

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2002

ACCESSIBLE HOUSING  
STRATEGY



BLUE MOUNTAINS  
CITY COUNCIL

APRIL 2002

Blue Mountains City Council

**Environmental Management Plan 2002**

**Accessible Housing Strategy**

**Report For Exemption To  
SEPP 5: Housing For Older People And People With A Disability**

**Supporting  
Draft Local Environmental Plan 2002**

Sustainable Environmental & City Planning  
City Sustainability Group

Endorsed by Blue Mountains City Council  
at its meeting of 30 April 2002

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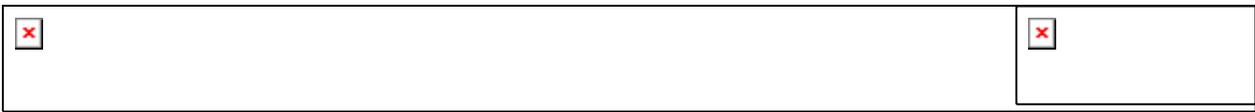
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## PART 1 INTRODUCTION

Housing for older people and people with a disability remains central to land use policy development and assessment within the Blue Mountains context. As with all local government areas throughout the State, the provision of this form of housing in the Blue Mountains is regulated by State Environmental Planning Policy 5 – Housing for Older People and People with a Disability (SEPP 5).

Council had foreshadowed its intention to seek exemption from the application of SEPP 5 to the Blue Mountains LGA in a submission, which it had endorsed unanimously on 9 May 2000, to the *Options for Change* discussion paper developed in the review of SEPP 5. Such an exemption would be on the basis that Council's Draft Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2002 and accompanying development controls would make sufficient and locally appropriate provision for SEPP 5 housing or "accessible housing" within the LGA.

As a component of the review of SEPP 5 in 2000, the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) released guidelines entitled *Housing for older people and people with a disability in your community: A guide for councils and applicants* (the 'guidelines') to clarify changes to the application of SEPP 5. In relation to exemption to SEPP 5, these guidelines indicated:

*Councils can amend their Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) to provide housing opportunities similar to those provided under the SEPP. The Minister is prepared to exclude council areas from the SEPP, where the LEP sufficiently provides those housing opportunities.*

(DUAP, 2000a:5)

In seeking to provide these housing opportunities, the preparation of the Draft LEP parallels the initiatives of the Department in reviewing the operation of SEPP 5, and considers the issues arising in the guidelines. The preparation of a comprehensive City-wide LEP, which aims to achieve integrated and sustainable land use outcomes, provides an important opportunity to plan for the provision of this form of housing in a manner that responds to local needs and environmental characteristics. Such an approach broadly addresses the following considerations:

- identified housing need;
- existing and planned community support infrastructure;
- access and mobility requirements of residents;
- environmental capacity; and
- recognised character values.

This report is directed to considering these issues, as well as demonstrating how Draft LEP 2002 responds to these requirements in its provision of housing for older people and people with a disability.





## PART 2 DUAP DISCUSSION PAPER & GUIDELINES

The *Options for Change* discussion paper (DUAP, 2000b) reiterated the need for older people, as well as people with a disability, to have access to functional and well-designed housing within their communities. Such housing is intended to meet an existing social need within an area, rather than to attract an increased population of older people or people with a disability. Recognition was given to the primary concerns raised by various councils in previous consultation, including:

- that SEPP 5 overrides local planning controls and provides for medium density housing that does not respond to local issues and design expectations;
- that there are difficulties for councils in ensuring that SEPP 5 is occupied by its target user group;
- the lack of definition of what constitutes 'reasonable access' to facilities and services;
- the inability to levy s94 contributions on SEPP 5 developments;
- the cumulative stress that SEPP 5 housing places on community services; and
- the inappropriate development of fringe land.

(DUAP, 2000b)

Accordingly, the discussion paper appeared to have gauged the critical issues of this form of housing as it relates to the Blue Mountains LGA. The review document suggests a two-stage process in developing a way forward for SEPP 5 provision:

- (a) In the first instance, amending the Policy to address key concerns identified as part of the review about compatibility of development with local character and to ensure housing is targeted to the aged and disabled; and*
- (b) In the medium term, providing for Councils to be exempted from the SEPP subject to putting into effect appropriate zoning and other development control to meet the housing needs of older people and people with a disability.*

(DUAP, 2000b: 14)

In view of the experience of SEPP 5 housing in this LGA, and the recognised environmental and character constraints of the Mountains, Council was in a position to fully endorse the directions within the discussion paper. Additionally, Council has progressed a number of initiatives in the preparation of Draft LEP 2002, including detailed consultation with the Blue Mountains Access Committee on a range of social issues affecting both older people and people with a disability. Council is therefore in a position to progress option (b) above in consultation with the Department and, once exhibited, with wide-ranging input from its community.

Through the exhibition of Draft LEP 2002 and this strategy document, the exemption will provide opportunities for the community to consider and make submissions in relation to the local planning provisions that will effect their future housing opportunities. Furthermore, such community input will help ensure that the future provision of housing for older people and people with a disability contributes to and is integrated with the urban fabric and environmental context of the Blue Mountains.

Council's policy development has also benefited from, and been supported by, the release of the amended SEPP 5 and guidelines. The review of SEPP 5 has resulted in stronger adaptable housing provisions to require a higher proportion of SEPP 5 units to provide





wheelchair access. It also stipulates that SEPP 5 developments must be located within 400 metres of certain facilities and services, or within 400 metres of a regular transport service. Draft LEP 2002 incorporates provisions that are consistent with this approach. Design standards are also strengthened in the new SEPP, as well as provisions for protecting sensitive land and allowing Section 94 Contributions to be levied. These provisions are addressed in the body of Council's Draft LEP, with the exception of Section 94 Contributions, which will be addressed separately in a future review of Council's Contributions Plan.

### **PART 3 IDENTIFIED HOUSING NEED**

This part identifies housing needs among older people and people with a disability for the Blue Mountains LGA. At the outset, it is to be noted that housing needs and preferences of older people and people with a disability are difficult to determine with any degree of certainty. A complex array of factors can contribute to a person's choice of dwelling type and it is recognised that people's housing needs change over their lifetime (2000a:4). Some of these factors are readily identified and measured, while others are more difficult to ascertain. Factors include:

- House and land cost and availability;
- Limitations imposed by development and planning controls, including land use zoning and height restrictions, which may restrict housing choice;
- Individual preferences, such as space for gardens, number of bedrooms;
- Attitudes to communal living - the choice between community or hostel living and living in a separate house; and
- Availability of support services for people living in separate houses, such as home and community care (HACC) services and meals on wheels.

A resident's response to the above factors is particularly influenced by their lifecycle stage and expectations, which may change substantially as people age. In illustrating this, consideration could be given to an older person who may choose to live alone in a separate house, being perfectly capable of maintaining large gardens and a dwelling. An event such as loss of eyesight or degeneration in bone structure may remove their ability to drive a car or undertake routine tasks, meaning that this person is substantially more isolated, as well as being more dependant on external aid to maintain the property. Housing preferences and needs change with these events. Equally, housing preferences also arise from lifestyle choices, where increased travel and other social activities may mean that maintaining larger houses and gardens may longer be a priority.

Some of the more indeterminate factors above include individual preferences regarding dwelling types and communal living. These factors vary so much between individuals, as well as between different stages of an individual's life, that it is difficult to adequately account for these factors in any estimate of demand for accessible housing. Generating a valid understanding of the housing aspirations or preferences for the population of older people or people with a disability at any given time is a significant challenge. This is magnified when attempts are made to forecast these preferences for residents into the future.

Similarly, although the availability of external support services and the cost and availability of housing may be measured at a given point, these cannot be effectively controlled in a planning context. At best, the demand for accessible housing can be measured based on broad indicators of the above factors.

Therefore, this part focuses on population trends among the target group, followed by a description of supply and demand factors affecting alternative housing (housing other than detached) in the Blue Mountains LGA. These areas are the basis for quantifiable demand





assessments. On this basis it is concluded that there is a significant need for increased alternative housing within the LGA, specifically to meet the current and projected future needs of older people and people with a disability. If sufficient and appropriate housing is not provided, these people will be left to compete with other residents for a limited supply of alternative housing. Housing costs and affordability are not directly considered in this report, as the Council's *Residential Development Strategy* considers these issues in detail.

In considering population trends, this report adopts Council's five study areas developed for community planning purposes, in order to target local area planning requirements for the provision of services and facilities. These are the "Areas" referred to throughout this report.

Table 1: Area Planning in the Blue Mountains

Area	Towns
Area 1	Blackheath (Service Centre), Mount Victoria, Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine, Mount Tomah, Bell
Area 2	Wentworth Falls, Leura, Katoomba (Service Centre), Medlow Bath
Area 3	Bullaburra, Lawson (Service Centre), Hazelbrook, Woodford, Linden
Area 4	Valley Heights, Winmalee, Yellow Rock, Hawkesbury Heights, Springwood (Service Centre), Faulconbridge
Area 5	Lapstone, Glenbrook, Mt Riverview, Blaxland (Service Centre), Warrimoo

Council utilises this geographical break-up for the purposes of Area Community Planning, which is undertaken on a regular basis and assists in determining needs for services and facilities across the dispersed community of the Blue Mountains.

### 3.1 OVERVIEW OF POPULATION TRENDS

#### 3.1.1 Older people

For the purposes of SEPP 5, 'older people' refers to those people who are aged 55 years or over. By 2026, it is estimated that one third of the population in both NSW and Sydney will be over the age of 55 (DUAP, 2000b: 4). This predicted increase in older people has enormous impacts on the provision of housing and related services. The *Options for Change* discussion paper states:

*In Sydney this will see the number of people aged 55 years and over increase by 655,000 people. Approximately 17% of that increase or an increase of 112,000 persons will take place in the next 5 years.*

(DUAP, 2000b: 4)

Within the Blue Mountains, it is projected that the population of older people will almost double in the next 20 years (Holloway and Wood, 2001:33). The 55-65 and 65 or more age cohorts are also projected to increase at a much greater rate than all other age cohorts, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Blue Mountains Population Projections, 1996-2017

Age	1996		2000		2011		2017		Change 1996-2017
	Population	% of total							
0-14	17 130	24	16 627	22	19 314	21	14 186	17	-2 944
15-34	18 279	25	19 139	25	21 282	23	18 558	22	279





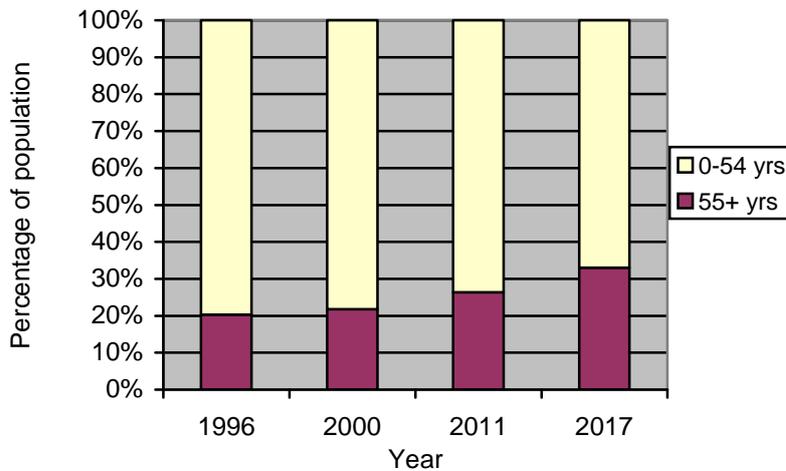
Age	1996		2000		2011		2017		Change 1996-2017
	Population	% of total	Population	% of total	Population	% of total	Population	% of total	
35-54	22 012	30	24 058	31	26 458	29	23 047	28	1 035
55-64	5 797	8	7 139	9	12 992	14	12 555	15	6 758
65 or more	8 816	12	9 578	13	11 119	12	14 978	18	6 162
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72 034*</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>76 541</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91 165</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83 324</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10 818</b>

*Differs from the ABS 1996 Census total due to the exclusion of overseas visitors*

*Source: derived from Holloway and Wood, 2001:34*

Table 2 demonstrates a disproportionate increase in the population aged 55 and over, and by 2017 it is estimated that those over 55 will comprise 33 per cent of the total population. Currently, 20.2 per cent of the Blue Mountains population is older than 55 years. This is higher than the proportion in this age cohort for WSROC<sup>1</sup> (15.9 per cent), and similar to that for the Sydney SD (19.7 per cent) (ABS, 1996).

The increasing share of the population occupied by those aged 55 and over is illustrated in Figure 1.



*Figure 1: Percentage of population aged 55 and over*

Figure 1 demonstrates a projected increase in the proportion of the population of those aged 55 and over in the Blue Mountains. This trend has not been forecast beyond 2017. However, even if the proportion of older people reaches a plateau at 33 per cent of the population, and the population grows at the moderate levels shown in Table 2, this will impact on the provision of housing and social services in the Blue Mountains. Even to maintain the current occupancy proportions of older people in alternative housing requires a significant targeted increase of such housing.

It is recognised that by 2017, those who are currently between 40 and 55 years old will be in the 55 to 70 age bracket. With improving medical services and health standards, it is likely that people aged 55 and over will be healthier and more mobile by 2017 (NSW Department

<sup>1</sup> WSROC refers to the population of those council areas which comprise the Western Sydney Organisation of Councils





of Planning, 2002). They will also have different accommodation needs. The housing needs and preferences of the 40 to 55 age bracket can be assessed over the next 15 years, and will form part of future revisions of this strategy.

### 3.1.2 People with disabilities

Information on the number of people with disabilities is more difficult to source, due to limitations of census data. However, the figures arising in the landmark ABS report of April 1999 provide a useful overview of the incidence of disability in the broader Australian context. The report indicates that 19 per cent of the population (or 1 in 5 people) have a disability, with 87 per cent of these people experiencing restrictions in core activities.

The Blue Mountains Housing Needs Research Report suggests that approximately 5,620 people in the Blue Mountains LGA have disabilities (Whittington, 1993:72), tending towards a more conservative estimate to that of the ABS study. This estimate was based on the findings of the Disability Research Project, undertaken in 1993 for the Mountains Disability Interagency and the Mountains Community Resource Network.

This information has been augmented by the synthetic predictors of disability derived from the 1998 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, which provide broad estimates of disability. Such predictions are useful in lieu of other reliable sources for a local area. As can be derived from Table 3, approximately 5,800 of the Blue Mountains population (7.9%) have moderate to profound core activity restrictions, based on the synthetic predictors of disability model.

Table 3: Blue Mountains Disability Status 1998

Disability Status	Blue Mountains No.	Blue Mountains %	NSW %
Profound core activity restriction <sup>1</sup>	1 362	1.9	2.0
Severe core activity restriction <sup>1</sup>	2 159	3.1	3.0
Moderate core activity restriction <sup>1</sup>	2 279	3.2	3.4
Mild core activity restriction	3 862	5.5	5.8
Schooling or employment restriction only	1 080	1.5	1.6
No specific restriction <sup>2</sup>	1 634	2.3	2.4
<b>Total with a disability</b>	<b>2386</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>18.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Core activities comprise communication, mobility and self-care.

<sup>2</sup> Specific restriction comprises a core activity restriction and/or a schooling or employment restriction.

Source: Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, ABS.

In supplementing the above assessment, Attachment 1 shows the number of people receiving an Aged Pension or Disability Support Pension by township and Planning Area. There are total of 6,331 people in the LGA (comprising 8.3% of the total population) receiving the aged pension and 2,171 people (2.8% of the total population) receiving a disability support pension. Of those receiving a disability support pension, over 40 per cent live in Planning Area Two (Katoomba to Wentworth Falls) with the next highest proportion (18.1%) in Planning Area 4. It should be noted that these figures do not account for those older people or people with a disability who do not claim or who are otherwise ineligible for a pension. These figures are also limited in their ability to predict the demand for accessible housing, since not all recipients of the disability support pension have physical disabilities that can be addressed through housing provision. Given these limitations, it is difficult to make any empirical assessment of the need for accessible housing among people who have a disability.





### 3.2 ALTERNATIVE DWELLING SUPPLY

Accessible housing is aligned with the supply of units, townhouses, villas and similar medium density housing forms, rather than with detached dwellings. Table 4 shows types of dwellings in the Blue Mountains compared to the Sydney Statistical Division (SD) and WSROC, based on the 1996 ABS Census.

Table 4 Dwelling stock in the Blue Mountains

Dwelling Type	Blue Mountains	WSROC	Sydney SD
Separate Houses	90.9	79.3	63.5
Semi-detached	2.2	6.7	10.1
Flats and Units	3.9	10.9	22.7

Source: derived from Holloway and Wood, 2001:25

Within the Blue Mountains 27,508 dwellings (90.9%) were separate houses. This compares to 79.3 per cent in WSROC and 63.5 per cent in Sydney. A further 665 dwellings in the Blue Mountains were semi-detached dwellings, accounting for 2.2 per cent of dwelling stock. In comparison, semi-detached dwellings comprised 6.7 per cent of dwellings in WSROC and 10.1 per cent in Sydney. Perhaps the most notable variation between areas is with flats and units, which comprised 3.9 per cent or 1,185 dwellings in the Blue Mountains compared to 10.9 per cent in WSROC and 22.7 per cent in Sydney.

ABS building approvals data reflects the dominance of detached dwellings, which comprised over 90 per cent of residential building approvals in the LGA in 1999-2000. Residential building approvals for attached dwellings comprised less than 10 per cent of building approvals in 1999-2000, and have been in decline since 1994-95. In comparison, the proportion of attached dwellings in Sydney has remained relatively constant over the same period, at just over 50 per cent of all residential building approvals (Holloway and Wood, 2001:38). Further information is provided in the report by Holloway and Wood (2001), entitled *City of the Blue Mountains Housing Market Study Part One: The Demand for Diverse Housing Options*.

### 3.3 ALTERNATIVE DWELLING DEMAND

The demand for alternative housing (housing other than detached) can be predicted by a range of factors, including older persons, lone person households, higher income households and owner occupiers (Holloway and Wood, 2001). The demand generated by older persons and lone person households is most relevant to SEPP 5 housing, and is discussed below. Other factors contributing to alternative housing demand, as determined by Holloway and Wood (2001) are also considered below.

#### 3.3.1 Current occupation of alternative housing by older people

A significant proportion of the semi-detached dwellings and flats available in the Blue Mountains are occupied by people over the age of 55. Holloway and Wood found that:

*Of those persons in semi-detached dwellings 23% are aged 65 years or more and 35% of those persons in flats are aged over 65 years. This compares to the WSROC area (8% and 11% respectively) and Sydney (12% and 13% respectively). This disparity, while less severe, is also present in the 55-64 year age group.*

(2001:32)





The Blue Mountains has a significantly higher proportion of occupants in flats and semi-detached dwellings who are aged 55 and over, compared to Sydney and WSROC. Of those living in semi-detached housing in the Blue Mountains, 31.8 per cent are aged 55 and over. This is a much higher proportion than both Sydney (18.6%) and WSROC (13.9%). A similar trend emerges with respect to older people living in flats, with 44.0 per cent of those living in flats in the Blue Mountains being aged 55 and over, compared to 20.1 per cent in Sydney and 17.0 per cent in WSROC. In terms of the percentage of people living in separate housing, comparisons are more even. Of those living in detached housing in the Blue Mountains, 18.5 per cent are 55 years and older, which is equivalent to Sydney (19%) and compares to 15.5 per cent in WSROC.

The relatively high occupancy of flats by older people may be simply a product of the limited supply of alternative housing in the Mountains, where a large proportion of such housing comprises retirement villages and SEPP 5 developments which restrict occupancy to older people. Although this disparity between the Blue Mountains and Sydney/WSROC is marked, it is difficult to determine the exact extent to which it represents a general housing preference by older people.

### 3.3.2 Dwelling choice by older people - review of current dwelling types

The trends noted above are to be considered against the current choice of housing by older people in the Blue Mountains, which may be in part constrained by the limited supply of alternative housing forms. Figure 2 illustrates the proportion of older people occupying various dwellings compared to WSROC and Sydney SD.

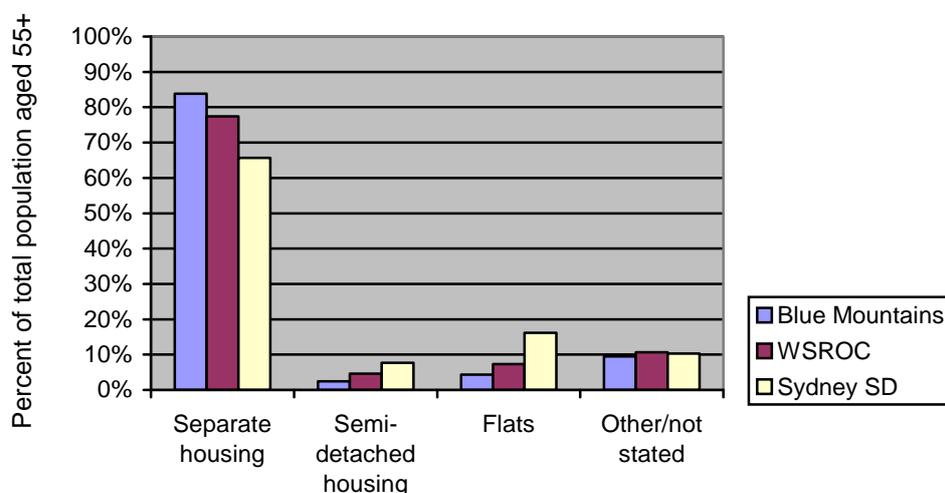
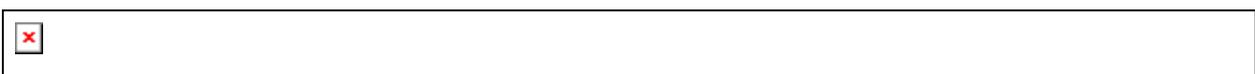


Figure 2: Dwellings occupied by Older Persons (derived from ABS, 1996 and Holloway and Wood, 2001:31-32)

In the Blue Mountains 4.3 per cent of older people live in flats, with a further 2.4 per cent living in semi-detached dwellings and the majority (83.8%) living in separate houses. Sydney and WSROC provide varying degrees of contrast to this situation. In WSROC, a smaller majority of 77.4 per cent of the population aged 55 and over live in separate houses, whilst 4.6 per cent live in semi-detached dwellings and 7.3 per cent live in flats. In Sydney, an even smaller majority of those aged 55 and over live in separate houses (65.7%), while a greater proportion live in flats (16.1%) and semi-detached houses (7.7%).

On the basis of this statistical overview, a notable disparity between Sydney and the Blue Mountains emerges. It is evident that the population of older people in Sydney has a wider choice of dwelling type, with nearly a quarter of the older people in Sydney (23.8%)





occupying alternative housing forms. This compares to the Blue Mountains, where 6.7 per cent occupy alternative dwellings.

What cannot be gauged from this overview is whether the current housing situation represents the preferred choice of older people either within Sydney or the Blue Mountains. It has not been determined what proportion of older people in Sydney may choose to live in detached housing but are economically constrained from doing so because of land availability and cost issues. Similarly, it is difficult to establish the proportion of over 55s in the Blue Mountains who would choose alternative housing but are restricted in their choice by the supply of such housing.

It is to be recognised that on the basis of proposed and foreseeable planning controls in the Blue Mountains, the disparity between Sydney and the Blue Mountains in terms of access of older people to alternative housing will remain. In planning for older people in the Blue Mountains, the challenge is not so much to increase the proportion of older people living in alternative housing (6.7%), but to maintain this current level of choice, while absorbing the increase in the population of older people. This in effect will require an increase in supply of this form of housing. Provided that options are left open for the reasonable provision of appropriate accessible housing, balanced against environmental and character constraints, people's preferences for this type of housing will be represented by the market take-up for this form of development.

**3.3.3 Demand generated by lone person households**

Lone person households are one of the most rapidly increasing components of the Blue Mountains population. Within the LGA, 57.2 per cent of lone person households are aged 55 and over, with 41.2 per cent aged 65 and over (ABS, 1996). It is generally recognised that older people living alone in detached houses may become isolated from the wider community due to their decreasing mobility. They also generally experience difficulty in maintaining the typically larger houses and gardens characterising detached dwellings in the Mountains. Some rely on the home-based assistance or HACC services. It is considered that, with greater availability of alternative dwelling types, many lone person households currently living in detached dwellings would be living in smaller one and two bedroom dwellings.

The average household size across the Blue Mountains is 2.7 persons. This compares to an average household size of 2.7 for the Sydney SD and 3.0 for WSROC. Overall, households in the Blue Mountains are comparable to those in Sydney and smaller than those in WSROC. However, the average size of households living in semi detached dwellings and flats is much smaller than that for the Sydney SD and WSROC. In the Blue Mountains an average 1.9 persons live in semi detached dwellings and 1.5 live in flats. In contrast, WSROC has an average 2.6 persons living in semi detached dwellings and 2.2 in flats, while the Sydney SD has an average 2.4 persons living in semi detached dwellings and 1.9 in flats (Holloway and Wood, 2001:11). These figures show that the Blue Mountains has smaller household sizes in flats and semi detached dwellings even than the Sydney SD.

A decrease of average household sizes across the Blue Mountains has been accompanied by increasing lone person households. Generally there has been a two to four per cent increase in lone person households across various townships of the LGA between 1991 and 1996. In 1991, 20.6 per cent of households in the Blue Mountains were lone person households. This has increased to 22.5 per cent in 1996, and compares with 16 per cent for WSROC and 21.5 per cent for Sydney SD at the 1996 census (Holloway and Wood, 2001:13). Lone person households are increasing in the Blue Mountains, and comprise a significantly greater proportion of the population than in WSROC and a slightly greater proportion of the population than in the Sydney SD.





The number of people in lone person households in the LGA is projected to be 6,974 in 1999, comprising 8.9 per cent of the population. Lone person households are expected to increase to 9,756 by 2019, also increasing their share of the population to 11.5 per cent. Such growth is disproportionately higher than that projected for lone person households in WSROC and the Sydney SD. The total number of households in the Blue Mountains is projected to increase by approximately 7,000 between 1999 and 2019. Much of this growth is explained by the increase in lone person households and couples without children, each expected to increase by 3,000 (Holloway and Wood, 2001:35-36).

Increases in lone person households and couples without children are expected to result in greater competition for alternative housing in the Mountains. As a result some potential occupants, including older people and people with a disability, may miss out on opportunities for such housing. If left unaddressed, this may force some people to remain living in housing which does not meet their needs.

### **3.3.4 Alternative housing demand indicators and projections**

Holloway and Wood (2001) have developed a multiple regression equation which can be used to predict the demand for alternative housing in the Blue Mountains. Multiple regression selects a number of independent variables that best predict variation in a dependent variable (in this case, demand for alternate housing). This was developed using a wide range of variables from the 1996 ABS Census. Twenty variables with some relevance to alternative housing demand were selected, and were culled to the most relevant variables by a process involving both stepwise regression and backwards regression. The resulting equation explains 56 per cent of variance in the demand for alternative housing in the Blue Mountains.

Lone person households, high-income households, and persons aged over 65 were found to be positively correlated to the demand for alternative housing (Holloway and Wood, 2001:41). This means that increases in the number of lone person or high-income households, and increases in the number of people aged over 65, are strongly linked to increases in demand for alternative housing. As these factors increase, demand will also increase. A negative correlation was found between owner-occupiers and the demand for alternative housing. This means that as the number of owner-occupiers in the LGA increases, demand for alternative housing will decrease.

The fact that lone person households and persons aged over 65 are two of the strongest predictors for demand for alternative housing is a clear indication that demand will increase with the increasing proportion of people aged over 65 in the LGA. These findings are in accordance with the DUAP guidelines (2000a:4), which state that older people are attracted to multi-unit housing due to lower maintenance and lower costs, as well as greater mobility (the ability to go away without concern about property maintenance), greater personal and property security, and having rooms of adequate size. The Guidelines also highlight the desire of older people to 'age in place', remaining in their current neighbourhood as their housing needs change. On this basis, it becomes imperative that proper provision is made for a range of suitably designed and located housing to meet the needs of these residents.

Holloway and Wood have predicted the level of demand for alternative housing based on its correlation with the independent variables: number of lone person households, high income households, persons aged over 65, and owner-occupiers. They predict that by the year 2017, between 2,900 and 3,140 alternative housing units will be required to meet the demand generated by the independent variables. Given the current supply of 1,850 alternative housing units, between 1,050 and 1,290 additional units will be required to meet this demand.





### 3.3.5 Demand generated by people with a disability

Due to limitations of census data and the lack of alternative data sources, the number of people with a disability in the LGA has not been factored into this equation. The impact of the number of people with a disability on the demand for alternative housing is unknown. However, given the estimated proportion of people in the Blue Mountains with a disability, it follows that some level of alternative housing provision and housing choice is required to meet the needs of people with a disability.

Anecdotal evidence from the Blue Mountains Access Committee suggests that younger people with a disability may not necessarily wish to live in SEPP 5 style developments, so the provision of housing types that can be readily adapted to respond to their access needs is also required. This is consistent with the DUAP Guidelines (2000a:7) which state that people with disabilities generally prefer their housing to be integrated with housing for the wider community. Small-scale infill developments can be used to incorporate adaptable housing in existing residential areas. This allows some measure of independence, with access to residential care facilities. Housing for people with a disability needs to have the same quality of access to services and facilities as housing for older people, including access to medical facilities, shops, and recreation. An additional need for younger people with a disability is proximity to transport to enable access to work places. These findings reinforce the need to provide suitable opportunities for small-scale and infill accessible housing developments for those people wishing to live near or within town and village centres.

On this basis, Draft LEP 2002 proposes to permit:

- dual occupancies with consent in the Village - Town Centre, Village - Tourist, Village - Housing, Living - General and Employment - Enterprise zones.
- granny flats with consent in the above zones, together with the Living - Conservation and Living - Bushland Conservation zones.
- multi-dwelling housing (which does not have restrictions on occupancy) with consent in the Village - Town Centre, Village - Tourist and Village - Housing zones.

This range of housing options beyond accessible housing particularly benefits people who wish to live in low maintenance housing that is designed for accessibility, which are outside 'SEPP 5' style developments. The Draft LEP has created opportunities for these alternative forms of housing in order to encourage the retention of affordable housing and promote housing choice. In so doing, there is an underlying recognition that the majority of older people and people with a disability in the Blue Mountains may not wish to live in these diverse housing forms, preferring detached housing. The focus is on providing choice.

### 3.4 IMPLICATIONS OF DEMAND FOR ACCESSIBLE HOUSING

There is a demonstrated need for accessible housing in the Blue Mountains. The aging of the population is an established theme, and with this demographic transition comes the need to provide suitable housing choice. It is evident that simply maintaining the current level of housing choice will require a substantial increase in the supply of accessible housing over the next twenty years.

Comparisons have been made with Sydney and the western Sydney region, which indicate that older people in the Blue Mountains currently have less access to alternative housing and, where this housing is available, older people are predominant occupiers. Coupled with this, there is an increase in lone person households amongst older people. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that detached housing may not meet the current and/or future housing needs of older people living alone. While a case could be made to increase the proportion of alternative housing for older people in the Blue Mountains, there is presently insufficient

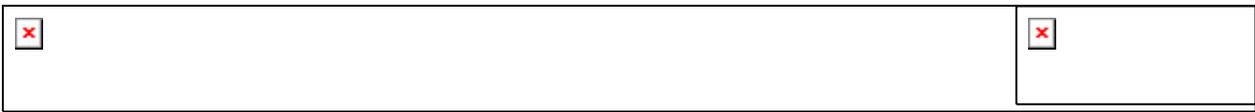




evidence to suggest that this is necessary. Further, such increases need to be balanced against environmental and character constraints.

It is considered that maintaining the current level of supply of accessible housing presents a significant challenge within the Blue Mountains context, and these issues will be considered further in this report. The projections for the number of alternative dwelling units by Holloway and Wood have been considered and these projections are consistent with the principle of maintaining the current levels of housing choice in the Blue Mountains.





## **PART 4 PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE HOUSING**

This part of the report describes how the Draft LEP proposes to encourage the provision of SEPP 5 housing (to be known as “accessible housing”), by allocating Accessible Housing Areas (AHAs) in appropriate locations to meet the need described in Part 3. Firstly, Part 4 outlines the ability of designated townships in the Blue Mountains to service an increasing population of older people and people with a disability. It is demonstrated that those townships, which have been chosen to service this population, correlate to the main townships currently populated by older people. Part 4 explains how the designation of townships plays a key role in the allocation of AHAs, and demonstrates that Draft LEP 2002 can provide accessible housing to meet the needs of the population.

### **4.1 RECOGNITION OF DESIGNATED SERVICE CENTRES**

The physical characteristics of the Blue Mountains, with its linear development of 26 townships generally along a central road and railway corridor, limit the ability of Council and other government and community agencies to adequately service the community support infrastructure across the LGA. Choices must be made between either duplicating services in each township, which would result in an extensive outlay of infrastructure and represents an inefficient use of resources, and selecting a number of key centres in which to provide a greater level of service. In response to this situation, Council has recognised that it must target certain district and local centres for the provision of adequate facilities to meet the needs of its population.

Ten primary townships, or Designated Service Centres (DSCs), have been identified as a part of Council’s strategy for accessible housing, building on concepts developed in the *Blue Mountains Community Plan* (1995). These represent the optimal centres in which the needs of older people and people with a disability may be met, in terms of their facilities and service capacity. The ten DSCs are:

- Blackheath;
- Katoomba;
- Leura;
- Wentworth Falls;
- Lawson;
- Hazelbrook;
- Springwood;
- Winmalee;
- Blaxland; and
- Glenbrook.

These are mapped in Attachment 2.

The number of people aged 55 years or over is shown for each town and Planning Area in Attachment 3, reflecting a concentration of those aged 55 and over in the DSCs. A picture of the distribution of both older people and people with a disability across the LGA can be gained from comparison of Attachments 1 and 3. Table 5 presents information on the number of people aged 55 and over, or on the aged pension, or on the disability support pension, for each of the ten DSCs.





Table 5: Proportion of older people and people with a disability presently living in Designated Service Centres (DSCs).

Designated Service Centre	% People within LGA aged 55 years and older	% People within LGA on Aged Pension	% People within LGA on Disability Support Pension
Blackheath	7.5	8.1	11.7
Katoomba	13.3	14.2	22.3
Leura	7.0	6.4	8.3
Wentworth Falls	10.5	10.4	9.1
Lawson	3.3	4.6	4.6
Hazelbrook	4.9	5.7	6.2
Springwood	13.3	16.8	8.4
Winmalee	7.2	5.7	4.7
Blaxland	7.3	7.1	6.4
Glenbrook	5.5	4.6	2.9
Total DSCs as % of LGA	79.8	83.6	84.6

Source: refer to Attachments 1&3

Table 5 demonstrates that out of the 27 towns in the Blue Mountains, these ten centres presently accommodate approximately 80 per cent of older people and people with a disability. Such a correlation tends to confirm the legitimacy of the choice of townships to support nominated accessible housing areas, showing that those who are in the target group for accessible housing have already selected these centres as appropriate to their needs.

## 4.2 SOCIAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

A range of services and facilities must be provided in the DSCs, to ensure that they will meet the needs of a growing population of older people and people with a disability. Table 6 depicts the level of services provided in each DSC as shown by Planning Area.

Table 6: Designated Service Centres (DSCs) in the Blue Mountains for the provision of housing for older people and people with a disability.

Planning Area	District/City-wide service centre	Major service centre	Minor service centre
Area 1		Blackheath	
Area 2	Katoomba		Leura Wentworth Falls
Area 3		Lawson (Hazelbrook)	Hazelbrook (Lawson)
Area 4	Springwood		Winmalee
Area 5		Blaxland	Glenbrook

Table 6 shows that there are three levels of service provision in the DSCs. The commercial centres of Katoomba and Springwood provide for City-wide services and facilities, reflecting the natural tendency for district centres to develop to serve the Upper and Lower Mountains respectively. Additionally, a major service centre has been identified for each of the community planning areas. Minor service centres, also capable of meeting the social and





physical support needs of residents, have been identified, with consideration given to existing populations of people in the target group who live in these towns.

The service levels required for housing older people and people with a disability are established in Clause 12(1) of SEPP 5. All of these towns have existing facilities that meet the baseline requirements of SEPP 5, including shops, banks, other retail and commercial services, community services, recreational facilities, and a general medical practitioner. The range of services and facilities provided in each town is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Access to Services and Facilities

Township→	Blackheath	Katoomba	Leura	Wentworth Falls	Lawson	Hazelbrook	Springwood	Winmalee	Blaxland	Glenbrook
<b>Shopping Centres:</b>										
Neighbourhood	4		4	4	4	4		4	4	4
District							4			
Sub-regional		4								
<b>Medical Facilities:</b>										
Hospital		4					4			
Chemist	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Dentist	4	4	4	4			4	4	4	4
GPs	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Transport:</b>										
Bus Service	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Rail Service	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		4	4
<b>Community Centre</b>	4	4			4		4	4	4	
<b>Senior Citizen's Centre</b>		4							4	
<b>Library:</b>										
Part Time Service	4			4	4					
Full Time Service		4					4		4	
<b>Recreation:</b>										
Bowling/RSL Club	4	4		4	4		4			4
Indoor Recreation Centre		4	4		4		4		4	4
Parks/Ovals	4	4		4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Swimming Pool	4	4			4		4			4

There are significant limitations to social support infrastructure in the Blue Mountains, specifically hospital services and employment opportunities. As these issues are considered in the *Community Plan*, it is sufficient to highlight that in order to access some hospital services, older people and people with disabilities are required to travel to tertiary treatment centres like Westmead Hospital and Nepean Hospital. Similarly, a significant proportion of employment opportunities are provided outside the LGA. The availability of public train services with accessible train stations, or accessible community transport facilities, becomes essential due to deficiencies in local hospital services and employment opportunities.

The towns have also been selected on the basis of the principles for the provision of services and facilities, as identified in the *Community Plan*, and an assessment of the existing population in each town, documented in Attachment 3 of this report and discussed above.

The existing infrastructure of these centres is in some cases under stress. Whilst this is recognised, it is considered that locating housing for older people and people with a





disability within a designated walkable catchment of these centres represents the optimum response to the level of existing and planned social infrastructure provision in the Blue Mountains. Over the longer term this strategy will permit the further development of publicly provided community services within these towns, as well as encouraging private sector concentrations of a range of medical and support services. It also enables priorities to be determined for the provision or upgrade of support infrastructure, such as the modification of railway stations to provide access for people with a disability or limited mobility. Such an approach contributes to reinforcing the existing retail hierarchy in the LGA, and supports the community planning framework of the Blue Mountains.

Given the inadequacy of current infrastructure provision, it is necessary for the relevant government departments to work together to achieve an appropriate level of service. As stated in the *Social Profile of the Blue Mountains*:

*It is widely recognised that resources cannot meet existing demand and this situation will continue to escalate. It is therefore apparent that government departments need to work together to plan for future needs, provide for community infrastructure and implement preventative measures.*

*The Blue Mountains Local Home and Community Care (HACC) Forum in association with Council are working towards a holistic and integrated planning process in order to:*

- *Provide services and facilities which meet an identified gap in service provision;*
- *Achieve equity and access to services and facilities;*
- *Improve efficiency and effectiveness of existing service provision;*
- *Identify future demands; and*
- *Develop and implement preventative approaches.*

*(BMCC, 1998: 70)*

### 4.3 APPLICATION OF ACCESSIBLE HOUSING AREAS

As part of its response to the need for accessible housing, Draft LEP 2002 allocates accessible housing areas (AHAs) on the zoning maps. Accessible housing will only be allowed to be located within these AHAs, which are identified around certain designated service centres, that can respond to the basic needs of older people and people with a disability. However, opportunities for larger, self-contained developments outside the AHAs are also provided, subject to certain provisions. The AHAs were determined not only on the distance from service centres, but with regard to current and potential paths of travel and consideration of local gradients. Site visits and consultation with the Blue Mountains Access Committee provided valuable input into Council's application of the AHAs.

The location of each AHA is shown in Attachment 4. All AHAs are located in proximity to the commercial centres of one of the ten DSCs. The total area of AHA per town is specified in Table 8.

*Table 8: Size of the Accessible Housing Areas by Township*

Planning Area	Size of AHA (Ha)	Township	Size of AHA (Ha)
Planning Area 1	63.4	Blackheath	63.4
Planning Area 2	183.6	Katoomba	128.1
		Leura	33.8
		Wentworth Falls	21.7





Planning Area	Size of AHA (Ha)	Township	Size of AHA (Ha)
Planning Area 3	51.7	Lawson	39.2
		Hazelbrook	12.5
Planning Area 4	97.6	Springwood	63.9
		Winmalee	33.7
Planning Area 5	88.9	Blaxland	55.4
		Glenbrook	33.5
Total Area	485.2		485.2

The baseline criteria for provision of the AHAs are provided in Attachment 5. The size of the AHA varies between townships, and is a product of a range of factors, including:

- the town's existing population within the target group;
- current infrastructure provision and capacity within the town;
- provision of services within the town;
- areas where character is to be retained;
- topography; and
- environmental constraints.

Comparison of Table 5 and Table 8 shows a broad correlation between the population of older people and those with a disability and the size of the AHA for each Planning Area. Generally, the towns with a larger population of older people and people with a disability are allocated a larger AHA. Leura and Hazelbrook are exceptions to this, due to character and infrastructure constraints in Leura and environmental constraints in Hazelbrook. It is noted that the AHA of Hazelbrook does not provide sufficient areas for this type of housing, given the size of its target population. This limitation arose from the constraints posed by the Woodford Dam Catchment.

In order to provide a degree of flexibility in the development of housing for older people and people with a disability, consideration has been given to permitting certain 'self-sustaining developments' outside of the AHA, particularly where these are associated with existing hospitals or nursing homes. It is recognised that without the support of recognised service providers and the wider community, few developments are able to provide affordable transport and services for the life of the development. Such developments rely on economies of scale, and suitable sites in established residential areas are generally limited. Therefore, while these developments are permissible subject to provisions ensuring that all services are provided to their residents, their development is limited to the Living - General and certain precincts within the Recreation - Private zones. Development of accessible housing within the St Columba's site at Springwood provides an important and limited opportunity for such a 'self-sustained' accessible housing development.

#### 4.4 NOTIONAL ACCESSIBLE HOUSING YIELD

In assessing the adequacy of the proposed supply of accessible housing under Draft LEP 2002, the notional yield for additional accessible housing areas across the LGA has been calculated.

The calculations do not differentiate between accessible housing (the occupation of which is restricted to older people and people with a disability, and is sometimes referred to as age-segregated housing) and multi-dwelling housing. It is probable that within the Village-Housing and Village-Tourist zones (which permit both dwelling forms), that development of multi-





dwelling housing may be preferred over accessible housing. However, it is emphasised that both housing forms are required to be designed to meet adaptability requirements. Although multi-dwelling housing will not be occupied exclusively by the target group, it will provide opportunities for their housing needs, but in competition with the broader housing market.

Calculations reflect the potential supply of units within AHAs only and do not take into account opportunities for dual occupancies, granny flats or opportunities for accessible housing outside of the AHAs, which are briefly discussed in Part 4.5.

These calculations are presented in Table 9 are based on a number of assumptions, and these will be outlined below.

*Table 9: Notional unit yields for accessible housing by township*

Designated Service Centre	No. of units (based on a 33% take up rate)	No. of units (based on a 100% take up rate)
Blackheath	79	238
Katoomba	211	635
Leura	75	225
Wentworth Falls	43	130
Lawson	56	170
Hazelbrook	57	173
Springwood	271	815
(St Columba's)	43	130
Winmalee	10	30
Blaxland	121	363
Glenbrook	18	55
Total Units	984	2 964

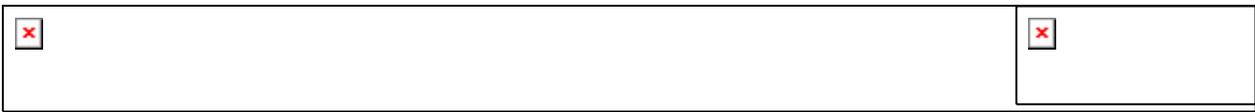
The methodology adopted involved first calculating the total mapped area to which the AHA designation applies, for each town as shown in Table 8. These total gross areas were qualified by the exclusion of certain sites that either cannot, or are highly unlikely to be, developed for the purposes of accessible housing.

The following lands were excluded from notional yield calculations:

- well established residential areas, where it was considered unlikely that widespread redevelopment would take place due to the value of existing dwellings and the extent of existing development;
- heritage items and conservation areas, in which redevelopment and infill development are restricted by the need to preserve heritage buildings;
- Protected Areas;
- areas of existing higher density housing, which are unlikely to be redeveloped in the near future; and
- areas of recognised housing character.

Once these excluded lands were calculated, the total exclusions were deducted from the total area, resulting in the gross available area for each town. The gross available area was then multiplied by the floor space ratio (FSR). The relevant FSR for each site is prescribed by locality provisions within Draft LEP 2002. The resulting figure is termed the gross useable area (GUA), and represents the total floor space available for accessible housing in each town.





For land in the Village - Town Centre, Village - Tourist and some land in the Village - Housing zones, it was difficult to clearly determine the excluded area. An assumption was made on the amount of land likely to become available for accessible housing development. This assumption factored in parameters such as proximity to a town centre, expected demand for accessible housing in the area, and opportunities to consolidate small lots to achieve an optimum development area.

From this point three main assumptions were used to calculate the number of accessible housing units that could be developed in each town. Firstly, the GUA is likely to be reduced by a number of factors specific to each site, such as stairwells, lift wells, and other common requirements for such developments. To take this variable into account, a deduction of 10 per cent was made from the GUA, resulting in an estimated net useable area (NUA) for each town. The NUA was used to generate a maximum unit yield, based on an assumed average unit size of 115 square metres. The average unit size was the second main assumption, and is based on a standard figure for unit size, determined through discussions and consultation with assessment staff.

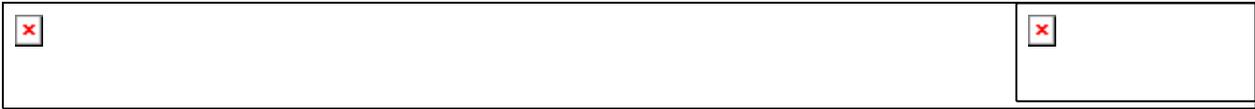
The resulting figure is the maximum unit yield likely to occur in each town, given the constraints to development posed by existing land uses and zonings, heritage, protected areas, FSR and site-specific development requirements. Whilst the maximum yield is important in realising the full extent of accessible housing possible under the Draft LEP, it must be qualified by a take-up rate. The take-up rate is the third main assumption, and is based on the likelihood that the market for accessible housing will fluctuate in accordance with local and regional trends and changing housing demands.

Table 9 shows that a maximum yield of 2,964 accessible housing units can be achieved, assuming 100 per cent take-up. However, it is unrealistic to assume that the market would realise all opportunities for accessible housing. A 33 per cent take-up rate is considered more likely over these sites, resulting in 984 units. Historically, the take-up rate for alternative dwellings in the Blue Mountains has been considerably below this level (see BMCC, 2001:49).

Development beyond a 33 per cent take-up rate over a twenty year period is not sanctioned by this strategy. The role of this strategy is to provide opportunities for accessible housing within levels commensurate with environmental and infrastructure capacity and community expectations. It cannot be said that such opportunities have been provided if the strategy would rely on maximum development potential being realised in all instances. However, such an approach comes with an important corollary; namely, that the level of accessible housing development requires periodic monitoring. Should levels of take-up approach those stated above, Council would have to re-assess this strategy and its planning instruments, with a view to evaluating the environmental impacts of existing development, and formally assessing community aspirations and housing need as it is presented at that time.

Holloway and Wood (2001) estimated that between 2,950 and 3,200 alternative housing units would be required by 2021, to meet the forecast demand for alternative housing in the Blue Mountains. Their estimation was based on a consideration of the entire Blue Mountains population, not simply the demand from older people and people with a disability. Given the current supply of 1,850 alternative housing units, between 1,100 and 1,350 alternative housing additional units will be required to meet the needs of the Blue Mountains population by 2021. Current occupancy patterns, together with the proposed restrictions on title for accessible housing, suggest that older people will make up the majority of occupiers. The provision of 984 units that can meet the needs of older people and people with a disability is considered sufficient to meet the needs of this portion of the population up to 2021.





#### 4.5 OTHER HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Draft LEP 2002 provides a range of housing opportunities for older people and people with a disability which are outside the AHAs. While accessible housing development within AHAs provides a targeted response to the needs of older people and people with a disability, housing outside these areas is not targeted or restricted in title, allowing other population cohorts to compete for this housing type. It also allows older people and people with a disability to live in smaller adaptable or accessible housing types that are not close to village centres. These housing options provide an additional source of accessible housing that has not been included in the calculations above.

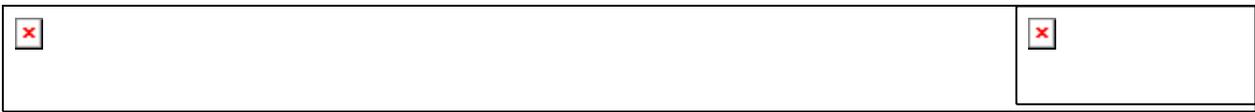
In addition to accessible housing, opportunities for housing older people and people with a disability include:

- Multi-dwelling housing, such as flats, apartments, villas, townhouses and terraces. Multi-dwelling housing is permissible with consent in the Village – Town Centre, Village – Tourist and Village – Housing zones. A third of dwellings in multi-dwelling developments are required to be small dwellings, with a gross floor area no greater than 100 square metres.
- Dual occupancies, granny flats and boarding houses, which provide a source of low cost and low maintenance housing in the Blue Mountains. These are permissible with consent in the Village – Town Centre, Village – Tourist, Village – Housing and Living – General zones. Granny flats are also permissible with consent in the Living – Conservation, Living – Bushland Conservation and Employment – Enterprise zones. A total of 872 dual occupancies may be developed under Draft LEP 2002, contributing significantly to the opportunities for alternative and low maintenance housing. Where dual occupancies are located with the AHA, one unit is to meet adaptability requirements.
- Cluster housing and integrated housing, which permit small lot subdivisions on mainly separate (torrens title) allotments. These smaller allotments are easier to maintain, and allow some people over the age of 55 to continue living independently in separate houses, in outlying residential areas. Cluster housing is permissible with consent in the Living – Bushland Conservation zone, and integrated housing is permissible with consent in the Village – Housing zone.
- Large self-sustained accessible housing developments. The Draft LEP allows certain accessible housing developments to locate outside the AHA, where they provide 50 or more dwellings (or beds, in a residential care facility) in a setting which includes community services and recreational and medical facilities. These developments are also to include access via affordable or subsidised transport to a the designated service centres. These developments are required to be fully adaptable, and are restricted in title to only allow occupancy by older people and people with a disability. The primary available site for such a development, at St Columba’s in Springwood, has been included in yield calculations. However limited opportunities for such development are available in the Living – General or Recreation – Private zones.

With the exception of self-sustained accessible housing development, these housing types are not specifically restricted to older people or people with a disability, as noted previously. However, many will be accessible or adaptable. These housing types provide a range of options for older people and people with a disability to live in mixed residential environments which are not age-segregated, and to live in outer areas where they do not desire close proximity to town centres.

On this basis, it is considered that the Draft LEP provides sufficient opportunity for accessible housing to service existing and future housing needs within the Blue Mountains.





## PART 5 MOBILITY & INDEPENDENT ACCESS

Mobility and access are considered to operate at two levels with respect to housing for older people and people with a disability. At the macro level, mobility and access concerns relate to access to public and community transport, the location of development relative to township centres, independent access to services and social opportunities and access pathways between the development and township centres. At the micro level concerns include mobility within the development site and within the dwelling, with a focus on building design and the topographical suitability of the development site.

The *Social Profile of the Blue Mountains* highlights access to transport as one of the key gaps in service provision, both from the perspective of older people and service providers. Older people identified the need for better access to services and facilities and public transport, with residents in the Upper Mountains specifying the need for better access to community transport (BMCC, 1998: 69).

Train access is the predominant public transport modal choice, with its ability to provide regular services between centres in the LGA, and outside the Blue Mountains to centres such as Penrith, Westmead (Hospital), Parramatta and the Sydney CBD, providing access to the full range of services and facilities. There is a need to upgrade railway stations within the DSCs, to provide for suitable access for disabled people and those with limited mobility. This work is being progressed by the State Government.

Reliance on public bus services is considered problematic within the Blue Mountains. Council is not able to regulate the provision of buses to ensure that they meet the needs of people with a disability or those with limited mobility. The upgrade of the public bus system within the Blue Mountains is not a viable option without significant government subsidy, however these resources are generally directed to metropolitan Sydney. Presently, greater reliance is placed on community transport facilities and taxis than on the public bus system.

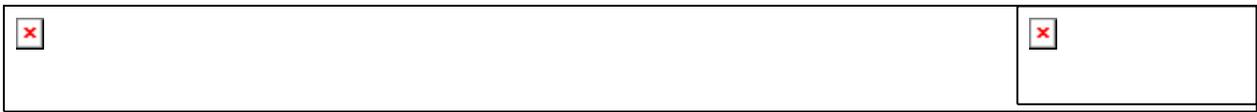
Mountains Community Transport is a transport provider assisting older people and people with a disability. This service is funded under the HACC program, and is directed to helping people remain in their homes and outside of institutions for as long as possible. The service has two modified mini-buses to take wheelchairs, a modified van and a station wagon, which provide:

- Individual and group medical transport;
- Transport to centre based meals and activities;
- Transport to medical specialists, including those in Penrith;
- Shopping excursions, social and recreational transport; and
- Transport to respite care.

Mountains Community Transport has recorded steady growth in demand, indicating an increase in the numbers of people who are 'transport disadvantaged' in the Blue Mountains. The *Blue Mountains Social Profile* identified several factors which contributed to this increase, particularly as it relates to housing for older people and people with a disability. These were:

- Early discharge system by hospitals requiring patients to return for further treatment;
- Cost of taxi fares which are outside the budgets of many people;
- Geographic isolation of many housing developments which can be a considerable distance from the highway or railway line, preventing people from using public transport;





- Location of most specialist medical facilities outside the LGA.

As of April 2000, there is only one (1) taxi providing access for people with a disability throughout the LGA, which is inadequate.

Accordingly, there is a need to ensure that AHA sites are close to essential services and reliable public transport. As well as avoiding increased demand on community transport providers, this provides opportunities for residents to independently gain access into town centres and broadens their opportunities to participate in community life. As an adjunct, these initiatives respond to the imperatives of limiting car dependence and achieving sustainability outcomes.

The location and design of this form of housing is seen as central to meeting the needs of older people and people with a disability. It is proposed that housing for older people and people with a disability and multi-unit housing will generally only be permissible where a continuous accessible path of travel is to be provided from the development to the town centre, or where access does not require travelling along gradients generally steeper than 1:14. However, such provisions are to provide adequate flexibility in recognition of the considerable topographical constraints of the Blue Mountains. Suitable provision is to be made for crossing arterial roads and the railway corridor, as well as local roads.

The model proposed by Council in Draft LEP 2002 has been developed in consultation with the Blue Mountains' Access Committee. The Committee has inspected all sites proposed for multi-unit housing to ensure that accessibility objectives can be readily met, both as they relate to older people and to people with a disability. The sites chosen will have individual controls that, among other character and environmental considerations, will provide for access. It is presently proposed that 100 per cent of units meet the lowest level (Level C) of compliance with Australian Standard 4299 – Adaptable Housing. Additionally, it is proposed that provision be made that 20 per cent of dwellings or 1 in 5 units are to have, or are to be capable of minor modification to provide, wheelchair access to all essential areas. In view of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Council's general policy directions and the importance of tourism in the Mountains, these requirements are proposed to extend to Tourist Accommodation. These provisions are to be developed within Council's Development Control Plan dealing with "Design for Equity of Access", in consultation with the Blue Mountains Access Committee.

As SEPP 5 housing, along with medium density housing, forms only a small proportion of the Mountains' housing stock, it is essential that the limited housing provided meets the needs of its target user group. As it can be demonstrated that the incidence of disability, combined with the well-documented aging of the population, affects a significant proportion of the Blue Mountains population, the proposed rate of 20 per cent (within 6 per cent of the housing stock) would be a minimum baseline provision.





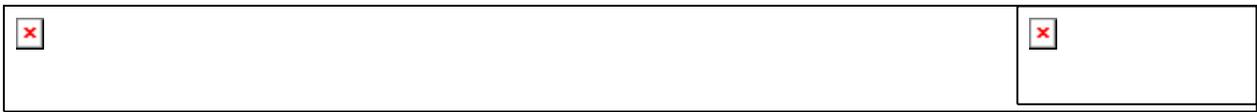
**PART 6 ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY**

The Blue Mountains is characterised by its sensitive natural environment, significant for its capacity to provide drinking water and to contribute to the preservation of biological diversity. As well as its intrinsic value and the ability to sustain life, the natural environment contributes to the cultural setting and economy of the Blue Mountains. Consideration and protection of the environment is one of the principal purposes of Draft LEP 2002, and the means employed through the Draft LEP to achieve this outcome are detailed in Part 3 of *Environmental Management Plan 2002* (EMP 2002), which is part of the supporting documentation of Draft LEP 2002.

In terms of the provision of housing for older people and people with a disability, it is sufficient to state that this form of housing, like all other development in the Mountains, is to respond to the environmental constraints of this area. The provisions of Draft LEP 2002 have been developed to that end.

Accessible housing is generally to be located in relatively unconstrained areas and in close proximity to principal townships, thereby limiting impacts at the urban/bushland interface. At a broader level, its location encourages independent and equitable access by residents the use of public transport, without reliance on private motor vehicles. Accordingly, the opportunity exists for this form of housing to contribute to sustainability outcomes.





**PART 7 RECOGNISED CHARACTER VALUES**

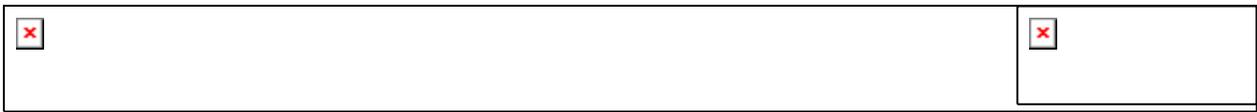
As with environmental capacity, the provision of housing for older people and people with a disability is to respond to the character attributes present in the built environment of the Blue Mountains. The retention of character is another principal strategic direction of Draft LEP 2002, and this is detailed in Part 3 of EMP 2002

Broadly, character was identified at three levels. The first provided for the recognition of traditional housing stock or "Period Housing" as a Protected Area, to which certain provisions and development considerations apply. At the second level, the significant landscape settings of certain properties were identified, which gave rise to the Living - Conservation zone. This zone provides for retention of low site coverage and large lot subdivision, to ensure that the character of residential development is preserved. The final level, which was also allied to environmental capacity, was the bushland character of certain properties, generally within the urban/bushland interface. This level is zoned within Draft LEP 2002 as Living - Bushland Conservation.

It is considered that accessible housing, if properly designed, can respond to the imperative of protecting period housing. Provided that land is zoned Living - General a designation of "Period Housing Area" does not serve to prohibit this form of housing. Provision is made for the design of accessible housing to respond to, and preferably incorporate, existing period housing.

Conversely, the development of housing for older people and people with a disability is considered to be incompatible with the values of the Living - Conservation and Living - Bushland Conservation zones. The building of any form of multi-unit development in these areas cannot be reconciled with the overriding aim of retaining its identified streetscape character. Housing for older people and people with a disability is not proposed to be permissible in either of these zones.





## PART 8 DRAFT LEP 2002 – A WAY FORWARD

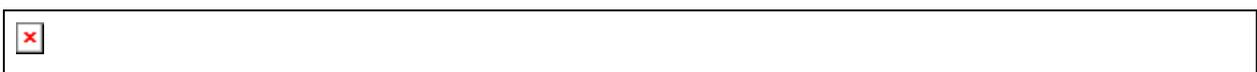
Draft LEP 2002 has been prepared to respond explicitly to the issues arising from EMP 2002. Unlike the existing SEPP 5 instrument, Draft LEP 2002 incorporates development control provisions related to housing for older people and people with a disability within the Blue Mountains local planning framework. The application of these principles is best conveyed through an assessment of the provisions of Draft LEP 2002, as it responds to the requirements of SEPP 5 and the need for accessible housing in the Blue Mountains. Attachment 6 contains such an assessment, and it is considered that Draft LEP 2002 and the accompanying development controls provide sufficient opportunity for accessible housing in the Blue Mountains.

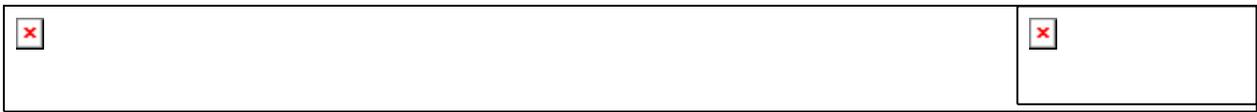
It is considered that the environmental and character constraints of the Blue Mountains require targeted land use policy responses, particularly in relation to multi-unit housing and SEPP 5 development. In correspondence to Council of 30 December 1999, the Director of Sydney Region West of the Department stated that:

*My view is that the Blue Mountains is a unique local government area with sensitive areas of environmental significance and on the fringe of the Sydney metropolitan area. It therefore should not be expected to accommodate metropolitan growth pressures. Planning for the area should have regard to the housing requirements of the population of the Mountains and provide as far as possible for this, having regard to the area's environmental limitations.*

*(DUAP, 1999)*

The proposed Draft LEP 2002 response to SEPP 5 housing enacts this direction and provides an important opportunity for Council, in partnership with the Department, to realise the directions of the guidelines. Council believes that the environmental, character and social support issues, combined with the initiatives proposed within Draft LEP 2002, form the basis of a case for special provisions related to housing for older people and people with a disability, which are not fully accounted for within the current State policy. In accordance with the DUAP Guidelines and final exemption guidelines, it is considered that exemption from SEPP 5 in the Blue Mountains and the application of locally appropriate controls as proposed under Draft LEP 2002 represent the optimum response to housing need among older people and people with a disability.





## **PART 9 REFERENCES**

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Holloway, D and M Wood. 2001. *City of Blue Mountains Housing Market Study Part One: The Demand for Diverse Housing Options*. Urban Frontiers Program: Campbelltown.

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Whittington, V. 1993. *Working Paper No. 1: Blue Mountains Housing Needs Research Report*.





## ATTACHMENT 1

### Pension recipients in the Blue Mountains March 2000.

Township	DSC	Aged Pension		Disability Pension	Support
		% of LGA	No.	% of LGA	No.
Mount Victoria		1.1	71	1.8	40
Blackheath	•	8.1	511	11.7	253
Total Area 1		9.3	589	13.6	296
Medlow Bath		0.6	35	0.6	12
Katoomba	•	14.2	898	22.3	484
Leura	•	6.4	404	8.3	181
Wentworth Falls	•	10.4	661	9.1	197
Total Area 2		31.6	1 998	40.3	874
Bullaburra		1.3	85	1.7	37
Lawson	•	4.6	291	4.6	99
Hazelbrook	•	5.7	358	6.2	134
Linden		0.3	20	0.2	4
Woodford		2.1	134	1.2	27
Total Area 3		14.0	888	13.9	301
Falconbridge		4.2	269	3.5	75
Springwood	•	16.8	1061	8.4	182
Valley Heights		1.2	76	1.0	22
Winmalee	•	5.7	363	4.7	101
Yellow Rock/ Hawk. Heights		0.3	21	0.6	13
Total Area 4		28.3	1 790	18.1	393
Warrimoo		1.9	120	2.2	47
Blaxland	•	7.1	450	6.4	138
Mt Riverview		2.2	141	2.2	47
Glenbrook	•	4.6	292	2.9	64
Lapstone		1.0	63	0.5	11
Total Area 5		16.8	1 066	14.1	307
Blue Mountains LGA		100.0	6 331	100.0	2 171

Source: extracted from Commonwealth Department of Employment, Work Place Relations and Small Business, 2000



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## ATTACHMENT 2

## ATTACHMENT 3

### People aged 55 years and over by township and planning areas

Township	DSC	% Persons Aged >55 Years (LGA)	Number of persons Aged >55 Years
Bell & Mounts		0.8	114
Mount Victoria		1.1	166
Megalong Valley		0.3	40
Blackheath	•	7.5	1 093
<b>Total Area 1</b>		<b>9.7</b>	<b>1 413</b>
Medlow Bath		0.8	113
Katoomba	•	13.3	1 949
Leura	•	7.0	1 029
Wentworth Falls	•	10.5	1 529
<b>Total Area 2</b>		<b>31.6</b>	<b>4 620</b>
Bullaburra		1.4	198
Lawson	•	3.3	481
Hazelbrook	•	4.9	716
Linden/ Woodford		2.6	377
<b>Total Area 3</b>		<b>12.1</b>	<b>1 772</b>
Faulconbridge		4.0	588
Springwood	•	13.3	1 952
Valley Heights		1.1	163
Winmalee	•	7.2	1 053
Yellow Rock/ Hawk. Heights		0.7	99
<b>Total Area 4</b>		<b>26.4</b>	<b>3 855</b>
Warrimoo		2.4	345
Blaxland	•	7.3	1 072
Mt Riverview		3.2	463
Glenbrook	•	5.5	802
Lapstone		1.9	271

	
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Township	DSC	% Persons Aged >55 Years (LGA)	Number of persons Aged >55 Years
Total Area 5		20.2	2 953
Blue Mountains LGA (% total population)		20.3	14 623
Sydney SD (% total population)		19.9	738 043

Source: extracted from ABS, 1996


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**ATTACHMENT 4**


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## ATTACHMENT 5

Criteria for the Application of the Accessible Housing Area (AHA) within Draft Local Environmental Plan 2002

### Designation on zoning maps

Areas that are appropriate for housing for older people and people with a disability are to be located within the designated catchment centred on nominated townships. The catchment, known as the Accessible Housing Area (AHA) is to be shown on the map as a single, distinctive line or hatched area.

The characteristics of the AHA are as follows:

- The catchments are to be applied to the following townships only:
  - Blackheath;
  - Katoomba;
  - Leura;
  - Wentworth Falls;
  - Lawson;
  - Hazelbrook;
  - Springwood;
  - Winmalee;
  - Blaxland;
  - Glenbrook.
- The catchments are to represent a walkable catchment area to these townships, generally in the vicinity of 800 to 1000 metres from these townships by way of a road or other pathway system.
- In the case of Katoomba, the AHA is to be based on the transport spine between Echo Point and Katoomba Railway Station, in view of the likely provision of regular, public transport that can provide for access for people with a disability.
- The point of measure to the town is to be to any point that is zoned under LEP 4 as follows:
  - In the case of townships of Blackheath; Katoomba; Leura; Wentworth Falls; Lawson; Springwood; Winmalee and Blaxland to that area zoned Business General 3a.
  - In the case of townships of Hazelbrook and Glenbrook to that area zoned Business Neighbourhood 3b.
- Pathways are to:
  - represent a continuous, accessible path of travel, being a path that does not impede access to those townships in a wheelchair or motorised cart, or
  - generally be no steeper than 1:14 slope. However, consideration can be given to slopes as high as 1:10, provided that slope is not sustained for more than 50 to 100 metres within the 800 to 1000 metre travel length.



	
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- Access, requiring the crossing of an arterial road, is to be at those points providing signalised or other safe crossing conditions (eg. a refuge island with adequate sight distance).
- Access, requiring the crossing of the rail line, is to be at those points providing level pedestrian crossings (signalised) or by way of a bridge providing for wheelchair access, including ramps or elevators. In the case of Blaxland, the assumption is to be made that elevators will be provided in the foreseeable future to permit access across the pedestrian bridge.
- Those areas zoned Village - Housing under Draft LEP 2002 as Village - Housing are to be taken to be within the AHA in all instances.
- As housing for older people and people with a disability is not permissible in the Living - Bushland Conservation zone or Living - Conservation zone, areas characterised by this zone should not generally be included within the AHA.
- The catchment line is not to split any lots, and is to generally be located along the centre lines of streets or rear cadastral boundaries as appropriate.


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## ATTACHMENT 6

SEPP 5 Clause	Intent of SEPP 5 Clause	Equivalent Draft LEP Clause	Exceeds Requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Consistent with <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Addressed <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment
4(a)	Exclude environmentally sensitive land from the application of SEPP 5	43 - 58	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Draft LEP identifies all environmentally sensitive land in the LGA that is unsuitable for development, and uses land use zoning and protected area constraints to exclude such land from development.
9	Objective to provide accessible housing	12(h)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Draft LEP aims to promote the provision of accessible, diverse and affordable housing options.
12(1)	Proximity to services and facilities	105(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Draft LEP identifies suitable areas on the zoning maps in which accessible housing is permissible. Each such area is within walking distance of a 'designated service centre' (DSC), in which all necessary services and facilities are provided. The only exception is development provided in accordance with Clause 106, which allows large 'self-sustained' SEPP 5 developments to be located outside the accessible housing areas (AHAs) provided there is regular transport to one of the DSCs.
12(2)	Defining appropriate access to services and facilities	105(2) and 105(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SEPP 5 requires that services and facilities must be located no more than 400 metres from the proposed development, or alternatively a regular week-day transport service must pick up residents at a point no more than 400 metres from the proposed development and set them down not more than 400 metres away from the services and facilities.  The Draft LEP requires that, for developments within AHAs, there must be 'reasonable pedestrian access' between the development and the DSC, via a sealed footpath with rest stops and an average gradient of 1:14. Where such access is not provided, there must be either: affordable and accessible private transport from the development site to a DSC; or regular and accessible public transport which collects residents from a point no more than 250 metres from the proposed development and sets them down within a DSC.
12(2A)	Access to home-based care for development adjoining urban land	107(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Draft LEP requires that access be provided to a wider range of home-based care, including gardening maintenance and respite care.



SEPP 5 Clause	Intent of SEPP 5 Clause	Equivalent Draft LEP Clause	Exceeds Requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consistent with <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Addressed <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment
12(3)	Availability of facilities and services	-		<input type="checkbox"/>		SEPP 5 requires that the consent authority be satisfied that any services and facilities required as a part of the development be available when the housing is ready for occupation (or, for staged developments, in proportion to the number of residents in each stage). This clause is not replicated in the Draft LEP.
12(4)	Connection to reticulated water and adequate sewerage	87(2)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		SEPP 5 requires that any accessible housing be connected to reticulated water and have adequate facilities for the removal or disposal of sewerage. Where reticulated services cannot be made available, regulators must be satisfied that the proposed infrastructure is satisfactory for the proposed development.  The Draft LEP requires that all accessible housing proposals have reticulated sewerage and water.
13	Control building height and site frontage	Schedules 1 & 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			The precinct-specific controls in Schedules 1 & 2 of the Draft LEP provide site specific controls over height of buildings and site frontage, which are applicable to accessible housing developments.
13A(2)(a)	Wheelchair access	108	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			SEPP 5 requires that, on a site with gradient less than 1:10, all dwellings and beds must have wheelchair access in accordance with AS 1428 to an adjoining public road or internal road or driveway. On sites where the gradient is in part more than 1:10, the same level of access must be provided to a proportion of dwellings and beds.  The Draft LEP requires that all accessible housing units have a continuous accessible path of travel from dwelling entrances to various areas within the development and to the principal pedestrian entrance to the development.
13A(2)(b)	Wheelchair access to road	108	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			SEPP 5 requires that at least 10% of hostel beds and 10% of dwellings with gradient less than 1:10 must have wheelchair access to an adjoining public road. The Draft LEP requires that all accessible housing has the same level of access from all dwelling entrances to vehicle set down and parking areas. This meets the intent of the SEPP 5 requirement for access to a public road, providing safer access due to the requirement for a vehicle set down area.
13A(2)(c)	Wheelchair access to common areas	108		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		SEPP 5 requires that anyone using a wheelchair must be able to access common areas and facilities in an accessible housing site. The Draft LEP requires wheelchair access from the entrances of all proposed dwellings to communal on-site facilities.
13A(2)(d)	Adaptability	100 & 101	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			SEPP 5 requires that 10% of any residential care facility beds or dwellings with a gradient less than 1:10 must be adaptable to the point of being capable of providing wheelchair access to all

SEPP 5 Clause	Intent of SEPP 5 Clause	Equivalent Draft LEP Clause	Exceeds Requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consistent with <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Addressed <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment
						essential areas in the dwelling, hostel or residential care facility.  The Draft LEP requires that all accessible housing units be adaptable in accordance with AS 4299. Further, 20% of all development comprising 5 or more units, and a minimum of one unit in any accessible housing development comprising less than 5 units must be accessible to AS1428.
13A(3) – (22)	Application of design standards	-		<input type="checkbox"/>		It would be inappropriate for the Draft LEP to contain this level of detail on the design requirements for accessible housing. Equivalent controls are proposed to be incorporated into Council’s Draft DCP dealing with <i>Design for Equity of Access</i> .
14	Prevent refusal of applications for SEPP 5 housing provided the proposal meets certain standards	Schedules 1&2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			The provisions of the Draft LEP, including Schedules 1 & 2, ensure that development in the Blue Mountains is appropriate to its surrounds and particularly to the environmental constraints of the site. One of the reasons for seeking exemption to SEPP 5 within the Blue Mountains is that such provisions do not allow Council to ensure that development sufficiently responds to the site constraints. Precinct-specific provisions in Schedules 1 & 2 overcome this difficulty without overly restricting accessible housing.
15	Restrict occupancy of SEPP 5 housing	104		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Occupancy of accessible housing is restricted to ensure that it services the target population.
16	Allow similar developments in tandem with SEPP 5 housing	32(4)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		SEPP 5 allows the development of hospitals and nursing homes with consent where they are connected to a SEPP 5 development.  Hospitals (which include Nursing Homes) are separately defined under the Draft LEP, and are permitted with consent in the Village Town Centre, Village Housing, Living - General and Employment - General zones.
18	Permit subdivision	82 – 85	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			The Draft LEP requires that subdivision in which lots are created must conform to zone requirements. Some land may be subdivided without complying with the zoning and lot layout provisions, as specified in Clause 82(1), including land for accessible housing in the Village-Housing and Village- Tourist zones. Strata subdivision is permissible for accessible housing developments.
19	Protect heritage items and conservation areas	67 – 76		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Heritage items and conservation areas are separately protected within the Draft LEP, and whilst development of accessible housing is not prohibited on heritage sites, appropriate assessment and notification requirements are in place to protect heritage.
24	Require site analysis	41-42		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		A site analysis plan is required to be submitted with all development that requires development

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SEPP 5 Clause	Intent of SEPP 5 Clause	Equivalent Draft LEP Clause	Exceeds Requirements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Consistent with <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not Addressed <input type="checkbox"/>	Comment
						consent under the Draft LEP.
25	Set a standard for design of SEPP 5 housing	-		<input type="checkbox"/>		Detailed design requirements are not contained within the Draft LEP. These matters are more appropriately controlled by DCPs, specifically the Draft DCP – <i>Design for Equity of Access</i> , and DCP 38 – <i>Housing for Older People and People with a Disability</i> .

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