

Community Newsletter



BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL APRIL 2020

Good Neighbour



LOVE LOCAL

We're in this together

#lovelocalbluemountains

Supporting our community during uncertain times

Photo: Mayor Mark Greenhill and Step by Step Blue Mountains Support Worker Ruth Myers.

I want to extend my personal thanks to the Blue Mountains community for your resilience in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

Everyone in our community is tired. Fires have tested us. Floods have tested us. Now, we're facing a pandemic the likes of which has not been seen for 100 years. We all need to continue to be kind and understanding, as we find our way through this together

To our local businesses, hang in there. I know the last six months have been devastating for you. Blue Mountains City Council is doing everything we can to support you. We are **waiving rents for all tenants in Council buildings under commercial agreements for as long as needed**, given the current COVID-19 crisis. We've encouraged other landlords to do the same.

At the Council Meeting on 31 March, Council also endorsed the following measures to support our residents and local businesses during this difficult time:

- **Providing payment arrangements for ratepayers and businesses who are experiencing hardship** because of COVID-19. Interest penalties will also be put on hold during the period of any arrangements.
- **Requesting the Valuer-General to put on-hold the redistribution of rates associated with the most recent three year land revaluation process**, currently scheduled to impact rates paid by Blue Mountains residents from 1 July 2020.

- **Investigating the possible introduction of a pensioner rebate on domestic waste charges.**
- **Focusing regulatory activity on education at this time** to provide sufficient time to achieve compliance, rather than regulatory enforcement – with greater recognition of the circumstances of people during COVID-19.
- **Transitioning the Council's Business Training & Support Programs** from face-to-face to online service provision.
- **Developing and implementing further online resources for the Library and Leisure Centre services** and a range of other online initiatives, and
- **Implementing further business outreach to support businesses** and business owners with recovery information and mental health support.

We will continue to deliver the best we can to the Blue Mountains community in these trying times.

Please remember, that despite social distancing, you are not alone. Despite the uncertainty, you are not alone. We are better together, and together is how we will get through this.

Mayor, Mark Greenhill OAM
Blue Mountains City Council

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Council helping our community recover after bush fires

With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic taking centre stage, we must continue to stand with and support those who have been affected by recent bush fires. They have not been forgotten.

Council is currently implementing the second phase of the *Blue Mountains 2019-2020 Bush Fire Recovery Action Plan* and continues to direct funding to five key areas – Social and Community Wellbeing; Waste Management; Environment, Animal and Agriculture; Infrastructure; and Tourism, Local Business & Economic Recovery.

Council also continues to keep its **Bush Fire Recovery Guide** up to date with all the assistance available for our residents and businesses. You can find this at bmcc.nsw.gov.au/recovery.

The impact of the bush fires on properties within the City included:

- 22 homes destroyed, 10 damaged
- 13 facilities destroyed, 3 damaged
- 36 outbuildings destroyed, 30 damaged (sheds, garages, barns or structures not attached to a main residence), and
- 122 impacted rural landholders.

Bush Fire Mayoral Relief Fund

The Blue Mountains Bush Fire Mayoral Relief Fund has so far received \$75,000, with \$50,000 already distributed to those in need.

Tax deductible donations can still be made via Paypal, Internet banking, or by calling Council on 4780 5000.

Go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/mrf for more information.

Personalised Recovery Support Service launches in Blue Mountains



Photo: Step by Step Project Co-ordinator Joanna Brown, Gateway Family Services CEO Gregory Lazarus, Mayor Mark Greenhill, Step by Step Blue Mountains Support Worker Ruth Myers, Step by Step Recovery Support Service Manager Anne Crestani and Gateway Family Services Finance Manager Terese Klynhout.

Residents affected by the bush fires or other emergency events can now access a flexible and customised support program.

Step by Step is focused on wellbeing and providing immediate emotional and social support. The service can also help with accessing grants, dealing with applications, insurance issues and by linking people to other recovery resources and services.

Step By Step is delivered by Gateway Family Services and funded by NSW Department of Communities and Justice. **To access the Step by Step Recovery Support Service call 0417 298 832 or email stepbystep@gatewayfamilyservices.org.au.**

Step by Step provide the following advice...

Many of us are feeling anxious and stressed with so many changes to the way we normally live our lives.

These are understandable and normal feelings and reactions.

Our connections with others are vital for supporting our wellbeing. Social isolation can be very challenging. Try and stay safely connected with the important people in your life.

Consider chatting via video calls or email. Go "old school" by writing and mailing letters and cards, post a loved one a care package or simply pick up the phone for regular catch ups. We need each other more than ever to get through these tough times.

If you need extra support please contact Lifeline.

- **Phone:** 13 11 14 (24 hours / 7 days)
- **Text:** 0477 13 11 14 (6pm – midnight AEDT, 7 nights)
- **Chat online:** www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat (7pm – midnight, 7 nights)

We are all having to adjust to a very different world at the moment, and many of you have had your livelihoods impacted.

The link below takes you to Information and services to help you if you're affected by COVID-19 or looking for more details about immediate income assistance:

- if you have lost your job and need to apply for a payment urgently
- support for individuals and households
- stimulus payments, income support, and assistance for retirees and pensioners and
- cost of living support.

You can also register your interest in Service NSW customer service roles - Service NSW is looking for experienced customer service professionals to join their team.

service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19

Council supporting our community during COVID-19: Emergency Food Boxes for our most vulnerable residents

Seniors and people with disabilities in the Blue Mountains who are self-isolating due to COVID-19, and have no access to essential supplies, can receive Emergency Food Boxes thanks to a partnership between Council and the Rapid Relief Team.

The Food Boxes – that contain a variety of non-perishable, long-life food – will be delivered to the doors of self-isolating residents that meet the criteria. Volunteer not-for-profit organisation Rapid Relief Team will deliver the supplies to those in need during the crisis.

Council has initiated the program to relieve pressure, during the COVID-19 pandemic, on those who are most vulnerable in our community. The one-off relief packages will be provided at no cost to eligible recipients.

All requests for the Food Boxes will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will be prioritised based on those in greatest need. There is limited choice as to products provided and Council may not be able to cater for dietary and cultural requirements.

If you are a Blue Mountains resident over the age of 65, or are living with a disability, and are in urgent need please contact Council at goodneighbour@bmcc.nsw.gov.au or call 4723 5000 (Lower Mountains) or 4780 5000 (Upper Mountains).

If you know someone who may be eligible for this program, please contact Council.

More information is available at bmcc.nsw.gov.au/goodneighbour



CONTENT	FOOD BOX
Weet-Bix	1 Box of 24
UHT Milk - 200ml	2 Box
Chicken Savoury Biscuits	1 Box
Choc Chip Cookies	1 Pack
Vitafresh Orange Mix	2 Packs
Instant Noodles	5 Packs
Spaghetti – 420g	1 Tin
Bakes Beans – 420g	1 Tin
Creamed Corn – 420g	1 Tin
Tropical Fruit Chunks	1 Tin
Ham	1 Tin
Muesli Bar	8 Bars
Dairy Milk Chocolate	4 Bars
Instant Soup – 2 pack	2 Packs
Tuna Chunks	1 Tin
Rice Basmati	1 Pack
Pasta Creamy Bacon	1 Pack
Coffee Sticks	5 Sticks
Sugar Sticks	5 Sticks
Tea Bag	5 Sticks
RRT Lollies	4 Bags

Introducing Good Neighbour

People often feel disconnected from each other at the best of times. And now, with social distancing and restrictions on public movements, it can be even harder to maintain relationships with those around you.

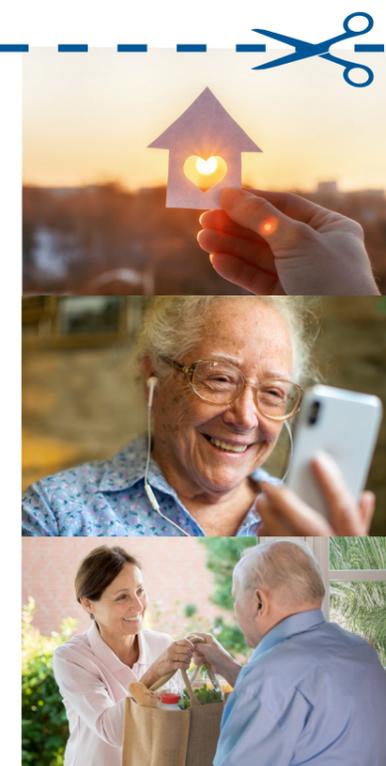
Good relationships can transform communities and knowing our neighbours is important, even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How can you be a Good Neighbour? It's really easy. Just learning each other's names and saying a quick hello across the fence, at a safe distance, is all it takes to start building a relationship.

If you have a neighbour who is self-isolating, especially those in the vulnerable and at risk categories, fill out the Good Neighbour calling card (on the other side of this flyer) to let them know you're around if they need anything to help get them through.

Go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/goodneighbour for more information

Supporting our community through COVID-19



Council's free online platforms

One of the challenges over the coming months will be what to do while we wait out the threat of COVID-19. While social isolation can be challenging, and at times downright boring, you might consider using the time to learn or explore what our City has on offer through our free online platforms.

Bmcc.nsw.gov.au

- Report, Apply, Lodge and Pay online at bmcc.nsw.gov.au/eservices
- Find all council's media releases at bmcc.nsw.gov.au/media-centre
- Subscribe to council's fortnightly eNewsletter at bmcc.nsw.gov.au/publications/community-news-snapshot
- Receive your rates electronically. Go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/eRates
- Love Local Blue Mountains' businesses: bmcc.nsw.gov.au/lovelocal

Have Your Say

Take part in the community by engaging with our Have Your Say online platform. This is where we are asking for your thoughts on all sorts of matters – traffic safety, public parks and town centre upgrades and more. Contribute at yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Community Assistance Program grants

Applications are open for the Community Assistance Program are now open. The Program provides grants to help local community organisations and not-for-profits provide activities and services to local residents. Applications close 5pm on 6 May. For more information visit bmcc.nsw.gov.au/grants.

Council's proposed service delivery plan and budget for 2020-2021

To continue building a successful and sustainable future for the Blue Mountains, Council will spend more than \$140 million during 2020-2021 on a wide range of services and facilities to support our community and the environment. Council has prepared its draft update of the Delivery Program 2017-2021 and Operational Plan for 2020-2021 and invites you to Have Your Say. The draft documents are on public exhibition from Thursday 30 April until Wednesday 27 May 2020. Go to yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre has launched VIRTUAL INSIGHT, a curated selection of digital content the whole community can access for free. Go to bluemountainsculturalcentre.com.au

eLibrary

Our eLibrary is a space where you can read, learn or just watch a movie. Free services include eBooks, eMagazines, eAudiobooks, video streaming, language resources, games and stories for kids and study and HSC Resources. Go to library.bmcc.nsw.gov.au

For the safety of our community and staff, Council has closed some community facilities and services.

Council has collated reliable and relevant information about coronavirus COVID-19 from trusted sources.

We also provide support information for individuals and businesses. Go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus for more.

Hi Neighbour!

This is (name/s) _____

I/we live at (address) _____

If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19, I can help by:

- | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picking up shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> A friendly phone call | <input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Posting mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Urgent supplies | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Just call or text me on _____ and I'll do my best to help you!
(phone)

Thanks for being a good neighbour!

bmcc.nsw.gov.au/goodneighbour