

Annual Report 2017-2018



Acknowledgement

The City of the Blue Mountains is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. Blue Mountains City Council recognises that Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners have a continuous and deep connection to their Country and that this is of great cultural significance to Aboriginal people, both locally and in the region.

For Darug and Gundungurra People, Ngurra (Country) takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape – landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories and special places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings, and people: past, present and future.

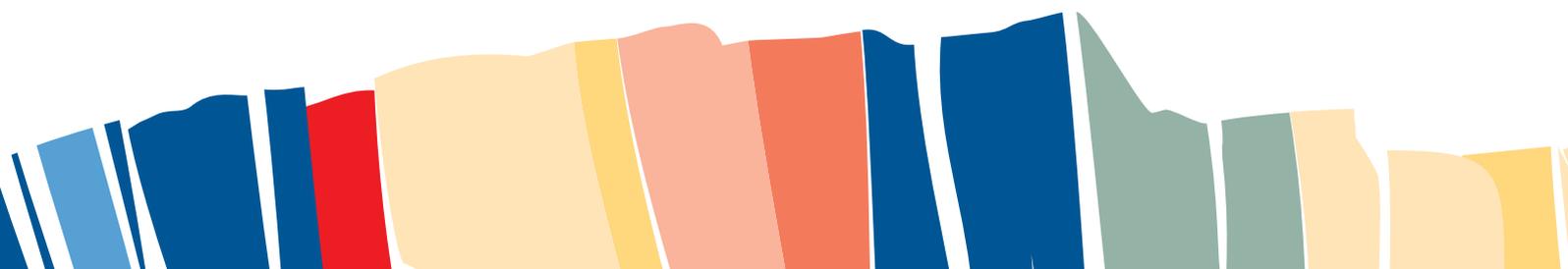
Blue Mountains City Council pays respect to Elders past and present while recognising the strength, capacity and resilience of past and present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Blue Mountains region.

Images supplied by:

Jasmine Zeleny (p76), Ian Brown (p64, p79), Wyn Jones (p89),
Meg Benson (p91), DW Noble (p109)

Cover image:

Street Art Walk Mural by Internationally Acclaimed Artist - Adnate



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Introduction



Message from the Mayor and General Manager



Mark Greenhill OAM, Mayor



Rosemary Dillon,
General Manager

On behalf of the Council, we are proud to present the Annual Report 2017-2018. This report highlights the performance and key achievements of the Council in the first year of its four-year Delivery Program 2017-2021. It also includes discussion of the key challenges we have faced during the year, some of which have impacted the delivery of commitments from our Operational Plan 2017-2018.

Importantly, during 2017-2018 we have continued to work in partnership with the community and other levels of government to build a sustainable and successful future for the Blue Mountains.

Overall performance in 2017-2018

The Council has performed well in meeting its core service delivery commitments for 2017-2018. The 2018 Community Survey results continued to show a high level of satisfaction with Council service delivery.

The Council completed 90% of Operational Plan actions, 81% of scheduled Asset Works Program projects and met 97% of its Fit for the Future Action Plan milestones. This was despite a significant amount of unplanned work arising from the need to increase the focus of the organisation on further strengthening our Work Health and Safety (WHS) and asbestos management.

Increased focus on WHS and asbestos management

In 2017-2018, the Council faced significant challenges and intense media, political, regulatory and community scrutiny, arising from allegations related to the organisation's management of asbestos, and to a range of matters including workplace safety and recruitment practices. The Council acted swiftly and responsibly to address these allegations through initiating independent investigations in November 2017 and working cooperatively with the Office of Local Government, SafeWork NSW and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

The independent Asbestos Investigation identified the need for improvements in Council's safety and asbestos management systems and processes. A range of recommendations were made including the need to review Council's framework for managing asbestos; implement a community and staff awareness, communication and engagement program in relation to the identification and management of asbestos; and develop a long term Asbestos Eradication Program. The Council resolved to fully implement all recommendations of the independent investigations into asbestos management and recruitment.

The need to identify and manage Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM) is a challenge faced by all communities and levels of government across Australia. For the City of Blue Mountains, asbestos presents a particular challenge due to many of our buildings and facilities ageing. In addition, the Council has to contend with significant amounts of illegally dumped asbestos in the thousands of hectares of surrounding bushland.

The Council has shown strong leadership and worked hard in 2017-2018 in addressing these challenges. Considerable progress was made in strengthening safety and asbestos management, including:

- Reviewing and adopting the Council's Asbestos Management Policy and Asbestos Management Plans and procedures;
- Improving our governance of safety and asbestos management in a range of ways including establishing Project Control Groups and reporting progress on the implementation of the Asbestos Improvement Plan to the Council on a monthly basis;
- Initiating a Multi-Agency Asbestos Management Committee, bringing together key stakeholders including SafeWork NSW, the EPA, United Service Union, Council staff, management and an elected body representative;
- Appointing a Chief Safety Officer to oversee the Council's asbestos management response and develop an internationally recognised safety management system;
- Establishing an Asbestos Response Team to manage small scale asbestos finds and remediation;
- Ongoing rollout of a comprehensive Asbestos Management Training and Awareness Program for Council staff;
- Expanding the Council's website to include easily accessible asbestos safety information; and
- Providing easy-to-understand printed health and safety information at libraries, community centres and waste and resource recovery facilities.

In 2017-2018, the Council also initiated a further review of its overall Safety Management System. This review will carry into 2018-2019 and will inform development of a fully certified management system that meets international standards (ISO 45001).

Launched Organisational Performance Review

In January 2018, the Council endorsed a comprehensive organisational performance review. The purpose of the review is to engage with staff and elected Councillors to develop a shared vision and action plan for improving organisational performance, and to strengthen our capability to anticipate and respond to challenges and opportunities.

Secured funding through Western Sydney City Deal

The Western Sydney City deal was signed by eight Western Sydney councils, including the Blue Mountains in 2018. The multi-billion deal between local, NSW and Australian governments will fund the development of the new Western Parkland City over the next 20 years and includes:

- A commitment to improve liveability in the region—directing more funding towards parks, open space and other community infrastructure;
- Targeted initiatives to create jobs and develop skills across the region; and
- New railway links, including the first stage of the North-South rail link.

Redeveloped district parks

During 2017-2018, Council continued to improve its four major district parks to provide higher quality public park spaces that are more accessible, inclusive and have a better quality of design and amenities. Significant achievements include:

- Opening a new junior playground in Glenbrook Park with inclusive play equipment and a heritage transport theme;
- Returning the rocket to Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park in partnership with the Rotary Club of Blackheath; and
- Constructing a new viewing platform, boardwalk and interpretative signage at Wentworth Falls Lake and a new, centrally-located toilet block.

Celebrated 5th anniversary of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre

The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre celebrated its 5th year of operations in November 2017. Over the last five years the hard work and dedication of Cultural Centre staff has established the Centre as the premier gallery space in the region and is recognised nationally for the quality of exhibitions, professionalism of staff and community engagement. The Cultural Centre has welcomed over 570,000 visitors since opening in 2012, making the Centre one of the most visited regional galleries in Australia.

Adopted key strategies

A significant amount of work was done during 2017-2018 on finalising and adopting a diverse range of strategic plans. These have been directly informed by the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035 and developed in consultation with community. They include the:

- Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategic Plan;
- Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan;
- Citywide Parking Strategic Plan;
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan; and
- Integrated Transport Strategic Plan.

Progressed Southern Scenic Escarpment program

The Council continued to improve the magnificent Southern Scenic Escarpment precinct to enhance the experience for locals and visitors to the Blue Mountains. Redevelopment of the Visitor Information Centre at Echo Point was approved by the Council in May 2018. In addition to the regular process of community consultation, the Council consulted extensively with First Peoples of Darug and Gundungurra Country on interpretive elements of the design. Work also progressed on the design and development application for the Katoomba Falls Kiosk redevelopment, and enhancements to adjacent natural area visitor facilities such as walking tracks and lookouts.

Upgraded waste management facility

Council completed a major upgrade to the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility in 2017-2018 with the construction of a new waste cell. This has extended the life of the landfill for another 2-3 years, while further approved stages are estimated to give the Blue Mountains community enough landfill capacity to last until 2034 at current rates of waste disposal. The excavation and lining works met stringent new guidelines that govern environmental protection standards for landfill facilities, ensuring minimum impacts to the environment, human health and amenity.



Excavation works at Blaxland Waste Management Facility



Design for Echo Point Visitor Information Centre

Supported community events

Every year, Council hosts a number of events and also supports a multitude of community-run events, all of which contribute to the vibrancy, health and wellbeing of our community, environment and local economy. In 2017-2018, the Council supported over 100 community events across a range of areas, from children's events and music festivals to ANZAC and Vietnam Veterans recognition activities, by way of direct funding or significant in-kind support with event planning and applications.

Some of the major events hosted by the Council in 2017-2018 include:

- The inaugural Live and Local event in Katoomba;
- Wentworth Falls Waterways Festival;
- Katoomba Solstice Celebration; and
- Official Tree Planting by the Hon. Julia Gillard at the Prime Ministers' Corridor of Oaks.

Improved transport and accessibility

During 2017-2018, Council completed 155,000 m² of road reseal, equivalent to approximately 20 km of road length. The Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program progressed, with a further 21,000 m² (4 km) of road sealing works completed during the year. Implementation of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Program continued in 2017-2018, improving the provision of safe and accessible pathways of travel for people of all ages and abilities.

Other highlights

- Successfully obtaining \$5.1 million in grant funding for a range of specific projects;
- Commencing re-development of the Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre. This facility is due for completion in 2018-2019;
- Completing a \$460,000 makeover of Knapsack Park to deliver an improved playing surface on the popular sports ground;
- Introducing local planning panels to determine contentious development applications; and
- Launching a new corporate website that is responsive, accessible, user-focused and contemporary.

Conclusion

The Council can be very proud of its performance in 2017-2018. As detailed in this report, an extensive range of services, facilities, projects and initiatives has been delivered to maintain and improve quality of life in the City of Blue Mountains.

Most importantly, the Council has demonstrated strong leadership in responding to a range of safety and asbestos management issues that arose during 2017-2018. The proactive action taken has ensured that the Council will continue to improve and strengthen as an organisation, fully committed to the safety and wellbeing of its staff and of the community that it serves.

On behalf of the Council, we sincerely thank the community, the elected body and Council staff for their support and contribution to all that has been achieved in 2017-2018.

As we move forward, the Council remains committed to our vision of building a sustainable and successful future for the Blue Mountains. We look forward to working in partnership with you all in 2018-2019.



Katoomba Solstice Celebration – Martin Foote

2017-2018 Highlights

lead

inspiring leadership

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- Increased focus on safety and asbestos management
- Signed Western Sydney City Deal
- Launched organisational performance review
- Progressed Regional Strategic Alliance
- Celebrated a Prime Ministerial planting in the Corridor of Oaks
- Improved records management
- Launched a new corporate website
- Engaged with our community
- Advocated against Western Sydney Airport
- Improved asset management
- Conducted community satisfaction survey
- Strengthened governance and risk management

protect

an environmentally responsible city

page
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- Invested in carbon reduction measures
- Received excellence award for Yosemite Creek restoration
- Adopted waste avoidance strategies
- Secured funding to enhance cycling and walking trails
- Launched Blue Mountains Fauna Project
- Managed invasive weeds
- Held community day to celebrate Blue Mountains waterways
- Managed our City's waste effectively
- Improved catchment health at Leura Falls
- Installed new toilet at Centennial Glen
- Partnered with Western Sydney councils to prevent illegal dumping
- Installed bio-filtration systems at Wentworth Falls Lake
- Hosted Annual Bushcare Picnic
- Drafted Water Sensitive Strategic Plan
- Connected kids with nature

care

an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

- Celebrated five-year anniversary of Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Katoomba Library
- Upgraded district parks at Glenbrook and Wentworth Falls
- Resurfaced Knapsack Oval
- Finalised Open Space and Recreation Strategy
- Celebrated NAIDOC week
- Contributed to Bushfire Building Conference and Expo
- Adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Returned rocket to Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park in partnership with the Rotary Club of Blackheath
- Delivered a diverse program of theatre events

care

an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

page 82

- Supported Children's Week
- Delivered City of the Arts Trust Grants Program
- Provided leisure opportunities for residents and visitors
- Installed new water refill stations in public places
- Collaborated on strategic direction for Aboriginal Advisory Council
- Provided a vibrant public library service
- Enhanced dog off-leash areas
- Conserved cultural heritage

live

a liveable city

page 92

- Secured funding from Liveability Program
- Exhibited draft Blaxland Masterplan
- Established Local Planning Panels
- Managed land use and building certification
- Updated spatial data to assist planning
- Commenced masterplan for former Lawson Golf Course
- Adopted Blackheath Masterplan
- Advocated to State Government
- Contributed to planning for Western City District

move

an accessible city

page 98

- Repaired and upgraded the City's road network
- Adopted Citywide Parking Strategic Plan
- Allocated additional funding for priority footpaths
- Adopted Integrated Transport Strategic Plan
- Launched Active Transport Review
- Supported road safety initiatives
- Undertook detailed inspection of road network
- Commenced planning for shared trail between Emu Plains and Glenbrook

thrive

an economically sustainable city

page 104

- Adopted masterplan for Scenic Eastern Escarpment
- Hosted inaugural Live and Local event in Katoomba
- Adopted Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan
- Enhanced visitor experiences through Destination Ambassador Program
- Supported local businesses to employ people with a disability
- Allocated funding to support continuation of Winter Magic Festival
- Hosted Katoomba Solstice Celebration
- Showcased our City at Vivid Sydney
- Launched Small Business Training Calendar

About this Report

The Annual Report is a key point of accountability between the Council and the community. It reports on progress made against the Council's 2017-2018 commitments in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, and describes how the Council is supporting achievement of the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035.

The report presents performance measure results for each Council service, and summarises annual achievements across the following key directions:



In accordance with the *Local Government Act, 1993* the Annual Report also includes required statutory information, and provides an overview of the Council's financial position.

More detailed information on the financial performance of the Council during 2017-2018 can be found in the Annual Financial Statements, a companion document to this report.

The Annual Report is one of a suite of documents that are legislatively required under the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The relationship between these various plans and reports is represented in the diagram below.

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK



Performance Snapshot



This section is a summary of the overall performance of the Council during 2017-2018. It outlines whether service delivery commitments were met, how well we performed financially, and describes some of the challenges we faced as an organisation. It also includes Council achievements as a result of the Special Rate Variation and progress against our Fit for the Future Action Plan.

Overall Results

Major Project Milestones

67% of Major Project milestones for 2017-2018 were completed as planned.

Major Projects are those one-off projects that have a significant capital component, require significant staff resources or involve extensive community consultation. These projects are usually delivered over more than one financial year.

The major projects for 2017-2018 were the Glenbrook Park Upgrade, Southern Scenic Escarpment Program, Wentworth Falls District Park Upgrade and Blaxland Waste Management Facility Upgrade – refer to Section 4 for more details.

Asset Works Program

81% of scheduled Asset Works Program projects were completed as planned in 2017-2018.

The Asset Works Program comprises those projects that involve the planning and construction of new built assets or the improvement of existing built assets, such as footpaths, signage, roads and community halls.

Approximately \$12 million was invested in Council-managed assets through the Asset Works Program in 2017-2018 – refer to the Appendix for more details.

Operational Plan Actions

90% of Operational Plan actions for 2017-2018 were completed as planned.

The Council committed to a wide range of actions and projects through its service delivery commitments.

Council delivers a diverse range of services to the community, from Aquatic and Leisure Centres to Waste Resource Management – refer to Section 5 for more details.

Fit for the Future Action Plan

97% of Fit for the Future Action Plan milestones for 2017-2018 were on target as at 30 June 2018.

The Action Plan was developed to achieve the NSW Government's Fit for the Future targets by 2019-2020.

In 2017-2018, Council completed 26 milestones from the Fit for the Future Action Plan - refer to the Appendix for more details.

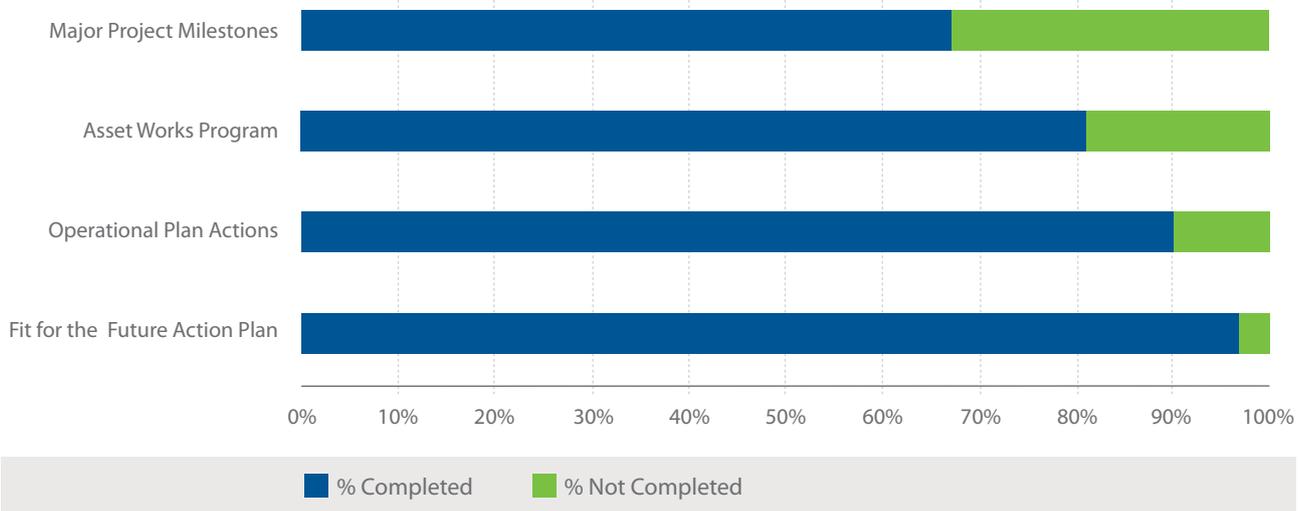
Delivery Program Performance Measures

68% of Delivery Program Performance Measure targets for 2017-2018 were achieved or were within $\pm 10\%$ of target.

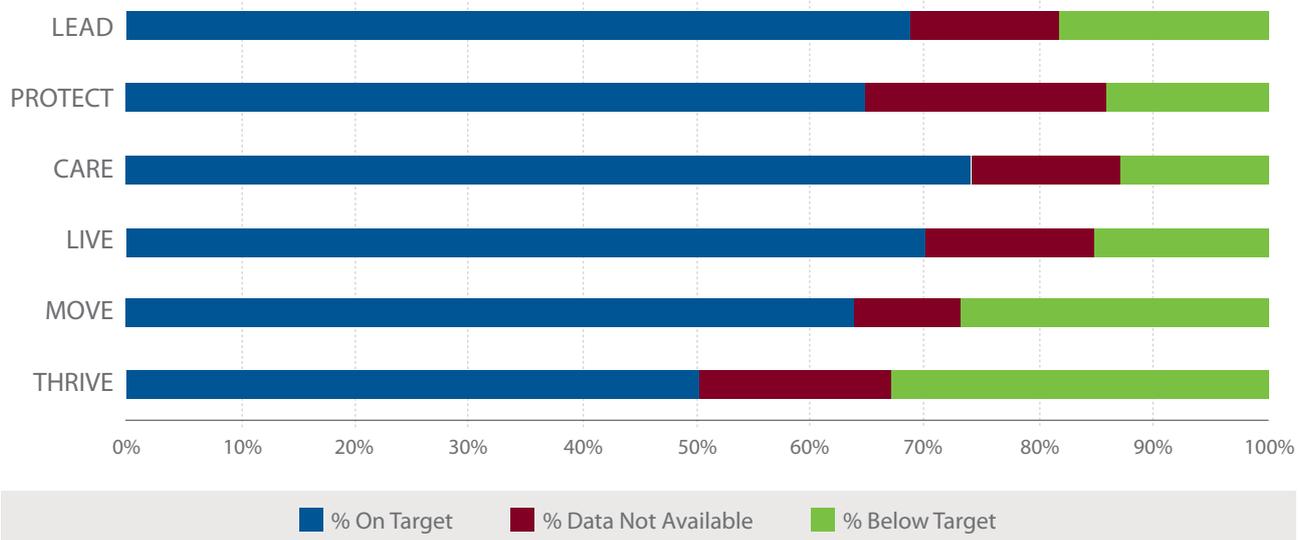
The Council has committed to reporting against 91 performance measures as detailed in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2017-2018. These assess Council's quadruple bottom line – in terms of governance, environmental, social and financial performance – and track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of service delivery outputs and standards. Together, they provide an indication of how healthy we are as an organisation and whether we are meeting agreed targets.

For example, the proportion of Blue Mountains residents who are library members is currently 52%, which is better than the NSW average of 41% – refer to Section 5 for more details.

Overall Council Performance



Performance Measure Results by Key Direction



Safety and Asbestos Management

The safe management of Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM) is a significant issue for all levels of government, and all businesses and communities across NSW. Like many councils, asbestos presents a particular challenge for Blue Mountains City Council due to the age of many buildings and facilities, illegal dumping and bushfires. It is a challenge that has been recognised by the NSW Government and the Local Government sector as a whole.

Background

Since 2012, significant work has been undertaken to strengthen safety and asbestos management within the Council and the City. This has included a gap analysis undertaken in 2012 of the Council's occupational health and safety standards against the new Work Health and Safety Act. This analysis identified the need to conduct a survey of all Council buildings constructed prior to the year 2000. Surveys were undertaken between 2013 and 2015 to inform the update of Council's Asbestos Registers.

In 2015, a major project to improve the Council's existing safety management system, including asbestos management commenced. The roadmap for this project was established using a 'maturity assessment' conducted in October 2015. This project in its initial phase concentrated on the revision of Council's suite of safety policies and procedures, improving incident reporting, refreshing safety consultation throughout the organisation and included the introduction of a new governance structure for safety management, including establishment of a Peak Safety Steering Group chaired by the General Manager on a monthly basis. These changes were designed to produce a more systematic approach to the management and oversight of safety.

The Peak Safety Steering Group is the principal internal committee for the governance of safety at the Council. Inaugurated in July 2016, held monthly and chaired by the General Manager, its objective is to assure the health and safety of Council staff, residents and the broader community. In 2017-2018, this Committee continued to oversee the maturation of Council's Safety Management System and how it is being embedded into day-to-day operations of the organisation to achieve the Council's vision for safety of 'Work Safe, Home Safe'.

Asbestos management challenges

In 2017-2018, media reports criticised the Council's approach to asbestos management relative to a number of specific construction sites and facilities. In responding to these criticisms, the Council resolved to implement an investigation, engaging one of Australia's most respected Work Health and Safety law firms (Clyde & Co.) to independently investigate the matters raised. This investigation resulted in four reports with recommendations. The Council subsequently resolved to implement all recommendations arising from these reports through developing an Asbestos Improvement Plan.

Asbestos Response Team activity during 2017-2018

An Asbestos Response Team was established in 2017-2018 to manage and remediate asbestos. Key achievements of the Team include:

- Responding to 412 asbestos-related incidents
- Assisting the Safework NSW re-visit program, involving up to 30 site inspections across the City
- Coordinating the licensed removal of 10 tonnes of friable ACM exposed by a bushfire at Mitchell's Pass, Glenbrook
- Removal of significant amounts of illegally dumped asbestos material from public land across the Blue Mountains LGA
- Removal of significant amounts of bonded asbestos material from workplaces and other Council owned assets

In January 2018, the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Gabrielle Upton, issued the Council with a Performance Improvement Order to improve asbestos management performance and management of other matters arising from the independent investigation report recommendations. The Council responded swiftly and positively, and reaffirmed its commitment to improving asbestos management systems and procedures. In 2017-2018, the Council has met all required actions of the Performance Improvement Order and continues to work in close cooperation with government regulating agencies.

Safety and asbestos management improvement actions

The key actions undertaken by the Council to improve safety and asbestos management in 2017-2018 include:

- Adopting the BMCC Asbestos Management Policy, Asbestos Management Plan and Asbestos Safe Operating Procedures in October 2017;
- Continuing the implementation of all recommendations of the Independent Investigation into Asbestos Management initiated by the Council in November 2017;
- Participating openly and cooperatively in all asbestos management related investigations;
- Adopting a transparent and rigorous approach to compliance and reporting, ensuring regulators and the Minister are apprised of all achievements against actions and timeframes adopted by the Council in its Asbestos Improvement Plan and against the Performance Improvement Order;
- Allocating significant funding for asbestos response and remediation work;
- Committing to the development and implementation of an integrated Safety Management System that aligns with international best practice standards with the goal of securing accreditation against ISO 45001;
- Appointing a Chief Safety Officer to oversee the Council's safety and asbestos management response;
- Ongoing rollout of a comprehensive Asbestos Management Training and Awareness Program for Council staff;
- Establishing an Asbestos Response Team to manage and remediate asbestos;
- Establishing a 24-hour Staff Asbestos Hotline to improve the ease of staff notifications of potential asbestos finds to Council's Asbestos Response Team;
- Initiating the Blue Mountains Multi-agency Asbestos Management Committee in February 2018 with major stakeholders including SafeWork NSW, the NSW Environment Protection Authority, the United Services Union, Council staff, Council management and an elected council representative;
- Improving the Council website to include easily accessible asbestos safety information for staff and community at www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/council/asbestos/;
- Providing easy-to-understand printed health and safety information at libraries, community centres and Waste and Resource Recovery Facilities;
- Reducing the Fees and Charges applicable to asbestos waste, placing these on a par with General Waste Disposal Fees, thereby encouraging residents and customers to declare asbestos waste on entry to waste facilities;
- Introducing the use of asbestos identification equipment for use by staff at Council waste facilities, to prevent asbestos material being dumped at facilities, unbeknown to staff; and
- Providing waste facility staff with updated information, fact sheets and other handouts to inform the public about safe disposal of asbestos waste.



Waste Material is Checked for Asbestos on Entry to the Katoomba Waste Management Facility

Did You Know?

Asbestos was commonly used in the past for various building purposes including roofing and guttering and is present in many older buildings across NSW. In the 1960s and 1970s, loose fibre asbestos was used in some parts of NSW as home roof insulation.

Many Council-owned facilities have Asbestos-Containing Material, as do approximately one-third of all homes in Australia.

It is only when fibro or other bonded asbestos sheeting is broken, damaged or mishandled that fibres can become loose and airborne, and may pose a potential risk to health.

Asbestos fibres can affect people's health when they are breathed in and enter the lungs; however small amounts of asbestos are present in the air at all times, and are being breathed by everyone without any ill effects – *NSW Health, Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District.*

Priority focus on Workplace Health and Safety and asbestos management

The health, safety and wellbeing of the Blue Mountains community and Council staff are of paramount importance. The Council is committed to good governance and leadership relative to safety and asbestos management.

Given the prevalence of asbestos within the Local Government Area, it is inevitable that potential Asbestos-Containing Material will continue to be found, reported and identified. The Council will, in such instances, respond appropriately in accordance with our Asbestos Management Plan and procedures, and take all necessary steps to minimise risks and address issues safely as a matter of urgency.

The Council is working hard to nurture a best practice safety culture. This includes a 'fair and just' approach to incidents in our workplace, empowering staff to raise safety issues and be heard in a supportive environment. This approach recognises that human error can occur and safety systems will always need to be continuously strengthened and improved in complex organisations such as local government.

Public inquiry

While the Council has shown strong leadership in responding to a range of complex safety and asbestos management issues, the Minister for Local Government announced a Public Inquiry into Blue Mountains City Council on 27 June 2018. The inquiry includes nine Terms of Reference and will investigate a range of governance matters including the Council's asbestos management.

The Council has taken the approach of fully cooperating with the Public Inquiry and is committed to participating in the proceedings in a transparent way. This will include presenting the outcome of related investigations as well as the Council leadership and actions to date in relation to safety and asbestos management.

Further information

Information on safety and asbestos management, regulations, disposal and health risks is available on the Council's website at

www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/council/asbestos



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Performance Snapshot

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Our City and Organisation

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Major Projects

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Progress Report

A

Statutory Information

Awards and Recognition

We received the following awards and commendations during 2017-2018.

Award Program	Award Category	Project	Placing
Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards	Natural Environment Protection & Enhancement: On Ground Works Award	Return of the bottomless pool in Yosemite Creek, North Katoomba	Category Winner

We presented the following awards to members of our community during 2017-2018.

Citizen of the Year – Carmel Higgins

Carmel has excelled in providing service to women’s sport, devoting her time to coaching, mentoring, and running netball in the Blue Mountains for almost 50 years.

Young Citizen of the Year – Andrew Gunn

Andrew has given up his time to make sure the Blue Mountains community is a safe, fun and accepting environment for everyone, but particularly for young people. Andrew has been an active and engaged Blue Mountains Youth Councillor since the start of 2016. During his time as a Youth Councillor, Andrew has provided great support for the youth congress ‘Project NOW’ which led to Andrew’s involvement in the Youth Summit radio program.

Community Achievement of the Year – Springwood Foundation Day Committee 2017

The Springwood Foundation Day Festival is a long running community event that celebrates Springwood’s heritage and showcases what it has become today. The 2017 event was a highly successful day with all funds raised going back into the local community.



Local Citizens of the Year Award 2018 recipients

Financial Performance Snapshot

A Financially Viable Council

The Council is financially viable and each year lives responsibly within its means by ensuring the annual cash budget is balanced against available revenue. Council has achieved a surplus cash budget result for the last 10 years.

Independent external auditors conduct an annual audit of the finances and have confirmed the Council's robust financial position and viability for the period 2017-2018.

The Council maintains an annual target for working capital of \$1.7-\$1.9 million (which meets industry standards) to manage financial shocks and day-to-day activities. In 2017-2018, the working capital reduced to \$1.4 million due to unforeseen additional expenditure, and will be raised to \$1.7 million during 2018-2019. Council has \$31.7 million in cash and investments in reserve. The investment balance at 30 June 2018 has reduced by approximately \$6 million from the previous year, partly due to the use of reserves to fund significant unanticipated asbestos remediation costs.

Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability

Council is in a strong financial position due to the implementation of its adopted Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability over a number of years. Council's improved financial position has enabled Council to be able to manage the significant financial shocks experienced in 2017-2018. Council has also been able to continue to implement the Six Strategies, including further debt reduction and a balanced cash budget. The operating deficit in 2017-2018 and future increases in depreciation will require adjustments to future years' budgets to achieve Fit for the Future targets and ensure Council is prepared for future shocks.

Simultaneously implementing each of the six strategies is critical to building a sustainable and successful future for our City. Progress achieved in 2017-2018 is summarised on the following pages.

SIX STRATEGIES FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



STRATEGY 1

Avoid Shocks

In 2017-2018, the Council continued to proactively implement financial planning to ensure we live responsibly within our means, manage risks and prioritise resources to achieve best value outcomes. Implementation of this strategy has positioned the City to better withstand costly unexpected events and continue to deliver quality services that meet community needs. This has ensured that in 2017-2018 the significant unexpected expenditure on asbestos remediation and investigations were able to be funded without a significant impact on service delivery to the community.

Under this strategy, the Council has also been implementing long-term asset management planning and enterprise risk management, achieved cash liquidity within the benchmark, developed a long term Workforce Management Strategy and allocated funds into reserves for renewal of high-risk assets and/or high-risk asset failures. This reserve was essential for meeting the immediate funding needs for asbestos remediation as the risk was identified.

The Council's Long Term Financial Plan has been developed to incorporate a Fit for the Future Action Plan 2017-2021, to ensure we meet the targets in 2019-2020 and continue to be sustainable into the future. In 2017-2018, the Fit for the Future Action Plan 2017-2021 was monitored and reported. The Long Term Financial Plan continued to be used to manage and smooth projected increases in costs and decreases in revenue. Four and one year planning and budgeting was aligned to the Community Strategic Plan and Long Term Financial Plan, with improved communication of financial strategies and plans, and improved strategic decision-making to avoid shocks.

STRATEGY 2

Balance the Budget

The Council has taken action to ensure it achieves a balanced or surplus cash budget each year. In 2017-2018 the Council ended the financial year with a Working Capital Result of \$1.4 million. This favourable result reflects the Council's strategic approach in implementing all Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability, despite unforeseen events.

Under this strategy, the Council is also building financial capacity to achieve a balanced Operating Result in all future years. The Operating Result (that includes depreciation costs and excludes capital items) is a key measure of financial health. It measures whether the Council has sufficient income to meet all of its expenditure requirements, including required funding to renew and maintain built infrastructure.

In 2017-2018, the Council had a deficit Operating Performance Result of \$5.0 million, even though the original budget was for a small surplus, building on the surplus result of \$6.2 million in 2016-2017. Considering the unforeseen challenges of 2017-2018, this is still a positive outcome compared to the budgeted and realised deficits of prior years, including -\$13 million in 2011-2012.



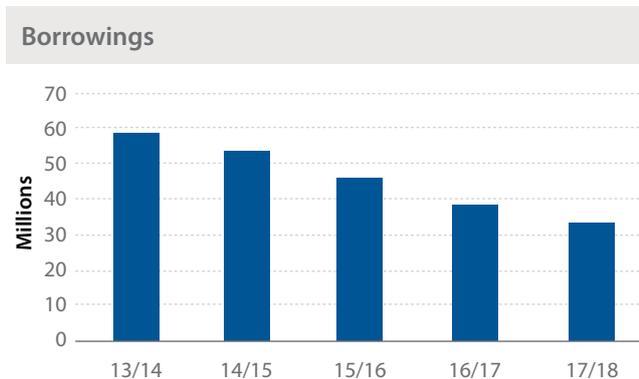
STRATEGY 3

Manage Borrowings Responsibly

Implementation of this strategy in 2017-2018 has resulted in the Council's borrowing position as at 30 June 2018 reducing to \$33.3 million, well ahead of the previously projected position. Council has achieved this debt reduction by:

- Stopping borrowing in the short to medium term, subject to annual reviews of borrowing capacity;
- Consideration of loans, only after a comprehensive business case and review of alternate funding options;
- Reviewing and refinancing existing loan interest rate terms and conditions e.g. renegotiation of lower interest rates;
- Using subsidised loan funding from the NSW Government where effective;
- Retiring and/or reducing debt by managing cash and cash equivalent reserve funds; and
- Directing any surplus cash funds to reducing borrowings wherever it is effective to do so.

Council has reduced debt continually over recent years as shown in the graph below. This is reflected in a significant reduction in annual borrowing costs.



As at 30 June 2018, Council had a total of \$31 million invested, the majority of these investments are restricted for specific purposes to fund known expenditure and cover identified risks.

The Investment Policy was reviewed and updated in 2017-2018 and after public exhibition was adopted on 17 October 2017. The new policy broadens Council's investment options, and states that Council is committed to the principles of environmental and social responsibility, embracing these principles in relation to its investments. Under the Policy, preference is given to investing with environmentally and socially responsible institutions, where:

- The investment is compliant with legislation and the Policy; and
- The rate of return is equal to comparable risk-based investments on offer to Council at the time of investment.

The responsible management of investments has improved the rate of return on the investment portfolio and resulted in \$4 million or 13% of the portfolio invested in environmentally and socially responsible institutions.

STRATEGY 4

Increase Income

This strategy ensures the Council maximises income, where appropriate to do so. Over the past six years, the Council obtained over \$119.7 million in grant and contributions funding for the community including the Australian Government Financial Assistance Grants.

In 2017-2018, the Council made a number of successful grant applications resulting in \$19.5 million in grant and contributions income. This income comprised of \$16.5 million in operating income and \$3.0 million in capital income from the NSW and Australian Governments and other agencies. \$4.5 million of the operating grant income was for an advance payment of the 2018-2019 Financial Assistance Grant.

Importantly, the Council successfully applied for a Special Rate Variation, which Council endorsed in June 2015. The Special Rate Variation applies over the four years from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019, generating an estimated \$30.4 million additional revenue. This will help stop the decline in the City's \$1.3 billion worth of built assets and fund required renewal and maintenance. The extra revenue will provide greater capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies, deliver successful environmental programs and improve services to community. In 2017-2018, \$7.5 million Special Rate Variation funds were spent.

In 2017-2018, the Council continued to review existing income strategies to ensure that revenue is maximised in an equitable as well as a business-like manner, resulting in improved income from Council's business activities. Examples of these include the upgrade of Council's commercial properties in order to maintain future rental income and the development and adoption of the Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan.

STRATEGY 5

Review and Adjust Services

This strategy involves the Council implementing ongoing service reviews in consultation with community to ensure we are providing quality, value for money services, responsive to changing requirements of the community. To support achievement of the service reviews, the Council adopted a Best Value Service Framework in 2013, updated in 2015. Service reviews and adjustments completed to date, with ongoing cost savings in 2017-2018, include:

- A service level trade-off tool developed and workshopped with Councillors, and a service model comparative analysis with other similar councils has been completed;
- A strategic internal review of the allocation of Special Rate Variation funding for 2018-2019 onwards;
- Update of outstanding rate debt-collection processes with improved rates and annual charges outstanding ratio;
- Town Centres and Economic Development and Tourism reviews;
- Desktop review of maintenance expenditure for commercial properties;
- Ongoing savings of approximately \$270,000 from the review of high energy use Council sites which resulted in a range of initiatives to reduce ongoing energy costs;
- Ongoing savings of approximately \$270,000 from the Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program;
- Improved management of corporate credit cards through improved procurement processes resulting in savings of approximately \$370,000;
- Implementation of comprehensive stock take procedures at stores, reducing costs by approximately \$25,000; and
- Increased revenue of approximately \$275,000 through price and operational adjustments in some retail operations.

STRATEGY 6

Increase Advocacy and Partnerships

This strategy involves advocating to other levels of government for a fair share of funding and reduced cost shifting, and building partnerships with others to achieve positive outcomes for the Blue Mountains.

Supporting achievement of this strategy, in 2015-2016 the Council formed a Regional Strategic Alliance (RSA) with Penrith City Council and Hawkesbury City Council. The councils are working together to strengthen strategic capacity, achieve economies of scale and efficiencies and a more unified approach to regional planning, advocacy and procurement.

The Council has advocated on behalf of residents on the following matters:

- Prepared a submission on District Plan for Sydney West;
- Met with Sydney Trains to Lobby for improvements to access and parking at Blaxland Station;
- Partnered with Office of Environment and Heritage, Museums and Galleries and Environment Trust;
- Participated in Waste Less Recycle More 2014-2017 improvements through surveys and interviews;
- Worked with member agencies of Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee and Local Emergency Management Committee;
- Established Western Sydney Airport Mayoral Reference Group and represented at a Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FOWSA); and
- Collaborated with seven Western Sydney local governments to provide input on the Western Sydney Deal.



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Financial Statement Summary

The Council's sound financial management has resulted in a surplus end of year cash budget result with a net working capital position of \$1.4 million as at 30 June 2018. The ongoing implementation of the Council's Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability and progress towards implementing the Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal has contributed to this result.

A summary of the financial statement is provided in the table below.

A Summary of the Financial Statements	2018 \$'000	2017 \$'000
Income Statement		
Total Income from Continuing Operations	118,535	119,320
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	120,295	110,518
NET OPERATING RESULT FOR THE YEAR	(1,760)	8,802
NET OPERATING RESULT BEFORE GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDED FOR CAPITAL PURPOSES	(4,742)	6,410
Statement of Financial Position		
Total Current Assets	36,237	44,841
Total Current Liabilities	27,306	26,366
Total Non-Current Assets	999,168	755,214
Total Non-Current Liabilities	32,205	34,840
TOTAL EQUITY	975,894	738,849
Other Financial Information		
Operating Performance Ratio	-4.37%	5.42%
Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio	83.52%	80.06%
Unrestricted Current Ratio	1.57 x	2.26 x
Debt Service Cover Ratio	1.70 x	2.59 x
Rates & Annual Charges Outstanding Ratio	3.73%	3.40%
Cash Expense Cover Ratio	3.37 mths	4.41 mths

How we financed our service delivery in 2017-2018

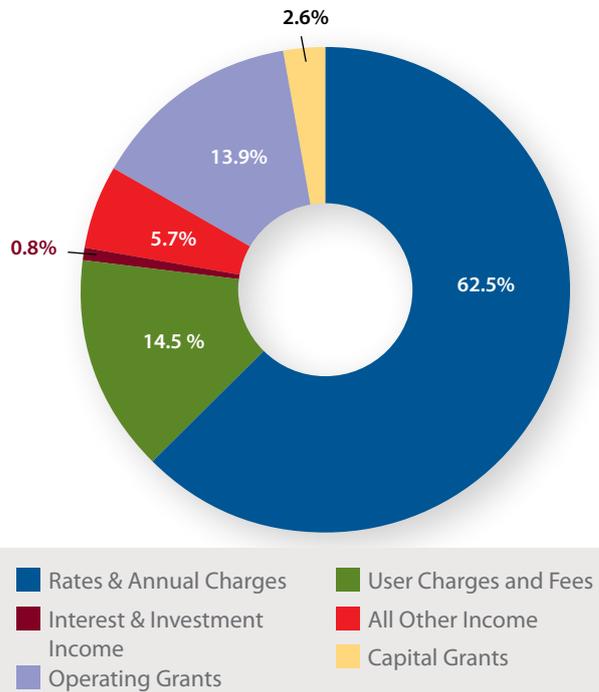
In 2017-2018, the Council received income of \$118.5 million:

- 62.5% (\$74.1 million) of the total came from rates and annual charges;
- 16.4% or \$19.5 million came from operational and capital grants from other levels of government supporting provision of required services and facilities; and
- 14.5% or \$17.2 million of total income was from user charges and fees.

Other income from Council business activities contributed the balance of \$7.7 million or 6.6% of revenue. Other income included:

- Interest and investment income of \$1 million; and
- Rental income of investment property of \$1.9 million.

2017-2018 Total Income **\$118.5 Million**

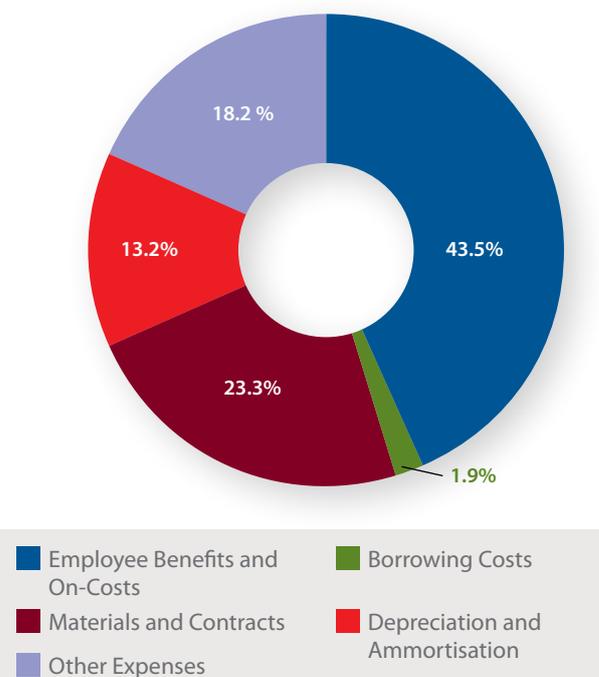


How we spent our money in 2017-2018

In 2017-2018, the Council spent \$120.3 million including:

- 43.5% or \$52.3 million was spent on staff employment to enable the delivery of an extensive range of services and facilities to approximately 80,000 residents across 27 towns and villages, and a growing number of visitors estimated at three million tourists per annum;
- Another 43.3% or \$52.1 million was spent on materials, contracts and other expenses to deliver a broad range of services to the community including emergency management statutory contributions, electricity, water, gas, street lighting, insurance, cleaning, waste management services and the increased cost from Asbestos Management and related legal costs; and
- 13.2% or \$15.9 million of costs relate to depreciation of assets, which allocates an asset's usage over its useful life.

2017-2018 Total Operating Expenses **\$120.3 Million**



How does our performance compare with previous years?

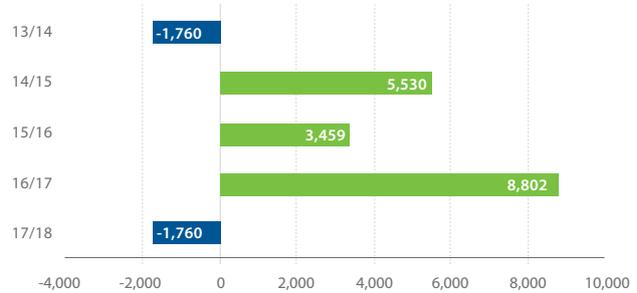
Net Operating Result including depreciation and including capital grants and contributions

The Net Operating Result measures whether the Council has sufficient revenue to cover its expenditure requirements (including depreciation). The net operating result includes capital grants and contributions as reported on the income statement in the Council's Annual Financial Statements.

In 2017-2018, the Council's operating result was a deficit (including depreciation and capital grants and contributions) of \$1.8 million, meaning the Council's expenses for the year was greater than its income. This means a drawback for the Council's positive operating results over the past seven years.

The decrease in the Net Operating result from the previous year is mainly attributable to the ongoing asbestos-related remediation costs of about \$8 million, including associated legal and compliance costs.

Operating Result (\$'000)
(including income from capital grants & contributions)



Operating Result including depreciation but excluding capital grants and contributions

This Operating Result measures whether the Council has sufficient revenue (when we exclude capital grants, capital contributions and other non-operating income), to cover expenditure requirements (including depreciation). It is the key measure of the Council's financial health and the best measure of financial sustainability. This result is used to calculate the Fit for the Future Operating Performance Ratio.

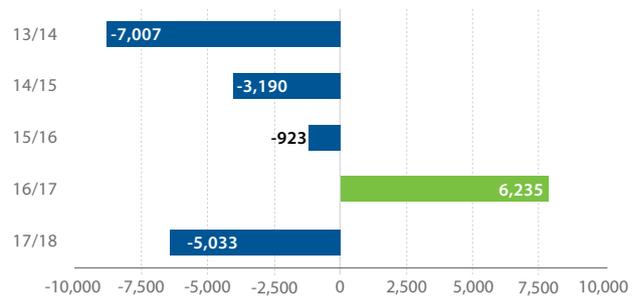
The key rationale behind this measure is that a Council has to have sustainable income sources to match its ongoing expenditure requirements (including asset life cycle costs). Income from capital grants and contributions, which is variable each year and used for one-off capital projects, is excluded.

The Council's Operating Result was a deficit of \$5.0 million. This is a significant deterioration to the previous year.

Although the Council balances the annual cash budget, it had an operating deficit once the required funding to renew built assets is included (i.e. depreciation) and variable income from capital grants is excluded. This operating deficit highlights that, generally, the Council does have the capacity to fund on an annual basis all of the required maintenance, renewal and replacement of existing Council assets (roads, drains, footpaths, swimming pools, libraries, parks etc.), however unexpected major events can impact the result negatively.

The Council has set a target of achieving a three-year average surplus Operating Result in 2019-2020 to be considered Fit for the Future. The Council can only be sustainable if operating revenues cover operating costs (including depreciation). Council has been steadily improving the Operating Result over the previous six years. As the 2017-2018 deficit is unfavorable, this indicates the Council will need to be cautious in reviewing and managing its expense strategies to achieve the three year average surplus from 2017-2020 for the Fit for the Future measure.

Operating Result (\$'000)
(excluding variable capital grants & contributions)



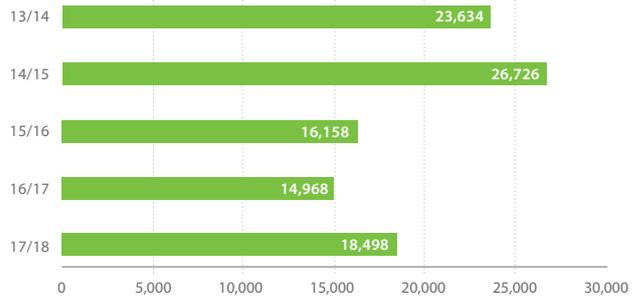
Investment in community infrastructure in 2017-2018

Maintaining a vibrant City and being responsive to changing needs and requirements of our community are key objectives. Major facilities such as the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Library in Katoomba and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood, funded with the assistance of significant grants from other levels of Government, provide key anchors for the revitalisation of the City, socially, economically and environmentally.

Capital expenditure of \$18.5 million in 2017-2018 reflects the Council's commitment and continued efforts to renew and provide required facilities in the City. Such spending includes large capital items such as improvements to the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility, improved Natural Area Visitor Facilities, road resurfacing, and the Swim Centre upgrades, as well as smaller items such as footpaths and playground equipment. Increased expenditure in 2017-2018 reflects the increased funding of asset renewals and upgrades.

Capital expenditure is made up of renewal, upgrade and new asset expenditure. This expenditure is determined by available funding from capital grants and contributions, and available operational income including additional income from Special Rate Variations.

Capital Expenditure (\$'000)



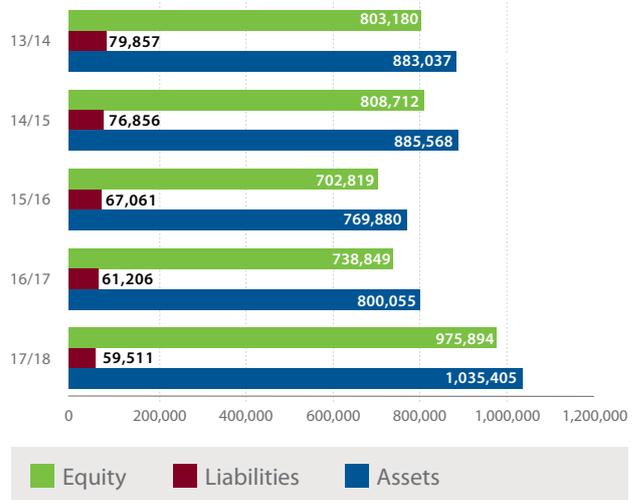
What is the Council's net worth?

The Council's total accumulated net worth is measured by its total equity or net assets position. The Council's net worth or net assets position shows the total amount owned (assets) less amounts owed (liabilities).

In 2017-2018, the Council had a favourable and healthy net worth of \$975.9 million as at 30 June 2018. This result was an increase in net worth of \$237.0 million from \$738.9 million in 2016-2017. The adjustment to assets and equity in 2017-2018 was due to a statutory review and revaluation of Council-owned assets.

The following graph compares the Council's net accumulated financial worth as at 30 June 2018 to our position over the past five years. Previously stable over the past period, the net worth of the Council has increased due the asset review. Liabilities have been steadily declining as debt is being reduced.

Net Worth/Equity (\$'000)



Council’s assets – infrastructure, property, plant and equipment

In 2017-2018, the Council continued its priority focus on reversing the decline in the City’s built assets.

Council owns and maintains over \$1.3 billion worth of infrastructure assets including roads, parks, buildings, stormwater drainage, bridges, footpaths, lighting, walking trails and lookouts. Much of the City’s infrastructure was built many decades ago, often with funding from other levels of government, and now requires significant renewal. These assets, used by residents and visitors every day, deteriorate over time and require ongoing maintenance or replacement.

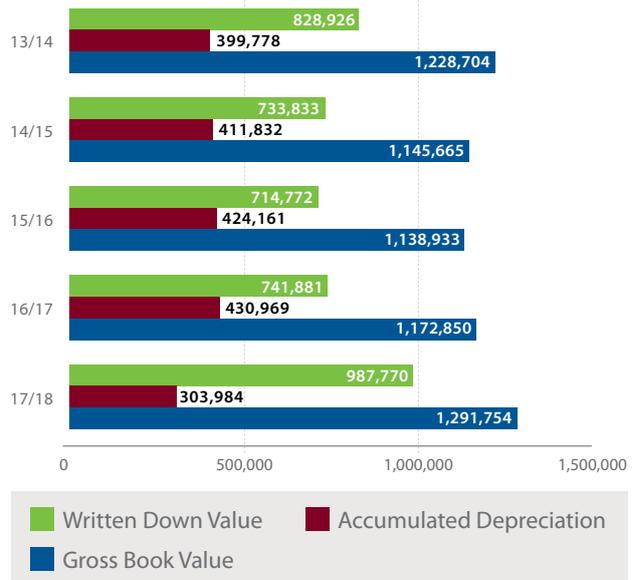
As shown in the adjacent chart, the Council’s \$1.3 billion worth of infrastructure has depreciated in its estimated value by \$304 million or 23% of its useful life as of 30 June 2018, to a written down value of \$987.8 million. Deteriorating infrastructure is a major issue for all NSW councils, with a report released in June 2014 by the NRMA highlighting a \$3.87 billion funding backlog needed to bring NSW council roads up to a satisfactory condition.

Economic and legislative conditions such as rate pegging, cost shifting from other levels of government, and increasing costs for materials and utilities are significant challenges for all NSW councils, including Blue Mountains City Council, and result in further restrictions on our ability to meet our existing and emerging community priorities.

As our population and demographics change, so do the demand for services and consumptions rates however Council’s resources to maintain these assets struggles to keep pace with these increasing costs.

These variance creates a backlog in the work needed to maintain these assets and raises the need to invest in renewal and maintenance programs to ensure we meet community needs and deliver on the agreed levels of service.

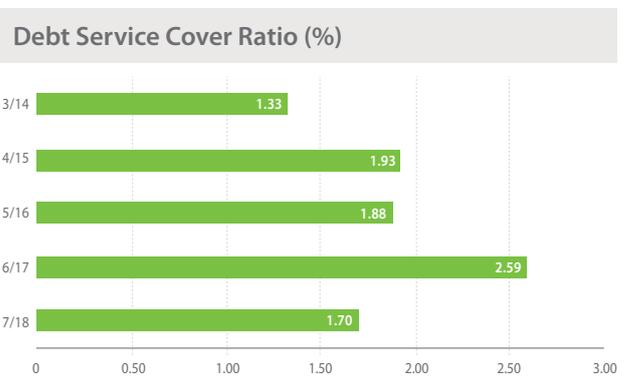
Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment - (\$'000) - Value



Key Financial Measures

Debt service cover ratio

This ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest and principal payments. It is calculated by dividing the operating result (before capital) by principal repayments plus borrowing costs. The benchmark target that the Council aims to achieve is a minimum ratio of 2.0 or greater. In 2017-2018, the Council's Debt Service Ratio Cover was approximately 1.70x. The Council is committed to managing borrowings responsibly, which is one of our strategies to improve financial sustainability. There has been an improvement over the past few years in this ratio, however due to the low operating result, the Council has fallen below the benchmark of 2%.

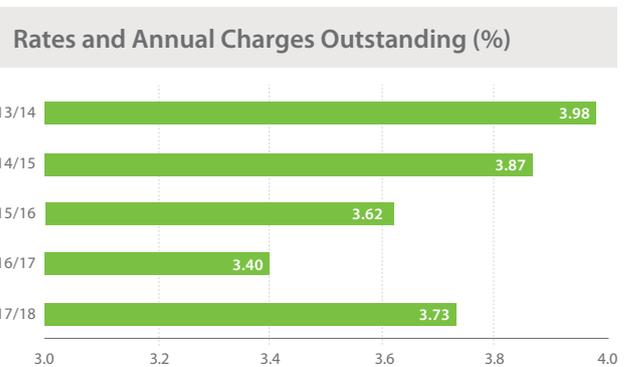


Rates and annual charges outstanding

The rates and annual charges outstanding ratio is calculated from the amount of rates and annual charges outstanding as a percentage of the rates and charges collectible. The ratio measures the adequacy of Council's debt recovery practices. It also measures the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity.

The Council has maintained a strong recovery rate, with 3.73% outstanding rates and annual charges as at 30 June 2018. This compares favourably with the industry benchmark of 5 percent.

The ratio indicates that a high proportion of residents are managing to pay their rates on time. Given that rates and annual charges comprise more than half of Council's revenue to fund the delivery of services and facilities, it is critical that this ratio is maintained within the benchmark. The circumstances of individual ratepayers are considered when determining any collection action.



Fit for the Future Report

In response to the requirements of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for Fit for the Future (FFTF), the Council has a FFTF action plan for achieving financial sustainability, effective management of infrastructure and efficient best value service delivery into the future. Given the unexpected events and increased cost, the Council will need to review its course to meet benchmarks by 2019-2020. Key improvement strategies include:

- Implementing the Council’s Asset Management Improvement Program including improving asset information systems, improved information for asset planning, strengthening whole-of-life cycle strategic asset management to ensure optimal allocation of funding extends the life of assets and reduces long-term costs; and
- Continuing to implement the Council’s Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability, including ongoing community engagement on required and affordable levels of service and implementing best value service reviews.

Key Financial Measures

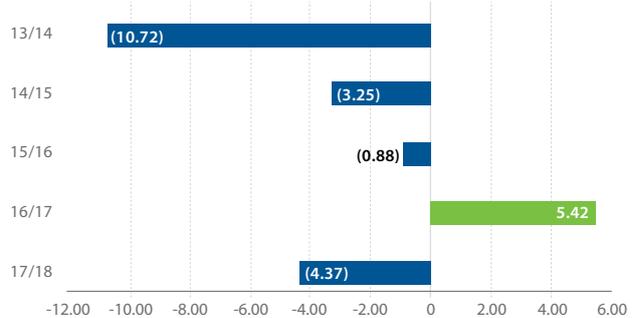
Operating performance ratio

This ratio measures whether the Council has sufficient sustainable income to meet its ongoing expenditure requirements (including asset life cycle costs and excluding capital grants and contributions). It is calculated by dividing the operating result (excluding capital items) by total revenue.

The benchmark target that should be aimed for is a ratio greater than zero percent. The Council’s result has deteriorated significantly in 2017-2018 to -4.37%. This indicates revenue does not sufficiently cover expenditure requirements due to above mentioned unforeseen issues. The improvement in this measure achieved in previous periods since 2012-2013 is a result of the Council implementing its Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability. Continued implementation of these strategies and the Fit for the Future Improvement Action Plan will help to achieve the target ratio of 0% or better in future years.

There is a significant improvement in the operating performance ratio from 13-14 to 16-17 however due to the previously mentioned financial challenges 2017-2018 resulted in a deficit.

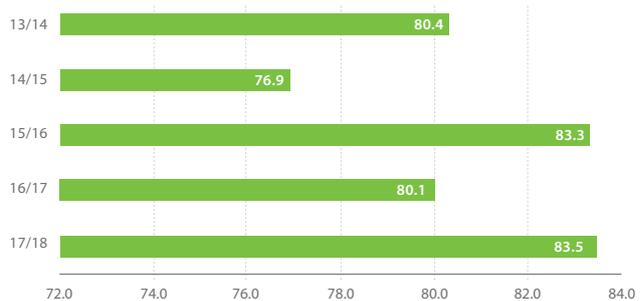
Operating Performance Ratio (%)



Own Source Revenue ratio

This ratio measures the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. It is calculated by dividing total operating revenue (excluding capital revenue) by total operating revenue. The benchmark is a ratio greater than 60%. The Council’s result is 83.5% in 2017-2018, which continues to be well above the benchmark of 60%.

Own Source Revenue Ratio (%)



Building and Infrastructure asset renewal ratio

The building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio is the Council's ability to fund the renewal of road, drainage and building assets relative to the amount of funding projected to be required as measured by depreciation. The ratio is calculated by dividing Building and Infrastructure asset renewal expenditure by Building and Infrastructure asset depreciation. The NSW Government's Fit for the Future benchmark for the Building and Infrastructure asset renewal ratio is 100%. The Council currently is on a good way to meeting this benchmark with a result of 33.1% in 2017-2018. The Infrastructure renewal included in the Council's Special Schedule 7 – Report on Infrastructure Assets is \$4.1 million compared to Infrastructure depreciation of \$12.5 million.

Additional funds are planned to be continuously allocated to Infrastructure renewal in future years from additional Special Rate Variation funds.

Infrastructure backlog ratio

The infrastructure backlog ratio is calculated by the estimated cost to bring infrastructure assets to a satisfactory condition, as a percentage of the total value of infrastructure assets. This ratio shows what proportion the asset backlog is against the total value of a Council's infrastructure. This ratio is calculated by dividing the estimated cost to bring infrastructure assets to a satisfactory standard by the carrying value of the assets. The NSW Government's Fit for the Future benchmark for the Infrastructure Backlog Ratio is less than 2%. The Council has met this benchmark with a result of 1.99% in 2017-2018. The Infrastructure Backlog included in the Council's Special Schedule 7 – Report on Infrastructure Assets is \$15.5 million.

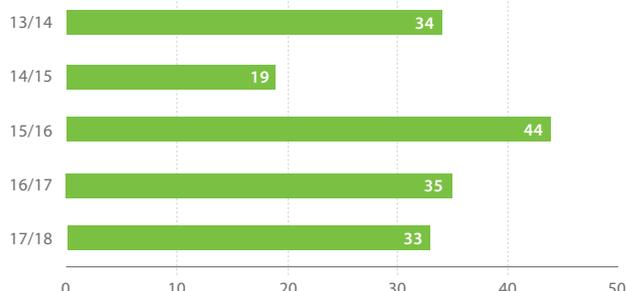
This result is based on the best available data. As the systems and data quality improve, we will be more informed about how best to target expenditure to manage and optimise the life of our assets most cost effectively.

Addressing the City's infrastructure funding gap and backlog will require focused attention over the next 10 years. The Long Term Financial Plan forecasts that the infrastructure backlog will reduce as a result of increased income from the Council's 2015 Special Rate Variation being available for asset renewal. Key strategies to address the infrastructure backlog include:

- Implementing "whole of lifecycle" asset management to understand when money needs to be allocated to renew and maintain assets most cost effectively and to extend their lives;
- Targeting Special Rate Variation expenditure to addressing renewal of assets with high residual risk;

This will improve future Building and Infrastructure renewal ratio results and achieve a substantial improvement in the three year average at 2019-2020 so that we achieve the Fit for the Future target.

Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio (%)



- Continuing to engage community on required and affordable levels of service; and
- Improving the sophistication of strategic asset management planning to assist in identifying more cost- effective and efficient treatment options into the future.

The key outcome from implementing these strategies will be reducing the Infrastructure Backlog by 2019-2020.

Infrastructure Backlog Ratio (%)



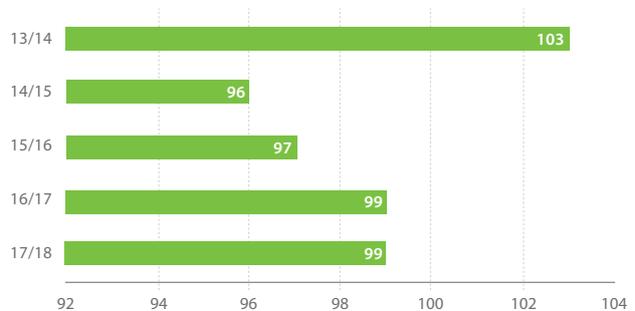
Asset maintenance ratio

The Asset Maintenance ratio reflects the actual asset maintenance expenditure relative to the required asset maintenance. The ratio is calculated by dividing actual asset maintenance by required asset maintenance. The ratio provides a measure of the rate of asset degradation (or renewal) as it shows whether the Council is fulfilling all its maintenance requirements, or allowing some assets to degrade.

The benchmark has been a ratio of greater than 1, which would imply that the Council's asset maintenance expenditure meets or exceeds requirements (and therefore the Council is maintaining or reducing its infrastructure backlog). On the basis of current data the Council has achieved a ratio of close to 1.0 in 2017-2018, which indicates it is allocating sufficient resources to maintain assets to a satisfactory standard agreed with the community. The NSW Government's Fit for the Future benchmark for the Asset Maintenance Ratio is a target of improving towards 100% average over three years by 2019-2020. The Council's Long Term Financial Plan projects that this ratio to will have a three year average close to 100% in the 2019-2020 financial year and therefore will meet the Fit for the Future benchmark.

The Asset maintenance ratio is being maintained close to the benchmark of 100% over the past few years, and with the Long Term Financial Plan ensuring adequate funds are allocated to asset maintenance, the benchmark should be achieved in future years.

Asset Maintenance Ratio (%)

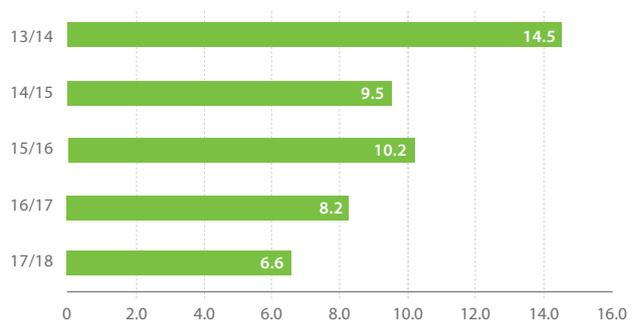


Debt service ratio

The debt service ratio is the percentage of the Council's total revenue used to service debt. The ratio is calculated by dividing loan interest and principal repayments by operating revenue. The NSW Government's Fit for the Future benchmark for the debt service ratio is less than 20%. The Council currently meets this benchmark with a result of 6.6% in 2017-2018. This positive ratio is as a result of implementing the actions in Strategy 3 - Manage Debt Responsibly of the Council's Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability.

There has been a steady improvement in the debt service ratio over the past few years due to Council's debt reduction strategy and the ratio is well within the benchmark of 20%.

Debt Service Ratio (%)

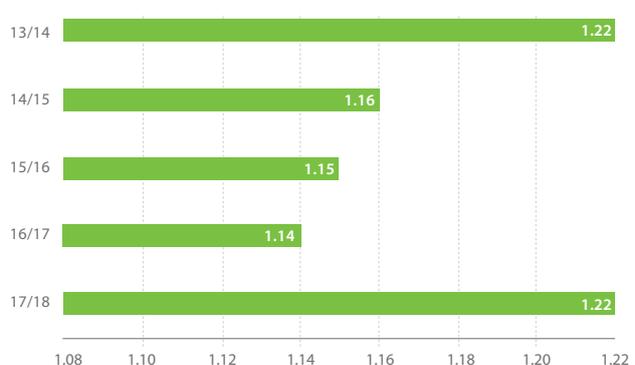


Real Operating expenditure per capita

The Council's real operating expenditure per capita indicates how well the Council is utilising economies of scale and managing service levels to achieve efficiencies. The NSW Government's Fit for the Future benchmark is a decrease in real operating expenditure over time. The ratio is calculated by dividing operating expenditure (discounted to the base year equivalent amount) by population, after excluding service improvements, such as additional Special Rate Variation funds, after the base year of 2014-2015. The City has a low rate of population growth historically which makes this ratio slow to reduce over time.

The Council has achieved a steady reduction in real operating expenditure per capital over the previous four years, and has deteriorated to a ratio of 1.22% in 2017-2018 due to the above named unexpected issues.

Real Operating Expenditure per Capita (%)



Special Rate Variation

Special Rate Variation 2013

In 2013, the Council received approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to continue a Special Rate Variation for asset renewal and maintenance. These additional funds were used to support the Asset Works Program, and have contributed to reducing projected deterioration of priority public infrastructure.

The following table provides a summary of expenditure in 2017-2018 from the 2013 Special Rate Variation, including outcomes achieved.

Special Rate Variation 2013 Expenditure (\$'000)

Service	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual expenditure	Outcomes
SV 2013 OPERATING EXPENDITURE				
Transport & Public Access	248	248	248	Continued road vegetation maintenance program
Parks, City Presentation	282	282	282	Continued maintenance program for parks and town centres
Resource Recovery & Waste Resource Management		362	362	Katoomba Waste Management Facility asbestos remediation
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	530	892	892	
SV 2013 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
Transport & Public Access	1,510	1,901	1,816	Roads resealing, installation of seven new kerb ramps, Loftus St pedestrian refuge relocation and footpath construction
Water Resource Management	170	300	105	Jamison Creek catchment stormwater drainage infrastructure renewal. Outlet treatment improvement works at David Street, Wentworth Falls. Stormwater drainage upgrade projects in Hazelbrook to minimise potential localised flooding

Service	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual expenditure	Outcomes
Community Development		63	59	Repair of structural damage on Warrimoo Community Hall brickwork. Removal and replacement of asbestos-containing electrical boards at Mt Riverview, Faulconbridge and Blackheath Community Halls.
Sport & Recreation	40	25	0	Springwood town centre park project was deferred to 2018-2019
Resource Recovery & Waste Resource Management		114	4	Fencing of old Blackheath tip
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	1,720	2,402	1,984	
SV 2013 TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,250	3,294	2,876	



Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program - Peach Tree Rd, Megalong Valley

Special Rate Variation 2015

Council began implementation of a further Special Rate Variation in July 2015, following approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and majority community support. These additional funds provide greater capacity for renewal and maintenance of existing built assets (such as roads, drainage, parks and town centres), improvement of emergency preparedness and response, continuation of environmental programs previously funded by the Environment Levy, and improvements to community services and facilities.

In 2017-2018, funds from the Special Rate Variation were allocated to programs and projects through a best-value business case assessment process. The table below shows a summary of the allocation, and actual expenditure for the year.

Special Rate Variation 2015 Expenditure (\$'000)

Service	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual expenditure	Variance
SV 2015 OPERATING EXPENDITURE				
BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE	2,788	1,889	1,905	16
Transport & Public Access	1,825	942	614	-328
Water Resource Management	267	171	138	-33
City Presentation, Economic Development & Tourism	275	272	303	31
Other (inc. operational buildings, asset management)	421	504	850	346
ENVIRONMENT	1,359	1,376	1,479	103
Natural Environment	1,265	1,235	1,338	103
Natural Area Visitor Facilities	94	140	140	-
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE	196	209	209	-
Emergency Management	196	209	209	-
COMMUNITY & RECREATION	421	273	165	-108
Community & Cultural Programs and Facilities	218	208	129	-79
Sport, Recreation & Aquatic Facilities	203	65	36	-29
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURE	4,763	3,746	3,757	11

Service	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual expenditure	Variance
SV 2015 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE	2,138	2,862	2,247	-614
Transport & Public Access	1,295	1,144	1,010	-134
Water Resource Management	198	448	325	-123
City Presentation, Economic Development & Tourism	560	950	625	-325
Other (inc. operational buildings, asset management)	85	320	288	-32
ENVIRONMENT	682	174	157	-17
Natural Area Visitor Facilities	682	174	157	-17
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE	184	187	173	-14
Emergency Management	184	187	173	-14
COMMUNITY & RECREATION	1,349	1,686	954	-733
Community & Cultural Programs and Facilities	555	503	183	-320
Sport, Recreation & Aquatic Facilities	794	1,183	770	-413
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	4,353	4,908	3,530	-1,378
Reserves adjustment	1,211	230	230	-
SV 2015 TOTAL EXPENDITURE	10,327	8,885	7,517	-1,367



Bike Week Activities

This section presents key outcomes from the 2015 Special Rate Variation expenditure in 2017-2018.

Built infrastructure

Street sweeping

Council has continued to achieve noticeable results in 2017-2018 with the operation of an additional sweeper truck funded by the Special Rate Variation. By proactively reducing the debris entering our drains and pits we are able to reduce the risk of localised flooding.

Over the past 12 months our sweepers have completed approximately 4,700,000 m of kerb and gutter sweeping, and over 1,180,000 m² of sealed road sweeping across the Blue Mountains. In comparison to the 2015-2016 financial year, we have completed an additional 1,024,163 m of sweeping.

Heavy patch team

With the addition of a second heavy patch team we have completed 8,894 m² of heavy patch repairs and 6,996 m of crack sealing work. The heavy patching will extend the life of Council's sealed roads by ensuring water does not penetrate into the subgrade, and improve the ride quality for road users. The crack sealing also keeps water out of the subgrade and extends the life of the roads.

Sealing of unsealed roads

The Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program was conducted in three stages in 2017-2018. Stage 1 was the sealing of Cliff Lane, Kerslake Street, Brisbane Lane, Popes Lane and Hargraves Street in Blackheath, and Trow Avenue in Katoomba, totalling approximately 1,500 m² of road sealed. Stage 2 was the sealing of Landscape Road, Bedford Road and Riches Avenue in Woodford, and Lake Road and Heron Place in Hazelbrook, equating to approximately 4,690 m² of road sealed. Stage 3 was the sealing of 2.2 km of Peach Tree Road, Megalong Valley which was approximately 12,540 m² of road sealed. In total, 18,730 m² of unsealed roads were sealed in 2017-2018. This will significantly reduce Council's maintenance grading and has greatly improved resident satisfaction in these areas.

Great Blue Mountains Trail

The extension of the Great Blue Mountains Trail (a shared path for cyclists and pedestrians) from Blackheath to Mt Victoria includes upgrading footpaths in Blackheath, constructing a new path beside the Great Western Highway and using existing infrastructure, including parts of the old highway. Design works were completed in 2017-2018, with construction to be completed in 2018-2019. It is part-funded by the Special Rate Variation with additional funding from NSW Government grants.

Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP)

Renewal and upgrade of footpath/bike infrastructure as outlined in PAMP 2025 occurred as a result of Special Rate Variation funding. Delivery of high priority infrastructure improvements in identified key locations across the City included kerb blisters, pathways, pedestrian crossings, ramps, warning signs, hand rails and pavement markings. This project delivered priority works from Faulconbridge to Lapstone in 2017-2018. The works are renewal in nature and generally consist of new kerb ramps, updating non-complaint signage and pavement markings.

Woodford to Linden cycle path

This project will deliver a shared off-road/on-road cycle route from Woodford to Linden, to support priorities identified in the Blue Mountains Bike Plan 2020. Works commenced in 2017-2018 and are expected to be completed by December 2018.

Precinct pavement cleansing program

Improvements continue to be made to precinct cleansing and pressure washing of town centres. This has also been improved with an investment in a truck-mounted system that has made access to areas easier. The program continues to be expanded to include bus shelters and other high-profile areas.

Sports and amenities cleansing

A comprehensive cleansing service has been provided to sporting amenities blocks, which has been warmly received by users. Furthermore, the additional resources available through the Special Rate Variation have allowed for improved services to high-profile areas such as Echo Point, Katoomba and Leura during peak visitation periods.

Survey equipment upgrade

Special Rate Variation funds enabled the purchase of a new total station instrument to replace redundant equipment, a new controller so the instruments are compatible with existing GPS receivers and upgraded software. This equipment has greater capability and will deliver large efficiencies and more comprehensive data. Stockpile certification, roads and earthworks can be surveyed more effectively with this instrument and it is up to 50% faster than the previous equipment.

Strategic service review

As part of the strategic review of Council's service portfolio, we have developed a number of tools to assist with service and asset planning. This includes an impact analysis tool that uses the Council's adopted best value criteria to assess and rank the impact of service changes and/or projects. This will assist the Council to ensure we are providing value for money services that meet community needs effectively and efficiently.

Volunteer park care program

This project provides an avenue for volunteers to offer their time providing maintenance activities at selected park locations. The Council has continued its support for current volunteer programs in parks and town centres in Winmalee, Springwood, Hazelbrook, Katoomba and Blackheath. During 2017-2018, additional groups in Woodford, Leura, Katoomba and Blackheath were also established and supported.

Environment

Bushland management

The Council manages over 6,100 hectares of bushland. These areas make a significant contribution to the conservation of significant flora and fauna, community health and wellbeing, and the tourism industry. Activities funded through the Special Rate Variation include bush regeneration, wetland restoration, weed control, re-plantings, and erosion management works in 132 reserves as part of the restoration of the following landscape conservation programs:

- Lower Blue Mountains Shale Sandstone Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program;
- Upper Blue Mountains Plateau Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program; and
- Sandstone Granite Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program.

These programs improved the condition of important habitat for threatened species such as the Powerful Owl in the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest, the endangered *Leucopogon fletcheri* in Winmalee, and the Blue Mountains Water Skink and Giant Dragonfly in swamp systems such as The Gully, South Katoomba, Wentworth Falls Lake, South Lawson Creek and Jamison Creek, Wentworth Falls.

Other key outcomes for 2017-2018 include:

- Providing technical advice to support remediation works on private properties containing Blue Mountains Swamp and Shale-based endangered ecological communities;
- Soil conservation works as part of the restoration of degraded landscapes at North Katoomba and North Leura quarries, Knapsack Park, Glenbrook and East Blaxland;
- Revegetation works to restore the wildlife corridors that link fragmented areas of native vegetation across nine degraded and eroding sites;
- Expanding the events-based Bushcare program; and
- Delivering and refining a Council-wide, systematic approach to improve compliance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and provide staff training in best practice environmental management.

Priority and environmental weed control

Council undertook an Urban Weeds Public Lands Program targeting highly invasive weeds in urban areas across all townships in the Local Government Area, integrating this work with the private lands inspection program.

Key outcomes in 2017-2018 include:

- Undertaking 3,941 private property inspections as part of the city-wide Biodiversity Conservation Program;
- Commencing a control program for Frogbit, a highly invasive state significant weed;
- Delivering the public lands weed control program, focusing on high priority public open spaces impacted by dense infestation of highly invasive weeds;
- Carrying out on-site visits to provide bushland conservation and weed management advice to residents as part of the Resident Weed Support program; and
- Continuing to control invasive weeds in the agricultural landscape on public lands as well as undertaking a comprehensive property inspection program.

Key grant-funded projects for community conservation

Grant funding obtained through leverage of Special Rate Variation funds allocated to environmental programs were used to control highly invasive weeds and restore areas of high conservation value on both public and private lands. Grants included:

- Saving our Species grants with a combined value of \$42,900 were received from the Office of Environment & Heritage to assist in the delivery of threatened species recovery actions in the Blue Mountains LGA;
- The NSW Environmental Trust Swamped by Threats grant provided \$99,550 to restore and protect the swamp habitats of the Blue Mountains Water Skink and Giant Dragonfly;
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services provided \$10,000 to protect the Bellevue Park, Lawson butterfly hill-topping site;
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services provided the Blue Mountains Bushcare Network with \$24,000 to deliver a Citizen Science Faunal Survey and Engagement Project;
- NSW Department of Industry provide \$48,025 for Council to implement actions from the Sydney Weed Action Plan; and
- NSW Heritage has provided \$50,000 towards the development of a Plan of Management for The Gully Aboriginal Place, Katoomba.

Natural area visitor facilities

Visitor facilities provide our residents a significant recreation amenity, and contribute to the region's attraction as a domestic and international tourism destination. Growing use by both the local community and visitors is creating an increasing demand for the Council to maintain tracks and other infrastructure to modern standards and to ensure adequate levels of public safety.

Key projects for 2017-2018 include:

- Significant upgrade of Prince Henry Cliff Walk from Duke & Duchess of York Lookout to Reids Plateau;
- Construction of a new accessible toilet at Centennial Glen; and
- Engineering inspections of elevated walkways and bridges to meet compliance standards.



Environmental education and engagement

Council delivers several community education and engagement initiatives that support our community to live responsibly in our City within a World Heritage Area. This year over 600 students from 12 local schools and preschools participated in Connecting Kids to Nature. The program has a number of elements including:

- BioBlitz – citizen science;
- Bush Trackers;
- Mountains to Sea;
- Stormwater projects; and
- Environment Trust Grant Project.

Each year, we develop a user-friendly snapshot of Council's water quality monitoring results, which is mailed to all ratepayers in July. The snapshot shows each sample waterway in the Blue Mountains and its state of ecological health. The 2018 Blue Mountains Waterways Health Report is available on the Council website at www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterways

Other key outcomes from 2017-2018 include:

- Supporting Clean up Australia Day by promoting the event locally and collecting and disposing of site rubbish;
- Delivering a community Weed Blitz Day held in collaboration with Council's Bushcare team and the Leura Falls Creek Community Catchment Group, with participation by Katoomba Public School and a total of 450 plants planted; and
- Supporting the Streamwatch Program that assists local community groups in conducting monthly water quality monitoring at 10 sites across the City.

Aquatic monitoring and catchment health

Waterways in good condition are important assets, crucial to the continued health of the City’s natural areas, the surrounding World Heritage Area and Sydney’s drinking water catchments.

In 2017-2018, we continued to implement the Aquatic Monitoring and Action Program with the support of Special Rate Variation funding. This program involves the collection, analysis and reporting on data to assess the health of the City’s waterways and to prioritise sites for protection and restoration.

Key outcomes in 2017-2018 include:

- Weekly summer sampling at Megalong Creek, Yosemite Creek, Wentworth Falls Lake, Jellybean Pool and Glenbrook Lagoon as part of the Recreational Water Quality Monitoring Program, to test suitability for water-based recreation;
- Publishing the 2017 Recreational Water Quality Report;
- Aquatic macroinvertebrate and water quality sampling at 71 sites across the LGA, to track waterway health and enable catchment prioritisation;
- Sediment sampling to measure toxic pollutants such as pesticides, metals and hydrocarbons at 29 sites across 10 waterways, from Blackheath to Glenbrook;
- Controlling regrowth of Cabomba - an aquatic Weed of National Significance - through activities such as hand-weeding by divers and targeted herbicide application; and
- Creekline and wetland restoration works and stormwater treatment works as part of the Riparian Protection and Restoration Program.



Leura Falls Weed Blitz

Floodplain management

The Lapstone, South Glenbrook and South Blaxland floodplain risk management study and plan indicated up to five properties within the Wattlecliff Estate that will be impacted by 100-year flood events. A low wall has been constructed on the footpath between the Great Western Highway and impacted properties to divert the overland flow from major flood events into the exiting pit inlet.

Council received a grant under the NSW Floodplain Management Program 2010 to undertake a floodplain risk management plan for the Glenbrook-Erskine Creek Catchment within the Blue Mountains LGA. Continuing on from the flood study that was completed in 2012, Council is now undertaking the floodplain risk management study and plan for the study catchment for Subsection 1 – Bullaburra to Linden. Planned completion is in March 2019.

Emergency preparedness and response

Asset protection zone maintenance

Council’s Asset Protection Zone Management Program continued throughout the year, with work occurring on 131 sites across the City. These areas of managed vegetation aim to reduce the direct impacts of bushfires to homes in close proximity to Council-managed bushland reserves. Maintenance of these areas is cyclical, however significant enhancement work has been undertaken to ensure these zones meet best practice standards.

Fire trail renewal

During 2017-2018, Council’s fire trail renewal program focused wholly on the management of vegetation within the trail corridors on seven strategic trails. The aim of this work is to provide sufficient clearance to allow fire appliances and fire fighters to operate safely during wildfire containment and hazard reduction operations.

Emergency preparedness

Council provides and maintains a facility known as an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC), which is used for multi-agency coordination during major incidents. The EOC is located at the Blue Mountains Emergency Centre in Katoomba and has recently been upgraded with a range of technological enhancement. Replacement of EOC furniture, refurbishment of the room and ongoing provision of internet and communications support occurred during 2017-2018.

Mt Riverview Rural Fire Service station renewal

The roof on the Mount Riverview RFS station had reached the end of its useable life and required replacement. Project works were completed with Special Rate Variation funds in 2017-2018.

Community and recreation

Community halls renewal

Renewal works occurred at community halls throughout the City, based on priorities identified as a result of inspections, or high-risk items in the built assets risk register:

- Blackheath Community Hall - renewed two gas stoves to electric, new vinyl on kitchen floors, replaced ventilation system in bathrooms and electrical switchboard upgrades;
- Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre - renewed stove to electric and vinyl on kitchen floor;
- Faulconbridge Community Hall - renewed stove to electric and electrical switchboard upgrade;
- Mt Riverview Hall - renewed kitchen and electrical switchboard upgrade;
- Warrimoo Hall - renewed ceiling fans and electrical switchboard upgrade; and
- Mount Wilson Hall - renewed vinyl on kitchen floor.

Repairs to the external brickwork wall of the Warrimoo Community Hall have also been completed, following recent damage by a vehicle.

Connecting to Country program

The Connecting to Country program, which was established in 2016-2017, focuses on engaging with Traditional Owners, the Darug and Gundungurra peoples, and other Aboriginal communities, to support caring for Country.

In 2017-2018, further work was undertaken on building the relationship between the Darug Traditional Owner community and the Council. The intention of these Darug Working Group meetings is to create meaningful opportunities for co-management of Country between Council and the Darug community. Work also progressed in strengthening relationships between Council and the Gundungurra Traditional Owners through the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

Developing Connecting to Country activities in consultation with Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal Advisory Council was also a priority in 2017-2018. It is envisaged that these activities will provide a range of cultural experiences for Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal community that will enhance and consolidate knowledge, while providing opportunities for inter-generational learning.

Heritage Asset Rehabilitation Fund

Special Rate Variation funds supported a new initiative in 2017-2018 – the Heritage Asset Rehabilitation Fund – to improve heritage outcomes through asset management. A particular focus of the fund is on physical as well as strategic intervention to improve heritage outcomes, including public perception, on Council assets which have a significant community, social and/or political profile.

This fund is essential to enable appropriate planning and renewal works for Council's assets with heritage value. In 2017-2018, \$110,000 was allocated for high priority works, including the second stage of rehabilitation works at state heritage listed Lennox Bridge, Glenbrook, and the preparation of a Conservation Management Strategy for the state heritage listed section of Cox's Road at Linden. Council also secured grant funding from the Office of Environment and Heritage towards these heritage projects.

Key outcomes from 2017-2018 include:

- Approximately 100 Conservation Management Statements completed for high priority heritage assets to guide future management;
- Lennox Bridge Stage 2 Rehabilitation Works – completion of mortar re-pointing for the historic stonework; and
- Cox's Road, Linden – preparation of a Conservation Management Strategy to guide future management in this historic precinct.

Libraries and information

One-off funding of \$60,000 from the Special Rate Variation has added significant depth and breadth to the library's online collections, providing resources that directly benefit the community.

These new online resources include:

- HSC Study Lab – an online tool that covers the NSW HSC syllabus for Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Business Studies;
- Story Box Library – an educational website, created for Australian children to view videos of stories by Australian authors and illustrators, being read aloud by fantastic storytellers;
- BorrowBox eBooks – additional content to meet demand for popular titles and provide greater depth to the eBooks collection;
- BorrowBox eAudiobooks – additional content to meet demand for popular titles and provide greater depth to the eAudiobook collection with classic collections and award-winning titles; and
- RBdigital eAudiobooks – establishing a new eAudiobook collection with a focus on purchasing Australian audiobooks featuring Australian authors, Australian stories, narrated by Australian actors.

Lawson Swim Centre upgrade

In 2017-2018, Council commenced a significant upgrade to Lawson Swim Centre. These works are intended to extend the life of the existing pools, ensure greater compliance with new management standards and cater for changes to water sports since the pools were first installed.

Improvements include:

- Upgrade of the 50m pool filtration plant;
- Construction of a new leisure pools plant room;
- Installation of new spray feature; and
- Replacement of lighting.

Improvements to Knapsack Park

Council completed a significant make-over of Knapsack Park during 2017-2018, which was part-funded through the Special Rate Variation. The popular sports ground now boasts an improved playing surface that is suitable for multiple sports across multiple seasons, particularly soccer and cricket.

The renovation work included building the soil profile to improve the turf growing conditions and drainage, renewing the irrigation system, and re-turfing the fields to provide new grass suitable for sports use. Those parts of the fields that had shallow soil due to compaction were top dressed to increase the soil depth and carrying-capacity of the playing surface.

Kingsford Smith Park safety works

A total of 21 large conifers were removed from Kingsford Smith Park due to the high risk they posed to residents surrounding the park and users of the park. Replanting has since taken place.

Katoomba Showground lighting upgrade

Special Rate Variation funds enabled the replacement of the lighting system at Katoomba Showground with a system that meets Australian Standards for sports use and minimises obtrusive effects of light to nearby properties. This is the first playing field in the Blue Mountains to use LED illumination.



Lennox Bridge Restoration Project

Our City and Our Organisation



Our City of Blue Mountains



Located on the western fringe of Metropolitan Sydney.

FACT

The Blue Mountains is one of only two cities in the world surrounded by a World Heritage National Park. The National Park makes up 70% of our Local Government Area.

The Blue Mountains is a nationally and internationally significant World Heritage Area and unique tourist destination.

About our City

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 km of mountainous terrain.

Our City is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples and includes areas that are of great cultural significance. The Blue Mountains has been home to Aboriginal people for thousands of years and the Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners have a deep and ongoing connection to their Country.

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 unique heritage buildings.

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. This is a nationally significant transport corridor.

We are a low density city comprised mainly of single detached dwellings on large blocks. Ribbons of development extend out along ridgelines, with many properties connecting directly to the surrounding bushland. This proximity puts our City at high risk of bushfires and creates a lengthy urban-bushland interface that requires environmental management.

The natural areas of the Blue Mountains provide a significant recreation and tourism resource for Greater Sydney and the world. They also play an important role in providing high quality drinking water to Sydney, as many of the City's waterways drain in to Lake Burratorang.

Our City covers an area of 1,431 km², of which approximately 70% is national park and only 11% is available for settlement.

Our people

Our City population is growing slowly. The Estimated Resident Population for the Blue Mountains was 78,705 in 2016, compared with 78,553 in 2011. This equates to only 0.2% growth over five years, which is well below the state and national averages.

We are predominantly a city of families and older people. Our distance from the Sydney CBD and most major educational institutions means that many young people move away from the Blue Mountains for education and career opportunities, or for the desire to live a more urban lifestyle.

The Blue Mountains is more affordable and liveable than many other urban areas. Compared with metropolitan Sydney, the Blue Mountains provides affordable housing, excellent facilities for families and a safe and caring community.

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.

The Blue Mountains is not as ethnically diverse as other parts of Sydney, and has a comparatively low proportion of residents who speak a language other than English.

At the time of the 2016 Census, our:

Median age was

44 years

Average household size was

2.5 people

Median weekly household income was

\$1,468

Median monthly mortgage repayment was

\$1,842

Median weekly rent was

\$350

Our Community - Key Statistics

Statistic	2016 Number	2016 %	2011 Number	2011 %	Change 2011-2016
Population					
Males	37,119	48.3	36,710	48.3	409
Females	39,782	51.7	39,232	51.7	550
Total population	76,901	100.0	75,942	100.0	959
Population Characteristics					
Indigenous population	1,821	2.4	1,320	1.7	501
Australian born	60,028	78.1	59,235	78.0	793
Language other than English spoken at home	4,689	6.1	3,861	5.1	828
Persons needing assistance with core activities	4,228	5.5	3,390	4.5	838
Eligible voters (citizens aged 18+)	53,076	69.0	51,600	67.9	1,476
Age Structure					
Babies and preschoolers (0-4)	4,232	5.5	4,697	6.2	-465
Primary schoolers (5-11)	6,939	9.0	7,042	9.3	-103
Secondary schoolers (12-17)	5,883	7.7	6,184	8.1	-301
Tertiary education and independence (18-24)	5,418	7.0	5,614	7.4	-196
Young workforce (25-34)	6,985	9.1	6,998	9.2	-13
Parents and homebuilders (35-49)	15,233	19.8	15,986	21.1	-753
Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59)	11,382	14.8	12,019	15.8	-637
Empty nesters and retirees (60-69)	11,225	14.6	9,529	12.5	1,696
Seniors (70-84)	7,974	10.4	6,318	8.3	1,656
Elderly aged (85+)	1,630	2.1	1,555	2.0	75
Households and Dwellings					
Fully owned	11,348	37.8	10,594	36.1	754
Purchasing (i.e. mortgage)	11,379	37.9	11,435	38.9	-56
Renting	5,353	17.8	5,449	18.5	-96
Other tenure type/not stated	1,912	6.4	1,899	6.5	13
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	2.46	-	2.49	-	-0.03
Total households	29,992	100.0	29,377	100.0	615
Employment Location					
Live and work in the Blue Mountains	15,290	42.7	14,142	39.7	1,148
Live in the Blue Mountains but work elsewhere	18,762	52.4	17,902	50.3	860
Work location unknown	1,736	4.9	3,566	10.0	-1,830
Total employed persons	35,788	100.0	35,610	100.0	178
Transport to Work					
Public transport (train, bus, tram or ferry)	4,222	13.3	4,106	13.2	116
Drive (car, truck, motorbike or taxi)	23,545	74.0	22,854	73.7	691
Bicycle	119	0.4	128	0.4	-9
Walk	918	2.9	913	2.9	5
Other/not stated	594	1.9	779	2.5	-185
Work at home	2,440	7.7	2,230	7.2	210

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2011 and 2016

Vision, Mission and Values



Our Vision

To build a sustainable and 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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

- I build positive relationships
- I welcome and consider all feedback
- I act now with the future in mind

Calendar of Events

The Blue Mountains is fortunate to have an enthusiastic community that contributes to the vibrant cultural character of the City. In 2017-2018, Council supported a total of 84 community-run events that were held on Council-managed land, by way of direct funding or significant in-kind support with event planning and applications.

Council also hosts numerous community and civic events throughout the year. A sample of the events hosted by Council in 2017-2018 is provided below.

The combined calendar of Blue Mountains events, hosted by Council and the community, contributes to fostering a sense of community pride and connectivity, boosting the local and regional economy, strengthening cultural identity, restoring the natural environment and increasing community awareness.

JULY

- NAIDOC Week Celebrations
- Official Tree Planting by the Hon. Julia Gillard at the Prime Ministers' Corridor of Oaks
- Citizenship Ceremony
- Senior Pedestrian Safety Presentation



NAIDOC Week Celebrations

AUGUST

- Inclusive Tourism Forum
- Child Restraint Checking Day
- Senior Pedestrian Safety Presentation
- Helping Learner Driver Become Safer Drivers Workshop

SEPTEMBER

- Wentworth Falls Waterways Festival
- Bike Week Activities
- Bushfire Building Conference and Expo
- Wollemi Artisan Market

OCTOBER

- Children's Week
- Graffiti Removal Day
- Nepean Jobs for All Business Breakfast
- Citizenship Ceremony

NOVEMBER

- 5th Birthday Celebrations for Blue Mountains Cultural Centre
- White Ribbon Day Mayoral Breakfast
- Swim Centre Open Days at Lawson and Blackheath
- Poetry Under the Stars
- Senior Pedestrian Safety Presentation
- Helping Learner Driver Become Safer Drivers Workshop

DECEMBER

- Wollemi Artisan Market
- Child Restraint Checking Day



Wollemi Artisan Market

JANUARY

- Australia Day Awards
- Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony
- Movies at the Pool at Lawson and Blackheath
- Bug Safari and Nature Play at Glenbrook Park

FEBRUARY

- Popes Glen Community Bushcare Day
- Child Restraint Checking Day

MARCH

- Harmony Day Celebrations
- Leura Falls Creek Community Weed Blitz
- Clean Up Australia Day
- Senior Pedestrian Safety Presentation

APRIL

- Seniors Festival
- Blue Mountains Fauna Survey Walks and Talks
- Katoomba Live and Local
- Glenbrook Playground Opening
- Citizenship Ceremony
- Nature Play at Buttenshaw Park
- Senior Drivers and Scooter Workshop



Katoomba Live and Local



Free Comic Book Day, Katoomba Library

MAY

- Jamison Creek Catchment Bushcare Day
- Waste to Art Community Workshop
- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) Flag Raising Ceremony
- Comic Book Day at Katoomba Library
- Child Restraint Checking Day

JUNE

- Katoomba Solstice Celebration
- Wollemi Artisan Market
- Katoomba Poetry Slam
- Annual Bushcare Picnic



Annual Bushcare Picnic

THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY
OF
BLUE MOUNTAINS



NO SMOKING
Within
4 metres of
entry or exit
of Building

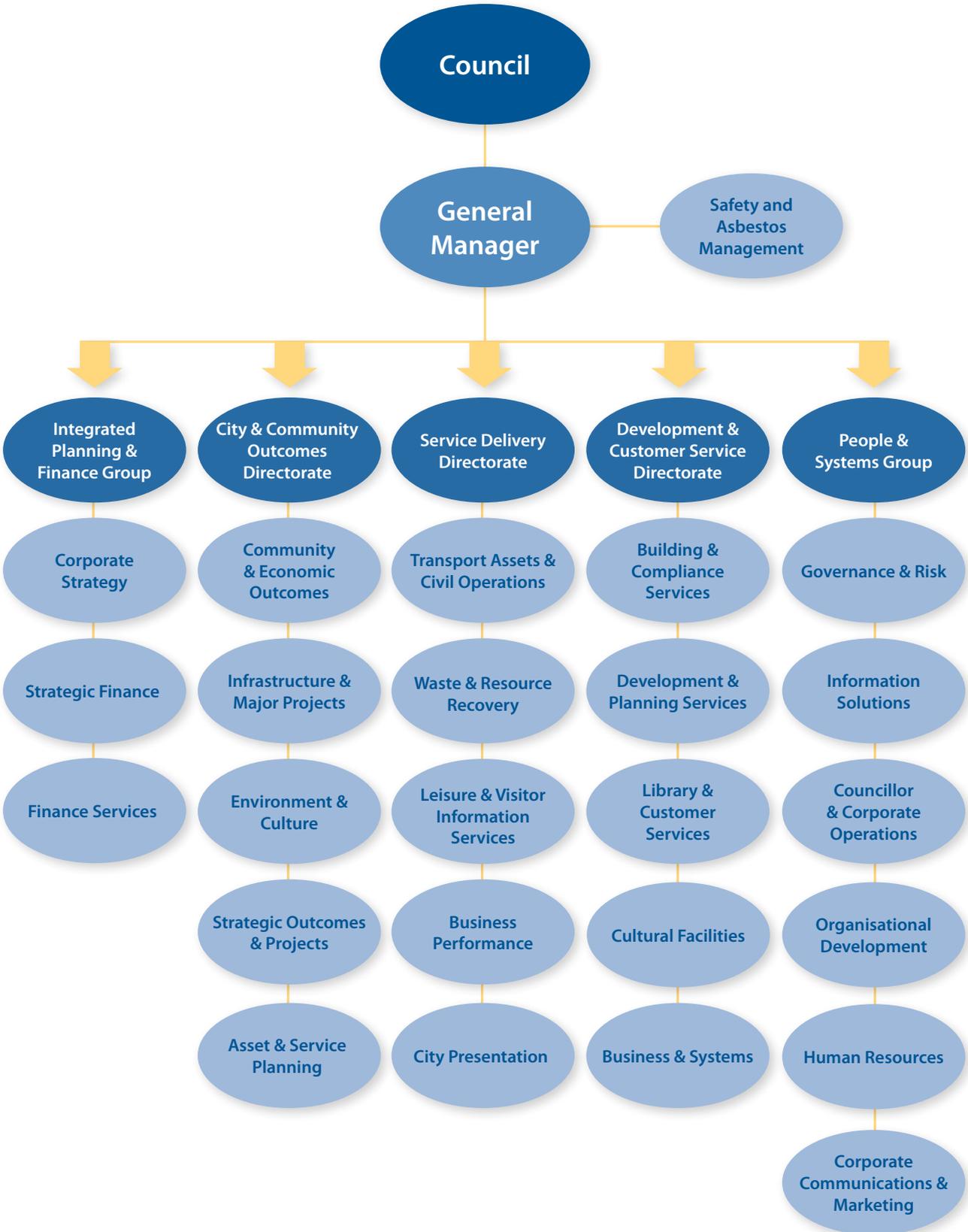
LETTERSBOXES
ACCESS THE
BLUE DOOR
←



NO PARKING
Within
4 metres of
entry or exit
of Building

Organisational Structure

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2017-2018



Our Councillors

WARD 4 **Lapstone to Warrimoo**

(Left to right):
Councillor Mark Greenhill, OAM (Mayor)
Councillor Darryl Bowling
Councillor Brendan Christie



WARD 3 **Valley Heights to Faulconbridge**

(Left to right):
Councillor Daniel Myles
Councillor Mick Fell
Councillor Shae Foenander



WARD 2 **Faulconbridge to Wentworth Falls**

(Left to right):
Councillor Chris Van Der Kley (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Romola Hollywood
Councillor Brent Hoare



WARD 1 **Leura to Mount Victoria, Mount Tomah**

(Left to right):
Councillor Don McGregor
Councillor Kerry Brown
Councillor Kevin Schreiber



Our Staff



Farewelled Robert Greenwood as General Manager

In November 2017, the former General Manager, Robert Greenwood, retired from his position as General Manager, after seven years of leading the organisation, and more than 30 years of service with Blue Mountains City Council.

During his tenure he spearheaded some of the largest projects that our community has seen, with the development of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub and the Blue Mountains Business Park to name a few. He was also central to the creation of the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise that has driven renewed economic activity in the region.

Robert also served the Council through some challenging times, including the October 2013 bushfires, 'Red October'. During this time, Robert displayed clarity under enormous pressure, guiding the Council to champion an extraordinary response and enabling our community to rebuild.

Through his steadfast leadership and commitment to the Blue Mountains, Robert has made a substantial contribution to the future of our City, our people and our community.

The majority of our workforce (86%) live in the Blue Mountains area, and are highly engaged, committed and invested in Council's vision of building a successful and sustainable future for the Blue Mountains. The Council enables achievement of this vision through supporting a workplace that practices a 'just and fair' culture. We work hard to provide a workplace that demonstrates respect, diversity and inclusion, learning and growth, teamwork, innovation, commitment to safety and wellbeing, and ensures value-based outcomes.

Our workplace

We have multiple work sites spread across the Blue Mountains, with most conveniently located within close proximity to public transport.

- Head Office (including Council Chambers) located at Katoomba;
- Business Information Centres located in Katoomba and Springwood;
- Works Depots at Katoomba and Springwood;
- Waste Management Facilities located in Katoomba and Blaxland;



Appointed Rosemary Dillon as General Manager

Following the retirement of Robert Greenwood as General Manager, the Council appointed Rosemary Dillon as General Manager for a period of up to 12 months. Then, following a competitive recruitment process, she was subsequently appointed for a term of five years.

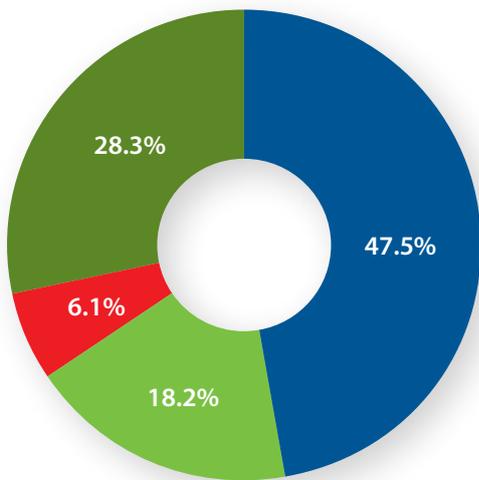
Prior to her appointment as General Manager, Rosemary held the position of Group Manager, Integrated Planning and Finance. Rosemary's extensive knowledge and experience of local government, coupled with her passion for the Blue Mountains, holds her in good stead to lead the organisation going forward.

As the first woman in the role of General Manager for Blue Mountains City Council, Rosemary has committed to prioritising the safety, health and wellbeing of our community and our employees, and ensuring a collaborative, transparent organisation, while continuing to deliver best value services to the community and responding to challenges and opportunities that arise.

Our people at a glance

We are one of the largest employers in the Local Government Area and have a highly skilled and flexible workforce of approximately 820 people. As at 30 June 2018, almost two-thirds of our workforce were permanent employees (65.7%), with the remainder a mix of temporary and casual staff. The proportion of casual staff reflects the seasonal nature of some Council activities and resulting need for flexibility, particularly at our Aquatic and Leisure Centres.

Employment Type



■ Full Time (permanent) ■ Part Time (permanent)
■ Temporary ■ Casual

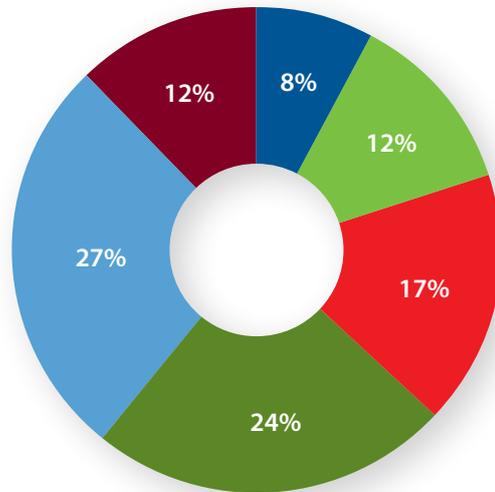
Gender balance

The gender balance of our permanent workforce is 46% female and 54% male. The inclusion of our casual workforce increases female representation to 52%. The proportion of women in senior management positions is currently 67%, which is well above the industry average.

Age

As at 30 June 2018, 39% of Council employees were aged over 50 years, and 20% were under 31 years. Our workforce strategy focuses on initiatives such as traineeship programs, workplace flexibility and work-life balance programs to support people at different life stages and address the challenges of an ageing workforce.

Age

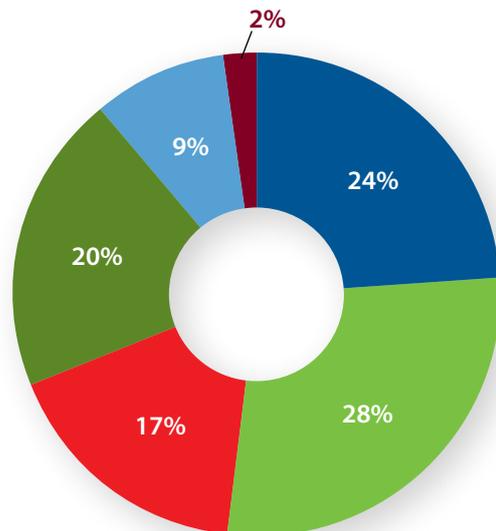


■ <21 years ■ 21-30 years ■ 31-40 years
■ 41-50 years ■ 51-60 years ■ >60 years

Length of service

Average length of service for all employees is currently 8.2 years. This reflects favourably on the Council as a rewarding place to work.

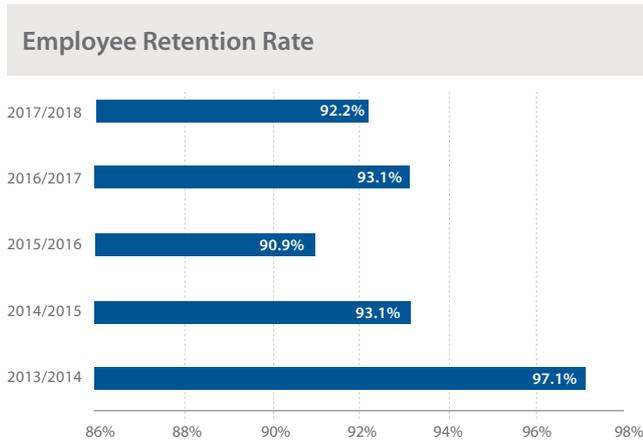
Length of Service



■ Less than 2 years ■ 2-5 years ■ 6-10 years
■ 11-20 years ■ 21-30 years ■ 31 or more years

Employee retention

A key indicator of organisation health is the employee retention rate. Our retention rate for 2017-2018 was 92.2%, which is slightly below the target of 95%.



Valuing our people

Developing our people

Council recognises the importance of proactively developing our people to deliver the work they do today and the work required in the future. While a range of learning and development options are available for our staff, we encourage our leaders to work with each individual to customise their development. We strongly encourage our staff to apply their learnings in the workplace by being part of cross-organisational project teams and working groups.

Development opportunities include:

- Secondment to other areas;
- Acting in other positions;
- Cross-organisation project teams and working groups;
- Education assistance to further tertiary education;
- Traineeship, Cadet and Graduate Program;
- Internal and external training courses;
- Conference attendance; and
- Participating in the Local Government Professionals Association Management Challenge.

Flexible workplace

We acknowledge that for people to bring their best to work requires a balance of both personal and work commitments. Council provides a range of options to support staff in finding this balance, including:

- 9 weeks full-pay maternity leave, or 18 weeks half-pay (conditions apply);
- Carers leave to care for family members and relatives;
- Long service leave after five years of continuous service;
- Emergency services leave;
- 9-day fortnight for full-time employees; and
- A variety of Work Life Balance Program initiatives.

Other benefits

A range of other benefits are made available to our staff such as:

- Fitness Passport enables staff and their family members to use multiple gyms and pools in the area at a very low cost;
- Discounts at local Visitor Information Centres (Echo Point and Glenbrook);
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP);
- Staff Social Club;
- Staff functions and charity events;
- Uniforms for frontline employees;
- Salary sacrifice; and
- Free financial planning advice for Local Government Super Superannuation members.

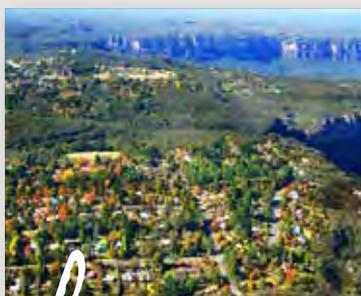
Leave

Our people enjoy leave provisions covered under the Local Government State Award including:

- 20 days annual leave per annum (pro-rata for part-time employees); and
- 15 days sick leave per annum (pro-rata for part-time employees).

Community Strategic Plan Objectives

 <p>lead inspiring leadership</p> <p>By 2035 we are a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains</p>	 <p>protect an environmentally responsible city</p> <p>By 2035 we are a more environmentally responsible City</p>	 <p>care an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city</p> <p>By 2035 we are a more inclusive, healthy and vibrant City</p>
<p>Objective 1.1</p> <p>The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability</p>	<p>Objective 2.1</p> <p>The condition, health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat, ecosystems, waterways, water catchments and groundwater are maintained and enhanced</p>	<p>Objective 3.1</p> <p>Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring, diverse and inclusive</p>
<p>Objective 1.2</p> <p>All levels of government provide transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership and governance</p>	<p>Objective 2.2</p> <p>Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way</p>	<p>Objective 3.2</p> <p>The Blue Mountains community is healthy and active</p>
<p>Objective 1.3</p> <p>All levels of government provide value for money sustainable services and infrastructure</p>	<p>Objective 2.3</p> <p>The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area</p>	<p>Objective 3.3</p> <p>The Blue Mountains community is resilient and prepared for natural disasters</p>
<p>Objective 1.4</p> <p>All levels of government and the community, work together to achieve a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains</p>	<p>Objective 2.4</p> <p>Traditional owners and the broader Aboriginal community are supported to connect to, care for and benefit from Country</p>	<p>Objective 3.4</p> <p>The Blue Mountains is a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning</p>



live
a liveable city

By 2035 we are a more liveable City

Objective 4.1

City planning drives the creation of vibrant and well-designed places and spaces for people to live, work and play

Objective 4.2

The distinctive qualities of towns and villages are maintained and local identity and sense of pride is strengthened

Objective 4.3

The impact of development on the natural and built environment is well managed

Objective 4.4

The City's housing meets the diverse needs of the community



move
an accessible city

By 2035 we are a more accessible City

Objective 5.1

The City has an integrated, accessible and sustainable transport network

Objective 5.2

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

Objective 5.3

The City has an integrated, accessible public transport network with good connections within the City and to the Greater Sydney Region

Objective 5.4

The City has a pedestrian and cycleway network that supports active movement and access to centres and facilities



thrive
an economically sustainable city

By 2035 our local economy is stronger and more sustainable

Objective 6.1

The City's economy is diverse, vibrant and strong with increased local employment

Objective 6.2

The City of the Blue Mountains has a strong identity that builds on its natural and built heritage and creative strengths as a City of the Arts and a City surrounded by a World Heritage Area

Objective 6.3

The City's infrastructure supports diverse and sustainable economic development

Objective 6.4

The Blue Mountains is a leader of sustainable tourism and destination management within a World Heritage Area

Council Services at a Glance

lead

Strategic and Governance

- Councillor and Corporate Operations
- Corporate Strategy
- Commercial Property Portfolio
- Governance and Risk
- People (Strategic)
- Safety and Asbestos Management
- Strategic Asset Planning
- Strategic Finance

Operational Internal

- Administrative Property Portfolio
- Asset Management
- Central Warehousing and Purchasing
- Corporate Communications and Marketing
- Customer Service
- Financial Management
- Fleet
- Information Solutions
- People (Human Resources)

care

- Aquatic and Leisure Centres
- Community Development
- Cultural Development
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Health and Regulatory Compliance
- Family Day Care
- Libraries and Information
- Sport and Recreation

live

- Burials and Ashes Placement
- Building Certification
- City Presentation
- City-wide Strategic Planning
- Land Use Management

protect

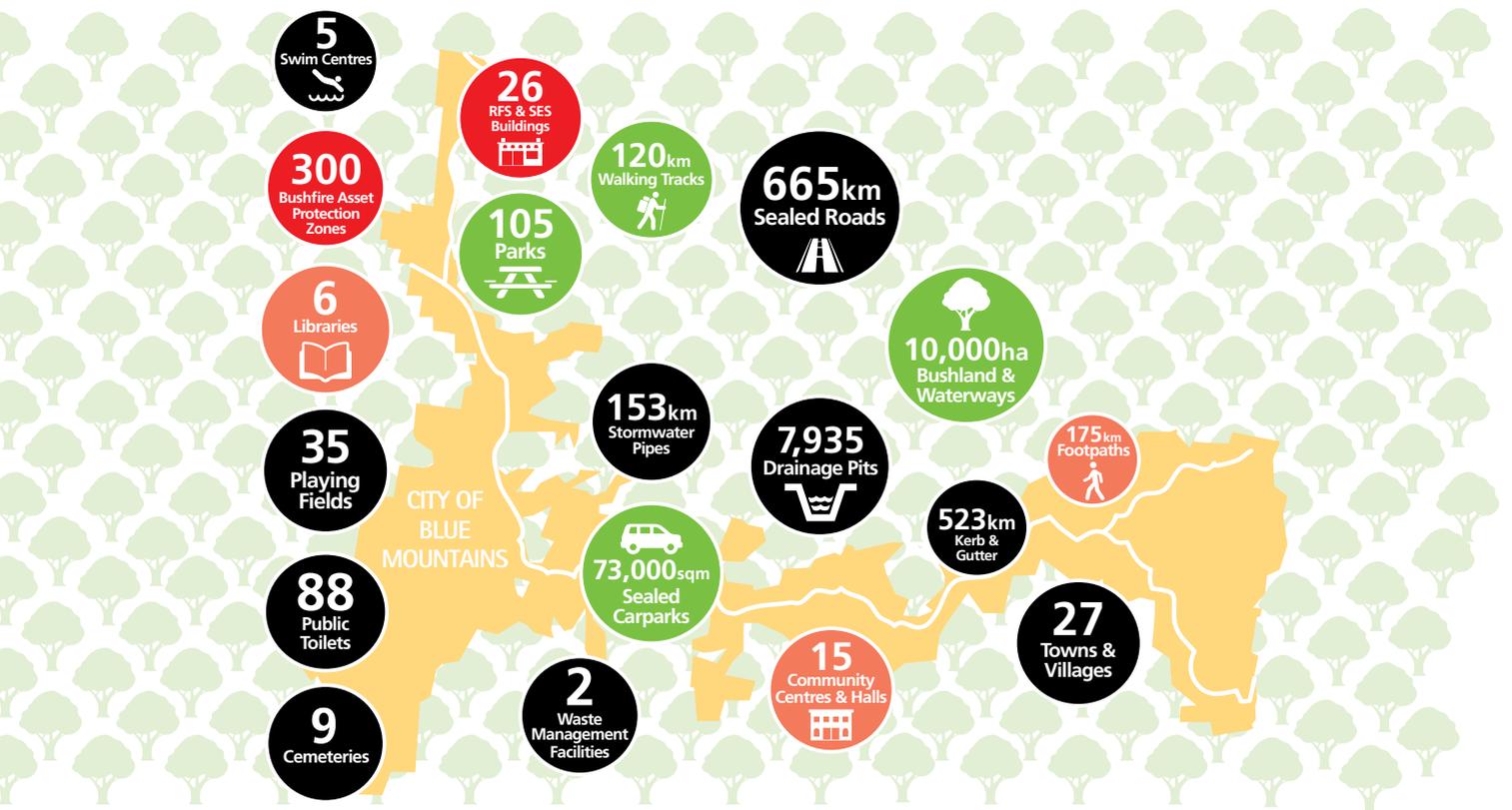
- Natural Environment
- Waste Resource Management
- Water Resource Management

move

- Transport and Public Access

thrive

- Economic Development and Tourism
- Commercial Activities



Major Projects



This section outlines our progress in delivering major projects during 2017-2018. Major projects are those one-off projects that have a significant capital investment, require significant staff resources or involve extensive community consultation. They are usually delivered over more than one financial year.

Glenbrook Park Upgrade

Glenbrook Park is already well-established as a family park and as a tourism stopover for visitors to the Blue Mountains. The plan of management that was adopted in May 2017 sought to build on these existing strengths by providing a large range of recreational and social opportunities, and establishing a tourism gateway with a strong Blue Mountains flavour. In 2017-2018 the first components of the plan were delivered.

Opened new junior playground

The new junior playground in Glenbrook Park was officially opened in April 2018. It offers new, inclusive play equipment and seating in a shady, landscaped setting. The playground has some beautiful design features and a heritage transport theme. A horse sculpture and elements of old train wheels and cart wheels have been incorporated into the precinct design in recognition of the park being on the site of the original Cox's Road.

Contributions from local community groups include artefacts donated by the Valley Heights Locomotive Museum and the Sun Valley Pony Club, a bridge made by the Lower Mountains Men's Shed, and decorative features such as painted rocks and pavers from the Luke Priddis Foundation and Lapstone Out of School Hours Care. The upgrade of the playground is the first of many improvements that will bring the park up to a district park standard.

Upgraded visitor facilities in Glenbrook

A major upgrade of Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre commenced in February 2018. Positioned at the gateway to the Blue Mountains, this project is part of Council's commitment to providing a quality user experience for visitors to the Blue Mountains. The works include expansion of the existing Visitor Information Centre, alterations to the entrance portico, construction of a new carpark and associated landscaping. These upgrades will improve visibility and access from the highway and deliver a modern facility that compliments the surrounding landscape. New pathways will also provide better access from the centre to nearby public toilets and to Glenbrook Village Centre. These works, which were part-funded by the Australian Government through a grant under the National Stronger Regional Program, will be completed in 2018-2019.



Glenbrook Park

Southern Scenic Escarpment Program

Council continues to improve the magnificent Scenic Southern Escarpment precinct to enhance the experience for locals and visitors to the Blue Mountains.

The program will revitalise existing infrastructure by providing contemporary buildings with increased function and capacity, enable growth in the hospitality and tourism sector, and provide a greater range of natural area visitor facilities. These works are being part-funded by the Australian Government through a grant under the National Stronger Regions Program.

Approved redevelopment of Echo Point Visitor Information Centre

Redevelopment of the Visitor Information Centre at Echo Point was approved by the Council in May 2018. The new centre will be a modern facility that meets the needs of an international tourist destination and is sympathetic to the landscape and unique setting. It will have greater capacity to cater for increased visitation, and will incorporate shade and weather protection. There will also be a new outdoor gathering place that will provide a meeting space for talks, presentations and cultural events.

Design of interpretive elements has been led by the Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners, with support from Council, and guidance by experts in the field. Extensive consultation with local Aboriginal communities has occurred throughout the planning and design process to incorporate the story of this part of Ngurra (Country).

Progressed Katoomba Falls Kiosk upgrade

Situated in a prime location adjacent to Katoomba Falls and the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, the upgrade and extension of Katoomba Falls Kiosk will allow patrons to appreciate this iconic, heritage-listed facility as well as dine in a signature restaurant overlooking the stunning Jamison Valley. A development application was lodged during 2017-2018 and is ongoing.

Enhanced natural area visitor facilities

Construction of the walking track from Duke and Duchess of York Lookout to Reids Plateau has been completed. Further work is required to complete the lighting of the track and cliff faces. Once complete, the Katoomba Falls night-lit walk will be almost triple its original size, providing amazing views of the Three Sisters and Katoomba Falls, and helping to activate this area for night-time activities.

In May 2018, the Council approved the upgrade of a section of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, to allow clearer walking access through Echo Point from east to west, and to improve public safety and the visitor experience. There will also be a new accessible round walk down to Elizabeth Lookout and around.



Design for Echo Point Visitor Information Centre

Wentworth Falls District Park Upgrade

Work progressed during 2017-2018 on the planned upgrade of facilities at Wentworth Falls Lake, which is one of Council's four district parks. For the first time, residents and visitors now have access to the western edge of the lake via a stunning new boardwalk and viewing platform. These facilities are linked to existing paths via a new, accessible pathway. In addition, work commenced on a new interpretive walk, the Badu Cultural Walk, which will share natural and cultural perspectives with visitors.

A new, more centrally located toilet block has been built to replace the old toilet block, which will be removed. The new toilet block is sympathetically designed to meet the needs of a wide variety of park users. It features northern sun and interpretive elements that reflect the lake environment.

These upgrades support the vision for a district park, which is to provide higher quality public park spaces that are more accessible, inclusive and have better quality of design and amenities.



New Pathway at Wentworth Falls Lake

Blaxland Waste Management Facility Upgrade

Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility is the sole landfill servicing the Blue Mountains community (Katoomba operates as a recycling facility and transfer station only). Council completed a major upgrade to this facility in 2017-2018, with the construction of a new waste cell in a zone previously identified for expansion.

The excavation and lining works involved in constructing the new cell were significantly more complex than they had been in the past due to the introduction of the 2016 Environmental Guidelines for Solid Waste Landfills by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). These stringent new guidelines govern the quality assurance and environmental protection standards of all new landfill cells across the state, with the aim of ensuring minimum impacts to the environment, human health and amenity.

Approximately 30,000 m³ of sandstone was extracted from the hillside, creating more than 100,000 m³ of additional landfill capacity. The opening of the cell and successful EPA licensing has extended the life of the landfill for another 2-3 years, and marks another milestone for the Council in improving waste management services for the Blue Mountains. Construction of further landfill stages have been approved and are estimated to give the Blue Mountains community landfill capacity until 2034 at current rates of disposal.



Blaxland Waste Management Facility Upgrade

Progress Report on Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2017-2018





The Delivery Program and Operational Plan is the Council’s response and commitment to implementing, within available resources, the priorities and aspirations of the Blue Mountains community as expressed in the City’s Community Strategic Plan.

This section of the report outlines our performance against commitments in the 2017-2018 Delivery Program and Operational Plan. It presents highlights, challenges and performance measure results across our six key directions:



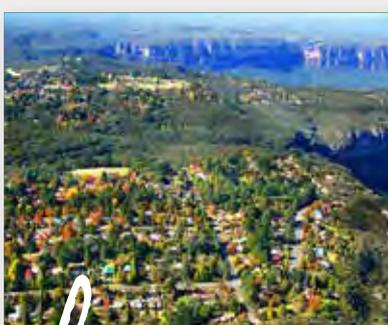
lead
inspiring leadership



protect
an environmentally responsible city



care
an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city



live
a liveable city



move
an accessible city



thrive
an economically sustainable city



lead

inspiring leadership

together we lead

A sustainable city has inspiring community and civic leadership that acts responsibly in the broader interests.

It aspires to transform local communities into better places for current and future generations.

our aspirations and aims

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

Our leaders work together effectively with the community, local organisations and other levels of government to achieve a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains, environmentally, socially and economically.

**By 2035 we are a more sustainable,
successful and resilient Blue Mountains**

Increased focus on safety and asbestos management

The need to identify and manage asbestos-containing material is a challenge faced by all communities across NSW. Like many councils, asbestos presents a particular challenge for the Blue Mountains due to ageing buildings and facilities, illegal dumping and bushfires.

Council has been proactive and shown strong leadership in its approach to a range of complex issues relating to asbestos management that arose during 2017-2018. These included compliance with a performance improvement order issued by the Minister for Local Government, and managing unforeseen asbestos remediation projects.

We have made considerable progress in strengthening our safety and asbestos management and responding to recommendations from the independent asbestos investigation initiated by the Council in November 2017.

These actions include:

- Appointing a Chief Safety Officer to oversee the Council's Asbestos Management Response;
- Establishing an Asbestos Response Team to manage and remediate asbestos finds;
- Allocating significant funding for asbestos response and site remediation;
- Adopting the BMCC Asbestos Management Policy and Asbestos Management Plans;
- Implementing an extensive staff training and awareness program; and
- Participating cooperatively in all investigations undertaken by the NSW Government.

The Council's approach in dealing with these challenges recognises the seriousness of asbestos management and reflects the Council's intention to place the safety of its staff and community at the centre of its operations and organisational culture.

Further information can be found in Section 2 – Performance Snapshot.

Signed Western Sydney City Deal

The Western Sydney City Deal is a partnership between the Australian Government, NSW Government and the local governments of the Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Penrith and Wollondilly. Signed in March 2018, the 20-year agreement will unlock opportunities in education, business and employment for the region as part of the development of the new Western Parkland City and includes:

- A commitment to improve liveability in the region—directing more funding towards parks, open space and other community infrastructure;
- Targeted initiatives to create jobs and develop skills across the region; and
- New railway links, including the first stage of the North-South rail link.

Launched organisational performance review

In May 2018, we commenced a comprehensive organisational performance review, following endorsement by the Council on 30 January 2018. The purpose of the review is to engage with staff and elected Councillors to develop a shared vision and action plan for improving organisational performance, and to strengthen our capability to anticipate and respond to challenges and opportunities.

The review began with an assessment of *'where are we now?'* and consideration of *'where do we want to be?'*. Further stages will look at developing an improvement plan and establishing a reporting framework to monitor progress. This work has been supported by a staff reference group with representatives from all levels and parts of the organisation, to ensure that different perspectives are heard and considered. The review will continue into 2018-2019 with an improvement plan due in late 2018.



Customer Service Centre Staff

Progressed Regional Strategic Alliance

The Council, as part of the Regional Strategic Alliance (RSA), undertook its second year of collaboration with Hawkesbury and Penrith City Councils throughout 2017-2018. Working collectively through the RSA allows each Council to explore initiatives that bring greater efficiency and effectiveness to each organisation, while developing regional capacity and capability.

Work in priority project areas is ongoing with a focus on:

- Regional Asset Management;
- Regional Strategic Procurement;
- Regional Waste Management;
- Regional Tourism;
- Regional Internal Audit; and
- Regional Community Services.

Highlights of 2017-2018 include the receipt of matched funding from Destination NSW to create and implement a regional tourism campaign as well as the launch and roll-out of a Regional Employment Network for people living with a disability. In addition, the alignment of internal audit plans at Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury Councils has achieved the desired objective of simplifying administration and allowing for a more compelling offering to external suppliers.

Celebrated a Prime Ministerial planting in the Corridor of Oaks

Former Prime Minister, the Hon. Julia Gillard was welcomed to the Blue Mountains in July 2017 for her official tree planting in the Prime Ministers' Corridor of Oaks in Faulconbridge. The Corridor of Oaks is a heritage conservation area of state and local significance and is a popular spot for tourists and locals.

The oak trees have been planted by each Prime Minister, or their closest living relative, since Federation, in what has long been a nationally-recognised tradition. Julia Gillard is the 27th Prime Minister of Australia and the first woman to occupy the role.

Improved records management

In 2017-2018, the Council continued to strengthen its records management systems and processes, and improve compliance with the State Records Act 1998. This involved the ongoing assessment of records for transfer to State Archives, authorised disposal under relevant legislation and retention authorities, and transition from paper-based files to digital for improved access to information.



Official Tree Planting by the Hon. Julia Gillard

The Council created and managed some 306,849 new records during 2017-2018, and undertook the authorised disposal of some 15,108 records that had met their minimum retention period. In addition to good record-keeping practice, the reduction in the number of records held in offsite storage had a secondary benefit to Council of reducing ongoing storage costs.

Launched a new corporate website

A new corporate website was successfully launched in March 2018, providing an improved customer experience and a more contemporary look and feel. The new website will better serve customer and e-business needs, and position the Council to be more proactive in communicating and engaging with our community. It is responsive to suit different devices, and is also accessible, user-friendly and leading practice in regards to how it presents content.

Engaged with our community

In 2017-2018, Council listened and responded to our residents in a range of ways including:

- Responding to 79,277 telephone calls through the Council's Customer Service Call Centres;
- Serving 27,160 customers at our Katoomba and Springwood Customer Service Centres;
- Serving an additional 32,622 Service NSW customers at our Katoomba Office; and
- Responding to 16,589 Customer Service Requests.

The Council communicated, consulted and listened to the community through:

- Council Meetings via elected Councillors;
- Council website and social media platforms;
- Quarterly Community Newsletter sent to all ratepayers;
- Blue Mountains Gazette;
- Community forums, workshops and public meetings;
- Community surveys;
- Council Advisory Committees and Reference Groups;
- Public exhibitions of plans and project; and
- Blue Mountains Have Your Say website – an online forum for the community to provide feedback on key projects and proposals.

Advocated against Western Sydney Airport

The Council continued to make representations to the Australian Government on issues and impacts from the proposed airport. Findings from a study commissioned by Council revealed the impact of the proposed flight paths on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, and the lack of standards regarding aircraft noise management in natural areas.

The Western Sydney Airport Mayoral Reference Group, which is considered to be an important mechanism to ensure that community interest and concern about the airport is heard by the Council, was endorsed to continue for a further 18 months from 27 March 2018.

Improved asset management

The Asset Management Improvement Program aims to deliver continuous improvement in our management of built assets to support long-term planning in an effective and integrated way. This is one of the Council's key strategic priorities for 2017-2021, and supports our commitment to meeting the NSW Government's Fit for the Future targets and providing value-for-money services to our community.

The 2017-2018 program achieved a complete audit and review of the asset register for all infrastructure categories, update of key strategic documentation and a status assessment on business systems and processes for inspections, risk management and progress reporting. As Council continues to improve the organisation's asset management maturity, the improvement plan for 2018-2019 will focus on strengthening the asset planning and management structure.

Conducted community satisfaction survey

The Council received a positive report card from its 2018 Community Survey, with results indicating a high level of satisfaction with Council service delivery. Overall, 87% of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council, and 82% are at least somewhat satisfied with the level of information provided, community consultation and advocacy undertaken.

This survey, independently conducted by Micromex Research, is used to assess community satisfaction with the overall performance and service delivery of the Council and to inform future planning priorities. A representative cross-section of more than 500 residents took part after being randomly-selected for telephone interview.

Strengthened governance and risk management

In 2017-2018, Council updated its risk management framework. The revised framework aims to systematically integrate risk management assessment processes into all activities across Council and to inform resource allocation as required, as well as the internal audit program.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance to the Council and the General Manager in relation to risk management, internal control, the interface between governance and operations, financial reporting, business improvement and compliance. The Committee includes two external independent members and one Councillor. The Audit and Risk Committee met four times during 2017-2018.

The Audit and Risk Committee provides a forum for communication between stakeholders, and supports the independence of the internal audit function. Non-voting attendees include the Mayor, General Manager, Chief Audit Executive, External Auditor, the Executive Officer and the internal audit service provider.

In 2017-2018, the Audit and Risk Committee continued to provide oversight of Council's Internal Audit Program. A total of six internal audit reports were completed, identifying a number of ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Council operations.

As each audit was completed, the findings and recommendations were communicated to the Audit and Risk Committee, which monitors these actions until they are completed. A risk-based internal audit program for 2018-2019 has been endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee and is currently being implemented.

Peak Safety Steering Group

The Peak Safety Steering Group is the principal internal committee for the governance of safety at the Council. Inaugurated in July 2016, held monthly and chaired by the General Manager, its objective is to assure the health and safety of Council staff and Blue Mountains residents.

In 2017-2018, the Steering Group continued to champion the Council vision for safety of 'Work Safe, Home Safe' and to oversee the maturation of the Council's Safety Management System and how it is being embedded into day-to-day operations of the organisation.

Work Health and Safety Committees

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committees are consultative bodies comprised of elected staff representatives from the Council's operational work groups. WHS committees have been an important function of the business for many years, and have initiated many improvements, reviews and replacements of workplace items, plant, equipment and processes. The WHS Committees are effective consultative mechanisms; members provide necessary feedback to the business to drive the ongoing improvements to workforce health, safety and culture within the Council.

Council has three functioning WHS Committees covering: Springwood Depot, Katoomba Depot and Katoomba Office. In 2017-2018, the three WHS Committees met monthly and provided recommendations to the Peak Safety Steering Group for review and action.

Project Control Groups

Project Control Groups are a mechanism adopted by the Council to strengthen governance and track progress on major projects. A Project Control Group consists of key staff within the organisation responsible for implementing a project plan.

During 2017-2018, a number of Project Control Groups were established to manage, track progress and report on significant projects in an integrated way across the organisation. Key Project Control Groups established in 2017-2018 include:

- *Asbestos Operations Project Control Group* provided high level oversight of Council's compliance with its Asbestos Management Plan, including, but not limited to, its day-to-day responsiveness to asbestos finds across the Local Government Area and the availability and ongoing maintenance of the Corporate Asbestos Register;
- *Asbestos and Hazardous Materials Project Control Group* managed, tracked and reported on a number of specific, large-scale asbestos management projects; and
- *Performance Improvement Order Project Control Group* had oversight of Council's progress in complying with the terms of the Performance Improvement Order issued by the Minister for Local Government. It has overseen all compliance requirements, as well as monthly auditing and reporting to the Council on progress in implementing Improvement Plans.

lead Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Governance – good customer service

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Overall community satisfaction with Council performance	3.52	Maintain or improve	3.44	✓
Overall community satisfaction with Council staff performance	3.77	Maintain	3.91	✓ ✓
Overall community satisfaction with Councillor performance	3.69	Maintain or improve	3.51	✓
Overall community satisfaction with value for money of Council services	3.34	Maintain or improve	3.37	✓ ✓
Overall community satisfaction with the level of Council information provided and consultation implemented	3.36	Maintain or improve	3.32	✓



Organisational Performance Review

Financial – a financially sustainable Council

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Operating performance ratio	5.4%	Positive	-4.4%	○
Own source revenue ratio	80.1%	Maintain	83.5%	✓ ✓
Building and infrastructure renewal ratio	35.1%	Increase	33.1%	✓
Infrastructure backlog ratio	2.0%	Decrease	2.0%	✓
Asset maintenance ratio	99%	Maintain	99%	✓ ✓
Debt service ratio	8.2%	Decrease	6.6%	✓ ✓
Real operating expenditure per capita	1.1%	Decrease	1.2%	○

Social – a safe, skilled and engaged workforce

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Lost time injuries	17.6 per million hours	Decrease	29 per million hours	○
Employee retention rate	93.1%	Maintain	92.2%	✓
Employee engagement	54%	Increase	Not available	—

Environment – reduced resource consumption

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Council carbon footprint	Not available	Decrease	Not available	—



protect

**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 which are ecologically sensitive.

The importance of retaining natural areas within the urban footprint is understood.

our aspirations and aims

As a City surrounded by a World Heritage National Park, we strive to minimise the impact of our urban footprint on the natural environment and to be a model for sustainable living.

Living in harmony with the environment, we care for the ecosystems and habitats that support life. We look after, enjoy and actively manage the healthy creeks and waterways, diverse flora and fauna and clean air and fertile soil.

In response to climate change, we have developed strategies to prepare, adapt and build resilience to likely impacts. We have become a leader in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and increasing our use of renewable energies. We aim to conserve energy and the natural resources we use.

By 2035 we are a more environmentally responsible City

Invested in carbon reduction measures

The Carbon Abatement Action Plan and Investment Plan initiative was adopted by the Council in June 2017 to improve our response and leadership in carbon reduction. It provides a strategic approach to identifying, evaluating and funding long-term CO₂ reduction by establishing a revolving fund to reduce emissions by 20% over five years. To compliment this approach, Council has resolved to join the Cities Power Partnership.

During 2017-2018, lighting upgrades at Katoomba Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility, and both Springwood and Katoomba Aquatic and Leisure Centres have been completed. Further upgrades at various facilities have had funding approval, including five solar power systems. A further 15 facilities have undergone energy audits, with proposals being developed and assessed for relevant energy efficiency measures.

Received excellence award for Yosemite Creek restoration

Council was recognised at the 2017 NSW Local Government Awards for outstanding work over many years to return the 'bottomless pool' in Yosemite Creek, North Katoomba. This project was the overall category winner of the Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement: On-ground Works Award.

The result is the culmination of decades of work addressing urban stormwater runoff and weed invasion, which had resulted in sedimentation, erosion and decline in the creek's water quality, as well as loss of habitat and aquatic biodiversity. A coordinated and collaborative approach between Council, government agencies, businesses and the local community resulted in the successful restoration of Yosemite Creek and the return of Minnehaha's 'bottomless' plunge pool.

Adopted waste avoidance strategies

In March 2018, the Council adopted the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategic Plan 2017-2021. This is a short-term plan in response to a dynamic external operating environment that includes changes to legislation, industry practice and funding. It identifies value-for-money actions that will reduce waste buried at Council's only landfill, by continuing to improve how waste is avoided and recycled. The plan focuses on the sources of waste that contribute most to landfill, namely waste from our homes (51%) and waste from businesses (28%).

In June 2018, the Council also endorsed the Draft Western Sydney Regional Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy, which is expected to increase recycling and combat illegal dumping across the Western Sydney region.

Secured funding to enhance cycling and walking trails

Council was awarded funding of \$818,000 from the NSW Government to extend the Great Blue Mountains Trail at Leura and to upgrade trails in Knapsack Reserve, Glenbrook. The two grants, awarded as part of the Metropolitan Greenspace Program and administered by the Greater Sydney Commission, are provided on a matching dollar-for-dollar basis.

A total of \$593,000 in co-funding will go towards design and construction of a 450m safe pedestrian and bushwalking connection from Leura Cascades to Kiah Lookout. It will also cover the design of trail improvements to Scenic World as part of the Southern Scenic Escarpment Program.

The second grant of \$225,000 was secured as part of the Scenic Eastern Escarpment Masterplan, and will upgrade cycling and walking trails in the Knapsack Reserve, providing improved access to new facilities and existing lookouts.

Launched Blue Mountains Fauna Project

The Blue Mountains Fauna Project was launched in March 2018 as a joint initiative between Council and the Bushcare Network, with funding from Local Land Services. The aim of the project is to better understand what fauna species are found in our bushland reserves and our towns and villages.

The project invites community members to get involved and record sightings. This will improve our knowledge and ultimately lead to better management of fauna in our local bushland reserves. When the project is finished, the report and species maps will be available via the Council website and will be a great resource for local residents and visitors, as well as Council staff. The fauna project was launched with a series of field trips including fauna surveys, spotlight tours and walks and talks.



Blue Mountains Fauna Project - Sooty Owl

Managed invasive weeds

Council continued to manage highly invasive weeds in urban areas across all townships across the Local Government Area, integrating this work with the private lands inspection program. In 2017-2018, Council performed almost 4,000 private property inspections as part of the City-wide Biodiversity Conservation Program.

During one of these routine inspections, Council's biosecurity officers discovered Amazon Frogbit (*Limnobium laevigatum*) in an ornamental pond in the backyard of a private home in Glenbrook. This is one of NSW's highest priority aquatic weeds, and the first time it has been found in the Blue Mountains. Although in the early stages of establishment in Australia, the weed has the potential to seriously degrade aquatic habitats and water quality. As a result of this finding, Council commenced a control program, including community awareness and education measures.

Council also continued controlling regrowth of Cabomba – an aquatic Weed of National Significance – through activities such as hand-weeding by divers and targeted herbicide application at Glenbrook Lagoon.

Held community day to celebrate Blue Mountains waterways

The Waterways Festival held at Wentworth Falls Lake in September 2017 was a great family day out. The festival was well received, with approximately 400 people in attendance. Festival-goers enjoyed walks, talks, workshops and displays on many things related to our local waterways – from crayfish and turtles, to how to achieve a water-sensitive home. The festival was held in conjunction with Kindlehill School, Blue Mountains Grammar School, Wentworth Falls Public School and the Jamison Creek Catchment Community Group.

Managed our City's waste effectively

During 2017-2018, almost 1.5 million red bins were emptied across the Local Government Area. This equates to an average of 28,000 bins each week. Council's booked waste collection service continued to thrive and is regularly praised by users. More than 12,000 bookings were made during 2017-2018 for bulky waste and kerbside chipping. The community recycling centre at Katoomba received 48 tonnes of hazardous and problem waste, with household paints (77%) by far the largest component, followed by gas cylinders (8.7%).

All three household bin services (waste, recycling and garden organics) experienced a slight reduction in the volume of material placed out for collection compared with 2016-2017. Waste collected from red bins was 1% less, recycling dropped by 2%, and garden organics experienced a 6% reduction. In total, this equates to a 2.8% (965 tonnes) reduction in waste generation compared with the previous year.

Improved catchment health at Leura Falls

Council continued monthly water quality monitoring and rainfall event-based sampling at a number of sites in Leura and Katoomba to assess the effectiveness of five new stormwater treatment systems constructed by the Leura Falls Catchment Improvement Project. This was a \$300,000 joint initiative between Council and WaterNSW that has won a number of awards, including excellence in integrated stormwater design.

Preliminary results show the treatment systems are working well. Overall, the systems have achieved:

- 55% reduction in suspended solids;
- 31% reduction in total phosphorus;
- 17% reduction in total nitrogen; and
- 50% reduction in faecal coliforms.



Waterways Festival at Wentworth Falls

Installed new toilet at Centennial Glen

Construction of a new eco-toilet at the Centennial Glen climbing site in Blackheath was completed during 2017-2018, thanks to a partnership between Council, Blue Mountains Cragcare and the Sydney Rockclimbing Club. Fundraising over about eight years by local and Sydney recreational climbers raised almost \$10,000 for the new facility. A further \$19,300 was contributed from the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership Program, with matched funding from Council. The new toilet has received excellent feedback from residents and visitors alike. It is a significant upgrade for this increasingly popular climbing area and will reduce impacts on local residents and the sensitive environmental setting.

Partnered with Western Sydney councils to prevent illegal dumping

At the June 2018 meeting, the Council resolved to become a member of the Western Sydney Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) squad. The main objective of the RID squad is the identification, investigation, prosecution, and deterrence of illegal waste offences using a range of enforcement strategies. The squad works across local government boundaries, and uses a strategic, coordinated approach to prevent illegal dumping. Current member councils include Blacktown City Council, Cumberland Council, Fairfield City Council, Penrith City Council and The Hills Shire Council.

Installed bio-filtration systems at Wentworth Falls Lake

Council has partnered with Water NSW and the Environment NSW Trust on the Swamped by Threats project to fund the installation of bio-filtration systems for stormwater going into Wentworth Falls Lake and Jamison Creek.

The bio-filtration systems are designed to remove bacteria and nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, resulting in significant improvements to water quality and a reduction in the spread of weeds. The systems include settling ponds for catching silt, multi-layered filtration basins with native plants and sandstone rock armouring to prevent erosion. These works are important for protecting our endangered Blue Mountains swamp ecosystems.

Hosted Annual Bushcare Picnic

On behalf of the community, Council hosted the Annual Bushcare Picnic in June 2018 to celebrate the hardworking Bushcare volunteers and thank them for their amazing work and enthusiasm in helping to keep our bushland healthy.

Bushcare awards were presented to five individuals for their outstanding contributions to Blue Mountains Bushcare. A number of groups also received recognition for their significant service in the Bushcare program over many years.

Drafted Water Sensitive Strategic Plan

The Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan was drafted during 2017-2018, and aims to set the future direction of how Council manages our City's waterways and water resources. Our waterways are some of the most beautiful, iconic and highly-valued in Australia, sustaining a unique diversity of animals and plants, feeding into vital water supplies, and providing opportunities for recreation and tourism. However they are also at risk, especially due to urban stormwater runoff and climate change.

The plan sets out a strategic and coordinated approach to manage water in the Blue Mountains. It builds on Council's past achievements in improving waterway health and is based on a holistic water-sensitive approach with the following four main components:

- Water efficiency;
- Water reuse;
- Best-practice stormwater management; and
- A water-literate community.

Connected kids with nature

During 2017-2018, Council engaged more than 600 students from 12 local schools and preschools in environmental education and engagement events across the Blue Mountains. These programs support our young people to live responsibly in our City within a World Heritage Area.

The Connecting Kids with Nature Program receives great feedback from students and educators, such as the following from a member of staff at Blackheath Public School:

"Thank you for the wonderful experience on Tuesday. The team from Council had an outstanding knowledge of their subject area. They related wonderfully to the children. It was such a well put together package. Could anything be improved? Not really. It's a 10 out of 10 from me."



Connecting Kids to Nature Program



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New Stormwater Treatment Structures, Wentworth Falls Lake

protect Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Natural Environment

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with clean creeks and waterways	3.44	Maintain or increase	3.47	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with protection of natural bushland	3.53	Maintain or increase	3.54	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with weed control	2.99	Maintain or increase	2.91	✓
Community satisfaction with bush regeneration	3.46	Maintain or increase	3.53	✓ ✓
Percentage of urban reporting sites with excellent or good waterway health ratings	52%	Maintain	61%	✓ ✓
Hours of participation in Council-supported community conservation programs	10,471 hours	Maintain or increase	6,178 hours	○
Condition of natural environment assets (Dec 2014: Good 43%, Fair 34%, Poor 23%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—

Waste Resource Management

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with wheelie bin recycling service	4.21	Maintain	4.05	✓
Community satisfaction with wheelie bin garbage service	4.17	Maintain	4.08	✓
Condition of waste resource built assets (Dec 2014: Good 81%, Fair 5%, Poor 14%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Amount of waste to landfill (including domestic, commercial and construction/demolition) per capita	517 kg/person	Year-on-year decrease	476 kg/person	✓ ✓

Water Resource Management

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with management of stormwater and drainage	3.23	Maintain or increase	3.28	✓ ✓
Inspection and maintenance of stormwater assets	Not available	85% completed	75%	○
Condition of water resource management assets (Dec 2014: Good 78%, Fair 17%, Poor 5%)	Not available	Maintain or increase	Not available	—



Knapsack Historical Walk



care

**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 preventative action and early intervention, provision of accessible local health services and through supporting people to live active, healthy lifestyles. Sustainable food initiatives that improve 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.

our aspirations and aims

We value our strong connected and inclusive 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 residents have access to a range of housing that meets diverse needs and is affordable. Our ageing population is cared for and supported. We have stemmed the outflow of younger people from the City through provision of exciting opportunities for working and learning. Building on our rich cultural heritage and inspirational unique natural environment, we are a recognised centre of culture and creativity.

**By 2035 we are a more inclusive,
healthy and vibrant City**

Celebrated five-year anniversary of Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Katoomba Library

A free Community Day was held in November 2017 to celebrate the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Katoomba Library turning five. The Centre hosted free exhibitions, talks and activities, as well as face painting, bands and a magic show for the kids. Inside Katoomba Library there was a very special sensory play and craft area presented by Blue Mountains Family Day Care.

Over the past 5 years, the Cultural Centre has been established as the premier gallery space in the region. This reputation has enabled milestone exhibitions such as *Brett Whiteley: West of the Divide*, *The Archibald Portrait Prize 2015* and the international exhibition *David Hockney: Words & Pictures*, from the British Council, to be secured and shown at the Centre. The Cultural Centre has welcomed over 570,000 visitors since opening in 2012, making the Centre one of the most visited regional gallery spaces in Australia.

Our state-of-the-art Library in Katoomba welcomes over 530 customers per day, issues over 15,300 loans per month and boasts some of the best views from any building in the Blue Mountains. As part of our 5th birthday celebrations, the Library hosted Poetry under the Stars on Friday 17 November, which was attended by approximately 250 people.



David Hockney exhibition at Cultural Centre

Upgraded district parks at Glenbrook and Wentworth Falls

A new junior playground was opened at Glenbrook Park in April 2018, featuring climbing apparatus inspired by a time when Glenbrook was called 'Water Tank'. Significant upgrade works were also completed at Wentworth Falls Lake, providing a new walkway and viewing platform at the western end of the lake. These district park upgrades were classified as major projects for the Council in 2017-2018. Further information can be found in Section 4 of this report.

Resurfaced Knapsack Oval

Council completed a make-over of Knapsack Oval during 2017-2018 to improve the playing surface of the popular sportsground. The renovation work included building the soil profile to improve the turf growing conditions and drainage, renewing the irrigation system, and re-turfing of the oval to provide new grass suitable for sports use. Council was also successful in obtaining additional grant funding through the Asian Cup 2015 Legacy Fund to supplement the upgrade works. Over 400 players from the Blue Mountains Football Club attended a 'Welcome Back to Knapsack' event in May 2018 to celebrate the upgraded facility.

Finalised Open Space and Recreation Strategy

Council received more than 1,900 submissions from the community on its ten-year plan for providing open space and sport and recreation facilities for the local community and visitors. The majority of these submissions focused on the proposals for pools and play, with a smaller number of submissions spread across other themes in the draft plan, such as walking, bushwalking, parks, urban cycling, mountain biking, cliff sports, dog exercise, sports grounds, and sports courts.

Council did a lot of research to inform the draft plan and options for the best possible mix of sport and recreation services across the City. This included exploring the changing needs and demand for recreation, identifying patterns and trends in how people use sport and recreation facilities and open spaces, and assessing the condition of current facilities and open space managed by Council. A number of amendments were made to the draft plan in response to community submissions. The final Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan and supporting Play Guidelines will be presented to the Council for adoption early in 2018-2019.



NAIDOC Week celebrations

Celebrated NAIDOC week

Council worked in partnership with the Aboriginal Advisory Council and the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre (ACRC) to provide an inclusive program of events to celebrate NAIDOC Week in July 2017. The program included a flag-raising ceremony at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and a community day in the Gully Aboriginal Place.

The Cultural Centre also hosted the 2017 NAIDOC exhibition, *Dambu-waa Ngurra – To Paint the Country*, which showcased work by over 10 local Aboriginal artists. The artworks were developed through a TAFE Outreach program that allowed Aboriginal community members of any age to learn painting skills and strengthen their connection with their identity and Country, and to share their stories with the broader community. By making this exhibition free to the public, more than 1,200 visitors were able to experience the exhibition.

Contributed to Bushfire Building Conference and Expo

Council staff took part in discussion panels as part of the Bushfire Building Conference and Expo, held in Springwood in September 2017, as well as operating an information stand. The Bushfire Building Expo is an exhibition showcase of leading technology, products and professional services necessary to build in a bushfire zone. The theme for the 2017 event was 'Building for the Future' and showcased innovative and sustainable bushfire building projects and designs from around Australia.

Delivered a diverse program of theatre events

During 2017-2018, there was major artistic development and diversity in programming at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub. We were able to present an international touring ballet company for the first time in December 2017, with two sold-out productions from the Russian National Ballet Company – *The Nutcracker* and *Romeo and Juliet*. There were many other highlights during the year, such as the Joseph Tawadros Quintet, Dan Sultan, Kitty Flanagan, Jeff Duff and Melinda Schneider. Ticket sales across the year increased by 10% on the previous year, with 25,594 tickets sold in total.

Adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 was adopted by the Council in August 2017. This four-year plan will assist Council to work towards creating an inclusive community that is respectful and accessible to everyone. It identifies diverse areas for action by Council as well as the community, non-government sector and other levels of government.

Implementation will require an all-of-Council approach. Service providers and agencies within the City that work alongside Council will also have a key role in the plan's delivery. Opportunities for collaborative partnerships and engagement are a key element of the plan. It has been developed in consultation with a range of community members, including people with a disability and their carers, service providers, and stakeholders. It has also been informed by the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035.

Returned rocket to Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park

Council worked with the Rotary Club of Blackheath and the community to facilitate the installation of the new replica rocket installed at Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park. The original rocket was built in the early 1960s but was removed more than 20 years ago due to safety concerns. The new rocket provides a unique experience for children of the Blue Mountains and beyond, and expands the offering at one of our four district parks. The official opening was held on Sunday, 25 March 2018.



New Replica Rocket at Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park

Supported Children's Week

Council supported Children's Week in October 2017 through a variety of free programs. One of these was an event held at Glenbrook Park that focused on sensory play. The event, which was hosted by Blue Mountains Family Day Care, allowed participants to experience first-hand how effective sensory play and inclusive play spaces are for children of different levels and abilities. Glenbrook Park was the ideal play space for the sensory activities which included coloured rice play, water beads, scented playdough, musical instruments, and some playground fun.



Delivered City of the Arts Trust Grants Program

Five exciting art projects supported by the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program were delivered during 2017-2018. These included a contemporary cabaret performance involving trapeze performers, musicians and acrobats; creative writing workshops for young people; classical concerts with musicians of international standing, made accessible to children and adults with special sensory needs; film and animation workshops for children and young people; and a curated exhibition of contemporary art drawing on the history, technology and landscape of the Linden Observatory.

In the June 2018 funding round, a further seven projects were supported for delivery in 2018-2019. These are detailed in the Appendix.

Provided leisure opportunities for residents and visitors

Five aquatic and leisure centres are provided across the Blue Mountains. Year-round centres are provided at Katoomba, Springwood and Glenbrook and seasonal pools are provided at Blackheath, Katoomba and Lawson. The Aquatic and Leisure Centres provide a range of leisure opportunities that improve the wellbeing of the Blue Mountains community.

During 2017-2018, the Council's leisure centres:

- Provided community space and activities that were enjoyed almost half a million times by community members and visitors;
- Offered discounted swim lessons, in conjunction with the Adam Crouch Foundation, to prepare kids for a water-safe summer;
- Provided free strength training to over 65's to improve health and fitness;
- Provided lessons for more than 8,000 students at Glenbrook, Springwood and Katoomba pools through the Swim School Program;
- Held free community open days at each centre;
- Encouraged participation in indoor sports such as swimming, basketball, soccer, tumbling, trampolining, bubble soccer and roller derby;
- Connected community members through morning teas and social activities; and
- Attracted more than 50,000 visits over the year through our group fitness program.

Installed new water refill stations in public places

Council entered into a partnership with Sydney Water to install eight new water bubblers and refill stations to make tap water more accessible in popular public places. Each water refill unit is multi-functional, serving as a bubbler and bottle refill station, with a dog bowl at the base. They are a simple, robust construction and wheelchair accessible. The locations for the pilot project were selected based on high community use and represent a range of different public places, including sports grounds, play areas and walking track heads.

Collaborated on strategic direction for Aboriginal Advisory Council

The Council worked in partnership with the Aboriginal Advisory Council (AAC) to develop a new strategic plan to 2020, known as 'Pathways'. This document will guide the future direction of the AAC and aims to achieve a shared vision and action plan to respond to key trends, while also addressing, where possible, issues faced by the local Aboriginal Community.

'Pathways' aims to deliver the vision of the AAC which is that *"The Aboriginal Advisory Council works in partnership with the Council and other stakeholders in caring for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our people and our Ngurra (Country) within the Blue Mountains LGA."*

Provided a vibrant public library service

More than half of Blue Mountains residents are active library members. Council libraries continue to provide a vibrant and accessible library and information service, with more than 47,000 information requests answered during the year, and more than half a million library loans processed. In 2017-2018, Council libraries hosted a wide variety of events, boasting more than 14,000 participants.

In April 2018, in conjunction with Varuna Writers' House and the Sydney Writers' Festival, a Children's Festival was hosted by Katoomba Library and the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre. The Library presented a Grug storytime followed by a meet and greet with Grug. This was followed up with a talk by Emily Rodda, the author of the *Deltora Quest* series.

Author talks hosted by Council libraries in 2017-2018 included *Murder at Myall Creek* by Mark Tedeschi QC, *Sanctuary* by Judy Nunn and *Opal Dragonfly* by Julian Leatherdale. The Summer Reading Challenge for 2017-2018 saw an impressive 594 children participate in the program and 11,520 books read.

Enhanced dog off-leash areas

Following adoption of the Dogs in Public Spaces Strategic Plan in September 2017, Council worked with the community to install dog poo bag dispensers in dog off-leash areas, sportsground and parks around the City. This was one of the key actions recommended in the plan. So far, 9 of the 14 designated dog off-leash areas have at least two dispensers installed. These have been funded by the NSW Environment Protection Authority and are supported by local residents who ensure the dispensers are stocked with bags and any problems are reported to the Council.

The Council also resolved to retain Pitt Park as a 24-hour dog off-leash area, unless booked by sports or undergoing maintenance, following substantial community feedback. Council will also install large fixed signage to explain the shared-use arrangements for Lower Pitt Park and the expectations of dog owners using this popular sportsground in Wentworth Falls.

Conserved cultural heritage

Council continues conservation works for high priority cultural heritage assets that are owned or managed by Council, including graffiti removal from the historic Lennox Bridge in Glenbrook. In partnership with the community, we have completed the restoration of the Map of Australia water feature in Wilson Park, Lawson, and developed a Conservation Management Plan for a remnant section of the old Cox's Road in Linden.



Sydney Writers' Festival Event at Katoomba Library

care Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Aquatic and Leisure Centres

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with management of the swimming pools and leisure centres	3.78	Maintain	3.49	○
Number of visitors to aquatic and leisure centres	530,467	Maintain	503,271	✓
Condition of aquatic and leisure centre assets (Dec 2014: Good 50%, Fair 30%, Poor 20%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—

Community Development

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with community centres and community halls	3.70	Maintain or increase	3.64	✓
Community satisfaction with services and facilities for children and families	3.44	Maintain or increase	3.40	✓
Community satisfaction with services and facilities for older people	3.36	Maintain or increase	3.31	✓
Community satisfaction with services that support the local Aboriginal community	3.28	Maintain or increase	3.07	○
Community satisfaction with services and facilities for people with a disability	3.17	Maintain or increase	2.94	○
Community satisfaction with services and facilities for young people	2.94	Maintain or increase	2.96	✓ ✓
Condition of community development building assets (Dec 2014: Good 5%, Fair 63%, Poor 32%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Completion of program maintenance schedules for community development building assets	Not available	85% completed	80%	✓



Cultural Centre

Cultural Development

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with cultural and arts facilities	3.80	Maintain	3.87	✓ ✓
Number of visitors to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre	113,962	Increase	107,065	✓
Number of patrons to events at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub	43,658	Increase	48,214	✓ ✓

Emergency Management

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with planning for and supporting emergency management for the city	3.77	Maintain	3.70	✓
Community satisfaction with managing the bushfire risk on Council land	3.52	Maintain or increase	3.51	✓ ✓
Percentage delivery of the annual fire mitigation program	99%	Actions on-time	99%	✓ ✓
Condition of emergency management assets (Dec 2014: Good 33%, Fair 43%, Poor 24%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Completion of program maintenance schedules for emergency management building assets	Not available	85% completed	80%	✓

Environmental Health and Regulatory Compliance

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Percentage of customer service requests related to environmental health matters actioned within target	85%	85% completed	81%	✓
Community satisfaction with clean, safe and healthy living environments	3.86	Maintain	3.83	✓

Family Day Care

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Number of equivalent child care hours utilised	100	Maintain	99	✓

Libraries and Information

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with library services	3.96	Maintain	3.95	✓ ✓
Number of library patrons as a % of residents	52%	Better than or equal to NSW average	52%	✓ ✓
Age of library collection	52% < 5 years 82% < 10 years	Better than or equal to NSW average	52% < 5 years 82% < 10 years	✓ ✓
Completion of program maintenance schedules for library building assets	Not available	85% completed	80%	✓

Sport and Recreation

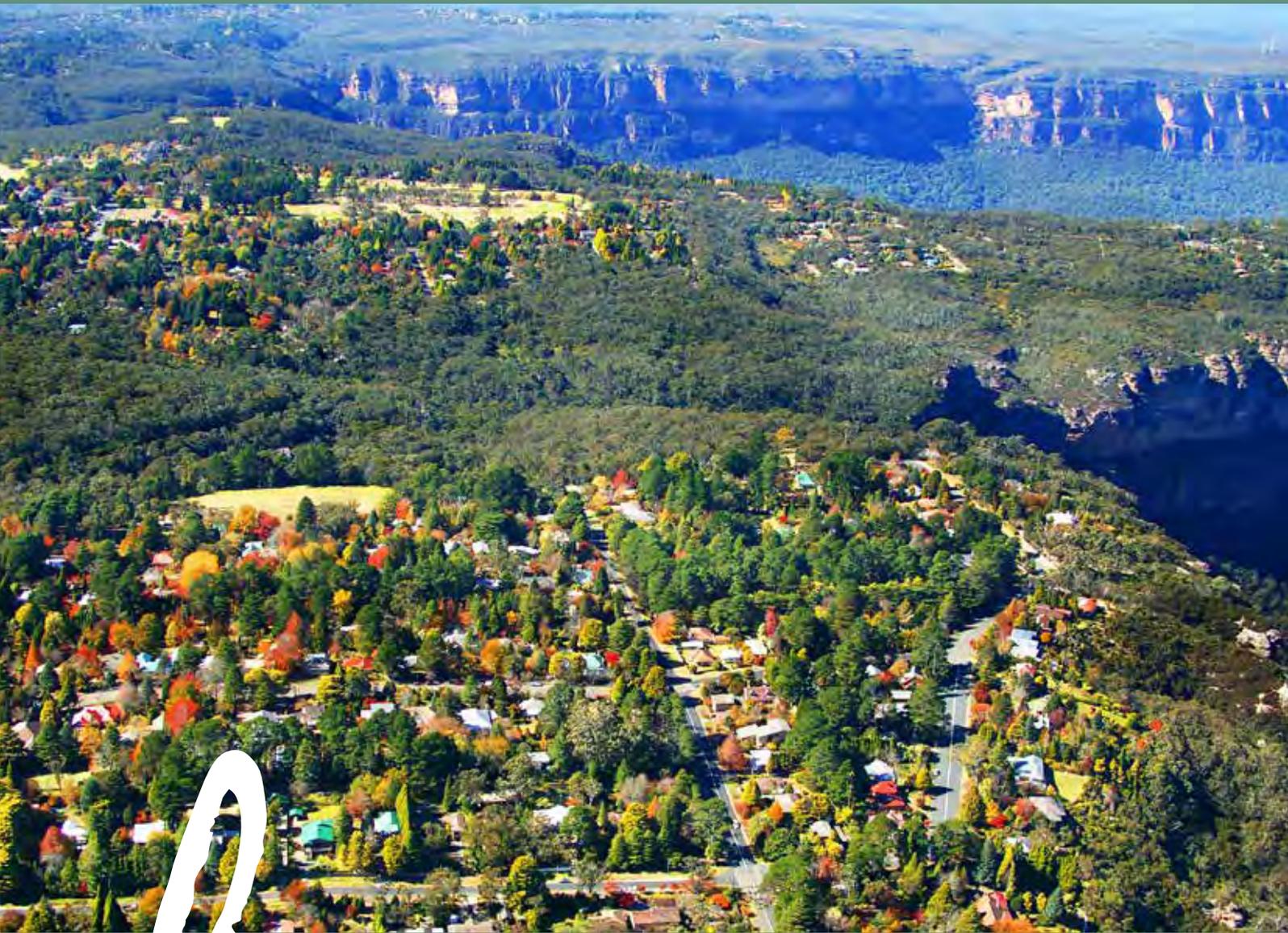
Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with Council lookouts and walking trails	3.83	Maintain	3.73	✓
Community satisfaction with ovals and sporting grounds	3.67	Maintain or increase	3.57	✓
Community satisfaction with parks and playgrounds	3.57	Maintain or increase	3.39	○
Condition of sport and recreation facility assets (Dec 2014: Good 21%, Fair 60%, Poor 19%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Completion of program maintenance schedules for sport and recreation assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓



Blue Mountains East Timor Sisters Trivia Night



Katoomba Live and Local



live

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 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 intrinsic value to the community are retained and enhanced. Liveable cities promote development on a human scale and have distinct and attractive towns and streetscapes.

our aspirations and aims

We take pride in the character and distinct identities of our towns and villages. Our cultural and built heritage is important. We use our land to live in harmony with our surrounding World Heritage environment. Through innovative urban planning we have created a hierarchy of well-designed settlements that connect residents to services and facilities they need. We have created vibrant liveable places and spaces for people of all ages and abilities to live, work and play.

Affordable and well-designed housing options, relevant to diverse community needs, are available. Within the capacity of our natural and built environments, we have encouraged sustainable development in centres with access to public transport, required infrastructure, services and facilities.

By 2035 we are a more liveable City



Secured funding from Liveability Program

The \$150 million Liveability Program is a part of the Western Sydney City Deal and is designed to enhance the local character of each participating council and support new community infrastructure, including parks, playgrounds and cultural facilities. Funding will be shared equally between the eight Western Sydney councils that will form part of the new Western Parkland City, with each to receive \$15 million in funding from the NSW and Australian governments – a further \$3.75 million will also be contributed by each council to the program.

Exhibited draft Blaxland Masterplan

The draft Blaxland Masterplan was placed on public exhibition from February to March 2018, following 12-15 months of investigation, community consultation and concept development. The masterplan sets out a vision to revitalise and renew Blaxland town centre and guide future planning and development over the next 15-20 years.

The community has helped guide the development of the masterplan through a number of major consultation activities since 2016. During 2017-2018, a third round of consultation took place on Saturday 4 November 2017 with a community workshop at the Sharon Burrigge Hall.

Development of the plan also included specialist studies into traffic and parking, urban design and retail studies, and an architectural study which explored the potential for relocation of community facilities into a new purpose-built centre with shop-top housing and a central laneway with cafes and retail spaces. The final masterplan is due for adoption by the Council in 2018-2019.

Established Local Planning Panels

Local Planning Panels were introduced by the NSW Government in 2018, across councils in Sydney, Wollongong and the Blue Mountains. The focus of these panels is on the determination of development applications that are contentious.

The Blue Mountains Local Planning Panel commenced on 1 March 2018 and consists of a chair (appointed by the Minister for Planning), two independent expert members (from an established pool of experts) and a community ward representative (selected through an expression of interest process).

Ten experts were selected for the Blue Mountains panel across a range of disciplines including architecture, heritage, urban design, bushfire, environment, traffic, engineering and planning. In the period up to 30 June 2018, the Blue Mountains Local Planning Panel made determinations on four development applications.

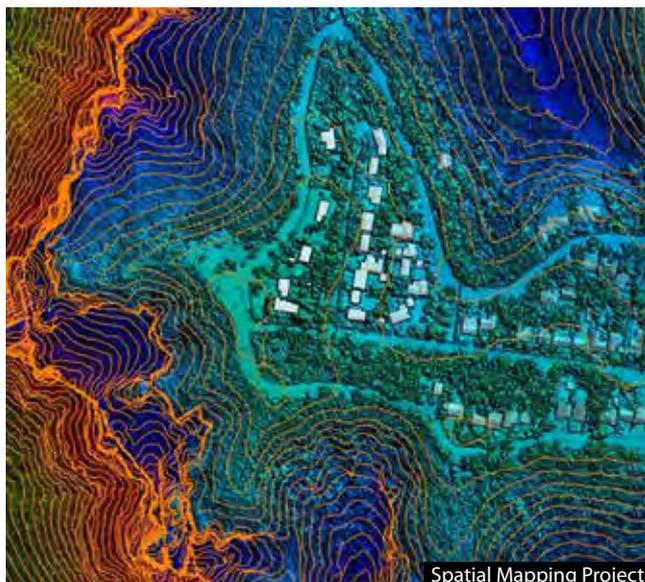
Managed land use and building certification

In 2017-2018, the Council determined 1,093 development applications and modifications, processed 808 applications requesting a construction or complying development certificate, and completed 2,169 building code compliance inspections of new developments.

Updated spatial data to assist planning

Council completed a significant mapping project in 2017-2018 that updated our elevation imagery and building footprint data to reflect the current state of the Blue Mountains built and natural environment.

New high-resolution maps were created using a technique known as Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) – a surveying method that measures distance to a target by illuminating the target with pulsed laser light and measuring the reflected pulses with a sensor. Spatial information from these 3D maps will be used for flood modelling, environmental management, asset management, city-wide land use planning, bushfire risk analysis and assessment of development applications.



Spatial Mapping Project

Contributed to planning for Western City District

The Blue Mountains is part of the Western City District with Penrith, Hawkesbury, Fairfield, Liverpool, Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly. The State Government released the Western City District Plan in March 2018 which sets priorities and actions for this part of Greater Sydney for the next 20 years.

Council provided input into the plan and successfully advocated for recognition of the unique characteristics of our local area, resulting in the Blue Mountains being classified differently to most of Sydney.

This classification of 'metro-rural' rather than 'metro-urban' means that the Blue Mountains does not have to accommodate the level of growth occurring in greater Sydney. This is reflected in more appropriate housing and jobs targets.

Commenced masterplan for former Lawson Golf Course

Development of a masterplan for the future use of the former Lawson Golf Course began in 2017-2018. Community engagement commenced with two community workshops held in March and April 2018.

Creation of water-sensitive recreation infrastructure is one of six key projects that have been nominated by the Council for funding under the Western Sydney City Deal Liveability Program. Based on significant community input, the proposal includes a pedestrian loop path, restored riparian corridors, nature play and picnic areas and a fenced dog off-leash area. Council will seek further community feedback before finalising the masterplan, once the City Deal funding is confirmed.

Adopted Blackheath Masterplan

The Blackheath Village Centre Masterplan was adopted by the Council in September 2017, following extensive consultation on options for the village centre, particularly in regards to traffic management, parking and development of a town square. The Blackheath Village town square is considered an important addition to the public domain in Blackheath, with the potential to deliver significant community benefit in terms of amenity, accessibility and safety. Funding has been allocated in Council's Asset Works Program to commence implementation of the Masterplan in 2018-2019.

Advocated to State Government

Council continued to represent the interests of the Blue Mountains community during 2017-2018 in relation to a number of proposed planning changes being implemented by the NSW Government.

The Council sought exemption, for the third time, from the NSW Government's new Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code on the basis that the new code bypasses local planning processes and allows for increased densities, without having to comply with Council development standards or consult appropriately with the community.

A submission to the Department of Planning and Environment on short-term holiday letting in NSW was endorsed by the Council in October 2017 in response to an options paper released in July 2017.

live Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Building Certification

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Percentage of market share for competitive components of building certification service	62%	60%	60%	✓ ✓

Burials and Ashes Placement

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with cemeteries and ashes placement sites	3.71	Maintain or increase	3.61	✓
Condition of burials and ashes placement assets (Dec 2014: Good 8%, Fair 79%, Poor 13%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—

Land Use Management

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with protection of heritage values in our towns and villages	3.45	Maintain or increase	3.41	✓
Community satisfaction with managing residential development	3.08	Maintain or increase	3.12	✓ ✓
Determination times for processing development applications	85 days	<= 87 days	88 days	✓



Artist Impression of Pilgrim Place

City Presentation

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with the atmosphere, look and feel of our towns and villages	3.53	Maintain or increase	3.44	✓
Community satisfaction with litter control	3.45	Maintain or increase	3.47	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with street cleaning	3.43	Maintain or increase	3.46	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with parking for shoppers	3.24	Maintain or increase	3.09	○
Community satisfaction with public toilets in town centres	3.03	Maintain or increase	2.85	○
Condition of town and village centre assets (Dec 2014: Good 72%, Fair 28%, Poor 0%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Completion of program maintenance schedules for town and village centre assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓



move

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 less polluting means of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling.

our aspirations and aims

We value safe, well-planned 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 pathways for cycling and walking integrated with reliable and accessible public transport services and facilities. The needs of commuters have been considered resulting in enhanced, more frequent and better integrated transport services and improved commuter parking facilities.

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 2035 we are a more accessible City

Repaired and upgraded the City's road network

During 2017-2018, Council resealed around 20 km of local roads as part of the road reseal program. This included approximately 94,000 m² of asphalt and 61,000 m² of spray seal. These renewal works were completed in Blackheath, Katoomba, Leura, Wentworth Falls, Lawson, Hazelbrook, Woodford, Faulconbridge, Springwood, Winmalee and Glenbrook.

The sealing of unsealed roads program continued to be implemented, with a further 4 km of road sealing works completed during the year. Small sections were sealed in Blackheath, Katoomba, Hazelbrook and Woodford, as well as 2.2 km Peach Tree Rd in the Megalong Valley. This will significantly reduce the ongoing maintenance required for grading unsealed roads and has greatly improved resident satisfaction in these areas.



Sealing of Peach Tree Rd, Megalong Valley

Adopted Citywide Parking Strategic Plan

The Council adopted a Citywide Parking Strategic Plan in March 2018. The plan makes recommendations for the whole of City, and for individual towns, villages and tourism destinations, providing a framework to guide parking infrastructure over the next 10-15 years. It seeks a balance between current and future parking needs, business and resident needs, and protecting the village character and natural environment of the Blue Mountains.

The focus is on improving the management of existing parking areas, including improving the turnover of vehicles. A key recommendation is to prepare Parking Precinct Plans for key locations that are under parking pressure, investigating options such as electronic sensor parking and changes to time restrictions. Draft parking precinct plans for Wentworth Falls Lookout and Conservation Hut, Echo Point Precinct and Blackheath Village Centre have been prepared.



New Footpath - Wentworth St, Blackheath

Allocated additional funding for priority footpaths

Implementation of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Program (PAMP) continued in 2017-2018, improving the provision of safe and accessible pathways of travel for people of all ages. This year's program was boosted by the allocation of a portion of the 2016-2017 budget surplus to fund new footpaths in priority locations across the City.

Works completed in 2017-2018 include locations in Blackheath, Katoomba, Lawson, Faulconbridge, Springwood, Winmalee, Blaxland, Mt Riverview, Glenbrook and Lapstone. The implementation of this program aims to provide and promote sustainable choices for moving around the City that are safe, inclusive and efficient, and encourage people of all ages to walk for everyday transportation and enjoyment.

Adopted Integrated Transport Strategic Plan

The Integrated Transport Strategic Plan 2035 was adopted by the Council in June 2018. The plan provides a framework to guide the detailed planning of traffic and transport services and infrastructure in the Blue Mountains. It also provides context with which to advocate to the NSW Government for improvement to state roads and public transport.

The strategy sets out priority actions and a number of options for further investigation and implementation between now and 2035. These include:

- Bicycle riding and walking networks;
- Public transport;
- Roads and travel demand;
- Parking;
- Freight;
- Technology and innovation; and
- Link and place.

The actions identified in the plan have been developed in response to the specific needs of the Blue Mountains Community and aim to move the transport network forward in a sustainable way.

Launched Active Transport Review

In May 2018, Council commenced a review of its active transport network. The goal is to identify where footpaths, shared paths, bike routes, and accessibility can be improved to support and promote walking and cycling as a choice of transport in the Blue Mountains.

Community feedback will provide valuable insight to guide the Council in developing and improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across the City, and ensure that the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and the Blue Mountains Bike Plan remain relevant and reflect community needs and priorities.

Supported road safety initiatives

Council continued its proud support of National Road Safety Week by asking the community to share responsibility on the road, slow down and Drive So Others Survive. Council also worked with Roads and Maritime Services and NSW Police to promote the Slow Down in My Street campaign. This initiative encourages motorists to slow down on local roads for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and to drive to the conditions.



Slow Down in My Street campaign

The Respect Our Code on Blue Mountains Roads Campaign targets users of NSW Government-managed roads in the Blue Mountains region and stems from the 2016 Blue Mountains Heavy Vehicle Drive Neighbourly Agreement. The agreement encourages safe and respectful behaviour from all road users and was endorsed by major industry participants. Council has continued to work with stakeholders to encourage safer roads and reduce the impacts of vehicle emissions and noise.

Undertook detailed inspection of road network

A detailed assessment of the City's 675 km road network was undertaken during November and December 2017. The project included video imaging that will enable better management of the Council's road assets. Improved data will enable a more efficient system for allocating funding to best reduce risk and maximise service levels, and show the long-term impacts of any gap in funding.

Commenced planning for shared trail between Emu Plains and Glenbrook

Council has engaged a consultant to prepare a feasibility assessment and detailed design for an off-road shared path between Emu Plains and Glenbrook. The project is funded under the NSW Government's Active Transport Program, with a shared contribution to the project from Blue Mountains and Penrith City Councils.

move Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Transport and Public Access

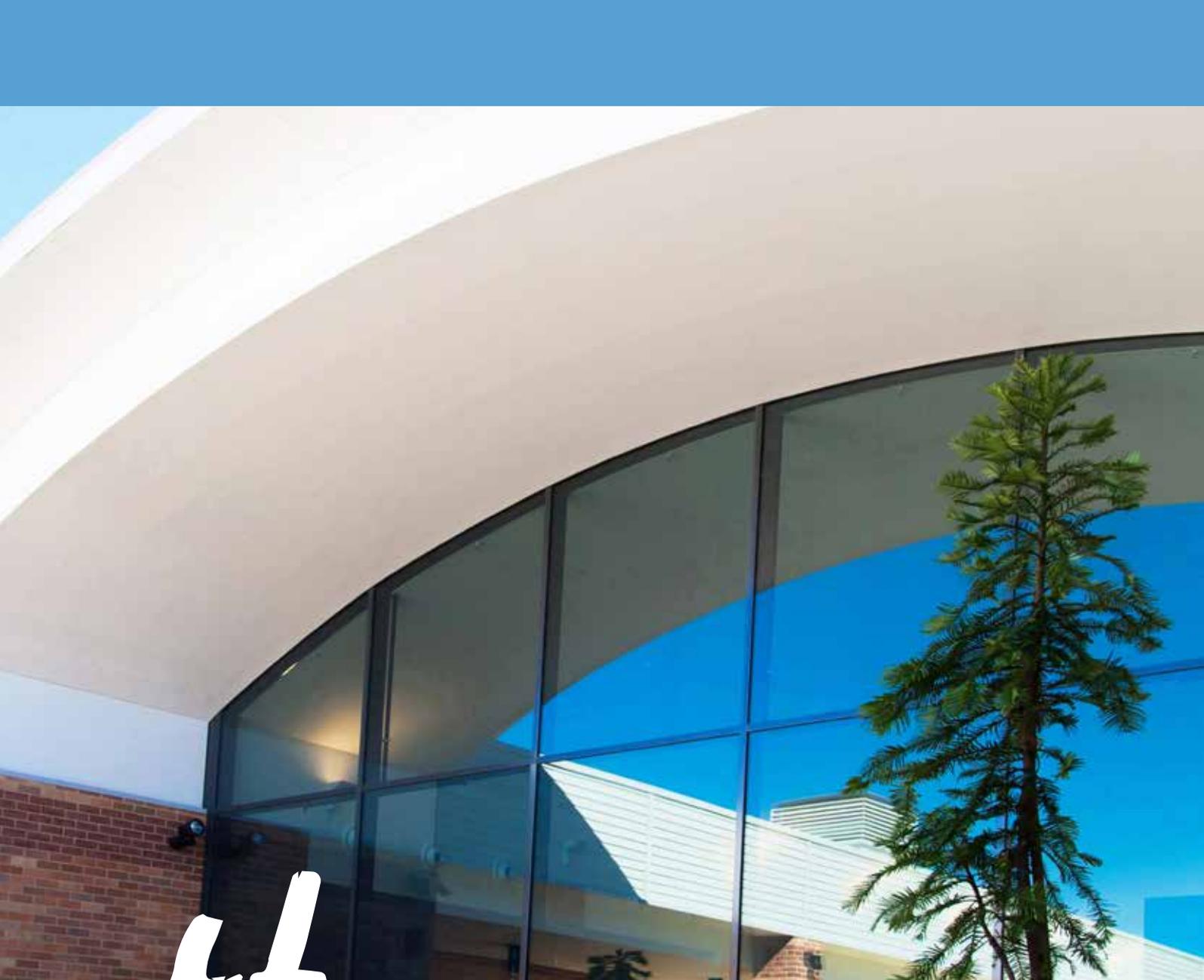
Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with pedestrian access around shopping centres and community facilities	3.60	Maintain or increase	3.65	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with traffic safety for pedestrians and vehicles	3.44	Maintain or increase	3.39	✓
Community satisfaction with bus shelters	3.31	Maintain or increase	3.32	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with sealed roads	3.27	Maintain or increase	3.46	✓ ✓
Community satisfaction with carparks	3.24	Maintain or increase	3.17	✓
Community satisfaction with commuter parking	3.24	Maintain or increase	3.14	✓
Community satisfaction with footpaths	3.04	Maintain or increase	2.98	✓
Community satisfaction with cycleways	2.85	Maintain or increase	2.59	○
Condition of transport assets (Dec 2014: Good 22%, Fair 57%, Poor 21%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Percentage of bus stops compliant with Disability Discrimination Act standards	10%	Increase	10%	○
Inspection and maintenance of Council's transport infrastructure assets including footpaths, resealing, potholes, grading and shoulders	79%	85% completed	74%	○



Road Resal Program



Respect Our Code on Blue Mountains Roads



thrive

**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.

our aspirations and aims

We value business and industries that support the needs of our community and are in harmony with our surrounding World Heritage environment. People of all ages are attracted to work, live and study in the Blue Mountains.

Through responsible economic development we have strengthened and diversified our local economy, creating growth in employment and educational opportunities. In doing this we have built on our inherent strengths and advantages in being a City with rich cultural and natural heritage surrounded by a World Heritage Area and a creative City of the Arts. We are a leader in sustainable tourism and visitor destination management.

By 2035 our local economy is stronger and more sustainable

Adopted masterplan for Scenic Eastern Escarpment

In May 2018, the Council adopted a long-term plan for the Scenic Eastern Escarpment that will guide the future development of nature-based and culture-based recreation and tourism opportunities in the lower Blue Mountains. The masterplan will assist in obtaining significant NSW and Australian Government investment in recreation infrastructure for the community.

Development of the masterplan for this precinct involved extensive consultation with community and neighbouring land managers, such as National Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Lands, Penrith and Hawkesbury City Councils. Another key feature of the masterplan is close engagement with Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners to ensure that the management of Country within the eastern escarpment area achieves cultural, social and economic outcomes for the Traditional Owners and the broader Aboriginal community.



Scenic Eastern Escarpment

Hosted inaugural Live and Local event in Katoomba

More than 2,000 people attended the first Live and Local event for the Blue Mountains on 7 April 2018. Over 180 performers, including large ensembles, entertained from 12 locations over six hours at the free, family event. It was a fun and creative collaboration that brought vibrancy to Katoomba town centre and lasting benefits for both musicians and small business.

The project proved to be an innovative way to promote and springboard emerging musical talent. Approximately 25% of performers at the event were under 25 years of age, and 12% were Indigenous. The event fostered new connections, helping to link musicians with local event managers and potential employers. This Council-led community collaboration was made possible by a Create NSW grant, and also received sponsorship from Bendigo Bank.

Adopted Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan

In March 2018, the Council adopted a Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan for the Blue Mountains. The plan was developed to identify the investment required to support visitor infrastructure, visitor services and city presentation, and to identify additional revenue streams to fund this investment.

The plan will help address the challenges associated with increasing visitor numbers, including increasing costs to Council and the resulting financial burden on ratepayers. It will also support improved service levels for city presentation, including litter collection and cleaning in villages and town centres, as well as footpath and streetscape improvements.

The Council also endorsed a 10-year implementation plan, and specific priority actions for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Financial modelling indicates that, over the next decade, implementation of the plan could generate indicative revenue of \$28-35 million.

Enhanced visitor experiences through Destination Ambassador Program

Council trialled a new Destination Ambassador Program over the peak Christmas and New Year period. Ambassadors were available to greet tourists as they alighted from trains at Katoomba Station. Visitor Information Centre staff provided directions, advice and and/or user-friendly maps to more than 6,000 domestic and international visitors during this period.

This program came about as a result of the Destination Management Plan that was endorsed by the Council in August 2017, which highlighted the need to explore visitor information options at, or near, Katoomba Station as a priority. It is set for expansion in 2018-2019, with more volunteers being trained to provide information to visitors in the upper Blue Mountains.

Supported local businesses to employ people with a disability

Council hosted a free breakfast on 26 October 2017 to show how employing people with a disability can make good business sense. The breakfast event had business leaders, managers, hiring managers, recruitment staff and human resource professionals in attendance. A range of speakers provided an overview of wage subsidies, equipment modification schemes and other forms of support to employ people with a disability.

This event was held as part of the Nepean Jobs for All project – a joint initiative between Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith City Councils, with funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Allocated funding to support continuation of Winter Magic Festival

Winter Magic is the largest event in the Blue Mountains, often referred to as the largest community event in NSW. Its contribution to the City both economically and socially is significant, with an estimated 43,700 people attending the event in 2017, generating \$2.4 million overall.

In response to the cancellation of the 2018 Winter Magic Festival by the Festival Committee, due in part to the challenges of complying with the requirements of managing an event of this size and the associated cost, the Council resolved to contribute up to \$80,000 to assist in planning for Winter Magic 2019. These funds have enabled a review of the event, and will contribute to the development of required event plans to ensure its continued success.

Launched Small Business Training Calendar

Council has launched free training sessions for small business, mostly funded by Council with assistance from the Office of Small Business. These sessions have been run in Springwood and Katoomba locations and are growing in popularity. In 2017-2018 we ran trainings on:

- Setting up a small business;
- Home-based business; and
- Tax basics.

We also ran two trainings for tourism operators and accommodation providers:

- Building Your Digital Footprint; and
- Inclusive tourism training.

The inclusive tourism training is now also offered online via our Council business page. It explains the benefits to local business of catering for people with a disability, young families and older people. The training also offers practical advice on accessibility requirements and assistance available for businesses to better meet the needs of the inclusive tourism market.

Hosted Katoomba Solstice Celebration

The Katoomba Solstice Celebration, in June 2018, saw around 50 local musicians entertaining the community in a variety of venues. It was held in lieu of the 2018 Winter Magic festival, which was cancelled earlier in the year. This free, family-friendly event was held across 12 locations in the Katoomba town centre, including two stages and pop-up performance spaces.

The event complemented other activities held in Katoomba on the day that the Winter Magic Festival is normally held, and was attended by up to 2,000 people.

Showcased our City at Vivid Sydney

The Blue Mountains was promoted in Pitt Street Mall during the Sydney Film Festival and Vivid in June 2018. A 15-second Blue Mountains tourism advertisement that was commissioned by Council was shown 100 times over a 12-day period. Vivid attracts almost 2.5 million people annually.



Katoomba Solstice Celebration

thrive Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Economic Development and Tourism

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Community satisfaction with visitor information centres at Glenbrook and Echo Point	4.00	Maintain	3.71	○
Community satisfaction with caravan parks at Katoomba and Blackheath	3.53	Maintain or increase	3.35	○
Community satisfaction with access to local employment opportunities	2.90	Maintain or increase	2.97	✓ ✓
Condition of tourism assets (Dec 2014: Good 3%, Fair 89%, Poor 8%)	Not available	Maintain	Not available	—
Completion of program maintenance schedules for tourism assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓

Commercial Activities

Measure	2016-2017 Result	Annual Target	2017-2018 Result	Status
Profit and loss statements for commercial activities	Not available	Net revenue result	\$468,000	✓ ✓

Appendix Statutory Information



Rates and Charges Written Off

The following abandonments occurred during the 2017-2018 rating period.

Pensioner Concession Rebates	\$1,582,035.42
Postponed Rate Abandonments	\$58,677.62
Rates & Charges Abandoned by Resolution of Council	\$13,539.20
Legal Fees & Extra Charges Written Off	\$24,523.45
Small Balance Write Offs	\$6,518.42
TOTAL ABANDONMENTS	\$1,685,294.11

Overseas Visits

There were no overseas trips undertaken by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing the Council for the year ending 30 June 2018.

Mayoral and Councillor Fees and Expenses

Mayoral and Councillor fees for the year 2017-2018 were determined by the Council as follows:

Annual fee for Councillors

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1993, the maximum amount payable to a Councillor per annum was \$18,361 (excluding Mayoral fees).

Annual fee for the Mayor

Pursuant to the Local Government Act 1993, the Council determined the Mayoral allowance would be \$40,088, with \$4,009 of this set aside for the Deputy Mayor when acting in the Office of the Mayor. The total Mayoral fee was therefore \$58,450, comprising the Councillor fee and Mayoral allowance.

Payment of expenses and provision of facilities

The Council has a policy for the Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors as per the Local Government Act 1993. This policy is reviewed annually by the Council, and is placed on public exhibition as per Sections 248-254. It is titled *Councillor Facilities and Expenses Policy* and is located on the Council website.

The following summary shows the amount expended during the year on Mayoral and Councillor fees, the amount expended on the provision of facilities for use by Councillors and the payment of Councillors' expenses.

Nature Of Expenses	Actuals (\$)
Mayoral fees	37,082
Councillor fees & allowances	223,344
Councillor travel expenses	5,729
Conference fees & expenses	18,026
Councillor sundries	-
Councillor training	12,710
Out of pocket expenses	544
Telephone	10,915
Printing and stationery	1,991
Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor, being expenses payable in accordance with the Guidelines	-
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a Councillor	-
Catering for Council meetings and briefings	42,883
Interstate visits by Councillors (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	-

Contract Information

The following table details contracts awarded in 2017-2018 for amounts greater than \$150,000.

Council Meeting	Minute No.	Contractor	Description	Amount (ex GST)
22 Aug 17	270	Better View Landscapes Pty Ltd	Construction of a new junior inclusive playground at Glenbrook Park	\$355,014
17 Oct 17	352	The Almar Group Pty Ltd	Design and Construction of Blaxland Rural Fire Service Station at 24 Attunga Road, Blaxland	\$897,516
17 Oct 17	347	Central Industries Pty Ltd	Concrete Walking track Upgrade and Construction of Steel Boardwalk at Wentworth Falls Lake Site	\$238,276
17 Nov 17	403	Central Industries Pty Ltd	Construction of Pedestrian Infrastructure and Installation of Signage within BMCC Local Government Area	\$357,936
12 Dec 17	439	The Green Horticultural Group Pty Ltd	Irrigation System Upgrade at Knapsack Park, Glenbrook	\$493,943
30 Jan 18	18	The Almar Group Pty Ltd	Construction of a new toilet block at Wentworth Falls Lake Site	\$534,488
27 Feb 18	57	The Almar Group Pty Ltd	Upgrade and Extension to the Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre and Construction of a new carpark and associated landscaping	\$831,123
27 Mar 18	110	Cardno NSW/ACT Pty Ltd	Consultancy Services for the feasibility assessment detailed design for an off road shared path between Emu Plains and Glenbrook	\$177,300
27 Mar 18	104	Precision Civil Infrastructure Pty Ltd	Supply and Installation of Wash Bay Roof at South Street Depot, Katoomba	\$188,347
29 May 18	205	Hydrocare Pool Services Pty Ltd	Lawson Swim Centre Pool Filtration Upgrade	\$229,500

Legal Proceedings

During 2017-2018 the following amounts were incurred by the Council in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the Council.

Title	Status as at 30 June 2018	2017-2018 Expenditure (ex GST)	Result
Land and Environment Court			
Prosecution re non-compliance with development consent	Ongoing	\$0	
Defend appeal against direction to comply with Swimming Pools Act 1992	Concluded	\$34,693.28	Appeal dismissed and Council's direction upheld
Defend appeal against actual refusal of development application	Concluded	\$9,937.18	Appeal dismissed and DA refused
Enforce Order: Demolition and removal of waste (Class 4 proceedings)	Concluded	\$354.00	Property ownership had changed; no further action
Appeal against refusal of development application	Ongoing	\$1,716.97	
Class 1 appeal against conditions of development consent	Ongoing	\$4,423.50	
Interlocutory proceedings against suspension of the Council	Concluded	\$49,093.16	Injunction granted; matter withdrawn by Council with agreement to pay Minister's costs of \$20,000
Total Land and Environment Court		\$100,218.09	
Local Court			
Defend penalty infringement notices (2) re illegal dumping	Concluded	\$37,807.80	Proceedings withdrawn by Council
Vegetation removal and other unauthorised work	Ongoing	\$14,281.83	
Court Elect: Penalty Infringement Notice – non-compliance with development consent	Concluded	\$1,536.91	Penalty infringement upheld; order for payment of fine and professional costs to Council
Court elect: Penalty Infringement Notice - clearing of vegetation	Concluded	\$545.50	Proceedings withdrawn by Council
Seeking conviction under POEO Act - waste dumping - two offences	Concluded	\$4,883.91	Defendant convicted; order for defendant to pay fines and costs
Court elect: Penalty Infringement Notice - fire safety	Concluded	\$5,978.50	Penalty infringement upheld; order for payment of fine and professional costs to Council
Total Local Court		\$50,752.62	

Title	Status as at 30 June 2018	2017-2018 Expenditure (ex GST)	Result
NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal			
Defend appeal against NCAT decision re application for government information (GIPA)	Concluded	\$8,609.32	Appeal withdrawn by applicant
External review of Council's decision under GIPA Act	Concluded	\$6,719.22	Appeal withdrawn by applicant
External review of Council's decision under GIPA Act	Ongoing	\$6,711.41	Judgment reserved
Total NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal		\$22,039.95	
NSW Supreme Court			
Defend appeal against injunction action in L&E Court	Concluded	\$4,416.28	Appeal successful
Total Supreme Court		\$4,416.28	
Industrial Relations Commission			
Staff matter	Concluded	\$11,527.20	Settled
Total Industrial Relations Commission		\$11,527.20	
Total Legal Cost to Council for all Court Proceedings		\$201,967.30	
Total Legal Income to Council		\$46,984.00	

Work Carried Out on Private Land

No works were carried out on private land. No properties were entered in 2017-2018 to carry out works, as permitted under s.67 of the Local Government Act, to enforce an Order.

Financial Assistance

The following programs provide financial assistance to fund a wide range of community and cultural projects within the City of Blue Mountains, which is granted under Section 356 of the *Local Government Act, 1993*.

Community Assistance Program 2018

In 2017-2018, the Council allocated \$53,115 in funding to the Community Assistance Program 2018. An outline of community organisations that received funding under the program is provided in the table below.

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Mount Victoria Community Association Inc.	<i>Celebrating Mount Victoria</i>	\$1,000
Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society Inc.	<i>Pedestrian safety</i>	\$790
Blackheath Kookaburra Kindergarten	<i>Vegetable garden rejuvenation and purchase of more outdoor resources</i>	\$790
Blackheath Area Men's Shed Inc.	<i>Steps to greater workshop safety and technical literacy</i>	\$695
Rotary Club of Blackheath Inc.	<i>Refurbishment of BBQ trailer</i>	\$790
Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre	<i>Upper Blue Mountains connected community</i>	\$1,750
Blackheath Rhododendron Festival Inc.	<i>Blackheath Choir Festival - combined choir</i>	\$790
Total Applications Received Area 1		\$6,605
St Hilda's Anglican Church Katoomba	<i>KidzArts</i>	\$490
Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre	<i>Community lunches</i>	\$1,750
Katoomba Leura Preschool	<i>Breakfast and nutrition program</i>	\$790
Total Applications Received Area 2		\$3,030
Hazelbrook Association Community Inc.	<i>Community Family Fun Day</i>	\$790
Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre	<i>MMNC support of community activities</i>	\$1,750
Girl Guides Association of NSW	<i>Safety strategies for Lawson Girl Guides Hall</i>	\$790
Total Applications Received Area 3		\$3,330

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Fusion Blue Mountains	<i>Breakfast clubs</i>	\$790
Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Coop	<i>Information and referral support</i>	\$1,750
Total Applications Received Area 4		\$2,540
Gateway Family Services	<i>Referral hot spot</i>	\$1,000
Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre	<i>Quarterly newsletter - CHATS</i>	\$1,750
Total Applications Received Area 5		\$2,750
Blue Mountains Family Support Service Inc. T/A Thrive Services	<i>Homework station</i>	\$1,000
Furaha Mamas Inc.	<i>Monthly support meetings and awareness raising event</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc.	<i>BMACHO workshops</i>	\$790
Academy Singers Inc.	<i>Choral workshop</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains & Penrith Woodworking Club Inc.	<i>Various</i>	\$790
Orpheus Strings Music Society (Blue Mountains) Inc.	<i>Annual Blue Mountains Performers Concert 2018</i>	\$490
Blue Mountains Public Broadcasting Society	<i>Call Back Radio System - seven second delay</i>	\$790
bentART Incorporated	<i>bentART exhibition 2019</i>	\$690
Connect Child & Family Services	<i>YAWN taking care of tired families</i>	\$1,750
Springwood Senior Dance Club Inc.	<i>Dancing for seniors in the BMCC area</i>	\$690
Blue Mountains City RSL Band	<i>Ongoing support of the Blue Mountains City RSL Band</i>	\$5,000
Blue Mountains Pipe Band	<i>Assistance to rent venue for practice and deliver tuition</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains Junior Roller Derby League	<i>Court hire fees for 14 hours</i>	\$690
Kinship at Christmas Foundation	<i>Aged care gift giving project</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains Roller Derby League Inc.	<i>Court hire for 15 hours</i>	\$690
Mountains Outreach Community Services	<i>Aboriginal cultural activities for families and children</i>	\$1,750

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Blue Mountains Food Services	<i>Social support program</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre	<i>Aboriginal art festival</i>	\$1,750
Iris Society of Australia	<i>2018 NSW Iris Show</i>	\$690
Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre	<i>Self-nurturing and discovery</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains Orchestra Inc.	<i>Mozart and Enigma</i>	\$790
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre	<i>Fresh food program</i>	\$1,750
CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia) - Blue Mountains Sub Branch	<i>Author/illustrator workshops for children</i>	\$790
Riding for the Disabled Blue Mountains	<i>Compost for local community garden</i>	\$590
Your Music Inc.	<i>Sensory concert</i>	\$790
Blue Mountains Concert Band Inc.	<i>Mountains Youth Band development masterclass</i>	\$790
Mountains Community Resource Network	<i>Interagency resourcing</i>	\$1,750
Life Education NSW	<i>Increasing the knowledge and skills of Children's Preventative Health Educator</i>	\$790
Schools Industry Partnership	<i>Tuned-in teens</i>	\$790
Mountains Youth Services Team	<i>Katoomba High School breakfast</i>	\$1,750
Mountains Multicultural Interagency	<i>MMI - refugee project</i>	\$790
National Trust NSW	<i>Table linen upgrade</i>	\$400
Out of the Nest	<i>Santa comes to the Blue Mountains</i>	\$790
Total Applications Received City-Wide		\$34,860
TOTAL		\$53,115

Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program 2018

The Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program increases opportunities for the delivery of creative projects by local artists and art workers and provides a stimulus for creativity within the City. On 26 June 2018, the Council endorsed the following seven projects recommended by the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Advisory Committee. These projects will be delivered in 2018-2019.

Artist/ Organisation	Project name and description	Funding
Grace Kim	<p>Leonard The Lyrebird</p> <p>In this project creative director Grace Kim will produce quality, family friendly, classical music performances featuring an original composition based on a Blue Mountains children’s story. Grace addresses the need in this genre to celebrate works with Australian narratives, composed and performed by Australian musicians. The story creatively lends itself to a musical interpretation that connects audiences with the landscape and animals of the Blue Mountains. There will be several performances at Scenic World, the venue partner.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Blue Mountains Artists Network</i></p>	\$10,000
Faye Wilson	<p>Blume Illustration Project Mentorship Program</p> <p>In 2018, Faye Wilson will be introducing a formal mentorship program for young artists between the age of 18 and 24. Mentees will be involved in the creation of new work for exhibition and publication. In 2019 Faye will partner with Westwords and focus on facilitating practical experience for the mentees in the creative fields of design, illustration and writing. Westwords are providing work space in their Writers’ rooms for mentees to work on set briefs and to access additional advice and support from their professional staff.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Blue Mountains Artists Network</i></p>	\$10,000
Saskia Everingham	<p>Sensa Flora</p> <p>Saskia Everingham will curate an extended exhibition at Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mt Tomah, with ten established women textile artists from the Greater Blue Mountains. The theme encompasses personal responses to flowers experienced at peak and ordinary moments in life: weddings, funerals or wild waratahs on a bush walk. Interaction will also be encouraged by visitors writing their own flower experiences on paper and “planting” them in an origami garden at the Visitors Centre. Additional satellite events include workshops, demonstrations and artist talks throughout the event.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Blue Mountains Artists Network</i></p>	\$9,200
Jo Clancy	<p>Yindyang</p> <p>Wiradjuri Dance Artist Jo Clancy will create a First Nations Australian and Canadian dance and film installation with Metis, Cree, Mohawk Native Canadian film maker Gregory Coyes in collaboration with Darug singer song writer Jacinta Tobin, Wiradjuri Videographer Jamie Murray; the Wagana Aboriginal Dancers and Cultural Mentor Aunty Carol Cooper, Darug and Gundungurra Elder. The work will be inspired by River flow and Indigenous people’s shared connection to water passed down from generations.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Mountains Outreach Community Service</i></p>	\$8,750
Margaret Davis	<p>Eating Pomegranates</p> <p>In this project Creative Director Margaret Davis combines physical theatre and social dance forms from waltz to tango and line dancing as a framework for the story-telling. Written and performed by a group of professional mountains playwrights and actors, the work is a response to how we adapt to the changes in our bodies over time: some expected, others sudden and catastrophic. The piece will be underpinned by myths from many cultures about the unpredictability of existence and the threshold between life and afterlife.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Weatherboard Theatre Company</i></p>	\$8,732

Artist/ Organisation	Project name and description	Funding
Camille Walsh	<p>Lanterns on the Lake</p> <p>This is an ephemeral cultural event which aims to bring the community together in an expression of gratitude and creative celebration at Wentworth Falls Lake. The project involves workshops to create many hundreds of lanterns for the evening performance as well as a range of performing artists, including an opera performance on the lake and a Slam Poetry event.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Varuna - The National Writers' House</i></p>	\$7,500
Varuna - The National Writers' House	<p>City of the Arts Generation of New Writers</p> <p>This project aims to inspire and enable talented young people from across the Blue Mountains to express themselves using the written form. It is an extension and adaptation of the successful 'City of the Arts Young Writers Program 2017'. Masterclasses will teach young people about the craft of writing, including narrative, voice, plot and characterisation, through writing exercises and discussions. In partnership with the Mountains Youth Services Team, 'Poetry under the Stars' and the poetry circle event at Varuna Open Day.</p> <p><i>Auspice: Varuna - The National Writers' House</i></p>	\$5,100
TOTAL		\$59,282



Australian Poetry Slam, Katoomba Heat

External Bodies Exercising Council Functions

Other than CivicRisk Mutual (an insurance pooling group of ten Western Sydney Councils established under a joint agreement) and the United Independent Pools (UIP), no external bodies exercised functions delegated by Blue Mountains City Council in 2017-2018.

Companies in which Council held a Controlling Interest

Council had no controlling interest in any company during 2017-2018.

Partnerships, Corporations and Joint Ventures Involving Council

Council is a member of WSROC Limited, a company limited by guarantee, comprising eleven Western Sydney councils formed for the purpose of research, lobbying and fostering of co-operation between councils for the benefit of all residents of Western Sydney. Council is also a member of CivicRisk Mutual as detailed above.

The Blue Mountains and Penrith Council Alliance continues through a Memorandum of Understanding that was established in May 2008. The partnership supports the Minister for Local Government's reform initiative for councils to work together to improve resource sharing and efficiency in service delivery.

In August 2016, the Council formally entered into a Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith City Council and Hawkesbury City Council. The Regional Strategic Alliance provides opportunities to strengthen Council's ability to deliver on key priorities through our Resourcing Strategy and Delivery Program, and ultimately our Community Strategic Plan. The Regional Strategic Alliance provides each council with an opportunity to work collaboratively on a range of initiatives that will provide significant benefit to the communities that each council serves.

The Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise was established by Blue Mountains City Council in late 2012 as an independent entity with the mission to stimulate economic development in the Blue Mountains through advocacy, investment and industry development, consistent with our competitive advantages.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Council is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), fair treatment and non-discrimination for all existing and future employees. The EEO policy statement and management plan meet legislative requirements and are followed across Council.

Remuneration of General Manager and other Senior Staff

Council has six designated senior staff positions comprising the General Manager, three Directors and two Group Managers. The General Manager remuneration includes retirement benefits and payout of annual leave and long service leave. The remuneration for Senior Staff includes termination payments. The total remuneration (including salary, motor vehicle, superannuation and performance payments) expended during 2017-2018 for these senior staff positions was:

- General Manager: \$979,566
- Other Senior Staff: \$1,469,363

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

There were no environmental upgrade agreements in place during 2017-2018.

Capital Works Projects

During 2017-2018, the Council expended more than \$12 million through its Assets Works Program. Capital works are those projects that involve the planning and construction of new built assets or the improvement of built assets, such as footpaths, signage, roads and community halls.

The following section provides details of capital projects that either commenced or were completed in 2017-2018. Information on capital expenditure can also be found in the accompanying Annual Financial Statements.

Community Buildings

Council maintains a wide variety of different buildings including administrative offices, works depots, libraries, aquatic and leisure centres, childcare centres and preschools, visitor information centres, cultural facilities, community centres, halls, emergency services buildings, public amenities and other auxiliary buildings. These have a combined asset value of approximately \$153 million.

Community Buildings Projects undertaken in 2017-2018

COMMENCED

Refurbishment works

- Design and documentation of Katoomba Falls Kiosk upgrade
- Design and documentation of Echo Point Visitor Information Centre upgrade, Katoomba
- Construction of Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre upgrade and new car parking facility
- Design and documentation of air-conditioning works at Springwood Library

New building works

- Design and documentation of Rural Fire Service Station at Blaxland
- Construction of Rural Fire Service Station at Lawson

COMPLETED

Refurbishment works

- Springwood Childcare Centre remedial works
- Asbestos Bike Shed demolition and rebuild
- Warrimoo Community Hall repairs
- Mt Riverview Rural Fire Station roof renewal

Community hall renewal projects

- Blackheath Community Hall
- Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre
- Faulconbridge Community Hall
- Mt Riverview Community Hall
- Warrimoo Community Hall
- Mount Wilson Hall

Building removal

- Demolition of Winmalee Community Hall

Transport & Public Access Infrastructure

Council maintains approximately 700 km of sealed roads and 45 km of unsealed roads, with 13,500 roadside signs and 30 bridges. This road network is supported by other transport infrastructure including 180 km of footpaths, 160 bus shelters and more than 76,000 m² of sealed carparks. Altogether, these transport and public access assets are valued at approximately \$703 million.

Transport & Public Access Projects undertaken in 2017-2018

COMMENCED

Bridge barrier renewal

- Review and project scoping for guardrail renewal to approaches of identified high priority railway overline bridges

Active transport infrastructure

- Design of Great Blue Mountains Trail upgrade – Blackheath to Mt Victoria
- Design of Great Blue Mountains Trail upgrade – Leura Cascades to Kiah Lookout
- Design of Great Blue Mountains Trail upgrade – Kiah Lookout to Scenic World
- Off Road Shared Path – Emu Plains to Glenbrook

Traffic studies and economic appraisals (RMS Congestion Program)

- Hawkesbury Road, Springwood
- Yeaman Bridge, Katoomba

Parking precinct plans

- Wentworth Falls Lookout
- Blackheath Town Centre
- Wentworth Falls Conservation Hut
- Echo Point, Katoomba

Transport studies and strategies

- Leura Local Area Traffic Management Plan
- Bike Plan 2020
- Active Transport Review to inform PAMP and Bike Plan

COMPLETED**Road asphalt resurfacing**

- Station Street, Blackheath
- Narrow Neck Road, Katoomba
- Bathurst Road, Katoomba
- Victoria Street, Katoomba
- Camp Street, Katoomba
- Lovel Street, Katoomba
- Katoomba Street, Katoomba
- Leura Mall, Leura
- Megalong Street, Leura
- Queens Road, Lawson
- Railway Parade, Hazelbrook
- Grose Road, Faulconbridge
- Macquarie Road, Springwood
- Homedale Street, Springwood
- Ellison Road, Springwood
- Singles Ridge Road, Winmalee
- Euroka Road, Glenbrook
- Mount Street, Glenbrook

Road spray seal resurfacing

- Mount Hay Road, Leura
- Bass Road, Wentworth Falls
- Banksia Road, Wentworth Falls
- Cook Road, Wentworth Falls
- Hill Street, Wentworth Falls
- David Street, Wentworth Falls
- Orama Road, Hazelbrook
- Mona Road, Hazelbrook
- Forbes Road, Hazelbrook
- Riches Avenue, Woodford
- Lucinda Avenue, Springwood
- Alderton Avenue, Springwood
- Chaseling Avenue, Springwood
- Perry Avenue, Springwood
- Crampton Drive, Springwood
- Fairway Avenue, Springwood
- Linksvie Road, Springwood
- Leslie Street, Winmalee
- White Cross Road, Winmalee
- Access Road off Hawkesbury Road, Winmalee

Carpark resurfacing

- Commercial Carpark off Hope Street, Blaxland (adjacent IGA supermarket complex)

Sealing of unsealed sections of road

- Peach Tree Road, Megalong Valley

Carpark reconstruction

- Hazelbrook Bowling Club – car park resurfaced

Bridge restoration

- Lennox Bridge restoration works (Stage 2)

Transport studies and strategies

- Blue Mountains Integrated Transport Strategic Plan (adopted June 2018)
- Traffic Modelling and Concept Options Report for Springwood Town Centre

Footpath construction and/or signage replacement based on Pedestrian Access Mobility Program (PAMP) priorities

- Clanwilliam Street, Blackheath
- Wentworth Street, Blackheath
- Cleveland Street, Lawson
- Adelaide Street, Lawson
- Albion Street, Katoomba
- Grose Road, Faulconbridge
- Macquarie Road, Springwood
- White Cross Road, Winmalee
- Hawkesbury Road, Winmalee
- High School Drive, Winmalee
- Tutor Close, Winmalee
- Endeavour Drive, Winmalee
- Coughlan Road, Blaxland
- Wilson Way, Blaxland
- Baden Place, Blaxland
- Great Western Highway service road (Brooklands Village), Blaxland
 - Emu Plains Road, Mt Riverview
 - Rusden Road, Mt Riverview
 - Park Street, Glenbrook
 - Wascoe Street, Glenbrook
 - Ross Street, Glenbrook
 - Explorers Road, Lapstone

Water Resource Management

Council maintains 190 km of stormwater pipes and 50 km of open channels, approximately 8,000 pits, 2,500 drainage headwalls and over 200 stormwater quality improvement devices. The Water Resource Management service also provides more than 35 stormwater harvesting and reuse systems and 20 raingarden/biofiltration systems that help to minimise the impacts of stormwater runoff on bushland and local waterways. In total, these asset classes are valued at approximately \$104 million.

Water Resource Management Projects undertaken in 2017-2018

COMMENCED

Stormwater drainage renewal

- Engagement of dam specialist consultant to support key infrastructure renewal and reporting requirements for the Wentworth Falls Lake Dam.

Floodplain management

- Bullaburra to Linden study

COMPLETED

Stormwater drainage renewal

- Jamison Creek Catchment stormwater drainage infrastructure renewal and outlet treatment improvement works, David Street, Wentworth Falls.
- Oaklands Road, Hazelbrook drainage channel structure renewal

Stormwater drainage upgrade

- Russell Avenue, Faulconbridge piping of open channel

Floodplain management

- Hazelbrook and Woodford Creeks Catchment floodplain study
- Wattlecliffe Levee Wall

Natural Area Visitor Facilities

Council provides a wide range of nature-based experiences in its bushland areas, involving the maintenance of approximately 130 km of walking tracks, 85 lookouts, 5 campgrounds and numerous other picnic areas, shelters and toilets. Many of these facilities are in cliff top environments and experience high visitation, making it critical for public safety that these assets are in good, functional condition. Council’s natural area visitor facilities have an asset value of approximately \$49 million.

Natural Area Visitor Facilities Projects undertaken in 2017-2018

COMMENCED

- Design of sealed parking area at Lincoln’s Rock, Wentworth Falls
- Installation of night lighting at Reids Plateau, Katoomba

COMPLETED

- Renewal of bridge on Charles Darwin Walk, Wentworth Falls
- Design of unsealed parking area, Railway Parade, Linden (Paradise Pools)
- Construction of walking track and lookout upgrades – Reids Plateau, Katoomba
- Construction of a new pit toilet at Centennial Glen Reserve



Reids Plateau Walking Track Upgrade

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Council provides and maintains a wide range of recreation opportunities for the community and visitors including 5 leisure and aquatic centres, 105 parks, 22 sportsgrounds, 66 sports courts and 6 skate parks with 54 play-equipment settings, as well as sporting amenities, clubhouses, public toilets, picnic shelters and dog off-leash areas. These assets are valued at approximately \$55 million.

Sports & Recreation Facilities Projects undertaken in 2017-2018

COMMENCED

- Lapstone Reserve sewer system – design and statutory approval completed
- Wentworth Falls Lake new toilet block
- Warrimoo Oval Carpark – design finalised
- Lawson Swim Centre renewal

COMPLETED

District park upgrade

- Wentworth Falls Lake - construction of boardwalk and concrete path upgrade
- Glenbrook Park upgrade
- Replica Rocket at Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park

Play equipment renewals and replacement of failed items

- Batman Park, Springwood
- Wentworth Falls Lake Playground
- Possum Park, Warrimoo
- Tall Timbers Park, Winmalee
- Springwood Early Childhood Health Playground, Springwood
- Warrimoo Oval Play Area, Warrimoo

Park improvements

- Knapsack Park automatic irrigation system
- Katoomba Showground lighting upgrade
- Kingsford Smith Park tree removal and replanting



Katoomba Showground Lighting Upgrade

Other Infrastructure

Council maintains a range of other infrastructure including waste facilities, cemeteries, monuments and fire trails.

Other Infrastructure Projects undertaken in 2017-2018

COMMENCED

- Carrington Place lighting replacement
- Explorers Tree maintenance

COMPLETED

- Blaxland Waste Management Facility landfill liner works
- Blackheath War Memorial landscape works
- Springwood Buckland Park War Memorial
- Cemetery maintenance – upgrade and maintenance of gardens at Katoomba, Wentworth Falls and Springwood; restoration of locally significant grave at Wentworth Falls
- Fire trail renewal



Blackheath War Memorial Restoration

Companion Animals Management

The Companion Animals Management Plan (CAMP) is a strategic document outlining a combination of traditional regulatory activities and non-regulatory strategies to encourage and promote responsible pet ownership. In June 2017, the Council adopted the Companion Animals Management Plan 2017-2021. A copy of this plan can be viewed on the Council website.

Lodgement of pound data collection returns

Returns have been completed and lodged indicating that 140 dogs were seized by Council Rangers, of which 73 were returned directly to their owner and 67 were taken to the pound. A further 133 dogs were taken or surrendered to the pound by the public. There were 170 cats taken to the pound.

Lodgement of dog attack data

Dog attack data is recorded on the Companion Animal Register. In 2017-2018, there were 56 incidents classified as 'dog attacks' involving people or animals.

Community Education Activities

Promotional material on the Community Animal Welfare Scheme (CAWS) program was provided and distributed through Council facilities such as libraries, neighbourhood centres, and council offices. Brochures on responsible cat and dog ownership and appropriate behaviours to minimise the impacts of cats and dogs on native wildlife, bushland reserves, wildlife protection areas and the environment were made available. Online social media forums, including the Blue Mountains Have Your Say website, were utilised to provide information and obtain feedback on topical issues in relation to dog exercise areas, and issues around shared spaces to help identify community priorities. The Council website was redesigned with improved information on dogs and cats, dog off leash areas, lost and found and pest species.

Strategies to promote or assist with de-sexing of dogs and cats

In conjunction with the RSPCA, the CAWS program provided low income earners and pensioners with subsidised desexing, vaccination and microchipping. Council assisted with promotion and fielded enquiries.

Strategies to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals

The NSW Companion Animals Act provides that micro-chipped animals be held for a minimum of 14 days and unidentified animals kept for seven days. At the expiration of the prescribed period, unclaimed animals are transferred to the RSPCA for sale. In some circumstances the decision may be made to euthanise. In the case of infant animals, this can occur without waiting the prescribed minimum time periods. Under these circumstances, the Shelter Manager will carry out an assessment based on the age, condition and likelihood of survival. If the assessment discloses that it is not humane or practical to provide immediate or long term care and shelter, then the Shelter Manager, after consultation with the appropriate Council representative, may destroy the animal/s without waiting the prescribed time. Statistics show a continual decrease in euthanasia rates for cats and dogs from the Blue Mountains Shelter.

Off-Leash Areas provided in the LGA

Blackheath

Whitley Park

Fully fenced off-leash area with seating, toilets, picnic shelter, bin and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 171-175 Great Western Hwy, Blackheath

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Full dog off-leash area

Old Airstrip, Hat Hill Road

Open space off-leash area with pond, bubbler with dog bowl, carpark, bin and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 244-318 Hat Hill Road, Blackheath

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared recreation zone

Medlow Bath

Medlow Park

Partly fenced off-leash area with picnic shelter, seating, bubbler, disabled parking, toilets and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 10-14 Railway Pde, Medlow Bath

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared recreation zone

Katoomba

Bureau Park

Unfenced sports oval surrounded by bushland, with seating, bin and toilet.

Address: 28-40 Mistral St, Katoomba
Open: Monday to Sunday, sunrise to 10am then after 4pm, except when booked or undergoing maintenance

Type of use: Shared sportsground

Melrose Park

Partly fenced off-leash area surrounded by bushland, with seating, shelter and bin.

Address: Fitzgerald St, Katoomba
Open: Monday to Friday, sunrise to 4pm, except when booked or undergoing maintenance

Type of use: Shared sportsground

Katoomba Falls Reserve (Lower Oval)

Fenced off-leash area surrounded by natural creek area, recreation area and caravan park.

Address: 101 Cliff Drive, Katoomba
Open: Monday to Friday sunrise to 10am, weekends after 5pm except when sport is being played

Type of use: Shared sportsground

Leura

Leura Oval

Unfenced off-leash area surrounded by bushland, with bin, toilet and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 34-36 Gordon Road, Leura
Open: Monday to Sunday, sunrise to 10am then after 4pm, except when booked or undergoing maintenance

Type of use: Shared sportsground

Wentworth Falls

Pitt Park (Lower Oval)

Partly fenced off-leash area with carpark, seating, bins, toilet and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 3-15 Matcham St, Wentworth Falls
Open: Monday to Sunday 24 hours, except when oval is booked or undergoing maintenance

Type of use: Shared sportsground

Lawson

Former Lawson Golf Course

Open grassed fairways with bushland surrounds and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 48-78 Wilson St, Lawson
Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours
Type of use: Shared recreation area

Woodford

Bulls Camp

Unfenced off-leash area with open grassland, carpark, picnic shelters, seating, bubbler, bins and toilet.

Address: 1-6 Great Western Hwy, Woodford
Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared recreation area, highway rest area

Sun Valley

Sun Valley Reserve

Rural-fenced grassed field, with water, bins, toilet and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 96-130 Sun Valley Road, Sun Valley
Open: Monday to Sunday 24 hours, except when booked, undergoing maintenance or horses on reserve.

Type of use: Shared recreation area

Winmalee

Summerhayes Park

Fully fenced off-leash area adjoining Summerhayes Park complex, with wheelchair access, bins, toilet and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 326-349 Hawkesbury Rd, Winmalee (access from Bunnel Avenue)
Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Designated fenced and accessible dog off-leash area

Glenbrook

Whitton Park

Partly fenced open grassed area with seating, picnic shelter, benches, bubbler, bin and dog poo bag dispenser.

Address: 12 Moore St, Glenbrook
Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared recreation area

Lennox Bridge

Shared track in bushland area with creek and some clearings.

Address: Knapsack Reserve, Mitchells Pass Road, Glenbrook
Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared track circuit

Amount of funding spent relating to Companion Animal Management

Council’s expenditure in relation to companion animal management and activities for 2017-2018 is estimated at \$248,080. Details are as follows:

Receipts	
Companion Animal Fund	-\$80,183
Pound income (sustenance and release fees)	-\$13,585
Pound shelter subsidy	-\$1,675
Disbursements	
Enforcement by Rangers	\$253,628
Provision of pound facility	\$64,348
Veterinary costs	\$1,879
Sustenance	\$18,680
Education (public advertisements in news print), estimate	\$4,988
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	\$248,080

Privacy Management Plan Notification

The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA)* requires the Council to maintain a Privacy Management Plan.

On 23 June 2015, Blue Mountains City Council endorsed a reviewed Privacy Management Plan. The plan is available for viewing on Council’s website.

The plan will be reviewed during the 2018-2019 financial year.

Swimming Pools

Under Division 5 of Part 2 of the Swimming Pools Act, Council is required to undertake inspections of the swimming pool barrier on premises where there is tourist and visitor accommodation or more than two dwellings. Upon a satisfactory inspection Council may issue a certificate of compliance, or certificate of non-compliance for an unsatisfactory inspection.

Council completed 13 inspections which resulted in the issue of 9 certificates of compliance in 2017-2018.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Implementation of Council’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan for 2017-2018 involved the following actions:

- Provision of disability awareness training for Council staff by the Guide Dog Association to better equip staff on the needs of people with a disability, in particular the vision-impaired, in navigating services and facilities in the Blue Mountains LGA;
- Commencement of a mobility study to identify the barriers for people with a disability and the frail aged accessing their town centre, with a particular emphasis on Blackheath, Springwood and Winmalee;
- Commencement of a public toilet study to identify toilets in need of upgrade for disabled access that are near to town centres, pathways of travel and public transport infrastructure;
- Commencement of the provision of an adult change table for adults with a disability at the Blue Mountains Community Theatre Hub; and
- Council has amended its recruitment policy to include a statement in support of people with a disability applying for vacant positions.

Government Information (Public Access) Applications

Information relating to the 33 formal Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 (GIPA) applications received during the period 2017-2018 can be broken down into the following tables as per Schedule 2 of the GIPA Regulation, 2018.

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome*

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Members of the public (other)	10	5	5	2	0	2	0	3

*More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Personal information applications*	5	1	3	1	0	1	0	0
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	5	3	2	2	0	2	0	3
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0

*A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications

Reason for invalidity	Number of applications
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	0
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0
Total number of invalid applications received	0
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 to the Act

	Number of times consideration used*
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive Council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	4
Excluded information	0
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0
Transport safety	0
Adoption	0
Care and protection of children	0
Ministerial code of conduct	0
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0
Information about complaints to Judicial Commission	0
Information about authorised transactions under <i>Electricity Network Assets (Authorised Transactions) Act 2015</i>	0
Information about authorised transaction under <i>Land and Property Information NSW (Authorised Transaction) Act 2016</i>	0

*More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of the Act

	Number of occasions when application not successful
Responsible and effective government	2
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	5
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

Table F: Timeliness	
	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	32
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	1
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0
TOTAL	33

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)			
	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total
Internal review	0	0	0
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	1	1
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	1	1	1
Review by NCAT	2	0	2
TOTAL	3	2	4

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendation to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)	
	Number of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	5
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies under Division 2 of Part 4 of the Act (by type of transfer)	
	Number of applications transferred
Agency-initiated transfers	1
Applicant-initiated transfers	0

Open Access Requests

During the 2017-2018 financial year, Council received 584 open access requests related to Development Applications. A total of 570 requests were processed during this period.

Planning Agreements

There were no planning agreements in force during 2017-2018.

Public Interest Disclosures

The Council is required to report disclosures made by public officials under Section 31 of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (NSW) ('the PID Act'). The PID Act sets out a comprehensive framework for protecting public officials who disclose wrongdoing in accordance with this Act. Such disclosures are known as public interest disclosures or internal reports.

The Public Interest Disclosure Internal Reporting Policy was endorsed by the Council on 12 December 2017 (Min No. 347) and is available on the Council website.

The following table outlines public interest disclosures for the period July 2017 to June 2018.

	Made by public officials performing their day to day functions	Under a statutory or other legal obligation	All other PIDs
Number of public officials who made PIDs directly	4	0	0
Number of PIDs received	4	0	0
Of PIDs received, number primarily about:			
• Corrupt conduct	4	0	0
• Maladministration	0	0	0
• Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0
• Government information contravention	0	0	0
• Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Number of PIDs finalised in reporting period	4		

During the reporting period, the Council undertook the following actions to meet its staff awareness obligations under section 6E(1)(b) of the PID Act:

- Organising training to be presented by the Ombudsman to (i) disclosures officers and other key staff, and (ii) management team;
- Email to all staff regarding policy;
- PID information is available on the staff intranet;
- The Public Interest Disclosure Internal Reporting Policy is on the Council website;
- Posters are displayed to promote staff awareness, with detail on where they can seek advice or to make a report of wrongdoing;
- Internal reporting policy and procedures covered in staff induction sessions; and
- Information on internal reporting was presented in the staff newsletter

Fit for the Future Action Plan

The Council was declared Fit for the Future in October 2015 based on a submission and action plan provided to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in June 2015. The action plan was developed to achieve Fit for the Future targets by 2019-2020. The following tables present the status of each milestone for 2017-2018 as at 30 June 2018.

The following key has been used:

Fit for the Future Action Plan Status	
Milestone complete	
Milestone partially complete	
Milestone rescheduled or withdrawn	

4-Year Action	2017-2018 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2018
AVIOD SHOCKS		
Action 1.a. Achieve Fit for the Future ratios in 2019-2020, then maintain or improve ratios	Drive implementation of the Council's Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability (DPOP 1.1a)	
Action 1.b. Set annual Fit for the Future targets for 2017-2018 to 2019-2020	LTFP communication plan developed and implemented (DPOP 1.2a)	
Action 1.c. Develop Corporate Risk Register to target high risk renewal expenditure	Implement an organisational risk based approach to policy review and development (DPOP 1.2.c)	
Action 1.d. Implement best value spending of SV2 funds to meet Fit for the Future ratios	Deliver initiatives to ensure that the expenditure of SV2 and other Council funds reduces long term costs and increases income (DPOP 1.1.a)	
BALANCE THE BUDGET		
Action 2.a Align decision making to LTFP plan to achieve a positive operating performance ratio	Strengthen alignment of budgeting to LTFP (DPOP 1.1.a)	
Action 2.b Implement improvement initiatives to achieve decreasing operating expenditure per capita	Establish a Business Improvement Program Office and develop a Business Improvement Business Plan (DPOP 1.1.b)	
	Promote electronic delivery of all rating correspondence (DPOP 1.1.b)	

4-Year Action	2017-2018 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2018
Action 2.c Model, define and review affordable levels of service within available revenue to improve operating performance ratio	Progress work on defining affordable levels of service (DPOP 1.3.a)	✓ ✓
Action 2.d Improve asset lifecycle costs to improve the asset renewal and asset maintenance ratios	Review the Council's depreciation and useful life assessment, including civic infrastructure review (DPOP 1.1.a)	✓ ✓
	Review integration of the Asset Register and Asset Management Plans (DPOP 1.1.a)	✓ ✓
	Implement the Asset Management Improvement Program (DPOP 1.3.b)	✓ ✓
Action 2.e Consolidate and/or reconfigure provision of assets/services to improve asset renewal and asset maintenance ratios	Implement a strategic review of service levels (DPOP 1.3.a)	✓ ✓
Action 2.f Prioritise funding of high risk asset renewal to reduce infrastructure backlog ratio	Educate key staff in risk management (DPOP 1.2.c)	✓
MANAGE DEBT AND INVESTMENTS RESPONSIBLY		
Action 3.a Cease future loan borrowings unless supported by business case to improve debt servicing ratio	Review and update Borrowings Policy, review loan financing, and reduce borrowings with available funds (DPOP 1.1a)	✓ ✓
Action 3.b Reduced operating expenditure requirements that improve debt servicing and operating performance ratios		✓ ✓
Action 3.c Further reduce borrowings to improve borrowing capacity, reduce debt servicing costs and improve debt servicing ratio		✓ ✓
Action 3.d Review borrowing capacity annually to ensure staying within debt servicing benchmark		✓ ✓
Action 3.e Manage Investments to maximise returns and achieve positive operating performance ratio		Review and update Investments Policy (DPOP 1.1a)

4-Year Action	2017-2018 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2018
INCREASE INCOME		
Action 4.a Review revenue strategies to maximise revenue to achieve positive operating performance ratio and improve own source revenue ratio	Update Revenue Strategies (DPOP 1.1.a)	
Action 4.b Increase income from Property Disposal and Investment Program to achieve positive operating performance ratio and improve own source revenue ratio	Update Property disposal and investment program (DPOP 1.1.a)	
Action 4.c Increase revenue generating initiatives to achieve positive operating performance ratio and improve own source revenue ratio	Develop the Visitor User Pay Strategy including possible expansion of paid parking (DPOP 6.4.a)	
	Develop the Campgrounds Investment and Management Plan including the investigation of user pays (DPOP 6.4.a)	 Project will now be delivered under the Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan in 2018-2019
Action 4.d Increase income from commercial activities to achieve positive operating performance ratio and improve own source revenue ratio	Conduct a review of current operations of Council owned tourist parks (DPOP 6.3.a)	
REVIEW AND ADJUST SERVICES		
Action 5.a Define service levels in 2019-2020 to improve operating performance and infrastructure backlog ratios	Commence review and update of service dashboards community engagement tool - defining affordable levels of service (DPOP 1.2.b)	
Action 5.b Strategic review of services improves operating performance ratio	Undertake a strategic review of services to inform future decision making (DPOP 1.3.a)	
Action 5.c Individual service reviews reduce expenditure to improve operating performance ratio	Progress implementation of the BMCC Service Framework: Guidelines for achieving Best Value Services (DPOP 1.3.a)	
Action 5.d Develop financial projections for each service by 2018-2019 to ensure LTFP can be achieved and so can a positive operating performance ratio	Service reporting is further developed to improve planning, review and management of service budgets (DPOP 1.3.a)	

4-Year Action	2017-2018 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2018
INCREASE ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS		
Action 6.a Lobby to increase income and improve operating performance ratio	Create an annual advocacy and partnership plan (DPOP 1.1.a)	
Action 6.b Lobby to minimise expenditure increases and improve operating performance ratio	Review and revise Service Level Agreements with the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service (DPOP 3.3.b)	
Action 6.c Advocate against expenditure increases and improve operating performance ratio	Prepare the Priority Infrastructure Plan with input from state and other agencies (DPOP 1.4.a)	 Rescheduled
Action 6.d Implement Regional Strategic Alliance to achieve enhanced advocacy and regional planning outcomes reduce operating expenditure per capita	Implement relevant components of the Regional Strategic Alliance Business Plan for 2017-2018 (DPOP 1.4.b)	
Action 6.e Develop partnerships with other agencies to create efficiency savings and reduce operating expenditure per capita	Convene a workshop with adjoining Councils to improve alignment of Community Strategic Planning and Resourcing Strategies (DPOP 1.4.a)	 Withdrawn

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