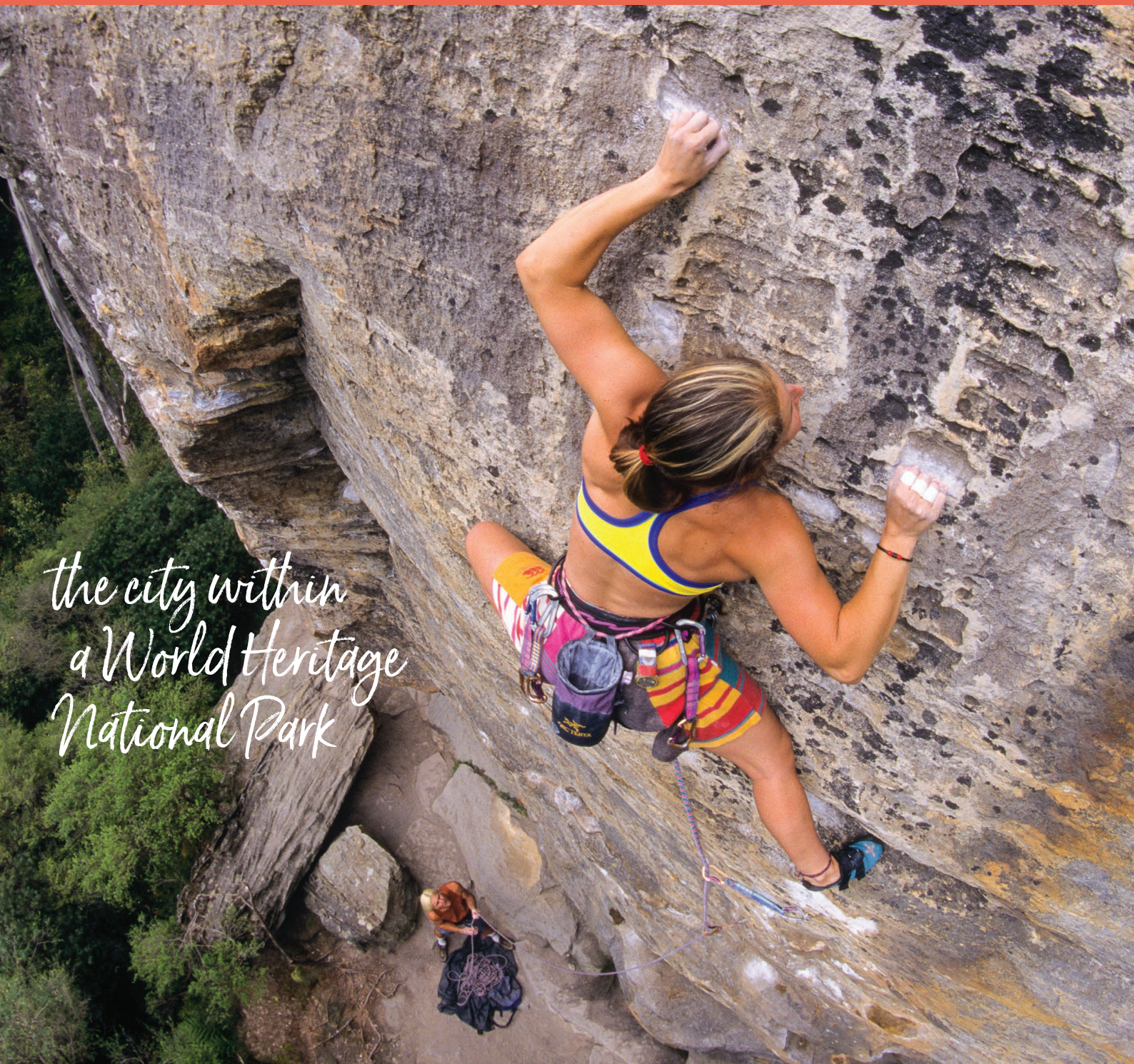


# Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan 2018–2028

*the city within  
a World Heritage  
National Park*



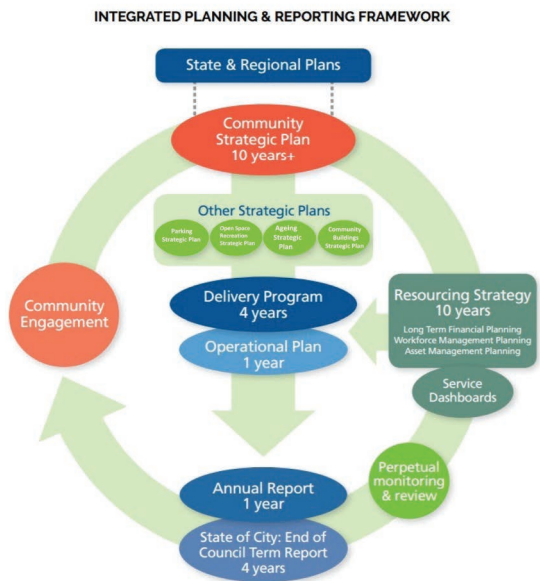


The Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan has been directly informed by the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035.

It falls under the community strategic plan's Key Direction of Care.

Ongoing review of policies, programs and priorities allows Council to ensure that it is prepared and resourced to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing community. It will inform Council's four-year delivery program and resource allocation, now and into the future.

The strategic planning focus supports a whole-of-Council approach to delivering services in our local government area.



# Acknowledgement

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

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

Blue Mountains City Council also 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.



# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Why a Strategic Plan?	8
1.2 Purpose of the Strategic Plan	9
1.3 Policy and legislative context	10
<b>2. Open Space in the Blue Mountains</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 The big picture on open space	12
2.2 Spaces managed by Council	18
2.3 Spaces managed by others	20
<b>3. Community needs and values</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1 Consultation and feedback	22
<b>4. Open Space Planning</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1 Who we are planning for?	28
4.2 What are we doing?	31
4.3 Our planning approach	36
4.3.1 Identifying opportunities for recreation	36
4.3.2 How do we compare?	37
4.4 Our planning framework	39
4.5 Service hierarchy and themes	40
<b>5. Strategic Plan Framework</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>6. Strategic Outcomes</b>	<b>47</b>
6.1 Walking: tracks and trails and urban paths	48
6.2 Cycling: tracks and trails and urban paths	50
6.3 Nature-based recreation and bushland parks	52
6.4 Play	54
6.5 Parks	63
6.6 Sports organised and informal: fields, courts and facilities	65
6.7 Pools	69
6.8 City presentation and roadside stops	72
6.9 Promotion and Activation	73
6.10 Partnerships	74
6.11 Policies and management practice	76
6.12 Culture and heritage	78
<b>7. Appendices</b>	<b>81</b>
7.1 Consultation – Tables	82
7.2 Definitions and Glossary of terms	84
7.3 References	86







# Executive Summary

**This Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan provides strategic policy for managing open space and the provision of sport and recreation facilities in the City of Blue Mountains. The time frame of this strategic plan is 10+ years. It focusses on Council owned or managed open space and recreation facilities.**

The open spaces of the Blue Mountains are part of the Country (Ngurra) of the Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners. Ngurra has nurtured and nourished countless generations of Traditional Owners since the creation time. Council acknowledges that colonisation dispossessed and disadvantaged the Traditional Owners and brought profound changes to Ngurra. This strategic plan recognises the interests and aspirations of Traditional Owners in continuing to care for, nourish and benefit from their Ngurra, and seeks actions to support this.

The Blue Mountains is an iconic international tourist destination. It is unique in terms of its geography and settlement pattern, with the scenic landscapes and nature-based recreation major attractants. Council plays a critical role in managing the interface between urban development and the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWH) providing gateway infrastructure for visitors as well as buffering impacts on natural values.

A dispersed settlement pattern of 27 small towns and villages across 100km of ridgeline presents many challenges to providing equitable access for residents to recreational opportunities. As a peri-urban area the Blue Mountains is highly unusual in terms of its growth rates and demographic makeup. The local community is stable, growing slowly and steadily ageing. This presents particular challenges in providing for open space and recreation facilities, especially in terms of physical and social accessibility, and Council resources to fund this provision.

The Blue Mountains has an unusually high level of duplication of recreational facilities, many of which are near the end of useful life and do not conform to modern standards. These legacy facilities, some of which are more than 100 years old, will require renewal over the next 10+ years.

Council has insufficient resources to maintain or renew all current facilities. Community needs have also changed and different recreational facilities are now required.

We have undertaken extensive and detailed community consultation to inform this strategic plan. Time-lapse photography was also used to assess park visitation in the lower mountains (Planning Area 5).

The strategic plan seeks to identify and respond to the changing needs of the local community, and visitors to the Blue Mountains, by examining:

- current and projected demographics
- recreation demand and participation patterns of local residents and visitors
- local and global recreation, social, environmental and economics trends
- current and potential opportunities for recreation activity across the Blue Mountains

Detailed land and asset mapping and analysis has been undertaken to understand the distribution and range, and the quantity and quality of open space and recreation facilities across the Blue Mountains. It has also been used to analyse costs, maintenance demands and operational issues.

To move forward, Council needs to focus on current and projected community needs and the resources available to meet them. It also needs to reassess where it invests and how it maintains open space. Capital investment and recurrent spending can be reallocated. In most cases this change will need to be phased in over time through altered landscape management practices and removal of old facilities and equipment as they reach their end of useful life.



This strategic plan's key outcomes are to:

- ensure our public open spaces make it easy to exercise, play, socialise and relax
- ensure diverse opportunities for recreation and sport that are well located and distributed equitably across the Blue Mountains.

To enhance the existing open space network by

- improving off-road linkages so that people can move freely between towns and open space, preferably off-road, for health, safety and convenience
- building more accessibility, diversity and flexibility into the network recognising that not all residents are the same or seek the same recreation experiences all the time
- responding to changing trends in park design and recreation activities and participation
- inform and underpin Council's asset management framework by establishing realistic and sustainable standards of service along with reinvestment principles that guide asset removal, renewal, replacement, expansion and upgrade
- ensure environmental and financial responsibility

The strategic plan proposes to achieve this by:

- focusing on quality of provision rather than quantity
- focusing on the diverse recreation opportunities available across various types of spaces rather than on individual spaces. The provision of these opportunities can make use of multiple types of open space
- focusing on maintaining equitable access to recreation opportunities for people of all ages and abilities across our community
- making best use of current facilities while steadily transforming current assets to better meet future needs
- implementing a reinvestment program for parks that reflects the new asset management framework and takes a staged approach to changes to existing open spaces, parks and reserves
- developing partnerships with other levels of government including Offices of Sport & Recreation, Departments of Education, Health and Planning, Office of Environment and Heritage and Destination NSW
- promoting private investment in recreation infrastructure and service delivery

The strategic plan proposes adoption of a service hierarchy that considers provision:

- at neighbourhood or township levels
- within each locality or planning areas, or the districts of the upper and lower mountain
- at a whole of city and regional level

The actions for implementation of this strategic plan are grouped under the following themes:

- 1 Walking: tracks and trails and urban paths
- 2 Cycling: tracks and trails and urban paths
- 3 Nature-based recreation and bushland parks
- 4 Play
- 5 Parks
- 6 Sports - organised and informal: Fields, Courts and Facilities
- 7 Pools
- 8 City Presentation and roadside stops
- 9 Promotion and activation
- 10 Partnerships– Public, NGO and Commercial
- 11 Policies and Management Practise
- 12 Culture and Heritage



# Introduction





# 1.1 Why a Strategic Plan?

**The Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan will inform Councils allocation of resources over a 10<sup>+</sup> year timeframe. It aims to improve open space and recreation facilities to best meet the current and future needs of our community.**

This strategic plan seeks to understand the needs of the local community, and visitors of the Blue Mountains, by examining current and projected demographics, recreation demand and participation patterns, trends in recreation and current and potential opportunities for recreation across the City.

Council has a key role in developing urban environments and providing open spaces that support and encourage physical, mental and social activity to promote community health and wellbeing. This means providing walkable neighbourhoods, pools and sporting areas, tracks and trails, active recreation spaces and places for social interaction and community gathering. Providing this infrastructure is an investment in the future health of the community and has the added benefit of improving social cohesion and productivity, and supporting the tourism economy.

To prepare this strategic plan we have undertaken research, community consultation and asset assessment. We have used Council's Geographical Information System (GIS) to help document and analyse community needs and behaviour, and to understand the distribution and range, quantity and quality of open space and recreation facilities across the City.

A business as usual approach is not an option—to continue operating open spaces in the same way is not financially viable. The temporary rate increase is a chance for Council to invest in a new approach that progressively delivers a better quality of service with less recurrent cost.

***Walking paths and tracks need particular attention because:***

- walking is the major form of exercise for Blue Mountains residents
- they are particularly suited to our aging population
- they can encourage more sustainable living

***Leisure Centres need particular attention because:***

- ageing pools will need major renewal work over the next decade or so
- improvements could offer year-round swimming

***Play needs particular attention because:***

- of changes in our understanding of what children need in play environments to foster their imaginative and social development
- the desirability of unstructured outdoor play or nature play
- there are limited opportunities for children with disabilities to play with others
- community members have expressed desire for significant destination parks within the Blue Mountains



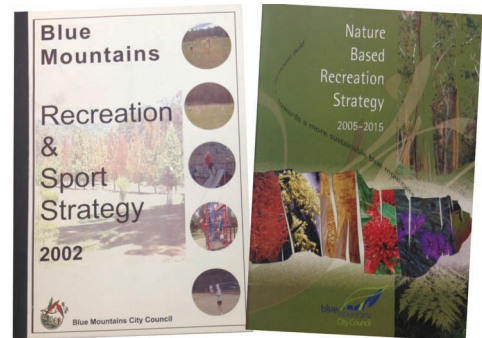
# 1.2 Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan provides strategic policy direction for planning, providing and managing open space, and sport and recreation facilities, in the City of Blue Mountains.

## The strategic plan replaces the current:

- Blue Mountains Recreation and Sport Strategy 2002
- Blue Mountains Nature Based Recreation Strategy 2004

This strategic plan focuses on Council-managed open spaces and facilities that are primarily used for outdoor recreation activities.



Indoor recreation facilities planning and provision will be addressed through the Blue Mountains Community Facilities Strategic Plan (currently in development).

We have prepared this strategic plan by assessing current recreation opportunities in the Blue Mountains against the recreation needs and aspirations of the community. Provision of facilities is based on user catchments of walkable neighbourhoods, local planning areas, upper and lower mountain districts, and regional catchments.

## The key outcomes sought are:

- to ensure our public open spaces make it easy to exercise, play, socialise and relax
- to ensure a rich diversity of opportunities for recreation and sport are well located and distributed equitably across the city
- to enhance the existing open space network by
  - improving off-road linkages for health, safety and convenience
  - building more accessibility, diversity and flexibility into the network recognising that not all residents are the same or seek the same recreation experiences all the time
  - forecasting future needs and responding to trends in park design and recreation activities
- to inform and underpin Council's asset management framework by establishing sustainable and realistic desired standards of service and providing a framework for a reinvestment strategy that guides asset removal, renewal, replacement, expansion and upgrade
- to ensure environmental and financial responsibility

## Adopting the new provision framework and the recommendations regarding specific open space, parks and reserves means:

- undertaking detailed planning within neighbourhoods to identify the preferred approach to provision
- some parks or open spaces will be flagged for transition either for upgrade or alternative recreation uses
- investment will be needed in regional and district parks and reserves and trails to achieve the quality and range of recreation opportunities required
- maintenance resources will be reallocated to better suit priorities

# 1.3 Policy and Legislative Context

**This strategic plan conforms with relevant legislation and policies including:**

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 31** which recognises the right of the child:

- for rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts
- to provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, recreational and leisure activity

**Western City District Plan** Which stresses the importance of open space to enhance the character of neighbourhoods, support healthy and active lifestyles, and bring communities together.

The Western City District Plan recognises that within established areas such as the City of Blue Mountains there are relatively few opportunities to increase the quantity of public open space, and that greater emphasis is needed on improving the quality and distribution of open space. This includes improving the availability of active open space such as sporting facilities. The District Plan acknowledges the need to identify innovative solutions for the shortfall in active open space, including making better use of existing sportsgrounds, converting existing facilities to sports uses and partnering with schools to share spaces outside school hours.

The District Plan highlights the importance of establishing physical open space links that support social networks and create a sense of community, and delivering connected walking and cycling trails to maximise their use.

The Western City District Plan also recognises the role that scenic and nature-based recreation plays in supporting the Blue Mountains economy.

**Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035** informs planning and resourcing for maintenance, management and investment into sporting and recreational facilities and services for the City of Blue Mountains. This Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan fits under the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan's key direction of 'CARE: An Inclusive, Healthy and Vibrant City' and is guided by the following principles:

- improving our decision making
- strengthening our assets
- a partnership approach
- social Justice
- sustainability

This Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan also coordinates with other Council planning documents including the:

- Blue Mountains City Council Play Guidelines
- Blue Mountains Dogs in Public Places Strategic Plan
- Blue Mountains City Council Ageing Strategic Plan 2016–2026
- Blue Mountains City Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016–2020
- Blue Mountains Child and Family Plan 2016
- Blue Mountains Destination Management Plan
- Blue Mountains Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan 2025
- Blue Mountains Bike Plan 2020
- Eastern Escarpment Masterplan
- Southern Escarpment Masterplan and
- plans of management and masterplans for Council managed open space, parks and reserves and community buildings



# Open Space in the Blue Mountains



Abby Watkins exploring Pierce's Pass, above the Grose Valley, in the Blue Mountains. Courtesy of photographer Simon Carter

## 2.1 The Big Picture on Open Space

**When we refer to open space we mean those ‘public and private lands that are broadly available for public recreation, pedestrian and cycle movement, sport or for scenic and nature conservation purposes’.**

There are many providers of open space in the Blue Mountains including the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) and Council, as well other levels of government, non-government organisations and private owners.

Seventy percent of the city area of 1431ha is national park within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWH). The GBMWH is recognised by Tourism Australia as one of the 16 significant national landscapes across Australia, and is internationally celebrated for its beauty and for the long history of human interaction with its landscapes.

Council manages around 6,500ha of public land in the Blue Mountains LGA—plus additional land within the City of Lithgow, as well as a high number of recreation facilities, most of which are ageing and deteriorating. As Council has inadequate resources to renew or replace all of these facilities, future provision needs careful assessment.

Council needs to refocus on where it invests and how it maintains open space to meet the changing needs of the community. In some cases legacy decisions have left Council with open spaces that are stranded assets or that do not meet the needs of the community now surrounding them. Where this occurs capital investment and recurrent spending can be reallocated between different types of open spaces and facilities. Some parks or facilities will be flagged for transition, either for upgrade or for alternative recreation uses. In most cases these changes will be phased in over time through altered landscape management practices and with renewals of old facilities and equipment as they reach end of life.

### **Key planning considerations:**

- Designing and managing recreation facilities to maximise community access and opportunities.
- Understanding walkability is important in assessing provision of open space at the neighbourhood level. Most residential areas across the city have a park or reserve within 800m or 10 minutes’ walk. There are some exceptions and liaison by Council to facilitate access to local school facilities within these neighbourhoods is recommended.
- Providing quality over quantity—larger parks with more diverse uses should be preferred over numerous small ‘pocket’ parks that provide very limited recreational opportunity.
- Understanding the trend from formal sport to active recreation in the community with growing demands for access to open space for emerging activities such as ‘park run’ and ‘boot camp’.
- Actively managing facilities to support multiple uses.
- Providing consolidated recreation and sporting precincts that offer more efficient use of shared infrastructure.
- Walking participation is higher than for other activities - linking open space areas and providing trail/path networks is very important.
- The significant funding shortfall to maintain and renew current recreation facilities, especially walking tracks and lookouts, playgrounds and pools.
- Focusing on renewing failing infrastructure and improving surfaces and signage at more popular (higher level) walking tracks where maximum benefit can be achieved for the investment available.
- Increasing awareness of the different recreation experiences and settings across the city.
- Providing gateway visitor infrastructure to support local, natural and international nature-based tourism.

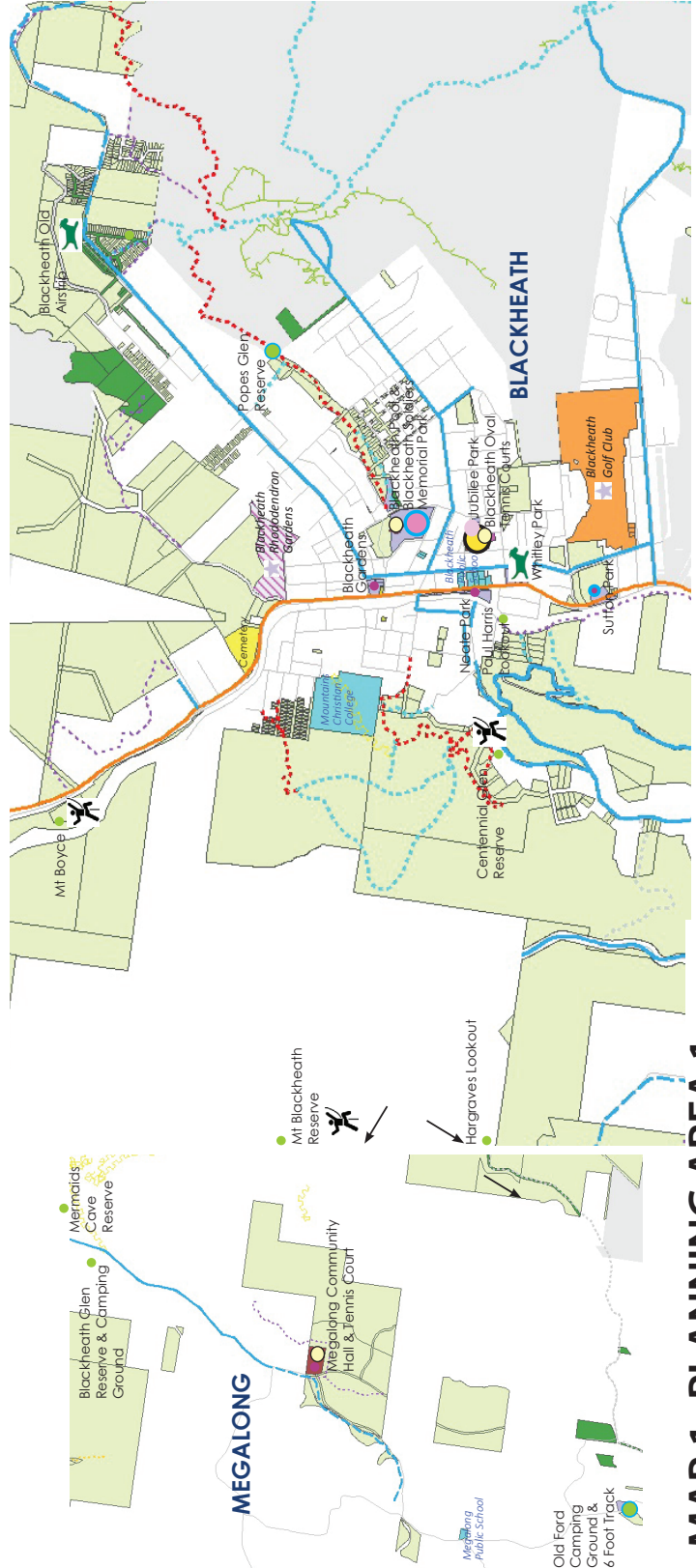


## MT WILSON/ MT IRVINE/ MT TOMAH



## KEY

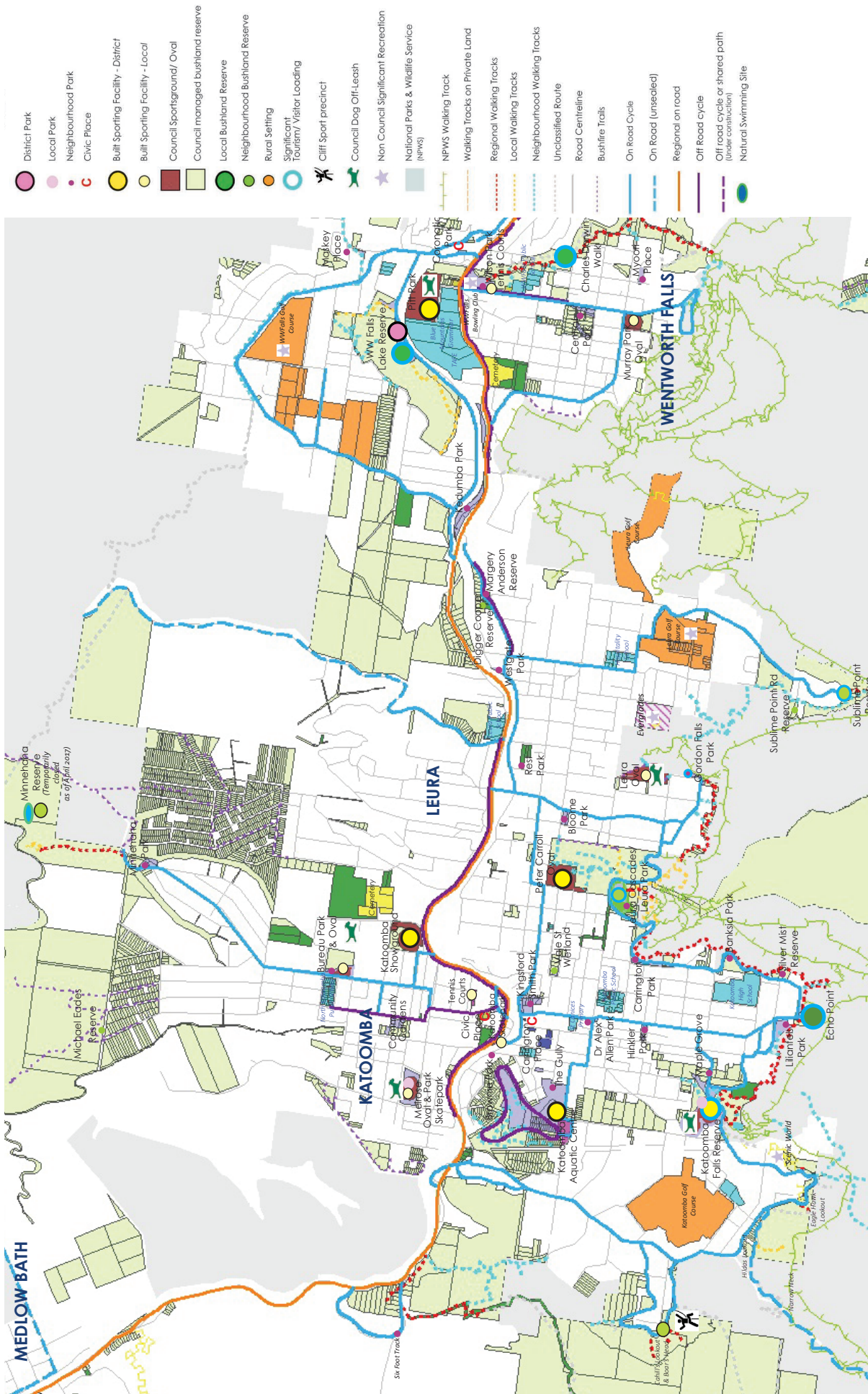
- District Park
- Local Park
- Neighbourhood Park
- Civic Place
- Built Sporting Facility - District
- Built Sporting Facility - Local
- Council Sportsground/ Oval
- Council managed bushland reserve
- Local Bushland Reserve
- Neighbourhood Bushland Reserve
- Rural Setting
- Significant Tourism/ Visitor Loading
- Cliff Sport precinct
- Council Dog Off-Leash
- Non Council Significant Recreation
- National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- NPWS Walking Track
- Walking Tracks on Private Land
- Regional Walking Tracks
- Local Walking Tracks
- Neighbourhood Walking Tracks
- Unclassified Route
- Road Centreline
- Bushfire Trails
- On Road Cycle
- On Road (unsealed)
- Regional on road
- Off Road cycle
- Off road cycle or shared path (under construction)
- Natural Swimming Site

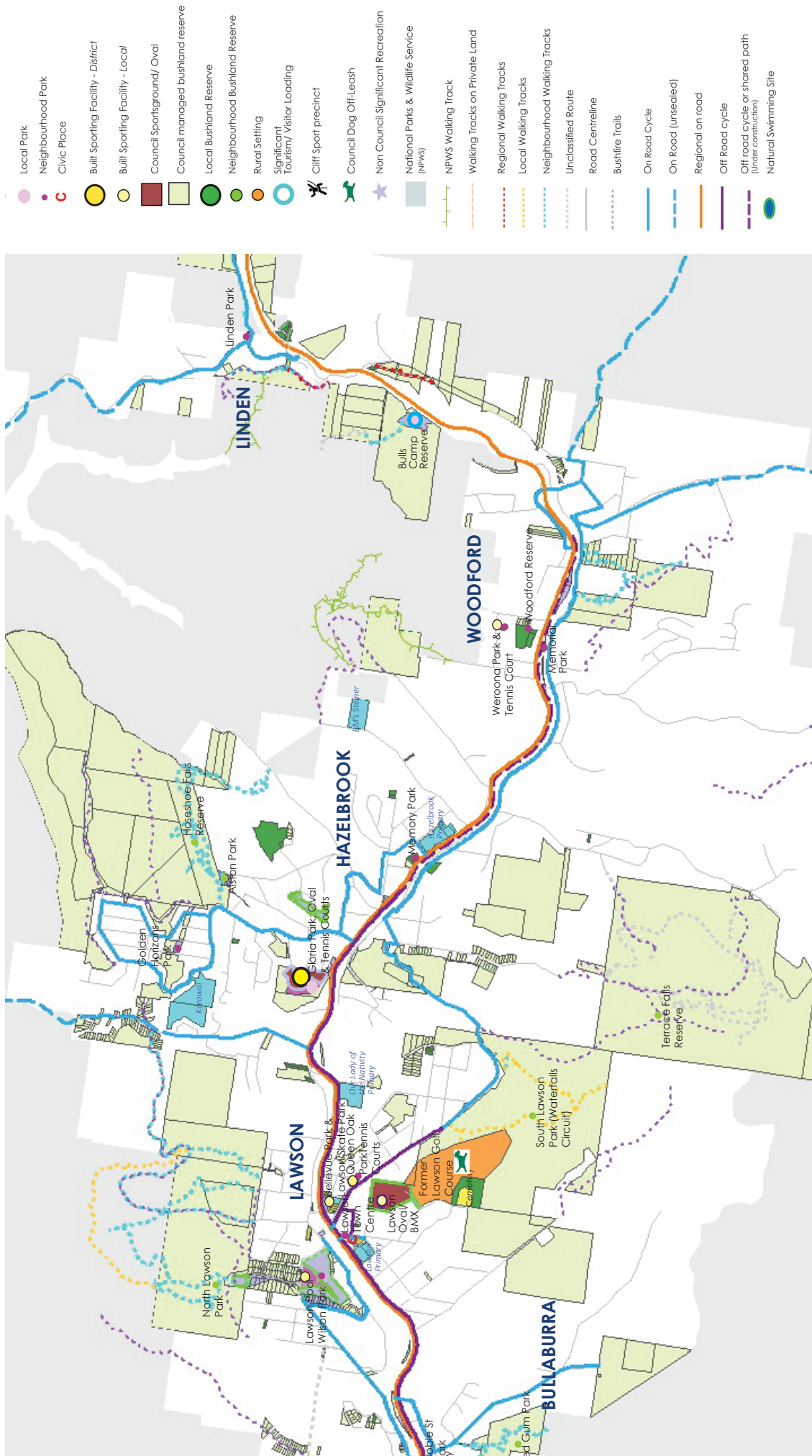


## MAP 1-PLANNING AREA 1

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGED BY COUNCIL

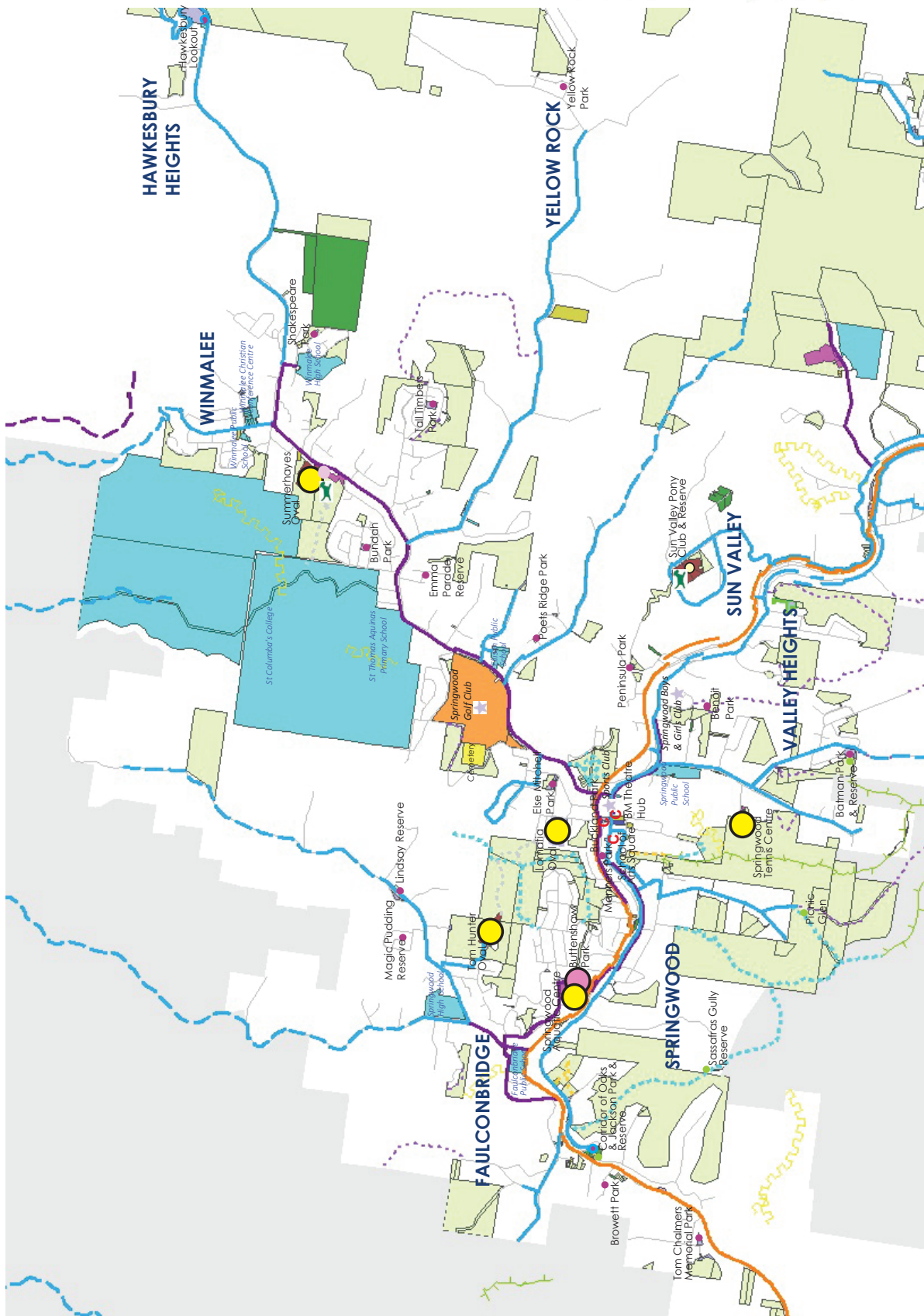






**MAP 3-PLANNING AREA 3**  
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGED BY COUNCIL



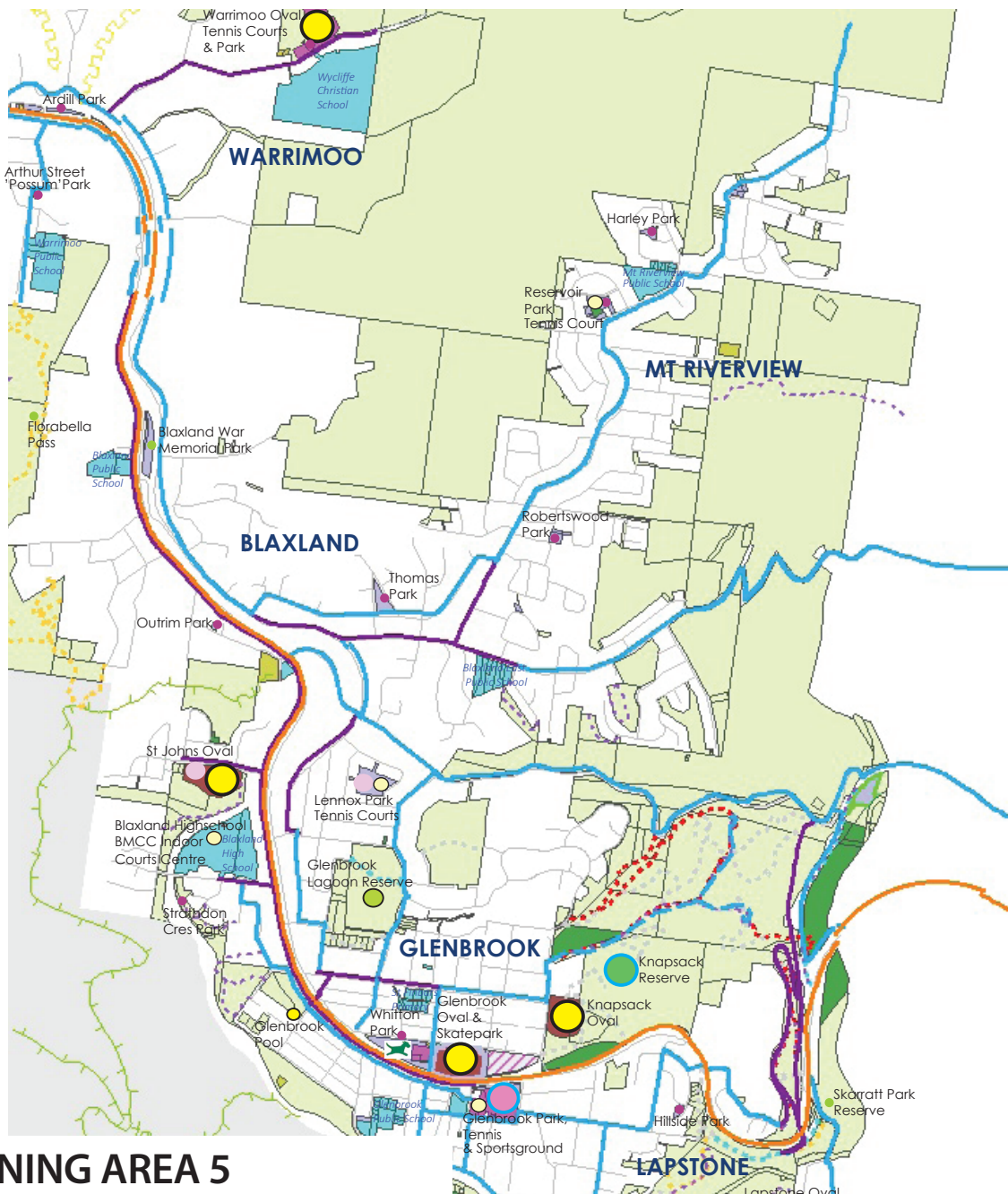


**MAP 4-PLANNING AREA 4**  
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGED BY COUNCIL



## KEY

- Neighbourhood Park
- C Civic Place
- Built Sporting Facility - District
- Built Sporting Facility - Local
- Council Sportsground/ Oval
- Council managed bushland reserve
- Local Bushland Reserve
- Neighbourhood Bushland Reserve
- Rural Setting
- Significant Tourism/ Visitor Loading
- ✂ Cliff Sport precinct
- 🐕 Council Dog Off-Leash
- ★ Non Council Significant Recreation
- National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS)
- NPWS Walking Track
- Walking Tracks on Private Land
- Regional Walking Tracks
- Local Walking Tracks
- Neighbourhood Walking Tracks
- Unclassified Route
- Road Centreline
- Bushfire Trails
- On Road Cycle
- On Road (unsealed)
- Regional on road
- Off Road cycle
- Off road cycle or shared path (Under construction)
- Natural Swimming Site



**MAP 5-PLANNING AREA 5**  
OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGED BY COUNCIL





## 2.2 Spaces Managed by Council

Council manages a wide and diverse range of open spaces, and, within them, a diverse range of recreation infrastructure. This includes Council owned land as well as Crown Reserves for Recreation managed by Council on behalf of the NSW Government. Many of the Crown Reserves must comply with the provisions of the Native Title Act 1993 with Crown land south of the Great Western Highway subject to the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement.

Much of the existing recreation infrastructure is ageing. If renewed, it is in need of upgrade or adaptation to respond to changing user demand and expectations, and to meet modern safety standards.

### **Open space under Council management:**

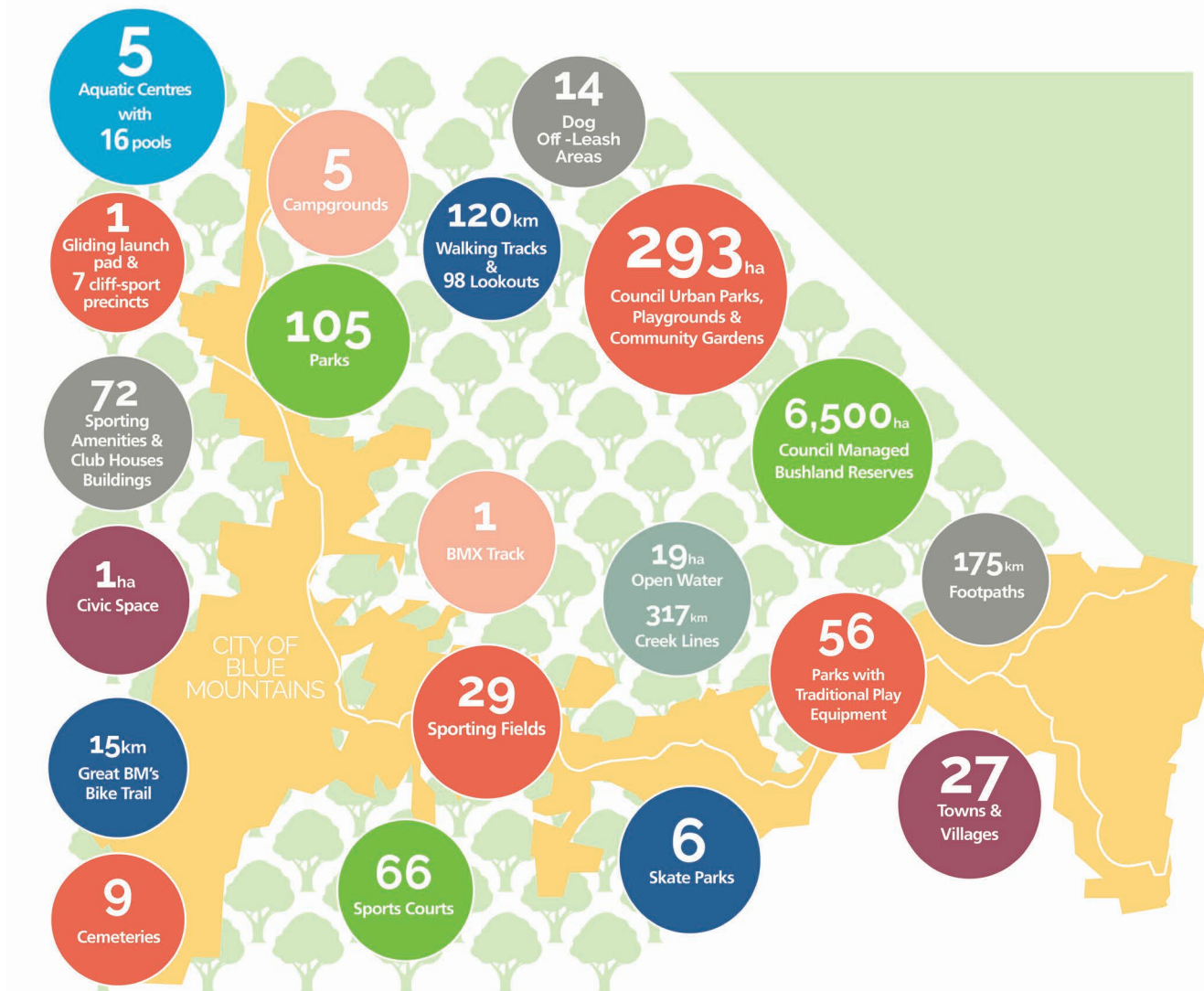
- over 6,500ha of bushland reserves
- aquatic ecosystems including 19ha of open water bodies and 317km of creek lines
- around 293ha of urban parks, playgrounds and community gardens
- over 50ha of sporting fields and courts
- around 80ha of developed parkland and bushland surrounding sports fields and courts
- around 1ha of civic spaces
- around 40ha of cemeteries

### **Recreation facilities and infrastructure under Council management:**

- 72 sporting amenities, club houses and public toilet buildings, approximately 75 shelters and sheds, and various fencing, garden beds, signage, pathways, and car parks spread across:
  - 105 parks
  - 56 formal playgrounds
  - six skateparks
  - 22 sites with 29 sports grounds/playing fields
  - 21 sites with 66 sports courts
  - approximately 170 walking tracks networks with a length of over 120kms
  - 98 lookouts
  - five aquatic centres with 16 individual pools
  - five campgrounds
  - nine cemeteries
- 34km of bike paths and the 15km-long stage 1 of the Great Blue Mountains Trail







## OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION FACILITIES OWNED AND/OR MANAGED BY BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL



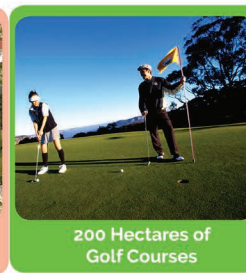
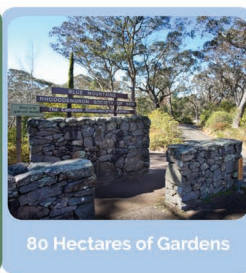
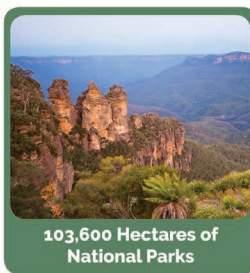


## 2.3 Spaces Managed by Others

There are also many opportunities for recreation available on privately owned land and on public land managed by others.

Council planning needs to take into account open spaces managed by others including:

- over 103,600ha of national parks, including Blue Mountains National Park, state recreation areas and the Yellowmunde Regional Park managed by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage through the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS)
- over 80ha of gardens, including Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens, The Everglades in Leura, Campbell Rhododendron Gardens in Blackheath, and private gardens which are opened for the public to visit
- over 680ha of public and private cultural and educational campuses, including over 20 schools and two TAFES
- over 200ha of golf courses
- green spaces including, private town, village and rural lands and road side areas





# Community Needs and Values





## 3.1 Consultation and feedback

To inform this strategic plan, Council consulted with the local community and visitors to the Blue Mountains. The consultation sought to understand current rates of participation in recreation activities, levels of satisfaction with facilities and services, and priorities for future investment.

The consultation included:

- Consultation with the Aboriginal community to enable Traditional Owner and broader Aboriginal community values of Country are appropriately identified and considered. Continued consultation is required to ensure meaningful and effective engagement, and development of shared outcomes. This will be undertaken through Council's relationships with Gundungurra and Darug Traditional Owners and the Blue Mountains City Council Aboriginal Advisory Council (AAC).
- Primary and secondary school students—through class based activity that recorded the number of children in each class, male and female, were currently participating in traditional sports and in which other recreational activities they participated.
- Sports clubs—through a survey focusing on membership and volunteer trends, the Council facilities used by the club, and issues faced with organised sports.
- A voluntary 'Residents Open Space and Recreation' survey—which focused on which Council recreational spaces and facilities participants use in their spare time, and their values and comments regarding Councils range and provision of services.
- A survey of randomly selected residents to provide a statistically valid response and address any imbalances in overall demographics of the self-selected sample.
- Ad hoc surveys with special interest groups regarding off-leash dog exercise, cliff sports and mountain biking. The aim of these surveys was to focus on the trends and current issues facing these particular areas of recreation.
- Workshops undertaken with interested residents to discuss the findings of consultation to date and identify priorities.
- Monitoring and observation of use of parks and reserves including a three-month pilot using remote sensing photography to capture the size of groups and length of stay of visitors to parks across the lower mountains (Planning Area 5).
- Users of popular district and regional parks and reserves including Echo Point, Katoomba Falls, Wentworth Falls Lake and Glenbrook Park were interviewed through a Visitor Intercept Survey. The results of these surveys were benchmarked against results of similar surveys undertaken across parks and reserves in Australia.
- Targeted consultation was also undertaken on children's play areas.





Detailed review and analysis of the above are available in reports on the Blue Mountains Have Your Say website: [bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au](http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au)

A summary of issues raised during consultation is provided below (not in order of priority):

### **Access improvements**

- Footpaths and walking links need to be level and of sufficient width for passing—but don't all need to be concrete. A range of surfaces (including grass) could be used.
- Walking access to bush trail heads and neighbourhood parks needs to be improved.
- Bikeway access to all district and local planning area parks needs to be improved.
- Some expressed concern around shared paths, and the impact bike paths could have in natural areas.

### **Car parking provision**

- Providing adequate land and funding to develop facilities for parking often competes with provision of other facilities essential for recreation in the Blue Mountains.
- Some residents felt that more parking is needed for visitors and that the cost of visitor infrastructure should be recovered from tourists and the tourism industry.

### **User conflicts**

- With the increasing divergence of recreation activities and increasing participation in outdoor recreation, user conflicts are increasing. Examples include multi-user trails, share paths, and sporting areas sharing with off-leash dog exercise.
- Reduction in conflict requires management intervention to clarify acceptable uses, investment in additional infrastructure to accommodate demand and/or implement better systems for sharing.
- It was felt that education of users, to encourage behavioural changes, would also assist.

### **Walking tracks**

- Use of key tracks is high and the investment in track provision benefits locals as well as tourists.
- There is recognition that there are a high number of ageing tracks with failing infrastructure and the lack of regular maintenance on drainage is affecting the condition of track surfaces.
- More easy tracks (graded level 1 and 2) are needed to cater to day visitors, older people and family groups.
- There are opportunities to develop multi-day walking tracks using overnight accommodation in villages across the city.
- Other tracks which have minimal or no maintenance only suit more experienced walkers.

### **Bike trails**

- More bike paths are needed across the city to link towns and villages and parks.
- More integration with rail transport options is needed to be able to 'train up and ride down'.
- Training and specialist competition tracks are needed.
- A lot more could be done to encourage and accommodate bike tourism.
- Volunteers could be enlisted to help construct and maintain trails

Given the recreational nature of the Blue Mountains and the distances between points of interest, there is potential to introduce bike share docking stations in Katoomba, Blackheath, Leura, Glenbrook, Wentworth Falls and Springwood. The potential also exists to develop bike trails to profile food, arts, culture and heritage features.

### **Aquatic centres and outdoor pools**

- There is a need to retain outdoor pools, including childrens and toddlers pools, to support ready access to learn-to-swim opportunities and respite from heat.
- Council could focus on making swim centres function as outdoor lounge-rooms for the community.
- Pools need to be promoted to visitors.

### **Natural areas**

- Usage of natural areas such as climbing areas and swimming holes is rapidly increasing and impacts from use becoming evident include extensive bolting, erosion of access tracks, and impacts from lack of adequate parking and toilets;
- Council's role in the management of the interface between urban areas and the GBMWhA in order to protect the area from over development and negative impact from increasing visitor use.

### **Camping**

- More and improved primitive camping facilities are needed.
- Primitive camping facilities are at capacity and inadequate, especially toilets.
- Free camping is increasing in popularity at unauthorised venues.

### **Visitor facilities**

- Better quality of amenities and supporting infrastructure is needed.
- Car and bus parking remains a major issue at some high volume locations- pay to park areas are a good model to recover part of the costs of visitor infrastructure.
- Capacity at peak seasonal visiting periods is severely strained at sites such as Mount Wilson and Mount Irvine. Numbers are unsustainable unless current facilities such as toilets and parking are improved.
- There is a gap in activities for children and youth (trail and track difficulties, lack of pump tracks and similar).
- Evening activities and accommodation links with outdoor activities can be better promoted.
- Water bottle filling stations are requested at key destinations e.g. Echo Point.

### **Visitor Information and promotion**

- Many are unaware of the range of opportunities available and information and promotion is required for both residents and visitors.
- Opportunities exist to value-add to experiences and attract more visitors though 'packaging of opportunities'.

### **Children's Play**

- There is need for more inclusive play opportunities and safe paths of travel.
- There is demand for more diverse and exciting play opportunities with a Blue Mountains flavour.
- There is demand for more youth spaces.
- Amenity and supervision requirements were identified including: shading, fencing, good sight lines, seating.
- There is a lack of easily accessed information on location of play opportunities.
- Children and their carers do not always know how to engage with the environment for play where there is no formal play equipment.







## Parks and reserves

- Use pop-up parks to enliven town areas.
- Put bike/walking training tracks in parks: especially Melrose, Wentworth Falls, Glenbrook.
- Woodford residents requested an improved park to replace Memorial Park.

## Dog exercise

- Fenced off leash dog exercise areas are needed and consideration should be given to provide opportunities for dogs to swim.

## Sports facilities

- Increased sports fields for competition and training use are needed in the mid and lower mountains.
- Encourage multi-use facilities to increase availability of to all sports activities.
- Provide for futsal with share courts e.g. Winmalee.
- Investigate options to increase capacity and diversity of district sports facilities e.g. Springwood Tennis Club.
- There is support for a remote controlled model aircraft field or for shared use of an existing field.
- Provide Disc golf course at Lawson and elsewhere.
- Use of sports facilities for fitness training and informal use should be promoted when not in use by organised sports.

## Exclusive use of public land

- People are concerned about formal and informal booking of public open space e.g. booking for club sports through to weddings, and pay for entrance events.
- There needs to be a system that provides equitable access and certainty for those booking. The system also needs to ensure that spaces are used, not booked and left empty.

## Suggestions for public land that isn't needed for recreation

- People recognised that some public open space is not well suited to recreation use due to its location or physical characteristics, and there are areas where the community need for open space is not met.
- If there are opportunities to reinvest expenditure from unsuitable sites into locations of need and existing parks it will improve the quality of open space. Options suggested included conversion of sites unsuitable for recreation to alternative uses.



Photos: 'Blue Mountain Baseball & Softball Club, NSW'. Courtesy of Photographer - Peter Johnson



# Open Space Planning





## 4.1 Who we are planning for?

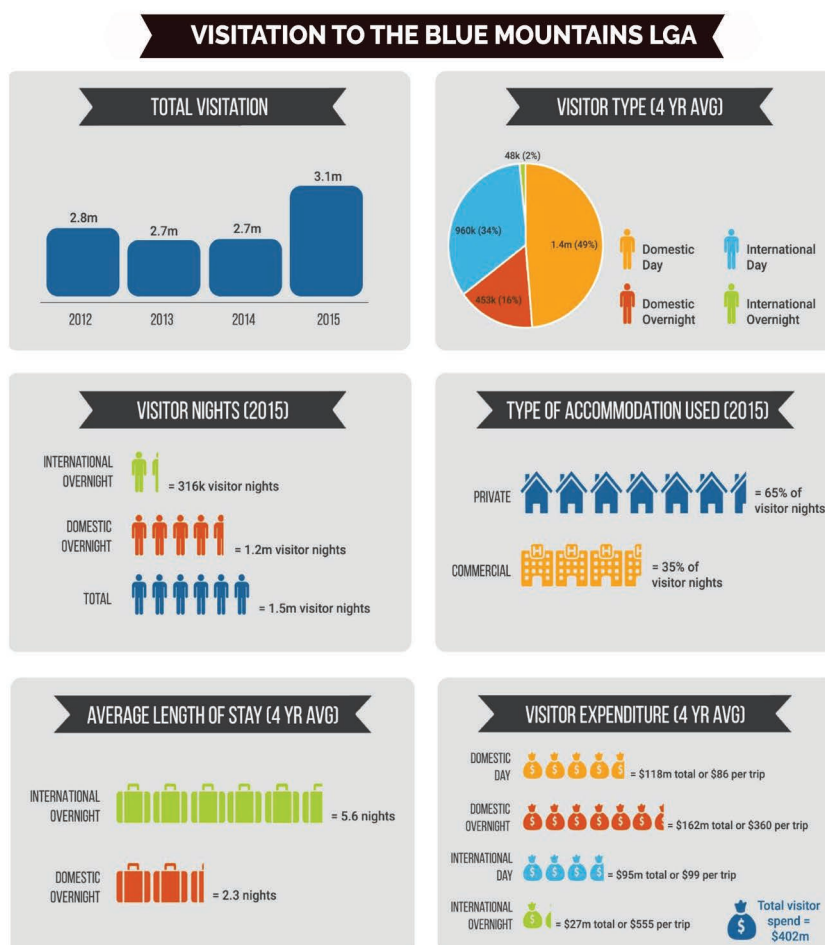
We are planning recreational facilities for the current and future resident community of the Blue Mountains as well as for over 3 million visitors who come to the Blue Mountains every year.

### 3.1 million domestic and international visitors

The Blue Mountains is a major visitor destination and the number of visitors is steadily growing. In 2015 it is estimated that more than 3.1 million people visited the Blue Mountains and by 2025 there are projected to be as many as 4.1 million visitors.

Tourism is the second largest employer in the city and the natural environment is a major attraction. Of the 127 tourism attraction experiences the most popular is self-guided bush walking (46%), and adventure tour companies contribute 7% of the total tourism product.

The Blue Mountains Destination Management Plan 2017 identifies recreation as a key area for diversification and expansion of the visitor economy. Managing the impact on local natural areas and communities, and ensuring both the quality and adequacy of visitor infrastructure in natural areas, is critical to supporting the tourist economy of the Blue Mountains. Improvements in visitor infrastructure also improve recreation opportunities for the local community.



4 Data in the infographic is based on a Special Data Request to Destination NSW as well as the LGA Profile – Blue Mountains (4-year annual average to September 2014). <http://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Blue-Mountains-LGA-profile-1.pdf>  
That the average length of stay (ALOS) for international visitors is skewed by international students and workers who stay in the region for longer periods of time. The ALOS for a "true" international visitor to the Blue Mountains (that is, those who are travelling for leisure etc.) is estimated to be similar to the domestic overnight visitor ALOS at 2.3 nights.

\* From the BMCC *Destination Management Plan 2017*. Reproduced with permission from The Stafford Group consultants.





## 76,904 people lived in the Blue Mountains in 2016

The population of the Blue Mountains was 76,904 people In 2016 (ABS Census). By 2036 there are expected to be 82,900 residents (Population ID 2016). The local population of the Blue Mountains is essentially stable, with a slow rate of growth. Between 2006 and 2011, the highest net gain of residents was from Penrith (+392), with the highest net loss being to Lithgow (-302). There continues to be a low level of ethnic diversity.



## An ageing community

The community is steadily ageing, with the proportion of residents over 65 increasing faster than the average for Greater Sydney. By 2036, one in four people, or as many as 24,000 Blue Mountains residents, could be 65 or more years old. Many people in the Blue Mountains live alone, and this is increasing.

Providing services and facilities that will meet the recreational needs of the ageing is a challenge and an investment priority. Walkability and physically accessible neighbourhoods will be increasingly important to maintain a healthy ageing community . An increasing proportion of residents on fixed incomes will mean affordability is also an issue. Access to opportunities for social interaction will be critical to maintaining social fabric and preventing isolation.



## Parents and families of young children

The Blue Mountains' distance from the CBD, and most major educational institutions, means that many young people move away from the area for education, career opportunities and to live a more urban lifestyle. Retaining and attracting younger people and encouraging families to the Blue Mountains will be increasingly important to ensure a balanced community structure with labour available for critical services. Investment in family friendly recreational space and facilities will continue to be critical to maintain the liveability and attraction of the Blue Mountains for younger generations, particularly families.

## In 2016, Blue Mountains LGA Population was 76,904 \*

If the Blue Mountains LGA was a village of 100 people	If the Greater Sydney area was a village of 100 people
48 are male	49 are male
52 are female	51 are female
2 identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	2 identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
17 were born overseas	37 were born overseas
18 are aged 14 years or younger	19 are aged 14 years or younger
20 are aged 65 years or older	14 are aged 65 years or older
7 were born in the United Kingdom	4 were born in the United Kingdom
9 are aged between 25–34	16 are aged between 25–34
6 have a profound or severe disability	6 have a profound or severe disability
36 have no religion	25 have no religion
25 volunteer	17 volunteer
14 provide unpaid care	11 provide unpaid care

\* Delivery Program 2017–2021 and Operational Plan Year 2 2018–2019

## From East to West

Demographic differences across the Blue Mountains have a big impact on the needs of our residents and required service delivery. In the east, residents are more likely to be part of a young family. In the west residents are more likely to be retirees. Incomes decrease east to west. The 2015 Urban Living Index gave the suburbs from Lapstone to Springwood the top score in Greater Sydney for affordability. These suburbs also scored well on the community and employment components. They were ranked 108 out of Sydney's 228 suburbs for urban liveability, which is a much higher ranking than other areas on Sydney's fringe.

## Volunteering in the Mountains

There is a higher rate of volunteering (23.4%) than the average for Greater Sydney (15.1%). Access to fulfilling opportunities for volunteering will become increasingly important as our population ages.

Protection of natural and cultural heritage is strongly valued among the Blue Mountains community.

## Health and movement

Getting our community moving is critical to improving health outcomes. Research shows that the Blue Mountains community has particular health challenges including:

- a high incidence of smoking, obesity and stress levels
- increasing rates of chronic illness
- high and increasing rates of diabetes
- a high proportion of breast cancer
- relatively large increases in the number of older people
- socio-economic inequalities and poorer health outcomes
- Western Sydney has a large urban Aboriginal community with poorer health outcomes than non-Aboriginal people

Reference: <http://www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about-us/about-our-region>



## 4.2 What are we doing?

To inform this strategic plan, Council consulted with the local community and visitors to the Blue Mountains. The consultation sought to understand current rates of participation in recreational activities, levels of satisfaction with facilities and services, and priorities for investment.

Detailed reports can be viewed on [www.bluemountainshaveyoursay/openspace](http://www.bluemountainshaveyoursay/openspace)

### Residents Open Space and Recreation Strategy Survey

The survey was completed by 442 adult residents who were selected to participate in the random survey. As such the results have a 95% confidence level which means that if we conducted a similar poll twenty times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population – in this case “all BMCC adult residents” - to within a +/- 4.6% margin in 19 of those 20 surveys (i.e. 95% of the time). Key results are summarised below.

The 42 activities listed in the survey fell into three groupings; respondents who more often do one of the activities in a group are more likely to often do each of the others. The three activity groups were:

- ‘Natural Setting activities’ like bushwalking, cycling and camping
- ‘Social activities’, mostly team sports each done by under 10% of respondents, including soccer, cycling, dancing, tennis, netball and cricket
- ‘Fitness activities’, more individual activities primarily motivated by the desire to get and remain physically fit, including aerobics, running, and swimming

The ten most popular activities (also see page 82) undertaken by residents on at least a monthly basis were:

Activity	Daily (%)	Monthly (%)	Total (%)
Walking for exercise	36	32	68
Walking (Bushwalking & Hiking)	6	42	48
Dog Exercise	19	10	30
Aerobic/Fitness	10	19	29
Camping/ Nature Study/ Bird Watching	3	26	29
Swimming/ Aqua Aerobics	3	20	24
Cycling - Road/ Cycle paths	2	14	16
Cycling - Off road, Mtn biking, downhill	2	14	16
Weight training	2	10	12
Yoga	1	10	11

52% of the sample spent 20 hours or less per month on outdoor recreation activities, and 48% reported spending more than 20 hours per month. 21% with club “approximately 25% of the time”

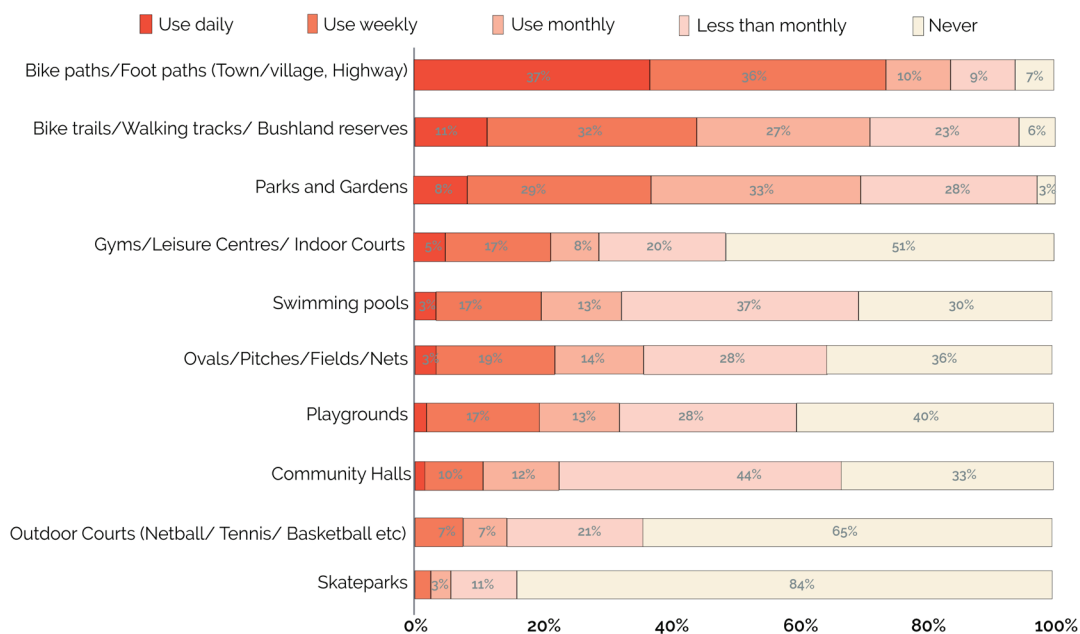
- 57% participated in informal recreational activities (no club)
- 12% with club “50% of the time”
- 45% felt age or health issues limited their participation
- 25% had a permanent physical impairment which limited their activity
- 30% of people over 65 had a physical impairment which limited their activity
- Suggestions to improve access included improved paths, seating and toilets



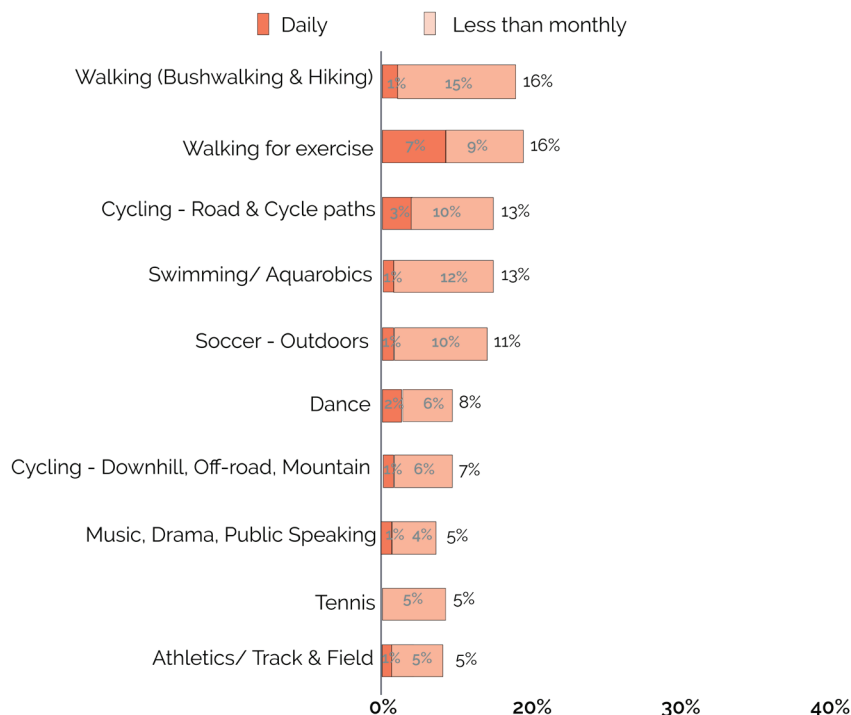
Most important aspects in choosing settings were:

- nice setting (amenity, bushland, views) with 90% rating this aspect as either important or very important
- good walking paths or walking tracks (86%)
- well maintained (68%)
- easy to get a car park (62%) (particularly for those aged 18-34 years) and
- distance from their home (51%)

#### What Council facilities do you use most for your recreational activities (Not including National Parks and privately operated)?



#### What regular sport and recreational activities do your children do in the Blue Mountains?



The random resident survey showed residents considered the following aspects in the management of open spaces, parks and bushland reserves to be the most important:

- walking tracks (45%)
- clean public toilets (32%)
- dog off-leash area (29%)
- mown grass and neat presentation (23%)
- good range and quality of play equipment (22%)
- bike tracks/trails (22%)

Respondents priorities nominated for Council future investment in open space and recreation were:

- walking tracks and bike tracks (bushland) 63%
- bushland reserves (49%)
- sealed bike paths (30%)
- more or better playground equipment (28%)
- dog off-leash areas (22%)
- swimming pools (21%)
- facilities at sportsgrounds (18%)
- more outdoor training equipment (14%)
- sports courts and nets and fields (14%)
- more specialist facilities (5%)
- do not invest more (5%)
- bushland reserves were a particular priority for those over 65 years of age
- walking tracks and bike tracks more important for those 55–64 years of age
- improved play equipment more important for females and those aged 35–44 years of age
- 18–34 years of age prioritised outdoor fitness equipment and organised activities

Factors preventing participation included:

- no time (57%)
- age or health issues (45%)
- lack of motivation (31%)
- unsuitable transport (8%)

Presence of a permanent disability:

- one in five were restricted by a permanent disability
- 30% over 65 reported a physical disability





# Visitor Intercept Surveys

- These were undertaken in four parks and reserves –being Glenbrook Park, Wentworth Falls Lake, Echo Point, Katoomba Falls
- Sample: 60–80 people per park over April/ May 2016
- 15km was the median distance travelled
- 45% were local residents, 30% were first-time visitors
- Of those, 54% were on a day visit, 12% on an overnight visit
- Satisfaction with park was 8.6/10



# Blue Mountains School Students Survey

- There is a wide range of activities being undertaken by Blue Mountains children
- Soccer is the most popular organised sport (25.95%)
- Recreational swimming was the most popular informal activity (75.95%)



# Blue Mountains Sports Clubs Survey

- Up to 11% of residents are player members of Blue Mountains sports clubs
- There are more male player members of sporting clubs than females members
- Between 2011 and 2015, there was a steady increase in both male and female player membership and participation
- The 8 football (soccer) clubs have 26% of club membership across the city

# Cliff Sports Special Interest Survey

- Of 356 responses: 79.1% male and 20.9% female. 20% local and 80% travel to climb in Blue Mountains
- 75% were rock climbers, of whom 64% were sports climbers and 33% traditional
- 80% had a high level of experience, ranging from experienced to professional
- Most were happy with low-key management of the sites. Concerns included access, erosion and safety and need for toilets and drinking water



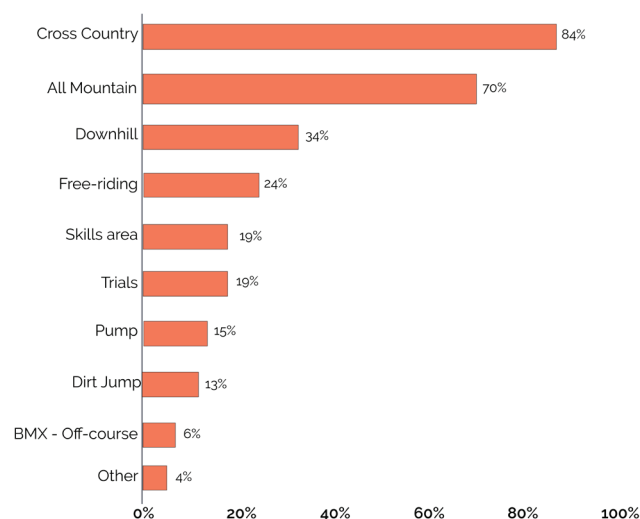
# Mountain Biking Special Interest Survey

Of 456 responses, 87.7% were male and 12.3% were female

- 29.5% were from the lower mountains, and 14.9% from the upper mountains
- 55.6% were from Sydney, NSW or interstate
- 34% were aged 20-35 years and 51% aged 36-50 years
- 56% ride to be outdoors and for fitness; 21%, particularly for younger riders, ride for fun
- Most ride in a small social group
- 82% requested single track circuits; 58% trails linking villages and 50% of tracks starting and ending at train stations
- General maintenance of trails was the highest priority for Council investment (79%)



**What forms of off-road biking do you participate in?  
Please select those that apply.**



## Dog Exercise Survey and Shared Spaces with Off-Leash Survey

Most dog owners split their dog exercise activities across both off-leash and on-leash.

- 5% found their local dog off-leash exercise area suitable for their needs, and 45% did not
- Areas were considered unsuitable because too far away, too small and crowded, lack of fencing.
- 33% always use the same local off leash areas, 28% travel to others, 16% do not use them, 16% alternated between areas in their town, and 8% use most or all off-leash areas
- Most important aspects for dog off leash areas were drinking water and bins, then fencing, distance from home, safe distance from busy road, and bushland setting
- 74% stated socialising at dog exercise areas is important for both dogs and their owners
- Major concerns expressed with sharing spaces with other users included issues related to dog behaviour, owner control of dogs, and failure of owners to pick up dog poo



## 4.3 Our Planning Approach

### 4.3.1 Identifying Opportunities for Recreation

Blue Mountains residential growth will be focused in established areas and it is unlikely that substantial new land for public open space will be acquired. For this reason, planning focuses on the sport and recreation opportunities for existing spaces.

#### Definition

**Recreation opportunities are combinations of recreation activities and particular settings. Each combination of recreation activity and setting provides a different recreation opportunity.**

Each combination of recreation activity and setting potentially:

- requires different skills and equipment
- attracts different participants/clients with different expectations
- provides a different recreation experience and
- requires different management inputs to maintain quality, safety, sustainability and diversity

**This strategic plan recommends supporting activities which are popular with our community and which can be undertaken using the different settings and infrastructure that are available across the city. This approach will help identify and address any deficiencies which may exist, and also strengthen the identity and character of the City.**



'Saturday afternoon competition - Springwood Tennis Club'  
Courtesy of photographer Craig Martin



## 4.3.2 How Do We Compare?

The Blue Mountains was compared with five other geographically and demographically similar local government areas in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. The benchmarking exercise made the following findings.

### Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

Provision of indoor recreation courts is relatively low across the city.

**Opportunities should be pursued to extend existing Council indoor recreation facilities, as well as to encourage construction of indoor sport and recreation facilities by others.**

### Aquatic Centres

Provision of pools across the city is very high—five aquatic centres with a total of 16 pools means that there are .06 Centres per 1000 people.

**In the longer term, Council should provide a range of mobility accessible pools across the city with extended swimming seasons. In the short term, Council should seek to extend the life of existing pools.**

### Sports Fields

Provision of sporting fields is relatively low (0.8ha per 1,000 people) with a marked deficiency in the lower and mid mountains. Council seeks to improve capacity of existing grounds through improvement works, but the geographic spread of the facilities and the size and capacity of each playing field means that the Blue Mountains has limited capacity to accommodate field sports as the population grows or as different trends in sporting codes emerge.

**Council should investigate opportunities for provision of additional fields, particularly for a set of fields suitable for district level competition sports.**





## Outdoor Sports Courts

The provision of outdoor tennis, basketball, netball or multi-use courts is low with 0.83 courts per 1000 people across the city. Access to multi-use courts is comparatively low.

**Council should investigate opportunities for provision of multi-use courts at a planning area level to cater for both practise and informal use. Multi-use courts and associated facilities such as hit up, kick and graffiti walls are needed to support active use by older children and youth.**

## Public Parks

Blue Mountains has 3.68ha per 1000 people which is relatively low. In comparison, the number of parks per 1,000 people is relatively high. This is because Council parks are generally small in size, which restricts their capacity for wide recreational use.

The significant amount of national park and bushland reserves available to residents helps mitigate these factors. Blue Mountains has one of the higher overall rates of provision of open space per resident of any peri-urban council.

**Council should focus on improving the quality and capacity of the larger parks at a district and planning area level, as well as improving quality and accessibility of regional level walking tracks and visitor facilities in natural areas.**



## 4.4 Our Planning Framework

**Our vision is to provide a network of open space, sport and recreation opportunities that encourages people in the Blue Mountains to lead active and healthy lives.**

We aim to do this by creating and supporting:

- Walkable neighbourhoods with useable open space such as a park, sports area or bushland reserve within walking distance (800m) of residences.
- Connected paths and trails for walking and cycling within and between each town and village, and to key destinations.
- Opportunities within each planning area for:
  - active recreation and sport, including fields, courts, bike and skate parks
  - a range of organised and informal exercise opportunities including with companion animals
  - children’s imaginative play
  - hangout spaces for young people
  - social gatherings and events
  - nature based recreation including tracks and trails
- District destination parks which will support a wide range of settings and recreation activities for all ages and abilities.
- District competition standard sporting fields, sports courts and aquatic centres.
- Access to year round swimming opportunities and active living programs at a district level.
- Access to local planning area swimming opportunities on a seasonal basis.
- Indoor recreation facilities (shared provision between Council, Department of Education and private recreation industry).
- A range of quality visitor facilities with capacity for locals and visitors of all ages and abilities to access scenic lookouts and walks.
- Information and promotion of the diverse range of recreation opportunities across the city.
- Volunteer programs to support provision and maintenance of recreation settings.

This will be achieved through:

- Focusing on quality of provision rather than quantity.
- Focusing on providing diverse recreational opportunities to the community rather than specified ‘spaces for recreation’.
- Providing equitable access for people of all ages and abilities across our community.
- Making best use of current facilities while steadily transforming current assets to better meet future needs.
- Implementing a reinvestment program for parks that reflects the new framework and takes a staged approach to phasing in changes to existing open spaces, parks and reserves.
- Forming partnerships with other levels of government including the Department of Education, Office of Environment and Heritage and Destination NSW.
- Encouraging private investment in recreation infrastructure and delivery of services.



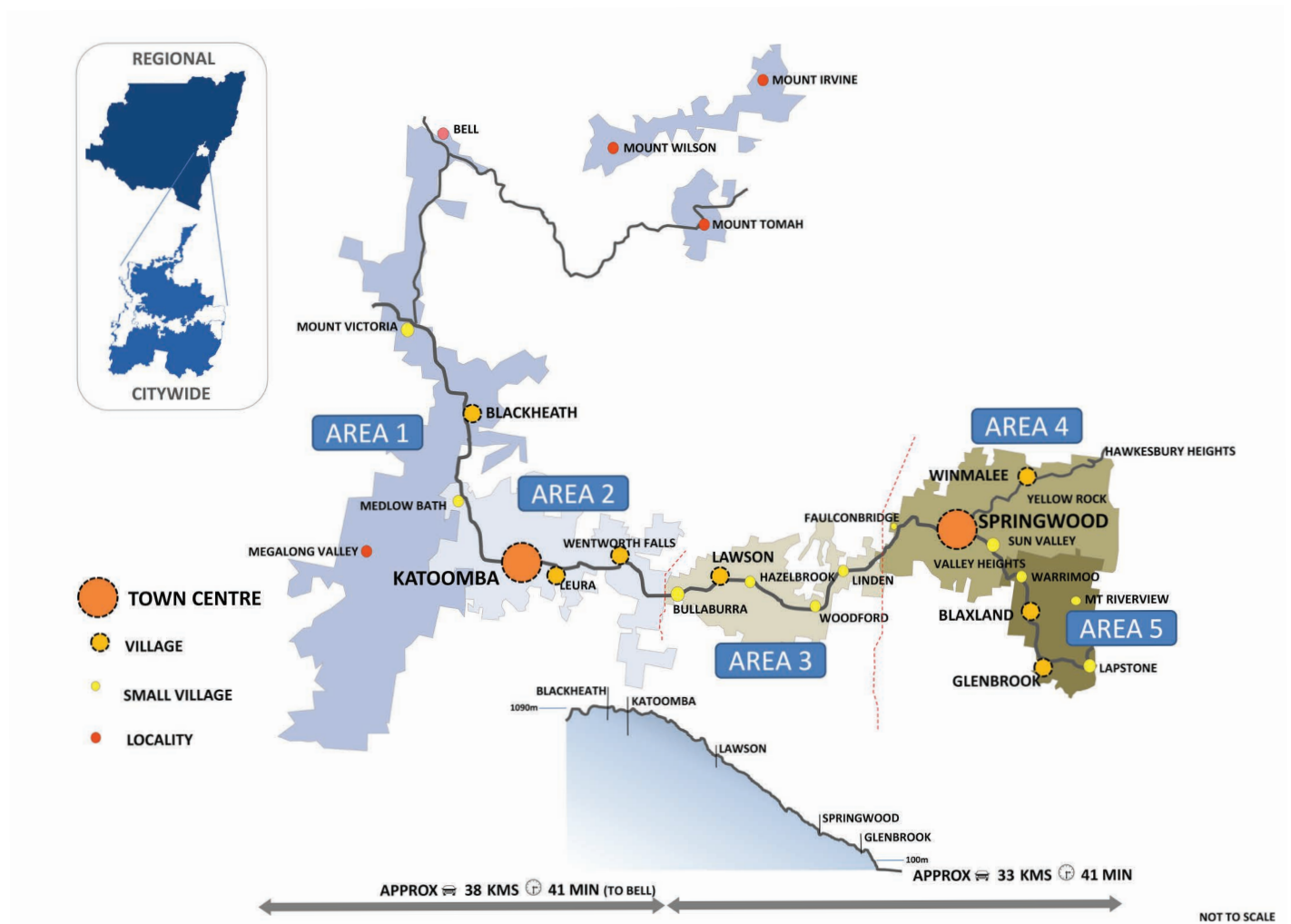
## 4.5 Service Hierarchy and Themes

Prioritising recreational opportunities for individual neighbourhoods, while also considering how these services fit into larger planning areas, will help Council create a strategic framework that better serves the Blue Mountains community. It will also improve liveability across our dispersed villages and towns.

Any strategies developed need to consider how to best provide recreational opportunities:

- at neighbourhood or village levels
- within each locality or planning area
- for the districts of the upper and lower mountains
- at a whole-of-city and regional levels

Blue Mountains City Spatial Catchments & Service Hierarchy	
Service Hierarchy	Description
Neighbourhood	Services a catchment of a small village or a precinct within a larger town or village. Ideal open spaces are free of barriers such as the highway, railway or landscape features that restrict movement of people within the area. Residents should have access within a safe walking distance, generally around 800m to 1km.
Local/Planning Area (with central service towns)	<p>Services one of the five planning areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Area 1: Mount Victoria, Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine, Mount Tomah, Bell Blackheath and Megalong Valley, with the service town being Blackheath</li> <li>• Area 2: Medlow Bath to Katoomba to Wentworth Falls, with the service town being Katoomba</li> <li>• Area 3: Bullaburra to Linden, with Lawson and Hazelbrook serving as the service towns</li> <li>• Area 4: Falconbridge to Springwood to Winmalee, Hawkesbury Heights, Yellow Rock and Valley Heights, with Springwood the service town</li> <li>• Area 5: Warrimoo to Lapstone, with Blaxland as the service town</li> </ul> <p>Drive-to destination parks and facilities providing informal and formal sport and recreation opportunities. Facilities cater to extended stays of two to three hours.</p> <p>Parks and facilities at this level also provide opportunities for the neighbourhood service catchment.</p>
District	<p>Services the two main districts of the Blue Mountains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upper mountains</li> <li>• lower mountains</li> </ul> <p>These are major destinations for their respective districts but also service residents and visitors from outside the district. Typically, district level destinations will provide high-quality facilities for a diverse range of activities and be suitable for extended stays of half a day or more. They may include a range of sporting and informal recreation facilities and/or natural area visitor facilities. These opportunities can also provide for local and neighbourhood needs.</p>
Whole-of-city and Regional	<p>Destination parks and facilities that service the whole city and beyond. This includes major event spaces and nature based recreation destinations that are major drivers of tourism.</p> <p>These require a high level of service due to the volume of use and the importance of the site to visitors and local residents.</p>



## BLUE MOUNTAINS SPATIAL CATCHMENTS AND SERVICE HIERARCHY





Walking tracks and Cycle trails are classified in line with the Australia Standards and the following table;

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Distance	Distance to complete walk/cycle x km.	Distance to complete walk/cycle xx km.	Distance to complete walk/cycle xx km.	Distance to complete walk/cycle xx km.	Distance to complete walk/cycle xx km.
Gradient	Flat.	Gentle hills.	Short steep hills.	Very steep.	Very steep and difficult.
Quality of path	Well-formed track.	Formed track.	Formed track, some obstacles.	Rough track, many obstacles.	Rough unformed track.
Quality of markings	Clearly sign posted.	Clearly sign posted.	Sign posted.	Limited signage.	No directional signage.
Experience required	No experience required.	No experience required.	Some bushwalking experience required.	Experienced bushwalkers.	Very experienced bushwalkers.
Time	High and low estimate of time needed to complete track (eg 1.5-2hrs).	High and low estimate of time needed to complete track (eg 1.5-2hrs).	Time needed to complete track (hours/days).	Time needed to complete track (hours/days).	Time needed to complete track (hours/days).





# Strategic Framework



'Competitors in the 50km event of the 2015 North Face 100' (Now Ultratrail). Photo: Simon Carter



# The proposed strategic framework

Recreational activity	Service Level and Hierarchy			Setting and Infrastructure that can be used:
	Neighbourhood (within walking distance)	Local (within the Local planning area)	District & regional (upper mountains, lower mountains & citywide)	
Nature Based/ Outdoor General/ Walking Tracks/ Camping/ Climbing	Park or bushland area.	Destination bushland reserve/ picnic areas catering to stays of more than 2 hours. Grade 3-4 walking tracks and lookouts in scenic areas with natural values for nature study, birdwatching, etc.	Grade 1 and 2 walking tracks and lookouts in scenic areas. Major destination parks with capacity for larger group activities. Primitive camping areas and associated nature based recreation sites. Cliff based sports areas.	1 Bushland Parks & Reserves; 2 Tracks, Trails & Lookouts; 3 Urban Paths; 4 Urban Parks; 5 Sporting Areas; 6 Indoor Sports Centres & Halls; 7 Aquatic Centres; 8 Civic Spaces; 9 Other Open Space; N.B. Other open space includes easements, buffers, linear corridors), National Parks, Private parks and Gardens, Schools
Urban/ active outdoor	Range of opportunities provided within village. Access distances to parks and reserves may vary, 800-1000m	Destination parks and district sports areas catering for extended stays and providing for a range of activities and larger group activities.	Major destination parks and sports areas with capacity for larger group activities such as Parkrun.	1,2,3,4,9 State Parks and Gardens
General recreation	Open space within approximately 800m safe walking distances of residences	Parks for extended stays providing multiple activities.	District and tourism parks.	1,2,3,4,5,9
Play	Full range of play opportunities distributed across the neighbourhood parks in each planning area.	Parks with 1 or 2 types of formal play equipment and opportunities for informal play. At least 1 / PA and at district sportsgrounds.	Major play spaces catering to full spectrum of play activities and a range of ages and abilities.	1,4,5,8,9

Recreational activity	Service Level and Hierarchy			Setting and Infrastructure that can be used:
	Neighbourhood (within walking distance)	Local (within the Local planning area)	District & regional (upper mountains, lower mountains & citywide)	
Community gatherings and events	Spaces for local events, event organisers to supply facilities required.	Larger space, power available for hire.	1-2 major event precincts, toilets, lights and power available for hire.	4,5,6,8 Shared use of schools
Outdoor sports/competition, training and informal uses	NA	Junior football and cricket field, practise courts provided within each Planning Area – preferred approach is to provide larger multi-use areas.	Sporting fields provided to support district level competition At least 1 multi-use field precinct able to support citywide competition and training. Secondary facilities; play equipment, walking/ cycling tracks, amenities, picnic facilities and sports pavilions. Ancillary uses include special events.	5 Shared use of schools
Court sports/competition and training	NA	Multipurpose courts suitable for range of uses – tennis, netball, futsal.	Aggregation of courts to accommodate competition and training for netball and tennis.	5 Shared use of schools
Lawn bowls, croquet	NA	NA	Provided at city wide level only.	5
Horse sports	NA	NA	Provided at city wide level only.	1,2,3,5



Recreational activity	Service Level and Hierarchy			Setting and Infrastructure that can be used:
	Neighbourhood (within walking distance)	Local (within the Local planning area)	District & regional (upper mountains, lower mountains & citywide)	
Walking	Local network of connected footpaths, walkable verges and quiet roads available for transport and recreation	Grade 3-4 walking tracks Routes with connected formed footpaths or shared paths. Circuit path on sporting field or Local park.	Sealed circuit track around district parks or sporting fields. Eastern and Southern Escarpment linked path and Mt York historic road networks	1,2,3,4,5,9 Roads
Cycling	Informal path and road access for training	Informal path, track and road access for training, kiddies training track at Local park or sportsground.	Specialist bike facilities e.g. BMX, dirt jumps, downhill, proposed Bike Park. Greater Blue Mountains Trail extended and surface improved.	1,2,3,4,5,9 Roads
Indoor sport and recreation	NA	Indoor opportunities may vary between planning areas. Commercial providers encouraged	1 indoor sports centre with 2 courts for each district: upper and lower mountains.	6 Shared use of schools and private gyms
Aquatic sport and recreation	NA	Outdoor seasonal swimming pools with links to parks or water play	2 multipurpose year round centres with active healthy living programs at district level: Springwood and Katoomba; 1 venue capable of hosting competition 50 m pool at Glenbrook.	7 Shared use of schools



# Strategic Outcomes



'Leura Cricket Club & Faulconbridge Cricket Club at Tom Hunter Grounds.' Courtesy of photographer Daniel Neukirch



# Theme 1 Walking: tracks and trails and urban paths

## Walking

**Community surveys show that walking for exercise and bushwalking are the two most popular recreational activities in the Blue Mountains.**

Investment in walking tracks and bike tracks was rated the highest 'Priority for Investment' for participants in the public consultation for open space and recreation.

The Blue Mountains has an extensive network of historical walking tracks largely built in the nineteenth century. Many are now protected under heritage listing. These tracks cross Council, Blue Mountains National Park and private land.

Council manages over 130 km of these tracks and 98 lookouts. An estimated 80% of these are in poor condition or failing, and there is insufficient funding to repair or replace the track surface and drainage or key infrastructure such as bridges and signage. To date Council has implemented a risk assessment approach to renewal of tracks and lookouts, and this will continue.

Most tracks are from Grade 3 to Grade 5 in difficulty, with steep grades, many steps and a low level of signage.

Improvements to heavily used tracks have been prioritised to minimise potential environmental impacts from erosion and to ensure older people and those with disabilities have access to the natural environment. Proposed improvements include upgrades to surfaces, signage, ancillary facilities and loop walks to ensure that they meet Grade 2 standards.

The Blue Mountains Pedestrian Access Management Plan (PAMP) outlines Council's program for urban paths. There are many gaps in the urban path network, and funding for the expansion of this network needs review to improve walkability across the Blue Mountains. A priority for path connectivity is to provide shared paths linking district parks and sporting and aquatic centres with town centres and transport nodes. Links to schools and other major community facilities are also critical to create a walkable city.

From a daily recreation perspective, it will be important to provide residential areas with walkable loop routes, and connections to the transport nodes to encourage regular activity.

## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
1.1: Deteriorating condition of infrastructure and inadequate funding to renew extensive failing walking track infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Focus maintenance on regional and local tracks (Grades 1 to 4)</li><li>Restore tracks using construction methods that reduce ongoing maintenance requirements</li></ul>	Ongoing
1.2: A large backlog in maintenance and renewal of walking tracks with an estimated 80% of track surfaces failing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Invest in renewal, surface improvements and signage to increase accessibility of Grade 3 tracks</li><li>Reduce maintenance on some Grade 4 tracks with low use</li><li>Halt surface upgrades on Grade 5 tracks</li></ul>	High/ongoing
1.3: Lack of accessible all-weather tracks for walking in bushland setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Upgrade major tracks to create high quality facilities which are accessible to a wider group of the local community as well as visitors</li><li>Connect track networks and transport nodes in the Southern and Eastern Escarpment precincts</li></ul>	Ongoing

# Issues, Challenges and Actions (cont.)

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
1.4: Lack of accessible all-weather routes and loops for walking in urban settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake walkability assessment of towns and villages</li> <li>Review the Pedestrian Access Management Plan (PAMP), prioritising critical gaps in walking paths</li> <li>Introduce a second tier of unsurfaced paths</li> <li>Map and promote walking routes in each town and village</li> </ul>	Short term
1.5: Many trails are not well connected to the urban path network and to transport nodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review PAMP to address residential and transport node connections to popular open space areas, including parks, sports and aquatic centres, and track and trail heads</li> </ul>	Short term
1.6: There are inadequate resources available to undertake sufficient levels of maintenance on the large number of heritage-listed walking tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase capital and maintenance budget to major walking tracks</li> </ul>	Ongoing
1.7: Some bushwalking groups expressed disappointment with Council's level of consultation about bushwalking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult with bushwalking groups to inform major track upgrade works</li> </ul>	Ongoing
1.8: Some community members have expressed concern about pedestrians and cyclists sharing paths and tracks, especially with fast moving cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure Austroads guidelines are followed where shared paths cater for low volumes of traffic or when cyclist speeds are slow and pedestrian volume is low</li> <li>Provide separate paths for walking and cycling where volumes are high, or gradients steep or visibility poor</li> <li>Monitor safety and usage of shared tracks</li> <li>Ensure that single use tracks are well signposted and monitor use</li> <li>Promote a culture of safe use of shared tracks by introducing 'keep to the left', speed limits and other safety signage</li> </ul>	High/ongoing
1.9: Community members are keen to provide voluntary assistance with track construction and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressively resource and develop formal volunteer programs for track care across the different styles of track</li> </ul>	Ongoing
1.10 Mapping of walking tracks shows there is a much larger network of routes than currently mapped and maintained (approximately 12% longer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information to potential users on track condition and recommended levels of experience for use</li> </ul>	High/ongoing



## Theme 2 Cycling: Tracks and Trails and Urban Paths

**Cycling is increasingly popular in the Blue Mountains but there are many gaps in the existing urban cycle network. There is also high demand for specialist tracks for competition, training and informal use, including downhill, cross-country, free riding and pump tracks.**

Council biking assets include urban shared paths, the BMX Park in Lawson, a downhill track in Knapsack Park and Stage 1 of the Great Blue Mountains Trail. There is also a large network of fire trails which cross Council and NPWS land.

The Blue Mountains Bike Plan outlines a program for expansion of urban bike trails across the City. However, funding for the expansion of this network needs review to cater to increasing numbers of cyclists.

## Issues, Challenges & Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/ Timeframe
2.1: Lack of accessible all-weather tracks for cycling in bushland setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade major tracks to create high-quality facilities that are more accessible to all members of the local community and to visitors.</li> <li>• Connect track networks and transport nodes in the Southern and Eastern Escarpment precincts.</li> <li>• Educate riders to reduce use of bush tracks in wet weather</li> </ul>	<p>Medium</p> <p>High</p>
2.2: Lack of accessible all-weather routes and loops for cycling in the urban setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake active transport assessment pilot.</li> <li>• Review the Blue Mountains Bike Plan, prioritising critical gaps in bike paths.</li> <li>• Introduce a second tier of unsurfaced trails.</li> </ul>	Short term
2.3: Many trails are not well connected to the urban path network and to transport nodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Blue Mountains Bike Plan to address connection to popular open space areas, including bike trail heads.</li> </ul>	Short term
2.4: Increasing cycle use of heritage-listed walking tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure single-use tracks are well signposted.</li> </ul>	Ongoing



Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/ Timeframe
2.5: Lack of formal facilities for each style of cycling, e.g. pump, downhill, cross-country, BMX, on-road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate sites for bike park/s and trails for foundation skill development and offer graded opportunities to cater for beginners, intermediate and expert riders</li> <li>Scope development of bike park/s and trails</li> <li>Seek partnerships to develop and manage bike park/s and formal tracks for different cycling styles e.g. pump, downhill, cross-country, BMX, on-road</li> </ul>	Medium term
2.6: Cycle tourism is not well developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve track network and information on access to tracks, advocate for improved train travel for bikes, coordinate with tourism industry to better promote and support cycle tourism and to develop further attraction and employment opportunities</li> </ul>	Ongoing
2.7: Lack of safe off road cycle link between towns and villages across the city and connections across the Nepean River and to western NSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue development of the Great Blue Mountains Trail linking upper mountains villages to trails and to western NSW, and the Eastern Escarpment trails connecting through the lower mountains to Penrith</li> </ul>	Ongoing
2.8: Unauthorised tracks are degrading high-value natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess unauthorised tracks and develop suitable management procedures or remove tracks and restore natural areas</li> <li>Provide information on impacts</li> <li>Open less sensitive tracks for bike use</li> </ul>	Short to medium term
2.9: Level of risk in providing cycling facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage construction, maintenance, signage and use of recreation facilities to minimise hazards and manage risk exposure of community and Council</li> <li>Facilitate provision for specialist forms of cycling in partnership with registered organisations and establish management roles, responsibilities and processes to ensure safe management of sites</li> </ul>	Short term
2.10: Community members are keen to provide voluntary assistance with track construction and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressively resource and develop formal volunteer programs for track care across the different styles of track</li> </ul>	Ongoing





# Theme 3 Nature-based Recreation and Bushland parks

Nature based recreation is an important part of life in the Blue Mountains and plays an important role in the regional economy.

Nature based recreation activities are dependent upon the natural environment, have appreciation of nature as the key motivational factor, and do not require substantial modification of the natural environment. The lands managed by Blue Mountains City Council offer a wide range of activities including

- sightseeing
- bird watching and nature study
- canoeing and wild swimming
- camping
- paragliding and hang gliding
- rock climbing and bouldering
- picnicking
- photography and
- walking and cycling in Theme 1 and Theme 2



## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
3.1: Natural areas with high levels of visitation and long stays do not all have adequate supporting infrastructure, such as parking, toilets, and shelter and access tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove aging toilet blocks due for replacement from low visitation locations, such as in neighbourhood parks</li> <li>• improve toilets in popular sites such as camping and climbing precincts, including Mt Blackheath, Centennial Glen, Mount Piddington, Mount York and Mount Boyce</li> </ul>	High
3.2: Inadequate visitor infrastructure, such as bus drop-off areas, and large capacity picnic shelters in popular areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce large shelters and bus bays in popular day-use areas such as at Wentworth Falls Lake</li> <li>• Investigate options to introduce a booking system for commercial usage</li> </ul>	Medium term
3.3: Some natural areas have increasing use but have inadequate visitor infrastructure to meet demand –problems with access tracks and no amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate introducing visitor infrastructure in high- use natural areas, such as free swimming areas</li> <li>• Introduce special management/investigate use of portable amenities for areas of high seasonal use. Temporary measures may be required until adequate resources can be reinvested in areas of need</li> <li>• Introduce sustainable catchment management practices to improve water quality</li> <li>• Install and maintain signage regarding impact of rain events on water quality for swimming</li> </ul>	High to medium
3.4: Increased freedom camping in remote unserviced natural areas has the potential to damage the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate pay to camp options for suitable sites, and regulate camping in other areas</li> <li>• Develop Camping Strategic Plan to regulate and manage camp grounds as well as freedom camping</li> </ul>	High/short term



# Issues, Challenges and Actions (cont.)

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
3.5: Opportunities are being missed for natural areas to supplement urban park-based recreational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connect recreational areas with walking tracks and optimise access to natural areas and urban parks</li> <li>Improve informal access and recreational opportunities at Glenbrook Lagoon</li> </ul>	Medium term
3.6: Lack of clear delineation of responsibility for asset maintenance where Council, Crown and NPWS land interconnect can result in poorly presented access roads, signage and other facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review areas and responsibility for management, and establish regular liaison with NPWS around key sites e.g. Narrownneck, the Southern Escarpment and Western Escarpment</li> </ul>	Short term
3.7: Need to manage risk in natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy for high risk activities in natural areas</li> <li>Incorporate risk management principles when new facilities are developed</li> </ul>	Ongoing





# Theme 4 Play

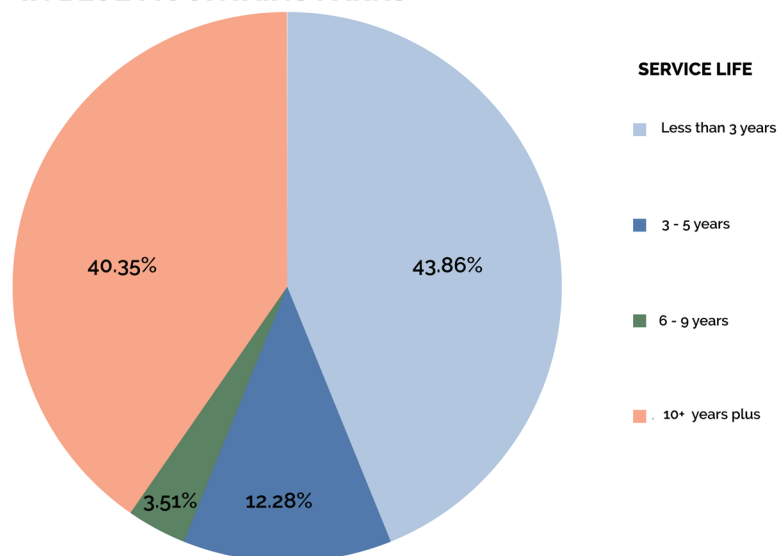
The Blue Mountains has hundreds of places for children to play, including over 100 Council-managed parks and 56 sites with sets of formal play equipment.

A high proportion of the formal play equipment provided by Council is due for replacement within the next 10 years.

Replacement costs range from \$40,000 for a small formal play setting in a neighbourhood park to \$1 million for a playground in a district park catering for all abilities and a range of ages. The smaller settings in neighbourhood parks normally last around 20 years and the high-use district playgrounds are significantly worn within 10 years. During their lifetime playgrounds need regular cleaning and top-up of soft fall, monthly checking, annual auditing and minor repairs, painting, oiling and or replacement of damaged parts.



**SERVICE LIFE REMAINING FOR PLAY EQUIPMENT IN BLUE MOUNTAINS PARKS**





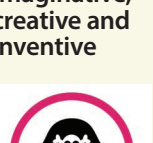


To continue replacing failing formal play equipment with like for like is not viable within available resources.

The proposed approach is to provide a diversity of play opportunities relating to developmental needs.

Children need five different types of play to grow to their full potential. Research, professional expertise and community all confirm that a diversity of play opportunities is required to support developmental needs. Formal or fixed play equipment provides for some of these play needs, but not all of them. Many needs can be provided through more informal play, particularly through nature play.

# Play Themes

Play Need	Action	Development	Play Area	Equipment
<b>Move your body</b> 	Running, climbing, swimming, jumping, throwing and catching	Fitness, obesity management, motor skills, coordination, balance, proprioception, risk management and resilience	Open level grassed spaces, goal posts, bounce walls, climbing equipment, boulders, trees, mounds rocks and logs, access to pools, creeks, dams and puddles	Bats and balls, frisbees, skipping ropes, gym equipment
<b>Kinetic</b> 	Swinging, sliding, skateboarding, riding bikes	Risk management and resilience, balance, academic performance	Swings, slides, and roundabouts, flying foxes, bike paths, skate parks, BMX or pump/junior dirt jump tracks, steep slopes	Bikes, scooters, skateboards, cardboard boxes
<b>Social</b> 	Any form of play where children meet and interact	Social skills, self-reliance, resilience	Seating and shelter for small groups and large, partially hidden places. Could include Wi-Fi, music playing outlets, artworks that reflect particular cohorts	Music, festivals, playgroups, portable barbecues, folding chairs and picnic blankets
<b>Explorative</b> 	Observing, finding, prodding things, and ongoing observation	Learning enthusiasm, environmental understanding and a scientific approach	Frequent access to the natural world and permission to move things. Nature, bush and bushwalks, environment, water play. Information/artwork, things to discover	Maps, field guides, magnifying glasses, cameras, note books, sketch pads
<b>Imaginative, creative and inventive</b> 	Making up stories and role play games. making mud pies, cubbies, dams, spears, sculptures, etc.	A sense of self, self-confidence, social skills, resilience and ability to adapt.	Loose materials to manipulate, e.g. stones, sticks, mulch, water, junk, etc. Imagination prompts like sculptures. Stages for acting things out or drawing with chalks, etc.	Dress-ups and accessories, dolls, chalks, books to act out, paint, paper, glue, scissors, video camera, etc.



A structured playground that incorporates nature play elements into its design, including arranged boulders and logs.  
 (Source: Learning Landscapes [www.learninglandscapesdesign.com/westmoreland-nature-play-area-opens/](http://www.learninglandscapesdesign.com/westmoreland-nature-play-area-opens/))



(Source: <http://www.field-studies-council.org/outdoorclassroom.aspx>)



(Source: <http://nicros.com/climbing-walls/playground-boulders/>)



# Participation in Play

A portion of families with children in the Mountains and visitors seek to play in open space –often on formal play equipment–multiple times per week.

Community surveys indicate satisfaction with the play opportunities provided in the Mountains. Many residents have chosen to live in the area for the natural and bush settings available, and the use of natural settings for play is widespread.

In the Blue Mountains nature play opportunities are many and varied.



However, the current range of formal play equipment provided is not very diverse and primarily provides for climbing and kinetic play. There are no large or inclusive playgrounds (although stage 1 of Glenbrook Park started to address this in 2018). There is also a shortage of play opportunities for older children and teenagers

Consultation with children aged 10–12 identified priorities for developing safe connections with bike paths and footpaths to parks. It also identified a general deficiency in play provision for older children and teenagers, especially equipment to move the body such as flying foxes and zip lines, walls and boulders for rock climbing, and free basketball courts. Safe places to hang out and socialise were also important for this group.

All play opportunities provided by Council, except within Leisure Centres, are free. Play opportunities of some sort are generally within 800metres of each residence, with a larger variety of options available if people travel further.

Time-lapse photography and user surveys indicate that neighbourhood parks are not used regularly for play. Larger more diverse playgrounds in local parks and those adjacent to sports grounds get higher use. The district parks are the most popular for play and social events.

To address this Council should aim to provide:

- more information on where play opportunities are available
- higher quality playgrounds at district and local planning area parks
- playgrounds with more amenity such as shade and seating
- playgrounds with better managed risks, in particular fencing
- more inclusive playgrounds with safe paths of travel

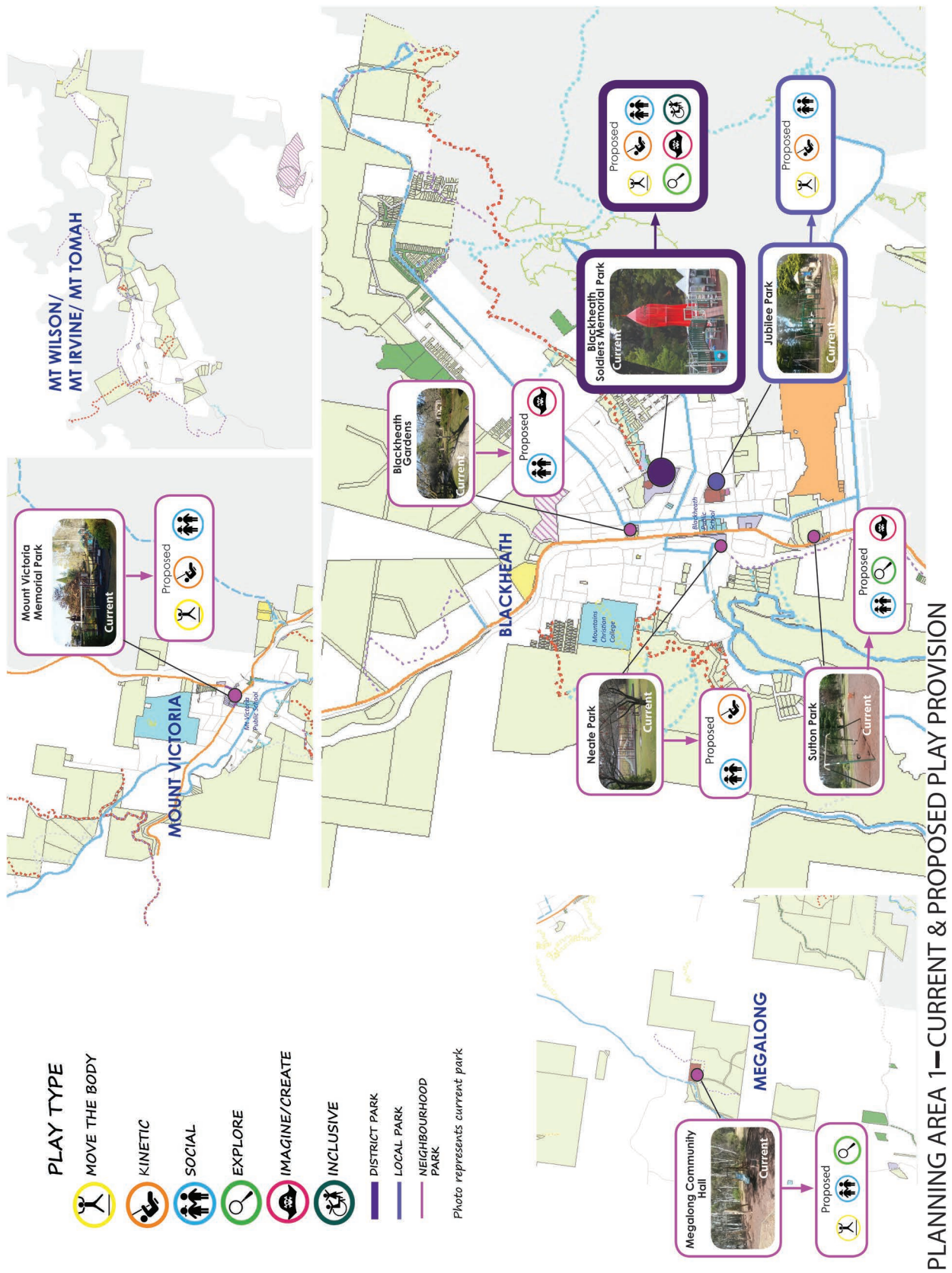
## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
4.1: Need to increase inclusiveness and accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide an all-abilities playground in all district parks as resources and space permit</li><li>• Improve mobility access to the main activity/area in civic, local and neighbourhood parks when play equipment is renewed</li><li>• Connect parks with adjoining activity nodes to encourage active transport</li></ul>	Medium

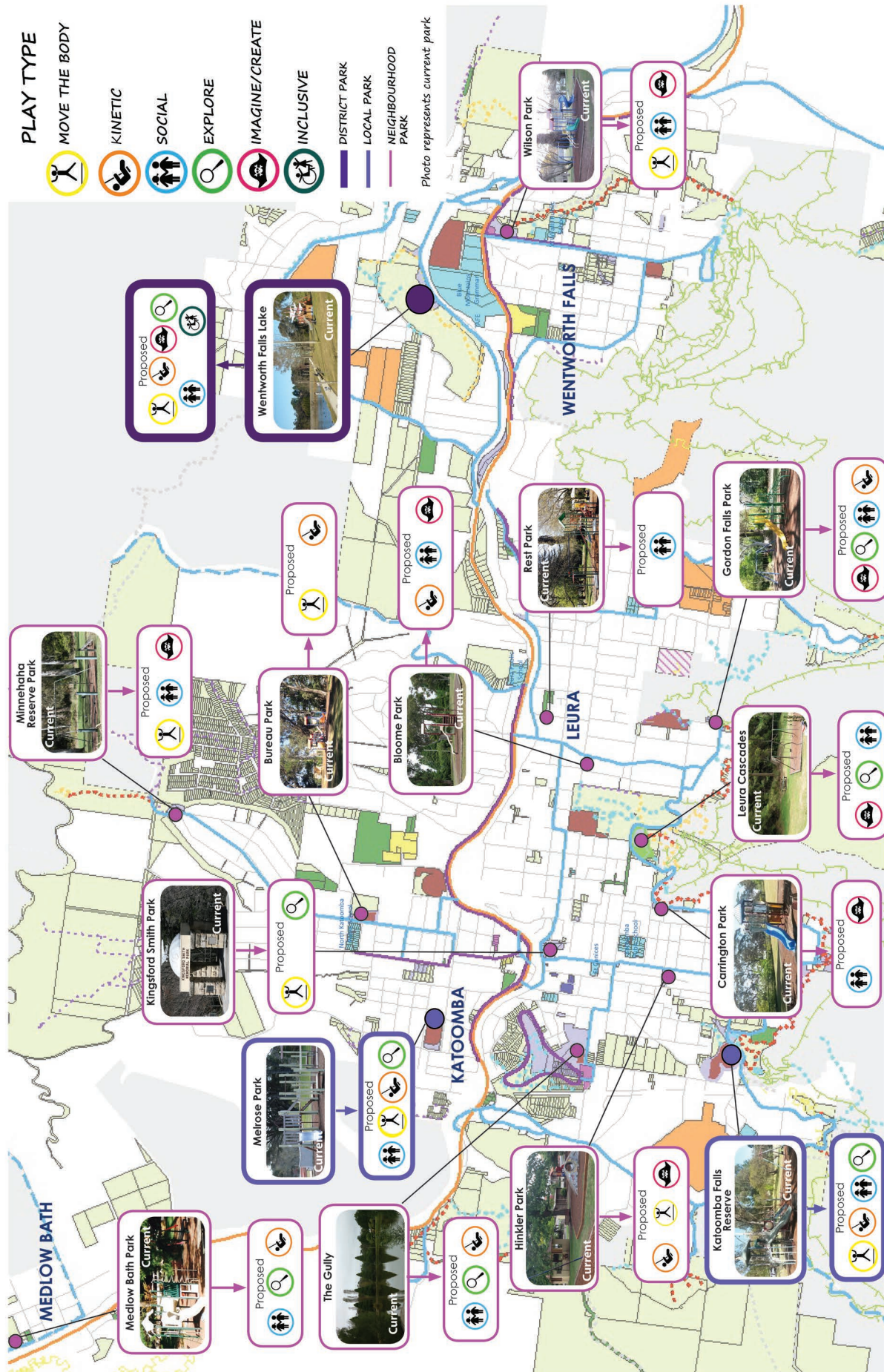
# Issues, Challenges & Actions (cont.)

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
4.2: Lack of carer-friendly playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide seating (formal or informal) near play areas.</li> <li>• Ensure that a significant portion of each play setting is visible from the road</li> <li>• Provide water and shade near play areas (note that shade will be from trees in most circumstances)</li> <li>• Provide fencing and barriers to roads at parks close to busy roads</li> <li>• Schedule regular maintenance activities, except for bushland and undeveloped parks</li> </ul>	Ongoing phased 10 + years
4.3: Playgrounds don't currently reflect Blue Mountains character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop design guidelines mandating use of natural materials such as sandstone, timber, heritage and native plantings where appropriate</li> </ul>	Ongoing phased 10 + years
4.4: Need to know the opportunities available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote Council playgrounds and parks with up-to-date information on Council's website</li> </ul>	Medium
4.5: Children and carers do not always know how to engage with the environment for play where there is no formal play equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage events and groups to use the parks for play</li> <li>• Adapt a portion of programmed Council events to deliver play learning activities</li> <li>• Work with the Stronger Families Alliance to promote and adapt existing programs to include play learning activities</li> </ul>	Medium
4.6: Formal playgrounds do not meet user expectations, lacking diversity, quality and excitement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the quality of play opportunities provided in local area parks and town centres</li> <li>• Provide a full range of quality play opportunities at district parks where space and resources permit</li> <li>• Develop a new district park aimed at older children and teenagers</li> <li>• Provide a medium level of facilities at local parks and adjoining district sports fields</li> <li>• Provide at least one informal play opportunity in neighbourhood parks and town centres, varying it so that a wide range of play opportunities is available within each of Council's five planning areas</li> <li>• Provide chillout and active spaces for older children and teenagers in each planning area, such as skate parks, multipurpose courts, pop-up parks</li> </ul>	Ongoing phased 10 + years
4.7: Risk management and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all formal play equipment meets the Australian Standards for Play Equipment at the time of its installation</li> <li>• Carry out an annual independent audit on formal play equipment</li> <li>• Carry out regular in-house inspections on formal play equipment</li> <li>• Rectify identified faults, prioritised according to level of risk</li> <li>• Provide barriers between play equipment and major roads when the play setting is less than 15m from the road and for inclusive playgrounds</li> <li>• Remove play equipment at the end of its safe life</li> </ul>	Ongoing



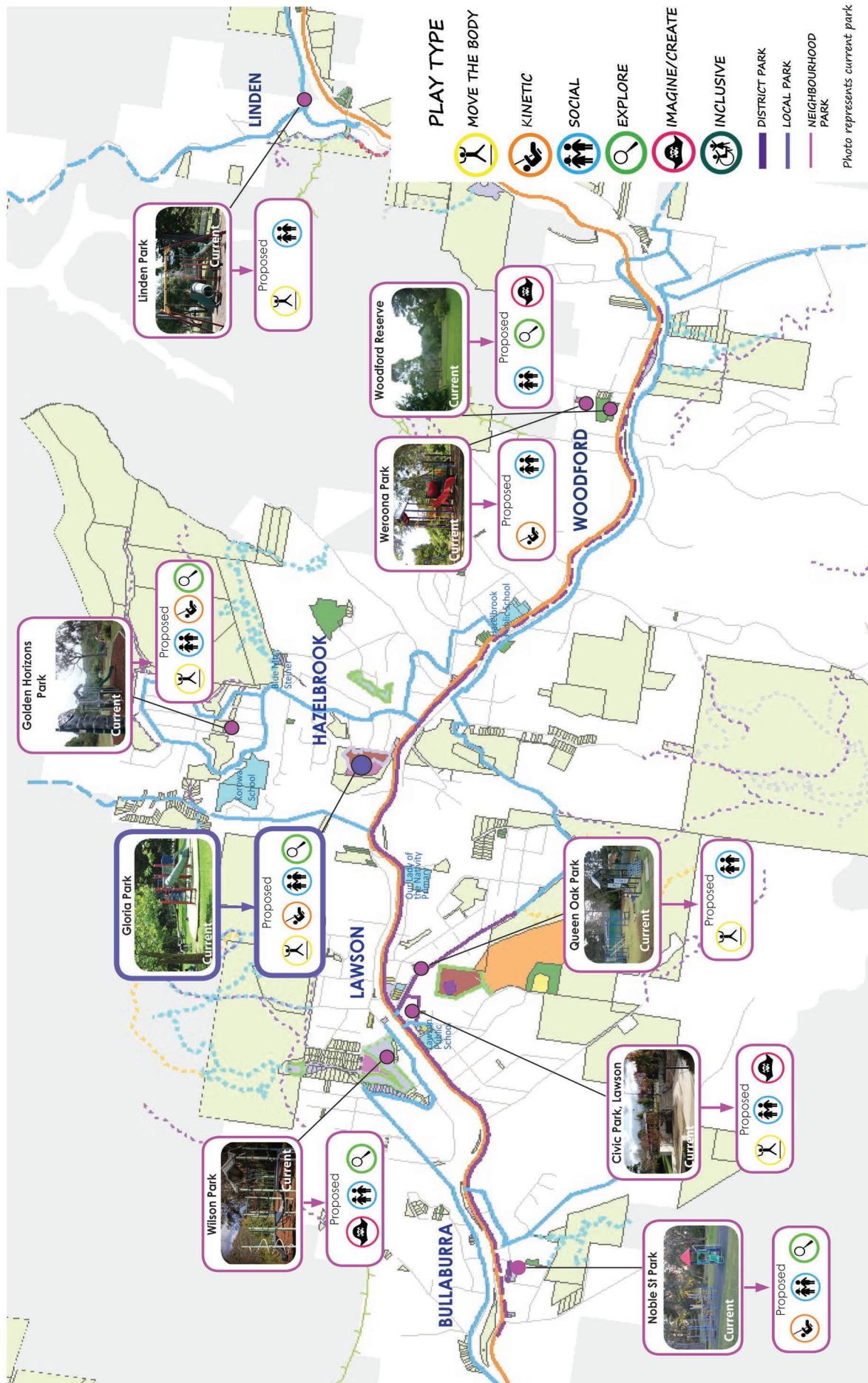






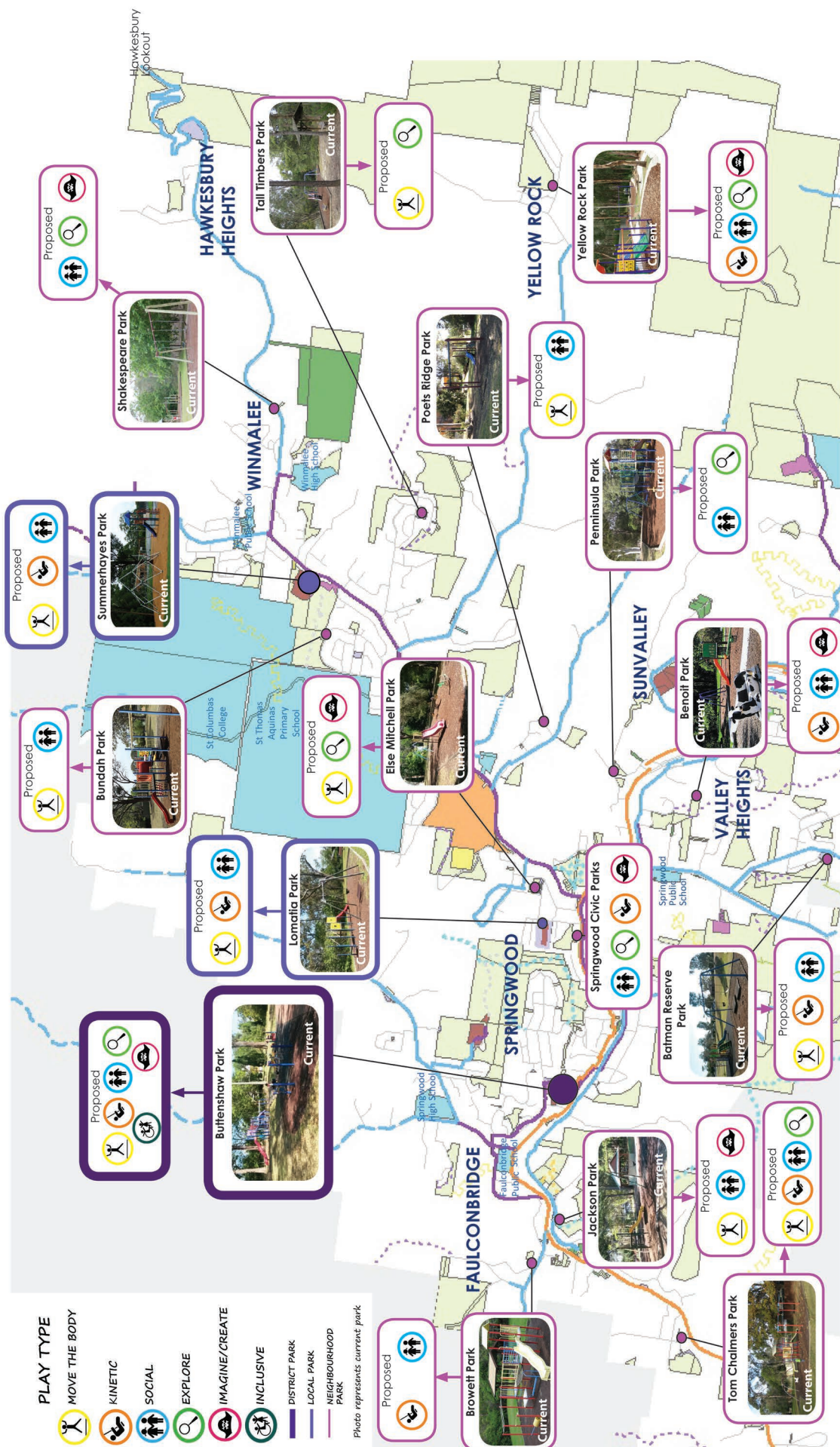
PLANNING AREA 2—CURRENT & PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION





PLANNING AREA 3—CURRENT & PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION





PLANNING AREA 4—CURRENT & PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION

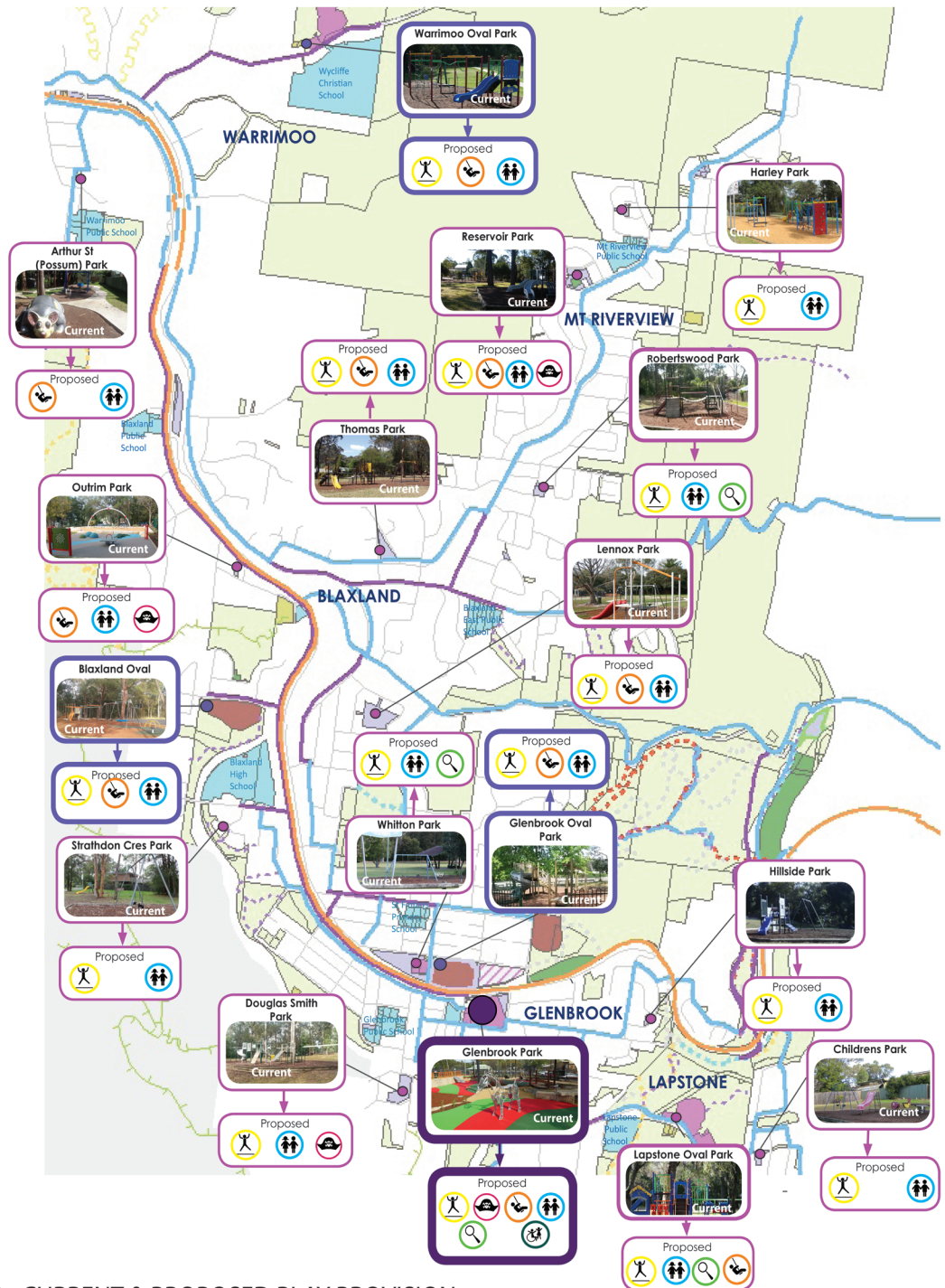


# PLAY TYPE

-  MOVE THE BODY
-  KINETIC
-  SOCIAL
-  EXPLORE
-  IMAGINE/CREATE
-  INCLUSIVE

-  DISTRICT PARK
-  LOCAL PARK
-  NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK

Photo represents current park



PLANNING AREA 5—CURRENT & PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION

# Theme 5 Parks

Seventy percent of Blue Mountains residents visit parks and gardens at least monthly. Larger district parks that offer a wider variety of activities and settings are the most popular.

## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
5.1: The North Leura and East Blaxland communities do not have local open space available within an easy walking distance from residential areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with local schools to enhance access to school facilities for the North Leura and East Blaxland residents.</li> </ul>	Medium
5.2: Many parks are not accessible for all ages and abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit and prepare priority plans for improvement of accessibility across the range of parks with an emphasis upon district and local planning area parks</li> <li>Develop and implement a program to adapt and</li> <li>improve accessibility of our parks by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing accessible paths networks that connect to key routes</li> <li>providing seating and shelters</li> <li>providing accessible toilets in high use areas</li> <li>improving quantity of marked accessible parking bays</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	High priority to establish rolling program
5.3: The current open space does not meet user expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upgrade regional natural area visitor infrastructure and four district parks to provide diverse recreational opportunities for children, older children and teenagers, families, older residents and visitors</li> </ul>	Over 10 years
5.4: Lack of large outdoor event space/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate sites for development or change of use of an existing site to provide outdoor event spaces with options including the former golfcourse sites at Lawson and Katoomba.</li> <li>Investigate options for event spaces with the masterplans for District Parks</li> </ul>	Medium
5.5: Parks need to better express and reflect local identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure local community input to planning for parks. Work with artists and artisans to plan and design infrastructure in our parks</li> </ul>	Ongoing





# Issues, Challenges and Actions (cont.)

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
5.6: Lack of parks suitable for multiple uses and lack of compatibility between different uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure new sport facilities and open spaces are designed and managed for concurrent use by different activities</li> <li>• Where concurrent use is not appropriate, facilities and land will be shared by recreation and sport activities which are separated in time</li> <li>• Active management of spaces may be required to minimise tensions developing between users</li> </ul>	Ongoing
5.7: Lack of diversity in current parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a diverse range of recreational experiences in the larger capacity district and local area parks, including formal play equipment, amenities and settings</li> <li>• Ensure each local area park is designed in concert with other parks in the local planning area to create different recreational opportunities within each area</li> <li>• Provide a range of nature play and active areas at the neighbourhood park level</li> </ul>	Ongoing
5.8: Poor provision for older children and teenagers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safe hangout spaces as part of park and civic place upgrades.</li> <li>• Include multipurpose courts as part of park and civic place upgrades</li> <li>• Upgrade Buttenshaw Park in Springwood focusing on the needs of older children and teenagers in the area</li> </ul>	Ongoing
5.9: Lack of interesting dog exercise opportunities especially off leash exercise areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide range of opportunities for off leash dog exercise across the city</li> <li>• Improve fencing and embellishment of spaces to cater for dogs and their owner's needs</li> <li>• Implement the Dogs in Public Places Strategic Plan</li> </ul>	Ongoing
5.10: There is untapped potential to promote habitat and water quality through management of parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressively investigate and implement water sensitive urban design practises to promote nature play in parks e.g. replace lawns with buffer corridor/screen plantings and return riparian values to drainage lines</li> </ul>	Ongoing
5.11: Lack of access to drinking water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate sustainable ways to provide access to potable water in parks and develop a program for delivery</li> </ul>	Ongoing

# Theme 6 Sports, organised and informal: fields, courts and associated facilities

**In the Blue Mountains, Council provides 22 parks with 29 sportsgrounds/playing fields and 21 parks with 66 sports courts.**

There is a shortfall in provision of sporting fields in the mid and lower mountains.

Council is currently upgrading lighting, drainage and field surfaces to improve the capacity of existing fields to cater for regular competition and training.

Amenities at sporting fields and courts are often not accessible or gender appropriate and are unsuitable for current users. Amenities are usually locked except when booked for use.

There are more sports courts in the lower mountains than the upper mountains. These include district facilities for tennis in Springwood and for netball in Lapstone. Tennis clubs manage the majority of Council owned tennis courts. Multipurpose courts are less common across the city.

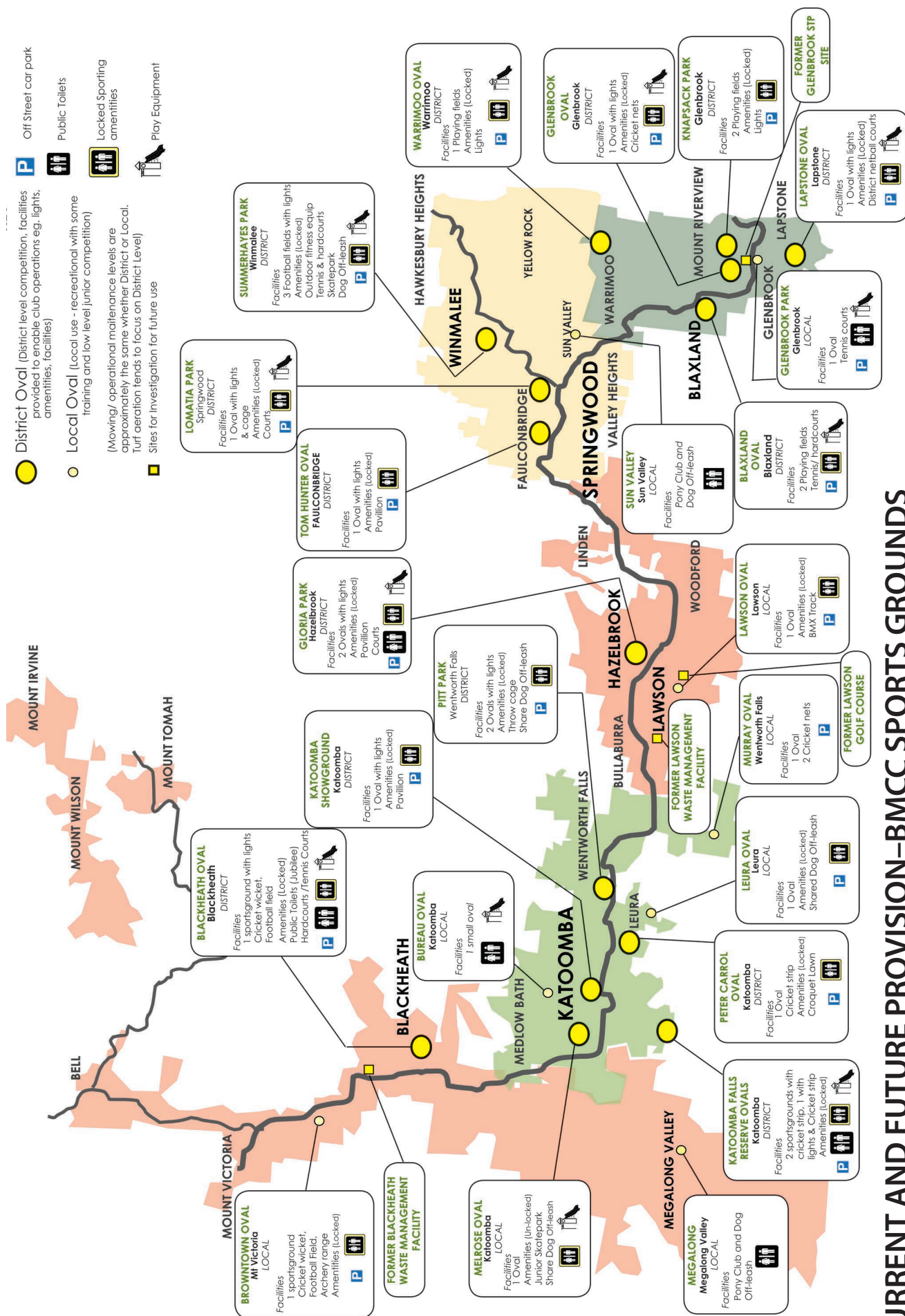


Photo; 'Mountain Archers'. Courtesy of club photographer David Tobin.



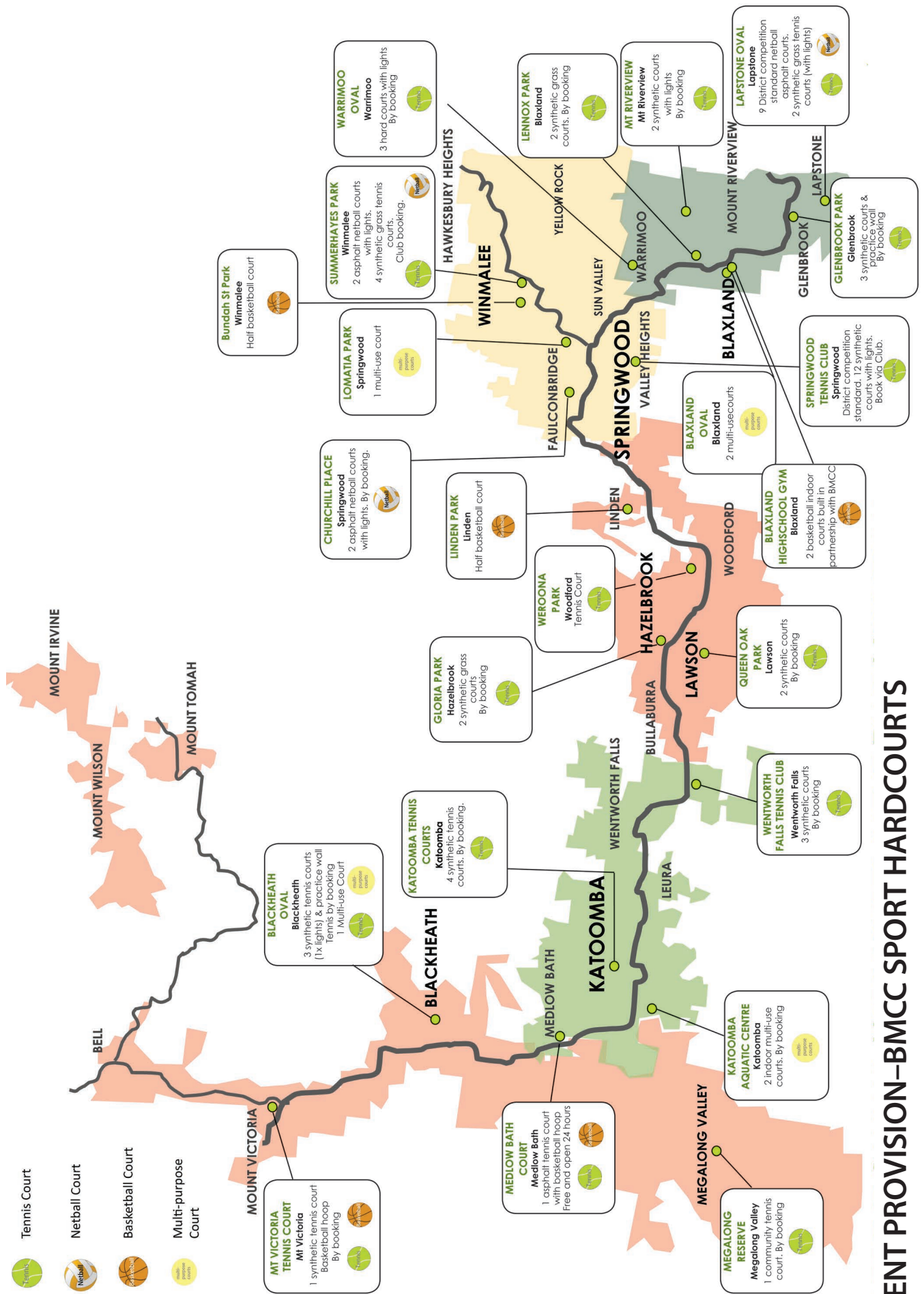
# Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/ Timeframe
6.1: Under supply of sporting fields in the mid & lower mountains. Suitable land for competition sporting areas in low supply in lower mountains, and little opportunity to expand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage existing sports fields and implement a program to upgrade sports facilities to maximise carrying capacity</li> <li>• Sports facilities will be provided to serve summer and winter sport for junior, senior and district competition levels and for training at a quality to enable high use of fields and courts. Concerns includes field or court surface quality plus irrigation and lighting to extend usage levels</li> <li>• Collocate sporting codes where overall use does not justify sole allocation</li> <li>• Investigate potential for a multi-field centre at former Lawson Golf Course</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>High</p>
6.2: Need for more opportunities for all members of the community, including older people, to continue to participate in sporting activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a program of upgrades to provide accessible and non gender specific sporting facility provision across the City</li> <li>• Initially focus upon universal design of parking, path networks, and amenities, and provision of additional facilities such as circuit paths and fitness centres</li> <li>• Monitor needs and trends and adapt program to best fit these</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
6.3: Large investment in sporting park infrastructure is locked and remains unused for much of the week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversify offer at major sports areas to become multi-use and to service multiple catchment hierarchies. Sporting open space will also provide local park functions for informal use. Introduce facilities to encourage informal use such as walking or cycle circuits, playgrounds, shelters and seats.</li> <li>• Progressively modify amenities to allocate accessible toilets for day use</li> </ul>	High
6.4: Need for multipurpose courts for sports such as Futsal and for young people to train and socialise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare a Courts Strategic Plan. Seek flexible management of existing courts to enable programmed use by multiple sports, and encourage renewal of courts to cater for multiple sports use.</li> <li>• Investigate online booking process to encourage wider use of existing courts</li> </ul>	High
6.5: Call for multipurpose bike sports park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess viability of development and operation of a bike park at former waste sites in Lawson and Blackheath, and former sewer treatment plant site in Glenbrook</li> <li>• Investigate public private partnership or Council/ community partnership options for development and management of bike facilities</li> </ul>	Medium
6.6: Lack of all-weather training and competition opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate options to develop all weather athletics and training track in the lower mountains, potentially at a multi-field facility proposed at the former Lawson Golf Course</li> </ul>	Medium
6.7: Lack of provision for new sports with increasing popularity such as disc golf, futsal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review offer for sports, and review allocation and set up of grounds to encourage innovation and entry of new sports.</li> <li>• Investigate feasibility for disc golf in planning area and larger parklands and especially at the former Lawson and Katoomba Golf Courses, and encourage private golf courses to consider it.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Medium</p>



## CURRENT AND FUTURE PROVISION-BMCC SPORTS GROUNDS





## CURRENT PROVISION-BMCC SPORT HARDCOURTS

# Theme 7 Pools

**The community of Blue Mountains are well provided with public swimming pools, with a much higher number of pools per head of population than the majority of Councils across Australia.**

These pools provide mainly for our local residents and operate at a subsidy varying from \$12.60 per visit in Blackheath (short swimming season and low numbers of visits) through to \$0.45 per visit in Springwood (year round indoor facility with high visitation).

Swimming and aquarobics are the sixth most popular recreation activity with 24% of adult residents swimming at least monthly. Twenty-one percent of residents nominate swimming pools as their seventh priority for Council investment. Swimming was the fourth most popular activity for children with 13% swimming at least monthly.

Council provides five aquatic centres with a total of 16 individual pools across the City. A number of these individual pools are nearing the end of their useful life. A review of the type of facility provided in the future is important. Water sports have changed since the pools were first installed, as have management regulations and available technology.

Council will seek to extend the life of existing pools, and plan for a program of renewal which seeks to provide access to year-round swimming opportunities in the upper and lower mountains. Seasonal opportunities will be retained in all local planning areas over the planning period.

Further investigations and community consultation are being progressed in 2018.

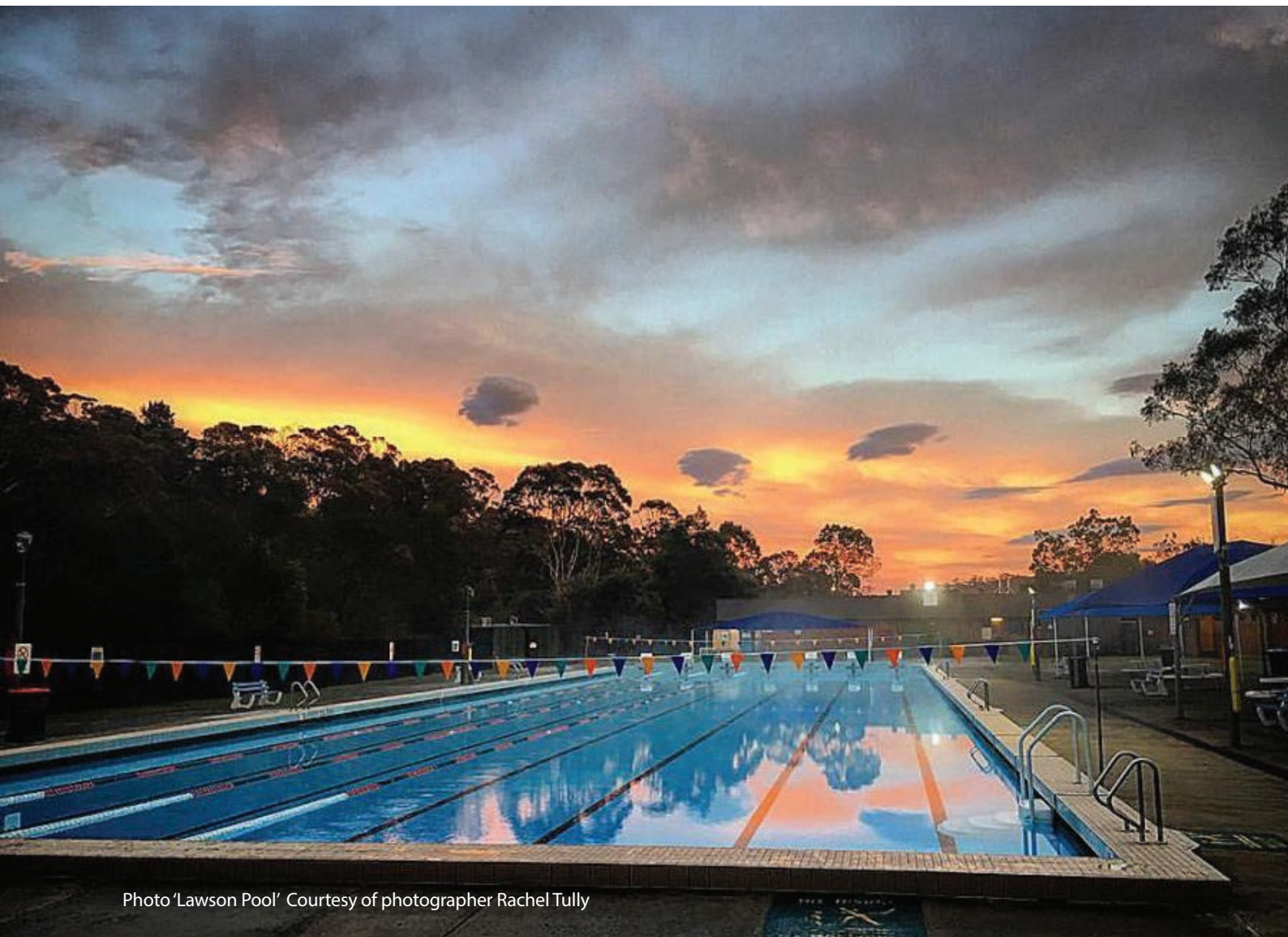
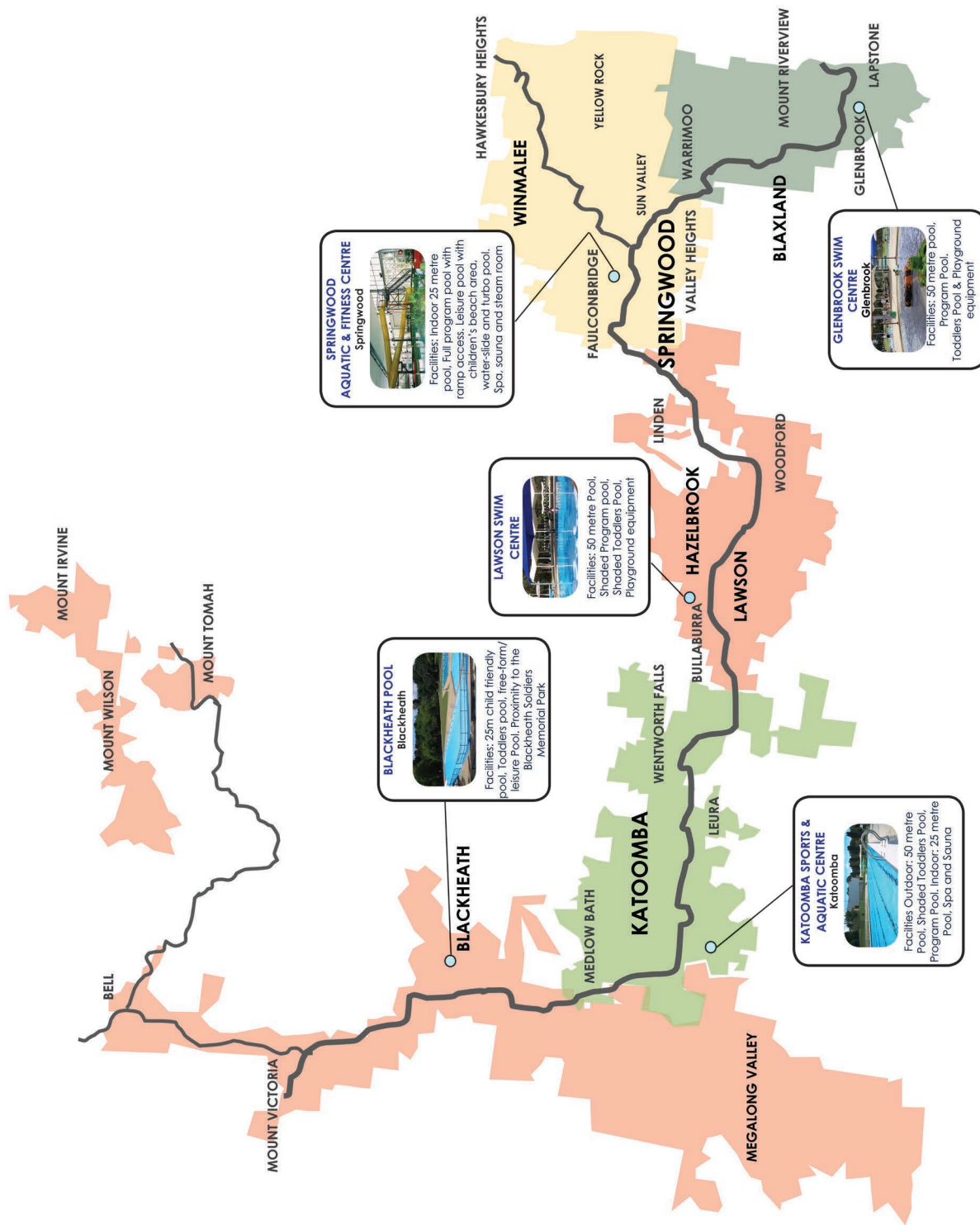


Photo 'Lawson Pool' Courtesy of photographer Rachel Tully



# Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/ Timeframe
<p>7.1: There is a large shortfall in funding required to replace aging pool infrastructure.</p> <p>Council has capital of \$2,670,000 allocated for pool renewal in the next five years. To replace all failing pools with equivalent would require capital of \$8,560,000.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make best use of existing facilities in good order</li> <li>• Vary the facilities upon renewal to better meet modern needs and to extend their season of use.</li> <li>• All centres consider improving cafe offer through financial viability of onsite/mobile/voluntary cafes.</li> <li>• Develop a sinking fund to fund renewal of pools as required.</li> </ul>	High
	<p><b>Katoomba</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review options to retain the 50m pool. Investigate options to provide facilities for children which offer year round use.</li> <li>• Investigate options for activation of the outdoor area, including the consideration of how to use the area in close proximity to the adjoining Gully Aboriginal Place supporting the social and cultural needs identified by the Gully Traditional Owners.</li> </ul>	High
	<p><b>Blackheath</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a program to monitor soil and structural movement of the Blackheath pools and maintain operations of the pools while considered safe.</li> <li>• Improve accessibility of the free-form pool.</li> <li>• Investigate options to heat pools to extend swimming season within available resources.</li> </ul>	High  High Medium
	<p><b>Lawson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access to pools from parking and youth areas.</li> </ul>	High
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain other facilities while in good condition.</li> </ul>	Medium
7.2: Pools are isolated from adjoining parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve connections with parks, open amenities to surrounding parks and provide active programs to engage community in parks and pools.</li> <li>• Redesign district parks which adjoin swim centres to link with surrounding parks and extend active programs to the parks.</li> </ul>	Medium
7.3: Pools are not outdoor living rooms for the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and landscape pool centres to support social activity and interaction while retaining cultural heritage values.</li> </ul>	Ongoing



## CURRENT PROVISION—BMCC POOLS IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS



# Theme 8 City Presentation and Roadside Stops

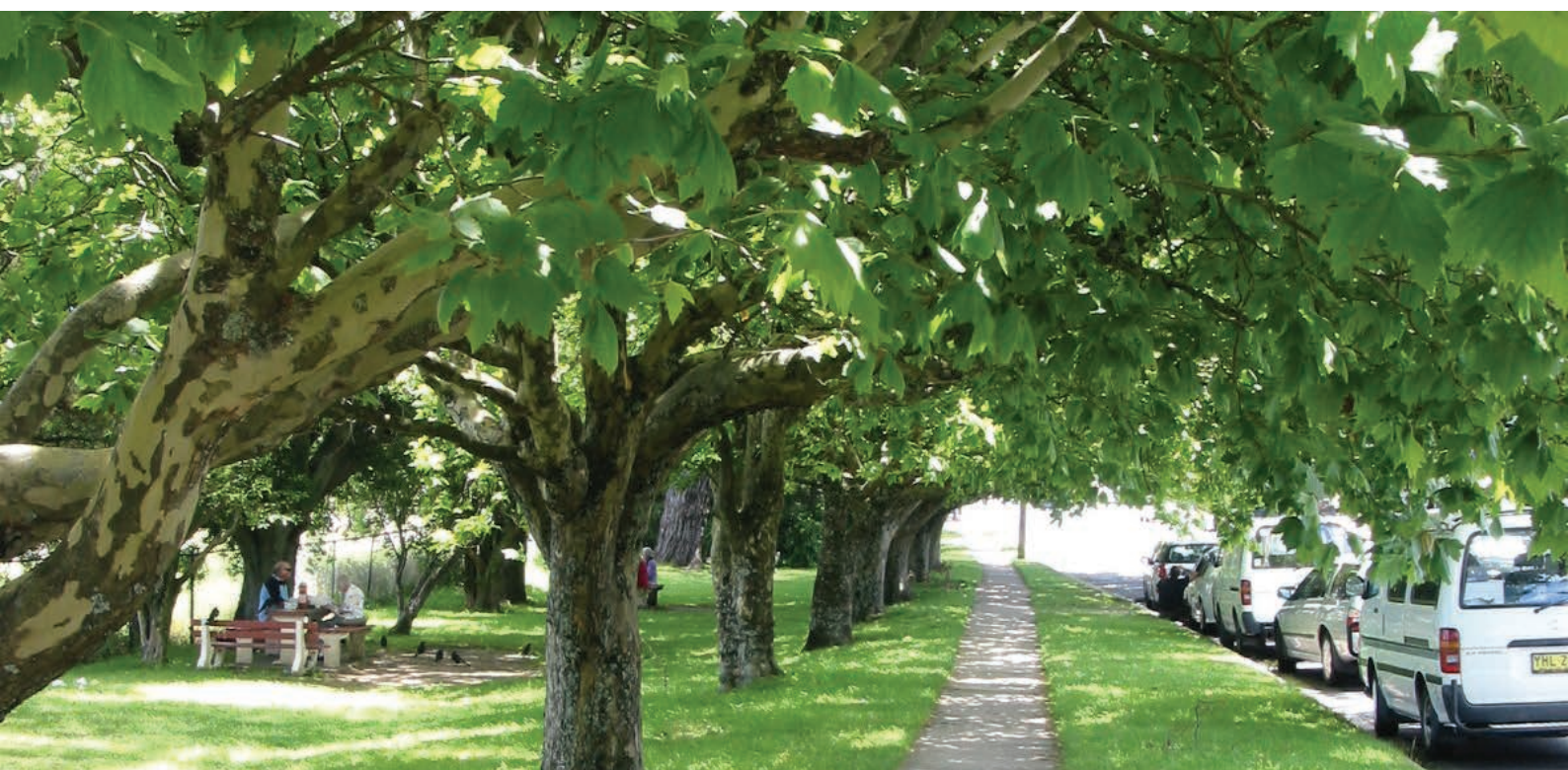
Council manages all roads beyond the Great Western Highway, and manages the full road reserve on other roads across the City, including scenic drives. The Blue Mountains Development Control Plan (DCP) 2015 describes the different landscape character required between towns and within towns.

There is an abundance of landscaped and grassed areas which require regular maintenance and at a high cost for the community. It is recommended that Council investigates ways to simplify these landscaped road verges to reduce costs. This could then permit additional resources being targeted to key destination parks and civic areas in the towns and villages across the City.

There are also frequent requests from residents and Chambers of Commerce to assist with maintenance of town centre gardens. Expansion of Council's capacity to support volunteer groups is proposed.

## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
8.1: High cost to Council of mowing and maintaining landscaping along main tourist routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investigate options to modify landscape treatment and review current equipment and practices to streamline maintenance requirements.</li></ul>	Ongoing
8.2: Free camping at roadside stops creates safety and amenity problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Address this in the proposed Camping Strategic Plan.</li></ul>	High
8.3: Roadside stops have many facilities which are not well used by travellers, such as playground equipment and poor core facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review roadside stops at Blackheath, Leura and Woodford, and develop renewal program for core facilities. Remove ancillary facilities and provide information and signage directing people to district and local parks with better recreation facilities. Review status and need for Kedumba roadside facilities.</li></ul>	Medium





# Theme 9 Promotion and Activation

A key issue raised by consultation undertaken for this strategic plan was the lack of knowledge of our residents and visitors of the range of open space and recreation opportunities available across the city.

Council is updating its corporate website and this offers many opportunities to provide interactive information on recreation sites and activities.

There is also strong support for Council to support organised activities in parks and bushland reserves.

## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/ Timeframe
9.1: Lack of knowledge of recreation opportunities which are available for residents and for visitors constrains their accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide web based information on recreation opportunities across the city.</li><li>• Conduct active and targeted promotion of the range of recreation opportunities through social media.</li></ul>	High/ Short term
9.2: Lack of opportunities to introduce or engage community in new activities or spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote activities through active living programs and partnerships.</li><li>• Extend scope of Aquatic and Leisure Centre programs to provide interactive onsite promotion of activities e.g. Park Run, Nature Play, Walking for Pleasure.</li></ul>	Ongoing
9.3: Lack of ongoing activity programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with business and community organisations in delivery of recreation programs and provide support for event organisation.</li><li>• Develop a high level of engagement of community in recreation activities.</li></ul>	Ongoing



'Scott Hawker finishing 2nd 50km event of the 2015 North Face 100'. (Now Ultratrail').  
Courtesy of photographer Simon Carter



# Theme 10 Partnerships

**Council is one of a number of providers of open space and recreation across the City, and works in partnership with many different organisations. To meet future community demand for open space and recreation facilities, strategic partnerships with community organisations, other levels of government and the private sector will be essential.**

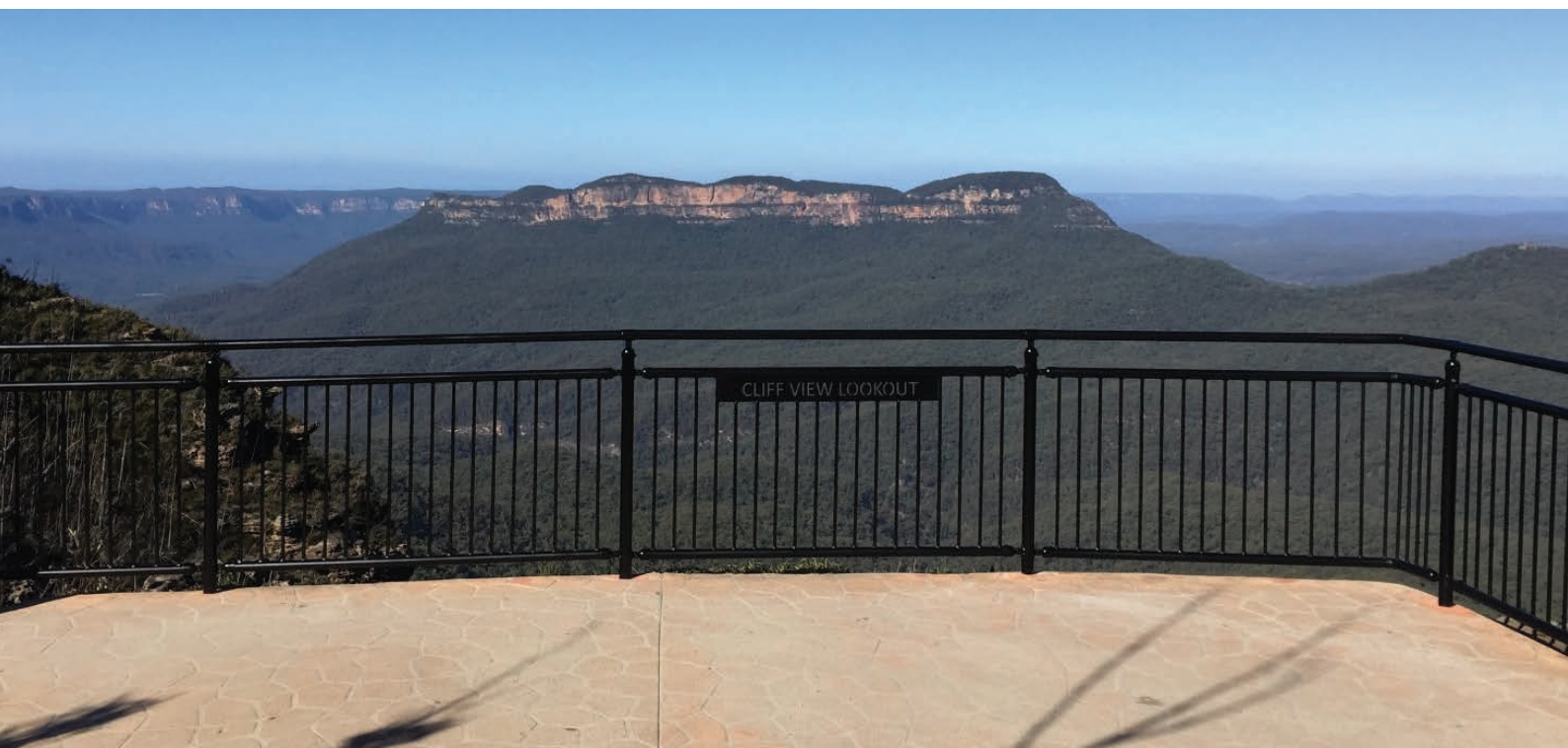
Council, in partnership with the NSW Government, provides critical visitor infrastructure to support international tourism. Council manages the gateway infrastructure (roads, directional signs, parking information points, toilets) to major destinations such as the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, the Blue Mountains National Park and the Three Sisters. Continued coordination with NPWS and other agencies such as RMS, the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mount Tomah, and key private operators such as Scenic World is essential to meet the growing visitor demand for scenic experiences.

An important developing partnership is that between Council and Darug and Gundundurra Traditional Owners in the co-management of Country.

By supporting initiatives of recreation program providers such—as NSW Office of Sport and Recreation, personal trainers, gyms and other community groups—Council can increase the range of opportunities available to the community. Coordinating and supporting sporting organisations will continue to remain critical in the provision of sporting competitions, and sporting organisations could become increasingly active in the management of facilities.

Establishment of formal partnerships with the NSW Department of Education may offer opportunities to better meet increases in demand for sporting and community facilities.

Business and community members already partner with Council to maintain vegetation in town centres, neighbourhood parks and bushland reserves through Council-supported volunteer programs such as parkcare and bushcare. However, with the steady ageing of the community, opportunities for a diversity of volunteerism will be increasingly sought, Council will need to be geared up to support the many benefits this can provide—personal enrichment, health and well-being as well as community cohesion and resilience. Volunteers could also help to increase the quantity and quality of recreation opportunities in the Blue Mountains.



# Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Time frame
10.1: Lack of volunteer opportunities in parks and on tracks and trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and support volunteer programs tailored to cover volunteer contributions to the provision and activation across the full range of open spaces and recreation facilities and participants e.g. bike trails; civic, local and neighbourhood parks and reserves</li> </ul>	High/Ongoing
10.2: Low take-up on Department of Education Policy for Shared use of School facilities. Out of hours use of School facilities have the potential to supplement Council provision in areas where inadequate open space exists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiate with school principals and regional education authorities on the use of school facilities by the community especially in North Leura and East Blaxland</li> <li>Facilitate agreements directly between recreation and sports clubs and schools</li> </ul>	Ongoing
10.3: Lack of commercial use of open space to engage and activate the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide processes and self-funding programs for commercial guiding and activities such as fitness training within public open spaces</li> <li>Seek opportunities for commercial provision of specialist facilities with high attraction potential such as zip lines and adventure parks</li> </ul>	Ongoing
10.4: Lack of suitable areas and ability to work with willing biking organisations to help develop and manage facilities for training and competition, including forms of mountain biking, pump circuits, BMX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate options for bike parks on degraded sites, and assess feasibility of joint development and management of bike parks. Investigate feasibility of partnerships in the development and management of bike park/s</li> </ul>	Medium
10.5: Great Blue Mountains Trail is incomplete and lacks external material support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek grant funding and community sponsorship for development and maintenance of the GBM Trail.</li> <li>Develop management structure to encourage sponsorship and further development</li> </ul>	Ongoing
10.7: Slow progress towards recognition of Indigenous values and input into management of Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through the Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Gundungurra Traditional Owners and strengthening co-management opportunities with Darug Traditional Owners, steadily progress towards effective city-wide co-management of Country</li> </ul>	Ongoing



# Theme 11 Policies and Management Practice

A steady increase in certain activities such as off road biking, freedom camping and wild swimming mean policies are required to better manage impacts on natural areas. Changes in legislation also need to be catered for.

New policies are needed to manage risk and impacts from increasing recreational use of natural areas.

Council will also need to develop masterplans that incorporate the recommendations of this strategic plan, including investigations of development precincts, upgrades to district parks and sporting grounds, changes to aquatic centres, and the transformation of neighbourhood parks. Policies and procedures will also need to be developed to manage the proposed changes.

The commencement of new Crown Lands legislation 2018 means Council is required to develop Plans of Management for all local Crown Lands over a three-year period from 2018–21.

Regular review of service levels will enable Council to adjust funding priorities and ensure recreational facilities and open spaces are resourced adequately in the future.

## Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
11.1: There is a need to adjust Council's investment and management of open space and recreation facilities and the management of these to better support current and future community needs and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review service levels across all recreation and asset types in line with the strategic directions outlined in this strategic plan.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
11.2: Lack of detailed policy and procedures to guide development of volunteer programs for Park Care, and Track and Trail Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Volunteer Policy and Procedures, and resource these programs adequately.</li> </ul>	High
11.3: Lack of clarity around management of freedom camping, and unmet demand for primitive and caravan park camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a Camping Strategic Plan to provide direction and identify means to resource and regulate implementation of the strategic plan.</li> </ul>	High
11.4: No guidelines for provision of infrastructure and management of events in public open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidate current practices and prepare a policy to outline ongoing support for events.</li> </ul>	High
11.5: Lack of management framework to support applications for commercial use of public open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policy and procedures including flexibility to encourage and support innovation.</li> </ul>	High
11.6: Lack of formal adopted Plans of Management for many parks and reserves hinders responsiveness of management of these areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program development of Plans of Management for key areas, and develop generic plans for the remainder of Community Land and Local Crown Lands and other property requiring these.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
11.7: Lack of masterplans for significant recreation precincts to guide management and provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program delivery of masterplans for key precincts including regional and district parks and tracks and trails. Coordinate planning with other levels of government and private industry to get the best mix of offer.</li> </ul>	Ongoing

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/ Timeframe
11.8 Hire of Council parks and facilities is complex and time consuming and is not available for many spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review booking processes for hire of Council parks, sportsgrounds and courts to offer online service, including check of availability and payment.</li> </ul>	High
11.9: Hire of Council-managed facilities requires groups and individuals to have public liability insurance which can inhibit informal social activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate options to provide affordable insurance cover with casual hire of Council grounds and facilities.</li> </ul>	High
11.10: Lack of policy for free swimming in natural water bodies and cliff sports such as climbing and abseiling on Council managed land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop policies for management of nature based recreation activities on Council managed land which assess and address risk to public safety, the environment and natural amenity. Any such policies should also recognise benefits to liveability and tourism value of the activities.</li> </ul>	High
11.11: Lack of detailed knowledge on walkability of neighbourhoods and access between parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an active transport and walkability assessment of each town and village. Consider walking and cycling routes and connections. Open space and recreation infrastructure to be treated as destinations within the PAMP and Blue Mountains Bike Plan.</li> </ul>	High
11.12: There is an inconsistent approach to setting user-fees for hire of parks, sports grounds and natural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify level of subsidy provided for each activity. Set user fees and charges based upon clear criteria including operational costs, facilities offered, usage levels, community benefit delivered through the facilities.</li> </ul>	High
11.13: Dirt Jump Strategic Plan is out-of-date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review dirt jump and pump provision and investigate opportunities for other forms of biking.</li> </ul>	Medium
11.14: Many agreements with clubs around management of Council facilities need to be updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review licenses and user agreements to ensure transparency, sustainability and consistency.</li> </ul>	High





# Theme 12 Culture and Heritage

The culture and heritage of the Blue Mountains is rich and complex, with many places formally recognised as having significance to the community. It is important to respect and protect these places as they help to define what is distinctive about the local area and its people, and contribute to community identity.

Country (Ngurra) within the Blue Mountains has nurtured and nourished countless strong and healthy generations of Darug and Gundungurra people. For Traditional Owners, Ngurra is everything, connecting holistically across time and space physically, culturally and spiritually.

Some aspects of the cultural value of Ngurra are invisible and intangible, while others physically demonstrate the presence of the rich culture that has been nurtured on it for thousands of years.

Tangible aspects still observable include:

- living places such as open camps and rock shelters
- places of economic livelihood and community activity such as quarries with ochre and materials to create tools
- places of art, culture and spirit such as rock art, scarred trees, stone arrangements, distinctive landscape features, and burial places

There are places throughout Ngurra of high cultural value and significance that require additional levels of respect and care, and that are acknowledged through formal processes, such as The Gully and the Three Sisters.

There are also places of European cultural significance, including parks, bushland reserves, cemeteries, archaeological sites, and facilities such as public buildings, walking tracks, and memorials. Many of these places overlap with places of Aboriginal cultural significance as a result of colonisation practices.

Council is committed to an honest and inclusive recognition of history on the lands it manages, both through respecting the rights, interests and perspectives of Traditional Owners and in the conservation and protection of heritage items of significance to the broader community.





# Issues, Challenges and Actions

Issues/Challenges	Proposed Actions	Priority/Timeframe
12.1: Serious gaps in resources to manage and interpret cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek resources to protect, manage and interpret cultural heritage in Council's parks and reserves.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
12.2: Low levels of understanding and appreciation of the needs for conservation of heritage items and cultural landscapes in parks and bushland areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve understanding of heritage items and cultural landscapes and investigate options to improve ongoing conservation and promotion of these.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue heritage research and conservation planning for Council owned and managed sites, and items of heritage value.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop in-house expertise and resources to manage cultural heritage.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work towards effective co-management and conservation of areas of Aboriginal cultural value.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and develop volunteers in the promotion and conservation of sites and items of cultural heritage value.</li> </ul>	Ongoing









# Appendices

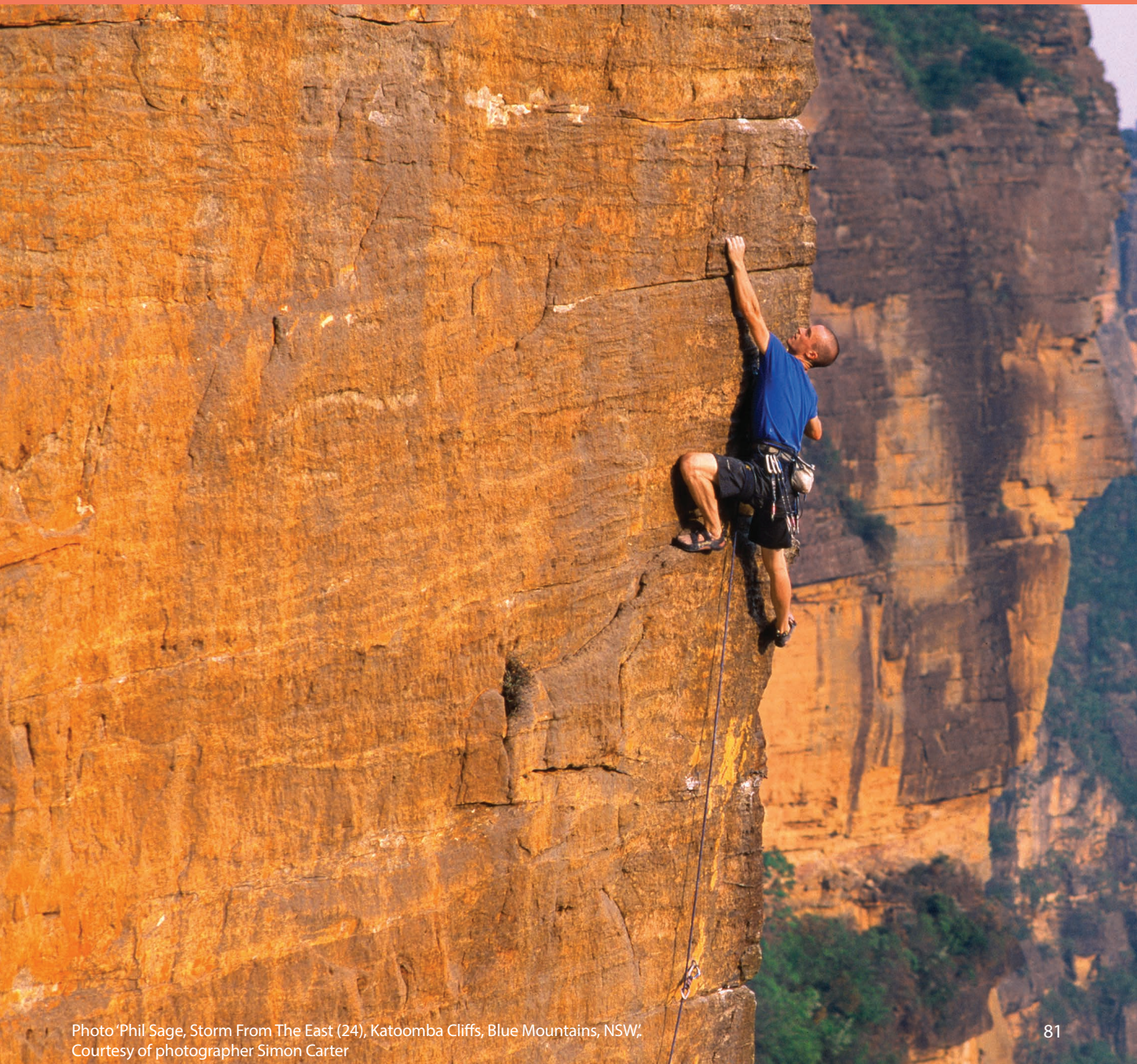


Photo 'Phil Sage, Storm From The East (24), Katoomba Cliffs, Blue Mountains, NSW,'  
Courtesy of photographer Simon Carter



The full results for levels of participation in regular sport and recreational activity of the adult population are listed below.

Activity	Daily (%)	Monthly (%)	Total (%)
Walking for exercise	36	32	68
Walking (bushwalking & hiking)	6	42	48
Dog-exercise	19	10	30
Aerobic/Fitness	10	19	29
Camping/Nature study/Bird watching	3	26	29
Swimming/Aqua-aerobics	3	20	24
Cycling–road/cycle paths	2	14	16
Cycling–off road, Mtn biking, Downhill	2	14	16
Weight training	2	10	12
Yoga	1	1	11
None apply	7	3	9
Soccer–outdoors	1	8	9
Golf	1	8	9
Tennis	1	7	7
Dancing	2	5	7
Orienteering/Trail running/ Endurance	1	4	5
Athletics/ Track & Field	1	4	5
Rock Climbing/ Abseiling	1	4	5
Rugby League	1	4	5
Lawn bowls	0	3	3
Netball	0	3	3
Cycling–BMX	0	3	3
Martial Arts	0	3	3
Horse Riding/ Equestrian/ Polocrosse	0	1	2
Canoeing/ Kayaking/ Rowing/ Sailing/ Fishing	0	8	0
Cricket–Outdoor	0	4	0
Basketball	0	3	0
Archery	0	2	0
Badminton/ Table Tennis	0	2	0
Boxing	0	2	0
Gymnastics	0	2	0
Motor Sports	0	2	0
Roller Sports	0	2	0
Soccer–indoor (Futsal)	0	2	0
Australian Rules Football	0	1	0
Baseball/ Softball	0	1	0
Cricket–indoor	0	1	0
Croquet	0	1	0
Hang-gliding	0	1	0
Hockey	0	1	0
Rugby Union	0	1	0
Shooting (Clay, Target, Pistol)	0	1	0
Touch Football	0	1	0
Volleyball	0	1	0

Reference: Blue Mountains Open Space and Recreation Survey 2016

Activity (Tally of school aged children participating in the activities offered. N= 255 primary students and N= 347 high school students)	% of School Children surveyed
Go swimming for fun	77%
Kick or throw a ball/ play frisbee at a park for fun	76%
Socilaise with friends in pubic spaces (such as public streets, malls, town squares)	72%
Go bushwalking for fun	69%
Jog or run for fun	65%
Watch others play sport	63%
Play in the street	59%
Play at the park	59%
Play in the bush	53%
Ride bikes in their neighbourhood for fun	51%
Go camping in the bush	43%
Play social basketball	30%
Computer gaming outside their home	27%
Soccer–competition	26%
Skateboard for fun	26%
Dance for fun	24%
Abseil or rockcimb for fun	24%
Drama/music performance/public speaking for fun	21%
BMX/ Dirt jump track riding for fun	20%
Indoor soccer/Futsal–competition	16%
Other organised sports	16%
Touch football–competition	15%
Music/drama/public speaking–competition	14%
Go horse-riding for fun	12%
Basketball –competition	11%
Do Martial Arts (eg. Judo, Karate etc) for fun	11%
Netball–competition	10%
Dance–competition	9%
Rugby League (NRL)–competition	9%
Cricket–competition	8%
Little Athletics–competition	8%
Swimming–competition	6%
Tennis–competition	5%
Other organised sports #1 Martial Arts	4%
Aussie Rules (AFL)–competition	3%
Horse Riding–competition	3%
BMX–competition	3%
Other organised sports #2 Ultimate Frisbee	2%
Golf–competition	2%
Hockey–competition	2%
Rugby Union–competition	2%
Aus Tag	2%
Softball or Baseball–competition	1%
Gymnastics	1%
Rowing	1%
Indoor Cricket–competition	1%
Ballet	1%



# Definitions & Glossary

**Open space:** Public and private lands that are broadly available for public recreation, pedestrian and cycle movement, sport or for scenic and nature conservation purposes.

**Recreation:** Any activity that a person participates in for enjoyment, physical activity, relaxation or health. This includes both passive and active activities undertaken outside of the home.

**Passive recreation:** Unstructured activities generally not requiring a high level of physical exertion. Examples include picnicking, going for a walk, visiting a playground, a casual bike ride, spectating at a sports event .

**Active recreation:** Participation in a relaxation activity or sport involving a moderate to high level of physical exertion, often on a competitive basis (or training for a competitive event) as an individual or a member of a team. E.g. playing soccer, netball, swimming, running, endurance running, rock climbing.

**Sport:** a physical activity that is competitive, organised and involves the observation of rules and may involve either team or individual participation

**Organised sport:** A physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport with activities organised by a club or association that requires payment of membership or registration.

**Non-organised sport:** Physical activity that is not organised by a club or association.

**Sport facility:** A piece of infrastructure vital to the practice of a sport (for example, golf course, hockey turf, outdoor/indoor court, sports field, softball diamond).

**Recreation opportunities:** Combinations of recreation activities in particular outdoor or indoor settings (e.g. swimming in an indoor pool, in a lake, in a mountain pool). Each combination of recreation activity and setting provides a different recreation opportunity.

**Demands:** Community desire for recreation activity or facility identified through consultation.

**Unmet demands:** The absence of facilities or opportunities for recreation that have been identified through community consultation as being in demand.

**Recreation Needs:** an evaluation of all aspects of a community's open space and recreation needs that integrates expressed demands along with an analysis of future needs based upon recreation trends, demographic trends, and local opportunities.

**Natural Heritage:** The legacy of natural places, objects and intangible attributes encompassing the natural environment including biodiversity.

**Ngurra (Country):** This is the Darug and Gundungurra term for Country which 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 practices, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings, and people—past, present and future.

**Active Transport:** travel between destinations using non-motorised transport involving physical activity, such as walking and cycling.

**Aquatic Centre:** is a complex with facilities for water sports and play, including swimming pools.

**Pool:** an artificially constructed structure which holds water and is used for swimming or other water-based recreation or therapy. There are many standard sizes, the largest being the Olympic-size swimming pool. Most public pools are rectangular in shape and 50m or 25m in length, but they can be any size or shape.

**Competition Pool:** The Federation Internationale de la Natation (FINA) sets standards for competition pools: 25 or 50m long and at least 1.35m deep. Competition pools are often indoors and heated to enable their use all year round, and to more easily comply with the regulations regarding temperature, lighting and automatic officiating equipment. Competition pools in the Blue Mountains are: Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre 25m pool, Glenbrook Swim Centre 50m pool, Blackheath 25m pool, and Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre 50m pool.

**Freeform pool:** A swimming pool that is designed in a naturalistic or irregular style and shape, with curves or flowing lines.

**Splash pad:** or spray pool is a recreation area for water play that has little or no standing water. Typically there are ground nozzles that spray water upwards out of the splash pad's raindeck. There may also be other water features such as a rainbow (semicircular pipe shower), or mushroom- or tree-shaped showers. Some splash pads feature movable nozzles similar to those found on fire trucks to allow users to spray others. The showers and ground nozzles are often controlled by a hand activated-motion sensor, to run for limited time.

The water is either freshwater, or recycled and treated water, that is typically treated to at least the same level of quality as swimming pool water standards. These splash pads are often surfaced in textured non-slip concrete or in crumb rubber.

**Program Pool:** is a smaller, shallow pool ideal for teaching babies, kids and adults how to swim. It is heated and undercover and enclosed to ensure wandering kids don't wander too far. Usually the depth ranges from under 1m to 1.4 m at the deeper end, and the pool will also support walking, aquarobics and aqua therapy. There is usually seating for parents to sit and watch as kids develop their swimming skills.

**Toddlers Pool:** or wading pool are shallow bodies of water intended for use by small children.

**Gap analysis:** analysis of both unmet demand and need with an assessment of facilities or opportunities that may be required to meet shortfalls between the two.



# References

Australian Institute of Sport (2016) 'Ausplay Participation data for the sports sector'

<http://profile.id.com.au/blue-mountains> Community Profile

Australian Bureau of Statistics: 2016 Census results

<http://www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about-us/about-our-region>

2002 -2004 data source: NSW Health (2009)

[New South Wales Population Health Survey. 2005-2007](#)

'Report on adult health. Blue Mountains Division of General Practice.'

## Background Research and Supporting Documents:

These documents provide more detail on the research undertaken to inform the Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan. They are provided for viewing on the Blue Mountains Have Your Say website.

1. Draft Play Guidelines, Blue Mountains City Council, 2017
2. Aquatic Facilities: Proposed Options, Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd, 2017
3. Measuring use of, and satisfaction with open space and recreation facilities in the Blue Mountains: Results from a random and statistically representative survey of 442 Blue Mountains City Council residents; Jetty Research Pty Ltd, 2016
4. Understand users and uses of various recreational activities within the Blue Mountains LGA: Results from a number of ad hoc surveys, Jetty Research Pty Ltd, 2016
5. Survey of Recreation Participation in the Blue Mountains LGA, Taverner Research 2016
6. Results summary - Data - Time Lapse photography - Recreation survey results, Time lapse Pty Ltd, 2016





# Contact

**Katoomba Office**

2 Civic Place Katoomba NSW 2780

**Phone:** 02 4780 5000

**Katoomba Office Postal Address**

Locked Bag 1005 Katoomba NSW 2780

**Springwood Office**

104 Macquarie Road Springwood NSW 2777

**Phone:** 02 4723 5000

**Springwood Office Postal Address**

Document Exchange DX 8305 Katoomba

**Council email**

[council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au)

**Council Website**

[bmcc.nsw.gov.au](http://bmcc.nsw.gov.au)

**Have Your Say Website**

[bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au](http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au)