

Community Newsletter



BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL AUGUST 2020



Photo: Top centre - Love Local tote bags on display at Glenbrook Park. Bottom left - Love Local Live performer Aurora Li. Bottom Right - 8 Things, Misha Laurent, featured on Love Local Lessons.

Love Local: Supporting the Blue Mountains community and economy

Blue Mountains City Council has launched multiple new initiatives this year to support our community after bush fires, flooding and COVID-19.

One of the most popular that has resonated with our community is *Love Local*, that launched in January. It started as a way to encourage residents to spend locally, to help our businesses who were struggling after the bush fires. (See page 3 for how local spend helps our local economy). The *Love Local* campaign has been extended throughout the year to include the following:

Love Local Tradies: We launched this initiative in August 2020, to help local tradespeople secure more local work. *Love Local Tradies* is rolling out in two phases. In the first phase we are urging local builders, plumbers, electricians, concreters and landscapers to register with Council, so they can be featured under 'Trades' on the **Love Local Business Directory map**.

In the second phase (from October 2020), we will notify the listed tradespeople to see if they'd like to bid for Council contracts.

Love Local Business Directory: This business directory launched in May 2020, to assist small businesses who had to change the way they operate due to COVID-19. It was our way of promoting these new services, while keeping the community up to date.

Love Local Live On Stage: Our Blue Mountains Theatre welcomed audiences back this month with these special, uplifting concerts, showcasing some of the Blue Mountains most talented musicians. The first show was sold out!

Love Local Live: This six-week initiative also supported our creative community, by livestreaming local musicians via social media. The six sessions, that could also be watched online after the events, have been viewed more than 23,000 times. Given the overwhelming popularity, Council will be extending the series. So stay tuned for more details coming soon!

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Councillors

Ward 1 | Bell to Leura, Megalong Valley & The Mounts
 Ward 2 | Wentworth Falls to Faulconbridge/Springwood
 Ward 3 | Faulconbridge/Springwood to Valley Heights
 Ward 4 | Warrimoo to Lapstone



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WARD 4

Dear Residents,

I am writing to you to let you know that an increase in your rates this year relates to recent land valuations that are determined by the NSW Government, through the Valuer General's office.

This is a state government imposed increase and not a Council decision; Council has no say in this matter and Council does not receive any extra revenue from it.

I have previously written to the state government and asked that it subsidise those households faced with an increase, given the difficult year it has been following summer bush fires, flooding in February and now the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fifty-eight percent of our ratepayers will be impacted by increased rates for the 2020/21 rating year, as overall land values have increased by 31 per cent since 2016.

Increasing rates due to land valuations is an additional burden on our residents, at a time when many have lost jobs or have had their incomes significantly reduced.

Council is legally required to levy ratepayers (under the Local Government Act 1993) and unfortunately we are not able to waive rates. However, where ratepayers are unable to pay rates

due to suffering a loss or reduction in employment, Council will approve extended instalment payment plans. Interest penalties can also be put on hold during the period of the arrangement. Please contact Council on 4780 5000 and ask for the Revenue team.

Council remains committed to supporting the community through COVID-19, and following bush fires and flooding, and working with other levels of government and key agencies to address the significant impacts on the City following multiple crises.

Regards,



Mayor, Mark Greenhill OAM
Blue Mountains City Council

Celebrating 20 years as a City within a World Heritage Area

This year is the 20th Anniversary of the Greater Blue Mountains region being granted World Heritage status by the United Nations. We're marking this important milestone, by celebrating the unique privilege of managing a City within a World Heritage Area.

Each month until December, we'll be showcasing critical areas that emphasise how Council helps preserve an area of such special significance, including recognition of Traditional Ownership, protection of the environment and threatened species, water resource management and strategic planning.

Chief Executive Officer Dr Rosemary Dillon said: "We are stewards of an area of global significance. As we all work together to achieve a sustainable Blue Mountains, we are increasingly strengthening our environmental management and sustainable urban living."

"By celebrating this important milestone, there will be opportunities for the community to come together, to learn, share knowledge and celebrate the fact that we are all lucky enough to live in one of the most unique and beautiful places on earth."

For more information go to: bmcc.nsw.gov.au/WHA.



Our Waterways Health Snapshot 2020 has been included in the mail out this month, with this Community Newsletter. Each year we report on the ecological health of our waterways. As we celebrate 20 years as a City within a World Heritage Area, ensuring the long term health and sustainability of our precious waterways has never been more important. Go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterways for more.

Love Local: Shop, play and stay local

The Love Local campaign was launched in January 2020 to encourage locals to *shop, play and stay* locally, to help Blue Mountains' businesses recover after bush fires.

Love Local in Focus: This series is celebrating our towns and villages. Each month we're featuring a Blue Mountains town or village, and showcasing what makes them unique. This is to encourage locals to visit these places and spend money, to support the local economy.

COVID-19 restrictions this year have forced many Blue Mountains' businesses to change the way they operate, but there are always plenty of ways to spend locally: shop over the phone or online, get a takeaway or a delivery, buy a gift card, or holiday at home by visiting another town or village in the City and stay overnight.

You can also support our local businesses by leaving a review online and encouraging your friends to support them. Promote how great local businesses are, during this difficult time, and use the hashtags #lovelocal #lovelocalbluemountains in your social media posts.

Our Love Local campaign in 2020 has also included **Love Local Lessons**. This is a series of free, online tutorials for both adults and children, launched in July. The series, still available online, features local talent such as *8 Things* chef Misha Laurent (pictured on page 1), Head Coach of the Young Matildas and Future Matildas Leah Blayney, hula-hooping superstar Suzy Spindoll and *Pinot & Picasso's* Brock Waugh, who shows how to paint the Three Sisters. This series will also be extended, so stay tuned for details. **For more information on all Love Local initiatives, go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/lovelocal.**

LOVE LOCAL



When you spend \$100 at a...



SMALL BUSINESS

\$64.45



LOCAL CHAIN

\$47.38



ONLINE STORE*

\$2.57

...is estimated to stay in the local community

*For a business outside of the Blue Mountains

bmcc.nsw.gov.au/lovelocal
#lovelocal #lovelocalbluemountains

Serving our community

...key achievements

Snapshot of achievements for 2019-2020

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

lead

inspiring leadership

Supported community given difficult times

Council implemented initiatives this year to support our community after bush fires, flooding and COVID-19. We launched programs like Good Neighbour (more than 200 emergency food boxes and 400 books to our most vulnerable residents and Love Local (support for local businesses). We also waived or reduced fees where possible (including waiving rents for all Council tenants and removing sportsground fees for two seasons).



Responded to unprecedented bush fires

Council supported the Incident Management Team managing the bush fires. We provided emergency service, communications and administrative staff, delivered bulk water carriers, provided extra waste services and prepared staging areas. We supported communities in the upper mountains who were directly impacted. The Bush Fire Mayoral Relief Fund has so far raised almost \$100,000 and almost 100 payments have been distributed to the community.



Committed to climate change action

Council adopted a target of becoming carbon neutral by the end of 2025. The organisation continues to support and advocate for initiatives that address climate change, as outlined in our *Carbon Abatement Action Plan*. Council took advantage of the recent closure of community facilities to finish the installation of solar panels at four more of our facilities. Council's Carbon Revolving Reserve project also won the national *Cities Power Partnership's Project Financing Innovation Award*.



protect

an environmentally responsible city

Endorsed water and weeds plans

Council adopted the *Water Sensitive Blue Mountains Strategic Plan* that focuses on water efficiency, water harvesting and reuse, stormwater management and education. Council also adopted the *Weed Management Strategic Plan 2019*. We were also awarded at the *Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards*, for the partnership project to restore Jamison Creek following the crayfish kill in 2012.



Activated Pulpit Hill

Council was a successful recipient of a *NSW Government Heritage Near Me Activation Grant* of \$100,000, for the Pulpit Hill Heritage Interpretation Project. The objective of the grant was to enhance the public's understanding of the place and its multilayered history, amplify the Aboriginal perspective on the site and provide access to interpretive information. The project was designed to encourage community appreciation of significant heritage values.



Launched fauna directory online

A research and citizen science project that catalogued fauna species within the Blue Mountains was published online. The Blue Mountains Fauna Project Inventory collated over 300,000 fauna records and showcased more than 450 different species, including 51 threatened species. The project was a joint partnership between Blue Mountain Bushcare Network and Blue Mountains City Council, with grant funding from Greater Sydney Local Land Services.



care

an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

Provided green waste services during crisis

To assist residents prepare their properties for bush fires, Council offered free extra chipping services; extended the operating hours of our Waste Management Facilities (WMF); waived the fee for green waste (covering the State Govt levy); and added extra green bin collections. Following restrictions at our WMFs due to COVID-19, extra booked bulky waste Services were made available to assist the community. The booked Service was also extended to collect green waste from households.



Implemented online services

During COVID-19 and following the closure of Council facilities – our Libraries, Cultural Centre and Leisure Centres looked at innovative ways to keep people connected and entertained during the pandemic. At the Library, Children's programs were transferred online including Storytime and Babytime. The Cultural Centre launched VIRTUAL INSIGHT. Meanwhile, the Leisure Centres offered the community free access to a suite of over 800 online workouts.



Conducted community consultation

Planning for community infrastructure projects got underway, as part of the *Western Parkland City Liveability Program*. We asked the community about proposed upgrades at our District Parks, as well as at Blackheath village centre, Lawson Parklands and Springwood Library. Planning also got underway for Springwood town centre, development at Katoomba Sports and Aquatic Centre and upgrades of walking tracks at Knapsack Reserve.



live

a liveable city

Conducted 'make safe' tree works

Council assessed and coordinated 'make safe' tree removal works with the Rural Fire Service, valued at nearly \$480,000 – on public land managed by the Council and some high priority tree removal work on private land – following bush fires. Council tree officers assessed approximately 1200 trees, for removal or pruning, along roadways within fire affected communities in the upper Blue Mountains include the villages of Bell, Mt Wilson and Mt Tomah.



Endorsed Local Planning Statement

Council endorsed the Blue Mountains Local Strategic Planning Statement *Blue Mountains 2040: Living Sustainably*. Developed with extensive community consultation, it is Council's long term land use plan aimed at ensuring the Blue Mountains local government area can respond in a locally appropriate way to the challenges and opportunities for the future. It aligns with, and responds to, the *Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035*.



Opened new heritage trail

A new heritage trail, *Layers in Time*, opened at Woodford Reserve. The trail takes visitors on a self-guided loop of the central estate grounds of Woodford Academy. Illustrated signage along the heritage trail features QR codes to easily access information. The trail was a collaboration between Council, Traditional Owners and the National Trust and was the culmination of dedicated work over many years by local residents, the Woodford Academy Management Committee and staff.



move

an accessible city

Improved local infrastructure

Council's improvement of accessibility and amenity of local roads, continued in 2019-2020. Council graded more than 220,000m² of unsealed roads and completed general maintenance of more than 4,500m² of the unsealed road network. Other infrastructure work included: checked and cleared more than 1,250 drainage pits; and repaired and replaced more than 1,500 signs, which is 18% of total Council signage in the local government area.



Supported bush fire response

We provided traffic management for multiple road closures to assist the Incident Management Team who managed the Ruined Castle, Grose Valley and Erskine Creek bush fires in December and January. Council provided traffic management for multiple road closures; more than 30 Council staff controlled numerous road blocks over six weeks. Council also delivered bulk water carriers to support fire-fighting efforts across many locations.



Responded to landslips

Council responded to more than a dozen significant landslips across the City, following flooding in February 2020. We are currently working on the remediation of Cliff Drive, Leura, after a landslip from private property onto public land. We also completed the rebuild of an embankment, road and footpath at Megalong Street, Leura, that collapsed following flooding in January 2019. This area is now fully accessible to cars and pedestrians.



thrive

an economically sustainable city

Assisted local businesses

Council responded to recent disasters with an Outreach Program to support small businesses across the City. Council also waived rents for tenants in Council buildings under commercial agreements for as long as needed; provided payment arrangements for ratepayers and businesses who are experiencing hardship; developed a 'Recovery for Business' web portal, and a new monthly eNewsletter; and implemented the *Love Local* campaign.



Developed Echo Point precinct

Council embarked on a major upgrade at Echo Point, Katoomba. The works, which are almost complete, included the installation of evacuation signage, the installation of fixed and removable bollards, the installation of CCTV, the reopening of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, and the development of a community amphitheatre. The City receives over 4 million tourists annually and Echo Point is a critical piece of Council's tourism offering.



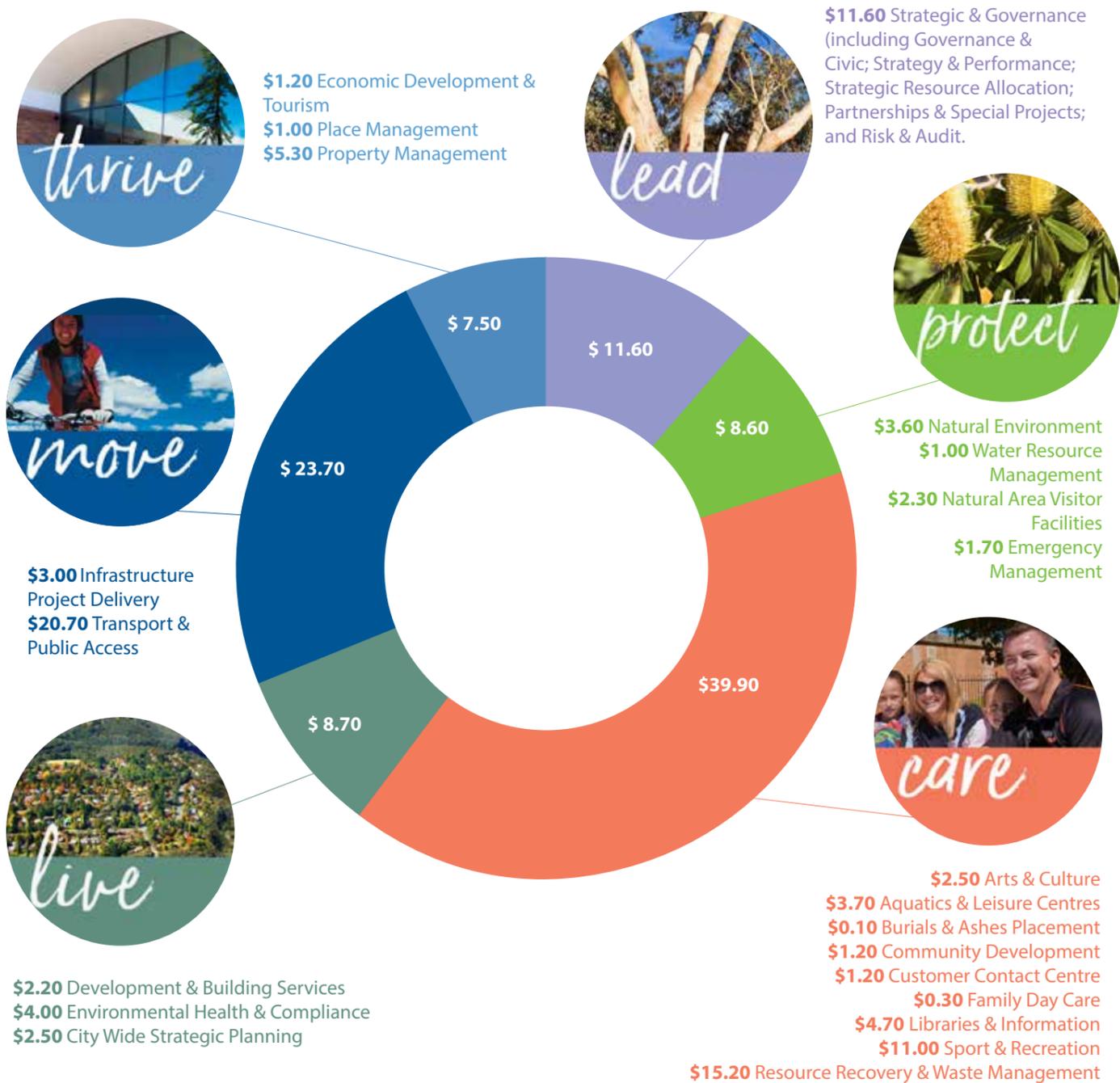
Boosted local tourism economy

Council, in partnership with Blue Mountains Tourism and the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, developed a destination marketing campaign to kick-start the local economy after bush fires and COVID-19. #GoBlue #StayANightOrTwo encouraged Sydneysiders, and NSW residents, to visit the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains and stay overnight, or for a weekend. Aimed at families and couples, the campaign showcased some of the best the region has to offer.



Where does \$100 of your rates and charges go each year?

See the breakdown below, related to the Key Directions of our Community Strategic Plan



WHERE DOES OUR MONEY COME FROM?

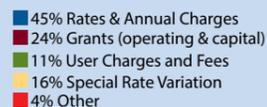
In 2020-21 Council is managing an income of \$155.1 million.

Rates and annual charges make up 45% of that income.

Each year council provides an extensive range of services and facilities to the community.

Supporting delivery of the services shown here, the Council manages over \$1.1 billion of built assets and infrastructure.

For more information on the Council's service delivery go to bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au/together.



Preparing for upgrades at our District Parks



All four district parks in the Blue Mountains are receiving upgrades valued at more than \$5.2 million, thanks to funding received through the Western Parkland City Liveability Program.

Since July 2019 we've been working with our community to determine what would be built at these parks. For the Glenbrook District Park Stage 2 playground and Buttenshaw Park's adventure playspace, we received more than 1,000 responses to the *Funbululator* – an online tool where respondents were able to select their favourite equipment.

Construction of the new play area for seven to 12 year olds at Glenbrook District Park is expected to get underway in October. We are currently finalising the designs for the adventure space at Springwood's Buttenshaw Park (pictured), to be built in 2021.

Additional community consultation has also been held for new planned works at Wentworth Falls Lake Park, including the accessible walkway over the dam wall, new accessible viewing platform and a new multi-purpose shelter. Additional funding has also been found through an 'Everyone Can Play' grant to replace the old equipment located near the new toilets. Meanwhile, a new toilet block and a fully accessible pathway will also be built at Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park.

Get more information on each of these projects at yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

For information on our other upcoming community infrastructure projects like Blackheath village centre, Lawson Parklands and Springwood Library go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/liveability-program.

Waste Service changes

From 1 August 2020 we introduced two changes to our Waste Service.

Council is now collecting and removing green waste for recycling, as part of a single Booked Waste Service.

Also the hours of operation at Katoomba Waste Management have changed. The facility is now open:

- 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday
- 10am to 2pm on Saturdays.

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

More Council facilities powered by sunshine

We took advantage of recent closure of community facilities, due to COVID-19, to finish the installation of solar panels at the following locations:

- Springwood Aquatic Centre
- Springwood Theatre and Community Hub
- Blaxland Waste Management Facility drop-off bay, and
- Katoomba Waste Management Facility.

A fifth facility, Katoomba Sports & Aquatic Centre, will also soon join the solar club, with panels to be installed in 2020.

The project is part of Council's Carbon Abatement Action Plan which was adopted in 2016 to identify and implement projects that reduce carbon emissions as well as operational costs.

The new solar panels, with a combined total of 289kW of power across all sites, will see our operational emissions reduce by a further 313 tonnes of CO₂e per year. The average Australian home generates 7 tonnes of CO₂e per year.

If you own your home, now is a great time to look into solar power. The technology is getting better and cheaper and, according to the NSW Government's Energy Saver website – the average Sydney household can save up to \$900 a year by installing a 4-kilowatt solar system on their roof. This means the solar system would pay itself off in less than five years through lower energy bills.

For more information about Council's action on climate change and how you can reduce emissions at home go to bmcc.nsw.gov.au/action-on-climate-change.



Calling kids to have their say

Blue Mountains kids are invited to have their say on shaping their community in our new initiative, *Kids Say*.

Kids Say is a dedicated space on Council's Have Your Say website, where kids (5-12 years) can take part in surveys and give feedback on matters that concern them.

For the first project, Council invites kids to have their say on the location of 10 future children's street libraries.

Each of the kids who find the locations suitable for one of the 10 libraries will receive a \$40 voucher! Grandparents, parents and carers are encouraged to support kids to have their say.

Go to yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/kids-say to find out more and Have Your Say by 31 August.

WHAT'S ON BLUE MOUNTAINS



Love Local Live On Stage

Fri 28 August -

Mic Conway and Robbie Long

ARIA award winning Mic Conway (Captain Matchbox, National Junk Band) and multi-instrumentalist and flatpickin' champion Robbie Long present an evening of vaudeville, meets cabaret, meets magic, meets fire-eating, tap dancing and loads more madcap fun.

Bookings:

bluemountainstheatre.com.au
or 4723 5050.



National Threatened Species Day

Mon Sept 7

The Blue Mountains region is home to a number of rare and endangered species such as the Giant Dragonfly, Dwarf Mountain Pine, and the Blue Mountains Water Skink to name a few. As we celebrate 20 years as a City within a World Heritage Area, find out what you can do to protect our natural environment.

bmcc.nsw.gov.au/WHA



Wollemi Weekend

Sat 19 – Sun 20 September

Expanding on the popular Wollemi Artisan Markets, the Wollemi Weekend will be a celebration of local artists, designers and musicians. Spread across two days, Wollemi Weekend will feature live mural painting, local bands, artist workshops, street art tours and kids activities.

Image courtesy of the artist: Maria Harding.

bluemountainculturalcentre.com.au



Creative Corner online

Creative Corner with Naomi Oliver

Following on from the immensely popular Online Storytime and Online Babytime video series, Blue Mountains Library is proud to present Creative Corner Online, a weekly online children's art class presented by the wonderful art teacher, Naomi Oliver.

library.bmcc.nsw.gov.au



Black and Blue 2

29 Aug – 27 September

Six years after its first edition in 2014, Black and Blue returns to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre to continue to explore dark and mysterious stories from the Blue Mountains. Artist and curator Faye Wilson has paired visual artists, writers and historians to respond to tales – tall and true – collected from the region's folklore and history.

Image courtesy of the artist: Faye Wilson.

bluemountainculturalcentre.com.au



The Sydney Comedy Festival Showcase Tour

Fri 27 Nov

The crème de la crème of the 2020 Sydney Comedy Festival are coming to the Blue Mountains! Don't miss the festival's funniest in one hilarious night.

Bookings:

bluemountainstheatre.com.au
or 4723 5050



Love Local Lessons

Paint the Three Sisters with Pinot and Picasso's Brock Waugh, finesse your cooking skills with Parisian born chef Misha Laurent, learn to juggle with circus superstar Suzy Spindoll, or develop your soccer skills with Young Matilda's coach Leah Blayney - all in this series of free, online tutorials.

bmcc.nsw.gov.au/love-local

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