


SUSTAINABLE BLUE MOUNTAINS **together**



Annual Report 2018-2019







Acknowledgement of *Ngurra* (Country)

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 Traditional Owners, *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.

For countless generations, Traditional Owners have cared for their *Ngurra* in what is now the Blue Mountains and through this, *Ngurra* has sustained and nourished them. Caring for *Ngurra* is central to Aboriginal culture, being recognised as a holistic embodiment of environmental sustainability. Locally, and as a nation, there is much to learn from the special relationship between Aboriginal people and Country.

In order to honour the past and respond to the future it is important to recognise and address the as yet largely unresolved issue of Traditional Ownership by Aboriginal peoples, recognised in part by the *Native Title Act 1993*. The dispossession of Traditional Owners resulting from the European colonisation of Australia, and the ongoing disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal peoples requires redress. This process starts by recognising the deep, strong, unbroken connection to *Ngurra* held by Traditional Owners in the Blue Mountains.

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.



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	6	5. Performance Reporting	58
About this Report	9	Lead	60
Message from the Mayor and CEO	10	Protect	68
Our City of Blue Mountains	12	Care	80
Council's Vision, Mission and Values	15	Live	94
Community Strategic Plan Objectives	16	Move	102
		Thrive	108
2. The Year in Review	18	6. Financial Reporting	116
Overall Results	20	Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability	118
Highlights	22	Financial Statement Summary	122
Challenges and Opportunities	24	Fit for the Future	129
Major Projects	25		
Financial Snapshot	28	Appendices	130
Calendar of Events	30	Statutory Information	132
Awards and Recognition	33	Special Rate Variation	161
		Glossary and Acronyms	169
3. Our Council	34		
Elected Councillors	36		
Governing our City	37		
Engaging our Community	39		
4. Our Organisation	42		
Organisational Performance Review	44		
Organisational Structure	45		
Leadership Team	48		
Workforce	50		
Corporate Governance	54		
Work Health and Safety	55		
Council Services at a Glance	56		



1

Introduction



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 2018-2019 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:

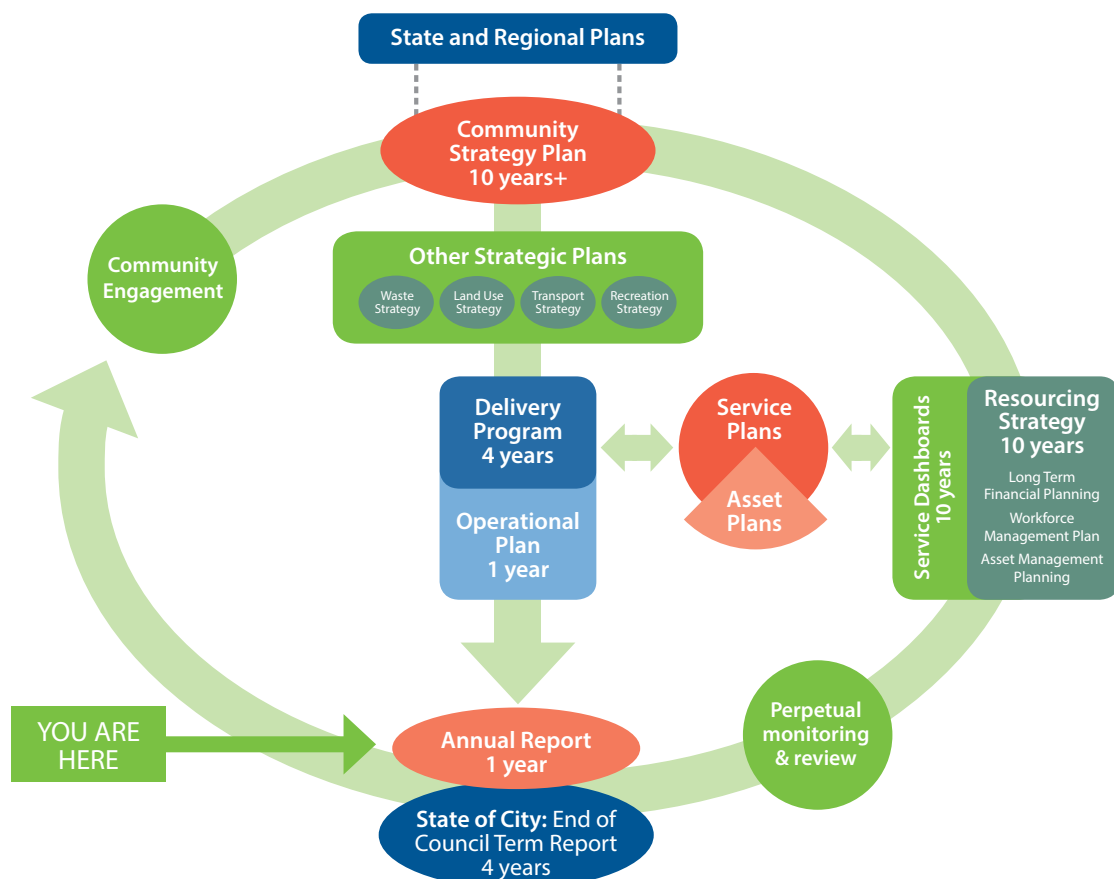


In accordance with the *Local Government Act, 1993* the Annual Report also includes required statutory information, and provides an overview of the Council's financial position.

More detailed information on the financial performance of the Council during 2018-2019 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



Message from the Mayor and CEO



On behalf of the Council, it is our great pleasure to present the 2018-2019 Annual Report. This report details our achievements and challenges over the past year, and the progress towards our vision of building a sustainable and successful future for the Blue Mountains.

Organisational Performance Review

A key focus for 2018-2019 has been a comprehensive and widely consultative Organisational Performance Review. We engaged extensively with staff and Councillors throughout this process, and developed a shared vision and action plan for further improving as an organisation.

One significant outcome of the review was a change to Council's operating model and structure, to support achievement of a more collaborative, strategy-led and service-focused organisation. The new structure was endorsed by the Council in March, and became effective on 1 July 2019. We are excited to see the opportunities and benefits that will unfold as a result of these changes.

A strategy-led organisation

We are proud of the significant amount of work done during 2018-2019 on drafting, exhibiting 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.

Plans that were adopted during the year include the Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan, Masterplans for Blaxland Town Centre and Lawson Crown Lands, and a Blue Mountains Economic Statement 2019-2021. In addition, significant consultation was undertaken with the community on draft strategic plans focusing on Weed Management and a Water Sensitive Blue Mountains, as well as Parking Precinct Plans for high priority tourist sites.

A service-focused organisation

Council spent more than \$125 million in 2018-2019 on delivering an extensive range of services, facilities, projects and initiatives to maintain and improve quality of life in the City of Blue Mountains. The valuable input from our wonderful community ensures these services continue to provide best value and meet changing needs. In 2018-2019, almost 58,000 people visited our online community engagement portal – Blue Mountains Have Your Say, with more than 2,700 actively participating in surveys and discussions there. Council was recognised with three awards at the 2018 National Local Government Customer Service Awards, reflecting our commitment to high quality customer service.

Major boost to infrastructure

The Blue Mountains received a huge boost in funding through the Western Parkland City Liveability Program, with ten projects, valued at more than \$18.7 million, scheduled for completion over the next three years. The projects include upgrades to all four district parks, rejuvenation of Blackheath and Springwood town centres, redevelopment of Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre and Springwood Library, and implementation of parts of the Lawson Crown Lands Masterplan. Most projects will also include upgrades of active transport links from the project site to the village centre, to improve pedestrian access and provide sustainable transport options to the new facilities.

Focus on Workplace Health and Safety

Our continued focus on Workplace Health and Safety has led to significant improvements during 2018-2019, in the key areas of people, systems and risk. Council continued to safely manage the challenges associated with asbestos building materials within ageing infrastructure, and joined the Western Sydney Regional Illegal Dumping Squad to help combat the issue of illegal dumping across the Blue Mountains.

Addressing Climate Change

Blue Mountains is leading the way in terms of addressing climate change. We declared a climate emergency in February 2019. We have already exceeded our carbon emissions reduction target for 2022, having achieved a 22% reduction in the first year of the Carbon Abatement Action Plan. We also continued to reduce the total amount of waste to landfill and launched the successful Compost Hub program. Blue Mountains was one of the first councils to sign up to the Cities Power Partnership – Australia's largest local government climate initiative – and we are now investigating how we can become carbon neutral.

A 20-year land use vision for the Blue Mountains

A major focus in 2018-2019 was on the development of a community-shaped vision for land use across our City for the next 20 years. The Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement – Blue Mountains 2040: Living Sustainably – was drafted with extensive input from the community, through workshops, surveys and digital platforms. It recognises our unique World Heritage setting, our local values, and the role we can play in being a centre of excellence for environmental management, sustainable living and as a creative City of the Arts. The draft statement supports the broader goals and aspirations of the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035.

Improved accessibility

Implementation of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Program continued in 2018-2019, improving the provision of safe and accessible pathways of travel

for people of all ages and abilities, and several bus stops were upgraded to meet disability standards. A new adult change facility was installed in Springwood, enabling people with disabilities to enjoy cultural and community facilities with greater ease and dignity. Safer cycling routes were developed, with key sections of the Great Blue Mountains Trail being completed at Blackheath and from Woodford to Linden.

Positive response to challenges

The Council continued to show strong leadership in responding to the ongoing challenges presented by the Performance Improvement Order and Public Inquiry, both of which were initiated by the former Minister for Local Government. While these activities have been very resource-intensive, they have also provided opportunities to continuously improve our policies, procedures and governance processes, making us stronger and safer as an organisation.

Conclusion

We are very proud of the Council's performance and achievements in 2018-2019 and sincerely thank the community, the elected body and Council staff for their support. 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 2019-2020.



Mayor, Mark Greenhill OAM
Blue Mountains City Council



Dr Rosemary Dillon
CEO Blue Mountains City Council

Our City of Blue Mountains



The City of Blue Mountains is located on the western fringe of Metropolitan Sydney and is one of only two cities in the world surrounded by a World Heritage National Park. This presents additional responsibilities and costs for the Council related to managing the impact of development on the environment, protecting and conserving world heritage natural values and protecting the health of catchments. The City sits within the Sydney drinking water catchment which services more than 3.7 million people.

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 Burrangong.

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 weekly rent was
\$350

Median monthly mortgage repayment was
\$1,842

City of Blue Mountains – Key Community 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

Council's 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

Community Strategic Plan Objectives



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

Objective 1.1

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

Objective 1.2

All levels of government provide transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership and governance

Objective 1.3

All levels of government provide value for money sustainable services and infrastructure

Objective 1.4

All levels of government and the community, work together to achieve a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains



By 2035 we are a more environmentally responsible City

Objective 2.1

The condition, health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat, ecosystems, waterways, water catchments and groundwater are maintained and enhanced

Objective 2.2

Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way

Objective 2.3

The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

Objective 2.4

Traditional owners and the broader Aboriginal community are supported to connect to, care for and benefit from Country



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

Objective 3.1

Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring, diverse and inclusive

Objective 3.2

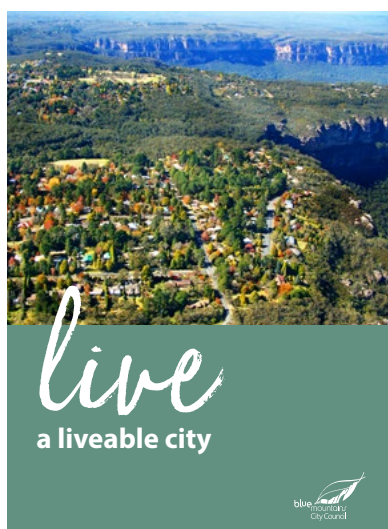
The Blue Mountains community is healthy and active

Objective 3.3

The Blue Mountains community is resilient and prepared for natural disasters

Objective 3.4

The Blue Mountains is a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning



**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

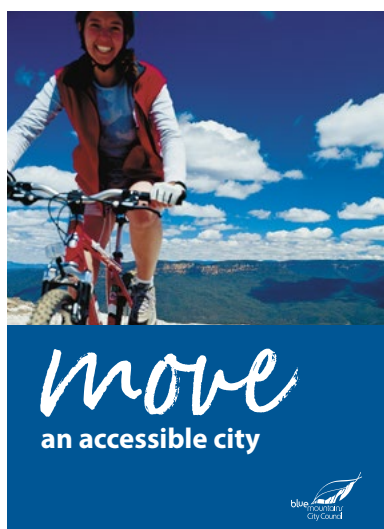
The distinctive qualities of towns and villages are maintained and local identity and sense of pride is strengthened

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



**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



**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



2

The year in review



This section is a summary of the overall performance of the Council during 2018-2019.

It outlines whether service delivery commitments were met, how well the Council performed financially, our progress on major projects, and some of the challenges and opportunities we faced as an organisation.

Overall Results

Major Project Milestones

75% of Major Project milestones for 2018-2019 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 2018-2019 were the Western Parkland City Liveability Program, Great Blue Mountains Trail and Southern Scenic Escarpment Program – refer to Section 2: Major Projects for more details.

Asset Works Program

70% of scheduled Asset Works Program projects were completed as planned in 2018-2019.

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.

More than \$12 million was invested in Council-managed assets through the Asset Works Program in 2018-2019 – refer to the Appendix for more details.

Operational Plan Actions

90% of Operational Plan actions for 2018-2019 were completed as planned.

The Council committed to delivering 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

92% of Fit for the Future Action Plan milestones for 2018-2019 were on target as at 30 June 2019.

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

In 2018-2019, Council completed 22 milestones from the Fit for the Future Action Plan – refer to the Appendix for more details.

Delivery Program Performance Measures

80%

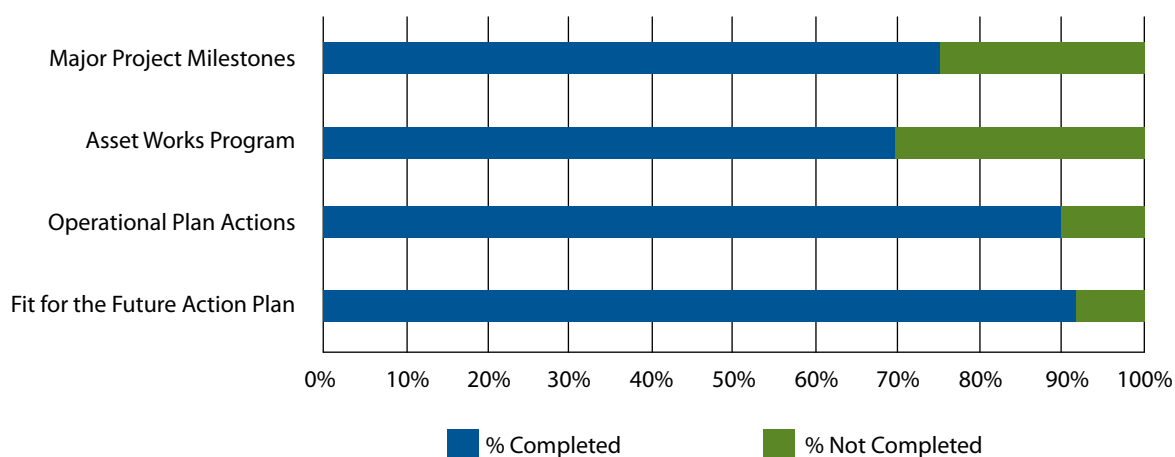
of Delivery Program Performance Measure targets for 2018-2019 were achieved or were within $\pm 10\%$ of target.

The Council has committed to reporting against 91 performance measures as detailed in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2018-2019. These assess Council's quadruple bottom line – in terms

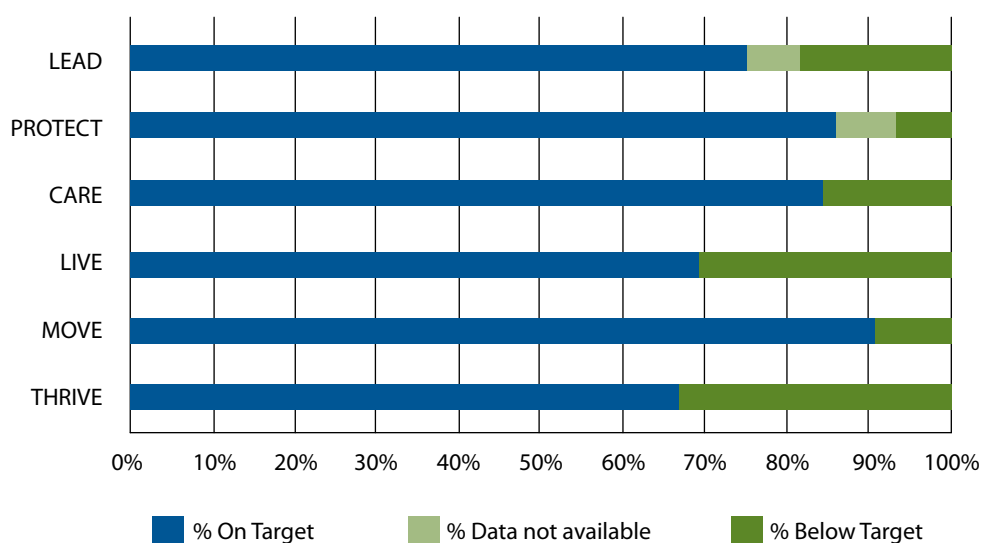
of governance, environmental, social and financial performance – and track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of service delivery outputs and standards. Together, they provide an indication of how healthy we are as an organisation and whether we are meeting agreed targets.

For example, the number of patrons to events at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub increased by almost 25% in 2018-2019 – refer to Section 5 for more details.

Overall Council Performance



Performance Measure Results by Key Direction



Highlights 2018-2019

lead inspiring leadership

p62

- Completed Organisational Performance Review
- Improved Workplace Health and Safety
- Responded to organisational challenges
- Established Quality of Life Mayoral Reference Group
- Received national customer service awards
- Strengthened approach to strategic procurement
- Enhanced community engagement
- Delivered traineeship program
- Recognised outstanding citizens
- Facilitated Youth Council programs

protect an environmentally responsible city

p70

- Exceeded reduction targets for carbon emissions
- Targeted illegal dumping
- Completed restoration project at Popes Glen
- Launched Compost Hub Program
- Provided a responsive and efficient waste service
- Connected kids with nature
- Hosted Cities Power Partnership Roundtable
- Cared for our waterways
- Engaged with community on weed management
- Celebrated Blue Mountains swamps

care an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

p82

- Supported the City's families
- Built resilience in the Blue Mountains
- Delivered City of the Arts Trust grants program
- Celebrated NAIDOC week
- Opened new toilet block at Wentworth Falls Lake
- Secured heritage grant for Woodford Reserve
- Completed priority actions from Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Hosted Grandparents and Elders Day
- Delivered a diverse program of theatre events
- Conducted Community Resilience and Wellbeing Survey

live a liveable city

p96

- Progressed Western Parkland City Liveability Program
- Developed 20-year vision for land use
- Drafted Local Housing Strategy
- Managed land use and building certification
- Completed local character statement for the Blue Mountains
- Reviewed management of Crown lands
- Targeted homelessness
- Planned redevelopment of Lawson Crown lands
- Adopted Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan
- Commenced review to inform Heritage Strategy

move an accessible city

p104

- Repaired and upgraded the City's roads
- Planned pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- Secured Smart Cities grant funding
- Developed parking precinct plans
- Supported road safety initiatives
- Planned extension of Great Blue Mountains Trail
- Continued the sealing of unsealed roads
- Offered bike skills sessions for kids
- Upgraded bus stops to improve accessibility
- Completed review of traffic conditions in Lapstone

thrive an economically sustainable city

p110

- Opened new Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre
- Launched regional tourism campaign
- Strengthened relationships with local business
- Trained taxi drivers as tourism advocates
- Secured funding for visitor facilities in Blackheath
- Supported community events
- Revised Visitor Infrastructure Investment Plan
- Supported the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise
- Received excellence awards for tourist parks
- Completed visitor economy, retail and employment studies

Challenges and Opportunities

The Council has demonstrated a responsive and proactive approach to emerging issues, and strong leadership on a range of complex matters that required attention during 2018-2019. This resulted in a number of scheduled actions being withdrawn or deferred to future years. Some of these matters are summarised below.

Performance Improvement Order

Council has continued to progress the actions laid out in the Performance Improvement Order (PIO) that was issued by the Minister for Local Government in January 2018. These actions were designed to ensure that Council's governance, asbestos management practices, staff recruitment and associated practices comply with regulatory obligations.

During 2018-2019, monthly progress reports against the improvement plan actions were sent to the Minister, as required by the PIO. As at 30 June 2019, a total of 103 actions were complete, with the remaining two actions due for completion early in 2019-2020. Council is committed to pursuing continuous improvement in the areas identified in the PIO.

Public Inquiry

On 27 June 2018, the Minister for Local Government announced a public inquiry into the Council, to investigate a range of governance matters including 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.

The public inquiry's first Interim Report, which related only to the engagement of independent investigators (Term of Reference 4), was released in May 2019. It was based on a thorough review of extensive documentation and on sworn testimony from several witnesses, and concluded that the Council's conduct was, in all circumstances, prudent and appropriate, in respect to the matters that it covered.

The inquiry is ongoing, and will thus also impact on 2019-2020 service delivery.

Asbestos Management

Throughout 2018-2019, Council continued to safely manage challenges associated with asbestos building materials within ageing infrastructure and illegal dumping activities across the Blue Mountains.

Significant work has been undertaken to embed new processes and procedures, with the intent of strengthening asbestos management within Council and the City. New training programs, significantly enhanced audit and inspection systems, and ongoing asbestos remediation and elimination initiatives are some of the key activities Council continues to resource within the area of asbestos management.

Key Actions

The Asbestos Response Team (ART), which was established during the year, provides critical asbestos management removal and remediation services to Council and the City. The team works collaboratively with licensed asbestos assessors and other professionals performing asbestos removal works throughout the Blue Mountains, including removal of illegally-dumped asbestos and other refuse.

In the 2018-2019 year, the Asbestos Response Team:

- received and actioned 383 requests for service
- created and placed 138 on-site Asbestos Registers within Council facilities where asbestos building products are located
- completed nine 'B Class' asbestos removal jobs under licence
- project-managed 10 contractor Asbestos-Containing Material (ACM) removal jobs
- removed 17 tons of ACM from the City.

Asbestos Elimination Program

In 2018, the Council committed to an Asbestos Elimination Program being a critically important project to remove all ACM from Council's built assets. The program considers facility use, risk and a range of other factors to prioritise asbestos removal from Council's buildings. Council's ART, together with licensed asbestos removalists, undertake the asbestos removal works on behalf of Council.

Major Projects

Western Parkland City Liveability Program

Ten projects valued at more than \$18.7 million will be completed across the Blue Mountains over the next three years, providing a welcome boost to infrastructure and public spaces. In May 2019, Council signed a deal with the NSW and Australian governments to secure \$15 million in additional funding through the Western Parkland City Liveability Program, with Council contributing the remaining \$3.7 million.

The projects include upgrades to four District Parks, rejuvenation of Blackheath and Springwood town centres, redevelopment of Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre and Springwood Library, and implementation of parts of the recently adopted Lawson Crown Lands Masterplan.

These projects will each go through a detailed design process and Council will progressively seek feedback from the community on the design concepts. All of these projects are on track to be completed by 2022, and are further detailed below.

Scenic Eastern Escarpment

This project will improve recreation and natural area visitor facilities on the Scenic Eastern Escarpment, making significant heritage features more accessible to residents and tourists. It comprises a significant

upgrade to 2.35 km of walking tracks between key features in Knapsack Reserve. These include Siding Lookout to Knapsack Street, Elizabeth Lookout to Knapsack Street, and Marges Lookout to Lennox Bridge.

Glenbrook Park

At Glenbrook Park, a major upgrade will see the creation of a new inclusive, accessible and interactive play area catering for seven to twelve year olds. This supports the plan of management that was adopted in May 2017, and is the second stage of a redevelopment that commenced in 2018 with the opening of a new junior playground and upgrade of the Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre.

Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park

At Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park, a new toilet block connected with accessible pedestrian pathways, as well as landscaping and other enhancements will complement the existing beauty of the park and its heritage.

Wentworth Falls Lake Park

Wentworth Falls Lake Park will receive an accessible multi-purpose shelter and upgrades to walking tracks and pathways to improve access and connectivity.



Glenbrook Park Design Concept



Buttenshaw Park Design Concept

Buttenshaw Park, Springwood

Springwood's Buttenshaw Park will receive a new adventure youth space including tandem flying fox, parkour play elements and other items targeted to teenage interests, as well as connectivity and accessibility upgrades. These enhancements have been designed to make the most of the unique, natural amphitheatre of this park, and its location next to the Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre.

Springwood Town Centre

The Springwood town centre rejuvenation project includes elements of the Springwood Town Centre Public Domain Plan. It builds on existing street and landscape features to provide a more attractive public space and improve pedestrian accessibility. This supports the goal of boosting the local economy through greater activation of shop frontages.

Blackheath Town Centre

Rejuvenation of Blackheath town centre will deliver elements of the Blackheath Village Centre Public Domain Plan, including a new town square, plus footpaths, drainage and associated civil works. In addition to the Liveability Program funding, the Australian Government is also contributing \$1.8 million to this project from the Building Better Regions Fund.

Lawson Crown Lands

The former Lawson Golf Course will benefit from bushland restoration works and new recreation facilities in line with the masterplan that was adopted in June 2019. These upgrades include the construction of accessible pathways with seating, a fenced dog off leash area, and associated landscaping works that will both improve the amenity and help to protect the fragile environment around Lawson Creek.

Katoomba Sports & Aquatic Centre

Upgrades to Katoomba Aquatic Centre will include an accessible outdoor program pool with water play features to replace the current toddler and learn-to-swim pool, a new concourse for the 50m outdoor pool, and landscaping and associated works.

Springwood Library

Redevelopment of Springwood Library will transform the public area into a larger, contemporary, light-filled space. It will also include installation of full-height glazing to the south façade on the ground floor, a new accessible lift and rendered finish to the external façade.

Active Transport Links

Each of these projects, with the exception of the Springwood Library and Katoomba Sports & Aquatic Centre upgrades, will include a pedestrian pathway connection from the project site to the village centre, to improve pedestrian access and provide sustainable transport options to the new facilities.

Great Blue Mountains Trail

The vision for the trail is to develop a shared path for cyclists and pedestrians that extends from east to west across the Blue Mountains ridgeline, accessible from all towns, villages and train stations along the way. Once completed, the trail will play an important role in meeting the growing demand for safe cycling facilities, whilst providing a safe corridor connecting residents and tourists with town centres and natural bushland environments.

Blackheath to Mt Victoria

Work continued during 2018-2019 on the extension of the Great Blue Mountains Trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria. This follows construction of the initial section of the trail, between Katoomba and Blackheath, which was completed in 2015.

The Blackheath to Mt Victoria section includes upgrade of footpaths within Blackheath (delivered via the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan), construction of a shared path beside the Great Western Highway and use of existing infrastructure, including parts of the old highway. Construction was completed from Blackheath to Mt Boyce Nursery in 2018-2019.

This project is funded jointly through the NSW Government's Metropolitan Greenspace Program, with matched funding from Council's Special Rate Variation.

Leura to Katoomba

Work to extend the trail from Leura to Katoomba continued in 2018-2019, with a tender accepted for the shared path between Leura Cascades Reserve and Kiah Lookout.

Woodford to Linden

During 2018-2019, construction of a new cycleway from Woodford to Linden was completed. This project delivers one of the priority routes identified in the Blue Mountains Bike Plan 2020, providing a shared off road/on road route from Tollgate Drive, Linden to Bull's Camp, Woodford.

Emu Plains to Glenbrook

The detailed design for a priority connection of the off-road shared path network was completed during 2018-2019, this being the link from Glenbrook to Emu Plains. This project was undertaken in conjunction with Penrith City Council, with funding from the Roads and Maritime Services Active Transport Program. The new route is intended to improve connections for cyclists and pedestrians through the Eastern Escarpment and into the Penrith region and is dependent on additional funding for its completion.

Southern Scenic Escarpment Program

The scope and timelines for this program have changed due to site conditions and other constraints with significant budget impacts. Delivery will continue through 2019-2020, with a particular focus on restoring the Prince Henry Cliff Walk in the form of a new raised steel boardwalk and creating a new outdoor gathering place for cultural interpretation at Echo Point.

Financial Snapshot

Our revenue

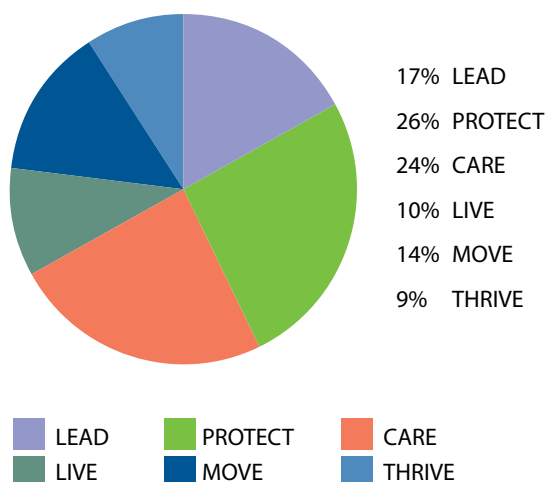
Council managed an income of \$128 million in 2018-2019. The majority of this, or approximately \$80 million, came from rates and annual charges. An additional \$22 million was received from other levels government in the form of capital and operational grants. The remainder was generated from fees and user charges, and other sources, including interest and investment income.

- 63% Rates and annual charges
- 13% Fees and user charges
- 12% Operating grants
- 5% Capital grants
- 1% Interest and investment income
- 6% Other revenue

Our expenditure

Each year, your rates go towards providing an extensive range of services and facilities to meet the changing needs of our community. In 2018-2019, we spent a total of \$125 million on delivering services to around 80,000 residents across the City, and an estimated 3 million visitors to the Blue Mountains.

The chart below shows the amount of Council expenditure by key direction in 2018-2019.



Our assets

Council owns and maintains over \$1.3 billion of infrastructure assets, including roads, parks, buildings, stormwater drainage, bridges, footpaths, lighting, walking trails and lookouts. The current value of these assets includes the following:

- Roads: \$631 million
- Buildings: \$158 million
- Stormwater drainage: \$101 million
- Footpaths: \$42 million
- Bridges: \$9 million
- Swimming pools: \$7 million

Our performance

Sound financial management has resulted in a surplus cash budget result every year for the past 10 years. We continue to implement our adopted Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability to ensure we are financially responsible now and into the future.

Including capital income, Council achieved a surplus net operating result of \$2.8 million in 2018-2019, meaning that our income for the year was greater than our expenditure.

When capital grants and contributions are excluded, our operating result was a deficit of \$3.8 million, which is a slight improvement on the previous year. This measure was adversely impacted by the unexpected expenditure on asbestos remediation and investigations in both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

Key achievements in 2018-2019

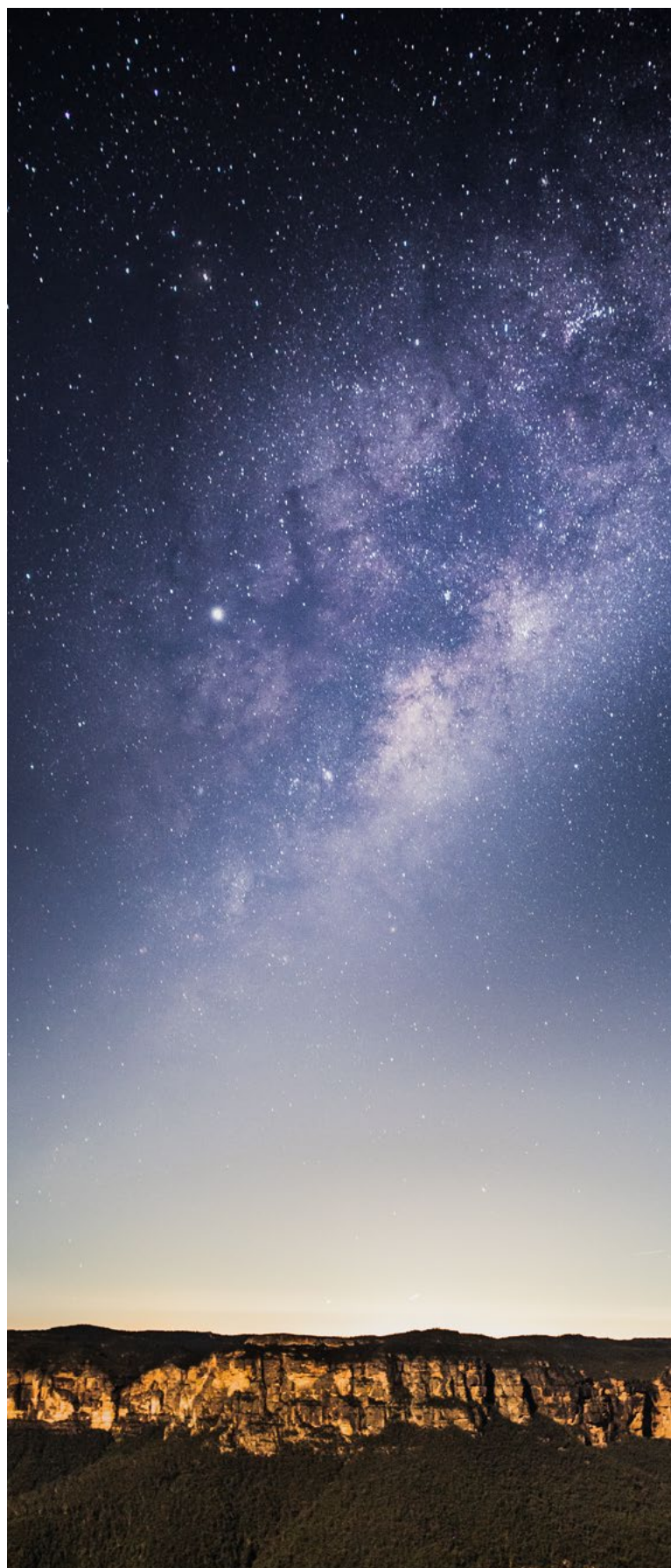
- ✓ Borrowings have reduced to \$28.5 million, amounting to a debt reduction of \$30 million over the past five years.
- ✓ 96.2% of our infrastructure assets are in excellent, good or satisfactory condition.
- ✓ In the final year of the 2015 Special Rate Variation, we spent \$10.7 million on improving built infrastructure, emergency preparedness and response, environmental programs and community services and facilities.

Key challenges in 2018-2019

- ⚠ High costs involved with unanticipated asbestos remediation have reduced our investment balance by approximately \$1 million.
- ⚠ Completion of the asset works program was impacted by other organisational priorities, such as the public inquiry, and projects being delayed from the previous financial year.

Further information

A more detailed account of our financial performance in 2018-2019 can be found in Section 6: Financial Reporting, including five-yearly trends of key financial measures. The Annual Financial Statements are presented as a companion document to this report.



Calendar of Events

The Blue Mountains is fortunate to have an enthusiastic community that contributes to the vibrant cultural character of the City. In 2018-2019, Council supported a total of 83 community-run events that were held on Council-managed land, by way of direct funding for ANZAC Day 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 2018-2019 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
- Citizenship Ceremony
- Small Business Workshop: Building your Digital Footprint
- 10th Birthday Celebrations for Kids Kingdom

AUGUST

- Small Business Workshop: Tax Basics
- Child Restraint Checking Day
- Trivia Night at the Cultural Centre
- Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers Workshop
- Strength training program for over 65s

SEPTEMBER

- Leura Swampfest
- Bike Skills Workshops for Kids
- Bushfire Building Conference and Community Day
- Threatened Species Day Talks and Activities
- Fauna Spotlight at Mt Wilson

OCTOBER

- Children's Week Family Fun Day
- Blue Mountains Fauna Project Bird Walks
- Wishing Wings for Water Week at Katoomba Town Centre
- Small Business Workshop: Low Cost Online Marketing
- Blue Mountains Destination Ambassador Training for Taxi Drivers
- Swim Centre Open Day at Lawson

NOVEMBER

- Grandparents and Elders Day
- Citizenship Ceremony
- White Ribbon Day Mayoral Breakfast
- Opening of Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre
- Swim Centre Open Day at Blackheath
- Cinema Under the Stars
- Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers Workshop
- Late Night Library at Springwood

DECEMBER

- Wollemi Twilight Market
- Child Restraint Checking Day
- Cinema Under the Stars
- Ceramics Open Studio Trail
- Late Night Library at Katoomba
- The Gully Get Together

JANUARY

- Australia Day Awards
- Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony
- Cinema Under the Stars
- Movies at the Pool at Lawson and Blackheath
- Swim Centre Open Days at Glenbrook, Springwood and Katoomba



FEBRUARY

- Child Restraint Checking Day
- Seniors Festival and Recognition Awards
- Senior Drivers Workshop

MARCH

- Harmony Day Celebrations
- Clean Up Australia Day
- Small Business Workshop: Business Planning
- Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers Workshop
- Blue Mountains Bat Night
- Fauna Spotlight at Katoomba
- Blue Mountains Vigil for Victims of the Christchurch Tragedy

APRIL

- Youth Week Activities
- Wollemi Artisan Market
- Small Business Workshop: Building your Digital Footprint
- Scoop-a-poop Citizen Science Workshop
- Creative Writing Workshops
- Cinema Under the Stars
- Waste2Art Weaving Workshops

MAY

- Citizenship Ceremony
- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) Flag Raising Ceremony
- Child Restraint Checking Day
- Comic Book Day at Katoomba Library
- HSC Workshops: Persuasive Writing
- Small Business Workshop: Search Engine Optimisation

JUNE

- Waste2Art Launch and Declutter Workshop
- HSC Workshops: Creative Writing, Study Skills and Wellbeing
- Annual Bushcare Picnic
- Spotlighting and Stargazing in the Megalong Valley





Awards and Recognition

We received the following awards and commendations during 2018-2019.

Award Program	Award Category	Project/Recipient	Placing
2018 National Local Government Customer Service Awards	Customer Service Team of the Year	Improving customer service through a focus on team engagement, resilience and communication	Winner
2018 National Local Government Customer Service Awards	Customer Service Team Leader of the Year	Damien Robinson – Senior Customer Service Advisor	Winner
2018 National Local Government Customer Service Awards	Customer Service Individual Award	Kerry Smith – Customer Service Officer	Highly Commended
2019 Australasian Reporting Awards	Local Government	2017-2018 Annual Report	Bronze Award
2019 Wild Warrior Women Festival Lift Awards	Standing for Inclusivity	Inclusion for people with a disability and the community	Winner

We also celebrated the outstanding achievements of the following local residents at the Blue Mountains Local Citizen of the Year Awards, held on Australia Day.

Citizen of the Year

Citizen of the Year was awarded to **George Winston**, who works tirelessly to provide emotional and practical support for refugees, and to campaign for justice and human rights for refugees in Australia. He is a founding member of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group, and has served as Secretary for many years. His strong empathy and compassion have assisted many in making the challenging transition to a new life in Australia.

Young Citizen of the Year

Adisen Wright was awarded Young Citizen of the Year. He is inspiring the youth of his school, and the broader community, to stand up and have their voices heard. In 2017, he was an integral part of the Vote Yes campaign for the LGBTQI marriage equality survey.

During this campaign, he encouraged those in his community to participate in democracy and to make their vote count.

Community Achievement of the Year

The Community Achievement of the Year was awarded to Blackheath Community Op Shop, led by **David O'Brien** and run by volunteers. It has been in operation for three years, and was started to make a difference to those in need and to foster community interaction. Any profits from the shop are used to help with local projects and community events.



3

Our Council

Elected Councillors

WARD 4

Lapstone
to Warrimoo



Councillor Mark Greenhill,
OAM (Mayor)



Councillor Darryl Bowling



Councillor Brendan Christie

WARD 3

Valley Heights
to Faulconbridge



Councillor Daniel Myles



Councillor Mick Fell



Councillor Shae Foenander

WARD 2

Faulconbridge to
Wentworth Falls



Councillor Chris Van Der
Kley (Deputy Mayor)



Councillor Romola
Hollywood



Councillor Brent Hoare

WARD 1

Leura to
Mount Victoria,
Mount Tomah



Councillor Don McGregor



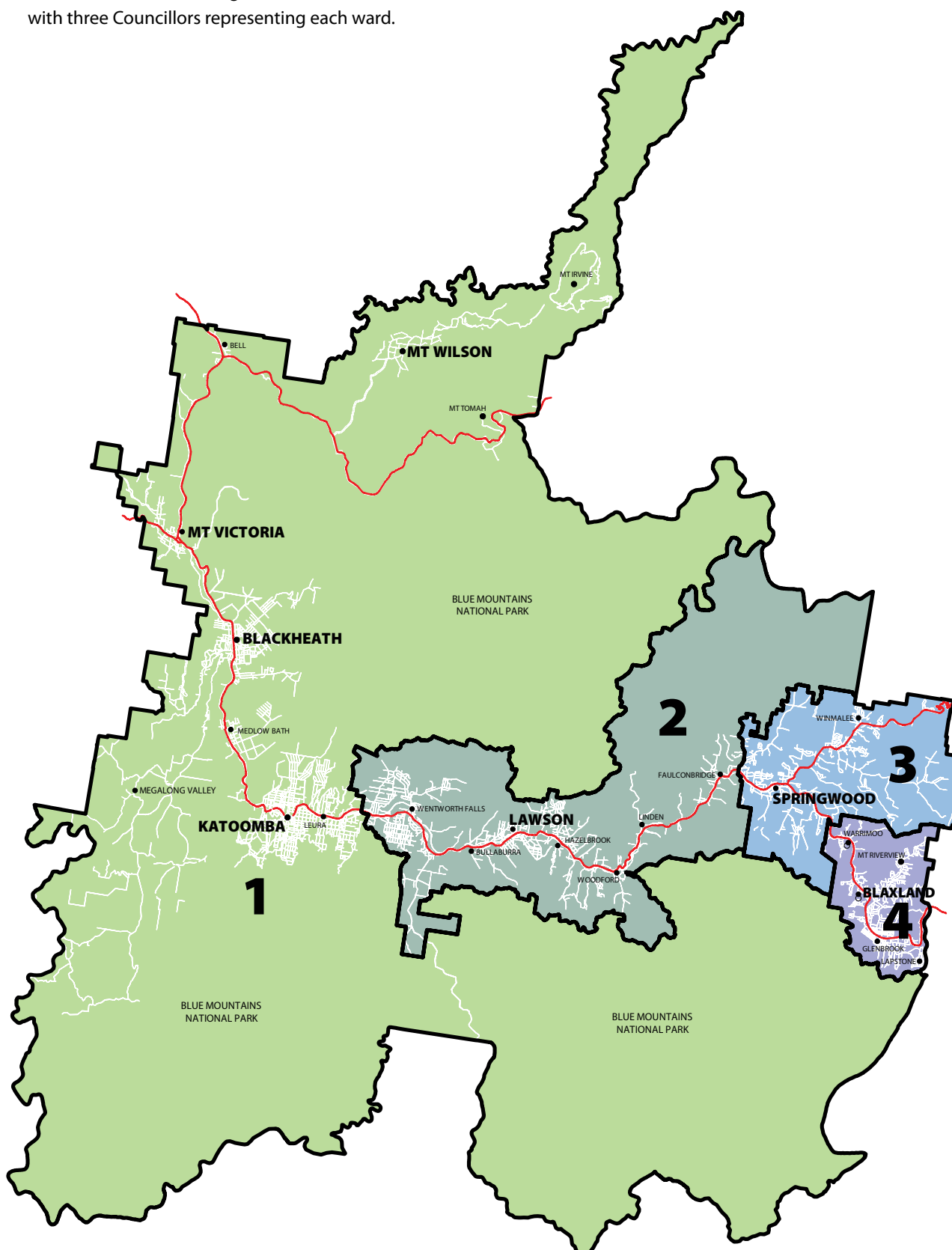
Councillor Kerry Brown



Councillor Kevin Schreiber

Governing our City

The Blue Mountains local government area is divided into four wards, with three Councillors representing each ward.



Role of the Council

The Council is committed to leading our City, protecting our environment, caring for our people, making our City vibrant, liveable, healthy and accessible, and ensuring we remain economically and financially sustainable. Council's roles and responsibilities are many and varied, but can be summarised as follows:

• Steward

Council has significant responsibilities and costs as steward of a City within a World Heritage National Park. This includes managing the impact of development on the environment, protecting and conserving world heritage natural values, and protecting the health of drinking water catchments.

• Leader and advocate

The Council leads the governance and management of a City with an area of 1,431 km² and a population of close to 80,000, spread across 27 towns and villages. We also advocate to other levels of government for services and funding, and work to improve the wellbeing of our community and financial sustainability of our City.

• Service provider

The Council provides an extensive range of services to meet community needs and priorities. Services provided include transport, sport and recreation facilities, waste resource management, community development, emergency management, economic development, family day care and libraries.

• Asset manager

The Council is responsible for managing significant natural assets that underpin the identity and health of the region, including 10,000 hectares of bushland, 300 km of creeks, 20 hectares of open freshwater bodies and 500 hectares of endangered ecological communities. We also manage over \$1.3 billion of built assets, supporting the delivery of services.

Council elections

Council elections are usually held every four years. All of our current Councillors were elected at the ordinary election in September 2016. Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Councillors then elect one of their number to be the Mayor, for a term of two years. The Mayor chairs Council meetings and is the community's representative at civic, business and government meetings and events.

At the 18 September 2018 Council meeting, Cr Mark Greenhill OAM was re-elected as Mayor and Cr Chris Van der Kley was re-elected as Deputy Mayor, while Cr Romola Hollywood was re-elected as Alternate Deputy Mayor. Each of these appointments was for a two year term.

The next local government ordinary elections will be held on **12 September 2020**.

Council meetings

Ordinary Council meetings are held on a monthly basis at the Council Chambers in Katoomba. Meetings are held on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm. Residents are welcome to attend these meetings, unless confidential items are being considered, but must register beforehand if they wish to speak. Occasionally, the Council also holds extraordinary meetings, which are held outside of the normal meeting cycle and are often called at short notice to deal with an urgent matter.

Before each Council meeting, a business paper is prepared detailing the items that are to be presented at the meeting. Council business papers are available on Council's website, and in hard copy at Council libraries and customer service centres on the Wednesday afternoon before the meeting. Meeting dates are published in advance on Council's website, and advertised in the local newspaper.

Twelve Ordinary Council Meetings and four Extraordinary Council Meetings were held during 2018-2019, and confirmed minutes from all of these meetings are available on our website.

Engaging our Community

Council has many touchpoints with the community, through thousands of daily interactions at our libraries, cultural facilities, customer service centres, pools and visitor information centres, and through requests relating to development applications, pets, hall bookings and burials, just to name a few.

During 2018-2019, Council listened and responded to our residents in a range of ways, including:

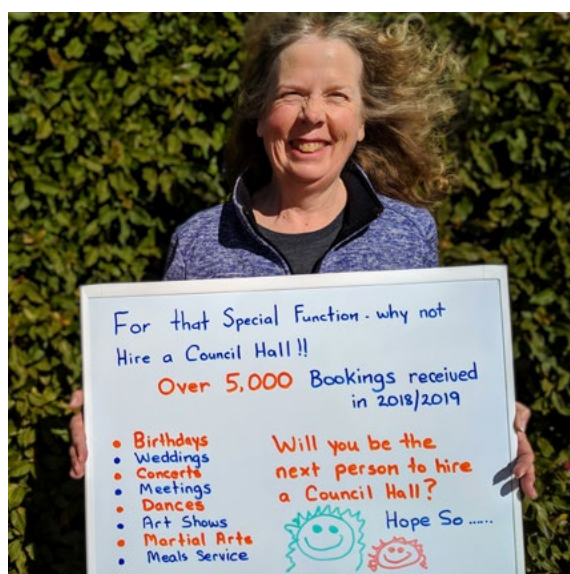
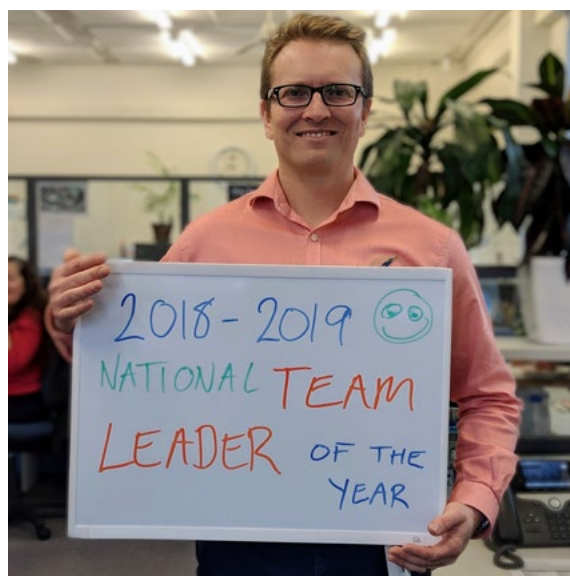
- answering almost 73,000 telephone calls through our customer service centres
- serving 26,000 customers at our customer service centres
- serving an additional 32,000 Service NSW customers.

Consultation

We value input from our community and provide a range of opportunities for residents, ratepayers and local businesses to meaningfully participate in and contribute to our decision-making processes. Increasingly, we are using a variety of online and social media tools to engage with our community, in addition to face-to-face forums, workshops and meetings.

This year, we communicated, consulted and listened to the community through:

- Council meetings via elected Councillors
- Council website and social media platforms
- quarterly community newsletters sent to all ratepayers
- new fortnightly community e-newsletters
- advertising and media releases to the Blue Mountains Gazette
- community forums, workshops and public meetings
- Council advisory committees and reference groups
- public exhibition of plans and strategies.



Have Your Say

Blue Mountains Have Your Say provides a convenient online forum for the community to find out about key projects and proposals that are open for public comment, and provide feedback to contribute to Council's decision-making. In 2018-2019, almost 58,000 people visited yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au and more than 2,700 actively participated in surveys and discussions there.

Some of the major consultations during 2018-2019 are described below:

Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park Masterplan

In October/November 2018, we sought ideas to help us draft the Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park Masterplan through an online "community ideas" consultation. This was followed up with two workshops in April and May 2019, for community members to review the draft masterplan before it went on public exhibition.

Disability Study

During May and June 2019, we invited members of the community living with disability and/or mental illness (including parents and carers) to share their experiences through a survey, focus groups and personal interviews. We wanted to gain a better understanding of their needs and priorities, to help us develop local solutions to make their lives easier.

Housing Study

Council engaged with the community about housing through a series of five focus group sessions held in February and March 2019 at Blaxland, Lawson, Springwood and Katoomba, and a survey in May. The information we collected helped us draft our Local Housing Strategy, which will be on public exhibition later in 2019 as one of the supporting documents for the Blue Mountains Local Strategic Planning Statement.

Integrated Planning for Services

Each year, Council publicly exhibits our Delivery Program and Operational Plan for the upcoming year. These documents outline Council's action plan for delivering on the objectives and strategies in the Community Strategic Plan, and describe how the budget is allocated. We invited community feedback on the Delivery Program 2017-2021 and Operational Plan 2019-2020 during May 2019, before their adoption in June. We actively promoted the public exhibition through local media, community newsletters, and with displays in our customer service centres and libraries.

Lawson Crown Lands Masterplan

The draft Lawson Crown Lands Masterplan, developed following earlier community consultation, was formally placed on public exhibition during March and April 2019. This process was supported by an online 'Conversation Hour' during which Council staff responded to questions from community members.

Local Strategic Planning Statement

All NSW councils are required by the State Government to prepare a vision document, summarising the unique values and characteristics of their local area, and capturing community aspirations for future land use and character. During 2018-2019, we undertook substantial community consultation to inform the development of the Blue Mountains Local Strategic Planning Statement. Stage 1 consultation used an interactive online mapping tool to capture comments from residents. Stage 2 involved three community workshops, held at Lawson, Springwood and Katoomba in March 2019, as well as productivity workshops with business and industry representatives, and business surveys in eight town centres.

Parking Precinct Plans

We received a large number of submissions when our draft Parking Precinct Plans, and an associated Parking Permit Policy, were placed on public exhibition throughout March and April 2019. 'Conversation Hours' gave residents an opportunity to ask questions and engage with Council staff.

Resilience and Wellbeing Survey

Council, in partnership with the Stronger Families Alliance, conducted a Survey of Resilience and Wellbeing – the first of its kind in the Blue Mountains. We received more than 2,500 responses to the survey, which ran from August to November in secondary schools, online and in community centres.

Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

During August/September 2018, Council invited community comment on our draft Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan through the Blue Mountains Have Your Say website and three workshops held in October at Lawson, Springwood and Katoomba. The plan sets the direction for how Council will manage our City's waterways and water resources in the future. Our conversations with the community particularly helped us identify ways to protect local waterways from stormwater damage and encourage a more water efficient community.



4

Our Organisation

Organisational Performance Review

Council is proud of its record of achievement in delivering an extensive range of quality services and maintaining high levels of community satisfaction with our customer service and overall performance. Notable achievements in recent years include leading the recovery efforts after the devastating October 2013 bushfires, and being one of only seven councils in Sydney declared Fit for the Future in 2015.

We also acknowledge there are areas for improvement. In light of this, Council implemented a comprehensive Organisational Performance Review during 2018-2019, to build upon its existing commitment towards continuous improvement and better position the Council to serve our community into the future. The key objective was to develop a shared vision for a strategy and action plan to improve organisational performance.

The review responded to a number of issues raised by staff, the United Services Union on behalf of staff, and external media. These issues ranged from the need to strengthen safety and asbestos management, to the need to improve workplace culture, business processes and systems, people management practices and the working relationships between staff in some parts of the organisation.

The Organisational Performance Review used a staged and highly collaborative approach to respond to the following questions:

Stage 1: Where Are We Now?

Stage 2: Where Do We Want To Be?

Stage 3: How Will We Get There?

Stage 4: How Will We Know We Are There?

Throughout these stages, the review process:

- assessed the current level of organisational performance and identified areas of strength and those needing improvement
- extensively consulted and engaged with staff and Councillors

- generated ideas for shaping a more collaborative culture and operating model and a new structure to address required improvements identified
- developed an Improvement Strategy and Action Plan for Council consideration
- encouraged leadership and collaboration at all levels.

The review also aimed at strengthening the Council's ongoing capability to anticipate and respond to known and emergent challenges and opportunities, thereby maintaining and further improving our capacity to deliver value-for-money services and contribute to the achievement of the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan.

At its meeting on 26 March 2019, the elected Council considered the outcomes of the review and adopted the Council's Improvement Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2021, positioning the Council for success into the future. The plan recognises the importance of building on past improvement processes, and includes a continuous improvement framework for the organisation going forward.

The Improvement Strategy and Action Plan is structured around six key improvement areas that were identified through the review process, namely:

- 1: Culture and Structure
- 2: Technology and Business Systems
- 3: Training, Capability and Skills
- 4: Processes and Procedures
- 5: Asset Management and Affordable Service Levels
- 6: Workplace Health and Safety

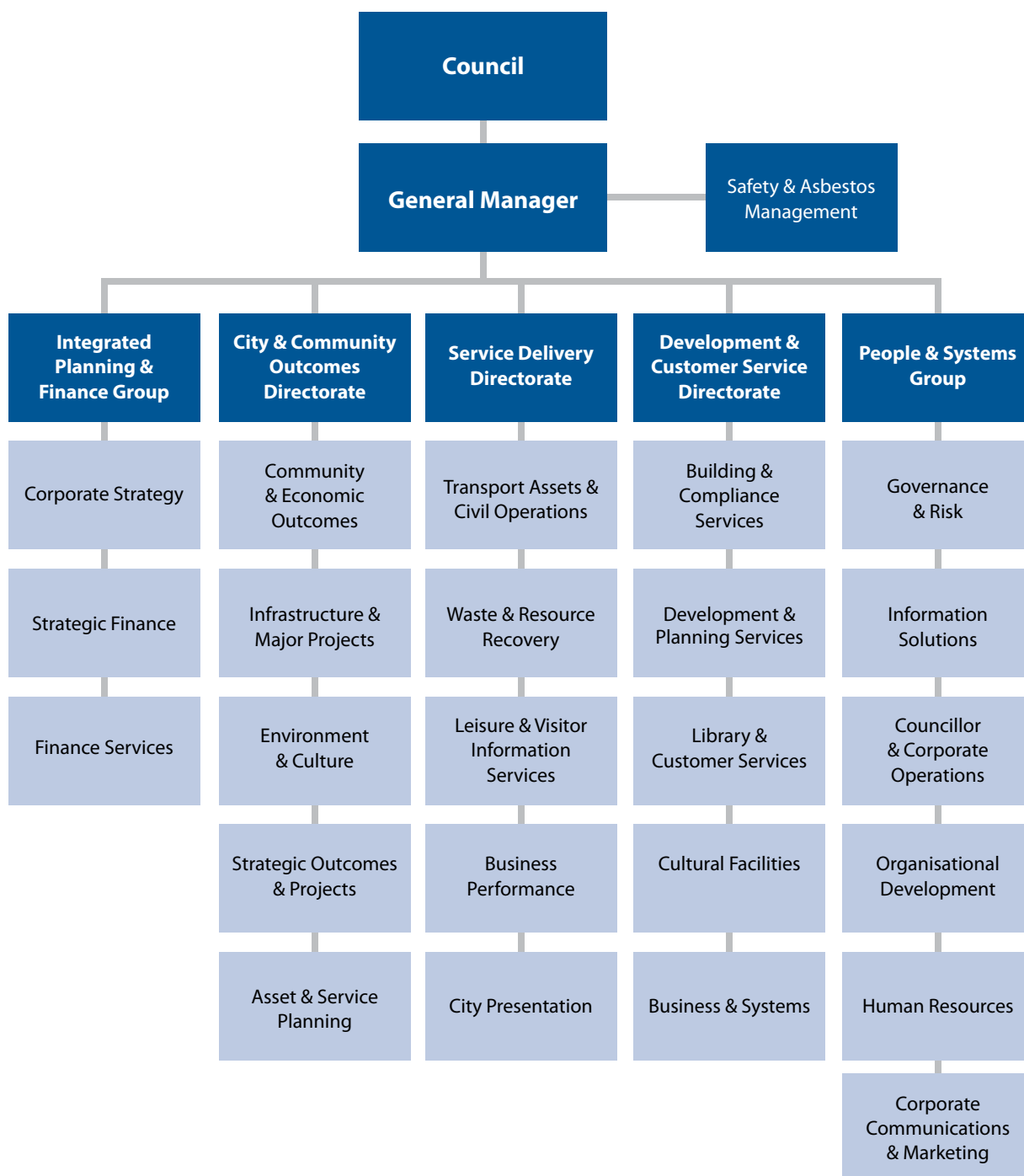
The Action Plan has now been integrated with the 2017-2021 Delivery Program, to ensure its ongoing implementation and review.

Organisational Structure

The organisational structure that was in place during 2018-2019 organised the functions of Council across three directorates and two groups.

During 2018-2019, Rosemary Dillon was General Manager; Andy Turner led the City & Community

Outcomes Directorate; Megan TeBay and John Hussey led the People & Systems Group; Hailie Ryzak led the Integrated Planning & Finance Group; Will Langevad led the Development & Customer Service Directorate; and Kirrilly Twomey led the Service Delivery Directorate.



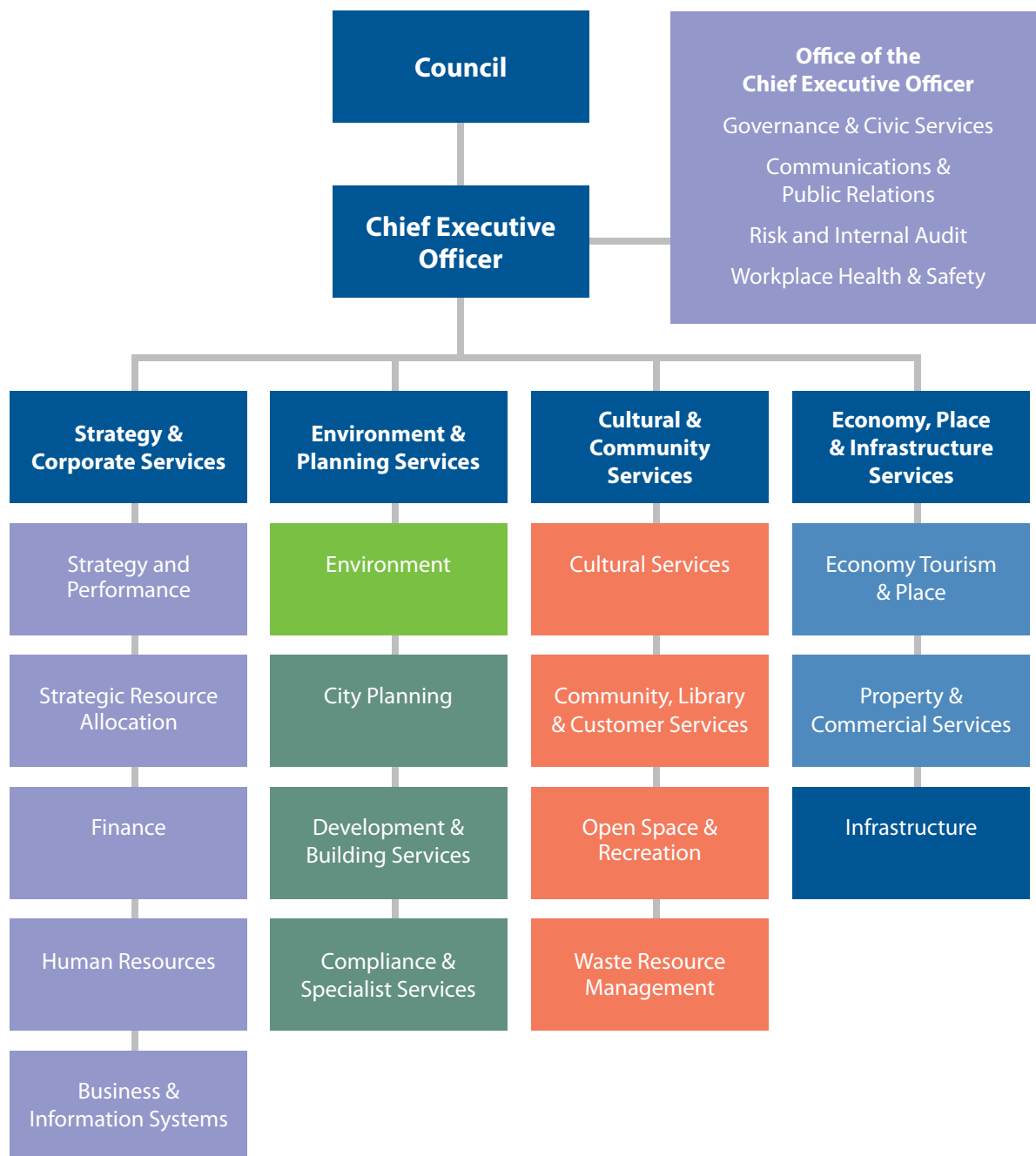
One of the improvement actions identified through the Organisational Performance Review was to review and make changes to Council's operating model and structure to support achievement of a more collaborative, strategy-led and service-focused organisation, with clarity of roles, functions and working relationships. The new structure and operating model were endorsed by the Council at the March 2019 Council meeting, and became effective on 1 July 2019.

Our operating model shows the inter-relationships between strategy, services, organisational structure and community – to be one organisation responding to the changing needs of our community and City.

- ✓ Strategy is the driver of decision-making, we are Strategy Led.
- ✓ Everything culminates in delivery of services to the community, we are Service Focused.
- ✓ Key Directions from our Community Strategic Plan guide delivery of services.
- ✓ Four new Directorates are aligned with the delivery of the Community Strategic Plan, with names reinforcing that each Directorate is a service provider.



The organisational structure that was endorsed by the Council in March 2019 and came into effect from 1 July, integrates and aligns the functions of Council across four new directorates, as follows.



Leadership Team

In 2018-2019, we welcomed the appointment of a new executive leadership team, consisting of the Chief Executive Officer and four Directors.



Chief Executive Officer - Rosemary Dillon

Rosemary is a visionary leader with over 25 years of experience in local government. She is passionately committed to achieving a collaborative organisation, that is strategy-led and service focused, supporting realisation of a sustainable and successful Council and City of Blue Mountains – socially, economically and environmentally. She has a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Hons) and a doctorate in Human Geography and has held numerous other roles at Council, including managing Community Development, Recreation, City Outcomes, Economic Development, Area Management, Town Centre Services, Corporate Planning, Finance and Integrated Planning and Reporting.

Rosemary project-managed the nationally awarded Blue Mountains Our Future – The Next 25 Years project, the forerunner to Sustainable Blue Mountains 2025 and the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035, and has led engagement with community on affordable and acceptable levels of service and the achievement of a financially sustainable Council.



Director Strategy and Corporate Services - Hailie Ryzak

Hailie has held key functional and leadership roles at Council for over 13 years in strategic and operational finance and corporate business planning and reporting. She has a Masters in Economics, a Bachelor in Financial Administration (major Accounting) and is a fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants.

Hailie has a proven track record in contributing to a more financially sustainable Council through strategic financial planning, debt reduction work and sound investment management. She has successfully managed implementation of the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework, delivering the 10, 4 and 1 year plans and reports guiding the organisation. Hailie was Project Director for the Organisational Performance Review and is passionate about achieving a strategy-led and service focused organisation through collaborative service business planning.



Director Environment and Planning Services - Will Langevad

Will has committed his career to the environment and planning of the City of Blue Mountains, having led strategic and statutory planning for over 20 years. He holds a Bachelor of Built Environment (Urban and Regional Planning), a Graduate Diploma of Planning with Distinction, a Master of Planning and a Graduate Certificate in Corporate Management.

Will played a key role in the development of the nationally awarded Local Environment Plan (LEP) 2005 and led the development of LEP 2015, which achieved unprecedented recognition of the values of the Blue Mountains. In 2016, he was appointed Director, Development and Customer Services, managing a broad portfolio of services, and more recently has led the Project Control Group ensuring the Council has successfully met its obligations under the Performance Improvement Order.



Director Cultural and Community Services - Kirrilly Twomey

Kirrilly has worked in local government for over 20 years, much of it in key leadership roles and most recently as Acting Director, Service Delivery. She has a Masters in Business Administration, a Bachelor of Education, a Graduate Diploma in Leisure Management, and is part-way through achieving a Masters in Local Government.

Kirrilly has extensive skills and experience in customer service, business management and best value service delivery. She has an exciting vision for contributing to a more sustainable Blue Mountains and for achieving a healthy, vibrant and inclusive community.



Director Economy, Place & Infrastructure Services - Gary Parsons

Gary has over 20 years of experience in local government in the areas of project and contract management, infrastructure planning and delivery, economic revitalisation, place making and property management. He has a Masters in Project Management for the Built Environment, a Degree in Construction Management (Building) (Honours), a Graduate Diploma in Asset Management and is currently studying for a Masters in Leadership.

From the start of his career as a tradesman to now, Gary brings extensive experience managing significant place development projects and associated infrastructure, including the redevelopment of the Gore Hill Park in Sydney and Chatswood Mall and Rail Interchange, a major economic and place revitalisation project for Chatswood CBD. He was the Major Project Delivery Manager at Willoughby Council and led Chatswood becoming a Vivid precinct. He is passionate about the role the Economy, Place and Infrastructure Directorate will play in achieving revitalised, well-designed, safe, accessible and thriving places and spaces within the Blue Mountains.

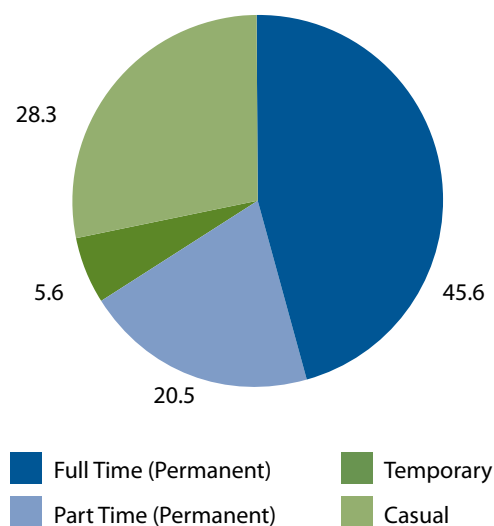
Workforce

Our people at a glance

The vast majority of our workforce live in the Blue Mountains area (86%), and are highly engaged, committed and invested in Council's vision of building a successful and sustainable future for the Blue Mountains. 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.

We are one of the largest employers in the local government area and have a highly skilled and flexible workforce of approximately 870 people. As at 30 June 2019, approximately two-thirds of our workforce were permanent employees (66%), 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



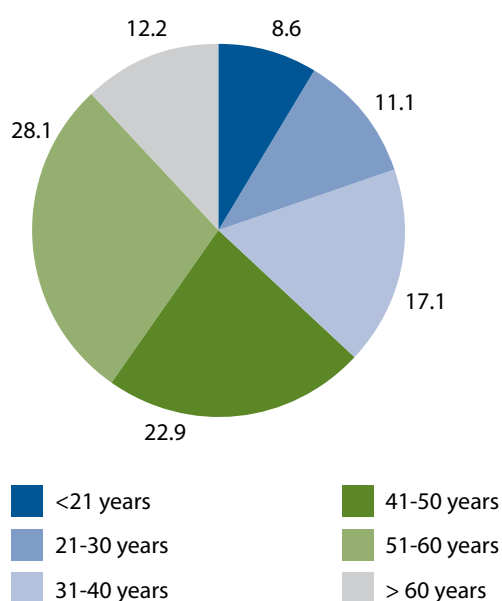
Gender balance

The gender balance of our permanent workforce is 46% female and 54% male. The inclusion of our casual workforce increases female representation to 53%. The proportion of women in senior management positions is currently 33%, while at the executive level this increases to 60%.

Age

As at 30 June 2019, 40% 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.

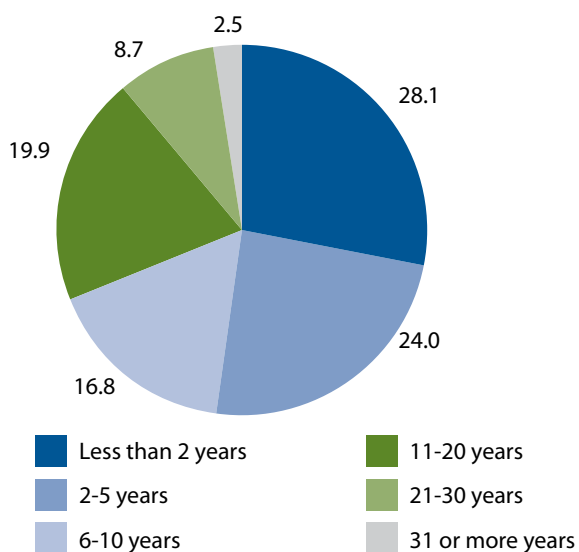
Age of Workforce



Length of service

Average length of service for all permanent and casual employees is currently 8.8 years. This reflects favourably on the Council as a rewarding place to work, and demonstrates the depth of expertise across Council.

Length of Service



Our workplace

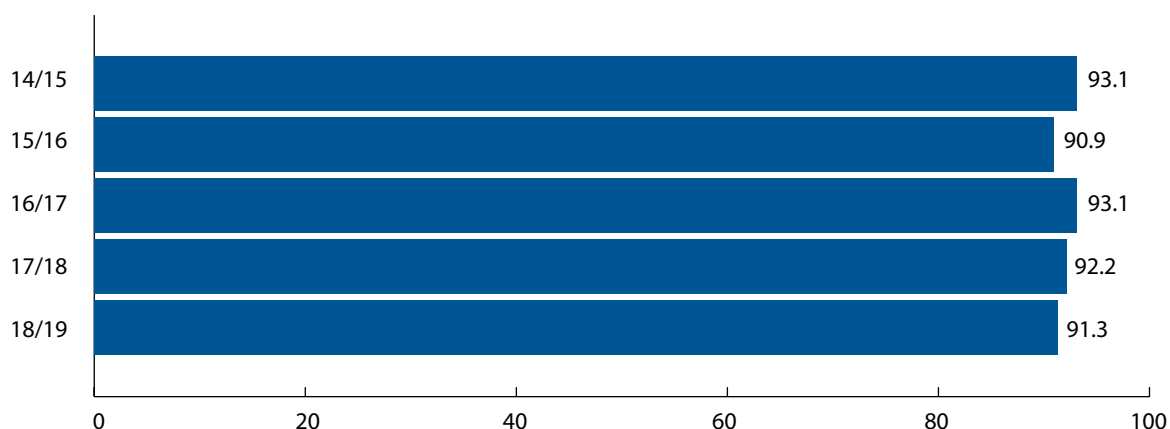
We have multiple work sites spread across the Blue Mountains, with most conveniently located within close proximity to public transport:

- Head Office (including Council Chambers) located at Katoomba
- Customer Service Centres in Katoomba and Springwood
- Works Depots at Katoomba and Springwood
- Waste Management Facilities located in Katoomba and Blaxland
- Leisure and Aquatic Centres in Glenbrook, Springwood, Lawson, Katoomba and Blackheath
- Libraries in Blaxland, Springwood, Lawson, Wentworth Falls, Katoomba and Blackheath
- Community Theatre and Hub and the Braemar Gallery located at Springwood
- Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in Katoomba
- Visitor Information Centres at Glenbrook and Katoomba.

Employee retention

A key indicator of organisation health is the employee retention rate. Our retention rate for 2018-2019 was 91.3%, which is slightly below the target of 95%.

Employee retention





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:

- participation in the Local Government Professionals Australasian Management Challenge
- attendance at conferences and internal and external training courses
- acting in more senior roles and secondment opportunities
- participation on cross-organisation project teams and working groups
- education assistance to further tertiary education
- traineeship, cadetship and graduate programs.

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
- carer's 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
- 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, which 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
- access to the Employee Assistance Program
- staff social clubs, functions and charity events
- provision of uniforms for frontline employees
- salary sacrifice options
- free financial planning advice for Local Government Superannuation members.

Leave

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

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

Corporate Governance

In 2018-2019, Council continued to improve governance processes, policies and practices to deliver transparent decision-making and effective service delivery.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee provides independent assurance to the Council and the Chief Executive Officer in relation to risk management, internal audit, insurance, financial reporting, business improvement and compliance.

The Committee comprises two independent members and one Councillor, as follows:

- Independent Chair – Michael Anstiss
- Independent Member – Brooke Broughton
- Non-independent Member – Cr Kevin Schreiber

During 2018-2019, the committee met quarterly with management representatives to discuss the provision and preparation of financial statements; internal control environment; risk management framework, including business resilience and fraud and corruption prevention; status of internal and external audit; and progress in relation to the Performance Improvement Order.

The Audit and Risk Committee also continued to provide oversight of the Internal Audit Program, which assesses the effectiveness of controls and systems to mitigate risk. During the year, Council completed eight audits, resulting in a range of management actions that, when completed, will improve internal controls and lessen the likelihood and consequences of realised risks.



Audit and Risk Committee

Governance and Risk Steering Group

The Governance and Risk Steering Group (GRSG) is responsible for the executive oversight of risk management at Council. In 2018-2019, the GRSG met monthly to:

- receive and consider risk-related reports from directors and group managers, and provide a considered opinion on proposed risk management strategies
- oversee the further maturation of the Enterprise Risk Management Framework
- communicate developments in risk management across the organisation
- consider reports from the Policy Control Team regarding the state of policy development, oversight and implementation
- receive reports on the status of internal audit including performance against the current audit plan.

Project Control Groups

These are a mechanism adopted by the Council to strengthen governance and track progress on major projects. During 2018-2019, a number of key Project Control Groups continued to manage significant projects in an integrated way across the organisation, including:

- 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.
- Asbestos Operations Project Control Group provided high-level oversight of Council's compliance with its Asbestos Management Plan, including its day-to-day responsiveness to asbestos finds across the Local Government Area and the availability and ongoing maintenance of the Corporate Asbestos Register.
- Organisational Performance Review Project Control Group had oversight of the review process, including staff and Councillor engagement.

Work Health and Safety

The Peak Safety Steering Group (PSSG) is the principal internal committee for the governance of safety at the Council. Established in July 2016, convened monthly, and chaired by the Chief Executive Officer, its objective is to assure the health and safety of Council staff and Blue Mountains residents.

In 2018-2019, the PSSG continued to review and improve the safety culture across all areas of the organisation. Significant progress was made in improving Work Health and Safety (WHS) performance, governance and resourcing, with key achievements including:

- expansion of the WHS unit to provide in-field assistance, mentoring and review
- regular Emergency Planning Committee meetings and emergency drills put in place across all Council workplaces
- major review of WHS policies and procedures
- improved communication of safety issues across the organisation
- delivery of new training modules, particularly in relation to asbestos management
- development of a WHS Strategy for implementation in 2019-2020, focusing on the three strategic delivery areas of people, systems and risk.

The Steering Group also has oversight of the WHS committees, which are consultative bodies comprised of elected staff representatives from Council's operational work groups.

Council has three functioning WHS committees, covering Springwood Depot, Katoomba Depot and Katoomba Head Office. These committees help to drive ongoing improvements to workforce health, safety and culture through a consultative process, with members providing important feedback to guide the organisation. In 2018-2019, the WHS committees met monthly and provided recommendations to the Peak Safety Steering Group for review and action.

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)

protect

- Natural Environment
- Waste Resource Management
- Water Resource Management

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

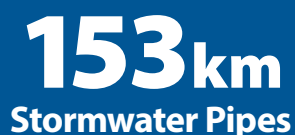
- Burials and Ashes Placement
- Building Certification
- City Presentation
- City-wide Strategic Planning
- Land Use Management

move

- Transport and Public Access

thrive

- Economic Development and Tourism
- Commercial Activities





5

Performance Reporting





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*

LEAD – Highlights

Completed Organisational Performance Review

Council completed a major Organisational Performance Review in March 2019, after using a staged and highly collaborative approach over the preceding 10-month period. At its meeting on 26 March, the elected Council considered the outcomes of the review and adopted the Council's Improvement Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2021, as well as a new Operating Model and Organisational Structure.

The Improvement Strategy builds on Council's strong record in continuously improving its performance and effectively delivering services to the community, and will better position the organisation to respond well to emerging challenges and opportunities. It includes six Key Improvement Areas, with the first focus area being Culture and Structure. Implementation of the Action Plan commenced following adoption by the Council.

The new Operating Model takes a strategy-led and service-focused approach, enabling us to act as one organisation, working together collaboratively to implement the decisions of the Council and support achievement of our adopted Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. The new model took effect from 1 July 2019.

For more information, refer to Section 4: Organisational Performance Review.

Improved Workplace Health and Safety

Council has made significant progress during 2018-2019 in improving Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) performance and strengthening resourcing. Improvements have been made in the three key areas of people, systems and risk.

The WHS unit has been expanded to better support the organisation, and various new training modules have been introduced. Communication of safety issues has been improved through regular updates from the Chief Safety Officer, and major procedural and policy reviews have been completed. A WHS Strategy has also been developed, for implementation in 2019-2020.

For more information, refer to Section 4: Corporate Governance.

Responded to organisational challenges

During 2018-2019, Council has demonstrated strong leadership in responding to a range of complex challenges, particularly surrounding asbestos management practices. Council has responded swiftly and cooperatively with all investigations, and has undertaken significant work to improve asbestos management throughout the City. We have also commenced a program of eliminating all asbestos-containing material from Council's built assets.

Further information on these challenges, including progress against the Performance Improvement Order issued by the Minister for Local Government and the ongoing Public Inquiry, can be found in Section 2: Challenges and Opportunities.



Organisational Performance Review Reference Group



Launch of Council's new organisational structure

Established Quality of Life Mayoral Reference Group

The Western Sydney Airport Mayoral Reference Group was expanded and renamed during 2018-2019 to also consider the environmental and liveability impacts from the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall.

The reference group was initially established in 2016 to enable ongoing communication between the Council and interested community members on matters relating to the Western Sydney Airport. The broadened terms of reference allow for further advocacy on behalf of our World Heritage Area, with the group ensuring that representations made by the Council on these significant issues are in line with the views of the community.

Received national customer service awards

The Council was honoured in three categories, including Customer Service Team of the Year, at the 2018 National Local Government Customer Service Awards. The team had worked hard on improving their resilience, engagement and communication, with the flow-on effect of improved service delivered to customers.

Senior Customer Service Adviser Damien Robinson was awarded Customer Service Team Leader of the Year and Customer Service Officer Kerry Smith was also highly commended in the Customer Service Individual Award category.

Annually, Council's Customer Contact Centre receives more than 80,000 calls and processes almost 60,000 transactions. These awards reflect Council's commitment to high quality customer service for our community and customers, connecting them with information, staff and the services they need.

Strengthened approach to strategic procurement

During 2018-2019, Council continued the review of its strategic procurement policies and procedures to improve and formalise procurement practices, tendering policies and capabilities. Flowing from this, the Strategic Procurement Policy was endorsed by the Council on 16 October 2018 and a strategic procurement function was established in January 2019.

The revised policy sets the framework for probity and accountability, while maintaining a strategic approach to procurement activities and supporting the achievement of a financially sustainable

Council. The immediate work program of the strategic procurement function will be informed by recommendations from an Internal Audit of Procurement and Tendering practices and processes that was conducted in April 2019, which will guide Council towards best practice in the procurement space.

Contributed to resilience strategy

The Blue Mountains was one of 33 councils involved in developing Resilient Sydney – the first resilience strategy for metropolitan Sydney. The strategy was developed in collaboration with 100 Resilient Cities and in consultation with over 1,000 residents and 100 businesses and government organisations. It will aid the city in strengthening its ability to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of increasing global uncertainty and local shocks and stresses, and marks a new spirit of collaboration and connection in the City. It was launched in July 2018 and is the result of two years of effort.

Delivered traineeship program

The Council's traineeship program gives successful applicants the opportunity to learn new skills and gain a nationally-recognised qualification through a structured work and training program. Trainees are mentored by long-standing Council employees who are passionate about serving the local community.

The 2019 Traineeship Program recruited people in the diverse fields of civil construction, engineering, business services and horticulture, as well as mechanical and electrical services.

Facilitated Youth Council programs

In July 2018, we welcomed six new Youth Councillors to the 2018 Youth Council. Our Youth Council, established in 2003, allows young people living within our City to share their opinions, ideas and views with Council. They also plan and implement community activities and events, promote awareness on issues impacting young people and help celebrate their achievements. This is a wonderful leadership opportunity for people aged between 12 and 20 years.

Throughout 2019, the Youth Council has been working within an 'environment' theme. At the beginning of the year the Youth Councillors attended an environmental leadership camp, and from there developed projects they have been working on throughout the year. These projects have included a tree planting and conservation initiative, a market stall that promoted generosity and reuse of resources; and a recognition program that aims to acknowledge businesses that are trying to reduce their environmental impact.

Enhanced community engagement

The Council's corporate website experienced a 30% increase in the number of users during 2018-2019, and a similar increase in the number of individual page views. This follows the successful launch of a new corporate website in March 2018, providing a more contemporary look and feel and improved customer experience.



Blue Mountains Youth Council 2018 - leadership by young people for young people

A new fortnightly community e-newsletter was also launched during the year, to raise awareness of the many ways in which Council serves our community, and more than 750,000 people were reached through Council's corporate Facebook page.

More information on how we engage with community can be found in Section 3: Engaging our Community.

Recognised outstanding citizens

Each year, Council celebrates the achievement and contribution of notable local residents through the Blue Mountains Local Citizen of the Year Awards held on Australia Day. Citizen of the Year was awarded to George Winston, who works tirelessly to provide emotional and practical support for refugees and to campaign for justice and human rights for refugees in Australia. Adisen Wright was awarded Young Citizen of the Year. In 2017, he was an integral part of the Vote Yes campaign for the LGBTQI marriage equality survey, where he encouraged those in his community to participate in democracy and to make their vote count. The Community Achievement of the Year was awarded to Blackheath Community Op Shop, led by David O'Brien and run by volunteers.

LEAD – Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within $\pm 10\%$)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—




Governance – good customer service

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	✓

Financial – a financially sustainable Council



Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Operating performance ratio	5.4%	Positive	-4.8%	○
Own source revenue ratio	80.1%	Maintain	82.1%	✓ ✓
Building and infrastructure renewal ratio	35.1%	Increase	39.3%	✓ ✓
Infrastructure backlog ratio	2.0%	Decrease	1.8%	✓ ✓
Asset maintenance ratio	99%	Maintain	99%	✓ ✓
Debt service ratio	8.2%	Decrease	5.7%	✓ ✓
Real operating expenditure per capita	1.1	Decrease	1.6	○

Social – a safe, skilled and engaged workforce

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Lost time injuries	17.6 per million hours	Decrease	23 per million hours	
Employee retention rate	93.1%	Maintain	91.3%	
Employee engagement	54%	Increase	Not available*	

* The focus during 2018-2019 was on engaging staff through the Organisational Performance Review. Although a separate employee engagement survey was not conducted this year, staff who attended the February 2019 open day overwhelmingly supported the proposed organisational direction and high-level action plan (74% of respondents).

Environment – reduced resource consumption

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Council's carbon footprint*	56,988 tonnes CO ₂ e	Decrease	44,180 tonnes CO ₂ e	 

* The baseline figure is from 2015-2016, and the most recent data available is from 2017-2018.



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

PROTECT – Highlights

Exceeded reduction targets for carbon emissions

Council has achieved its four-year target for carbon emissions in the first year of the Carbon Abatement Action Plan. This is an impressive achievement. Overall emissions have reduced by 12,807 tonnes CO₂. This represents a reduction of 22% against a baseline of 2015-2016, and exceeds the initial 2022 target. The main reason for this significant reduction is the performance of Blaxland landfill flare and the green bin service in reducing emissions from landfill at a faster rate than expected. Other contributing factors include the completion of lighting upgrades at Springwood and Katoomba Leisure Centres.

Council is also investigating how we can achieve Carbon Neutral Certification from the National Carbon Offset Standard. This involves measuring our carbon emissions, reducing our emissions as far as feasible, and then purchasing carbon offsets to equal the remaining emissions.

Targeted illegal dumping

Council has been working to make it tougher to illegally dump asbestos and easier to safely dispose of it. Each year, there are about 600 illegal dumping incidents in the City, with clean-up costs of more than \$269,000. Research shows that the three drivers of illegal asbestos dumping are the cost of disposal, convenience and awareness.

Council is addressing these drivers in a multi-faceted approach that is delivering benefits for the City

and community. In July 2018, Council reduced the fee for disposal of asbestos at the Blaxland Waste Management Facility, and from 1 January 2019 the Western Sydney Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Squad expanded their operations into the Blue Mountains. RID Squad investigators will undertake high visibility patrols across the Blue Mountains as well as conducting covert surveillance.

Completed restoration project at Popes Glen

The Council has worked closely with volunteers from the Popes Glen Bushcare Group over a six-year period to complete a remarkable environmental restoration project at Popes Glen in Blackheath.

This project has successfully removed one hectare of willows from the creek headwaters, pioneered innovative stormwater control strategies to enable weed removal and reduce pollutants and sediment flows to the national park, and engaged with over 600 students, residents and professionals. The project has also led to two scientific publications and has been applauded for its best practice environmental management approach.

Launched Compost Hub Program

The Compost Hub provides an innovative way to link households that are not composting with households that do, via an interactive online platform. This enables those residents who are keen to compost but find it difficult to manage their own compost bin, to get involved and reduce food waste to landfill.



Popes Glen Recognition Event

Compost champions receive food scraps from their local Contributors in the neighbourhood. Compost contributors simply drop off their food scraps to a Compost Champion nearby. In addition to diverting waste from landfill, this program will reduce carbon emissions generated from food scraps, and return valuable nutrients to the soil.

The launch of this program follows a successful trial last year when nine hubs were formed with 28 contributing households. Over the nine-week trial, more than 1000 kg of food scraps were diverted from landfill.

Declared a climate emergency

At its 26 February 2019 meeting, the Council formally recognised that we are in a state of climate emergency that requires urgent action by all levels of government, including local councils. Blue Mountains was the 11th local government in Australia to make such a declaration, with dozens more following suit in subsequent months. The Council is now investigating the best ways in which to turn this declaration into positive action for our community and for future generations.

Increased knowledge of local fauna

The Blue Mountains Fauna Project is a joint partnership between Council and the Bushcare Network, with grant funding from the Greater Sydney Local Land Services. It offers local residents an opportunity to contribute meaningful data on our Blue Mountains wildlife, so Council can better manage the 6,500 hectare of bushland reserves around our towns and villages.

During 2018-2019, events were held at Mt Wilson, Mt Victoria, Megalong Valley and the Gully, Katoomba, including spotlighting walks, bird-spotting walks, surveys and talks. An important sighting of the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater, which has a very patchy distribution in NSW, was recorded as part of the Blue Mountains Fauna Project after being spotted and photographed by 13-year-old McKinley Moens in Springwood. Initial learnings from the project were presented at the Western Sydney Citizen Science Forum in October 2018.



Crayfish survey, November 2018

Provided a responsive and efficient waste service

Almost 1.5 million garbage (red) bins were emptied during 2018-2019. This equates to garbage collection from almost 30,000 households each week. The amount of domestic waste collected was marginally higher than the previous year (0.1%), however the total amount of waste to landfill, including commercial and construction waste, is still on a downward trend. Since 2003, the Blue Mountains community has reduced its volume of waste to landfill by half, which is an outstanding trend and extremely uncommon in Australia.

Council's Booked Waste Collection service is regularly praised by service users. There were 12,953 service bookings made during 2018-2019, with approximately 80% of these being for bulky waste, and the remaining 20% for kerbside chipping. This represents an increase of 3% over the previous year in the number of service requests.

Connected kids with nature

This year, more than 1,400 students from 25 local schools and preschools participated in our Connecting Kids to Nature program, more than double that of the previous year. This hands-on environmental program is a learning experience that is unique to our City within a World Heritage Area. We offer young people the opportunity to explore their local water catchment, learn why it's special and take action to protect it. Activities include map work, catchment field trips, aquatic monitoring and on-ground studies related to stormwater, biodiversity, swamps and rare forests.

Hosted Cities Power Partnership Roundtable

In February 2019, Council hosted more than 60 local government representatives, academics and community groups from around Australia at the Cities Power Partnership Expert Roundtable on Climate Change, Bushfires and Local Government. This forum was designed to share knowledge on the growing risks that come with longer, more intense bushfire seasons. It also looked at how local government can better collaborate on these challenges.

Exhibited Water Sensitive Strategic Plan

The Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan sets the future direction of how Council manages our city's waterways and water resources. The draft plan was on public exhibition during 2018, with the community invited to have their say online, or attend one of three workshops held in October.

The workshops were a joint project between Council, WaterNSW and the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities. Topics for discussion included:

- ways to protect local waterways from stormwater damage and become a more water efficient community



Jamison Creek stormwater treatment project

- water sensitive success stories from Australia and overseas
- ideas for local projects to include in Council's Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan.

Engagement with the community will help guide the Council towards more efficient water use and best practice stormwater management, while also building community water literacy.

Provided incentives to reduce single-use plastics

In March 2019, the Council endorsed a proposal to provide financial incentives for event organisers in the Blue Mountains to reduce their generation of single-use plastics. The changes will reduce the fees for accessing general waste and recycling bins at events, and provide greater flexibility to organisers around recycling bin numbers. Event organisers who enter into an agreement to reduce single use plastics will also receive a 30% discount on clean up fees, should they be required.

Cared for our waterways

The 2018 Blue Mountains Waterways Snapshot was mailed to all ratepayers in July, providing a user-friendly guide to the health of our aquatic systems.

Each year, we monitor over 40 local waterways, using waterbugs as indicators of creek health. The snapshot also includes recreational water quality results.

During 2018-2019, Council worked with more than 600 local school students, inspiring them to look after our waterways and engaging them in the practical aspects of stormwater treatment design. We also supported over 500 conservation volunteers at 130 sites across the city.

Jamison Creek catchment in Wentworth Falls benefited from the construction of a new raingarden system in Central Park that diverts the main stormwater flow into three separate treatments. The system is designed to filter and reduce the discharge of nutrients, bacteria and suspended solids into the drinking water catchment, and improve overall creek health.

Engaged with community on weed management

During 2018-2019, Council developed a Draft Weed Management Strategic Plan, which was on public exhibition from May to June 2019. The plan outlines our response to the multiple threats of weeds in our local government area, within the context of current weed policy and recent legislative changes. It focuses



Mayor inspects new landfill cell at Blaxland with Council's waste management staff - July 2018



Clean Up Australia Day

on a long-term, strategic approach to the protection of our natural environment, and cooperation with all landowners to achieve high-level, sustainable weed control outcomes.

Council also continued to manage highly invasive weeds on public and private lands across the Blue Mountains. There were 176 private property inspections undertaken during the year through the City-wide Biodiversity Conservation Program. A discovery was also made in Wentworth Falls of an African grass species (*Hyparrhenia rufa*) that has not been found in the mountains previously.

Celebrated creative reuse of waste materials

A series of Waste2Art community workshops were held in April 2019 to celebrate the reuse of waste materials through the creation of a sculpture in the form of a Powerful Owl nest. The sculpture was woven together from discarded clothing, textiles and soft plastics, and aimed to highlight the issue of textile waste in our society. More than 170 residents contributed to the project.

On average, Blue Mountains residents throw out more than 20kg of clothes in household garbage bins each year. By taking action to reduce, reuse and repair, our collective efforts do make a difference and help threatened species like the Powerful Owl. The completed sculpture was unveiled at a special event on 1 June 2019 at the Community Hub in Springwood, in conjunction with a Low Waste Lifestyle and Declutter Workshop.

Pledged to improve sustainability

Council joined with other local government leaders to develop regional climate solutions at the first ever national summit run by the Cities Power Partnership in October 2018. This is a free, national program created by the Climate Council that brings together Australian towns and cities that are making the switch to clean energy.

As a Cities Power Partnership member, Council adopted five pledges, including to install renewable energy on Council buildings; adopt best-practice energy efficiency measures across all Council buildings; roll out energy-efficient lighting across the LGA; and encourage sustainable transport use.



Looking for waterbugs at Swampfest 2018

Blue Mountains is among the first 100 Councils to sign up to what is now Australia's largest local government climate initiative.

Advocated for investment in recycling

Council continues to advocate on behalf of the Blue Mountains community for a state-wide approach to waste minimisation, recycling and resource recovery in NSW. Council has called on the NSW Government to reinvest 100% of its Waste Levy in waste and resource recovery infrastructure, developing markets and innovative solutions, and undertaking other initiatives to encourage reuse and recycling. The State Government already collects hundreds of millions of dollars through the Waste Levy each year, but currently only a small proportion of this is reinvested in recycling and waste management.

Celebrated Blue Mountains swamps

On 23 September 2018, around 250 people attended Swampfest – a joint project between Council and the Leura Falls Creek Catchment Community Group, with input from students and staff at Katoomba Public School, St Canice's Primary School and Katoomba High School. Swampfest attendees enjoyed walks, talks, displays and workshops on swampy topics from crayfish and skinks, to how to keep a water-sensitive home.

More than 100 festival-goers made a pledge to protect local swamps and waterways by being more stormwater aware. This included keeping litter and chemicals out of stormwater drains, washing their car on the lawn to keep detergent out of street drains, and installing a rainwater tank.

Commenced Bullaburra to Linden flood study

Council commenced a new flood study for the Bullaburra to Linden catchment in 2019. The first step was the establishment of an Advisory Committee as a forum for discussion of technical, social, economic, environmental and cultural consideration and for representative community input. In March 2019, the Council endorsed the appointment of three local residents to the Bullaburra to Linden Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee for a four-year term.

Supported real-time air quality monitoring

Real-time information on local air quality is now available to the community with monitoring stations installed throughout the Blue Mountains. The project, Air Watch, is run by the NSW Environment Protection Authority and supported by Council. An air quality monitoring station at Katoomba will operate for 12 months to measure fine particles of various pollutants. Meanwhile, KOALA (Knowing Our Ambient



Local Air) air quality sensors will be operated by the Queensland University of Technology at various sites, including one at our Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre. These sensors are a low-cost way to observe pollution trends across the Blue Mountains and will complement data from the Katoomba station.

Reviewed the Gully Plan of Management

Council worked closely with Traditional Owners of The Gully in Katoomba to review the existing Plan of Management. The Gully is a dedicated Aboriginal Place under NSW law in recognition of the continuous occupation of the area by Aboriginal People until forced eviction of all residents in 1957. The plan will ensure the Gully is managed in a culturally appropriate way, using both traditional and contemporary practices. Preliminary consultation occurred during September to December 2018, and the draft plan is expected to be placed on public exhibition early in 2019-2020 for further community feedback.

Provided safe turtle habitat

Council is participating in a pilot program to install a man-made floating turtle sanctuary in Glenbrook Lagoon. This project is the first of its kind in NSW, and is funded by the NSW Premier's Office. The aim is to provide a safe nesting environment, away from predators, for the several species of turtle found in the lagoon.

The Glenbrook Lagoon Bushcare group, along with Council and the University of Western Sydney, have constructed a floating island for turtles to breed on, with easy access from the water for the turtles to climb on to rest, bask and lay their eggs. If successful, additional turtle islands may be considered.

Supported Clean Up Australia Day

Council supported 11 community groups to clear rubbish from the local government area on Sunday, 3 March 2019 as part of Clean Up Australia Day. Volunteers worked to clear rubbish from parks and ovals, bushland reserves, and even the cliffs below Echo Point. More than 30 large bags of rubbish were collected from the Echo Point area, including mobile phones, street signs, a washing machine and shopping trolley. On a positive note, local volunteers reported less rubbish in our bush compared with previous years. Council supported these efforts by promoting the event locally and collecting and disposing of the site rubbish.



Photo credit: Ricky Spencer

PROTECT – Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within $\pm 10\%$)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Note: for condition measures, one tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in poor condition is the same or less, and a second tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in good condition is the same or greater.

Natural Environment

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	59%	✓ ✓
Hours of participation in Council-supported community conservation programs	10,471 hours	Maintain or increase	9,900 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 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 80% Fair 13% Poor 6%	✓
Amount of waste to landfill (including domestic, commercial and construction/demolition) per capita	517 kg/person	Year-on-year decrease	470 kg/person	✓ ✓

Water Resource Management

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	55%	○ (resources diverted to retaining structure inspections)
Condition of water resource management assets (Dec 2014: Good 78%, Fair 17%, Poor 5%)	Not available	Maintain or increase	Good 87% Fair 7% Poor 6%	✓



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*

CARE – Highlights

Supported the City's families

In November 2018, Council released the 4th edition of the Blue Mountains Guide to Services and Activities for Families. The directory provides information to support families accessing local services, enjoying their community and finding the support they may need during times of transition. It is part of our commitment to support families and our goal to make the Blue Mountains a child, youth and family friendly community.

Council also provides support to Blue Mountains families by:

- employing Community Development officers who provide support and advocacy, and initiate projects relevant to the specific needs of the community
- convening the Stronger Families Alliance network of services across the Mountains, working collaboratively on local community priorities to support families
- providing accommodation for services supporting children, young people and families across the Blue Mountains
- hosting community events, such as the Children's Week family fun day, in partnership with other local organisations.

Celebrated Blue Mountains Botanica

The Blue Mountains Botanica exhibition was hosted at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre from 25 August

to 14 October 2018 in partnership with the NSW Botanical Gardens and Domain Trust.

In conjunction with the exhibition, a wide range of public programs and events celebrating the cross-pollination of art, science and nature were hosted by the Cultural Centre and event partners. More than 5,000 visitors to the gallery experienced the exhibition, and an estimated 20,000 people engaged with the associated public programs and events across the Blue Mountains.

This hugely popular exhibition was one of the Cultural Centre's most ambitious projects to date. The success of the exhibition and its wide-reaching programs further cemented the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre's reputation as one of the leading regional galleries in NSW.

Built resilience in the Blue Mountains

The Blue Mountains has been selected by the NSW Office of Emergency Management to pilot two projects relating to community resilience networks and local recovery planning, recognising the Council's significant involvement in the recovery effort from the 2013 bushfires. A multi-agency workshop was held in November 2018 and a Community Resilience Network workshop was held in February 2019, both of which will inform the development of a local recovery plan.

Council also participated in the Australian Disaster Resilience Conference, held in September 2018. The conference provided insight as to how the approach to disaster resilience is changing around the globe, and encouraged engagement, participation and partnerships around all facets of disaster resilience.



Blue Mountains Botanica Exhibition

Delivered City of the Arts Trust grants program

The City of the Arts Trust Grants Program supported the delivery of seven diverse arts projects during 2018-2019, providing stimulus for creativity within the City. These were:

- Leonard the Lyrebird – family-friendly classical music performances by Grace Kim
- Blume Illustration Project Mentorship Program – provided by Faye Wilson for young adult illustration artists
- Sensa Flora – an exhibition by Saskia Everingham featuring local women textile artists, cultural events and workshops
- Yindyang – a First Nations Australian and Canadian dance and film installation with a local singer/songwriter and dances by Jo Clancy
- Eating Pomegranates – a physical theatre and social dance performance with local talent by Margaret Davis
- Lanterns on the Lake – a lakeside evening theatrical event by Camille Walsh
- City of the Arts Generation of New Writers – a program to inspire young local writers.

In the June 2019 funding round, a further six projects were awarded more than \$50,000 for delivery in 2019-2020. These include a range of art forms including visual arts, literature, music, textile arts, photography and cross-art forms, as detailed in the Appendix.

Celebrated NAIDOC week

Council hosted a range of events for the 2018 National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) in July, together with the Aboriginal Advisory Council and the Blue Mountains NAIDOC Committee. NAIDOC highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture, history and achievements. The theme for 2018, 'Because of Her, We Can', focused on the significant role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women play in our community. These women – who are pillars of our society – are leaders, trailblazers, politicians, activists and social change advocates.



Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grant Committee and Partners



Beehive installation at the Cultural Centre, November 2018



Wagana Dancers at NAIDOC 2018 - photo credit Ben Pearce

The Blue Mountains City Art Gallery was transformed during the 2018 NAIDOC celebrations in conjunction with the exhibition *John South: Skyworld*. Events explored Aboriginal astronomy with panel discussions, stargazing and storytelling.

Improved emergency preparedness

Council has worked closely with member agencies of the Bush Fire Management Committee during 2018-2019 on fire trail renewal and upgrade work across the City, following the NSW Government policy changes and reclassification of all trails. Detailed planning was also undertaken for vegetation management, trail widening and surface restoration on a small number of Council-managed trails, particularly strategic trails that occur on multiple land tenures.

Council also continued to deliver maintenance and enhancement of Asset Protection Zones, with work occurring on 106 sites across the City. This resulted in reducing the bushfire risk for 471 homes and major buildings within the Blue Mountains.



Opened new toilet block at Wentworth Falls Lake

A new toilet block at Wentworth Falls Lake was completed and opened for use in September 2018.

The facility, which is large enough to cater for visiting school and community groups, features a brickwork pattern inspired by the markings on the body of the Blue Mountains Water Skink. The Giant Dragonfly is also represented in a motif on the adjacent gate design, based on original artwork by Darug man, Chris Tobin.

The building is part of a broad upgrade project at Wentworth Falls Lake Park, which included a new boardwalk and viewing platform, interpretive signage, carpark and landscaping works.

Secured heritage grant for Woodford Reserve

The little-known public reserve behind the historic Woodford Academy has an interesting history that will soon be shared with the community. In August 2018, Council was successful in obtaining a \$75,000 heritage grant from the NSW Government's Heritage Near Me program, to develop a self-guided trail which captures the site's history and shares stories in an accessible and engaging way.

Woodford Reserve has significant European, Aboriginal and landscape values. Intertwined with the colonial elements of this site, is the cultural significance of Country held by Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners to this area. The reserve has a colourful history that reflects that of the Woodford Academy, a National Trust property and the oldest complex of buildings in the Blue Mountains.

Completed priority actions from Disability Inclusion Action Plan

A new adult change facility is now open at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood. It is the second facility of its kind provided by Council, the first being at Echo Point. The new facility includes a height adjustable, adult-sized changing bench and a hoist system that is best practice in design. It enables people with disabilities to enjoy cultural, community and visitor facilities with greater ease and dignity.



Opening of new adult change facility at Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub

Other actions from the Disability Inclusion Action Plan that have been completed during 2018-2019 include an audit of Council's accessible toilets across the City, and a mobility study identifying the barriers for people with a disability and the frail aged in accessing their town centres, focusing on Blackheath, Winmalee and Springwood.

Hosted Grandparents and Elders Day

Council hosted a successful event on 4 November 2018 to celebrate Grandparents and Elders and the role they play in our society – both the things they have done, and the things they keep doing.

Young and old enjoyed various activities on the day including giant chess, rock painting, story time, bug identification, woodwork and "Retro Hello" letter writing. Many attendees also listened to local Darug elder, Chris Tobin, as he spoke about the Aboriginal significance of the Wentworth Falls Lake site.

The emphasis was on creating intergenerational participatory activities for both children and elders, to highlight and foster the valuable relationship they have. Local schools and musicians also performed on the day and artworks and stories from children focusing on how they value their grandparents and elders were on display.

Adopted Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan

In July 2018, the Council adopted an Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan, and supporting Play Guidelines, which will guide how Council provides and manages open space and sport and recreation facilities and services over the next ten or more years for the local community and visitors.

Supported community organisations

Forty-eight not-for-profit community organisations received grants totalling almost \$52,000 as part of Council's Community Assistance Program for 2019. These include a range of musical and sporting organisations, family support services, preschools, gardening societies, men's sheds and neighbourhood centres. The successful recipients for the grant program are detailed in the Appendix.

In addition to these successful grant applications, Council was also able to provide an extra \$2,750 each for Thrive Services (Blue Mountains Family Support Services), Gateway Family services and Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre to contribute to emergency food relief funds.

Celebrated diversity

The 10th International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia (known as IDAHOT) was held on Friday 17 May 2019. It's an annual community awareness raising event, supported by Council and other community groups, to raise awareness of discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ people worldwide and advocate for a community that supports a diverse and inclusive City.

This year the event featured key speakers Jonathan Llewellyn, convenor of Pink Mountains Youth, and 2019 Blue Mountains Young Citizen of the Year, Adisen Wright. Local high schools also participated in the event to support their students. The event included a rainbow flag raising, photo display, photo booth and morning tea.

Offered new leisure opportunities

During 2018-2019, Council's Aquatic and Leisure Centres trialled some new activities and equipment. At Lawson, there was a fun, new spray feature installed in the toddlers' pool, while Katoomba pool launched a new aquatic inflatable, which proved very popular with the kids. Blackheath, Katoomba, Lawson and Springwood Leisure Centres were also converted into outdoor living rooms, with new sun lounges and umbrellas.

Throughout the year, our Leisure Centres provide fitness and recreation opportunities for community members and visitors alike, with more than 500,000 visits in 2018-2019. The swim school program

provided lessons to more than 8,000 students, and free strength training was offered to over 65s to improve health and fitness. Group fitness programs attracted more than 55,000 visits during the year.

During the summer months, our pools become a vibrant hub for the local community, with extended opening hours offered during extremely hot weather, and family-friendly activities such as movies at the pool being very well attended.

Delivered a diverse program of theatre events

Blue Mountains Theatre programming continued to diversify in 2018-2019, attracting new audiences with the first musical presentation of 'Always... Patsy Cline'. International guests included Albert Lee (UK); Kaki King (USA); Bill Frisell Trio (USA) and Xylouris White (Aus/Crete). Australian performers included Ian Moss, James Reyne, Lior, Marina Prior and David Hobson, and The Whitlams. A very special presentation included The Australian Girls Choir together with Blue Mountains Youth Choir in an impressive showcase of song and dance.

The Theatre also supports many local community-based performing arts organisations. The Blue Mountains Musical Society celebrated a near season sell-out of their spectacular production of Queen's 'We Will Rock You' rock musical. The incredible success of this show helped boost overall box office sales for 2018-2019 to a record high of 29,419 tickets. This represents a 15% increase on sales in the previous year.



Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub

Completed conservation strategy for historic Cox's Road

Council has completed a conservation management strategy for remnant sections of the historic Cox's Road in Linden. The strategy provides the framework for the appropriate care, conservation and ongoing use of remnant sections of Cox's Road. Located near Dawes Park in Linden, the section of road is a significant heritage item listed on the NSW State Heritage Register.

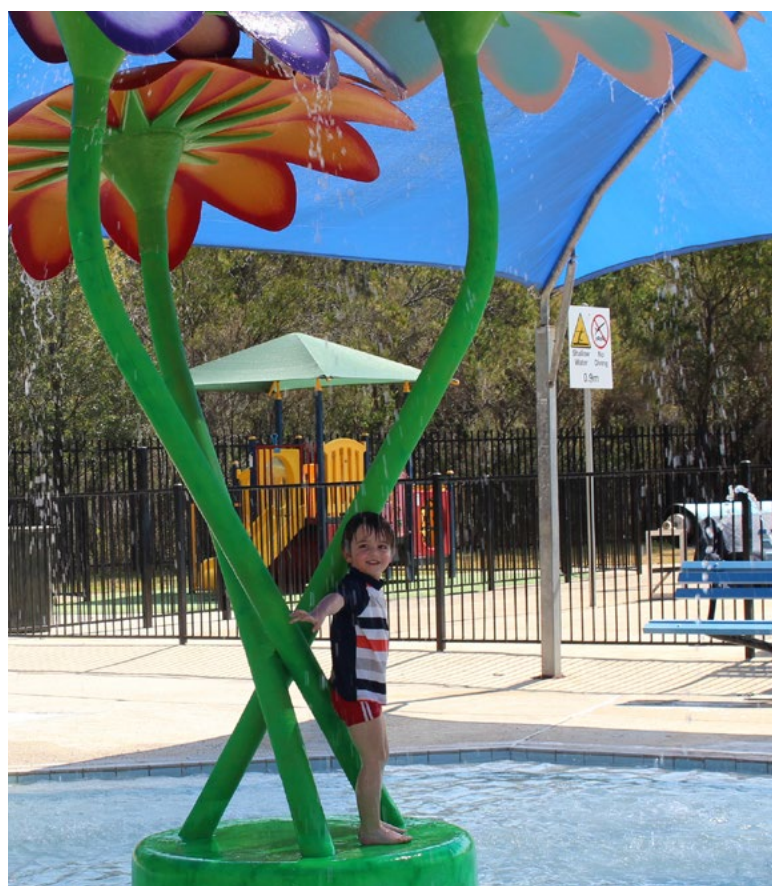
The strategy identifies opportunities for the site and makes a number of recommendations to guide future activities, including an interpretation plan, archival recording of historic fabric, and re-routing the existing access trail.

Received funding boost and expanded library collection

Blue Mountains Libraries will receive a 30% increase in funding in 2019-2020 thanks to the successful Renew Our Libraries campaign, which was supported unanimously by the Council.

During 2018-2019, our libraries had more than 450,000 visitors, and experienced a 13% increase in the number of visits to the library website. Library staff processed more than half a million loans and responded to approximately 38,000 information requests. Meanwhile, the libraries continued to host an extraordinary number and variety of events, which were attended by more than 20,000 people.

Council libraries have expanded their collection of digital resources, including eBooks, eAudio books, HSC study lab and the Storybox Library. These enhance connectivity to library resources, increase the library's online presence out of library hours, and promote equity of access to library services to the wider community. There is also a brand-new collection of dyslexia-friendly books that have a special font and layout to alleviate some of the issues that readers with dyslexia may experience.



New spray feature at Lawson Swim Centre



Katoomba Late Night Library



Family Day Care end of year event

Administered Family Day Care

Council provides a Family Day Care service for a diverse range of Blue Mountains families. The service is valued by families for its small group setting and natural home environment, while providing flexible and rewarding employment for many members of our community. In addition, Family Day Care provides In Home Care for families with additional needs – a service not offered by mainstream childcare services.

Family Day Care maintains strong links with the community through regular playgroups and community events. In 2018-2019, Family Day Care hosted play spaces at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub during school holidays, celebrated National Children's Week, held a pop-up library space at Glenbrook Fair, and an end-of-year event for families that promoted healthy development with NSW Health initiative, Munch & Move. The service also hosted a visit from Blue Mountains MP, Susan Templeman, and Shadow Assistant Minister for Schools, Andrew Giles, to highlight the many benefits of Family Day Care for working parents.

Chosen for drug and alcohol prevention study

The Blue Mountains has been chosen as one of ten sites across Australia to pilot the internationally-renowned Icelandic drug and alcohol prevention model "Planet Youth". This is an evidence-based program that has significantly reduced alcohol and other drug use rates in young people. Over the next three years, Council will work closely with the research team from Iceland, the Alcohol and Drug Foundation, local schools and community partners to roll out and evaluate this model.

Recognised the valuable contributions of seniors

We celebrated older people in the Blue Mountains in February, with a month-long program of activities offered by Council, in partnership with local community organisations and businesses. The theme for the 2019 Seniors Festival focussed on 'Love your life' and was about promoting inclusive communities by providing a range of opportunities for seniors to make new friends and try new things. The program of events also included the annual Seniors Week Recognition Awards, which recognise the valuable contributions that seniors make to our community.

Conducted Community Resilience and Wellbeing Survey

In partnership with the Stronger Families Alliance, Council conducted a Survey of Resilience and Wellbeing in 2018 to measure how healthy and resilient our community is. The survey ran from August to November in secondary schools, online, and in community centres, with more than 2,500 responses received. This study is the first of its kind in the Blue Mountains, and will help build the knowledge to shape future action, funding, infrastructure and policy.

The survey showed that most young people scored really positive results on the Wellbeing Index. Despite this, there were some groups that reported high vulnerabilities, including young people who identified as gender diverse. Some of the strengths of young people in the Blue Mountains included: seeing the humorous side of things, being part of the community, adapting to change and achieving goals. Belonging to an organised social or sporting group also had a strong correlation with positive wellbeing results.

The draft survey report is available on the Stronger Families Alliance website: strongerfamilies.net.au

Supported youth social enterprise project

Council provided financial support in the development of a new youth project “Grounded”, which delivered certified training in Permaculture Design to over 20 young people and established an ongoing social enterprise “Edgy Blue Mountains”. The project was auspiced by The Big Fix, based in Blackheath, and was supported by a number of Blue Mountains agencies. Edgy Blue Mountains now provides services in a range of sustainable gardening and food supply for the benefit of disadvantaged and vulnerable Blue Mountains residents and the young people involved.

Sponsored Refugee Week celebrations

Council provided financial support to the Tibetan community in the Blue Mountains to celebrate their annual Cultural Day, held on 6 July. The event was sponsored as part of Council’s commitment to be a Refugee Welcome Zone, and celebrate the contribution that refugees make to our community. Just over 50 Tibetans now live in the Upper Mountains as humanitarian refugees. The community has grown since His Holiness the Dalai Lama came to the Blue Mountains in 2015, and it’s expected to continue to grow.

The Cultural Day corresponds to the Dalai Lama’s birthday and brings the community together to share food, dance, music and stories, and celebrate their culture, remember their compatriots in Tibet and connect with the community in Australia. Many local services supported the event, including the Blue Mountains Refugee Group, Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre, Multicultural Health, Thrive Family Support, and Katoomba North Public School.

Supported White Ribbon Day

Almost 100 people attended the White Ribbon Day Mayoral Breakfast at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre in November, including representatives from local public schools. This was the 27th anniversary of White Ribbon Day, a world-wide movement to end violence against women and girls and to promote gender equity and healthy relationships. Council’s annual event is held in partnership with the Blue Mountains Coalition Against Violence and Abuse (CAVA), and encourages men to take responsibility for their behaviour and to speak up and take action against abusive behaviour and sexist attitudes.

Conserved cultural heritage

Council focused its efforts in 2018-2019 on the continued implementation of the cultural heritage improvement framework, including the development of Conservation Management Strategies for assets with heritage value. An independent review of the mechanisms for broader community involvement in heritage management was completed to assist in planning our engagement with the community on heritage matters.

With the aid of a \$100,000 grant from the NSW Government, Council also progressed the planning for the Pulpit Hill Precinct Interpretation Project, which includes the Explorers Tree. A draft interpretive strategy, conservator’s assessment and engineering report were all completed in preparation for the delivery of landscaping, interpretive signage and podium repair works in 2019-2020.

CARE – Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within $\pm 10\%$)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Note: for condition measures, one tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in poor condition is the same or less, and a second tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in good condition is the same or greater.

Aquatic and Leisure Centres

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	504,781	✓
Condition of aquatic and leisure centre assets (Dec 2014: Good 50%, Fair 30%, Poor 20%)	Not available	Maintain	Good 53% Fair 26% Poor 20%	✓ ✓

Community Development

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 37% Fair 54% Poor 8%	✓ ✓
Completion of program maintenance schedules for community development building assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓

Cultural Development

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	118,238	✓ ✓
Number of patrons to events at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub	43,658	Increase	54,419	✓ ✓

Emergency Management

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	93%	✓
Condition of emergency management assets (Dec 2014: Good 33%, Fair 43%, Poor 24%)	Not available	Maintain	Good 39% Fair 39% Poor 23%	✓ ✓
Completion of program maintenance schedules for emergency management building assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓

Environmental Health and Regulatory Compliance

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Percentage of customer service requests related to environmental health matters actioned within target	85%	85% completed	82%	✓
Community satisfaction with clean, safe and healthy living environments	3.86	Maintain	3.83	✓

Family Day Care

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Number of equivalent child care hours utilised	100	Maintain	89	○

Libraries and Information

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	57% < 5 years 86% < 10 years	✓ ✓
Completion of program maintenance schedules for library building assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓

Sport and Recreation

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 32% Fair 49% Poor 19%	✓ ✓
Completion of program maintenance schedules for sport and recreation assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓



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

LIVE – Highlights

Progressed Western Parkland City Liveability Program

In May 2019, Council signed a deal with the NSW and Australian governments to secure an additional \$15 million in funding through the Western Parkland City Liveability Program. This is one of the key commitments under the Western Sydney City Deal.

Ten different projects will be funded through this program, including:

- improvements to parks in Glenbrook, Springwood, Wentworth Falls and Blackheath
- improvements to recreation and natural area facilities on the Scenic Eastern Escarpment
- bushland restoration work and recreation area at the former Lawson Golf Course
- inclusive program pool with water play features at Katoomba Aquatic Centre
- town centre rejuvenation works at Springwood and Blackheath
- redevelopment of the cultural and library facility at Springwood.

These projects are all scheduled for completion by 2022. Council will seek feedback from the community progressively as each project goes through the detailed design stage. For further information, refer to Section 2: Major Projects.

Developed 20-year vision for land use

Council has made significant progress on the development of a 20-year planning vision for land use in the Blue Mountains. The Local Strategic Planning Statement will be used to guide future decisions on land use planning, and will serve as a bridge between Council's LEP 2015, the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan, and the NSW Government planning framework for Western Sydney.

The statement will set priorities for land use, including housing, employment, education, culture and tourism, as well as identify actions to address the challenges facing the Blue Mountains over the next 20 years. It will also summarise the unique values and characteristics of the Blue Mountains, which are unlike any other local government area in NSW.

During 2018-2019, Council undertook substantial consultation with the community to inform the development of the planning statement. Following adoption of an engagement strategy in September 2018, Council began Stage 1 consultation, using an interactive online mapping tool to capture comments from residents. Stage 2 involved three community workshops, held at Lawson, Springwood and Katoomba in March 2019, as well as productivity workshops with business and industry representatives, and business surveys in eight town centres.

Council will seek further feedback from community in 2019-2020 when the draft planning statement is placed on public exhibition.



Liveability Program Funding Announcement



Western Sydney City Deal Mayor Leadership Group - August 2018

Drafted Local Housing Strategy

Council has completed a housing survey in the Blue Mountains to inform the Draft Local Housing Strategy. A statistically-valid survey was conducted in May 2019. Questions were designed to better understand community views on housing supply, affordability, choice and character, so that we can plan for future housing needs. A series of five focus group sessions were also held in February and March 2019 at Blaxland, Lawson, Springwood and Katoomba.

The draft Local Housing Strategy will be presented to the Council in 2019-2020, and will help Council advocate to other levels of government on housing issues.

Managed land use and building certification

During 2018-2019, Council determined 691 development applications and 177 modifications, processed 384 applications requesting a construction or complying development certificate, and completed 1,747 building code compliance inspections.

Council actively worked with the NSW Government to give feedback on ePlanning initiatives. In December 2018, Council was advised that the Blue Mountains would be included in the first stage rollout of the ePlanning portal. Business processes were realigned to improve the user experience and ensure

consistency with NSW Government directions. Online payment options were expanded and a 'going green' campaign commenced to encourage clients to lodge applications digitally. By the end of the year, 46% of development applications were lodged online, with 100% receiving an electronic determination.

Reviewed management of Crown lands

Council has commenced a Crown lands review that will run until June 2021. This has been prompted by changes to the legislation governing Crown lands that came into effect on 1 July 2018.

There will be no change to the current use of land in the Blue Mountains, but the legislation seeks to improve the governance and management of Crown land across NSW. Among other things, it authorises councils that are appointed to manage dedicated or reserved Crown land, to plan for it as if it were public land under the *Local Government Act 1993*. There is a significant volume of work for all NSW councils associated with implementing this change.

Stage 1 of this review is now complete. In May 2019, the Council endorsed the Schedule of Crown lands to be managed by Council, including their proposed classification and one initial categorisation.



Consultation for the Local Strategic Planning Statement



Completed local character statement for the Blue Mountains

Council has prepared a draft Blue Mountains Local Character Study and Local Character Statement to support the Local Strategic Planning Statement. This study investigates and summarises the overall character values of our LGA, based on past work done by the Council and through decades of community input. It articulates what character elements and themes are important to the community and how these contribute to the Blue Mountains identity. By understanding the features valued by residents, Council can plan for the preservation of character in our towns and villages, while addressing changing community needs.

Targeted homelessness

Council partnered with Wentworth Community Housing and other supporters of the *Heading Home – Ending Homelessness Here* project to present a Garden Flat Expo in Springwood on 10 November 2018. This event was a collaboration between 16 community organisations, businesses and individuals who are working towards ending homelessness in the Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Penrith local government areas.

Heading Home – Ending Homelessness Here is looking at a variety of innovative solutions that can help generate new low-cost housing. The garden flat expo was designed to make it easier for home owners who are looking for an affordable product they could build in their backyard and then rent out. Incentives were also offered to those willing to build a garden flat and make it available to someone facing homelessness.

Planned redevelopment of Lawson Crown lands

Council adopted the Lawson Crown Lands Masterplan on 25 June 2019. The masterplan was developed with extensive consultation and informed by a range of community views and needs. It is a significant parcel of land – formally the Lawson golf course – and well-located for a range of uses.

Stage One of the adopted masterplan is funded under the Western Parkland City Liveability Program and will be completed by 2022. It includes the construction of accessible pathways, a fenced dog off leash area, seating and associated landscaping and bushland restoration works. The focus of Stage Two is on active recreation and is subject to further investigation of community needs and potential environmental impacts.

Adopted Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan

In August 2018, the Council adopted the Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan. This followed a detailed planning and community engagement process that commenced in 2016 and extended across a number of stages into early 2019.

Planning for Blaxland was prioritised due to the town's ability to accommodate a greater range of housing diversity, its proximity to public transport, potential as an accessible centre and its need for revitalisation. The plan focuses on the core retail and commercial centre, and looks at ways to renew the town centre and guide future planning over the next 15-20 years.

Additional work is scheduled for 2019-2020 to further consult with the community on the way forward, including any potential changes to the building controls to implement the masterplan.

Commenced review to inform Heritage Strategy

In May 2019, an independent process to review the way Council engages with the broader community on heritage matters was commenced. The review was carried out in close consultation with Council's Heritage Advisory Committee and will inform the review of Council's Heritage Strategy, which is programmed to be completed within the 2019-2020 year.



Blaxland town centre

LIVE – Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within $\pm 10\%$)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Note: for condition measures, one tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in poor condition is the same or less, and a second tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in good condition is the same or greater.

Building Certification

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Percentage of market share for competitive components of building certification service	62%	60%	55%	✓

Burials and Ashes Placement

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 29% Fair 59% Poor 12%	✓ ✓

Land Use Management

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	98 days	○

City Presentation

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 36% Fair 52% Poor 13%	○
Completion of program maintenance schedules for town and village centre assets	Not available	85% completed	95%	✓ ✓



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

MOVE – Highlights

Repaired and upgraded the City's roads

Council's road reseal program continued during 2018-2019, generating improvements in both accessibility and amenity. Approximately 70,000 m² of new asphalt surface was laid, or about 11 km of road length. This equates to a renewal ratio of 1.5%. Reseal works were completed in Glenbrook, Blaxland, Valley Heights, Springwood, Winmalee, Woodford, Hazelbrook, Lawson, Leura, Katoomba and Mt Victoria.

Planned pedestrian and cycling infrastructure

During July and August 2018, Council reviewed its active transport planning framework to guide the development and improvement of the City's footpath and shared path network, and help us prioritise work in the future.

We sought feedback from the community on where footpaths, shared paths, bike routes and accessibility can be improved to support and promote walking and cycling as a choice of transport. The review will also ensure the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) and the Blue Mountains Bike Plan remain relevant and reflect community needs and priorities.

Secured Smart Cities grant funding

Council was successful in securing a share of \$700,000 in Australian Government funding for a Western Sydney sensor network. The project will install a sensor network in eight Western Sydney council areas to collect, analyse and share data.

In the Blue Mountains, the focus will be on collecting information on pedestrian movements in Katoomba town centre, to inform future master planning.

Developed parking precinct plans

Paid parking was identified in the Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan as a priority revenue stream to shift the burden for the maintenance and investment of tourism infrastructure away from ratepayers. To achieve this, Council has developed Parking Precinct Plans for the following high priority tourist sites within the Blue Mountains:

- Echo Point
- Wentworth Falls Lookout
- Conservation Hut, Wentworth Falls
- Blackheath town centre.

The draft plans, and an associated parking permit policy, were placed on public exhibition throughout March and April 2019. Following community



Bike Week 2018

consultation, the plans were finalised for adoption by the Council early in 2019-2020.

Supported road safety initiatives

In 2018-2019, Council continued its proud support of national road safety campaigns such as National Road Safety Week and *Slow Down in My Street*. We asked the community to share responsibility on the road, slow down, and drive so others survive.

Council also offered a range of driver safety programs throughout the year. These included workshops aimed at seniors and workshops aimed at learner drivers and their supervisors, as well as child restraint checking days.

Planned extension of Great Blue Mountains Trail

The Great Blue Mountains Trail is a multi-stage project that connects towns in the Blue Mountains with an off-highway route for cyclists and walkers. Construction continued on the extension of the trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria, and a tender was accepted for the shared path between Leura Cascades and Kiah Lookout.

In the lower mountains, construction of a new cycleway between Woodford and Linden was completed, and design work progressed on the off-road shared path between Emu Plains and Glenbrook. For more information, refer to Section 2: Major Projects.

Continued the sealing of unsealed roads

The sealing of unsealed roads program was delivered, with four locations in Wentworth Falls, Leura and Megalong Valley completed during the year, comprising a total length of 1.5 km. These works will further reduce Council's maintenance grading requirements, leading to cost savings that can be redirected to other priority maintenance activities.

Offered bike skills sessions for kids

As part of NSW Bike Week, Council offered two free bike skills workshops on Saturday 22 September at Blackheath Public School. The workshops were for children 12 years and under who were already able to ride unassisted. They provided an opportunity for children to improve their riding confidence and bike handling skills through a series of fun bike games under the guidance of qualified trainers.



New footpath, Blackheath



New footpath, Faulconbridge

These events were highly successful and a great collaboration with Blackheath Public School and the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre. Parents provided feedback noting how much their children enjoyed the day and improved their bike riding confidence.

Upgraded bus stops to improve accessibility

A total of 24 bus stops along Hawkesbury Road were upgraded during 2018-2019, to improve accessibility to public transport options for people living with a disability, particularly a mobility or visual impairment, and for our ageing population. The upgrade also increased our compliance with the Disability Standard for Accessible Public Transport, and involved improvements to the actual bus stops as well as access to them.

Priority was given to bus stops identified in Council's Active Transport Review. This upgrade project is part of Council's broader program of work to upgrade the existing public transport infrastructure.

Completed review of traffic conditions in Lapstone

Council completed a review of traffic conditions in Lapstone's busy sports precinct that identified a number of improvements to address traffic flow, parking arrangements and traffic congestion in the area. While some improvements can be made in the short term, the majority of the recommendations require further design, community consultation, and referral to Council's Local Traffic Committee.

The review monitored traffic conditions on six key sections of road during the peak winter sports season. The review considered crash data, bus routes, school zones, resident observations, existing signage and parking arrangements, and a series of inspections at various days and times of the week.

Among other things, the review made recommendations on improving signage and line markings, formalising parking arrangements, considering parking restrictions and installing a 'kiss and ride' zone.



Senior Drivers Workshop 2019

MOVE – Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within $\pm 10\%$)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Note: for condition measures, one tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in poor condition is the same or less, and a second tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in good condition is the same or greater.

Transport and Public Access

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 67% Fair 30% Poor 3%	✓ ✓
Percentage of bus stops compliant with Disability Discrimination Act standards	10%	Increase	11%	✓ ✓
Inspection and maintenance of Council's transport infrastructure assets including footpaths, resealing, potholes, grading and shoulders	79%	85% completed	85%	✓ ✓



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*

THRIVE – Highlights

Opened new Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre

The new Blue Mountains Visitor Information Centre at Glenbrook was officially opened by the Mayor, Mark Greenhill OAM, and Senator for Western Sydney, the Hon Marise Payne, on 30 November 2018. The project has delivered a modern facility at the gateway to the Blue Mountains to meet the needs of our growing tourism sector – a key contributor to the regional economy. It was made possible with almost \$700,000 in funding from the Australian Government, which was matched with equal funding from Council.

It is estimated that more than 4.7 million people visited the Blue Mountains in 2018. The Visitor Information Centres at Glenbrook and Echo Point,

both accredited information centres, have specially-trained staff with local knowledge who have helped many of those visitors plan their stay and make the most of their time in the Blue Mountains region.

Launched regional tourism campaign

The Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith were showcased in a new cooperative tourism marketing campaign, developed by Destination NSW in partnership with the Regional Strategic Alliance.

The 'Wake Up With' campaign ran for eight weeks during the spring travel period from September to November 2018. It featured the four experience themes of adventure, nature, food and culture, and encouraged families and active singles from the Greater Sydney area to visit the region and stay overnight. It is a good example of how the Regional



Opening of the new Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre

Strategic Alliance has worked well in the tourism domain, working collaboratively to showcase all three local government areas.

'Wake Up With' was made possible by matched funding from Destination NSW, through the Regional Cooperative Tourism Marketing Program.

Strengthened relationships with local business

A new Mayoral Reference Group for Business held its first meeting in March 2019, with representatives from eight local Chambers of Commerce attending. The group was established in an advisory capacity to improve communications between Council and the Chambers, and to promote dialogue on matters of mutual interest. The Mayoral Reference Group for Business also draws expertise from across Council in responding to Chamber concerns.

The reference group seeks to strengthen and grow Council's relationship with Blue Mountains businesses and complement the work delivered by the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise. It will also enhance Council's previous commitment to the Office of Small Business Commissioner in being a Small Business Friendly Council.

Trained taxi drivers as tourism advocates

An innovative new pilot program has supported local taxi drivers to be trained as tourism advocates. Eleven taxi drivers attended Destination Ambassador training on 26 October 2018, following the successful trial of the program over the previous Christmas and New Year period. This is the first time the program has been applied to and tailor made for the local taxi industry.

This initiative provided an excellent opportunity for collaboration and engagement between Council, TAFE and a local taxi provider. The outcome will diversify the range of services available to visitors, and will also enable local taxi drivers with a passion for the destination to increase their services for visitors.

Secured funding for visitor facilities in Blackheath

Council was successful in securing \$1,565,745 of grant funding under the Building Better Regions Fund for the revitalisation of visitor infrastructure in Blackheath.



Small business workshop - search engine optimisation basics

This funding will support the following three projects:

- upgrades to public domain infrastructure in the town centre to support the anticipated increase in visitors through the provision of additional parking and public toilets, improved footpaths, traffic management and visual amenity
- completion of the Great Blue Mountains Trail between Blackheath and Mt Victoria
- upgrades to visitor facilities at Mt Blackheath, Hargraves Lookout and Popes Glen.

Together, these projects will provide significant contributions to the tourism and recreational facilities available within the area.

Streamlined processes for small business

In February 2019, we launched the *Easy to do Business* program, in partnership with Service NSW, to make it easier for local businesses to start and grow. Through one online portal, those looking to open up or expand a café, restaurant or small bar, can receive step-by-step guidance and support across local, state and federal government requirements. *Easy to do Business* is free of charge and lets applicants know upfront the time and effort involved, as well as helping to fast-track approvals.



Small business workshop - low cost online marketing

At the Small Business Friendly Councils Conference in May 2019, Council was commended for its commitment to the *Easy to do Business* program and our leadership in embracing the Small Business Friendly Councils initiative.

Supported community events

In the 2018-2019 year, there were 83 community events held on public land within the Blue Mountains. Council continues to work with event organisers to deliver events that enrich our community, boost our local economy and deliver safe events for our community and visitors. In June, Council delivered risk management training and templates for local event organisers through a series of three workshops, attended by 22 local organisations. Council also coordinated the development of a five-year event strategy and management plans for the Winter Magic Festival, in consultation with the Winter Magic Festival Committee. The objective was to provide a clear blueprint for ensuring a safe, successful and sustainable Winter Magic Festival for 2020 and into the future. Other community festivals and events in the Blue Mountains will benefit from this work as it will assist them to build capacity in managing events.

Revised Visitor Infrastructure Investment Plan

In March 2019, Council adopted a revised implementation plan for the Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan (VIISP). The Council also

endorsed the formation of a Visitor Infrastructure Fund to manage revenue generated by the plan, for reinvestment in visitor infrastructure, visitor services and city presentation.

A large amount of work has progressed on the implementation of the VIISP. Introducing paid parking in areas with high visitation was identified as a priority action in the plan, and to support this we have developed draft Parking Precinct Plans for key towns, villages and priority tourist sites. Council has also reviewed the existing nature-based licensing scheme and developed new camping guidelines.

Delivered workshops for small business

Council has been proactive in delivering a wide range of workshops to support small business, with an increased offering of sessions available during the year.

In 2018-2019, we hosted workshops on:

- Building your digital footprint
- Tax basics for small business
- Low cost online marketing
- Business planning
- Search engine optimisation basics.

These interactive sessions have been well received by the business community and a similar program will be offered again in 2019-2020.

Supported the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise

Council has been providing operational funding to the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE) since 2012, to stimulate economic development through advocacy, investment and industry development. This amounts to approximately \$400,000 in funding annually.

In September 2018, BMEE successfully held its 4th annual Australian Bushfire Building Conference and Community Forum. The two-day conference, aimed at building, planning and associated professionals living and working in Australia's bushfire-prone areas, built on the success of award-winning previous events and attracted 240 delegates from around Australia. Meanwhile, the Bushfire Building Forum and Expo provided important bushfire-related information to the public.

Received excellence awards for tourist parks

The Council-owned tourist parks at Katoomba and Blackheath were both awarded the highly sought-after Certificates of Excellence from TripAdvisor for the third consecutive year. These certificates are awarded to businesses that consistently achieve great customer reviews.

Katoomba Falls Tourist Park is located only a short walk from stunning bushwalks and iconic landmarks such as Echo Point and the Three Sisters. Blackheath Glen Tourist Park is popular with bushwalkers and families who love its secluded bush setting beside the wildlife haven of Pope's Glen.

Endorsed Blue Mountains Economic Statement

The Blue Mountains Economic Statement 2019-2021 was endorsed by the Council at their meeting in May 2019. It provides a summary of Council's current actions and strategic direction for economic growth in the City, and is underpinned by a vision in which, by 2035, our local economy is stronger and more sustainable.

The Economic Statement outlines Council's support for sustainable businesses, given our unique position within a World Heritage National Park. It also seeks to achieve economic outcomes that simultaneously achieve good social outcomes. The statement will be used as a tool for further consultation in the development of the broader Economic Strategic Plan.

Completed visitor economy, retail and employment studies

Council completed a suite of studies to support the development of our Local Strategic Planning Statement. These included a Visitor Economy Study, Retail Study and Employment Study. These studies will also inform the development of the Economic Strategic Plan.

The Visitor Study responds to concerns within the community that ratepayers are funding investment in tourism infrastructure, whilst being adversely impacted by the congestion it brings. It proposes three strategic priorities relating to the diversification of tourism experiences.

The Retail Study reviewed the retail floor space available in Blue Mountains towns and villages and concluded recommended that high quality main street retail should remain an integral part of the character and experience of the Blue Mountains, while the Employment Study focused on Katoomba as the major employment hub in the Blue Mountains.



Blue Mountains applauded for small business support

THRIVE – Performance Measure Results

Target achieved	Target almost achieved (within $\pm 10\%$)	Target not achieved	Data not available
✓ ✓	✓	○	—

Note: for condition measures, one tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in poor condition is the same or less, and a second tick is achieved if the proportion of assets in good condition is the same or greater.

Economic Development and Tourism

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 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	Good 70% Fair 16% Poor 15%	✓
Completion of program maintenance schedules for tourism assets	Not available	85% completed	100%	✓ ✓

Commercial Activities

Measure	2016-2017 Baseline	Target	2018-2019 Result	Status
Profit and loss statements for commercial activities	Not available	Net revenue result	\$527,578	✓ ✓



Film *by the*
Eucalypts





6

Financial Reporting

Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability

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 in 2018-2019 and for the last 10 years.

Independent external auditors conduct an annual audit of the finances and have confirmed the Council's healthy financial position and viability for the period 2018-2019.

The Council maintains an annual target for working capital of \$1.7-\$1.9 million (which meets sector standards) to manage financial shocks and day-to-day activities and has \$30.6 million in cash and investments in reserve. During 2018-2019, working capital has been replenished and surplus cash has rebuilt reserves.

Over 2018-2019, the Council maintained its financial position through implementing its adopted Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability. Simultaneously implementing each of the six strategies is critical to building a sustainable and successful future for our City.

SIX STRATEGIES FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Strategy 1 – Avoid Shocks

In 2018-2019, 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 during 2018-2019 the continued unexpected expenditure for 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 and allocated funds into reserves to provide for unforeseen financial impacts.

Strategy 2 – Balance the Budget

The Council has taken action to ensure it achieves a balanced or surplus cash budget each year. In 2018-2019 the Council ended the financial year with a Working Capital Result of \$2.6 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 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 2018-2019, the Council had a deficit Operating Performance Result of \$3.76 million. Although the original budget was for a small surplus, given the unforeseen challenges of 2018-2019, this is still a positive outcome compared to the deficits of prior years.

Strategy 3 – Manage Borrowings and Investments Responsibly

Implementation of this strategy in 2018-2019 has resulted in the Council's borrowing position as at 30 June 2019 reducing to \$28.5 million, 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
- 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 overleaf. This is reflected in a significant reduction in annual borrowing costs.

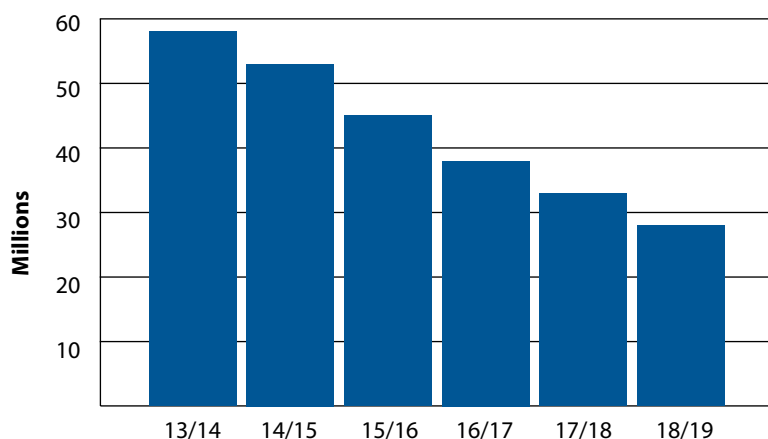
As at 30 June 2019, Council had a total of \$30.6 million invested, the majority of these investments are restricted for specific purposes to fund known expenditure and cover identified risks.

Under Council's Investment Policy, preference is given to investing with environmentally and socially responsible institutions, where:

- the investment is compliant with legislation and the Policy
- 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 \$5 million or 16.5% of the portfolio invested in environmentally and socially responsible institutions.

Borrowings



Strategy 4 – Increase Income

This strategy ensures the Council maximises income, where appropriate to do so. Over the past seven years, the Council obtained over \$141.5 million in grant and contributions funding for the community including the Australian Government Financial Assistance Grants.

In 2018-2019, the Council made a number of successful grant applications resulting in \$21.7 million in grant and contributions income. This income comprised of \$15.2 million in operating income and \$6.5 million in capital income from the NSW and Australian Governments and other agencies. \$4.38 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 2018-2019, \$10.7 million Special Rate Variation funds were spent.

In 2018-2019, 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 commercial property portfolio.

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, adjustments and improvements completed during 2018-2019, include:

- appointment of a Strategic Procurement Advisor to ensure sustainable procurement practices across services
- Leisure Centre customer satisfaction review undertaken
- review of Waste & Resource Recovery services contracts
- implementation of containerisation of the collection of wood for recycling at Blaxland Waste Management Facility
- incorporation of low floor entry to the community access bus.

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.

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

- established a Quality of Life Mayoral Reference Group
- aligned with local councils against the raising of Warragamba Dam
- continued advocacy against Western Sydney Airport
- regional Strategic Alliance - joint grant application for regional food waste reduction initiative
- participation and advocacy for health planning and promotion as part of the City Deal Regional Health Alliance
- partnering with National Parks on Southern Scenic Escarpment master planning and Grand Cliff Top Walk
- partnering with Department of Industry and Crown Lands on Six Foot Track multi tenure management
- worked with the Office of Emergency Management on a pilot project developing a local recovery plan
- participated in Cities Power Partnership
- collaborated with seven Western Sydney local governments to provide input on the Western Sydney City Deal.

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 \$2.6 million as at 30 June 2019. 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.

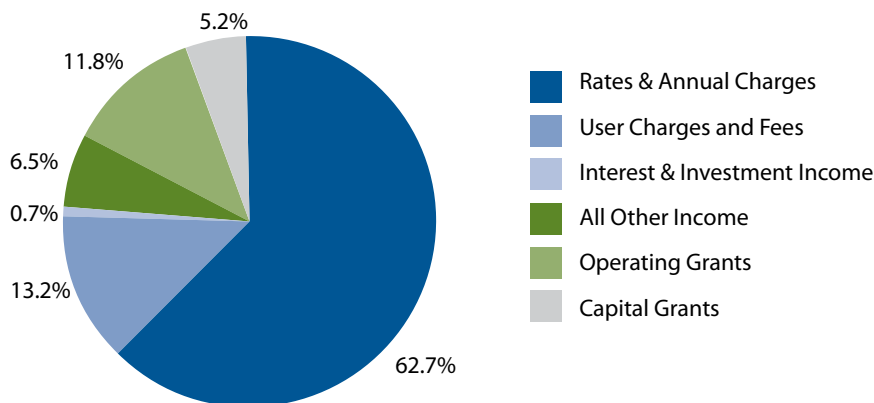
Summary of the Financial Statements	2019 \$'000	2018 \$'000
Income Statement		
Total Income from Continuing Operations	127,884	118,535
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	125,103	120,295
NET OPERATING RESULT FOR THE YEAR	2,781	(1,760)
NET OPERATING RESULT BEFORE GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDED FOR CAPITAL PURPOSES	(3,764)	(4,742)
Statement of Financial Position		
Total Current Assets	38,400	36,237
Total Current Liabilities	26,148	27,306
Total Non-Current Assets	1,005,198	999,168
Total Non-Current Liabilities	27,968	32,205
TOTAL EQUITY	975,436	975,894
Other Financial Information		
Operating Performance Ratio	-4.81%	-4.37%
Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio	82.07%	83.52%
Unrestricted Current Ratio	1.69 x	1.57 x
Debt Service Cover Ratio	2.25 x	1.70 x
Rates & Annual Charges Outstanding Ratio	4.83%	3.73%
Cash Expense Cover Ratio	3.13 mths	3.37 mths

How we financed our service delivery in 2018-2019

In 2018-2019, the Council received income of \$127.9 million:

- 62.7% (\$80.2 million) of the total came from rates and annual charges
- 17% or \$21.7 million came from operational and capital grants from other levels of government supporting provision of required services and facilities
- 13.2% or \$16.8 million of total income was from user charges and fees.

2018-2019 Total Income \$127.9 Million

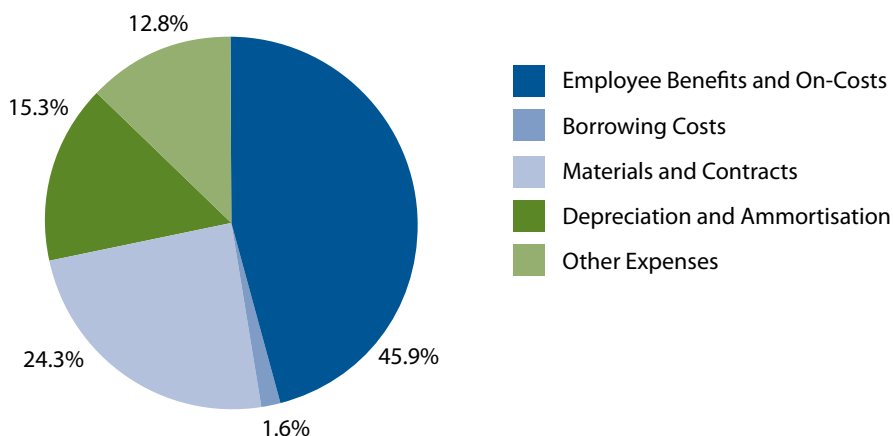


How we spent our money in 2018-2019

In 2018-2019, the Council spent \$125.1 million including:

- 45.9% or \$57.4 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 37.2% or \$46.5 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
- 15.3% or \$19.1 million of costs relate to depreciation of assets, which allocates an asset's usage over its useful life.

2018-2019 Total Operating Expenses \$125.1 Million



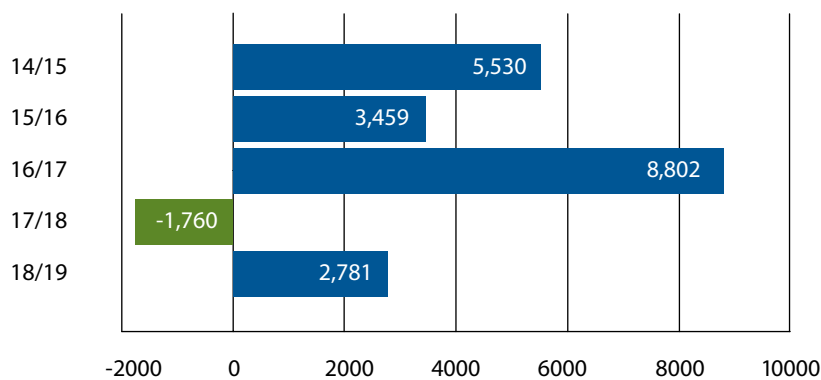


Net Operating Result including depreciation and including capital grants and contributions

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 2018-2019, the Council's net operating result was a surplus (including depreciation and capital grants and contributions) of \$2.8 million, meaning the Council's income for the year was greater than its expenditure.

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.

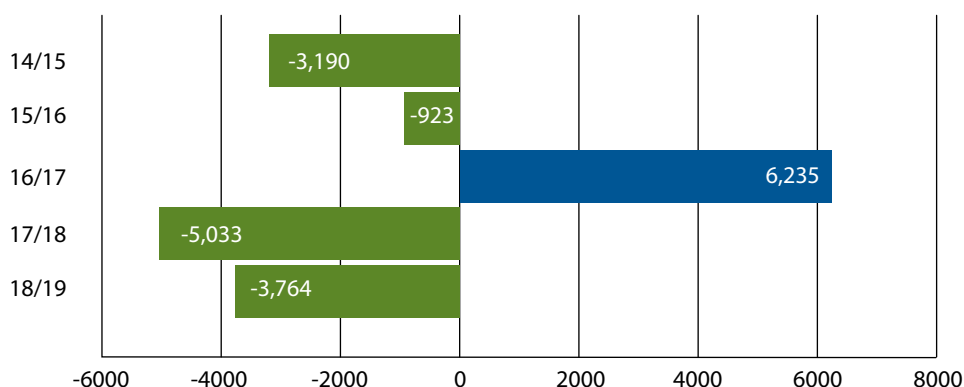
The key rationale behind this measure is that a Council has to have sustainable income sources to match its ongoing expenditure requirements (including asset life cycle costs). Income from capital grants and contributions, which is variable each year and used for one-off capital projects, is excluded.

The Council's Operating Result was a deficit of \$3.8 million. This is a slight improvement from 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.

One such event has been the unexpected expenditure on asbestos remediation and investigations, which has impacted the Operating Result in both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. These additional costs have largely been funded from reserves, to lessen the impact on service delivery to the community.

The Council has set a target of achieving a surplus Operating Result in 2019-2020 and going forward to be Fit for the Future. The Council can only be sustainable if operating revenues cover operating costs (including depreciation).

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



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

In 2018-2019, the Council continued its priority focus on reversing the decline in the City's built assets.

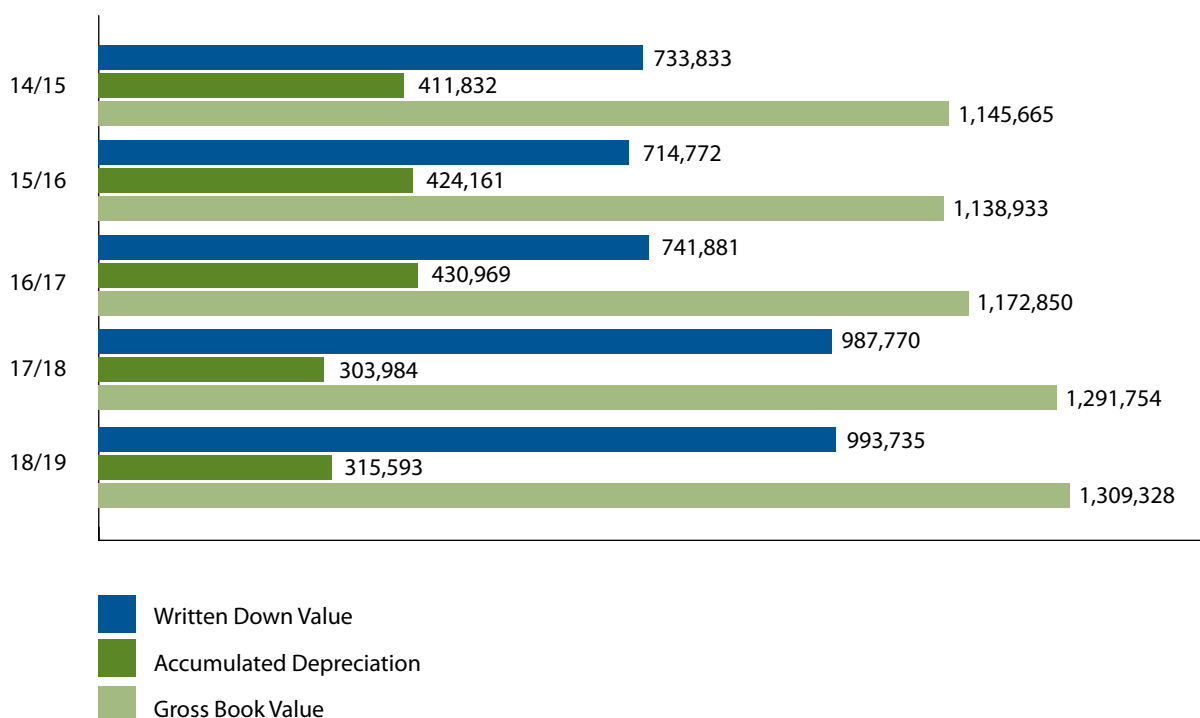
Council owns and maintains over \$1.3 billion worth of infrastructure assets including roads, parks, buildings, stormwater drainage, bridges, footpaths, lighting, walking trails and lookouts. Much of the City's infrastructure was built many decades ago, often with funding from other levels of government, 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 \$316 million or 24% of its useful life as of 30 June 2019, to a written down value of \$993.7 million. Deteriorating infrastructure is a major issue for all NSW councils, with a report released in January 2019 by the NRMA highlighting a \$2.23 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.

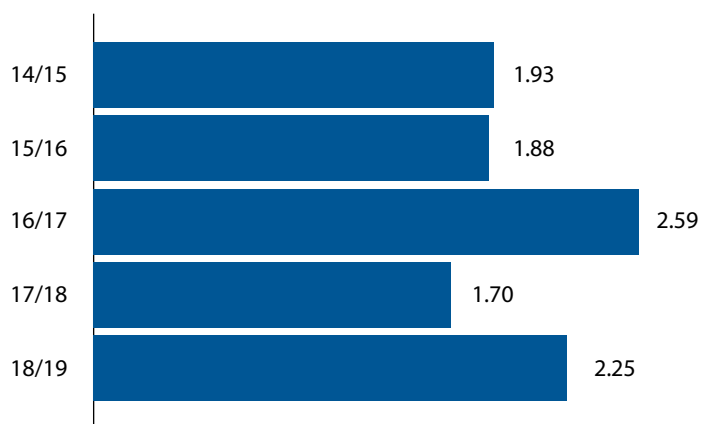
Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment - (\$'000) - Value



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 2018-2019, the Council's Debt Service Ratio Cover was 2.25%. The Council is committed to managing borrowings responsibly, which is one of our strategies to improve financial sustainability.

Debt Service Cover Ratio (%)



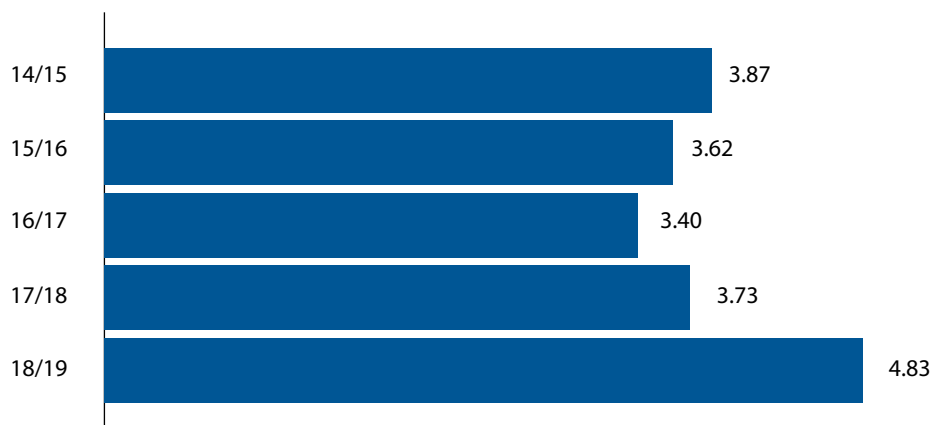
Rates and annual charges outstanding

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 recovery rate for 2018-2019 has deteriorated slightly, with 4.83% outstanding rates and annual charges as at 30 June 2019. This result still compares favourably with the sector 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.

Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding (%)



Fit for the Future

In response to the NSW Government's Fit for the Future (FFTF) requirements, the Council has an action plan for achieving financial sustainability, effective management of infrastructure and efficient best-value service delivery into the future. Key improvement strategies include:

- implementing the Council's Asset Management Improvement Program
- continuing to implement the Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability.

Further details on our progress against the FFTF action plan can be found in the appendix.

Indicator	Benchmark	Result 18-19	FFF Submission 19-20 (1)	Resource Strategy 19-20 (2)
Operating Performance Ratio This ratio measures whether the Council has sufficient sustainable income to meet its ongoing expenditure requirements	Greater than or equal to breakeven average over 3 years	-4.8%	0.5%	0.01%
Own Source Revenue This ratio measures the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions	Greater than 60% average over 3 years	82.1% Meets	87.8%	87.8%
Infrastructure Renewal Ratio This ratio is used to assess the rate at which infrastructure assets are being renewed against the rate at which they are depreciating	Greater than 100% average over 3 years	39.3%	76.9%	76.9%
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio This ratio measures the estimated cost to bring infrastructure assets to a satisfactory condition, as a percentage of the total value of infrastructure assets	Less than 2%	1.8% Meets	2.7%	2.0%
Asset Maintenance Ratio This ratio reflects the actual asset maintenance expenditure relative to the required asset maintenance	Greater than 100% average over 3 years	99.0% Improving	96.9%	96.9%
Debt Service Ratio This ratio is the percentage of the Council's total revenue used to service debt	Greater than 0% and less than or equal to 20% average over 3 years	5.7% Meets	6.2%	6.2%
Real Operating Expenditure This ratio indicates how well the Council is utilising economies of scale and managing service levels to achieve efficiencies	A decrease in Real Operating Expenditure per capita over time	1.6	Decreasing	0.9

(1) This is the predicted result for 2019-2020, as included in Council's June 2015 Fit for the Future submission.

(2) This is the predicted result for 2019-2020, as included in Council's Resource Strategy adopted in June 2017.



A large, stylized white letter 'A' is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page. The background is a lush garden scene featuring a dense row of flowering azaleas in various shades of pink, magenta, and red, cascading down a stone retaining wall. Above the flowers, the branches of cherry trees with green leaves and some white blossoms are visible. The overall scene is vibrant and colorful, typical of a spring garden.

A

Appendices

STATUTORY INFORMATION

Rates and Charges Written Off	133
Overseas Visits	133
Mayoral and Councillor Fees and Expenses	133
Contract Information	135
Legal Proceedings	136
Financial Assistance to Community	138
External Bodies Exercising Council Functions	141
Companies in which Council held a Controlling Interest	141
Partnerships, Corporations and Joint Ventures involving Council	141
Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan	141
Remuneration of Senior Staff	142
Works on Private Land	142
Environmental Upgrade Agreements	142
Planning Agreements	142
Capital Works Projects	143
Companion Animals Management	147
Government Information (Public Access) Requests	151
Public Interest Disclosures	155
Swimming Pool Inspections	156
Disability Inclusion Action Plan	156
Fit for the Future Action Plan	156
Special Rate Variation	161

Rates and Charges Written Off

The following abandonments occurred during the 2018-2019 rating period.

Pensioner Concession Rebates	\$1,591,659.22
Postponed Rate Abandonments	\$60,640.45
Legal Fees & Extra Charges Written Off	\$31,216.87
Small Balance Write Offs	\$2,875.43
TOTAL ABANDONMENTS	\$1,686,391.97

Overseas Visits

There were no overseas trips undertaken by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing the Council for the year ending 30 June 2019.

Mayoral and Councillor Fees and Expenses

Mayoral and Councillor fees for the year 2018-2019 were determined by the Council at the 29 May 2018 Council Meeting as follows:

Annual fee for Councillors

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1993*, the maximum amount payable to a Councillor per annum was \$18,820 (excluding Mayoral fees).

Annual fee for the Mayor

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Council determined the Mayoral allowance would be \$41,090, with \$4,109 of this set aside for the Deputy Mayor when acting in the Office of the Mayor. The total Mayoral fee was therefore \$59,911.

Payment of expenses and provision of facilities to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors

The Council has a policy for the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors as per the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Councillor Facilities and Expenses Policy was placed on public exhibition prior to being endorsed by the Council on 19 September 2017 (Minute 302) and is available 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 Expense	2018-2019 Expenditure
Mayoral fees	\$37,666
Councillor fees and allowances	\$229,269
Councillor travel expenses	\$8,340
Councillor sundries	-
Councillor training & conferences	\$22,749
Out-of-pocket expenses	\$1,913
Telephone	\$8,289
Printing and stationery	\$55
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	\$48,262
Interstate visits by Councillors (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	-



Contract Information

The following table details contracts awarded in 2018-2019 for amounts greater than \$150,000.

Council Meeting	Minute No.	Contractor	Description	Amount (ex GST)
25 Jun 2019	191	Mulligan's Geotechnical	Cliff-based rock stabilisation works: The removal of a rock overhang above the Minnehaha walking track, construction of buttress supports and the removal of material from walking track	\$195,613
16 Oct 2018	386	Maxwood Technology Australia Pty Ltd	Supply and Installation of Replacement Theatre Seating at Springwood Hub	\$198,588
19 Oct 2018	389	Christo Aitken & Associates	The provision of Council's Heritage Advisory Service including both the Strategic Planning and Statutory Planning roles	Up to \$250,000 for a three year period
11 Dec 2018	462	The Almar Group Pty Ltd T/as API Commercial	Construction of Shared Path Woodford to Linden	\$177,005
26 Feb 2019	54	Planet Civil Pty Ltd	Pedestrian Infrastructure Construction and Renewal Works across Blue Mountains LGA	\$588,817
26 Mar 2019	91	Antoun Civil Engineering (Aust) Pty Ltd	Design and Construction of Great Blue Mountains Trail from Leura Cascades to Kiah Lookout	\$426,490
28 May 2019	156	Ingrid Donald Architect Pty Ltd	Design Consultancy Services for the Upgrade of Springwood District Library	\$229,570
28 May 2019	160	KUE-S-Services	Provision of Quantity Surveying Services for the Liveability Program Projects across various locations within Blue Mountains LGA	\$150,360
28 May 2019	161	Jones Nicholson Pty Ltd	Civil Design Consultancy Services for an Upgrade to the Springwood and Blackheath Town Centre Precincts	\$480,014
25 Jun 2019	195	Knights and McAuley Pty Ltd	Landscape Architecture Services – Detailed Design for an upgrade to Lawson Crown Lands	\$153,085
25 Jun 2019	201	Amrod Pty Ltd	New and Renewal of Traffic Safety Guard Rails within Blue Mountains LGA	\$264,332

Legal Proceedings

During 2018-2019 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 2019	2018-2019 Expenditure (ex GST)	Result
Land and Environment Court			
Appeal against deferred commencement partial development consent	Ongoing	\$25,404.90	Appeal upheld through s34 conference
Interlocutory proceedings against suspension of the Council	Concluded	\$37,671.50	Injunction granted and matter withdrawn by Council in previous financial year. Council agreed to pay Minister's costs of \$20,000, which is included in the expenditure shown.
Appeal against the refusal of development application	Concluded	\$11,436.26	Appeal upheld through s34 conference
Appeal against deemed refusal of modification to development application	Concluded	\$15,322.32	Appeal upheld through s34 conference
Appeal against refusal of development application	Concluded	\$6,651.13	Appeal upheld through s34 conference
Appeal against refusal of development application	Ongoing	\$5,894.80	
Appeal against the part refusal of development application	Ongoing	\$1,646.10	
Appeal against deemed refusal of development application	Ongoing	\$4,535.37	
Total Land and Environment Court		\$108,562.38	
Local Court			
Court elect: Penalty infringement notice – menacing dog	Concluded	\$4,379.00	Offence proven
Claim against Council in small claims division	Concluded	\$4,988.20	Claim dismissed
Court Elect: Penalty Infringement Notice - Failure to comply with clean-up notice	Concluded	\$6,410.87	Offence proven
Vegetation removal and other unauthorised work	Concluded	\$21,700.25	Prosecution successful
Proceedings commenced by SafeWork NSW	Ongoing	\$3,537.60	
Total Local Court		\$41,015.92	

Title	Status as at 30 June 2019	2018-2019 Expenditure (ex GST)	Result
NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal			
External review of Council's decision under GIPA Act	Concluded	\$1,670.40	Original GIPA decision set aside in part, affirmed in part
External review of Council's decision under GIPA Act	Ongoing	\$28,135.32	
Total NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal		\$29,805.72	
NSW Supreme Court			
Defend appeal against injunction action in L&EC Court	Concluded	\$44,263.16	Appeal successful, as reported in prior financial year
Total Supreme Court		\$44,263.16	
Industrial Relations Commission			
Confidential staff matter	Concluded	\$625.20	Settled (in prior financial year)
Confidential staff matter	Ongoing	\$21,644.22	
Total Industrial Relations Commission		\$22,269.42	
Special Court of Inquiry			
Public Inquiry into Blue Mountains City Council	Ongoing	\$133,247.10	
Total Special Court of Inquiry		\$133,247.10	
TOTAL LEGAL COST TO COUNCIL FOR ALL COURT PROCEEDINGS		\$379,163.70	
TOTAL LEGAL INCOME TO COUNCIL		\$13,111	

Financial Assistance to Community

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 2019

In 2018-2019, the Council allocated \$60,022 in funding to the Community Assistance Program 2019. An outline of community organisations that received funding under the program is provided in the table below.

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre	Creating Opportunities for Inclusion	\$1,500
Blackheath Area Men's Shed Inc.	Project: Safety & Wellbeing	\$712
Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society Inc.	Water course rectification	\$910
Blackheath Kookaburra Kindergarten	Excursion to Lithgow PCYC by bus	\$910
Mount Victoria Community Association Inc.	Connecting Mount Victoria	\$1,000
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AREA 1		\$5,032
Katoomba Leura Preschool	Nature Climbing Structure	\$910
Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre	Community Lunches	\$1,500
Blue Mountains Bridge Club Inc.	Computer Equipment	\$910
Nepean and Blue Mountains Parkinson's Support Group	Creative Dancing with Parkinson's - Pilot Program of free community classes	\$780
St Hildas Anglican Church Katoomba	KidzArts 2019 'Rescued'	\$560
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AREA 2		\$4,660
Shared Reading NSW	Feel better with a book	\$910
Central Mountains Men's Shed	Men's Shed	\$910
Hazelbrook Association Community Inc.	Hazelbrook Family Fun Day	\$910
Bullaburra & District Progress Association	Bullaburra Community Hall Modernisation	\$910
Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre	Mid Mountains News Quarterly Newsletter	\$1,500
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AREA 3		\$5,140
Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Coop	Information & Referral support	\$1,500
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AREA 4		\$1,500
Gateway Family Services	Essentials	\$1,000
Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre	Quarterly Newsletter - CHATS	\$1,500
Glenbrook Preschool Kindergarten	Family Outdoor Area	\$910
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AREA 5		\$3,410
Connect Child & Family Services	YAWN (You Ask We Nurture)	\$1,500
Springwood Seniors Dance Inc	Dancing for Seniors in the BMCC area	\$700
Orpheus Strings Music Society (Blue Mountains) Inc.	Annual Blue Mountains Young Performers Concert 2019	\$470
Friends of Everglades	Wedding Presentation Folder	\$910

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre	De-stress for spring	\$1,500
Mountains Youth Services Team	Music Mentoring CD launch event	\$1,500
bentART Incorporated	bentART 16th Annual Art Exhibition June 2020	\$800
Academy Singers Inc.	Choral Workshop	\$910
Blue Mountains City Band	The ongoing support of the Blue Mountains City RSL Band	\$5,000
Fusion Australia Ltd.	Breakfast Clubs at Blaxland, Springwood and Winmalee High Schools	\$910
CBCA (Children's Book Council of Australia) - Blue Mountains Sub Branch	Author/Illustrator workshops for children	\$910
Blue Mountains Orchestra Inc.	20th Century Giants	\$910
Kinship at Christmas Foundation	Aged Care Gift Giving Project	\$820
Iris Society of Australia	2019 60th Anniversary NSW Iris Show	\$730
Blue Mountains Pipe Band	Assistance to rent venue for practice and deliver tuition	\$910
Mountains Community Resource Network	Interagency Resourcing	\$1,500
Greystanes Disability Services	Through Our Eyes 2020	\$700
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre	A Hand Up-where can I find support?	\$1,500
Blue Mountains Junior Roller Derby League	Court hire fees for 14 hours	\$640
Blue Mountains & Penrith Woodworking Club Inc.	Various	\$550
Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre	National Conference	\$650
Katoomba Children's Cottage Inc.	Taking Sensory play outside	\$630
Blue Mountains Family Support Service Inc. T/A Thrive Services	Community Expo	\$1,000
Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre	NAIDOC Art Festival	\$1,500
Blackheath Community Op Shop Inc.	Blackheath Community Op Shop Equipment Needed	\$910
Your Music Inc.	Sensory Concerts	\$910
Blue Mountains Roller Derby League Inc.	Court hire fees for 18 hours	\$870
Mountains Outreach Community Services	Billy Booksie puppets (Paint the Blue REaD)	\$1,500
Blue Mountains Concert Band (Late Application)	Mountains Youth Band Development Masterclass	\$690
Blue Mountains Family Support Services t/a Thrive Services	Emergency Relief funds	\$2,750
Gateway Family Services	Emergency Relief funds	\$2,750
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre	Emergency Relief funds	\$2,750
TOTAL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED CITY-WIDE		\$40,280
TOTAL		\$60,022

Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program 2019

The Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program increases opportunities for the delivery of creative projects by local artists, art workers and organisations, and provides a stimulus for creativity within the City.

On 25 June 2019, the Council allocated \$52,690 to fund six projects recommended by the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Advisory Committee. These projects will be delivered in 2019-2020.

Project	Artist/Organisation	Funding
FunKtion @ The Junction: A Musical Development Youth Mentorship Program by local creative industry professionals for young Blue Mountains musicians/artists, including a curated event at Junction 142 in Katoomba.	Willem Hendriksen Auspice: Mountains Youth Services Team	\$10,000
Birdland: Artists with a background in museum and/or natural history create work in response to the bird collections of Mt Victoria Museum and the NPWS and the observation of birds in the environment culminating in exhibitions on both sites.	Miriam Williamson Auspice: Modern Arts Projects Blue Mountains	\$8,800
Re-take Blue Mountains: Re-photographing and re-imagining the images of early 20th Century Blue Mountains photographs to create new artworks and an exhibition that will focus on community and landscape, then and now, and help preserve these images.	David Brazil Auspice: Blue Mountains Creative Arts Network	\$6,590
Blue Mountains Pluriversity Arts & Cultural Pilot Program: A pilot arts and cultural program employing diverse local artists to offer young people hands-on learning and experience in a range of artistic careers, culminating in a publication and a celebratory arts event.	The Big Fix Inc	\$10,000
Sewnup: This project will produce, exhibit and seek audience engagement with artworks responding to investigations into the tension between beautiful textiles and clothing products on one hand and aspects of their product cycle on the other.	Modern Arts Projects Blue Mountains	\$9,300
Blue Mountains Writers' Festival: The inaugural Blue Mountains Writers' Festival will showcase the best of the cultural vibrancy of the Blue Mountains artistic community, and is intended to become an icon on Australia's annual literary festival circuit.	Varuna - The National Writers House	\$8,000
Total		\$52,690

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 2018-2019.

Companies in which Council held a Controlling Interest

Council had no controlling interest in any company during 2018-2019.

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 Economic Enterprise was established by 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.

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 Western Sydney City Deal was signed on 4 March 2018 and presents a fundamental opportunity to facilitate the transformation of Western Sydney. It brings together eight Western Sydney councils into a strategic alliance including the cities of Blue Mountains, Penrith, Hawkesbury, Wollondilly, Camden, Campbelltown, Liverpool and Fairfield. Over the past year, City Deal governance arrangements have commenced on a number of work programs including significant infrastructure projects, such as North South Rail, and the Liveability funding program, providing approximately \$15 million in grant funding to the City of Blue Mountains and for each of the other councils.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

During 2018-2019, Council has achieved significant progress in implementation of its EEO Management Plan.

Council has conducted a review of its human resources policies and procedures to ensure they incorporate the principles of equal employment opportunity. This includes the review of the following:

- Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Family and Domestic Violence Workplace Support Policy
- Recruitment and Employment Policy & Procedure
- Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Resolution Policy & Procedure
- Anti-Discrimination, Harassment & Workplace Bullying Policy
- Employee Assistance Program Policy
- Hours of Work Policy

These policy updates have been communicated to all staff via Council's intranet, internal newsletters and toolbox talks. Where appropriate, policies are also made available to potential employees via Council's website.

Council has reviewed its recruitment and selection training to ensure all employees who may participate as recruitment panel members understand their

responsibilities with regard to equal employment opportunity. To date, more than 100 employees have undertaken this training, and training will continue to be provided on a twice-yearly basis.

Council has reviewed its position description template to more clearly express the inherent requirements of roles, with the aim of eliminating perceptions that some groups of potential employees may not be viewed as eligible to apply.

Council has developed EEO training modules for employees and managers, and delivery of this training will commence in 2019-2020 and then be incorporated into new employee induction training from 2020.

Council has established a process whereby all grievances and employment-related complaints are managed centrally and consolidated records held. This ensures that employee concerns can be managed in accordance with Council's Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure, and that trends can be identified and addressed promptly.

Remuneration of Senior Staff

During 2018-2019, Council had six designated senior staff positions, comprising the General Manager, three Directors and two Group Managers. The total remuneration (including salary, superannuation and performance payments) expended during 2018-2019 for these senior staff positions was:

- General Manager: \$352,438
- Other Senior Staff: \$1,586,704

Works on Private Land

No works were carried out on private land. No properties were entered in 2018-2019 to carry out works, as permitted under s.67 of the *Local Government Act, 1993*, to enforce an Order.

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

There were no environmental upgrade agreements in place during 2018-2019.

Planning Agreements

There were no planning agreements in force during 2018-2019.

Capital Works Projects

During 2018-2019, 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 2018-2019. 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 2018-2019

COMMENCED

Refurbishment works

- Pitt Park building replacement – design commenced

COMPLETED

Refurbishment works

- Construction of Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre upgrade and new car parking facility
- Truck wash bay roof works at South Street Depot
- Katoomba Civic Place renewal works – lighting, flooring and toilets
- Springwood Theatre and Community Hub seating

New building works

- Construction of Rural Fire Service Station at Blaxland
- Construction of Rural Fire Service Station at Lawson

Community hall renewal projects

- Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre – upgraded security system and door locks

Transport & Public Access Infrastructure

Council maintains approximately 700km of sealed roads and 45km of unsealed roads, with 13,500 roadside signs and 30 bridges. This road network is supported by other transport infrastructure including 180km 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 2018-2019

COMMENCED

- Blackheath Town Centre – design underway
- Springwood Town Centre – design underway

Bridge barrier renewal

- Guardrail renewal completed at approaches of identified high priority railway overline bridges, including Wilson Way, Blaxland Rd and Station St, Wentworth Falls.

Active transport infrastructure

- Design and construction 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

Car parking

- Hazelbrook Village Centre carpark upgrade – masterplan implementation

Traffic studies and economic appraisals (RMS Congestion Program)

- Hawkesbury Road, Springwood
- Yeaman Bridge, Katoomba

Parking precinct plans

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

Transport studies and strategies

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

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

- Chapman Parade, Faulconbridge (new)
- Station Street, Blackheath (new)
- Bathurst Road, Katoomba (renewal)
- Waratah Street, Katoomba (renewal)
- Lurline Street to Echo Point Road, Katoomba (renewal)
- White Cross Road, Winmalee (renewal)
- Leura Mall, Leura (renewal)
- Henderson Road, Wentworth Falls (renewal)



New Woodford to Linden cycleway

COMPLETED

Active transport infrastructure

- Cycleway construction from Woodford to Linden
- Transport upgrade to improve compliance and safety
- Off Road Shared Path – Emu Plains to Glenbrook

Road asphalt resurfacing

- Lawson Rd, Springwood
- Layton Ave, Blaxland
- Green Pde, Valley Heights
- Old Bathurst Rd, Blaxland
- Churchill St, Springwood
- Churchill Pl, Springwood
- Bathurst Rd, Katoomba
- Pryor Place, Katoomba
- Railway Pde, Woodford
- Narrow Neck Rd, Katoomba
- Honour Ave, Lawson
- Linksvie Rd, Springwood
- Explorers Rd, Glenbrook
- Lucasville Rd, Glenbrook
- Singles Ridge Rd, Winmalee
- Oaklands Rd, Hazelbrook
- Mt York Rd, Mt Victoria
- Gladstone Rd, Leura
- Katoomba Street, Katoomba
- Daintrey Rd, Katoomba

Carpark resurfacing

- Glenbrook Theatre and tennis courts carpark
- Glenbrook carpark

Sealing of unsealed sections of road

- Peach Tree Road, Megalong Valley
- Rozelle St, Wentworth Falls
- Lone Pine Ave, Leura
- Stanger Ave, Wentworth Falls

Bridge restoration

- Peach Tree Road, Megalong Valley
- Cliff Dr, Leura drainage culvert restoration
- Cliff Dr, Leura drainage culvert stabilisation

Water Resource Management

Council maintains 190km of stormwater pipes and 50km 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 2018-2019

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

- Fels Ave, Springwood pipeline renewal

Natural Area Visitor Facilities

Council provides a wide range of nature-based experiences in its bushland areas, involving the maintenance of 135km of walking tracks, 90 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 2018-2019

COMMENCED

- Design of sealed parking area at Lincoln's Rock, Wentworth Falls
- Installation of night lighting at Reids Plateau, Katoomba
- Design of walking track at Echo Point, Katoomba
- Eastern Scenic Escarpment - Lapstone – concept design underway
- Eastern Scenic Escarpment - Glenbrook – concept design underway
- Eastern Scenic Escarpment – Mt Riverview – concept design underway
- Eastern Scenic Escarpment – Yellow Rock – concept design underway
- Former Lawson Golf Course – concept design underway

COMPLETED

- Construction of a replacement pit toilet at Mt Blackheath
- Renewal of footbridges at Charles Darwin Walk and Central Park, Wentworth Falls
- Refurbishment of infrastructure in partnership with recreational hang gliders and paragliders



Guardrail replacement

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 2018-2019

COMMENCED

District park upgrade

- Glenbrook Park – concept design underway
- Buttenshaw Park – concept design underway
- Wentworth Falls Lake – concept design underway
- Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park – concept design underway

Aquatic centre upgrade

- Katoomba Aquatic Centre – concept design underway

Play equipment renewals and replacement of failed items

- Springwood Early Childhood Centre – purchase of play equipment (to be installed 2019-2020)

COMPLETED

District park upgrade

- Wentworth Falls Lake new toilet block
- Wentworth Falls Lake carpark upgrade
- Glenbrook Park toilet flushing system improvements

Park improvements

- Irrigation System renewal at Tom Hunter Park
- Cricket Wicket Reconstruction at Melrose Park

Other Infrastructure

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

Other Infrastructure Projects undertaken in 2018-2019

COMPLETED

- Carrington Place lighting replacement
- Permanent fencing at Old Blackheath Tip
- Cemetery maintenance – upgrade and maintenance of garden beds and gravesites at Katoomba, Wentworth Falls and Springwood
- Faulconbridge Cemetery - garden bed refurbishments
- Mount Victoria Cemetery - historical grave restoration of Berghofers Grave
- Springwood Cemetery - removal of 10 trees from the Catholic section of the cemetery
- Fire trail renewal



New Blaxland Rural Fire Service Station

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 Council's website.

Lodgement of pound data collection returns

Returns have been completed and lodged indicating that 109 dogs and 1 cat were seized by Council Rangers, of which 52 were returned directly to their owner and 58 were taken to the pound. A further 115 dogs were taken or surrendered to the pound by the public. There were 148 cats taken to the pound.

Lodgement of dog attack data

Dog attack data is recorded on the Companion Animal Register. In 2018-2019 there were 34 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 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.

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 2018-2019 is estimated at \$265,331. Details are as follows:

Receipts	
Companion Animal Fund	-\$59,525
Pound income (sustenance and release fees, pound subsidy)	-\$9,900
Disbursements	
Enforcement by Rangers	\$259,551
Provision of pound facility	\$55,588
Veterinary costs	\$2,681
Sustenance	\$12,391
Education (public advertisements in news print), estimate	\$4,545
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	\$265,331

Government Information (Public Access) Requests

Information relating to the 44 formal *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA) applications received during the period 2018-2019 can be broken down into the following tables as per Schedule 2 of the GIPA Regulation 2009. In addition, 106 informal GIPA requests were received and 103 finalised. There were also 31 requests for information received from other government entities and finalised under the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

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	1	0	0	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector business	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Members of the public (other)	8	7	2	3	4	5	0	9

**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*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	10	8	3	3	4	6	0	11
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	1	0	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 of the Act

	Number of times consideration used*
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive Council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	1
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

**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	3
Law enforcement and security	2
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	8
Business interests of agencies and other persons	6
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	3
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

Open Access Requests

During 2018-2019, Council processed 520 open access requests related to Development Applications.

Table F: Timeliness

	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	37
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	1
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	3
Total	41

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	0	1
Review by NCAT	0	0	0
Total	1	1	2

**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.*

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)

	Number of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	2
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

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 2018 to June 2019.

	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	0	0	1
Number of PIDs received	0	0	1
Of PIDs received, number primarily about alleged:			
• Corrupt conduct	0	0	1
• 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			2

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:

- Two training sessions were presented by the NSW Ombudsman to (i) the executive, disclosures officers and other key staff; and (ii) supervisors, managers and general awareness training provided.
- PID information and a form for anonymous reporting 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 staff can seek advice or to make a report of wrongdoing.
- Postcards are displayed and distributed to promote staff awareness, with detail on where they can seek advice or to make a report of wrongdoing.
- PID, the policy and procedures are covered in staff induction sessions.
- Information on internal reporting was presented in the staff newsletter.

Swimming Pool Inspections

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 five inspections and issued four certificates of compliance in 2018-2019.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan











Implementation of Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan for 2018-2019 involved the following actions:










- Completion 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, Winmalee and Springwood. Findings from the report have now been used to complement Council's Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan and Active Transport Links.
- Completion of a public toilet study to identify the toilets in need of upgrade for disabled access that are near town centres, pathways of travel and public transport infrastructure. Report findings have been used to assist Council with its community facilities and recreation study for disabled access.
- Installation of an adult change facility for adults with a disability at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub.
- Installation of automatic doors for disabled access at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.
- Commencement of the provision of an adult change facility for adults with a disability at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre.

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 table presents the status of each milestone for 2018-2019 as at 30 June 2019.

4-Year Action	2018-2019 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2019
AVOID 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 1.1.a)	✓
Action 1.b Set annual Fit for the Future targets for 2017-2018 to 2019-2020	Increase long term financial impact assessment in Council and Internal Management decision making (DPOP 1.2.a)	✓
Action 1.c Develop Corporate Risk Register to target high risk renewal expenditure	Enhance the Council's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) (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, Service Plans and Asset Management Plans (DPOP 1.1.a)	✓
Action 2.b Implement improvement initiatives to achieve decreasing operating expenditure per capita	Deliver Business Improvement projects and mentor organisational business improvement through the established Business Improvement Program Office (DPOP 1.1.b)	✓
	Promote electronic delivery of all rating correspondence (DPOP 1.1.b)	✓
Action 2.c Model, define and review affordable levels of service within available revenue to improve operating performance ratio	Define affordable levels of service within Long Term Service Plans (DPOP 1.3.a)	○ Rescheduled
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 and valuation in the context of updated Asset Condition assessments and Asset Management Plans (DPOP 1.1.a)	✓
	Review and make improvements to the integration of the Finance Asset Accounting and Asset Management Plans (DPOP 1.1.a)	✓
	Implement the endorsed Asset Management Improvement Program (DPOP 1.3.b)	○ Not Complete
Action 2.e Consolidate and/or reconfigure provision of assets/services to improve asset renewal and asset maintenance ratios	Continue a strategic review of services to inform decision making and priorities (DPOP 1.3.a)	○ Withdrawn
Action 2.f Prioritise funding of high risk asset renewal to reduce infrastructure backlog ratio	Enhance the Council's Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) (DPOP 1.2.c)	✓

4-Year Action	2018-2019 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2019
MANAGE DEBT AND INVESTMENTS RESPONSIBLY		
Action 3.a Cease future loan borrowings unless supported by business case to improve debt servicing ratio	Implement Borrowings Policy (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	Implement Investments Policy (DPOP 1.1a)	
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)	 Rescheduled
Action 4.c Increase revenue generating initiatives to achieve positive operating performance ratio and improve own source revenue ratio	Commence implementation of enforcement recommendations arising from the adopted Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan (DPOP 6.4.a)	
	Commence preparation of a Camping Strategic Plan (DPOP 3.2.a)	 Rescheduled
Action 4.d Increase income from commercial activities to achieve positive operating performance ratio and improve own source revenue ratio	Research options and develop recommendations on the operation of Council owned tourist parks for Council endorsement (DPOP 6.3.a)	 Rescheduled

4-Year Action	2018-2019 Milestone	Status at 30 June 2019
REVIEW AND ADJUST SERVICES		
Action 5.a Define service levels in 2019-2020 to improve operating performance and infrastructure backlog ratios	Complete the review and update of service dashboards - defining affordable levels of service provision (DPOP 1.2.b)	 Not Complete
Action 5.b Strategic review of services improves operating performance ratio	Continue a strategic review of services to inform decision making and priorities (DPOP 1.3.a)	 Withdrawn
Action 5.c Individual service reviews reduce expenditure to improve operating performance ratio	Financial Reporting and Analysis for in-depth Service Reviews (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	Review and strengthen the Council's Service Planning so that it guides and supports Asset Management Planning and best value service provision (DPOP 1.3.a)	
INCREASE ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS		
Action 6.a Lobby to increase income and improve operating performance ratio	Continue the annual advocacy and partnership plan (DPOP 1.1.a)	
Action 6.b Lobby to minimise expenditure increases and improve operating performance ratio	Develop and maintain formal relationships and supporting arrangements between Council and the Rural Fire Service and State Emergency Service (DPOP 3.3.b)	
Action 6.c Advocate against expenditure increases and improve operating performance ratio	Develop the Priority Infrastructure Strategic Plan (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 2018-2019 (DPOP 1.4.b)	
Action 6.e Develop partnerships with other agencies to create efficiency savings and reduce operating expenditure per capita	Engage with key state agencies and adjoining Councils to improve alignment of planning and reporting relative to the City of the Blue Mountains (DPOP 1.4.a)	 Withdrawn



Special Rate Variation

2013 Special Rate Variation

In 2013, the Council received approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to continue a Special Rate Variation for asset renewal and maintenance, previously granted in 2010 for a period of three years. 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 2018-2019 from the 2013 Special Rate Variation, including outcomes achieved.

2013 Special Rate Variation Expenditure (\$'000)

Service	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual expenditure	Outcomes
SV 2013 OPERATING EXPENDITURE				
Transport & Public Access	244	244	244	Continued road vegetation maintenance program
Parks, City Presentation	76	160	160	Continued maintenance program for parks and town centres
Water Resource Management		215	215	Continued drainage program
Total Operating Expenditure	320	619	619	
SV 2013 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
Operational Buildings		88	88	Boiler and air-conditioning renewal
Transport & Public Access	1,630	1,313	1,313	Roads resealing and footpath replacement programs
Water Resource Management	330	140	17	Wentworth Falls drainage upgrade and Katoomba drainage renewal
Community Development		18	10	Childcare centres facade renewal and repairs to Warrimoo Community Hall
Sport & Recreation	40	32	32	Western Parkland City Liveability Program concept development
Resource Recovery & Waste Resource Management		110	110	Old Blackheath tip remediation
Total Capital Expenditure	2,000	1,701	1,570	
SV 2013 TOTAL EXPENDITURE	2,320	2,320	2,189	

2015 Special Rate Variation

Council began implementation of a further Special Rate Variation in July 2015, following majority community support and subsequent approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. 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 2018-2019, funds from the 2015 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. Due to delays in completing a number of projects in 2018-2019, special variation funds of almost \$2.2 million were carried over into 2019-2020.

2015 Special Rate Variation Expenditure (\$'000)

Service	Original budget	Revised budget	Actual expenditure	Variance
SV 2015 OPERATING EXPENDITURE				
BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE	2,851	4,632	4,171	-461
Transport & Public Access	1,851	1,705	1,703	-2
Water Resource Management	344	205	205	-
City Presentation, Economic Development & Tourism	204	211	205	-6
Other (inc. operational buildings, asset management)	452	2,510	2,057	-453
ENVIRONMENT	1,737	1,595	1,495	-100
Natural Environment	1,255	1,443	1,354	-89
Natural Area Visitor Facilities	482	152	141	-11
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE	386	202	202	-
Emergency Management	386	202	202	-
COMMUNITY & RECREATION	980	479	203	-276
Community & Cultural Programs and Facilities	732	357	138	-220
Sport, Recreation & Aquatic Facilities	248	122	66	-56
Total Operating Expenditure	5,954	6,908	6,071	-836

SV 2015 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE	4,438	4,755	3,126	-1,630
Transport & Public Access	2,797	3,220	2,373	-847
Water Resource Management	665	504	38	-467
City Presentation, Economic Development & Tourism	256	788	475	-313
Other (inc. operational buildings, asset management)	720	243	240	-3
ENVIRONMENT	734	571	288	-284
Natural Area Visitor Facilities	734	571	288	-284
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE	169	169	98	-70
Emergency Management	169	169	98	-70
COMMUNITY & RECREATION	2,362	1,924	976	-948
Community & Cultural Programs and Facilities	802	724	120	-604
Sport, Recreation & Aquatic Facilities	1,561	1,200	856	-344
Total Capital Expenditure	7,703	7,419	4,488	-2,932
Reserves adjustment		623	175	-448
SV 2015 TOTAL EXPENDITURE	13,657	14,951	10,734	-4,217

Outcomes achieved in 2018-2019 from 2015 Special Rate Variation expenditure are detailed below. In addition, several of the projects highlighted elsewhere in this report were partly or wholly funded from special variation income, including:

- Great Blue Mountains Trail – refer to Section 2: Major Projects
- Southern Scenic Escarpment Program – refer to Section 2: Major Projects
- Bullaburra to Linden flood study – refer to Section 5: Protect
- District park upgrades at Wentworth Falls Lake – refer to Section 5: Care
- Accessibility upgrades to bus stops – refer to Section 5: Move
- Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre – refer to Section 5: Thrive.

Built infrastructure

Road renewal

The heavy patch team undertook activities such as road patching, constructing and repairing road shoulders, crack sealing and repairs to asphalt footpaths throughout the LGA. The output of the team for 2018-2019 is as follows:

- road sealing - 8,564 square metres
- crack sealing - 2,622 lineal metres.

These works were a combination of programmed and reactive works with some projects requiring the stabilising and preparation of the subgrade prior to the sealing taking place. A further 1,968 square metres of road and shoulder sealing was conducted by contractors.

Asphalt reseal works for Council roads within the local government area were completed resulting in renewal of 1.5% of the road network.

Street Sweeping

Council has two street sweepers that conduct a mixture of programmed and reactive street sweeping, as well as cleaning gross pollutant traps and stormwater pits. The sweeping is conducted in carparks, town centres and kerbed streets across the LGA.

Over the past 12 months, our sweepers have cleaned approximately 5.5 million lineal metres of carparks and sealed roads. They have also removed almost 50 tonnes of waste from silt traps and gross pollutant traps, and cleared more than 160 stormwater pits.

Footpath renewal and upgrade

Renewal and upgrade of footpath and bike infrastructure was delivered in line with the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan 2025. 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 Blaxland to Blackheath in 2018-2019. The works are renewal in nature and generally consist of new kerb ramps, updating non-complaint signage and pavement markings.

Bridge and barrier renewal

Minor works were completed to improve bridge condition at Peachtree Rd, Megalong Valley, and new guardrails were installed at rail over-line bridges in Blaxland and Wentworth Falls. Remediation works and planning for major culvert structures commenced in Leura, including specialist inspections, surveys, geotechnical investigations and stabilisation works. The renewal of guardrails was undertaken at priority locations to maintain levels of road safety.

Drainage upgrades

Planning works are underway for remediation of the Wentworth Falls dam wall, including engagement of a specialist dam engineering consultant. The project is currently awaiting completion of a Dam Safety Review as required by the NSW Dam Safety Committee.

Another project at Wentworth Falls has been delayed due to the need to review the proposed works and conduct further drainage analysis to ensure localised flooding is minimised. Works to complete the drainage improvement works are planned to be completed by December 2019.

Precinct pavement cleansing program

Improvements continue to be made to precinct cleansing and pressure washing of town centres. The investment in a truck-mounted system has proved to be a success that has made access to areas and manoeuvrability in town centres easier. The program has also expanded to include bus shelters, play equipment and other high-profile areas.

Environment

Bushland management

The Council manages over 6,100 hectares of bushland. These areas make a significant contribution to the conservation of flora and fauna, the tourism industry, community health and wellbeing, and the protection of Sydney's drinking water catchment from the impacts of an urbanised landscape.

Activities funded through the Special Rate Variation include bush regeneration, wetland restoration, weed control, re-plantings, and sediment and erosion management works in 175 reserves, as part of the following programs:

- Lower Blue Mountains Shale Sandstone Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program
- Upper Blue Mountains Plateau Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program
- Sandstone Granite Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program
- Moist Basalt Cap 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 at places such as Katoomba, Wentworth Falls and Lawson.

Other key outcomes for 2018-2019 include:

- providing technical advice to support remediation works on private properties containing Blue Mountains Swamp and Shale-based endangered ecological communities
- soil conservation works in North Katoomba, North Leura, Knapsack Park, Glenbrook and East Blaxland to protect downstream systems from erosion and sedimentation
- 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
- administering environmental assessments and providing 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, and integrating this work with the private lands inspection program.

Key outcomes in 2018-2019 include:

- undertaking 176 private property inspections as part of the city-wide Biodiversity Conservation Program, to support the ongoing restoration of key conservation landscapes
- 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
- 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

The Special Rate Variation gives the Council the capacity to secure significant additional external funding for the City through matching contributions. In 2018-2019, Council successfully secured \$1.6 million worth of Australian and NSW Government grants for local environmental projects. These grants were used to control highly invasive weeds and restore areas of high conservation value on both public and private lands, including:

- NSW Environmental Trust 'Forest for the Future' grant of \$350,000 over five years was secured to conserve Blue Mountains Shale Cap Forest and Sun Valley Cabbage Gum Forest
- Saving our Species grants with a combined value of \$47,000 were received from the Office of Environment & Heritage to assist in the delivery of threatened species recovery actions
- NSW Environmental Trust 'Swamped by Threats' grant provided \$92,500 to restore and protect the swamp habitats of the Blue Mountains Water Skink and Giant Dragonfly
- A grant of \$55,000 over two years was secured from the NSW Environmental Trust for Garguree Swampcare, to protect the Blue Mountains Swamp in the Gully Aboriginal Place
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services provided \$10,000 to control African Olive and Cats Claw Creeper on private land in Springwood and Glenbrook
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services provided \$26,786 to support weed control and swamp restoration on three properties adjoining Blue Mountains National Park and Council reserves in Leura, Lawson and Glenbrook
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services provided \$25,000 to support control of bird-spread weeds in Moist Basalt Cap forest on five private properties at Mt Wilson
- Greater Sydney Local Land Services, through the National Landcare Program, provided \$675,000 over five years to support bush regeneration and stormwater control works in reserves and private lands to protect Upper Mountains Swamps, Lower Mountains Endangered Forests and Basalt Cap Forest in Mount Wilson, as well as target weed control in the mid to lower Mountains and support for community catchment groups.



New hangliding ramp, Mt Blackheath



Replacement of footbridge on Charles Darwin Walk

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 2018-2019 include:

- replacement of footbridge on Charles Darwin Walk at Wentworth Falls
- renewal of pit toilet at Mount Blackheath
- completion of geotechnical cliff stabilisation near Minnehaha Falls in North Katoomba
- installation of footbridge at Central Park, Wentworth Falls
- continued planning for Grand Cliff Top Walk
- commencement of walking track improvements at Centennial Glen, Blackheath
- refurbishment of infrastructure in partnership with recreational user groups.

Environmental education and engagement

A key piece of engagement during 2018-2019 was the public exhibition of a Draft Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan, designed as a blueprint to guide Council towards more efficient water use and best practice stormwater management across all areas of Council business.

Council also delivers several community education and engagement initiatives that support our community to live responsibly in our City within a World Heritage Area. This year more than 1,400 students from 25 local schools and preschools participated in Connecting Kids to Nature, through programs and events such as:

- BioBlitz – citizen science
- Bush Trackers
- Stormwater projects
- Environment Trust Grant Project
- Swampfest Festival.

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 latest Blue Mountains Waterways Health Report is available on the Council website at www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterways

Other key outcomes from 2018-2019 include:

- supporting Clean up Australia Day by promoting the event locally and collecting and disposing of site rubbish
- hosting a national waterbug blitz workshop for council staff and community volunteers to learn waterbug survey and identification skills.

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 2018-2019, 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. Council also completes on-ground catchment improvement works such as building stormwater treatment systems to protect and improve waterway health.

Key outcomes in 2018-2019 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
- aquatic macroinvertebrate and water quality sampling at over 70 sites across the LGA, to track waterway health and aid catchment prioritisation
- monthly water quality monitoring and rainfall event-based sampling to assess the effectiveness of stormwater treatment systems constructed by the Leura Falls and Jamison Creek Catchment Improvement Projects show the systems are working well, removing significant proportions of faecal coliforms and nutrients from stormwater

- after more than fifteen years of aquatic weed control and stormwater treatment efforts at Glenbrook Lagoon, Council's ongoing monitoring in 2018-2019 found no evidence of regrowth of invasive aquatic weeds cabomba or salvinia
- crayfish surveys were completed at Leura Falls, Jamison and Springwood creeks, with the Jamison Creek survey showing that the crayfish population has recovered from the 2012 crayfish kill caused by pesticide contamination of stormwater
- creekline and wetland restoration works and stormwater treatment works as part of the Riparian Protection and Restoration Program.

Emergency preparedness and response

Asset protection zone maintenance

Council's Asset Protection Zone (APZ) Management Program continued throughout the year, with work occurring on 106 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.

Key outcomes from 2018-2019 include:

- 471 homes and major buildings with a reduced bushfire risk
- 93% of APZ program complete, including 3 new APZs

Fire trail renewal

Council's fire trail renewal program focuses on the management of vegetation within the trail corridors on seven 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. During 2018-2019, vegetation was cleared along 8 km of fire trails, resulting in improved access. This work is wholly funded by the Special Rate Variation.

Community and recreation

Connecting to Country program

The Connecting to Country program, which was established in 2015, focuses on engaging with Traditional Owners, the Darug and Gundungurra peoples, and other Aboriginal communities, to support their ongoing relationship with and care for Country.

In 2018-2019, further work was undertaken on building the relationship between Traditional Owner community members and the Council, with the intention of creating meaningful opportunities for co-management of Country between Council and the Traditional Owners. Work also progressed in strengthening relationships between Council and the Gundungurra Traditional Owners through the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

Risk management for community events

During 2018-2019, risk management consultants were engaged to develop a risk assessment template for community events, deliver training on this template, and transition existing templates for major events and ANZAC Day events. Three separate workshops were held for event organisers in June. A total of 35 event organisers attended, representing 22 different organisations.

Building replacement at Pitt Park

Design was completed for the replacement of the football clubhouse at Pitt Park. The new building will provide a safe and welcoming facility with adequate toilet and change facilities and greater storage space. It will be suitable regardless of weather conditions, and will also include accessibility upgrades. This project is scheduled for construction in 2020.

Sports and amenities cleansing

A comprehensive cleansing service continues to be 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.

Sportsground maintenance program

Utilising the sportsground tractor purchased using special variation funding, Council has been able to provide a comprehensive maintenance program for sportsgrounds that has included fertilising, aeration and seeding activities.

Glossary and Acronyms

ABS – Australian Bureau of Statistics

ACM – Asbestos-containing material

APZ – Asset Protection Zone

ARC – Audit and Risk Committee

ART – Asbestos Response Team

Asset Works Program (AWP) – This program delivers projects that involve the planning and construction of new built assets or the improvement of existing built assets. The Council currently has a portfolio of more than \$1.3 billion of built assets.

BMCC – Blue Mountains City Council

BMEE – Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise

CAMP – Companion Animals Management Plan

CAWS – Community Animal Welfare Scheme

CBD – Central Business District

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

Community Strategic Plan (CSP) – This is a long-term plan for the City of Blue Mountains that is developed in consultation with the community. It identifies our main priorities and aspirations for the future, and presents clear strategies to achieve these goals. Implementation of the plan is the responsibility of all levels of government, non-government organisations, local community groups and businesses.

Darug – Traditional Owners of the Blue Mountains region. See also Gundungurra. The City of Blue Mountains is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples.

Delivery Program (DP) – This four-year plan is a statement of commitment from the Council to the community. It details the principal activities that the Council will undertake during its term in office, to achieve the objectives and strategies of the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan.

EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity

ELT – Executive Leadership Team

Financial Year – The financial year for this Annual Report is the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019.

FFTF – Fit for the Future

GBMT – Great Blue Mountains Trail

GIPA – *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*

GRSG – Governance and Risk Steering Group

Gundungurra – Traditional Owners of the Blue Mountains region. See also Darug. The City of Blue Mountains is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples.

IDAHOT – International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) – The IP&R framework was introduced by the NSW Government in 2009 to help councils improve their long-term community, financial and asset planning. It consists of a hierarchy of planning documents, including the Community Strategic Plan, Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program and Operational Plan, and mechanisms for reporting progress and achievement against these plans, through the Annual Report and End of Term Report.

IPART – Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

Key Direction – These are the six themes that guide Council's service delivery and strategic planning, namely: Lead, Protect, Care, Live, Move and Thrive.

LEP – Local Environment Plan

LGA – Local Government Area

LGBTIQ – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer

LSPS – Local Strategic Planning Statement

LTFP – Long Term Financial Plan

NAIDOC – National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration

Ngurra – For Darug and Gundungurra People, Ngurra (Country) takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape.

OAM – Medal of the Order of Australia

OLG – Office of Local Government

Operational Plan (OP) – This annual plan provides details of the individual projects and activities that will be undertaken to achieve the commitments made in the Delivery Program.

OPR – Organisational Performance Review

PAMP – Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan

PCG – Project Control Group

PID – Public Interest Disclosure

PIO – Performance Improvement Order

PSSG – Peak Safety Steering Group

Public Inquiry – An investigation into Council operations, initiated by the Office of Local Government.

RFS – Rural Fire Service

RID – Regional Illegal Dumping

RMS – Roads and Maritime Services

RSA – Regional Strategic Alliance

SV – Special Variation

VIISP – Visitor Infrastructure Investment Strategic Plan

WHS – Work Health and Safety

WSROC – Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils





Contact

Katoomba Office

2 Civic Place
Katoomba NSW 2780
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm

Springwood Office

104 Macquarie Road
Springwood NSW 2777
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Telephone

For local call cost from:
Lower Mountains (02) 4723 5000
Upper Mountains (02) 4780 5000

Postal Address

Locked Bag 1005
Katoomba NSW 2780

Email

council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Council Website

bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Have Your Say Website

bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au