre and park improvements, graffiti removal, bushcare and other volunteer programs.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

Looking After People – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 4.3 The City is recognised as a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning

The Blue Mountains is a centre of culture and creativity, as demonstrated by the number of people working in the creative industries who live in the Blue Mountains. Our creative residents have supported the development of festivals, art galleries, theatrical productions and many other creative events.

The Blue Mountains was the inaugural NSW City of the Arts. Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust was re-established in 2013 to support the arts, through promoting the diverse range of creative events and activities in the Blue Mountains and by administering the former Cultural Partnerships Grants Program on an annual basis. In 2015, there were 224 events added to the Festivals and Events Calendar.

The Street Art Walk, created by Street Art Murals Australia, in partnership with the Council and Western Sydney University, in the Beverly Place precinct in Katoomba, demonstrates how the creativity of our community has many benefits supporting revitalisation of town centres, tourism and community pride. It was the winner of the 2016 National Local Government Award in the category "Art Activates".

New cultural facilities have been opened in Katoomba and Springwood bringing a regional art gallery and theatre to the Blue Mountains. These facilities have quickly established themselves as a cornerstone in advancing the Council's partnership with the community – and particularly the creative community.

More formal learning opportunities for young people have been provided with the establishment of two institutions offering diploma and/or degree courses. In 2015, Torrens University partnered with Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School to offer degree courses.

Western Sydney Institute of TAFE has two campuses in the Blue Mountains and offers a range of courses, including many that reflect the unique character of the region, focusing on tourism, hospitality and land management as well as an emphasis on health and construction.

Nepean Community College has responded to demand for digital literacy by establishing a Digital Hub and digital enterprise programs which have attracted over 5000 participants.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 147 Nepean Blue Mountains – Courses Retained/Promoted

ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

JANUARY

Australia Day Celebrations throughout the region.

Wines of the West at The Carrington Hotel. This event showcases many of the Central West regions leading wineries with opportunity to taste the different wines. www.thecarrington.com.au

Australian Gnome Convention. Join in the fun as gnomes gather at Glenbrook for their annual convention. <http://australiangnomeconvention.com.au>

A Day Out With Thomas - Zig Zag Railway operates during all school holidays. Join Thomas the Tank Engine and some of his friends for a unique steam trip. www.zigzagrailway.com.au

Rockley's Annual Rodeo. Rockley Showground. Bucking since the 1950's. www.oberonaustralia.com

FEBRUARY

Oberon Agricultural Show. Bring all the family along and join in the fun of the 110th Annual Oberon Show. www.oberonaustralia.com.au

Jazz in the Gardens at Norman Lindsay Gallery. The Friends of the Norman Lindsay Gallery invite you and your friends to this "ultimate jazz experience", a musical picnic party to celebrate the birthday of one of Australia's finest artists, Norman Lindsay. www.normanlindsay.com.au

The Roaring 20's...and all that Jazz! The 1920's was a roaring time in the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Region. Re-live this golden era by attending some of the many activities and events taking place during February. Frock Up, Jazz Up, Come Up and celebrate The Roaring 20's...and all that Jazz! www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Rydal Agricultural Show. The greatest little show in the west. Rydal Showground. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

MARCH

Six Foot Track Marathon. This 45 kilometre race from the Explorers Tree near Katoomba to Jenolan Caves is Australia's largest 100% off road marathon. www.sixfoot.com

Blue Mountains Music Festival of Folk, Roots and Blues. A three day internationally renowned festival of folk, roots and blue music featuring artists from around Australia and the world. www.bmff.org.au

Lithgow Flash Gift. Australia's richest female footrace. Athletes from around Australia compete under a handicapped system. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

The Norman Lindsay Festival of Children's Literature. Talks, workshops and book signings by well-known children's book authors held within the grounds of the home of "The Magic Pudding". www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Springwood Foundation Day. Community Festival with parades, stalls and much more. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

APRIL

Lithgow Agricultural Show. Come and see all the attractions of the show. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Ironfest. Celebrate the festival of all things metal through entertainment, music and art. Ironfest features the International Jousting Championship and Colonial re-enactments. www.ironfest.com.au

'Car Net' Rally of Lithgow. Witness the spectacle of rally cars competing. Ceremonial start in the main street with the rally conducted in the nearby State forests. www.rallyoflithgow.com

Concert in the Caves. Immerse yourself in a concert in the Cathedral Chamber of the Lucas Caves. Jenolan Caves host regular musical performances throughout the year. www.jenolancaves.org.au

MAY

Great Train Weekend, Mount Victoria. A great event for train buffs and everyone alike. www.mountvictoria.biz

Winnalee Autumn Artfest. Local artist's work and crafts. Winnalee High School. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Autumn Harvest Food & Wine Fair. Mount Tomah Botanic Garden. Tantalise your taste buds with fresh produce from local producers and growers. www.mounttomahbotanicgarden.com.au

The North Face. A journey through 100km of wilderness trails that will deliver nothing less than the ultimate endurance experience. www.thenorthface.com.au

Wild Endurance. A team event that raises funds to save the planet. www.wildendurance.org.au

Varuna 'The Writer's House' presents the Sydney Writer's Festival. Each year Australia's only national writer's centre hosts events in conjunction with the Sydney Writer's Festival. www.varuna.com.au

JUNE

Winter Magic Festival. The winter months are a special time in the region. This month long event celebrates all that's wonderful about the season including a street parade that fills Katoomba's main street with colourful performers. One of Australia's largest community festivals www.wintermagic.com.au

NRMA CareFlight Woodford to Glenbrook Classic. Ride or run from the Blue Mountains town of Woodford to Glenbrook via the Oaks Fire Trail. This incredibly scenic route is mostly downhill and in great condition for mountain bikes or a good set of running shoes. www.careflight.org

Wizard's Express. Enjoy the magic and mystery of the Zig Zag Railway's Harry Potter themed train rides. (June/July/August/September). www.zigzagrailway.com.au

JULY

Yulefest celebrations. Held throughout the region in hotels, guesthouses and resorts. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Wizard's School of Magic. Enjoy some magical school holiday fun with Mistress Wollamia Bubblebark. (June/July/August) www.mounttomahbotanicgarden.com.au

AUGUST

Vietnam Veterans and Associated Forces Memorial Day - Springwood. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Springwood High School Annual Artshow. An outstanding event with over 1000 art works on display. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

SEPTEMBER

Hazelbrook/Woodford Spring Garden Festival. These diverse and delightful gardens offer something of interest to all, set amidst the unique charm of the Blue Mountains. www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Daffodils at Rydal. Stroll through rural gardens experiencing the magic of Spring. www.rydal.com.au

Oberon Daffodil Spring Garden Festival. Open gardens in and around Oberon. www.oberonfestivals.com.au

OCTOBER

Leura Gardens Festival. Famous for their different magnificent displays of springtime colour and beauty in public and private gardens. www.leurgardensfestival.com.au

Leura Village Fair. Leura Mall comes alive with the annual celebration of Spring. www.leuravillage.com.au

Breenhold Gardens Annual Springfest Concert. Bring a picnic and relax in this Mount Wilson Heritage listed garden estate. www.breenhold.com.au

Oktoberfest. Celebrate with authentic German cuisine, Lowenbrau beer and German On-pa-pa Band. www.thecarrington.com.au

NOVEMBER

Blackheath Rhododendron Festival and Art Show. The village of Blackheath comes alive with floral displays, art show, parade and much more. www.rhodofestival.com.au

Wild About Waratahs. Designed to celebrate our State's floral emblem and inspire a love of Waratahs in the wild. www.mounttomahbotanicgarden.com.au

Celebrate Lithgow. A week of celebration culminating in the annual street party. www.tourism.lithgow.com

Glenbrook Spring Festival. Popular for local art, craft, live shows, displays, amusements and stalls. www.glenbrookchamber.com.au

Kedumba Drawing Award. Considered one of the premier events for drawing in Australia. www.kedumba.org.au

DECEMBER

Christmas Carols. Various locations throughout the region including a festive performance at Jenolan Caves. www.jenolancaves.org.au

Sunny Corner Sunday. Local artists display the variety of local arts. Entertainment and displays at various locations within the village. www.tourism.lithgow.com

These are only a few of the events and festivals. For more information on these and regional markets, exhibitions and music in the Blue Mountains Region visit www.visitbluemountains.com.au

Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.3 The City is recognised as a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning

Facilitated community access to library and information services

Provided a vibrant library service across six branches, offering enriching experiences and places for people to relax, study and come together.

The new Katoomba Library was opened In November 2012. This library has set a new benchmark for library and information services within the City, having the largest number of visitors of all libraries in the Blue Mountains over the past four years.

As well as offering a variety of public programs for young and old, and developing a strong social media presence, Blue Mountains library initiatives developed over the past four years have included:

- Poetry under the stars and Readers and Writers Forums;
- A grant-funded Library Newspaper Digitisation Project to digitise 16 newspaper titles (portions dating between 1884 and 1954);
- Enabling library members to access the State Library of NSW eResources, including access to local and international newspapers, encyclopaedias, eJournals, eMagazines, online databases and eBooks;
- Expanding in the eBook collection; and
- The Pop-up library program, bringing the library to the people, wherever they may be and targeting people who would not normally go to the library.

Strengthened and promoted the Blue Mountains City of the Arts within a World Heritage Area. Supported the Blue Mountains Culture Centre as a landmark arts and cultural hub

The Council constructed and opened the new Blue Mountains Cultural Centre supporting the City as a cultural and creative centre. The Centre has quickly become a recognisable hub of cultural activity for the Mountains and a significant meeting place for engagement of a diverse demographic. The creation of the Wollemi Artisan Markets in 2015 has been a great success with over 20 stall holders regularly booking places within the Cultural Centre courtyard.

Over the past three years, the Centre has maintained an annual visitation of over 100,000 visitors, making it one of New South Wales' most visited regional cultural facilities.

With a program of over 30 exhibitions a year in the City Art Gallery, an Insight Membership program with over 1,000 members and a rapidly growing art collection of significance, the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre has established itself as a dynamic venue highly supported by the local community.

The construction of the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood, was completed and opened in March 2015. This development, funded by a \$9.5 million grant from the Federal Government and \$6.5 million Council funding, has revitalised Springwood through the provision of high quality, sustainable community and cultural facilities, an improved street scape and upgraded and expanded parking facilities.

Established the Public Art Advisory Committee to provide policy advice on public art domain related issues.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.3 The City is recognised as a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning

Strengthened and promoted the Blue Mountains City of the Arts within a World Heritage Area. Supported the Blue Mountains Culture Centre as a landmark arts and cultural hub

Established the City of the Arts Trust social media promotion of Blue Mountains artists, arts and heritage groups and arts and cultural events building to over 4,700 subscribers.

Delivered the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program, providing project funding of \$50,000 annually to artists; arts groups and organisations.

Facilitated public art projects across the City in collaboration with state government agencies and community organisations.

Completed the Gully Aboriginal Interpretive Walk in partnership with the Gully Traditional Owners, a significant cultural heritage walk in the Blue Mountains.

Coordinated and sponsored Bicentennial Crossing events including renewing the Mount York Heritage Conservation Reserve.

Adopted the Council's Heritage Strategy 2014–2017, with the Heritage Advisory Committee advising on Local Heritage Fund projects and issues related to the management of heritage items.



Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

Looking After People – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 4.4 The population has a healthy balance of people of different ages and life stages

The population has continued to age, losing people in the 15–25 years age range, in particular. Forecasts prepared by ID profile based on current trends and NSW Department of Planning and Environment, both predict continued low growth and contraction of this age group.

These trends are of concern given the potential adverse consequences associated with not having a more balanced mix of people in different life stages in our City. Having a stable and more balanced mix of age groups lessens the need for costly changes to infrastructure and services required by the population. It also means that the community can benefit from the contribution and experience of people in all life stages.

Retaining younger people in our City is particularly important as they are more likely to be economically active and make fewer demands on health and social service infrastructure. People aged between 25 and 34 years are also at the primary age for child-bearing. Reductions in this age group will reduce the number of children in the Blue Mountains.

Provision of a diverse and affordable range of housing and access to local employment are key drivers underpinning retention of younger age groups within the Blue Mountains.

See Data Sheets:

[DS 010 Population – Under 50 years](#)

[DS 054 Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage](#)

[DS 064 Housing Diversity](#)

[DS 076 Persons 65 Years and Older](#)

[DS 113 Persons Aged 15–25 Years](#)





Achievement Highlights

Looking After People

Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.4 The population has a healthy balance of people of different ages and life stages

The Council has supported development of a child, youth and family friendly city

The Council has actively led and facilitated the development and implementation of the Blue Mountains Child and Family Plan.

Coordinated the Blue Mountains Youth Council, supporting young people's involvement in decision-making and their ability to have a say on what is important to them.

Supported the needs of families through provision of a Family Day Care Service providing home based child care including preschool, long day care, before and after school care, vacation care, casual care, emergency care and weekend care. The service meets National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care.

Coordinated and supported implementation of the Stronger Families Alliance (SFA).



Looking After People – Key Council Contributions

Objective 4.4 The population has a healthy balance of people of different ages and life stages

Encouraged young people and families to live and stay in the Blue Mountains through provision of appropriately designed and accessible services and facilities that meet their requirements

Completed construction of the Hazelwood Childcare Centre, a successful collaboration between the Council, Connect Child and Family Services and the Australian Government. This well-designed, state-of-the-art facility provides a modern and accessible child care centre meeting increased demand for childcare places by local families.

Completed a Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) for the City that considers the needs of people of different life stages, including young people and families with children.

Completed upgrade and construction of new skate parks in Katoomba.

Provided new and/ or upgraded accessible toilet amenities in Leura, Katoomba, Springwood, Hazelbrook, Lawson and Blackheath.

Completed new and upgraded cultural and library facilities, including: the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre; the new library in Katoomba; and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood. These facilities offer a range of experiences and activities for all age groups with targeted programs for younger people and families.



The people involved in Looking After People include:

community

- Residents
- Visitors

council

- Blue Mountains City Council
- Adjoining Local Government Areas

government

- Arts NSW: a division of NSW Department of Justice
- Australian Government: Department of Human Services
- Crown Lands: a division of NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District: a division of NSW Health
- Nepean Community College
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW Police
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Sport and Recreation
- Office of Sport: an agency of the Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Western Sydney Institute: a division of TAFE NSW

ngos and community groups

- Aboriginal Community and Resource Centre
- Aboriginal communities and organisations
- Blue Mountains Artists Network
- Neighbourhood Centres
- Mountains Community Resource Network
- Home and Community Care
- GREAT Community Transport
- Wentworth Community Housing
- Other local organisations supporting our community

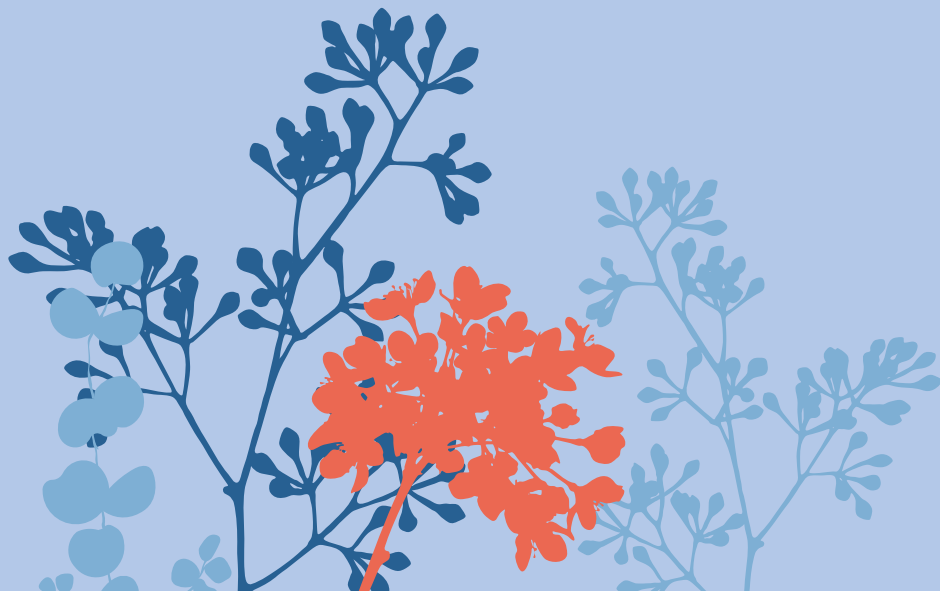
businesses

- Artists and creatives
- Art Galleries and businesses supporting artists and creatives
- Education providers
- Health care service providers

council advisory committees

- Blaxland Sports Stadium Management Committee
- Bicentenary of the Crossing Committee
- Blue Mountains Bushfire Mayoral Relief Fund
- Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Advisory Committee
- Blue Mountains City Council's Aboriginal Advisory Council
- Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Establishment Committee
- Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Exhibition Selection Committee
- Blue Mountains Heritage Advisory Committee
- Blue Mountains Sports Council
- Councillor Reference Group Springwood Civic Centre Upgrade Project
- Premises Review Panel
- Public Art Advisory Committee
- Youth Council Advisory Committee

together



using land



using land

a liveable city

together we live

A liveable city provides safe, healthy and vital spaces and places for people of all ages and abilities.

Through creative planning and design, the development of unique and vibrant places is fostered. The liveable city encourages community interaction and connection and facilitates people living close to where they work. Centralising population close to public transport uses land and infrastructure more efficiently. Local heritage, and places of natural, cultural and historical significance that have value for the community, are retained. Liveable cities promote development on a human scale, and have attractive towns and streetscapes.

values, aspirations and aims

We value the distinct identities of our villages and towns and the bushland between them. Our cultural and built heritage is important.

We use our land to live in harmony with the environment.

Affordable and well-designed housing options, relevant to the diverse needs of our community, are available. We have created vibrant liveable places and spaces for people of all ages and abilities to live, work and play.

Within the capacity of our natural and built environments, we have encouraged sustainable development in larger town centres with access to public transport, required infrastructure, services and facilities.

Through innovative urban design and planning, by 2025, the Blue Mountains has become renowned for its liveable and beautiful spaces.



objectives

Objective 2.1 The liveability, vibrancy and safety of towns and villages is strengthened

Objective 2.2 The impact of development on the natural and built environment is managed, and the City's unique character retained

challenges and opportunities

- Standardisation of the environmental planning instrument and changes to Exempt and Complying Development regulations by the NSW Government, reduces ability to develop planning controls tailored to our area;
- Ensuring the Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan continues to protect the City's village character and natural environment;
- Managing the impact of increasing tourist visitation on our towns and villages and their facilities, including parking, roads and toilet facilities;
- Achieving efficient provision of services in a City that is characterised by 27 widely dispersed towns and villages located across mountainous terrain;
- Renewal of ageing infrastructure to ensure it continues to support the needs of our community;
- Encouraging appropriate development and diversity of housing types that meet changing community needs, while retaining the Blue Mountains character;
- Increases in house prices and change in demographic profile could drive change in services required, especially in the upper mountains. It could also influence affordable housing availability and increase rents;
- Ageing population and reduction in household size could mean that more people require smaller housing on smaller blocks of land;
- Managing impacts of low forecast population growth and an ageing community on local economy and infrastructure;
- Managing the risk of bushfire on urban development and improving bushfire preparedness of properties;
- Blue Mountains has experience, and could lead education in emergency response, building recovery and resilience practices;
- Increasing local employment base and attracting large employers particularly those that deliver services; and
- Managing vandalism in town centres;

Progress Measures

Using Land

These are the measures we agreed would tell us if progress is moving in the right direction for *Using Land*.

This report shows targets met or not met, as well as those that have remained steady at the 2012 performance level. The following table shows the 2012–2016 results. The Data Sheets referenced below provide the trend data supporting the outcomes.

✓ Target Met ➡ Performance Maintained ✗ Target Not Met

Using Land				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
2.1 The liveability, vibrancy and safety of towns and villages is strengthened	Condition of town centre assets and their fitness for purpose	Maintain	✓	Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for town centre and village atmosphere	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 008
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for built environment	Decrease the gap	Not Available	Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for clean, safe and healthy living environments	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 115
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for pedestrian access around shopping centres	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 038
	Gap between community satisfaction with and importance of street cleaning	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 125
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for public toilets	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 011
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for parking for shoppers	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 120
	Number of residents working in the LGA as a proportion of the total working population	Increase	✓	DS 001
2.2 The impact of development on the natural and built environment is managed, and the City's unique character retained	Retention of bushland between towns and villages outside zoned permissible urban footprint	Maintain	➡	Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for managing residential development	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 127
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for protection of heritage values and heritage buildings	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 037
	Gap between community survey satisfaction with and importance of managing cemeteries and ashes placement	Decrease the gap	➡	DS 128

Using Land – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 2.1 The liveability, vibrancy and safety of towns and villages is strengthened

The hierarchy of towns and villages across the Blue Mountains has been strengthened. The future of towns and major public precincts will be guided by master plans. Master plans have been developed for Hazelbrook, Springwood and Katoomba town centre precincts. A master plan is being developed for Blackheath town centre precinct.

The range of services and facilities available in our larger centres has been increased or upgraded, for example through the development of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and the new Katoomba Library and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood.

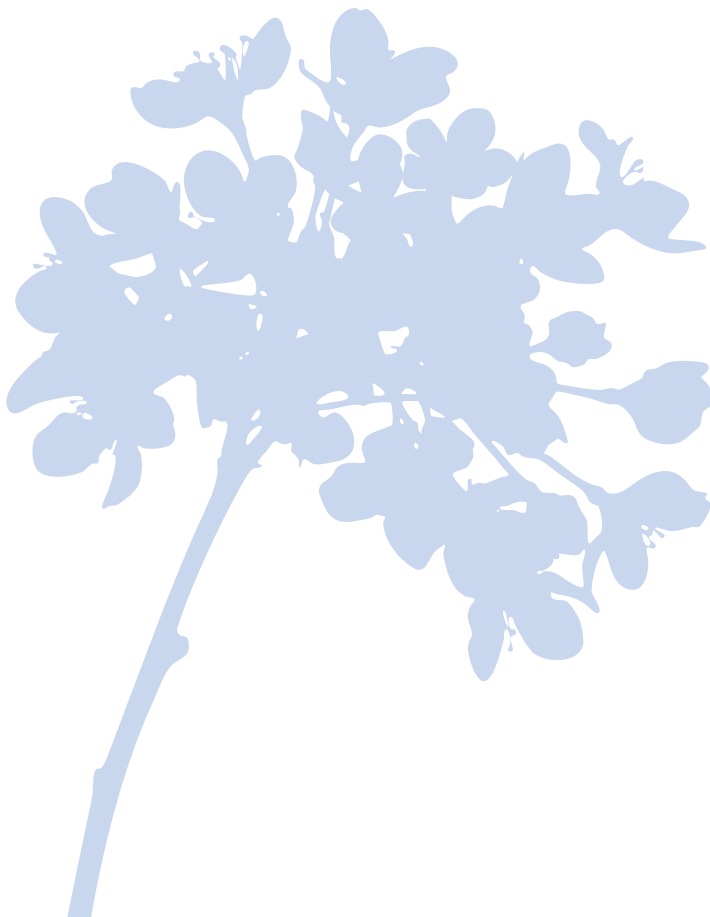
The quality of urban design in centres has improved, evidenced, for example, by the design features and qualities of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood, as well as the new child care facility constructed by the Council in Hazelbrook. These facilities incorporate environmental design and energy and water saving features. Within town centres and villages, the Council has implemented more consistent and locally specific design of street furniture enhancing the distinctive qualities of each centre.

The provision of public toilets in town centres has improved. The quality of public toilets in town centres has been an area where community feedback has indicated improvements could be made. Over the past four years new and/or upgraded toilets have been provided in Hazelbrook, Leura and Lawson. Blackheath town centre toilets have also been retrofitted in partnership with the local community.

Community support for town centres is demonstrated in the work of volunteers working with Village Associations in centres including Leura and Katoomba to maintain gardens and plantings. The high standard of garden planting and maintenance is a product of community and council partnership.

Katoomba has benefited from major partnerships. The future of Katoomba town centre was the subject of a detailed community consultation process, known as the Charrette, implemented in 1999. This process set out the strategy to revitalise Katoomba. The key revitalisation strategies from this Charrette have been realised demonstrating the importance of having a long-term vision.

Katoomba has seen some long-term projects realised in the past four years. These projects have improved the services and experience for our residents and visitors and reduced the need for residents to travel outside of the LGA to shop. Three major supermarkets now operate in Katoomba. Underground parking has been increased and upgraded. Pioneer Place has undergone a first stage of refurbishment with further stages now in the advanced stages of planning. The re-location of Coles to a site that also houses the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Katoomba Library was the result of a major partnership between the State Government, Coles and the Council. The Carrington Hotel continues to expand the number of services and activities it supports. The Cellars and Deli and the boutique brewery in the old garages have added activity to the Parkes Street frontage.



Achievement Highlights

Using Land

The Lawson town centre and public domain has been successfully reconstructed after the highway widening. Lawson Town Centre is once again a functioning village, after many of the shops were demolished to make way for the highway widening. Developers, designers and the Council worked together to deliver activated shop frontages to both sides of the new shopping area. Shop-top residential units have also been incorporated into some of the new buildings. The Council worked with the Roads and Maritime Service to ensure that many of the townscape amenities were in place in advance of shop reconstruction and that stormwater was well managed. This has meant that once the shops were built and occupied, the village had a completed feeling with Heatherbrae restored, green spaces, car parking and a new toilet facility supporting visitor needs. Lawson is an excellent example of a long-term plan fulfilled.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 007 Public Toilets
- DS 008 Town and Village Atmosphere
- DS 143 Vacant Shops – Katoomba and Springwood



Objective 2.1 is supported by the following LEP 2015 aims:

Aim 2(c) to meet the needs of residents, visitors and the business community through the provision of an appropriate balance of land uses and built forms; and

Aim 2(k) to promote the provision of accessible, diverse and affordable housing options to cater for the changing housing needs of the community.



Using Land – Key Council Contributions

Objective 2.1 The liveability, vibrancy and safety of towns and villages is strengthened

Supported development of a hierarchy of towns	The Council has adopted a spatial framework for service planning.
Enhanced the distinctive qualities of towns and villages and implemented innovative and sustainable urban design	Developed a master plan program for town centres This work aims to provide leadership through a place-based vision for each town centre developed and shared with key stakeholders and to identify the spatial, economic, cultural and social roles of towns and key public areas.
	Completed master plans for a number of town centres including Hazelbrook, Springwood and Pioneer Place in Katoomba. A master plan is underway for Blackheath town centre precinct.
	Improved our toilet facilities within town centres. Constructed new public toilet facilities in Leura, Hazelbrook, Lawson and within new facilities including the Blue Mountains Cultural centre, the Katoomba Library and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood.
	Completed footpath replacement in Katoomba town centre and invested in upgrades to Pioneer Place in conjunction with the construction of the Coles and Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Katoomba library complex.
Supported provision of a range of housing choices to meet diverse needs	Completed the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2015, which has introduced controls that will support a greater range of housing opportunities. It makes provision for secondary dwellings such as dual occupancies and granny flats and shop-top housing.
Implemented initiatives that reduce crime, vandalism and graffiti	Delivered a 'Prevention by Design Project', to prevent illegal graffiti in hot spots in each town through art. This program was funded by the Australian Government and delivered in partnership with Mountains Youth Services Team. It encouraged young artists to develop design skills to produce high standard community murals on frequently vandalised walls in town centres. Vandalism has been significantly reduced on mural art sites, reducing ongoing clean-up costs, and improving amenity. Young people have been actively involved with the design and implementation of the project, creating a sense of inclusiveness.
	Partnered with community and volunteer groups to maintain town centres and villages and to remove graffiti.
	Implemented the Blue Mountains Crime Prevention Plan, which focuses on the reduction of malicious damage, including incidents of graffiti within the Blue Mountains LGA. The Crime Prevention Plan was developed in accordance with the Department of Police and Justice's Guidelines for Developing a Crime Prevention Strategy.

Using Land – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 2.2 The impact of development on the natural and built environment is managed, and the City's unique character retained

The application of the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2015 and Development Control Plan (DCP) 2015, is central to maintaining the City's unique built and natural character.

The new LEP sets high standards and there has been strong community support for it.

Objective 2.2 is supported by the following LEP 2015 aims:

Aim 2(b) To provide a clear framework for the development of land that is consistent with and promotes the principles and practices of ecologically sustainable development;

Aim 2(h) to prescribe limits to urban development having regards to the potential impacts of development on the natural environment and the provision, capacity and management of infrastructure; and

Aim 2(j) to identify and retain the diverse built and landscape elements that contribute to the character and image of the Blue Mountains.



LEP 2015



Local Environmental Plan 2015

After more than three years of preparation, exhibition, review and negotiation, the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2015 was approved on 21 December 2015.

This plan conforms to the NSW Government's standard template, but also incorporates many provisions specific to the Blue Mountains, responding to local values.

The new LEP applies to the whole City. It continues to protect and manage the special characteristics of the Blue Mountains' natural and built environment, so valued by our community. It supports the preservation of the character of our villages, the protection of our water quality and significant vegetation.

Achievement Highlights

Using Land

Using Land – Key Council Contributions

Objective 2.2 The impact of development on the natural and built environment is managed, and the City's unique character retained

Ensured the Council's land use planning complies with legislation and facilitates development and renewal that supports quality urban design, environmental protection, heritage values, cultural landscapes and the character of Blue Mountains towns and villages	<p>Completed the Local Environmental plan (LEP) 2015 conforming to the NSW Government's standard template, but also incorporating many provisions specific to the Blue Mountains environmental and social values. Also completed the new City-wide Development Control Plan incorporating a best practice approach to controls.</p>
	<p>Implemented the online state-wide Electronic Housing Code, allowing residents to investigate whether the type of development proposed on a property is eligible for exempt or complying development.</p>
Helped to preserve and maintain the City's unique character and its built, natural and cultural heritage	<p>Invested in looking after our heritage, including upgrades to Springwood School of Arts, Braemar Gallery, Mount Victoria Hall, and Heatherbrae House. Restoration of the Blackheath War Memorial and Campbell Monument at Blaxland, restoration works including graffiti removal at Lennox Bridge and throughout the City and emergency works at Wilson Park, Lawson.</p>
Managed the City's cemeteries as settings for remembering	<p>Managed the City's nine cemeteries, with the adoption of the Cemeteries Policy addressing issues of efficient and sustainable management and safety, and the updating of cemetery protocols and procedures. The Council has been conducting trials on low cost techniques to effectively address erosion at Katoomba Cemetery and has invested in the renewal of drains, signs and burial areas at various cemeteries.</p>
Implemented environmental health inspection programs, including inspections of food premises and fire safety inspections of commercial and public buildings, protecting public health	

The people involved in Using Land include:

community

- Residents
- Landholders
- Visitors

council

- Blue Mountains City Council
- Adjoining Councils

government

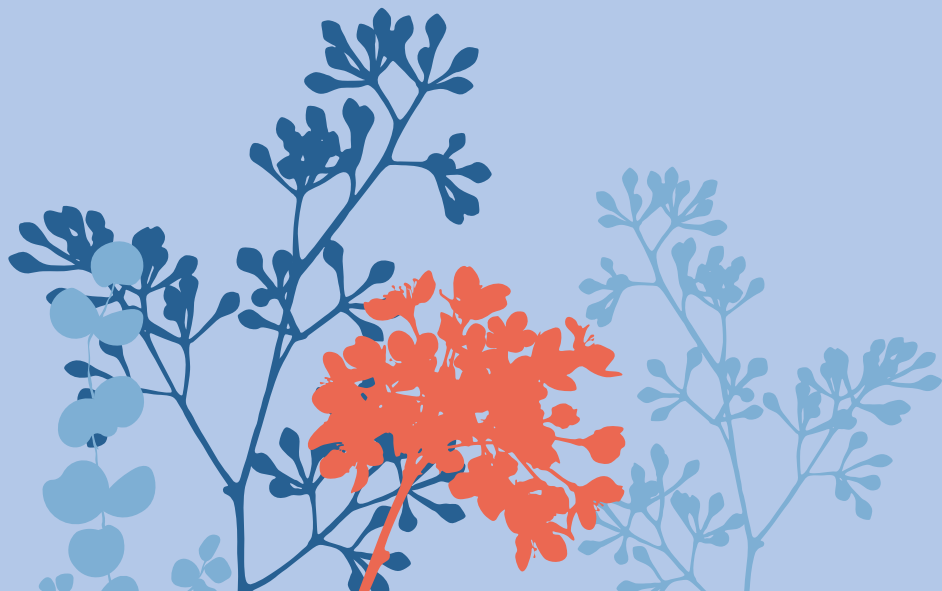
- Australian Government: Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
- Crown Lands: a division of NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Fire and Rescue NSW
- Greater Sydney Commission
- Office of Environment and Heritage
- NSW Department of Planning and Environment
- NSW Rural Fire Service
- NSW Sport and Recreation
- NSW State Emergency Service

ngos and businesses

- Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise
- Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber
- Local Business Chambers
- Utility Providers
- Development and Construction Industry



together



moving around



moving around

an accessible city

together we move

An accessible city makes it easy for people of all ages and abilities to move around and access services and facilities, work and recreation. It provides accessible pathways of travel leading to accessible places and spaces.

An accessible built environment is well designed and inclusive. It benefits everyone, increasing their participation in the community and in the local economy. The environmentally friendly accessible city maximises sustainable choices for moving around – reducing reliance on cars and promoting the use of less polluting means of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling.

values, aspirations and aims

We value safe and accessible pathways of travel for all, that improve our connections with destinations and each other.

We have sustainable choices for safe and environmentally friendly transport, including networks of walkways and cycle ways, integrated with reliable and accessible public transport.

Through better management and creative urban design, the Great Western Highway is a safe, accessible and beautiful space that adds to our local amenity, economy and World Heritage identity.

By 2025, we are a more accessible City.



objectives

Objective 3.1 Integrated accessible and sustainable choices are provided for moving around

Objective 3.2 The City has a safe, well-designed and maintained network of roads

challenges and opportunities

- Funding for the required renewal of transport and accessibility infrastructure;
- The highway is a primary freight route and the number of heavy vehicles using it is increasing;
- Road freight volume is forecast to double in NSW by 2031 (NSW Freight Strategy 2013);
- Our ageing population will require improved accessibility in all travel options, including walking, driving and public transport;
- Increase in car ownership and decrease in public transport uses undermines ability to argue for improved public transport options;
- Providing evacuation routes for emergencies;
- Potential development of Western Sydney airport at Badgerys creek may increase demand for commuter parking and require new or improved public transport links;
- More accessible public transport and parking spaces, in particular at stations that have lifts;
- Expansion of the footpath network to improve options for walking and access to local services and leisure; and
- Not all our train stations are wheelchair accessible.















Progress Measures

Moving Around

These are the measures we agreed would tell us if progress is moving in the right direction for *Moving Around*.

This report shows targets met or not met, as well as those that have remained steady at the 2012 performance level. The following table shows the 2012–2016 results. The Data Sheets referenced below provide the trend data supporting the outcomes.

 Target Met
  Performance Maintained
  Target Not Met

Moving Around				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
3.1 Integrated accessible and sustainable choices are provided for moving around	Condition of Council transport assets and their fitness for purpose	Maintain/Improve		Not Available
	Number of railway stations with bike lockers	Increase		DS 014
	Number of wheelchair accessible railway stations	Increase		DS 058
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for pedestrian access around shopping centres	Decrease the gap		DS 038
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for commuter car parks	Decrease the gap		DS 047
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for parking for shoppers	Decrease the gap		DS 120
3.2 The City has a safe, well-designed and maintained network of roads	Condition of Council roads and their fitness for purpose	Maintain/Improve		Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for sealed roads	Decrease the gap		DS 071
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for unsealed roads	Decrease the gap	Unknown	Not Available
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for footpaths	Decrease the gap		DS 060
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for cycle ways	Decrease the gap		DS 130
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for car parks	Decrease the gap		DS 131
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for parking for commuters	Decrease the gap		DS 047
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for bus shelters	Decrease the gap		DS 132
	Gap between resident satisfaction and importance ratings for traffic safety	Decrease the gap		DS 070

Moving Around – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 3.1 Integrated accessible and sustainable choices are provided for moving around

This objective supports the development of an integrated, accessible and linked transport network that meets the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles, freight and public transport. Over the past four years there have been significant improvements to our transport network.

The upgrade of the Great Western Highway to a four-lane dual carriageway has resulted in new and improved transport linkages for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. New bus shelters and upgraded footpaths and smaller link roads provide required access to public transport.

In 2016, the Council adopted a Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP). This plan will guide the City in the development of new programs and facilities to encourage people to walk, to improve accessibility and reduce dependence on vehicle transport.

The cycle network has increased in length and scope. Opportunities to provide better or new options for cycling have been included in the upgrade of the highway which includes a wide shoulder bike lane as well as the provision of separate bike paths by the Council.

The Blue Mountains has been successful in obtaining funding to support development of the Greater Blue Mountains Bike Trail between Katoomba and Blackheath.

For local and emergency movement, alternative options to the Great Western Highway have been upgraded, including the link roads between Wentworth Falls and Lawson.

There have been improvements to commuter parking and accessibility at railway stations including Glenbrook railway station, Hazelbrook commuter car park and Wentworth Falls lift and bus shelter funded by Transport NSW. The Hazelbrook commuter car park was identified in the Hazelbrook master plan process.

The number of wheelchair accessible train stations in the Blue Mountains has slowly increased, with four accessible stations in 2016 – Springwood, Katoomba, Blaxland and Wentworth Falls.

Daily patronage at Blue Mountains railway stations, however, has been steadily falling from 16,820 in 2004 to 15,140 in 2014 (*Source: NSW Government Bureau of Transport Statistics*).



Achievement Highlights

Moving Around

Community transport is an essential component of our transport infrastructure. The GREAT Community Transport service provides transport for eligible disadvantaged people including Blue Mountains and Penrith frail aged and people with disabilities and their carers.

During this period the Council has upgraded over 200 bus stops for DDA compliance including new boarding points, kerb ramps, signage and tactile ground surface indicators. New bus shelters have also been provided as part of working with the RMS on the highway upgrade and by the Council at some town centre locations.

New raised threshold pedestrian crossings have been constructed by the Council to support access to Hazelbrook Public School and as part of intersection improvement works in Katoomba town centre.

The Council worked closely with Transport NSW, and specifically Sydney Trains, on their upgrade to the Park Road overline bridge at Woodford to ensure that the new works by Sydney Trains included improvements to pedestrian access. The Council funded and completed works in the local road network to provide footpath linkages for the community to the upgraded bridge.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 014 Bike Lockers at Railway Stations
- DS 035 Travel to Work – Public Transport
- DS 058 Accessible Train Stations
- DS 060 Footpaths
- DS 086 Railway Station Barrier Counts
- DS 102 Average Daily Traffic Volumes
- DS 131 Car Parks
- DS 132 Bus Shelters

Objective 3.1 is supported by LEP 2015 Aim 2(p) to integrate development with transport systems and promote safe and sustainable access opportunities, including public transport initiatives, walking and cycling.



sealing of unsealed roads

678 km of unsealed roads now sealed

Over the past four years the Council has successfully implemented the Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program. This program was developed following a best value review of the Council's gravel road maintenance service. The costs associated with continually regrading gravel roads were significant and there was a growing number of residents finding it difficult to access gravel roads, particularly after wet weather.

The review found that it would be more cost effective in the medium to longer term for the Council to permanently seal the City's gravel roads rather than continually regrade them.

Between 2012 and 2016, 31 gravel roads were permanently sealed. While the program initially aimed to seal 55,000 square metres of road, it proved so successful that it was expanded to sealing approximately 100,000 square metres of road equivalent to 678 km of road.

The program was funded through the sale of plant previously used to regrade roads and through the cost savings associated with no longer having to maintain unsealed gravel roads, the proceeds of which were used to repay a loan.

Key benefits of the program include:

- Significant recurrent annual savings;
- Improved road accessibility for residents; and
- Improved maintenance service in other areas, as the reduction in the number of unsealed roads has allowed resources (staff and materials) previously used on the constant regrading of unsealed roads, to be re-allocated to other priority maintenance activities.

Roads resealed: Stage 1:

- Paterson Road, Springwood
- Singles Ridge Road, Yellow Rock
- Yellow Rock Road, Yellow Rock
- Winter Road, Winmalee
- Long Angle Road Yellow Rock
- Farm Road, Springwood
- Moore Road, Glenbrook
- End of Raymond Road, Springwood
- Chapman Parade, Faulconbridge
- Rita Avenue, Faulconbridge
- Grose Road, Faulconbridge
- Jennings Road, Faulconbridge
- Railway Parade, Linden
- Hilltop Avenue, Hazelbrook
- Hawkesbury Road Access Road, Winmalee
- Mills Lane, Winmalee
- Old Bathurst Road, Woodford

Stage 2:

- Albert Road, Bullaburra
- Mount Hay Road, Leura
- Vista Parade, Leura
- Farrer Road West, Mount Irvine
- Farrer Road East, Mount Irvine
- Danes Way, Mount Irvine
- Du Fours Road, Mount Wilson
- Wynnes Rock Road, Mount Wilson
- Applecott Lane, Mount Wilson
- Stephens Lane, Mount Wilson
- Waterfall Reserve car park, Mount Wilson
- Pulpit Rock Road, Katoomba
- Old Bells Line of Road
- Charlies Ravine Road, Mount Tomah

Achievement Highlights

Moving Around

Moving Around – Key Council Contributions

Objective 3.1 Integrated accessible and sustainable choices are provided for moving around

Supported development of an integrated, accessible and linked transport network	Blue Mountains Integrated Transport Forum is convened by Council and includes service providers such as bus companies, taxis, trains.
	Developed and commenced implementation of a number of key accessibility and transport plans and policies, including the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan, the Road Reseal Policy, and the Bike Plan.
Provided sustainable choices for moving around	Developed and hosted numerous cycling initiatives, including Bike Week providing information and instruction on bike safety, riding skills and the enjoyment of cycling. A Bike Map 2011 and a bike trail brochure were also produced.
	Greater Blue Mountains Bike Trail between Katoomba and Blackheath completed.
	New development controls in the DCP 2015 have a requirement that facilities for cyclists are included in developments of a certain size.
Supported improved bus services that are safe and meet the travel needs of the community	Completed an audit of bus stops and commenced upgrades, to meet Disability Discrimination Act requirements.
Promoted transport solutions for those unable to access transport	Provided and maintained a community access bus, in partnership with Great Community Transport, an alternative and cost-effective transport option for community groups.
Supported the provision of parking at key destinations	Endorsed the use of electronic vehicle detection technology for managing parking based on a trial of the detection technology in Leura in response to requests from the Leura Village Association. The aim of the technology is to increase turnover of vehicles consistent with the existing time limited signs, to promote a more equitable use of the parking resource.



Moving Around – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 3.2 The City has a safe, well-designed and maintained network of roads

The completion of the highway upgrade to four divided lanes to Katoomba in 2015 was a major milestone in the provision of a safe road network in the Blue Mountains. This long-term project has reduced the number of black spots. The highway is now, where possible, separated from local traffic. Pedestrian traffic has been provided with overpasses at key locations.

The design of the Great Western Highway upgrade sets new standards in managing storm water, using native plants and incorporating design elements that not only improve safety but also improve amenity and World Heritage Area protection.

The maintenance and renewal of the Great Western Highway is an ongoing project. Other recent upgrades have included:

- Victoria Pass at Mount Victoria;
- Mount Victoria village improvements;
- The intersection of the highway with Macquarie Road at Springwood, upgraded in 2015 under the 2014–2015 Blackspot program;
- Review of environmental factors relating to the highway upgrade between Katoomba and Mount Victoria, which will provide a safer road environment; and
- Mount Victoria safety upgrade.

The Bells Line of Road is another important part of the regional road network affecting the Blue Mountains and a key link for the western villages of Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and Mount Tomah. It is being upgraded to provide an overtaking lane in a program that will be completed in 2018.

The Drive Neighbourly Agreement, a partnership with the Heavy Vehicle Industry and the RMS, was established in 2015. This forum unites members from community and industry groups in managing the impact of heavy vehicles on our roads.

The proportion of light and heavy vehicle traffic, measured by the RMS at Mount Boyce, gives an indication of the use of the Great Western Highway as a route for freight to Western NSW. The data between 2012 and 2015 shows that the proportion of heavy vehicles (Class 4–10) passing through Mount Boyce has increased from 572 in 2013 to 1,208 in 2015.

The number of reported vehicle crashes and casualties in the Blue Mountains LGA have decreased from 2010–2013. This is a possible indicator of the success of measures taken to improve our main roads.



Over 2013–2014 and 2014–2015, the Council completed 13,604 m² of potholes repaired and 11,936 m² of preventative pothole maintenance.

During this period the Council has continued to implement the Annual Road Reseal and Renewal Program. This program renews the road pavement surface and also the supporting sub-grade of the road, where assessed as being required. This increases the longevity of these critical assets and provides a safe and well-maintained road network for all users.

Almost half a million square metres of road resealing works have been completed during this period across the entire LGA.

See Data Sheets:

- [DS 087 Vehicle Crashes](#)
- [DS 102 Average Daily Traffic Volumes](#)

Moving Around – Key Council Contributions

Objective 3.2 The City has a safe, well-designed and maintained network of roads

Improved the safety, amenity and linkages of the local road network	Commenced the Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program to reduce ongoing road maintenance costs as well as eliminating sediment run off and also providing improved amenity for residents.
	Invested in road resealing, resealing over 10% of road network over the last four years.
	Completed the Katoomba Traffic Study and implemented a number of traffic safety and amenity improvements in the Katoomba town centre, including installation of a roundabout at Katoomba and Waratah Streets Katoomba.
	Supported road safety initiatives through implementing annual road safety action plans with a focus on educational and behavioural activities to reduce the number and severity of road crashes on local roads.
	Invested in traffic safety improvements including: the sealing of Katoomba Falls Reserve car park and Katoomba Leisure Centre car park; improved accessibility at a number of existing bus stops and associated footpaths, to meet new Disability Discrimination Act standards; improved accessibility of the Glenbrook commuter car park through construction of an accessible ramp, stairs and associated works (funded by Transport NSW); upgrade of the Hazelbrook commuter car park including pavement replacement, vehicle access, lighting and improved pedestrian access to the Hazelbrook railway station (funded by Transport NSW); installation of safety signage and guide posts at Explorers Road, Lapstone, Mitchells Pass Road, Lapstone, and Railway Parade, Woodford; bridge renewals; and culvert rehabilitation at Peachtree Road, Megalong Valley.
Supported the upgrade and widening of the Great Western Highway to produce optimal outcomes	Advocated for better outcomes in response to Great Western Highway upgrades and other transport matters, including the following issues: NSW Freight and Ports Strategy; Highway upgrade between Katoomba and Mount Victoria; and Good Neighbourly Agreement in partnership with the Heavy Vehicle Industry and RMS.

The people involved in Moving Around include:

community

- Residents
- Visitors

council

- Blue Mountains City Council
- Adjoining Councils

government

- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District: a division of NSW Health
- Roads and Maritime Service
- Sydney Trains: a division of Transport NSW
- Train Link: a division of Transport NSW

ngos and peak groups

- Blue Mountains Commuters and Transport Users Association
- Blue Mountains Integrated Transport Forum
- Chambers of Commerce
- GREAT Community Transport
- Town and Village Associations

businesses

- Local Bus and Taxi Companies
- Tourism Companies

council advisory committees

- Local Traffic Committee



together



sustainable economy



sustainable economy

an economically sustainable city

together we thrive

An economically sustainable city facilitates a diverse, robust and environmentally friendly local economy that benefits local residents.

Sustainable businesses and industries that have minimal impact on the natural environment are encouraged and supported.

A vibrant city encourages and facilitates a variety of sustainable industries, enterprises and businesses.

values, aspirations and aims

We value business and industries that are in harmony with our surrounding World Heritage environment. We are recognised as a Centre of Excellence for sustainability that strives to create significant employment and educational opportunities.

Through responsible economic development we have strengthened and diversified our local economy. We are a leader in sustainable business and industry. Young people are attracted to work, live and study in the Blue Mountains.

By 2025, our local economy is stronger and more sustainable.



objectives

Objective 5.1 The Blue Mountains economy is vibrant and strong with increased local employment

Objective 5.2 The City is recognised nationally as an innovative learning region within a World Heritage Area

Objective 5.3 The City of Blue Mountains is a model for sustainable local business and tourism

challenges and opportunities

- Increasing local employment opportunities within the Blue Mountains;
- Strengthening the economic base of the City through increasing the range of sustainable industries;
- Increasing the duration and number of overnight visitors;
- Improving engagement with growing Asian tourist market;
- Developing a strong regional tourism organisation;
- Implement major investment in tourism infrastructure;
- Building on the strength of the creative industries;
- Recognising the service opportunities for older adults;
- Using the skill base of residents to attract a greater range of businesses and employment opportunities;
- Supporting home-based businesses;
- Ensuring the City has the required infrastructure to support sustainable economic development;
- NBN fibre to node version may not be adequate to support business, a subsidy may be required for businesses that require fibre to fibre connections;
- The Eastern Escarpment near Glenbrook provides an opportunity to develop an integrated tourism location, building on the Southern Escarpment model;
- Promoting the Blue Mountains as a Clean Green brand with associated environmental benefits; and
- Developing a city resilience strategy to enable businesses and community to cope and adapt to shocks such as natural disasters and tourism downturns.

Progress Measures

Sustainable Economy

These are the measures we agreed would tell us if progress is moving in the right direction for *Sustainable Economy*.

This report shows targets met or not met, as well as those that have remained steady at the 2012 performance level. The following table shows the 2012–2016 results. The Data Sheets referenced below provide the trend data supporting the outcomes.

✓ Target Met ➔ Performance Maintained ✗ Target Not Met

Sustainable Economy				
Objective	Progress Measure	Target	Outcome	Data Sheet
5.1 The Blue Mountains economy is vibrant and strong with increased local employment	Economic diversity of the LGA against the Economic Diversity Index	Increase	Not Available	Not Available
	Gross regional product	Increase	✓	DS 073
	Number of residents working within the LGA as a proportion of the total working population	Increase	✓	DS 001
	Gap in resident satisfaction and importance rating for generating local employment opportunities	Decrease the gap	✓	DS 074
5.2 The City is recognised nationally as an innovative learning region within a World Heritage Area	Gross regional product	Increase	✓	DS 073
	Number of student enrolments in Nepean Blue Mountains Community College	Increase	✓	DS 148
5.3 The City of Blue Mountains is a model for sustainable local business and tourism	Tourism visitation and length of stay	Increase	✓	DS 104
	Number of vacant shops in Katoomba and Springwood	Decrease	✓	DS 143
	Commercial and industrial occupancy rates	Increase	Unknown	Not Available

Sustainable Economy – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 5.1 The Blue Mountains economy is vibrant and strong with increased local employment

The Blue Mountains economy is relatively strong, with our Gross Regional Product (GRP) increasing from \$2.1 billion in 2011 to \$2.2 billion in 2015. A key issue going forward is how we will continue to strength and diversify the local economy.

The Council's recent Economic Strategy Round-table, the first step in development of an Economic Strategy for our region, highlighted the need to diversify our tourist offerings. Participants spoke of the need for greater wet weather and night time offerings, and to innovate our Blue Mountains tourist product by offering a more diverse array of experience based tourism, including adventure, food and cultural experiences.

Many Blue Mountains residents work in the LGA and this number is increasing with 42% of employed residents working in the City in 2011 (see Data Sheet 001). The number of local jobs has increased from 18,531 in 2006 to 20,313 in 2014. Blue Mountains residents have unemployment rates which are consistently lower than the average for Greater Sydney and NSW (see Data Sheet 025).

In December 2015 the unemployment rate in the Blue Mountains was reported to be 3.6% compared to an average for NSW and greater Western Sydney of just over 5%.

The diversity of our workforce is a great strength of the Blue Mountains. The proportion of residents who hold a tertiary or vocational qualification is high.

The Blue Mountains has a level of competitive advantage, with an industry location quotient greater than 1.5, for these industry sectors:

- Accommodation and food services;
- Arts and recreation services;
- Health care and social assistance; and
- Education and training.

This competitive advantage is reflected in employment of the workforce by sector in the Blue Mountains.

The relative advantage of the Blue Mountains for tourism is demonstrated by the 1.5 to 2 million people estimated to visit Echo Point every year. In 2016, visitation to the Blue Mountains has increased significantly. Much of the tourism in the City is based on our World Heritage natural setting.



The Blue Mountains has many attractions for domestic and international tourists but its topography limits opportunities for larger-scale events. Specific marketing strategies are required to showcase the agility of small group tours accessing a greater range of locations.

In 2015 42% of international tourists to the Blue Mountains came from the UK, USA and Germany compared to 24.4% for NSW. The proportion of visitors from China grew from 0.1% in 2006 to 5.5% in 2015. However, this proportion of Chinese visitors is much lower than the 16.6% represented for NSW overall.

A strong regional tourism body will boost the Blue Mountains competitive advantage in tourism. The Council is currently working with its Regional Alliance partners, Hawkesbury and Penrith Councils, to secure support for a new Regional Tourism Association which could attract funding from Destination NSW.

A key achievement has been Council's funding of the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE), operating since February 2013. The purpose of the BMEE is to support, advocate and promote the Blue Mountains' economy and facilitate sustainable growth, investment and job creation. While the BMEE works in partnership with all levels of Government and receives funding support from the Council, it operates as an independent entity.

Achievement Highlights

Sustainable Economy

BMEE helps grow the Blue Mountains Economy in three main ways:

- **Advocacy** – BMEE advocates to all levels of government on issues that impact economic development in the Blue Mountains. This includes submissions to local and state planning agencies on behalf of business, federal lobbying around critical issues such as the NBN roll-out and making the case for more funding, such as BMEE did on behalf of local arts institutions. You can read the full suite of BMEE advocacy documents on the website;
- **Investment** – BMEE works at a strategic level to attract investment into the region. Current projects include working to secure a tertiary education campus in the Blue Mountains, working closely with private investors scoping new tourism attraction development, attracting Government agencies to the Blue Mountains and the creation of a Smart Work Hub; and
- **Job creation** – BMEE works at an industry level to facilitate job creation in the region. Current industry-wide projects include the Creative Industries Cluster, the Bushfire Building Conference and Expo and the Local Food Industry Development Project.

BMEE is driving initiatives that build on competitive advantages in:

- Health and Well-being (including aged-care and disabilities);
- Creative Industries;
- Education; and
- World Heritage Industry Development (including tourism, food and bushfire building).

The MTNS MADE concept and logo was launched in 2015 to provide a mountains-specific branding for the many, often small, makers who produce hand crafted and unique products.

In terms of business connectivity, NBN roll-out as fibre to the node in Blue Mountains is scheduled to be completed by 2017. Linden to Mount Victoria is the first phase in 2016. Lower Mountains will be connected in 2017. This improvement in digital connectivity is essential for growth of small and large businesses in the Mountains.

See Data Sheets:

- DS 001 Residents Working In or Out of the LGA
- DS 006 Population – Education Status
- DS 025 Unemployment Rate
- DS 104 Tourism Visitation
- DS 143 Shop Vacancy Rates – Katoomba and Springwood



Objective 5.1 is supported by LEP 2015 Aim 2(m) to provide sustainable employment opportunities and strengthen the local economic base by encouraging a range of enterprises, including tourism, which respond to lifestyle choices, emerging markets and changes in technology, while protecting local amenity, character and environmental values.



Sustainable Economy – Key Council Contributions

Objective 5.1 The Blue Mountains economy is vibrant and strong with increased local employment

Helped to build a sustainable tourism industry

The Council supports the ability of the region to make the most of its relative advantage as a tourist destination and is very aware of the need to balance tourist and resident needs to get the best outcomes. Some of the Council's key projects supporting our local economy through tourism include:

- The Southern Scenic Escarpment Project linking attractions and expanding the range of options for visitors from Katoomba to Blackheath. It is providing more parking, toilets, accessible walks and new features such as night lit walking tracks and redevelopment of infrastructure like Katoomba Falls Kiosk.
- The Great Blue Mountains Trail from Katoomba to Blackheath developed with the support of funding from the Regional Development Australia Fund. The Trail links key tourist attractions through the townships of Katoomba, Medlow Bath and Blackheath, forming a cohesive and accessible route for walkers and cyclists. When complete it will extend to Mount Victoria.
- Visitor Information Centres at Echo Point and Glenbrook support additional tourism expenditure. In 2014–2015, the Echo Point Visitor Information Centre was rated by Destination NSW as the highest performing visitor information centre in NSW. They provide visitors with information, for example, about walks, attractions, accommodation, cafés, and when visitors know more about what they can see and do they spend more. Research has shown that the 90,000 visitors each year who get personal service from our Visitor Information Centres staff contribute an additional \$11.7 million to the local economy. Visitor Information Centres (VIC) also support visitors through an upgraded website which now has 5,000 website visitors every month, a fourfold increase. Our Visitor Information Centre staff are learning basic Mandarin to improve their ability to offer services to an increasing number of Mandarin speaking visitors.
- Council operated tourist parks at Katoomba and Blackheath support tourism by increasing the range of accommodation options available for overnight visitors.

Increased local employment opportunities

The Council has introduced a new business land use zone in LEP 2015, a business park located in Lawson, with appropriate development standards to encourage development and local employment generating opportunities.

The Council is one of the most significant employers in the Blue Mountains. In 2013–2014 the Council had the equivalent of 498 full-time employees representing about 2.5% of jobs provided in the Blue Mountains LGA. It provides employment opportunities covering a wide range of skills making it a cornerstone of local employment opportunity. The recruitment and retention of the best staff is an important element of the Council's ability to provide the best possible services for the community. The Council's Workforce Management Strategy has demonstrated its success in retaining staff and delivering a safe workplace.

Sustainable Economy – Key Council Contributions

Objective 5.1 The Blue Mountains economy is vibrant and strong with increased local employment

<p>Increased local employment opportunities</p>	<p>Support for employment opportunities for residents who may be disadvantaged in finding employment. The Council's Workforce Participation Strategy aims to break down barriers for people entering employment, especially those recognised as being from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some of the initiatives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job-shop began in 2012 to bring together in one place local employers, agencies that support people to find work or traineeships and people looking for employment. The number of people attending has doubled every year to nearly 400 in 2015. • Workshops for Aboriginal community members in partnership with TAFE to offer practical experience in an office environment. • Traineeship/Cadetship program targets skill shortages and the workforce management issues, such as ageing and diversity. 12–15 positions are provided each year, all targeted at local residents and in particular youth, and including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People and Women. The Council has expanded the program to include Cadetships, providing opportunity for full university support for local residents, while working in a key skill shortage area, such as Engineering. • Work for the dole program. The Council was one of the first to pilot this program in NSW and has now taken up three rounds. A third of the participants who were long-term unemployed local residents, gained paid employment after the first round working on the Great Blue Mountains Trail. • Opportunities to employ and mentor young people are a priority for the Council. Our Aquatic and Leisure Centres have developed a Junior employment pool, to assist youth to gain employment, which typically has 10 to 20 people less than 18 years.
<p>Established the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise to focus on generating ideas and initiatives for economic growth and jobs creation across the region</p>	<p>Council worked with stakeholders to establish and fund the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE) in 2013.</p>

Sustainable Economy – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 5.2 The City is recognised nationally as an innovative learning region within a World Heritage Area

The strategic importance of this objective is reflected in the two institutions now offering courses that lead to business and management qualifications. These are:

- The Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School in Leura in partnership with Torrens University Australia now offers business degree courses; and
- The Hotel Management Institute which is a partnership between TAFE: Western Sydney Institute and the Escarpment Hotel Group offer diploma and degree courses.

This long-term objective would be supported by further partnerships between educational institutions and business to develop learning opportunities in other areas related to the locational advantage of the region with a World Heritage Area.



Sustainable Economy – Key Council Contributions

Objective 5.2 The City is recognised nationally as an innovative learning region within a World Heritage Area

The Council has supported and promoted development of the City as a nationally recognised centre for creative industry, heritage and nature-based learning. It has grown the City's economic strength by focusing on its unique identity as a City of the Arts in a World Heritage Area

Operated the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, including the World Heritage Interpretive Centre, and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub, providing a vibrant range of cultural programs, exhibitions and performances.

Invested in looking after our heritage, including upgrading the Mount York Heritage Conservation Reserve, Braemar Gallery, and Heatherbrae House.

Completed the Gully Interpretative Walk in Katoomba



Achievement Highlights

Sustainable Economy

Sustainable Economy – Community and Council Achievements

Objective 5.3 The City of Blue Mountains is a model for sustainable local business and tourism

The Blue Mountains community has fostered a range of business initiatives that focus on sustainability, including:

- Slow Food Blue Mountains introduced the Change the Menu: Change the World concept in 2014 inviting food related businesses to demonstrate that they are sustainable. Businesses demonstrate that they use local produce, offer healthy options, recycle and compost or support food rescue. There are 65 local small producers and providers registered with Slow Food Blue Mountains;
- Cittaslow is a movement to identify the special qualities of a region. Katoomba was the first Cittaslow village in NSW. Together with the Slow Food Movement in 2015 it launched a Kitchen Garden in Every Home project to offer discounted seedlings from local nurseries and information;
- Blue Mountains Food Co-op has over 2000 members and offers local, organic, bio-dynamic and chemical-free produce, where possible;

- Local Food Directory developed by the local Food Project run by BMEE to encourage a greater use of local and regional produce by Blue Mountains cafés and restaurants; and
- Farmers markets.

Sustainable businesses sourcing local food and serving quality food is an integral part of the attraction for Blue Mountains visitors. Currently, 60.6% of visitors cite 'eating out' as a highlight of their visit.

As a companion to this, 39.3% identify bush walking and 36.8% visiting the national park as a key reason for their visit.

The Blue Mountains is fortunate to have 90 diverse events on community land each year. Events to attract new visitors and encourage overnight stays extend sustainable tourism in the mountains. Some key events which activate local precincts include Australia Day at Glenbrook, Ultra Trail, Running Wild, Six-foot Track Marathon, Woodford to Glenbrook Classic, Leura Gardens and Leura Village Fair, the Blue Mountains Music Festival, Ukulele Festival and Winter Magic.

Sustainable Economy – Key Council Contributions

Objective 5.3 The City of Blue Mountains is a model for sustainable local business and tourism

Council has supported the development of the Blue Mountains as a leader in responsible and sustainable tourism

Worked closely with tourism organisations to explore options for a sustainable regional tourism model into the future. Feedback was sought from Lithgow and Oberon Councils, Strategic Alliance Partners Hawkesbury and Penrith Councils, and the Blue Mountains Accommodation and Tourism Association, to initiate discussions at a strategic level regarding future regional tourism co-operation.

Continued to manage and invest in nature-based recreation on Council managed land, including implementing the nature-based recreation and tourism licensing system to protect sites used by commercial operators, and managing volunteer track work programs such as Trackcare, and implementing initiatives such as the Green Army project on the signature walking track, the Grand Cliff Top Walk.

Invested in tourism infrastructure, including installation of wayfinding and tourism signage, upgrades to the Grand Cliff Top Walk, and investment in renewal of Katoomba / Leura visitor infrastructure using the revenue from Echo Point pay parking.

Sustainable Economy – Key Council Contributions

Objective 5.3 The City of Blue Mountains is a model for sustainable local business and tourism

Council has supported the development of the Blue Mountains as a leader in responsible and sustainable tourism

Supported community events and festivals, processing event applications for events held on Council land and managing more than 280 tourist events every year.

Secured grant funding and commenced revitalising Katoomba Falls precinct and Southern Scenic Escarpment, successfully obtaining a National Stronger Regions Grant to support tourism infrastructure improvements. The Council has secured \$3.6 million from the Commonwealth Government towards revitalising Katoomba's existing tourism infrastructure and visitor experiences. The Council has also accepted the NSW Crown Lands funding of \$529,450 towards commercial buildings renewal at Katoomba Tourist Park and Katoomba Falls Kiosk.

Introduced new tourism land uses in LEP 2015 such as eco-tourism facilities, farm stays and short-term rental accommodation with a resulting increase in opportunities for the location of these tourism uses across the Blue Mountains.

Improved controls around tourism land uses in LEP 2015 such as increasing the number of bedrooms for bed and breakfast businesses.

Supported and strengthened local businesses

Joined the Small Business Friendly Councils Program, recognizing the importance of local small business sector as a vital contributor to the community and economy. The Council committed to:

- Implementing an "on time" payment policy to small business.
- Working with BMEE on the development and promotion of: an information leaflet, web page (one stop shop) on Council processes, requirements of small businesses, and encouraging new businesses to engage and join the Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber.
- Working with the BMEE to continue to support and encourage visits from small business vans into our town centres, and continue to engage with small business through chambers of commerce and township association groups.

Contributed to local business by supporting the Business Awards, the annual Business Expo, and providing subsidised rental accommodation to the Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber.

Increased business opportunities by introducing new land uses.

The people involved in Sustainable Economy include:

community

- Residents
- Creatives
- Visitors

council

- Blue Mountains City Council
- Adjoining Councils

government

- Arts NSW: a division of NSW Department of Justice
- Destination NSW
- NSW Department of Education and Training
- NSW Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Investment
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Treasury
- Office of Environment and Heritage
- Roads and Maritime Service
- Western Sydney Institute: a division of TAFE NSW

ngos and community groups

- Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise
- Blue Mountains Artists Network
- Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber
- Chambers of Commerce
- Town and Village Associations
- Slow Food Blue Mountains
- Cittaslow Katoomba Blue Mountains

businesses

- All Blue Mountains businesses



Blue Mountains Sustainability Model



together



Katoomba Office

2 Civic Place
Katoomba NSW 2780
Phone: 02 4780 5000

Locked Bag 1005
Katoomba NSW 2780

Springwood Office

104 Macquarie Road
Springwood NSW 2777
Phone: 02 4723 5000

Document Exchange
DX 8305 Katoomba

Council Email

council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Council Website

bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Have Your Say Website

bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au

contact

