

# Economic Development & Tourism Strategy

2021



# Acknowledgement

The City of the Blue Mountains is located within the Country of the Dharug and Gundungurra peoples. Blue Mountains City Council recognises that Dharug 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 Dharug and Gundungurra people, Country takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape—landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories and special places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings and people—past, present and future.

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

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# 1 Foreword



## Mayor

The Blue Mountains is a unique region. Set against the backdrop of our iconic blue haze and World Heritage natural scenery, our community is formed by a network of unique and vibrant small towns. We come together as a region to seize the promising opportunities, and face the challenges, of economic development and tourism over next 10-years.

Looking forward, the Blue Mountains will have a more resilient, diverse economy that highlights our small businesses, adapts to challenges and harnesses opportunity. Economic, environmental and social sustainability will be the key that unlocks future economic stability.

Guided by this Strategy, we will come together with our community, local businesses and partners to fulfill the region's rich potential and achieve exciting, adventurous and sustainable outcomes. Together we will strive to achieve prosperity, liveability and a brighter future for the Blue Mountains.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name Mark Greenhill.

**Mark Greenhill OAM, Mayor**  
Blue Mountains City Council



### Chief Executive Officer

I am proud to present the Blue Mountains Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, our Strategy to deliver a sustainable economy, prosperity, and resilience to this vibrant region.

Developed through an extensive community and stakeholder engagement process and further strengthened by research and analysis, this Strategy sets the future direction of economic development & tourism in the Blue Mountains.

Sustainability is a central priority for both Council and our community, and this Strategy acknowledges that sustainable economic development balances the social, economic and environmental priorities of our City.

2020 has highlighted the need for a coordinated and collaborative approach to economic development and tourism in the Blue Mountains. We are excited to build and strengthen our partnerships with other governments, local industry, associations and many others to support and invigorate our local economy.

**Rosemary Dillon, Chief Executive Officer**





## 2 Introduction

This Economic Development and Tourism Strategy sets our 10-year direction to deliver the economic and visitor economy outcomes for the Blue Mountains, building on the vision of the Community Strategic Plan and the city's Thrive key direction.

The Strategy outlines eight interconnected, research driven strategies to achieve economic and tourism development objectives. Guided by sustainability as a foundational principle and six core economic values developed through community consultation, this strategy takes an integrated approach to economic development and the visitor economy.

In developing this Strategy, we acknowledge the significant contribution tourism makes to the economy as well as the health, social assistance, education and training sectors. Together these have a strong and shaping influence in our economy and for the prosperity of our people.

Cohesively the Blue Mountains City Council, community, business owners, educators, key industries and the tourism sector are working to shape a vibrant and sustainable economy. This Strategy will coordinate this effort to create positive outcomes for residents, a world-class visitor experience and to protect our pristine natural environment.





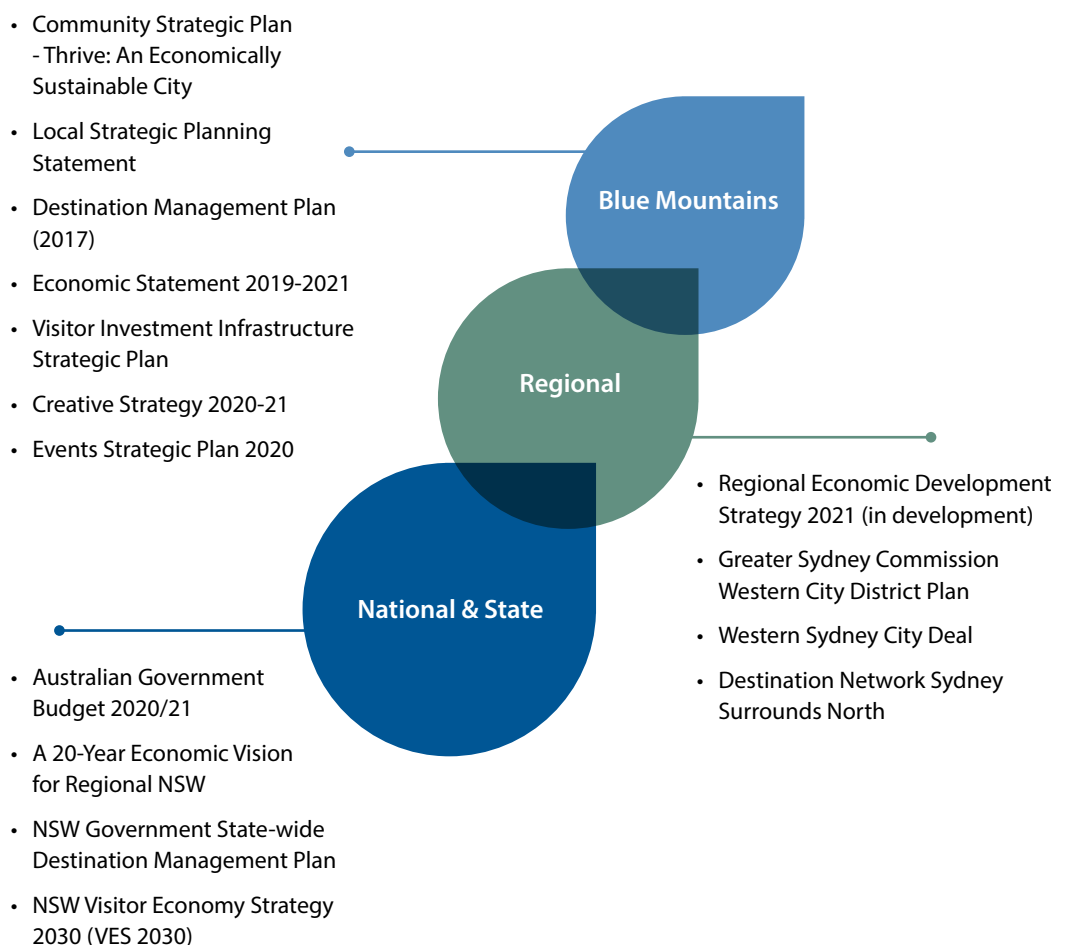


# 3 The Strategic Context

This Economic Development and Tourism Strategy sits within an interconnected strategic framework both within the Blue Mountains City Council and in relation to the broader regional, state and national context.

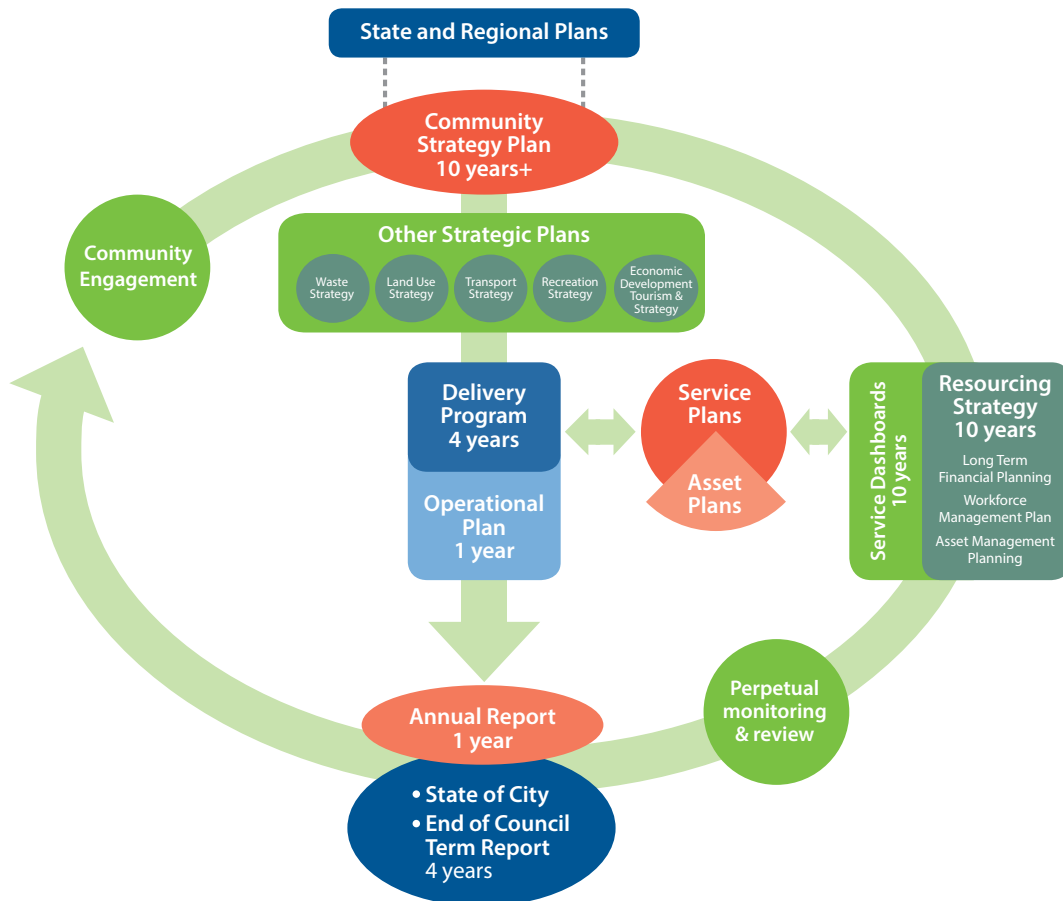
In developing this Strategy Council have considered the themes, purpose and objectives to ensure strategic alignment across National, State, Regional and Local priorities and objectives. The Regional dimension has provided an active context and following the adoption of the Western City District Plan and signing of the Western Sydney City Deal (both March 2018), the Western Parkland City Authority has recently emerged to deliver an ambitious program. Blue Mountains City Council remains an active participant in this context, ensuring our values and credentials are well evidenced through the development of new programs and initiatives.

The diagram below outlines the key documents considered across all levels of government in developing the Economic Development and Tourism concepts and actions of this Strategy.



## The Community Strategy Plan

The Community Strategic Plan is the highest level of Plan for Council. The Plan identifies the main priorities and establishes the Community's vision for the City. The Community's vision within the plan notes the aspiration for a strong and diversified economy and leadership in sustainable tourism.



*"Our economy is strong, diversified and sustainable. There are increased employment, education and learning opportunities locally and regionally. We welcome visitors to our City and are recognised as a leader in sustainable tourism and destination management. We have enhanced our Blue Mountains identity while forging strong regional partnerships. Our civic and community leadership is inspirational, at one with community. The Blue Mountains is recognised nationally and internationally as a creative model for sustainable living and learning about sustainable communities".*



## Thrive - an economically sustainable City

The Thrive key direction within the Community Strategic Plan recognises “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 are that “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”.

## By 2035 our local economy is stronger and more sustainable

### Our vision

**Our vision for this Economic Development and Tourism Strategic Plan is that by 2035, the Blue Mountains economy is strong, diversified and sustainable. There is increased employment, education and learning opportunities; our economy is inclusive, connected and thriving. We welcome visitors to our City and are recognised as a leader in sustainable tourism, planetary health education, and destination management.**



# Developing our Strategy

The adopted Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035, Sustainable Blue Mountains ‘together’ provides the spine to the development of this strategy. This is supplemented by a range of local, regional and state wide adopted and emergent strategic frameworks.

The Economic Development and Tourism Strategy focusses on the following key Community Strategic Plan (CSP) directions:

- The City’s economy is diverse, vibrant, strong and environmentally sustainable with increased local employment (CSP Thrive objective 6.1)
- The City of 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 (CSP Thrive objective 6.2)
- The City’s infrastructure supports diverse and sustainable economic development (CSP Thrive objective 6.3)
- The Blue Mountains is a leader of sustainable tourism and destination management in a World Heritage Area (CSP Thrive objective 6.4)

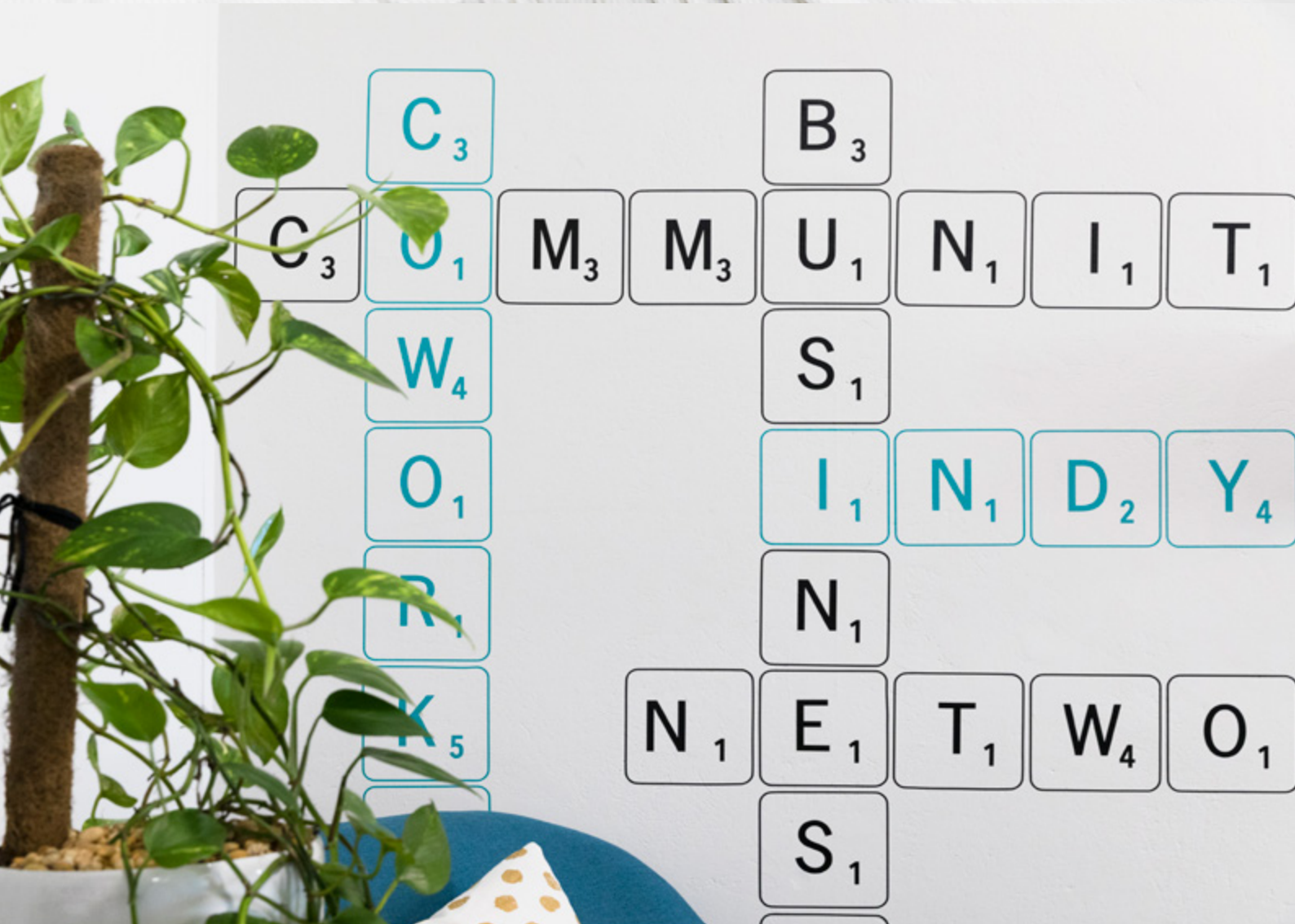
Sustainability is the foundational principle driving our strategic outcomes, notably demonstrated through the Council’s commitment to the Planetary Health agenda and evidenced by significant recent investment.

The Strategy is underpinned by our understanding of the Blue Mountain economy, demonstrated through the profiling undertaken and placed in a local regional and global context for the understanding of mega-trends. Statistical analysis informs the strategy and is supplemented by extensive stakeholder engagement and a number of notable case studies.

The evidence base has been used to craft our strategic direction, working with industry expertise in shaping our concepts and actions.













# 4 Our Sustainable City

## Sustainability: A Foundational Principle

The Blue Mountains takes a sustainable approach to economic development. This approach views the economy from a holistic perspective, and considers how we balance social, economic and environmental factors to achieve an inclusive, thriving, resilient region now and into the future.

Sustainability branches across a broad range of elements and components. Below are just a few of those most relevant to the Blue Mountains Economic Development and Tourism.

<b>Wellbeing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wellbeing economics moves away from typical measures of economic development such as GDP<sup>1</sup>.</li><li>• Instead, economic development is framed by wellbeing, encompassing health, education, gender equality, community connection, democratic engagement, environmental protection and social cohesion.</li></ul>	<b>Planetary Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planetary health focusses on the human health impacts of human-caused disruptions to the Earth's natural systems.</li><li>• This field aims to understand and act on the challenges facing the health of the Earth and its ongoing impact on human health.</li></ul>
<b>Quadruple Bottom Line Assessment Framework<sup>2</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This decision making and assessment framework acts to balance any trade-offs between economic development, social inclusion, good governance and environmental protection.</li><li>• It helps to embed sustainability throughout decision making and policy development.</li></ul>	<b>Environmental Protection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Environmental protection emphasises the protection of the natural environment and repairing environmental degradation</li><li>• It upholds sustainable economic development and environmental conservation to overcome unsustainable pressure on the biophysical world<sup>3</sup>.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> (Markulev & Long, 2013)

<sup>2</sup> (ACT, 2012 )

<sup>3</sup> (Committee, Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering, 1992)

<p><b>Climate Change Mitigation &amp; Adaption</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change is having major effects on our natural environment and the wellbeing of communities</li> <li>• It is causing extreme weather events with impacts to public health and safety, transport, food and water security and business productivity</li> </ul>	<p><b>UN Sustainable Development Goals<sup>4</sup></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 17 interlinked goals set in 2015 by the United National General Assembly guide action towards sustainable development.</li> <li>• Key objectives include to end poverty and set the world on a path of peace, prosperity and opportunity for all on a healthy planet.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Inclusion &amp; Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion and equity work to remove barriers to economic participation</li> <li>• It supports economic goals that work towards community connection and inclusion.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biodiversity refers to the variety of plant and animal life within a particular natural environment</li> <li>• It effects the air we breathe, the impact of extreme weather, as well as our ability to combat disease</li> </ul>
<p><b>Circular Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A circular economy builds social, economic and environmental capital by retaining and continually recycling and reusing resources</li> <li>• This concept includes aspects such as renewable energy and local procurement</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Slow &amp; Eco tourism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A slow tourism sustainable economy is an economy that encourages an immersive visitor experience. As an alternative tourism form, slow tourism is typically associated with sustainable practices, taking into consideration the impacts of travel on the environment, society and economy.</li> </ul>	

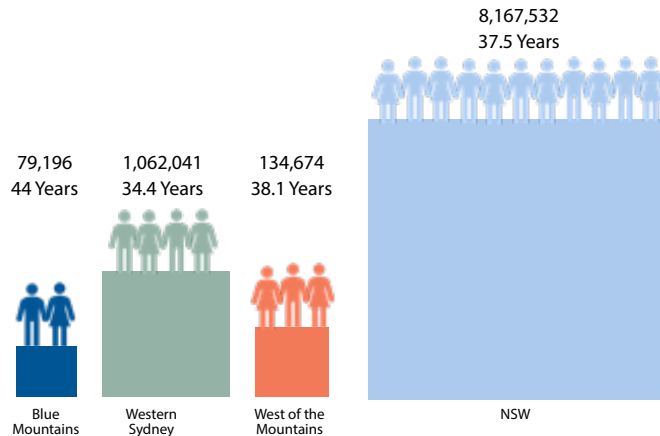
<sup>4</sup> (United Nations , 2015)



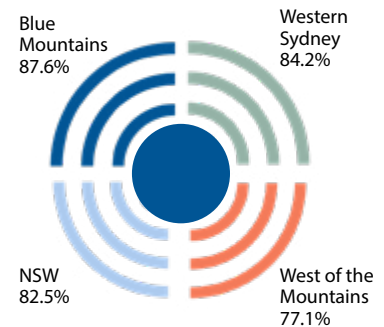
# Our Economic Profile

This strategy is based on a detailed analysis of local economic data and trends.  
A snapshot of key economic indicators and comparisons is presented below:

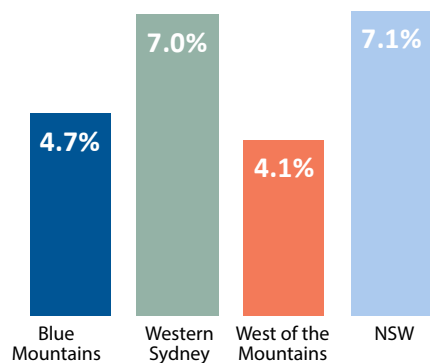
## Total Population & Median Age (2020)



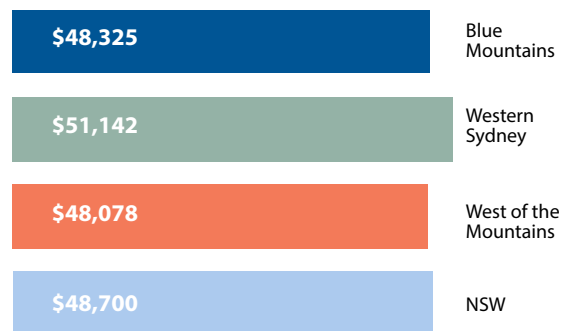
## Internet Connection at Home (2016)



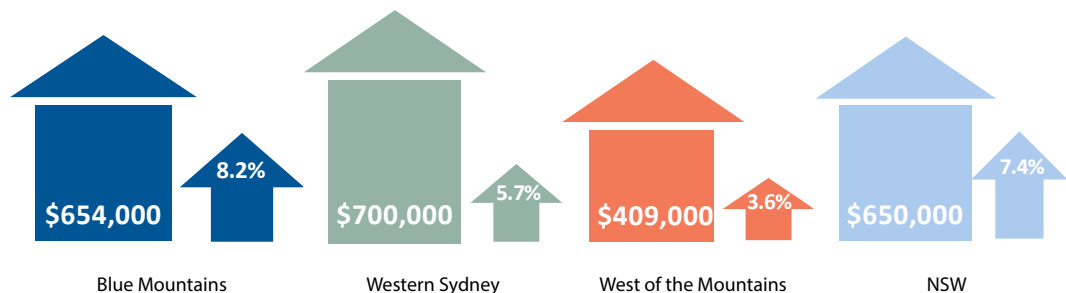
## Unemployment Rate (2020)



## Median Income (2017)



## Median House Price (2019) & Annual Growth (2014-2019)



Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Data by Region 2014-20 Cat. No. 1410.0; Australian Bureau of Statistics, Estimated Residential Population 2020 Cat. No. 3218.0; Australian Government, Small Area Labour Markets 2020



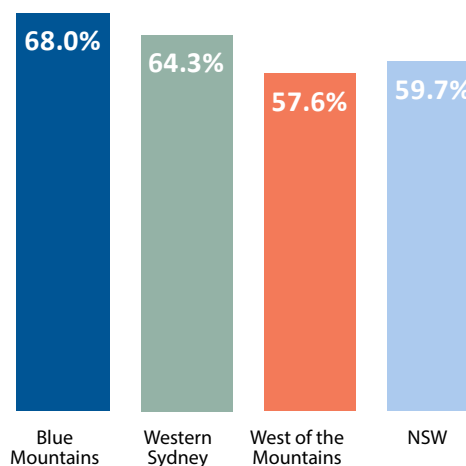


# Our Economic Profile

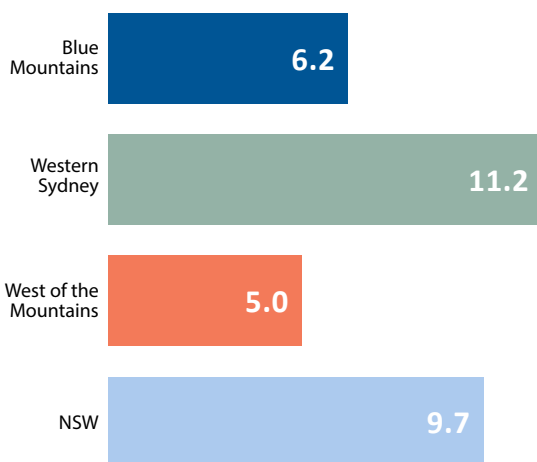
## Diversity - Overseas Heritage (2016)



## Participation Rate (2020)



## Commuting Effort (km)



## Top 5 Industry of Employment for Blue Mountains' Residents (2016)



**Number 1**  
Education & Training  
14.8%



**Number 2**  
Health Care & Social Assistance  
14.6%



**Number 3**  
Public Administration & Safety  
14.6%



**Number 4**  
Retail Trade  
8.3%



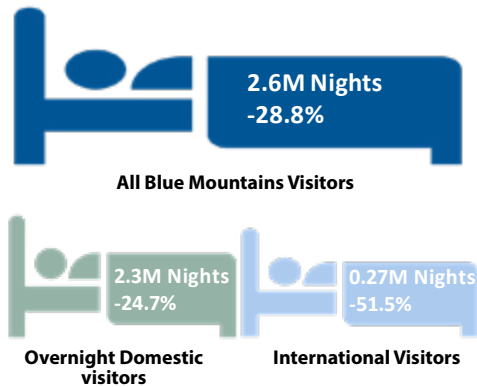
**Number 5**  
Construction  
8.1%

Sources: Australian Government, *Small Area Labour Markets 2020*; Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Data by Region 2016* Cat. No. 1410.0  
Geographic areas are based on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) as follows: **Blue Mountains:** Local Government Area (LGA). **Western Sydney:** Combined LGAs for Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Penrith, and Wollondilly. **West of the Mountains:** Combined Statistical Areas Level 3 (SA3) for Bathurst, Lithgow-Mudgee, and Orange

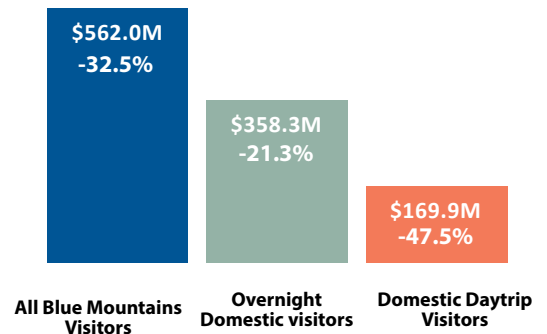


# Our Tourism Profile

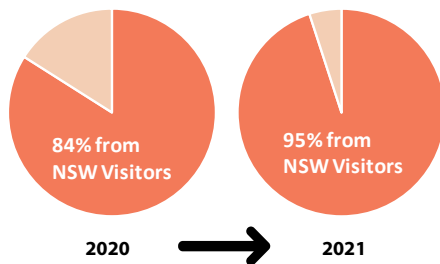
## September 2020 Nights & Year on Year Growth 2019-2020



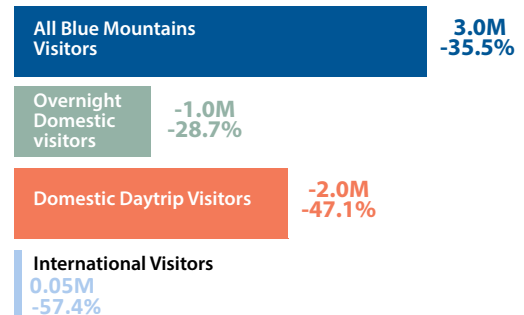
## Expenditure September 2020 & Year on Year Growth 2019-2020



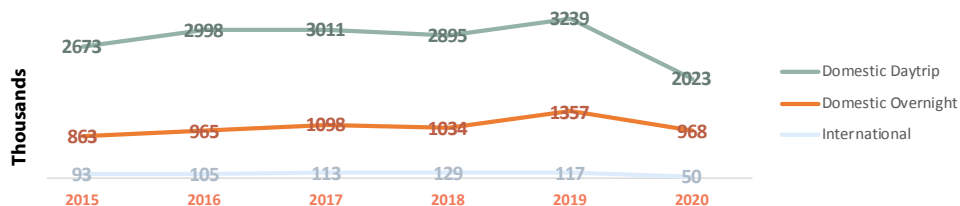
## % Value Spend by NSW Visitors



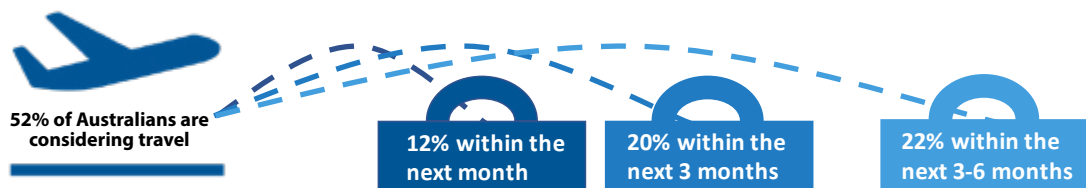
## September 2020 Visitors & Year on Year Growth 2019-2020



## Visitor Trends 2015-2020



## Travel Sentiment February 2021



Sources: Destination NSW, Westpac Tourism Expenditure Monitor 2021; Destination NSW, Westpac Tourism Expenditure Monitor 2020; Tourism Research Australia, Blue Mountains Visitor Profile 2020; Tourism Australia, Tourism Sentiment Tracker 2021



# 5 Challenges and Opportunities

Analysis was conducted to identify Blue Mountains-based strengths and weaknesses, and broader reaching opportunities and threats that could be addressed in this Strategy. Early consultation in 2016 also informed this SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. Below is a snap shot of those findings:

## Strengths and Weaknesses

The Blue Mountains lifestyle and culture, its place as a City within a World Heritage Area and the diversity of local businesses are unique strengths.

Tourism, when managed sustainably is a strength. On the downside, over dependency on a visitor economy can make the Blue Mountains vulnerable to global shocks and natural disasters. The Council is actively working to balance the finance of resident and visitor funded infrastructure and services to achieve a more sustainable position for the City. The Covid-19 2020 pandemic and the subsequent uptake on the associated Jobseeker program (4th highest in the state) demonstrates this point. Strength as a destination, while a positive, must be considered in light of the negative impacts that are often felt acutely in times of adversity such as the recent effects of COVID-19.

Like the broader community, the City of Blue Mountains has an ageing population. This is sometimes considered a weakness, but can also be a potential strength. The challenge is to achieve a healthy demographic balance, invest in health and aged care services for elderly residents while developing employment and education pathways for young people. We also need to ensure productive pathways for older retired residents to continue to contribute to our economy. The Blue Mountains has a high rate of volunteering (over 20%) where most other areas sit at around 13%. This reflects our skilled and committed community and our older contributing residents, an important asset for our region.

Local infrastructure and assets, including local roads, footpaths and community facilities, need to be well-planned and managed. Coordination of investment from Council and regional tourism associations will help improve visitor service, deliver sustainable tourism, improve town up-keep and enhance infrastructure outcomes for the community.

Specific improvements will also need to be made in the areas of transport and mobility, reducing reliance on private motor vehicles, encouraging active transport and improving public transport accessibility for local residents and visitors alike.

A strong, targeted Blue Mountains brand that champions our diverse small towns, our Creative industries and attracts specific tourism markets, such as eco-tourism and slow tourism could potentially reap benefits not only for the City, but for the broader region.

Both Local and State Government can play a role in reducing the 'red-tape' that can sometimes act as a deterrent for local business. Council can proactively increase transparency around sometimes confusing regulation and lower barriers associated with events in order to support a more vibrant economy. Diversification remains a guiding aspiration for the Blue Mountains. If we are to weather shocks and develop toward a truly resilient economy we must continue to strengthen diversification and encourage cross sectoral collaboration (for instance, between Creatives and tourism) to this end.





# Our Opportunities and Threats

The strategic location of the Blue Mountains presents both opportunities and threats. There is a need to actively address the challenges of Western Sydney growth and the new Aerotropolis to position the region as a hub for employment and commuters, and as a retreat destination. Regional investment can also grow as a result of promoting our strategic location and unique offer with the associated market opportunities, to position the Blue Mountains as an exciting region for government funding and commercial investment.

Domestic tourism is an area of opportunity with options to better promote the area as an accessible longer-stay destination and remote working location to leverage these new traveller trends. The rapid pace of change in technology and work patterns means that 'how' we work in the Blue Mountains is supported through improved connectivity, digital literacy, business diversification and education opportunities.

Our proximity to Sydney informs strong visitation, regional ingress of residents and good commuter pathways. However, it also means we are more commonly a day trip destination and have lost market share for overnight visitors to other areas.

The Blue Mountains is particularly prone to bushfires and other extreme weather events. We are challenged to reduce our carbon footprint and practise more sustainable development. Investment in key technologies including green homes, smart waste management and renewable energy will help to mitigate and manage our impact on the natural environment and improve our longer-term sustainability. It will also bolster local industry.

Like other local government areas the Blue Mountains currently feels the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 and will need to continue its economic recovery program to build long-term resilience. This could potentially be achieved through development of high potential industries, such as health and wellbeing, supporting innovation and flexible planning that can stimulate prosperity.

Conservation and sustainability are important to the Blue Mountains. Planetary Health in particular (the health of human beings and the state of the natural systems on which we depend) is also emerging as an area of opportunity. Implementation of innovative environmental management techniques, circular economy processes, green planning/building, and renewable technologies can also assist the City in becoming a hub for sustainable business and green industry. The Eco Tourism accreditation process presents an opportunity for the Blue Mountains to lead as a sustainable visitor destination. We already have some leaders of industry in water sensitive design, who are gaining recognition both nationally and internationally.



# 6

## Stakeholder Engagement

This strategy was informed by consultation with key stakeholders across the economy and tourism industry. This page presents a summary of the engagement process and key insights. The complete details of this engagement process are available in the accompanying document, Engagement Report: Economic Development & Tourism Strategy (April 2021).

### Stakeholders Included:



Community



Local Business  
Representatives



Tourism Industry  
Representatives



Regional  
Association

### Engagement Mechanisms:

1. Facilitated Workshops
2. Surveys
3. Interviews

### Engagement Outcomes:

- ✓ 188 Survey Responses
- ✓ 64 Workshop Participants
- ✓ 21 In-depth Interviews

**“Economic development in the mountains should mean a healthier, sustainable and more prosperous life for people living and working here.**

**We should produce a visitor guide for the region that focuses on our unique environment and outdoor experiences.**

**We need to establish a long-term plan for the management of assets and infrastructure that support both residents and visitors”**

### What is your vision for the Blue Mountains economy?

Welcoming Thriving Tourism  
**Natural Sustainability** business  
Cycling Local Creative Walking

### What do you think are the most significant economic challenges facing our community over the next 10-years?



12%  
Climate Change



10%  
Sustainability

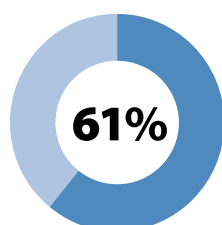
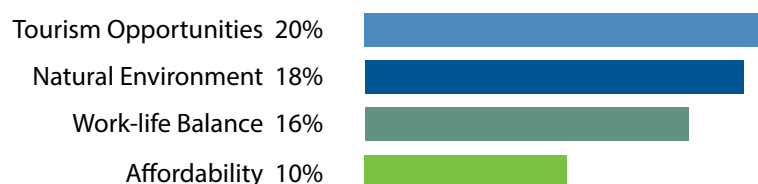


8%  
Tourism

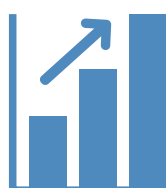


8%  
Employment

### What do you consider to be the Blue Mountains' key advantages as a place to invest or do business?



61% of respondents were optimistic/ very optimistic about economic growth in the Blue Mountains over the next 10-years



### What factors do you think will be the most important in driving economic growth in the Blue Mountains over the next 10-years?

1. Marketing and promoting the Blue Mountains brand
2. Leveraging our natural assets and location
3. Investing in local people, leveraging local talent, skills and expertise





# 7 Strategic Direction

We take a sustainable approach to economic development that enhances prosperity, innovation, creativity, prosperity and environmental outcomes for our community and for the broader region.

## Vision

### Foundational Principle

#### Sustainability

### Economic Values

Inclusive	Creative	Proactive	Resilient	Collaborative	Sustainable
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### Strategic Themes

Leveraging our competitive advantages	Planning our City	Fostering Partnership and Collaboration	Building a Connected City through Infrastructure
Nurture Innovation for Strategic Outcomes	Diversify the Economic base of the City to build resilience	Destination Management & the Visitor Economy	Investing in our People and Business

**Actions – including measuring and reporting on success**



# Case Studies

Each of these case studies reflects some of the leadership in our local business community and the significant achievements made in building Sustainable businesses in the World Heritage Area. From composting dehydrator to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) philanthropic programs, Blue Mountains businesses are leading in sustainable initiatives.

## Leura Garage

### Eco award winning restaurant

– article Ellen Hill, Deep Hill Media (BMT Magazine, April 2021)

A total grease and oil change for Leura Garage continues to modify industry standards, lower bills for the venue and pump up customer expectations. Its transformation from a contaminated car mechanic's site to an "eco-garage" retained vital structural elements of the building which give the restaurant a funky post-industrial ambience. Nods to the building's former life include an old car hoist remodelled into a bar and service counter, mechanics' tools embedded in the concrete floor, iron beams hanging from the roof, and mufflers and tyres stacked atop a dividing wall.

Today, diners sip double-filtered, ultra violet-zapped fresh rainwater from the 22,000 litre storage tank beneath the restaurant. Fresh chemical-free water supplies all facets of the restaurant from the bathrooms and dishwasher to the coffee machine, while a rooftop solar system harnesses green energy from the sun. An evacuated tube solar gas boosted system heats water for commercial use and 300m of hot water piping in the slab transfers heat into the thermal mass of the cement floor.

*"It's important for us to talk about our environmental credentials because customers care about the environment and expect us to be socially responsible as well, especially when we live in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area surrounded by pristine wilderness," said Leura Garage owner James Howarth. "While Leura Garage customers focus on the great food we serve and the regional beverages we stock, which are also part of our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing our food miles, they trust that we operate within that ethos in everything we do."*

The eco award-winning restaurant also features fans rather than airconditioning, a huge skylight to boost natural light, LED and fluorescent lighting, energy and water efficient bathroom fixtures and low emitting paint. Future eco measures include a state-of-the-art compost system to churn through organic waste each week and halve the amount of waste going to landfill, after which the composted material will go back to the fresh produce supplier to enrich the soil which grew the original vegetables.





## Scenic World Shared

### Scenic World's Philanthropic program

Scenic World's Shared is Scenic World's philanthropic program committed to sustaining the local community and protecting the Blue Mountains for future generations. Developed with the input of visitors, staff and the community, the Shared program gives back to the Blue Mountains to support our community and World Heritage-listed environment. Built on a framework for future giving across three key pillars – community, education and environment – Scenic World Shared builds the capacity of the Blue Mountains so we can share our community and environment with everyone, today and tomorrow.

### Our partners

We have handpicked partners which share similar values and vision for the future; whose work supports future generations, helps our community to grow in a sustainable way, and preserves our pristine part of the world.

**Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute** - Our flagship partnership with BMWHI allows us to learn more about our World Heritage-listed backyard and help to preserve its natural beauty.

- **The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal** - We are working with FRRR to provide targeted grants that will have a meaningful impact on our community.

- **Western Sydney University** - Our partnership with Western Sydney University supports local youth to take their studies in tourism and environmental science to the next level.

- **Schools Plus & Katoomba High School (KHS)** - Partnering with Schools Plus will help us unlock the potential of students at KHS and support their future development. Working with partners will allow us to achieve more, and have a lasting impact on the people who form the backbone of our community. Visit [www.scenicworldshared.com.au](http://www.scenicworldshared.com.au) for details.



## Fantastic Aussie Tours

### Fat zero emissions first for bus company (From Gazette Article)

In 2017, one of the oldest tourism vehicle operators in the country has become the first tourism operator and transport service in Australia to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to a big fat zero. Katoomba-based Fantastic Aussie Tours (FAT), which has operated in the Blue Mountains since 1974, is the first certified 100 per cent carbon neutral bus charter transport service in Australia under the Australian Government's Carbon Neutral Program.

Its Blue Mountains Explorer Bus business, which operates a fleet of four distinctive red double-decker sightseeing buses, was the first tourism operator/transport service in the country to be certified. Fantastic Aussie Tours and Blue Mountains Explorer Bus was also the first in the country to operate a certified carbon neutral bus and coach fleet. FAT managing director Mr Cronshaw said as well as going through the stringent certification process, the company had also signed the pledge to join the Climate Neutral Now initiative run by the United Nations.

Most importantly, certification meant FAT and Explorer Bus were part of the carbon neutral supply chain, so other businesses striving to reduce their carbon footprint would not have to count the cost of the service in their own carbon inventory when using the travel charter service.

*“This is different from programs that, say, some airlines run, where they allow customers to pay to offset their emissions.”*

*“We actually offset the emissions for them.”*

*While there was only a handful of carbon neutral products and services in Australia (Fantastic Aussie Tours will be number 15 and 29 on the list of organisations), the number was growing.*

*“Obviously we're very proud of our carbon neutral status and it makes business sense for us, but it's about more than just bragging rights and getting one up on our competitors.”*

*“We have been richly blessed to work and play in this region with its wilderness areas and fresh air when others in the world struggle everyday with the effects of chronic air pollution, overpopulation and lack of green spaces.”*

*“It's the way of the future and the four million people who visit the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area each year expect it of us.”*

To achieve carbon neutral certification, the company calculated its greenhouse inventory (carbon footprint) for Explorer Bus and FAT including items such as fuel emissions, on-site energy usage like water and electricity at its North Katoomba depot and Explorer Bus shop at Katoomba railway station, consumables, marketing materials, waste, fleet maintenance, staff commute and the life-cycle emissions of each bus in its fleet from manufacture to disposal.

The company, which was independently audited to the international standard, then neutralised carbon emissions by buying more carbon offsets than the amount of its emissions.

It has also implemented a strategy to reduce its future carbon footprint including switching to carbon neutral products and services where possible, reducing waste, improving recycling rates and investigating solar power.

## Hotel Etico, Mount Victoria

### Australian first in Mount Victoria (From Gazette article 2 December 2020)

Mt Victoria Manor has become the home of Australia's first social enterprise hotel staffed by hospitality trainees with intellectual disabilities supported by industry professionals.

The manor was built in 1876, by John R Fairfax, founder of The Sydney Morning Herald, as a Mountains retreat. Co-seed funding for the operation is now being supplied by the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation in what the foundation calls a *"compelling cycle of Fairfax family legacy"*.

*"Securing the support of the Fairfax family was a happy and welcome co-incidence ... a kind of sliding doors moment,"* founder and director of Hotel Etico Australia, Andrea Comastri said.

Founder of the first Hotel Etico in Italy, Alex Toselli brought the vision to Australia in 2017 when he met Mr Comastri. Mr Comastri loved the hotel when he visited the Mountains and helped ensure \$500,000 in seed money would come from VFFF and the other philanthropists, Paul and Sandra Salteri. Growing up in Italy, Mr Comastri had a friend who had down syndrome and was one of the few children to understand him."

A social inclusion project that changes lives: The vision for Hotel Etico came to life in 2009 in Northern Italy with a young man with down syndrome, Niccolo Vallese started working as an intern at his local restaurant. Niccolo was soon flourishing and the head chef Antonio De Benedetto realised his star intern's potential. It became the inspiration for the first Hotel Etico (Albergo Etico), in Asti in 2015. By the end of 2020 six hotels will be operating world-wide, with more in 2021. The story is even being made into a film. Mt Victoria's Hotel Etico opened last month. Recruitment for the first group of six trainees has begun.

Mr Comastri has 25 years experience in the health and disability field and is excited about the project. He calls Mt Victoria *"the sweet spot"*.

*"The area is stunning, there is a thriving community. From the very beginning we were convinced it was the perfect location."*

The hotel, like others in the chain, will offer a work, training and live-in program for people with intellectual disabilities aimed at providing them with a pathway to open employment.

They will start in February, with Niccol's restaurant opening a month later. The official opening is expected in winter. They are leasing the manor, but hope eventually to purchase it.





# Our Vision for Economic Development & Tourism

The vision articulates our aspirations for the City. It has been developed with input from stakeholders and in view of our current challenges and aspirations. It is underpinned by our Foundational principle of Sustainability and its thread should be reflected in our Strategic Themes, Values and ultimately in our Action Plan and its Measures.

Our vision for this Economic Development and Tourism Strategy is that by 2035, the Blue Mountains economy is strong, diversified and sustainable. There is increased employment, education and learning opportunities; our economy is inclusive, connected and thriving. We welcome visitors to our City and are recognised as a leader in sustainable tourism, planetary health education, and destination management.

We aspire for the Blue Mountains economy to become:



A Hub of Creative Industry



A Sustainability Champion



A Benchmark Wellbeing Economy



A Destination for Local Business & Sustainable Industry



An Innovation Leader



A Centre of Excellence for Education



An Exemplar of Sustainable Tourism



A Place of Partnerships & Collaboration



This is the  
**ORIGINAL  
HURLEY'S**  
butcher's block  
(circa 1940)

## Specials

## FROM THE FREEZER

PORK/LAMB OR PORK-VEAL MINCE  
CHICKEN MINCE 15.99/kg 17.99/kg  
(500g packs)

BEEF OR CHICKEN STOCK  
(500ml sachets) \$5 ea

Duck \$3.50  
Kangaroo 1.00 E

Kangaroo Loin Fillets 35.99/kg

Wild Rabbits

Quail x6 (Jumbo) \$40/pkt

Spatchcock \$11 ea

Venison Striploin 569.97kg  
 preservative Free Source

Resistant rice sausages  
(500g pack) 17.99/kg

### EGG RICES SAUCE

\$5.99ea







# 8 Economic Values

This Strategy is both outcomes-focused and values-based. It charts the forward course of our economy, and sets the values, which will guide our economic journey.

As economic conditions change, as new opportunities and risks emerge, six core values will focus our economic planning, policies and programs and inform our response.

These values were informed by local priorities identified in community and stakeholder feedback. Many of these values are also reflected in the Key Directions of Council's Community Strategic Plan.

## **Inclusive**

We value our diverse population, from those who have lived here for millennia to our newest migrants. Our approach to economic & tourism development will focus on inclusion, accessibility and equity. We will contribute to an economy that enhances liveability, economic prosperity and holistic outcomes across demographics.

## **Creative**

We value the creativity of our community. Our approach to economic and tourism development will support artists and innovators. We will generate opportunities for cultural expression, innovation and creative livelihoods in the Blue Mountains.

## **Proactive**

We value an economy that supports sustainable entrepreneurship. We will foster flexibility, ambition and the entrepreneurial spirit. We will build an innovation ecosystem to support long-term viability in the Blue Mountains.

## **Resilient**

We value economic security and self-sufficiency. We will seek to tackle existing and emerging economic challenges. We will foster economic diversification and make the Blue Mountains an enviable place to live, study, work, play and invest.

## **Collaborative**

We value strong partnerships and networks, and our economy is driven by the expertise and energy of our Community. Collaboration, partnership and investment attraction will inform long-term success.

## **Sustainable**

We value the needs of our community members and our World Heritage environment. Our approach to economic and tourism development will be guided by the principle of Quadruple Bottom line articulated in our Community Strategic Plan 2035. We will work holistically for the opportunity, wellbeing, rights and interests of our community, and for the preservation of our World Heritage natural and built environment.



# 9 Strategic Themes

Theme 1	<p><b>Leverage our Competitive Advantages: Planetary Health product development WHA, Sustainable Tourism, City of the Arts, Creative Industries</b></p> <p>We will harness our unique natural, locational and competitive advantages to deliver the Planetary Health agenda. Sustainable Tourism, Health and Education and Creative Industry initiatives will drive a thriving local economy.</p>
Theme 2	<p><b>Partnerships &amp; Collaboration: Fostering , Influencing, Advocating and Partnering</b></p> <p>We will influence, advocate and partner with governments, business and the community to deliver improved economic outcomes.</p>
Theme 3	<p><b>Nurture Innovation for Strategic Outcomes</b></p> <p>We will maximise the potential of our assets and places to grow local knowledge and networks to deliver sustainable economic development.</p>
Theme 4	<p><b>Diversify the Economic Base of the City to Build Resilience</b></p> <p>We will complete a targeted analysis of the local economy to understand and communicate its potential and inform future investment choices.</p>
Theme 5	<p><b>Build a Connected City through Infrastructure - (Built, digital &amp; transport)</b></p> <p>We will prioritise infrastructure delivery to secure optimal economic returns, through Council investments, grant programs, other levels of government and partnerships.</p>
Theme 6	<p><b>Investing in our People and Business</b></p> <p>We will enable through training delivery and continuous improvements in our procurement processes. We will also foster business to business opportunities through network facilitation and key projects.</p>
Theme 7	<p><b>Destination Management and the Visitor Economy</b></p> <p>We will encourage and enhance a sustainable visitor economy.</p>
Theme 8	<p><b>Planning our City</b></p> <p>We will review our regulatory environment and deliver initiatives to unlock the potential of our towns, villages and employment lands. The Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 provides our long-term land use aspirations for the City.</p>





# 10

## Actions & Measurement

In this section we set out the mechanisms proposed to deliver our strategic aim, set out across a range of Themes together with SMART (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed) measures. Measures are prioritised through short and medium term actions (1 to 5 year term) identified to maximise the local effectiveness and benefit to the local economy, with year one of the strategy commencing 2021/22. Longer- term effects will be measured through the planned review of this Strategy in 2025/26, setting a renewed direction.

Measures identified in this strategy are complemented by a range of strategic directions captured in related Blue Mountains City Council documents, referenced in the tables. Most notably these include the Community Strategic Plan, the Local Strategic Planning Statement, the Creative Strategy and the Events Strategic Plan.

In developing the actions and measures set out against each theme it is worthwhile to note that the Governance Review 2020 identified a renewed role for the delivery of Economic Development and Tourism for Blue Mountains City Council. Council had a limited role in the delivery and reporting of such initiatives prior to this review, adopted May 2020, and as a result Council acknowledges the need to establish appropriate baseline data sets through the establishment phase to better understand and report upon economic effect of investments made. The SMART measures identified in this section are general in nature and will be refined as the framework is progressively developed and delivered, establishing and reporting key economic dashboard data sets to evidence the efficacy of the program.

An opportunity exists to establish a number of baselines through the Annual Survey of residents, notably for “Place based” initiatives flagged in the strategy and these will be examined in the early phases of roll-out. Consideration will also be given to the implementation of a Bi-annual Business survey to elicit key feedback from businesses in the Blue Mountains to inform our programming.

### **Note acronyms used in tables:**

CSP	Community Strategic Plan 2017
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
CS	Creative Strategy 2020
NTE	Katoomba Night Time Economy Study 2017
	Blue Mountains Economic Statement - 2019

## Theme 1

# Leveraging our competitive advantages

**We will harness our unique natural, locational and community advantages to deliver the Planetary Health agenda. Sustainable Tourism, Health and Education and Creative Industry initiatives will drive a thriving local economy.**

Key strategies include:

- Promoting the competitive advantages of the Blue Mountains
- Strengthening key industries and economic sectors
- Expanding the nature and scope of our competitive advantages



Theme 1	Action	Year 1 2 3 4 5-10					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
	1.1 Develop and implement a Place Brand to encourage tourism & investment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Place Brand Audit completed, Framework developed, Place Brand Developed and adopted by Council. Brand implemented.	CSP 6.2d
	1.2 Market & Promote: Local campaigns, MTNS MADE, Unique Offerings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	New campaign delivered in Yr 1. Annual performance reported.	CSP 6.2 CSP 6.2d
	1.3 Secure Ecotourism Accreditation - to become a world leading ecotourism destination	✓					Engage stakeholders in accreditation process and develop viable plan. Accreditation Achieved	CSP 6.4
	1.4 Develop Blue Mountains as Lead in establishing Planetary Health Centre		✓	✓			Develop plan for BMs to be recognised by UNESCO as a Centre for Planetary Health. Secure recognition Yr 2, implement Yr 3.	LSPS (1.17, 2.16, 3.15 & 7.12)
	1.5 Developing Case Studies to Showcase Leadership and Innovation in Planetary Health		✓	✓			Guidelines for business to be developed and promoted YR 1 & 2; adoption measured YR 3)	
	1.6 Support development of more Slow Tourism Initiatives - Establish Base-line data	✓					Target visitor profile data established (Yr 1) baseline data of visitations developed (Yr 1) from existing DNSW & TRA  Develop a plan to enable slow tourism.	CSP 6.4c
	1.7 Support Film Friendly NSW Initiatives - including Delivery of a Film Blue Mountains Prospectus		✓	✓			Film Guideline Developed (Yr2), Prospectus (Yr3), Number of large Filming Apps approved.	
	1.8 Strengthen the Creative Industries Cluster - Enhance/ foster/strengthen existing offerings and further invest in creative industry projects	✓	✓	✓	✓		Host Creative Industry Summit to inform industry development plans  Options paper and recommendations provided to Council  Endorsed recommendations deliver	CSP 6.2a

Theme 1	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	1.9 Support the development of economic enablers with Traditional Owners, providing local employment opportunities and product development through the development of a targeted Economic Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓		Yr 2 – project scoped for Indigenous Economic Strategy Yr 3 Engagement and development of Strategy, Yr3 developed action plan and measures	CSP 6.1d LSPS 7.14
	1.10 Collaborate across Council to investigate opportunities for artists in residence program within the LGA		✓	✓	✓		Options and recommendations presented to Council by Yr 3	LSPS 4.9
	1.11 Collaborate across Council to transform the public domain and create villages that are safe, welcoming and inclusive via implementation of the City's Cultural Strategic Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓		Public art event delivered and outcomes reported e.g. Increased visitation in villages at night	LSPS 4.10
	1.12 To deliver a Bi-annual business survey			✓				

## Theme 2

# Partnerships & Fostering Collaboration

**We will influence, advocate and partner with governments, business and the community to deliver improved economic outcomes**

Key strategies include:

- Modernising key governance arrangements
- Coordinating delivery of a long-term advocacy plan
- Identifying and enacting high-value partnership options



Theme 2	Action	Year 1 2 3 4 5-10					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
	2.1 Collaborate with local tourism organisations on product development & delivery		✓	✓	✓	✓	Gap analysis on product completed (Yr2) Baseline set for product development areas Priority actions identified and agreed by Yr 2	CSP 6.1e
	2.2 Leverage the Western Sydney City Deal to accelerate priority economic outcomes for the BMs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Review and optimise BMCC's approach to engaging with the City Deal and the Western Parkland Councils, by Yr 1 Annual reporting of economic benefits realised via the City Deal	LSPS 7.10 & 7.11
	2.3 Collaborate with State Government to improve Health and Education Outcomes and convert emerging opportunities		✓	✓	✓	✓	Case study analysis Develop shared economic framework and priorities endorsed by Yr 2	CSP 6.2 CSP 6.2b LSPS 1.17
	2.4 Work with the education/training sector to increase pathways, participation and attainment		✓	✓	✓	✓	Host education and training summit to identify issues and opportunities, by Yr 2 Options and recommendations to Council by Yr 2 Priority/endorsed actions delivered	CSP 6.2a CSP 6.2b LSPS 7.13 LSPS 2.16
	2.5 Identify and form high-value economic partnerships which advance this EDTS Creative Industries, Blue Mountains Wedding Collective, Blue Mountains Beverage Collective, Film Industry, WSU, TAFE, Torrens, Monash, EPA, MRG, Health, Disability sector and NFP sector and other sectors with potential for impact on the economy through investment		✓	✓	✓	✓	Economic partnership assessment report provided to Council by Yr 2 Delivery of key recommendations	Creative Strategy 1.2 & 1.3

Theme 2	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	2.6 Support data collection/sharing that promotes local and regional economic outcomes - BMT, MRG, TAFE, Health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Identify and assess data collection/sharing opportunities by Yr 1 Delivery of key data sharing priorities	
	2.7 Strengthen collaboration with local business to advance our economic and tourism priorities - Improve resilience - Digital literacy and physical accessibility		✓	✓	✓	✓	Review and modernise collaboration mechanisms by Yr 2 Identification of key Council/business collaboration priorities and actions	
	2.8 Foster national and international opportunities through local, state and commonwealth networks		✓	✓	✓	✓	Promote local successes, review local business/innovation/entrepreneurial awards	



## Theme 3

# Nurture Innovation for Strategic Outcomes

**Maximise the potential of our assets and places to grow local knowledge and deliver locally appropriate economic development**

Key strategies include:

- Developing local innovation networks
- Promoting the innovation potential of Blue Mountains
- Building local innovation capacity and culture



Theme 3	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	3.1 Deliver Co-work Space/s & support networks - establish support programs early to position for success (See action below) - explore partnerships with local co-work space operators to maximise potential		✓	✓	✓	✓	Baseline data established (Yr 1) Annual business survey feedback. Increased annual co-working space membership numbers. Opportunities for future growth examined.	CP 6.3b CSP 6.3a
	3.2 Develop SMART precinct to trial tech in BMCC context, including footfall monitoring		✓	✓			SMART Precinct development successfully trialled in Katoomba and outcomes reported in Yr 3	CSP 6.3a LSPS 7.15
	3.3 Support development of the circular economy in the Blue Mountains		✓	✓			Circular economy framework endorsed Yr 2 Deliver key initiatives and pilots, including Main Street Project and online toolkits Yr 3	LSPS 7.16
	3.4 Partner with State Agencies to deliver impactful programs fostering entrepreneurialism within local industry	✓					Increase in uptake based on 2020 levels of engagement with Business Connect and the Entrepreneurs Programme	
	3.5 Explore options for strengthening Blue Mountains' innovation networks		✓	✓	✓		Engagement with local innovation sector by Yr 2 Options and recommendations to Council by Yr 3	



## Theme 4

# Diversify the economic base of the city to build resilience

**Complete a full analysis of the local economy to understand and communicate its potential and inform future investment choices**

Key strategies include:

- Identifying sectors with high economic development potential
- Supporting new modes of working and doing business
- Leveraging the economic opportunities of the digital revolution

Theme 4	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	4.1 Deliver an industry Gap Analysis study to inform future investment planning		✓				Develop Industry Gap Analysis (Yr 2) Develop action plan (Yr 2)	
	4.2 Develop a Blue Mountains 'Investment Prospectus' to encourage and provide investment opportunities within the Blue Mountains		✓	✓	✓	✓	Develop Investment Prospectus (Yr2) to aid investment attraction from Governments and other sectors. Develop baseline data from Remplan (Yr 2) Increased investment from new businesses	CSP 6.2a LSPS 4.7
	4.3 Promote growth sectors to harness interest & inward investment - Welcome Packs for businesses		✓	✓	✓	✓	Welcome packs developed (Yr 2) Baseline data set for number of packs delivered	CSP 6.1
	4.4 Work with employers to support remote, smart and/ or flexible working options for residents	✓	✓	✓			Baseline data developed on remote working (Yr 1 & 2), developed reporting framework from co-working spaces (Yr 1 & 2) Growth strategy developed (Yr 3)	CSP 6.3b
	4.5 Identify industry clusters and future growth sectors for investment and activation, such as boutique beverage producers, film industry, wedding industry cluster etc.		✓	✓	✓	✓	Develop framework around identifying clusters using established data sources such as Remplan (Yr 1), Develop strategy for targeted investment and activation (Yr 2), Action Plan developed (Yr 2/3)	LSPS 4.7
	4.6 Develop a sustainability metric – foundational measurement for Planetary Health – by which we measure our economic successes not only fiscally, but also environmentally (variety of measures) and with reference to impacts and benefits to wellbeing indicators		✓	✓	✓	✓	Framework in place by Yr 2 Annual report against key metrics	CSP 6.1a





## Theme 5

# Building a connected city through infrastructure

**Prioritise infrastructure delivery to secure optimal economic returns, through Council investments, grant programs, other levels of government and partnerships**

Key strategies include:

- Advocating for high-priority infrastructure investment
- Leveraging smart technology to enhance local assets
- Enhancing local digital connectivity and transport mobility

Theme 5	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	5.1 Advocate for enhanced internet and cellular connectivity across the City		✓			✓	Identify key connectivity gaps and issues by Yr 2 Advocacy plan in place by Yr 2	CSP 6.3b LSPS 7.10 & 7.15
	5.2 Support housing diversity & affordability. Develop a housing diversity and affordability framework for the City		✓	✓		✓	Identify and assess key housing issues by Yr2 Framework in place by Yr 3	LSPS 6.13
	5.3 Partner with Transport for NSW to establish core accessible infrastructure to foster movement of visitors throughout the region	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Joint transport priorities identified by Yr 2 Key transport projects delivered (including bus layovers, RV parking, and transport hubs) from Destination NSW baseline data sets. PIP drafted YR , adopted YR 2	CSP 6.4a (6403) LSPS 2.18
	5.4 Maintain, enhance & invest in tourism infrastructure		✓	✓	✓	✓	Visitor Servicing Strategy developed identifying opportunities for Visitor Investment (Yr 2) Action plan developed (Yr 3 / ongoing). Grant funding applied for as available.	CSP 6.4b LSPS 8.6 & 8.7
	5.5 Seek funding sources to incorporate additional multi-purpose performance, teaching and creation spaces within existing Council assets throughout the LGA			✓	✓	✓	Baseline data developed of available spaces via audit of Council and private assets (Yr 2), framework developed to identify spaces and investment partners (Yr 2-3)	CSP 3.4a (3402) LSPS 4.11
	5.6 Support local business and industry focus on sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Increased number of Eco accredited businesses using baseline data (on-going), Identified opportunities through targeted Research and Investment attraction package (see above)	LSPS 4.7
	5.7 Investigate options for investment in infrastructure to support an evolving night-time through wayfinding signage, supporting alfresco dining options and lighting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Visitor Servicing Framework developed (Yr 1) Increase in overnight stays (DNSW data) and evening activation – measured and reported	Katoomba Night Time Economy Study 2017

## Theme 6

# Investing in our people and businesses

**Enabled through training delivery and continued process improvements in our procurement. We will also foster business-to-business opportunities through network facilitation.**

Key strategies include:

- Fostering participation in education and training
- Promoting economic inclusion and opportunity for all
- Collaborating with the community to advance economic priorities



Theme 6	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	6.1 Complete Local Procurement Policy & implement to increase Council investment + public report		✓	✓	✓	✓	Policy adopted and baselines set. Reporting undertaken annually	CSP 6.1a
	6.2 Foster local employment opportunities (and reduce the need to commute outside of the BMs) - facilitating networks between industry and education - Track projects to see success - Support remote, smart and/or flexible working options	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Reduced % of resident workers traveling outside of the area to work – based on ABS Census data 2016	
	6.3 Encourage local businesses to do business with other local businesses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Increased B2B networks based on bi-annual business survey feedback data to commence 2021	CSP 6.1b
	6.4 Develop / foster Circular Economy		✓	✓	✓	✓	Guidelines and principles developed for Circular Economy. Main street project trialed Year 2. Program developed and promoted Yr 3. Baseline data developed and reporting frameworks established (Yr 4).	CSP 6.1a
	6.5 Foster night-time economy to strengthen sense of vibrancy and vitality in town centres and key visitation precincts to provide more reasons to extend their stay - Inclusivity - Accessibility - Liveability		✓	✓	✓	✓	Undertake pilot project delivery e.g. Food truck trial, busking, activation program and report outcomes	Katoomba Night Time Economy Study 2017
	6.6 Develop an Indigenous Economic Development Strategy and Identify Indigenous product development opportunities			✓	✓	✓	Partnerships forged with local Indigenous community, State and Federal agencies securing funding for mentoring and product development based on baseline data to be established	CS 1.5,3.4

## Theme 7

# Destination Management and the Visitor Economy

**To encourage and enhance a sustainable visitor economy**

Key strategies include:

- Building and promoting our tourism brand
- Enhancing visitor attractions and experiences
- Increasing the sustainability of our tourism sector

Theme 7	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	7.1 Deliver a coordinated approach to Destination Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Destination Management Plan (DMP) refreshed - Action Plan from DMP developed with identified joint responsibilities specifically through a Memorandum of Understanding with Blue Mountains Tourism	CSP 6.4
	7.2 Strengthen Governance and Relationships	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver a tourism governance structure that enhances the delivery of the DMP with BMT and other tourism stakeholders - Identify projects through DMP for collaboration across sectors & work collaboratively with State and Federal agencies	CSP 6.1e LSPS 8.1 & 8.13
	7.3 Creating World Class Visitor Experiences and Events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Bookable Creative and Authentic Experiences are developed, including a green pledge that underpins and supports brand  Increase wellness and health pillar	CSP 6.4c, CS 4.6
	7.4 Undertake a Visitor Services Review	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Visitor Service Review complete, identifying actions that provide sustainable Visitor Servicing	CSP 6.4c
	7.5 Undertake industry research relevant to the destination	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consistent effective baseline data developed for Visitor research, Potential visitor profiles completed and targeted across industry in partnership with local, state and federal agencies.	CSP 6.4c
	7.6 Review the Visitor Investment Strategic Plan (VIISP) 2018	✓					Develop sustainable visitation outcomes based on VIISP	CSP 6.4a





## Theme 8

# Planning our City

**We will review our regulatory environment and deliver initiatives to unlock the potential of our towns, villages and employment lands. The Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040 provides our long-term land use aspirations for the City.**

Key strategies include:

- Working to improve City planning policies and processes for business
- Foster improved dialogue between planners and business via events and referral processes
- Working with NSW Government and Planning and Development to improve planning outcomes
- Preparing Masterplans with integrated economic outcomes

Theme 8	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	8.1 Conduct a review of 'employment lands' and other opportunity sites within the LGA to encourage business diversity and investment attraction		✓	✓			Deliver employment lands review together with option paper for council's consideration	
	8.2 Enable economic activation through key policy developments	✓	✓				Policies developed to support activation (Yr 1) and increase in visitation through key villages (using Tourism Research Australia and Transport NSW data)	NTE
	8.3 Multi-year DA for Events (refer to Events Strategy)		✓	✓			Investigate Multi-year event DA's, develop and adopt	
	8.4 Work with State Agencies to streamline approval processes for events and temporary uses for events in the LGA and amendments to Standard Local Environment Plan and local controls (as evidenced <i>Night-time Economy Act 2020</i> )			✓	✓		Event undertaken within LGA aligned with priorities of sustainable tourism, creative arts and Planetary Health (Yr 3) to become signature events	LSPS 4.4
	8.5 Adoption and implementation of the Katoomba Master Plan		✓	✓	✓	✓	Adoption and delivery of the Katoomba Master plan including the Southern Scenic Escarpment	
	8.6 Master planning of Towns & Villages		✓	✓	✓	✓	Deliver Master Plan rolling program delivered with outcomes adopted by the council	
	8.7 Review and update Alcohol-free Zones	✓	✓				Alcohol-free Zones Reviewed & provisions updated	
	8.8 Work with State Agencies to improve creative opportunities within the NSW Planning System e.g. Collaborate with NSW Dept of Planning, Industry and Environment to explore and unlock policy options to provide studios and makers spaces within town centres		✓	✓	✓	✓	State Planning updates delivered to council, enabling an increase in mix-used creative workshops and retail outlets within town centres and villages	LSPS 4.5

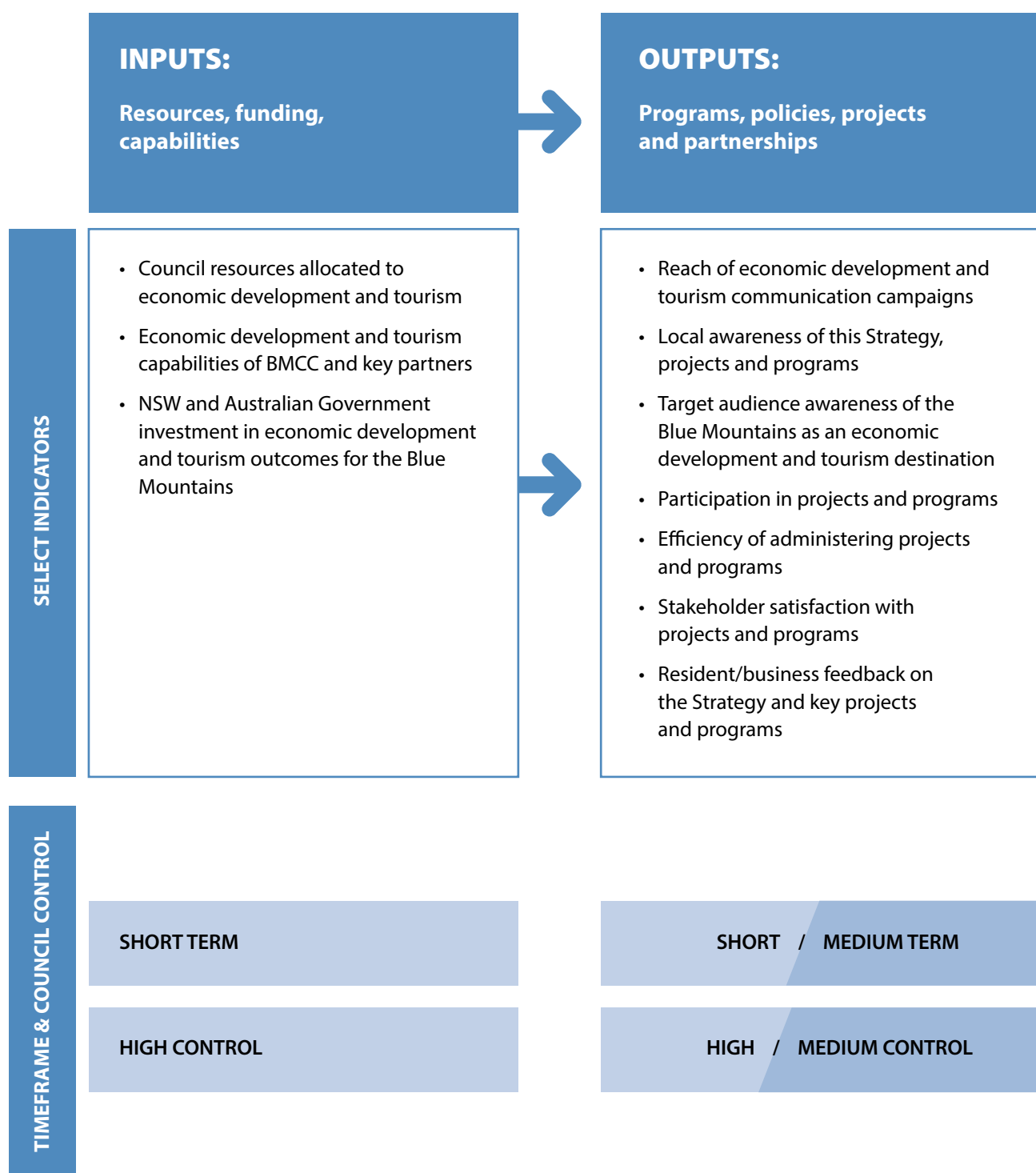
Theme 8	Action	Year					SMART Measurement	BMCC Reference Document
		1	2	3	4	5-10		
	8.9 Develop a Priority Infrastructure Plan	✓	✓				Deliver a Priority Infrastructure Plan associated with the VIISP	
	8.10 Develop Prospectus of Adaptive Reuse of Council and Private owned assets for potential investment		✓	✓			Number of DA's submitted involving change of use and adaptive reuse of existing assets within the LGA	
	8.11 Council to deliver continuous improvement in DA service for Blue Mountains business, and foster closer working arrangements with industry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Enhanced engagement with business community via communications and briefing sessions. Improved qualitative feedback and DA turnaround times and performance in State tracked and reported	

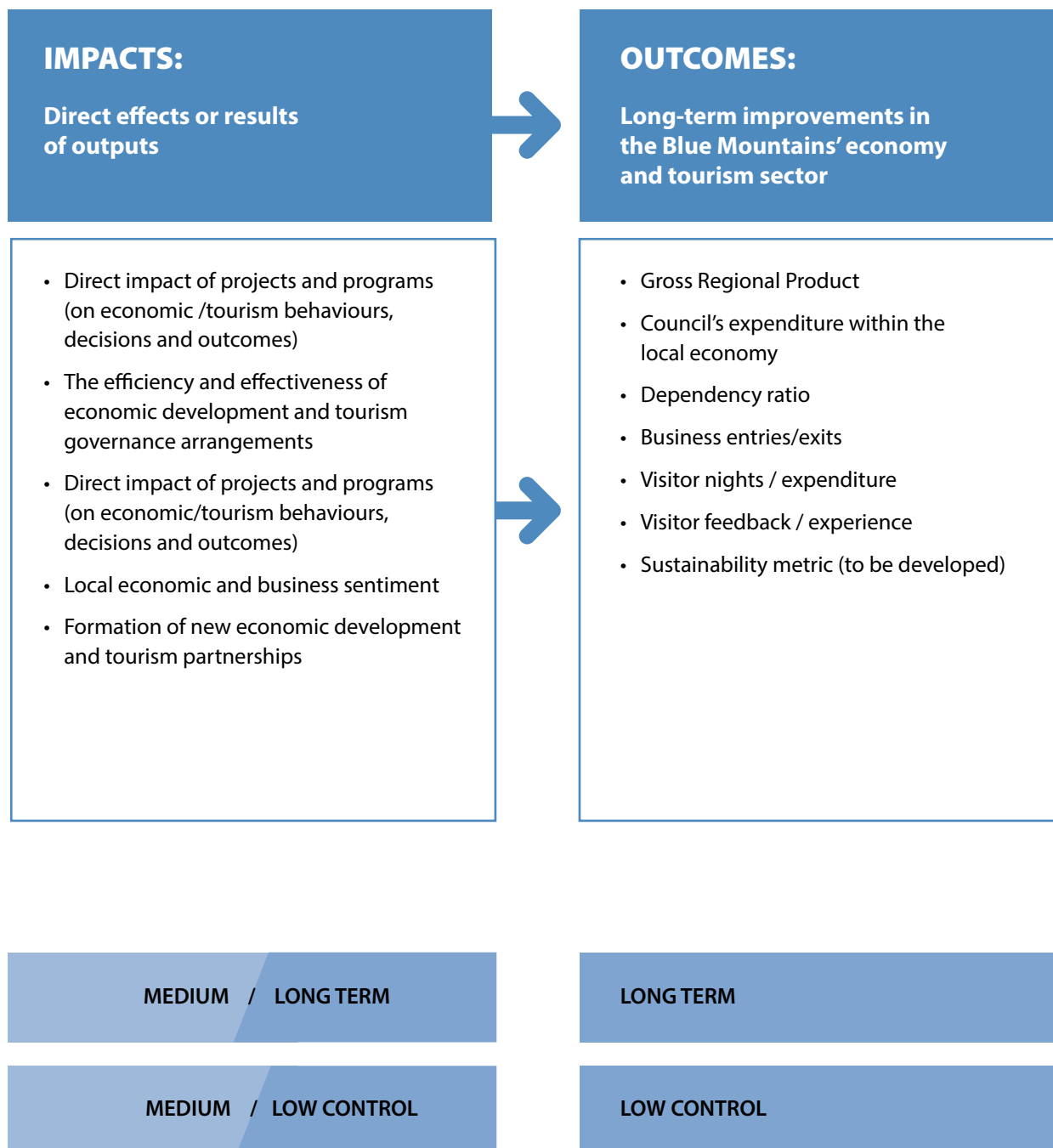




# Measuring our success

Blue Mountains City Council will take a holistic approach to monitoring and measuring the success of this Strategy. This approach, summarised below, covers the entire performance continuum, and includes a diverse range of performance indicators measured over the short, medium and long-term.











# Appendix: Economic Data

Note: Trend Growth is compound growth from the base year to latest year.

## Population Statistics

Metric	Units	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW	Latest year
Total Population	People	79,195	1,062,041	134,674	8,167,532	2020
Total Population Compound Growth	%	0.1	2.2	0.7	1.4	2015 - 2020
Median Age	Years	44	34.4	38.1	37.5	2019
Diversity - % Overseas Heritage	%	16.8	21.6	8.4	27.6	2019
% ATSI Population	%	2.4	3.2	5.5	2.9	2019

The statistics above give a snapshot of the Blue Mountains population. The Blue Mountains' population is older, seen in its higher median age, and has a lower growth rate than its equivalent neighbours and NSW as a whole. It is also less diverse than NSW and has a lower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) population.



## Income Statistics

Metric	Units	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW	Latest year / Base year
GRP	\$ Million	2,845	51,522	23,194	625,270	2020
GRP Compound Growth	%	0.7	2.4	na	2.3	2011 - 2020
Median Income	\$ per annum	48,325	51,142	48,078	48,700	2017
Median Income Compound Growth	%	1.8	3.1	2.4	2.1	2014 - 2017
HH disposable income	\$ weekly	911	937	812	891	2016
SEIFA	Decile*	9	8	6	-	2016
Gini coefficient	Ratio	0.462	0.404	0.461	0.496	2017

The statistics above depict the relative income wellbeing of the Blue Mountains, reflecting three aspects of economic health. Firstly, GRP for the Blue Mountains is relatively lower than its neighbouring areas, reflecting its overall smaller geographic and economic size. Median income however is similar to NSW as a whole. Further, both GRP and Median income growth rates are lower than their neighbours and NSW, reflecting slowing growth for the Blue Mountains. Secondly, prior to the pandemic, the average Blue Mountains household disposable income sat slightly above the NSW average, potentially reflecting a lower cost of living in the region. This is corroborated by the lower levels of mortgage and rental stress in the region (see Housing data). Thirdly, measures of inequality show the Blue Mountains is relatively not disadvantaged. The Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas (SEIFA) shows that the Blue Mountains LGA is in the ninth decile, representing relatively low disadvantage. The Gini coefficient also reflects lower income inequality in the Blue Mountains compared to NSW as a whole.



## Housing

Metric	Units	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW	Latest year
Median House Price	\$	654,000	700,000	409,000	650,000	2019
Median House Price Compound Growth	%	8.2	5.7	3.6	4.4	2014-2019
Housing Mortgage Stress	%	7.4	10.4	5.6	7.4	2016
Housing Rental Stress	%	8.4	11.9	10.0	12.9	2016
Internet Connection at Home	%	87.6	84.2	77.1	82.5	2016

Overall, housing statistics indicate relatively strong house prices and market growth, with Blue Mountains median house price significantly higher than neighbours west of the mountains, and slightly higher than NSW, along with high compound growth rate of this median price. Further, mortgage and rental stress are either the same or lower compared to NSW and Western Sydney. The Blue Mountains has the highest percent of internet connection at home, however as this statistics is from the 2016 census neighbouring LGAs may now be equivalent.



## Labour Force Statistics

Metric	Units	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW	Latest year
Working Age Population	People	48,522	692,437	96,506	5,270,559	2019
Labour Force	People	39,841	519,348	82,216	-	2019
Participation Rate	%	68.0	64.3	57.6	59.7	2016
Unemployment Rate	%	4.7	7.0	4.1	7.1	2020
Youth Engagement Ratio (15-19 years)	%	84.4	83.1	76.8	82.4	2016
Dependency Ratio	%	63.1	50.9	63.0	53.5	2019
Local Job Containment Ratio	% Employed	42.9	36.8	88.6	na	2016
Commuting effort	km	6.2	11.2	5.0	9.7	2016

The Labour force statistics above outline how well the labour market is functioning in the Blue Mountains. The relatively high participation, employment and youth-engagement rates indicate employees and employers are connecting easily. The relatively low commuting distance in the Blue Mountains indicates that this connection is occurring within the LGA. However, Blue Mountain's relatively high dependency ratio (and median age – see Population statistics) highlights that the region's working age population is a smaller share of the total population compared to western Sydney and NSW.

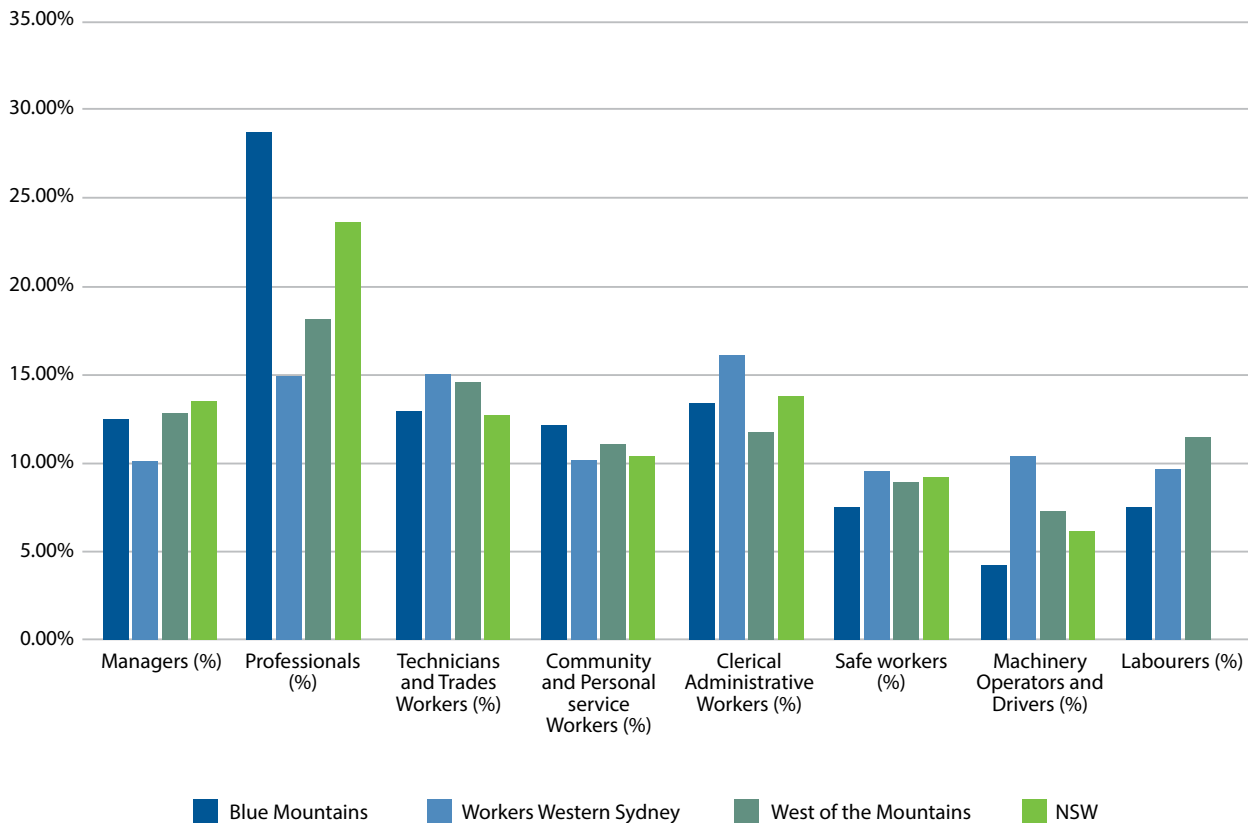


## Employment by Type 2016 (%)

Industry Sector	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW
Managers (%)	12.5	10.1	12.8	13.5
Professionals (%)	28.7	14.9	18.1	23.6
Technicians and Trades Workers (%)	12.9	15.0	14.6	12.7
Community and Personal service Workers (%)	12.1	10.1	11.1	10.4
Clerical and Administrative Workers (%)	13.4	16.1	11.8	13.8
Sales Workers (%)	7.5	9.5	8.9	9.2
Machinery Operators and Drivers (%)	4.2	10.4	7.3	6.1
Labourers (%)	7.5	9.7	11.5	8.8



### Employment by Type 2016 %



Industry sector breakdown shows that Blue Mountains has high employment for professionals, both comparatively within Blue Mountains employment and comparatively to neighbouring areas and NSW as a whole. Machine operators and drivers make up the least employment in the region, both comparatively within Blue Mountains employment and comparatively to neighbouring areas and NSW as a whole.



## Businesses

Metric	Units	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW	Latest year Base year
Number of Non-Employing Businesses (no.)	No.	3,311	43,260	8,620	486,795	2019
Number of Employing Businesses: 1-4 employees (no.)	No.	1,765	26,180	3,693	228,683	2019
Number of Employing Businesses: 5-19 employees (no.)	No.	466	6,810	1,440	70,382	2019
Number of Employing Businesses: 20 or more employees (no.)	No.	78	1,673	310	20,126	2019
Total Number of Businesses (no.)	No.	5,616	77,919	14,053	805,986	2019
Total Number of Businesses Compound Growth	%	1.6	4.9	1.9	3.3	2015-2019

Reflecting economic structures in NSW, the Blue Mountains, Western Sydney, West of the Mountains and NSW all have similar breakdown of business by size. Three fifths are non-employing, one fifth are micro business (1-4 employee), one-fifth are small business (5-19 employees) and 1-2% employ more than 20 people.





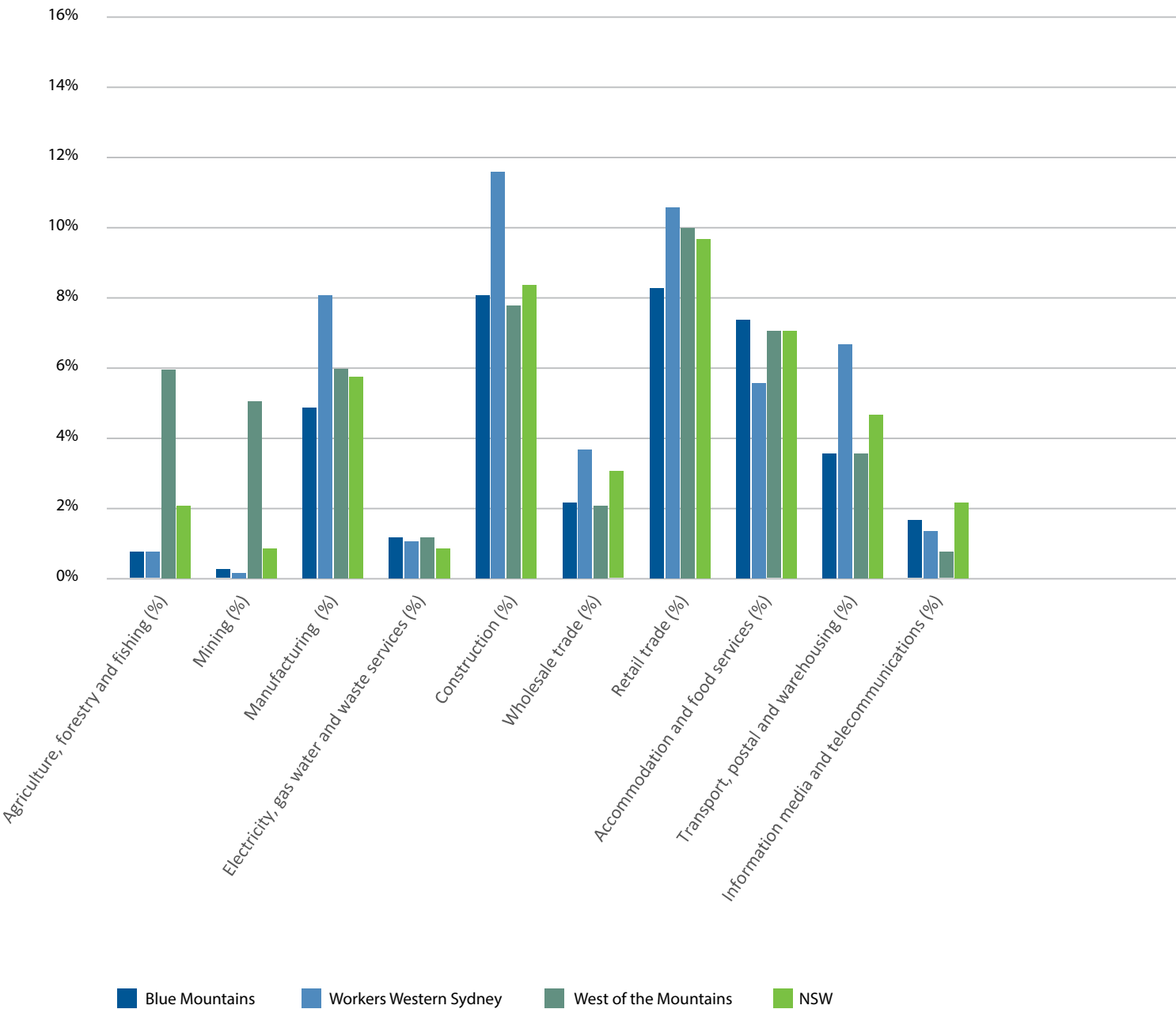


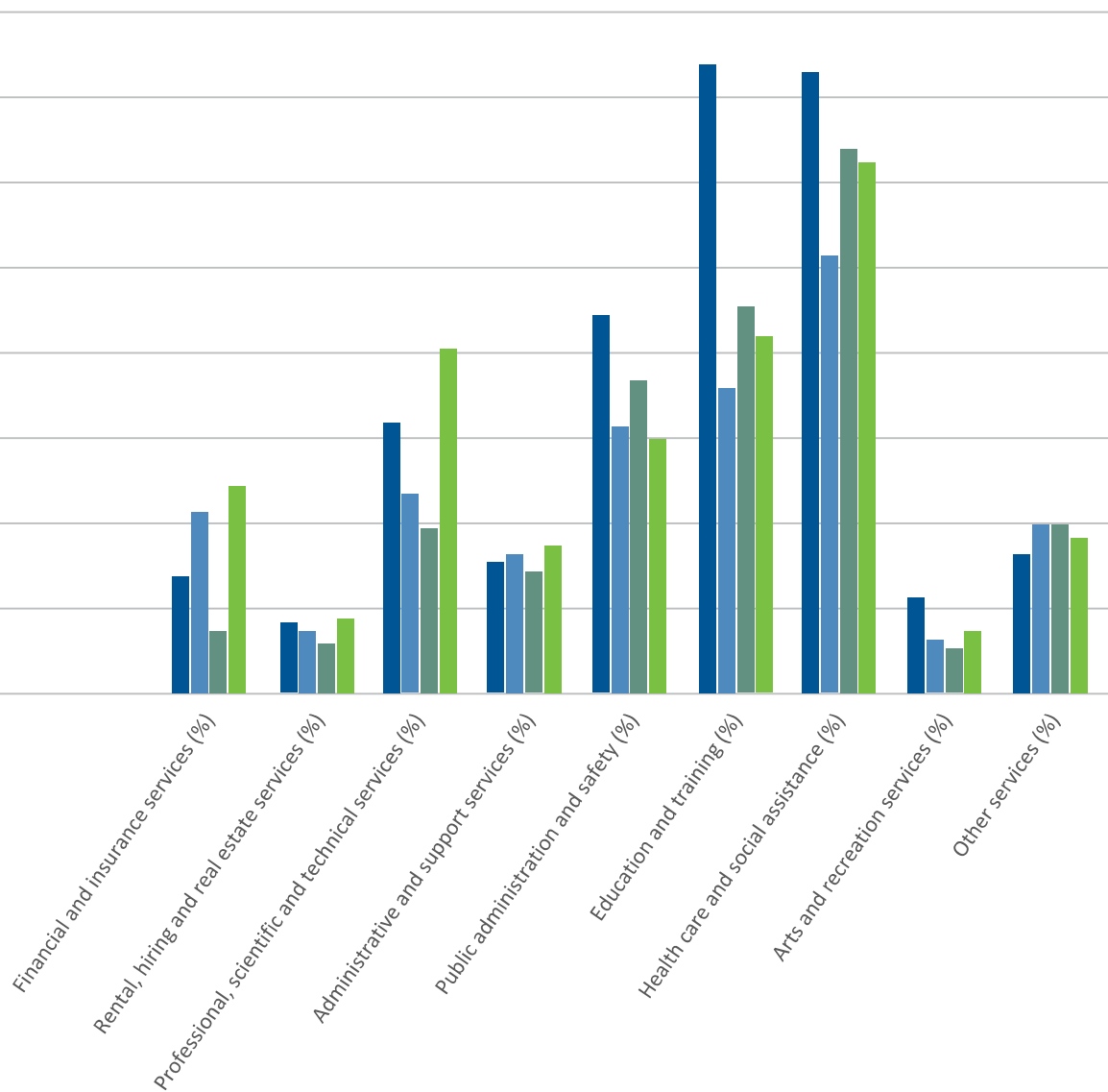
## Industry of Employment by Location of Residence (2016)

Industry Sector	Blue Mountains	Western Sydney	West of the Mountains	NSW
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (%)	0.8	0.8	6.0	2.1
Mining (%)	0.3	0.2	5.1	0.9
Manufacturing (%)	4.9	8.1	6.0	5.8
Electricity, gas water and waste services (%)	1.2	1.1	1.2	0.9
Construction (%)	8.1	11.6	7.8	8.4
Wholesale trade (%)	2.2	3.7	2.1	3.1
Retail trade (%)	8.3	10.6	10.0	9.7
Accommodation and food services (%)	7.4	5.6	7.1	7.1
Transport, postal and warehousing (%)	3.6	6.7	3.6	4.7
Information media and telecommunications (%)	1.7	1.4	0.8	2.2
Financial and insurance services (%)	2.8	4.3	1.5	4.9
Rental, hiring and real estate services (%)	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.8
Professional, scientific and technical services (%)	6.4	4.7	3.9	8.1
Administrative and support services (%)	3.1	3.3	2.9	3.5
Public administration and safety (%)	8.9	6.3	7.4	6.0
Education and training (%)	14.8	7.2	9.1	8.4
Health care and social assistance (%)	14.6	10.3	12.8	12.5
Arts and recreation services (%)	2.3	1.3	1.1	1.5
Other services (%)	3.3	4.0	4.0	3.7



Industry of Employment by Location of Residence (2016)





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