

# Serving our community

## A year in review 2018-2019

Blue Mountains City Council is committed to building a sustainable and successful future for the Blue Mountains. Here is an overview of our achievements for the past year...

Each year we deliver an extensive range of services to 78,705 residents and over 4 million tourists, across

27 towns and villages. We manage, renew and maintain over \$1.3 billion worth of built assets.

### lead inspiring leadership

#### Completed an organisational review

Following an extensive review of the performance of the organisation, Council adopted a continuous improvement strategy. This builds on past strengths and identifies key action areas going forward. The first focus area includes a new operating model and structure.



#### Secured Liveability Program funding

We secured \$18.7 million in funding under the Western Parkland City Liveability Program. Projects include upgrades to four District Parks, rejuvenation of Blackheath and Springwood town centres, redevelopment of Katoomba Aquatic Centre and implementation of parts of the Lawson Crown Lands Master Plan.



#### Recognised in national service awards

We were honoured in three categories at the 2018 National Local Government Customer Service Awards, including receiving the Customer Service Team of the Year Award. In 2018-2019, our Customer Contact Centre received almost 73,000 calls and helped almost 60,000 customers in person.



#### Adopted Delivery Program

We adopted the Delivery Program for 2017-2021 that supports spending of more than \$135 million on the delivery of a wide range of services, facilities and infrastructure and the management of \$1.3 billion worth of built assets and 10,000 hectares of bushland.



### protect an environmentally responsible city

#### Targeted illegal dumping

We joined the Western Sydney based Regional Illegal Dumping Squad (RID), which has been fighting illegal dumping in the region for the past two decades. There is about 600 illegal dumping incidents in the City annually, with the average clean-up costs of more than \$269,000 per year.



#### Reduced waste to landfill

We launched our Compost Hub, which links households that would like to compost with households that already do. It followed a successful trial which diverted 1,000kgs of food scraps from landfill. Since 2003 our community has reduced the volume of waste to landfill by half.



#### Introduced sustainability initiatives

As a Cities Powers Partnership member, we adopted 5 pledges including – to install renewable energy in 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.



#### Cared for our environment

We released our Blue Mountains Waterways Snapshot 2018. Each year, we test the health of over 40 local waterways. We're working with up to 500 dedicated local volunteers and 600 local school students to protect and restore waterways and regenerate our bush.



### care an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

#### Celebrated our citizens

We recognised local citizens for their outstanding contribution to the community. Citizen of the Year was awarded to George Winston (second from left), who campaigns for justice for refugees in Australia. We also hosted a range of events for our community including the Seniors Festival, IDAHOT and NAIDOC.



#### Provided grant funding

We provided more than \$100,000 in grants. The Blue Mountains City of the Arts Grant Program for 2018 recognised seven arts projects. The program was created to build on the City's reputation of being the State's inaugural City of the Arts. Also, 50 not-for-profit organisations received grant funding in the Community Assistance Program for 2018.



#### Supported the City's families

We released the 4th edition of the Blue Mountains Guide to Services and Activities for Families. It provides information to support families accessing local services and finding the support they need. It is part of our commitment to make our City a more child, youth and family-friendly community.



#### Advocated for our community

We advocated for our City's older people, young people, and residents living with a disability. We welcomed new Youth Councillors. We celebrated older people during our annual Seniors Festival and we opened a new adult change facility at Blue Mountains Theatre + Community Hub.



### live a liveable city

#### Consulted on 20-year planning vision for land use

We consulted with the community extensively to capture aspirations for future land use. Sydney metropolitan councils are required by the NSW Government to prepare a Local Planning Statement. The draft statement, that will be our 20-year planning vision for land use, will go on public exhibition in October 2019.



#### Planned for recreation facilities and services

Council adopted the Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan which will guide how we provide and manage open space, and sport and recreation facilities and services, over the next ten or more years. The plan was developed following extensive research and consultation.



#### Upgraded fire trails across City

We worked with the member agencies of the Bush Fire Management Committee on fire trail renewal and upgrade work across the City, following NSW Government policy changes and reclassification of all trails. Detailed planning is underway for vegetation management, trail widening and surface restoration.



#### Upgraded facilities at Wentworth Falls Lake

We continued upgrading Wentworth Falls Lake District Park. We installed a new toilet block, which is large enough to cater for school, community and visitor groups. We also added a new boardwalk, viewing platform, pedestrian connections and interpretive signage.



### move an accessible city

#### Developed parking precinct plans

We developed draft Parking Precinct Plans for key towns, villages and priority tourist sites. Introducing paid parking in areas with high visitation has been identified as a priority to shift the burden from rate payers, for the maintenance and investment of tourism infrastructure.



#### Planned for pedestrian and cycling infrastructure

We reviewed our Active Transport planning framework, to guide the development and improvement of the City's footpath and shared path network and help us prioritise works in the future. We sought feedback from the community on where footpaths, shared paths, bike routes and accessibility can be improved.



#### Improved local roads

Our Asphalt Resealing Program and Sealing of Unsealed Roads Program continued. The annual projects improve accessibility and amenity. More than 65,000 m2 of new asphalt surface was laid. We also manage 178km of footpaths, 550km of kerb and gutter and nearly 78,000 sqm of sealed car parks.



#### Prepared for next stage of Great Blue Mountains Trail

We prepared for the construction of the next section of the Great Blue Mountains Trail, from Leura Cascades Reserve to Cliff near Kiah Lookout. The Great Blue Mountains Trail is a multi-stage project that connects towns and villages in the City with an off-highway route for cyclists and walkers.



### thrive an economically sustainable city

#### Opened new Visitor Information Centre

The new Blue Mountains Visitor Information Centre at Glenbrook was opened. The provision of two accredited Visitor Information Centres – at Glenbrook and Echo Point – is a key part of our tourism offering. 4.7 million people visited the Blue Mountains in 2018.



#### Strengthened relationship with local business

We established a Mayoral Reference Group for Blue Mountains business to advise on matters such as development processes, place-based planning matters, the Local Environment Plan and tourism. We also launched the Easy to do Business program for those opening or expanding a small business.



#### Supported community events

We coordinated the development of a five-year event strategy and management plans for the Winter Magic Festival. This strategic work will have relevance for other local events. We are also delivering risk management training and templates for local event organisers.



#### Promoted the region

In partnership with the Regional Strategic Alliance (Blue Mountains, Penrith and Hawkesbury city councils) and Destination NSW, we launched a tourism campaign encouraging people from Greater Sydney to visit and stay overnight to boost the regional economy.



## Council's ongoing strategic priorities

The Council reaffirmed its four-year strategic priorities on 26 March 2019. The four-year commitments include:

**Priority 1** – Develop and implement an integrated Workplace Health and Safety Strategy and Management System, ensuring the well-being of our workforce and the community, and improving the council's management of asbestos and other risks to health and safety.

**Priority 2** – Strengthen the Council's approach to asset management so that it supports best value affordable service delivery and effective risk management.

**Priority 3** – Deliver the Council's financial sustainability strategies and Fit for the Future targets – maintaining the Best Value Decision making Framework to maximise outcomes for the community.

**Priority 4** – Commence strategic review of affordable and acceptable levels of Council service provision to inform future decision making and priorities.

**Priority 5** – Increase focus on organisational business improvement, innovation and safety, and improve culture, effectiveness and efficiency through an Organisational Performance Review.

**Priority 6** – Position the Council to be more proactive in communicating and engaging with the community on the business of the Council.

**Priority 7** – Develop a strategic approach to tourism and the visitor economy that also addresses the increased visitation, local community and funding options.

**Priority 8** – Implement training, capability and skill development of the council workforce to support delivery of required services to the community.

#### Safety and asbestos management

Council is well-positioned to continue strengthening its safety and asbestos management. The council continues to show strong leadership in addressing the challenges of managing and eliminating asbestos in ageing infrastructure and managing illegally dumped asbestos in our local bushland.

#### A financially viable Council

Council continues to implement Council's Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability. The Council remains financially viable and each year lives responsibly within its means. Our key financial challenge going forward is the continued focus on how best we can achieve affordable and acceptable levels of service within available funding, while managing risks associated with ageing infrastructure and responding to the changing needs of our community and City.

#### Advocacy and change

Council will continue to advocate to other levels of government as required to secure positive outcomes for the City. Some of the key issues that are the focus of Council's advocacy include:

- Ensuring success of the Western Sydney City Deal
- Advocating against the adverse impacts from the Western Sydney Airport
- Securing additional funding for asbestos removal
- Managing the impact of increased tourist visitation on local amenity and infrastructure.

We are committed to providing best value services that meet the needs of the Blue Mountains community. Working together in partnership with the community, we will maintain our focus on building a sustainable and success future for the Blue Mountains.