

Annual Report

2016-2017



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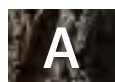
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Acknowledgement

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

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

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



1

Introduction

Message from the Mayor & General Manager

On behalf of the Council we are proud to present the Annual Report for 2016-2017. This report highlights the performance and key achievements of the Council for the final year of its four year Delivery Program 2013-2017. In summary, this Council has essentially done all the things that it set out to do.

In 2016-2017 the Council continued its leadership in taking action to achieve its Vision – *To build a successful future for the Blue Mountains*, and its Mission – *Improving the wellbeing of our community and the environment*. Some of the many highlights include:

Overall Council Performance in 2016-2017

The Council has performed well in meeting its core service delivery commitments for 2016-2017, including completing 97% of planned Operational Plan actions and 94% of scheduled capital works projects. We are proud that the 2016 Community Survey results indicated a high level of satisfaction with Council service delivery, and the highest ever level of satisfaction with Councillor performance.

Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan

The Council adopted the new suite of updated 10, 4 and 1 year Integrated Plans in June 2017, including the reviewed and updated Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035. This is the highest level plan for the City, shaped by the community, which sets the framework for a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains. Development of the plan involved major stakeholder engagement, including a highly successful whole-of-city community forum held in February 2017, with representatives from more than 60 different organisations.

Strategic Priorities for 2017-2021

Local government elections in September 2016 resulted in the election of a new Council. Councillor inductions were completed shortly thereafter. The new Council held two strategic planning workshops, in November 2016 and March 2017, to set its strategic priorities for 2017-2021. These priorities focus on delivering positive outcomes for the City including ensuring Fit for the Future targets are met, improving our approach to asset management, developing a strategic approach to tourism and the visitor economy that addresses the impact of increased visitation on the local community and ensuring delivery of value for money services responsive to the changing needs of our community.

Strengthened Financial Position

The Council finished the 2016-2017 year in a strong financial position. In line with Fit for the Future performance targets, the Council has delivered a surplus Operating Performance Result of \$6.2 million.

Debt has been reduced ahead of projections, with a \$14.3 million reduction over four years, resulting in an annual borrowing cost reduction of \$1.2 million. These achievements have been made possible through the continued implementation of Council's *Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability and the Council's Fit for the Future Action Plan*.

Improved Transport and Accessibility

In 2016-2017 the Council resealed 4.5km of the City's road network, repaired over 6,000m² of road potholes, repaired over 580m² of major road failures and implemented a range of traffic management improvement measures. The sealing of unsealed roads also continued with over 24,000m² of road sealing works completed.

Implementation of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Program continued in 2016-2017, improving the provision of safe and accessible pathways of travel for people of all ages. Works undertaken included footpath improvements, construction of new kerb ramps, kerb and gutter replacements and installation of new pedestrian crossing signs. Significant progress was also made on the development of a Citywide Parking Strategy and an Integrated Transport Strategy for the City.

Revitalisation of Southern Scenic Escarpment

During 2016-2017 work progressed on the Southern Scenic Escarpment Program with key achievements including: completion of improvements to the Katoomba Tourist Park, including installation of new cabins and renovation of the amenities block; appointment of design consultants for the upgrade of the Echo Point Visitor Information Centre and the Katoomba Falls Kiosk; and completion of the upgrade to the Katoomba Falls Reserve and Cahills Lookout. These works enhance the existing offering for visitors and will revitalise Katoomba's visitor infrastructure to provide a high-quality tourism destination for domestic and international markets.

Improved Resource Recovery

The introduction of Council's new household waste service on 4 July 2016 has resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of waste going to landfill, with garden vegetation being collected for recycling for the first time. The amount of household waste that went to landfill in the first 12 months of the new waste service was 28% less than for the same period in the previous year, with \$1.9 million saved in disposal costs. The City now recovers more waste than it disposes of for the first time.

Award-Winning Work

Council received numerous accolades during the year in recognition of our hard work and innovation. Some highlights were:

- Blue Mountains Family Day Care awarded the best family day care service in NSW for 2016;
- Climate Change Action Award for the Light Years Ahead Project with the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils, which achieved a 77% reduction in electricity costs for street lighting; and
- Multiple awards for the Leura Catchment Improvement Project, reflecting excellence in storm water design and natural environment protection.

Thriving Cultural Facilities

In its fifth year of operation, the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre has established itself as a premier regional gallery space that attracts more than 110,000 visitors per annum. The Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub has expanded its operation during 2016-2017, with a diverse program of 112 events held during the year. These venues have vastly increased the social and cultural capital of the Blue Mountains, as well as contributing to the economic prosperity of the region.

Great Blue Mountains Trail

The Council was successful in securing grant funding of \$257,523 through the NSW Government's Metropolitan Greenspace Program to continue the delivery of the Great Blue Mountains Trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria. This funding will help to progress the Council's vision for a regional trail from east to west across the Blue Mountains ridgeline, connecting residents and tourists with town centres and natural bushland environments.

Advocacy for the Blue Mountains

The Council continues to advocate for the best outcomes for Blue Mountains residents and our World Heritage environment. During 2016-2017, representations and submissions were made in relation to:

- Impacts of the proposed Western Sydney Airport;
- Development of the Western Sydney City Deal;
- Draft West District Plan and regional plan – Towards a Greater Sydney 2056;
- Impact of Centennial Coal operations on the local environment and health of the Cocks River; and
- Reinstatement of a residential character conservation zone in the Local Environment Plan.

Destination Management Plan

The Blue Mountains Destination Management Plan has been developed to build and manage the visitor economy for the Blue Mountains. It provides guidance for the tourism industry to invest in, market and promote the region as a destination, and is expected to help facilitate grant funding from State and Federal Government. Blue Mountains City Council and its residents take on a great responsibility in managing, preserving and presenting the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area as a recognized tourist icon. The Council through its strategic plans seeks support from other levels of government given its economic and environmental significance.

Other highlights

Some of our other highlights from 2016-2017 include:

- Completion of upgrades to Lawson Community Hall, including a new entrance with accessible ramp and new carpark;
- Master planning for Springwood, Blaxland and Blackheath town centres to improve liveability for residents and visitors;
- Upgrades to the Lapstone Oval and netball precinct carpark;
- Rebuilding of Shipley Rural Fire Brigade Station and upgrades to the Emergency Operations Centre in Katoomba; and
- Adoption of a Carbon Abatement Action Plan and Investment Plan to reduce carbon emissions by 20% over five years.

Conclusion

The Council is proud of the achievements in 2016-2017 outlined in this report. We sincerely thank the community, Councillors, staff and other agencies who have worked with us to improve the wellbeing of our community and the environment.

We look forward to improving services and working with you in 2017-2018 so that we can continue taking action to build a successful future for the City of Blue Mountains.



Mark Greenhill OAM, Mayor



Robert Greenwood, General Manager

2016–2017 Highlights by Key Direction

lead inspiring leadership

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- Elected a new Council
- Engaged with community on the Community Strategic Plan
- Strengthened Council's financial position
- Progressed Regional Strategic Alliance
- Endorsed State of City: End of Term Report
- Adopted new suite of Integrated Plans
- Endorsed Strategic Priorities for 2017-2021
- Hosted Sustainable Blue Mountains Together Community Forum
- Released 2016 Community Survey results
- Continued advocacy on Western Sydney Airport proposal
- Coordinated Asset Management Improvement Program
- Contributed to Western Sydney City Deal
- Advocated for the Blue Mountains
- Increased use of social media
- Listened to our residents

protect an environmentally responsible city

page
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- Improved resource recovery and reduced waste to landfill
- Recognised for environmental excellence
- Adopted Carbon Abatement Action Plan
- Celebrated 10-year anniversary of Council's Swamp Care Program
- Managed invasive weeds
- Began development of Water Sensitive City Strategy
- Supported community conservation programs
- Enhanced turtle habitat at Glenbrook Lagoon
- Hosted catchment education day
- Raised concerns over pollution threats to Coxs River
- Trialled compost hubs
- Hosted workshop on wildlife management
- Connected kids with nature

care an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

- Improved local emergency management
- Completed upgrades to Lawson Community Hall
- Recognised as Best Family Day Care Service in NSW
- Adopted Blue Mountains Ageing Strategy
- Commenced upgrade to Wentworth Falls Lake
- Hosted Project NOW: Youth Congress
- Engaged with Traditional Owners
- Rebuilt Shipley Rural Fire Brigade Station
- Delivered an exciting range of arts and cultural experiences
- Renewed walking tracks
- Provided a vibrant public library service
- Secured grant funding for community facilities

care

**an inclusive, healthy
and vibrant city**

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Installed new play equipment at Blaxland Oval Park
Extended celebrations for Blue Mountains seniors
Endorsed the Disability Inclusion Action Plan for public exhibition
Improved sportsground car parking at Lapstone Oval
Showcased achievements of the Aboriginal Advisory Council
Completed upgrade to Chalmers Lookout
Provided leisure opportunities for residents and visitors
Supported the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia
Recognised outstanding citizens
Delivered City of the Arts Trust grants program
Celebrated NAIDOC week

live

a liveable city

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Progressed masterplans across the City
- Development of Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan
- Implementation of Springwood Masterplan
- Further Consultation on Blackheath Masterplan
Completed first stage of Blue Mountains Heritage Review
Launched e-planning
Progressed Local Housing Strategy
Managed environmental health and compliance
Adopted Glenbrook Park Plan of Management
Finalised Local Environment Plan Amendments
Considered the future of Lawson Golf Course
Advocated to State Government
Managed land use

move

an accessible city

→ page
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Repaired and upgraded the City's road network
Completed Pedestrian Access Mobility Program
Adopted Leura Tourist Bus Parking Strategy
Designed extension to Great Blue Mountains Trail
Improved fire trail maintenance
Continued restoration of Lennox Bridge
Progressed Integrated Transport Strategy
Completed road improvements in Katoomba
Hosted free workshops to build skills of community
Completed Road Safety Audit between Linden and Faulconbridge
Supported road safety initiatives
Progressed Citywide Parking Strategy

thrive

**an economically
sustainable city**

→ page
92

Progressed Southern Scenic Escarpment Project
Exhibited Blue Mountains Destination Management Plan
Collaborated with BMEE to support new businesses
Enhanced visitor experiences
Commenced masterplan for Scenic Eastern Escarpment
Reviewed commercial property portfolio
Supported sustainable tourism in the Blue Mountains
Undertook Winter Magic market research
Supported Blue Mountains artisans through MTNS MADE

About This Report

The Annual Report is a key point of accountability between the Council and its community. It reports on progress made against the Council's 2016-2017 commitments in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, and describes how the Council is supporting achievement of the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan.

The report presents performance measure results for each Council service, and summarises annual achievements across the following key directions:



In accordance with the *Local Government Act, 1993* the Annual Report also includes required statutory information, and provides an overview of the Council's financial position.

More detailed information on the financial performance of the Council during 2016-2017 can be found in the Annual Financial Statements, a companion document to this report.

The Annual Report is one of a suite of documents that are legislatively required under the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The relationship between these various plans and reports is presented in the diagram below.

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK





2

Our City and Our Organisation

Our City of Blue Mountains



Located on the western fringe of Metropolitan Sydney.

FACT

The Blue Mountains is one of only two cities in the world surrounded by a World Heritage National Park. The National Park makes up 70% of our Local Government Area.

The Blue Mountains is a nationally & internationally significant World Heritage Area & unique tourist destination.

About Our City

With a spectacular environmental setting, the Blue Mountains is home to a community of nearly 80,000 people residing in 27 towns and villages located over 100km of mountainous terrain.

Our City is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples and includes areas that are of great cultural significance. The Blue Mountains has been home to Aboriginal people for thousands of years and the Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners have a deep and ongoing connection to their Country.

We are a Blue Mountains community, and a series of communities. Each town and village has its own character and distinctive features. Many of our towns and villages are long-established and have unique heritage buildings.

The City of Blue Mountains stretches across the Great Dividing Range and provides a major road and rail transport link between urban Sydney and the more rural Central West. This is a nationally significant transport corridor.

We are a low density city comprised mainly of single detached dwellings on large blocks. Ribbons of development extend out along ridgelines, with many properties connecting directly with the surrounding bushland. This proximity puts our City at high risk of bushfires and creates a lengthy urban-bushland interface that requires environmental management.

The natural areas of the Blue Mountains provide a significant recreation and tourism resource for Greater Sydney and the world. They also play an important role in providing high quality drinking water to Sydney, as many of the City's waterways drain in to Lake Burrangong.

Our City covers an area of 1,431km², of which approximately 70% is national park and only 11% is available for settlement.

Our People

Our City population is growing very slowly. The Estimated Resident Population for the Blue Mountains was 78,705 in 2016, compared with 78,553 in 2011. This equates to growth of only 0.2% over the past five years, which is well below the state and national averages.

We are predominantly a city of families and older people. Our distance from the Sydney CBD and most major educational institutions means that many young people move away from the Blue Mountains for education and career opportunities, or the desire to live a more urban lifestyle.

The Blue Mountains is more affordable and liveable than many other urban areas. Compared with metropolitan Sydney, the Blue Mountains provides affordable housing, excellent facilities for families and a safe and caring community.

We are an ageing community, and many people in the Blue Mountains live alone. The proportion of residents over 65 is increasing faster than the average for Greater Sydney.

The Blue Mountains is not as ethnically diverse as other parts of Sydney, and has a comparatively low proportion of residents who speak a language other than English.

At the time of the 2016 Census, our:

Median age was

44 years

Average household size was

2.5 people

Median weekly household income was

\$1,468

Median monthly mortgage repayment was

\$1,842

Median weekly rent was

\$350

Our Community - Key Statistics

Statistic	2016 Number	2016 %	2011 Number	2011 %	Change 2011-2016
Population					
Males	37,119	48.3	36,710	48.3	+409
Females	39,782	51.7	39,232	51.7	+550
Total population	76,904	100.0	75,942	100.0	+962
Population Characteristics					
Indigenous population	1,821	2.4	1,320	1.7	+501
Australian born	60,028	78.1	59,235	78.0	+793
Language other than English spoken at home	4,689	6.1	3,861	5.1	+828
Persons needing assistance with core activities	4,228	5.5	3,390	4.5	+838
Eligible voters (citizens aged 18+)	53,076	69.0	51,600	67.9	+1,476
Age Structure					
Babies and preschoolers (0-4)	4,232	5.5	4,697	6.2	-465
Primary schoolers (5-11)	6,939	9.0	7,042	9.3	-103
Secondary schoolers (12-17)	5,883	7.7	6,184	8.1	-301
Tertiary education and independence (18-24)	5,418	7.0	5,614	7.4	-196
Young workforce (25-34)	6,985	9.1	6,998	9.2	-13
Parents and homebuilders (35-49)	15,233	19.8	15,986	21.1	-753
Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59)	11,382	14.8	12,019	15.8	-637
Empty nesters and retirees (60-69)	11,225	14.6	9,529	12.5	+1,696
Seniors (70-84)	7,974	10.4	6,318	8.3	+1,656
Elderly aged (85+)	1,630	2.1	1,555	2.0	+75
Households and Dwellings					
Fully owned	11,348	37.8	10,594	36.1	+754
Purchasing (i.e. mortgage)	11,379	37.9	11,435	38.9	-56
Renting	5,353	17.8	5,449	18.5	-96
Other tenure type/not stated	1,912	6.4	1,899	6.5	+13
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	2.46	-	2.49	-	-0.03
Total households	29,992	100.0	29,377	100.0	+615
Employment Location					
Live and work in the Blue Mountains	NYA	NYA	14,142	39.7	NYA
Live in the Blue Mountains but work elsewhere	NYA	NYA	17,902	50.3	NYA
Work location unknown	NYA	NYA	3,566	10.0	NYA
Total employed persons	NYA	NYA	35,610	100.0	NYA
Transport to Work					
Public transport (train, bus, tram or ferry)	NYA	NYA	4,028	13.2	NYA
Drive (car, truck, motorbike or taxi)	NYA	NYA	22,546	73.9	NYA
Bicycle	NYA	NYA	132	0.4	NYA
Walk	NYA	NYA	838	2.7	NYA
Other/not stated	NYA	NYA	748	2.5	NYA
Worked at home	NYA	NYA	2,208	7.2	NYA

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2011

Note: Employment and Transport to Work Data from the 2016 Census is not yet available.

Blue Mountains City Council

Organisational Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision

To build a successful future for the Blue Mountains.

Our Mission

Improving the well-being of our community and the environment.

Our Values

We are committed to our values and behaviours and live them every day.

They define who we are and serve as our guide to become the organisation we aspire to be.



Working Together

We work collaboratively and support each other to achieve success

- I support and encourage others
- I share information and keep others informed
- I take time to recognise and celebrate success



Work Safe Home Safe

We keep ourselves, our workmates and our community safe every day

- I always work safely even when busy
- I take care of my own health and wellbeing and support others to do the same
- I speak up if something is not right and report unsafe acts



Service Excellence

We deliver our service standards to all our customers – internal and external

- I take time to understand customer needs
- I always respond politely
- I do what I say I will do



Value for Money

We always look for quality and for innovative solutions

- I make the best use of resources
- I look for better ways to work
- I avoid "band-aid" solutions



Trust & Respect

We treat all people fairly with sensitivity and respect

- I am open and honest with people
- I listen and value others point of view
- I take time to understand the role of others

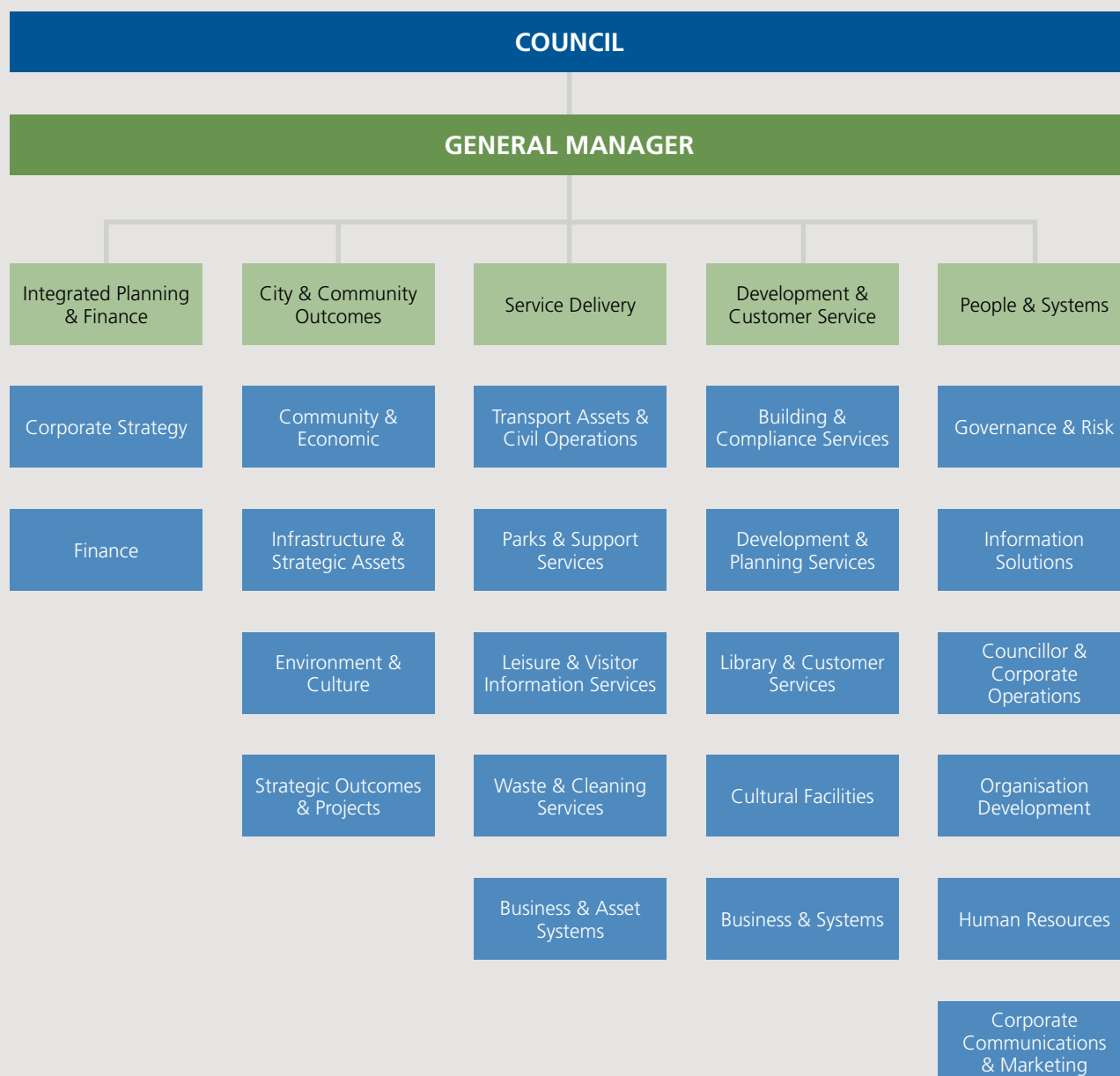


Supporting Community

We work in partnership with, and advocate for, our community and environment

- I build positive relationships
- I welcome and consider all feedback
- I act now with the future in mind

Council Structure in 2016-2017



Our Councillors

WARD 4

Lapstone to Warrimoo

(Left to right):

Councillor Mark Greenhill, OAM (Mayor)

Councillor Darryl Bowling

Councillor Brendan Christie



WARD 3

Valley Heights to Faulconbridge

(Left to right):

Councillor Daniel Myles

Councillor Mick Fell

Councillor Shae Foenander



WARD 2

Faulconbridge to Wentworth Falls

(Left to right):

Councillor Chris Van der Kley (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Romola Hollywood

Councillor Brent Hoare



WARD 1

Leura to Mount Victoria and Mount Tomah

(Left to right):

Councillor Don McGregor

Councillor Kerry Brown

Councillor Kevin Schreiber




Community Strategic Plan Objectives




lead
inspiring leadership

By 2035 we are a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains



protect
an environmentally responsible city

By 2035 we are a more environmentally responsible city



care
an inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

By 2035 we are a more inclusive, healthy and vibrant city

Objective 1.1

The Council lives responsibly within its means and strengthens its financial sustainability

Objective 2.1

The condition, health and diversity of native flora, fauna, habitat, ecosystems, waterways, water catchments and groundwater are maintained and enhanced

Objective 3.1

Blue Mountains communities are safe, caring, diverse and inclusive

Objective 1.2

All levels of government provide transparent, fair and accountable civic leadership and governance

Objective 2.2

Resources are used and managed in an environmentally responsible way

Objective 3.2

The Blue Mountains community is healthy and active

Objective 1.3

All levels of government provide value for money sustainable services and infrastructure

Objective 2.3

The community and all levels of government work together to protect the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

Objective 3.3

The Blue Mountains community is resilient and prepared for natural disasters

Objective 1.4

All levels of government and the community, work together to achieve a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains

Objective 2.4

Traditional owners and the broader Aboriginal community are supported to connect to, care for and benefit from Country

Objective 3.4

The Blue Mountains is a centre of culture, creativity and life-long learning



**By 2035 we are a
more liveable city**

Objective 4.1

City planning drives the creation of vibrant and well-designed places and spaces for people to live, work and play

Objective 4.2

The distinctive qualities of towns and villages are maintained and local identity and sense of pride is strengthened

Objective 4.3

The impact of development on the natural and built environment is well managed

Objective 4.4

The City's housing meets the diverse needs of the community



**By 2035 we are a
more accessible city**

Objective 5.1

The City has an integrated, accessible and sustainable transport network

Objective 5.2

The City has a safe, well designed and maintained network of roads

Objective 5.3

The City has an integrated, accessible public transport network with good connections within the City and to the Greater Sydney Region

Objective 5.4

The City has a pedestrian and cycleway network that supports active movement and access to centres and facilities



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

Objective 6.1

The City's economy is diverse, vibrant and strong with increased local employment

Objective 6.2

The City of the Blue Mountains has a strong identity that builds on its natural and built heritage and creative strengths as a City of the Arts and a City surrounded by a World Heritage Area

Objective 6.3

The City's infrastructure supports diverse and sustainable economic development

Objective 6.4

The Blue Mountains is a leader of sustainable tourism and destination management within a World Heritage Area

Council Services at a Glance

lead

Strategic and Governance

- Councillor and Corporate Operations
- Corporate Strategy
- Commercial Property Portfolio
- Governance and Risk
- People (Strategic)
- Strategic Asset Planning
- Strategic Finance

Operational Internal

- Administrative Property Portfolio
- Asset Management
- Central Warehousing and Purchasing
- Corporate Communications and Marketing
- Customer Service
- Financial Management
- Fleet
- Information Solutions
- People (Human Resources)

protect

- Natural Environment
- Waste Resource Management
- Water Resource Management

care

- Aquatic and Leisure Centres
- Community Development
- Cultural Development
- Emergency Management
- Environmental Health and Regulatory Compliance
- Family Day Care
- Libraries and Information
- Sport and Recreation

live

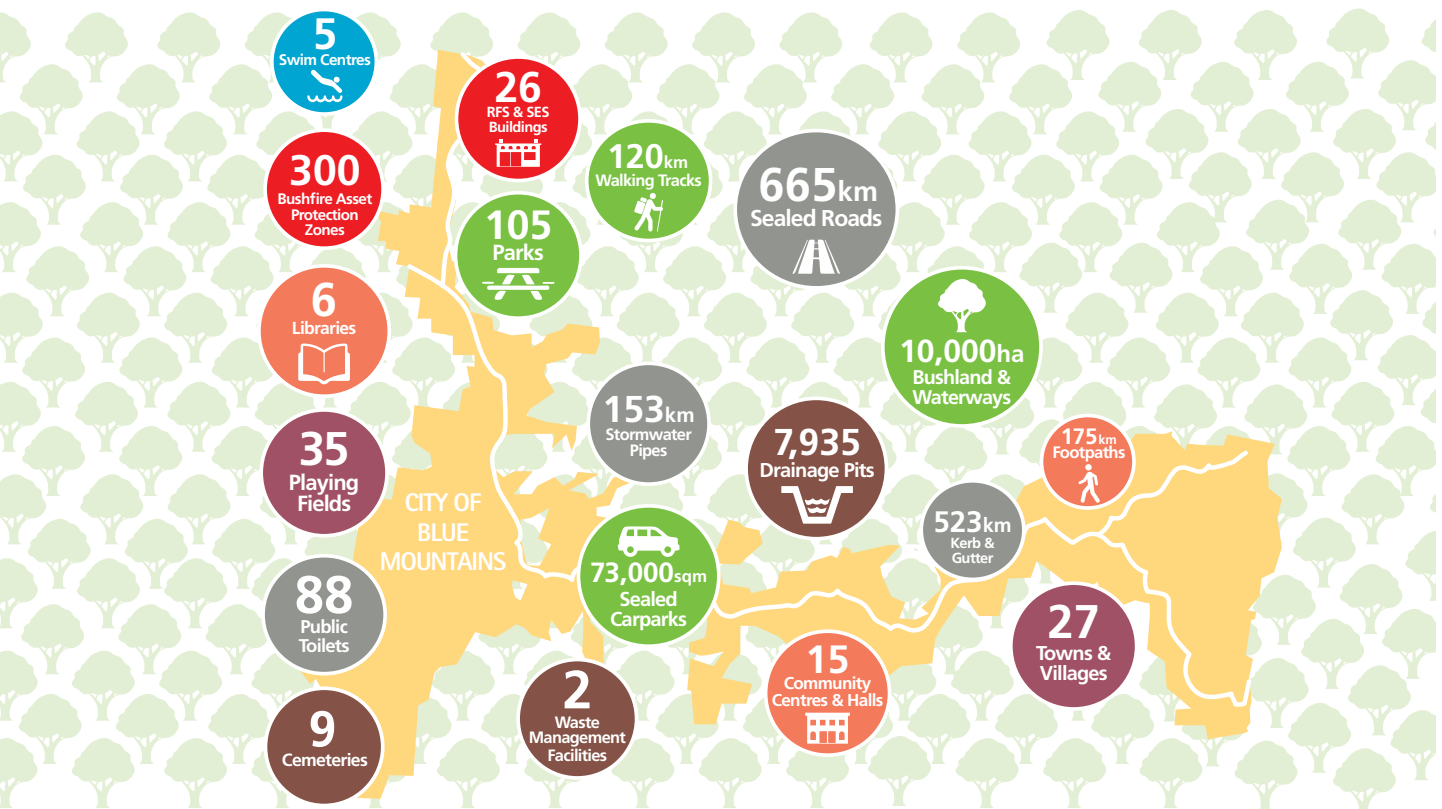
- Burials and Ashes Placement
- Building Certification
- City Presentation
- City-wide Strategic Planning
- Land Use Management

move

- Transport and Public Access

thrive

- Economic Development and Tourism
- Commercial Activities





3

Performance Snapshot

This section is a summary of the overall performance of the Council during 2016-2017 – whether service delivery commitments were met, and how well the Council performed financially. It also includes Council achievements as a result of the Special Rate Variation and progress against the Council's Fit for the Future Action Plan.

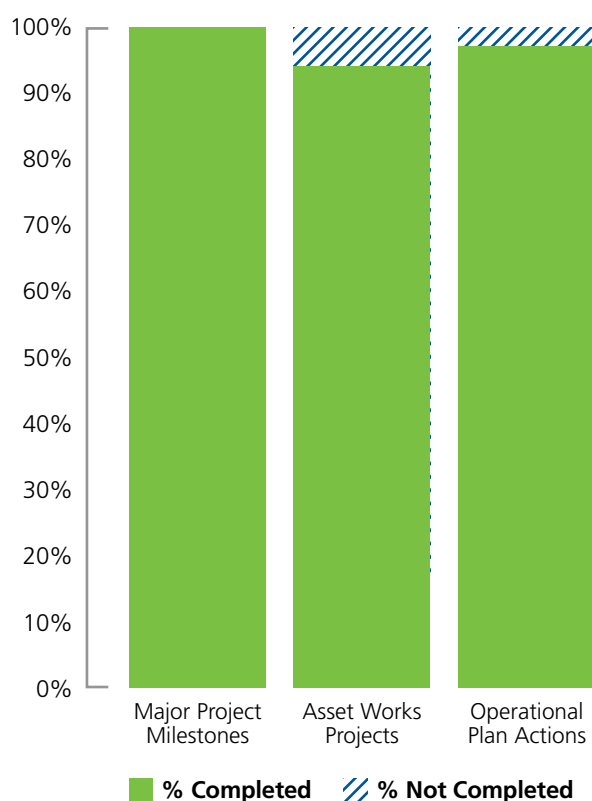
Overall Results

Major Project Milestones

100% of Major Project milestones for 2016-2017 were completed as planned.

Major Projects are those one-off projects that have a significant capital component, require significant staff resources or involve extensive community consultation. These projects are usually delivered over more than one financial year.

The major projects for 2016-2017 were the Southern Scenic Escarpment Program and the extension of the Great Blue Mountains Trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria – refer to Section 4 for more details.



Asset Works Projects

94% of scheduled Asset Works Program projects were completed as planned in 2016-2017.

The Asset Works Program comprises those projects that involve the planning and construction of new built assets or the improvement of existing built assets, such as footpaths, signage, roads and community halls.

Approximately \$8 million was invested in Council-managed assets through the Asset Works Program in 2016-2017 – refer to the Appendix for more details.

Operational Plan Actions

97% of Operational Plan actions for 2016-2017 were completed as planned.

The Council committed to delivering a wide range of actions and projects through its service delivery commitments.

Council delivers a diverse range of services to the community, from Aquatic and Leisure Centres to Waste Resource Management – refer to Section 5 for more details.



Organisational Sustainability Performance Measures

78%

**of Organisational Sustainability
Performance Measure targets for
2016-2017 were achieved.**

Quantitative measures are used to assess the Council's quadruple bottom line performance – in terms of governance, environmental, social and financial performance. Together they provide an indication of how healthy we are as an organisation.

For example, the on-time completion rate for Customer Service Requests was 87% in 2016-2017, which is above target despite an 11% increase in requests – refer to Section 5 for more details.

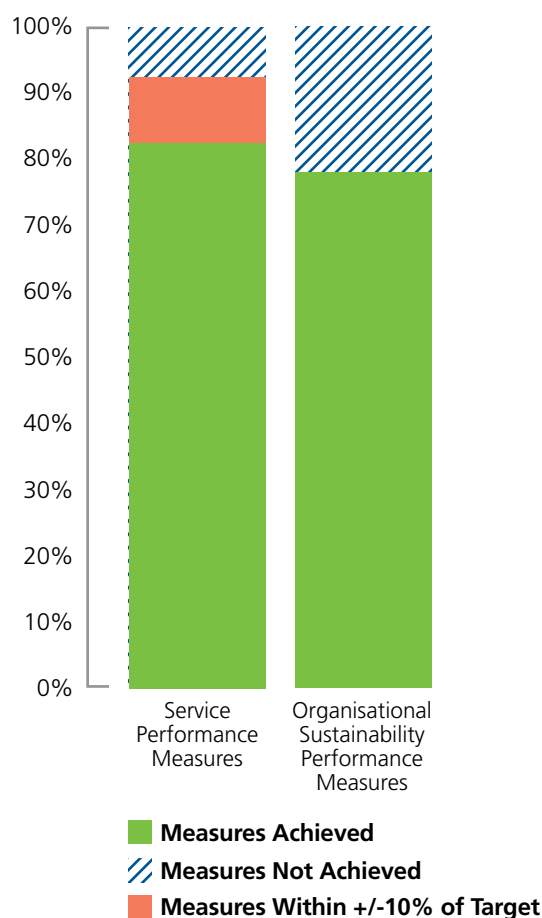
Service Performance Measures

82%

**of Service Performance Measure targets for
2016-2017 were achieved, with an
additional 10% within $\pm 10\%$ of target.**

The Council has committed to a number of performance measures to track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of the service delivery outputs/standards.

For example, there were 683 library events held during 2016-2017 with 18,550 attendees, a significant increase on the number of people participating in library events in 2015-2016 – refer to Section 5 for more details.



Free Comic Book Day at Katoomba Library - May 2017

Awards received during 2016–2017

Award Program	Award Category	Project	Placing
Stormwater NSW Awards for Excellence	Excellence in Integrated Stormwater Design	Leura Falls Catchment Improvement Project – with WaterNSW	Joint Category Winner
Stormwater NSW Awards for Excellence	Excellence in Research and Innovation	Stormwater Pollution Investigation Pilot Project – with WaterNSW and Wollondilly Council	Category Winner
Stormwater National Awards for Excellence	Excellence in Research and Innovation	Blue Mountains Cultural Centre Green Roof Treatment and Reuse System	Joint Category Winner
Excellence in Family Day Care Awards	Best Service in NSW	Blue Mountains Family Day Care Service	Category Winner
Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards	Climate Change Action	WSROC - Light Years Ahead Project	Joint Category Winner
Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards	Natural Environment Protection & Enhancement: On-Ground Works	Leura Falls Catchment Improvement Project	Highly Commended
Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards	Natural Environment Policies, Planning & Decision Making	Sydney Peri Urban Network of Councils – Sydney food futures project	Joint Category Winner



Leura Falls Catchment Improvement Project

Financial Performance Snapshot

A Financially Viable Council

The Council is financially viable and each year lives responsibly within its means by ensuring the annual cash budget is balanced against available revenue. Council has achieved a surplus cash budget result in 2016-2017 and for the last 10 years.

Independent external auditors conduct an annual audit of the finances and have confirmed the Council's sound financial position and viability for the period 2016-2017.

The Council maintains an annual working capital of \$1.7-\$1.9 million (which meets industry standards) to manage financial shocks and day-to-day activities and has \$37.4 million in cash and investments in reserve, to fund future commitments and identified risks.

Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability

Over 2016-2017 the Council improved its financial position through implementing its adopted *Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability*. Simultaneously implementing each of the six strategies is critical to building a successful future for our City. Progress achieved in 2016-2017 is summarised overleaf.

SIX STRATEGIES FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



STRATEGY 1

Avoid Shocks

In 2016-2017, the Council continued to proactively implement financial planning to ensure we live responsibly within our means, manage risks and prioritise resources to achieve best value outcomes. This strategy positions the City to better withstand costly unexpected events and continue to deliver quality services that meet community needs.

The Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) continued to be used to manage and smooth projected increases in costs and decreases in revenue, such as the \$2.9 million reduction in Australian Government Financial Assistance Grant funding to the Blue Mountains for four years from 2014-2015 to 2017-2018.

Under this strategy, the Council has also been implementing long-term asset management planning and enterprise risk management, achieved cash liquidity greater than the benchmark, developed a long term Workforce Management Strategy and allocated funds into reserves for renewal of high-risk assets and/or high-risk asset failures.

The Council's Long Term Financial Plan has been developed to incorporate a *Fit for the Future Action Plan 2017-2021*, to ensure we meet the targets in 2019-2020 and continue to be sustainable into the future. In 2016-2017 the *Fit for the Future Action Plan 2017-2021* was implemented, monitored and reported. Four and one year planning and budgeting was more clearly aligned to the Community Strategic Plan and Long Term Financial Plan, with improved communication of financial strategies and plans and improved strategic decision-making to avoid shocks. The Enterprise Risk Management Framework was implemented.

STRATEGY 2

Balance the Budget

The Council has taken action to ensure it achieves a balanced or surplus cash budget each year. In 2016-2017 the Council ended the financial year with a Working Capital Result of \$1.7 million. This favourable result reflects the strategic approach of the Council in implementing all Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability and includes favourable additional income received and cost savings.

Under this strategy, the Council is also building financial capacity to achieve a balanced Operating Balance Result in all future years. The Operating Balance Result is a key measure of financial health (that includes depreciation costs and excludes capital items). It measures whether the Council has sufficient income to meet all of its expenditure requirements, including required funding to renew and maintain built infrastructure. In 2016-2017 the Council had a surplus Operating Performance Result of \$6.2 million. Relative to past years this is a significant improvement and the first surplus result for this measure. In 2014-2015, the deficit was -\$3 million and in 2011-2012 was -\$13 million.

During 2016-2017 there was an update to the Integrated Planning and Reporting suite of plans. For the first time, the Resourcing Strategy plans for operating surpluses (excluding capital items) in every year of the 10 year projection, and the 2017-2018 budget has been set with an operating surplus. This is supported by closer alignment of the Long Term Financial Plan to the Council's Asset Management Strategy, and best value reviews of services and funding allocations.



STRATEGY 3

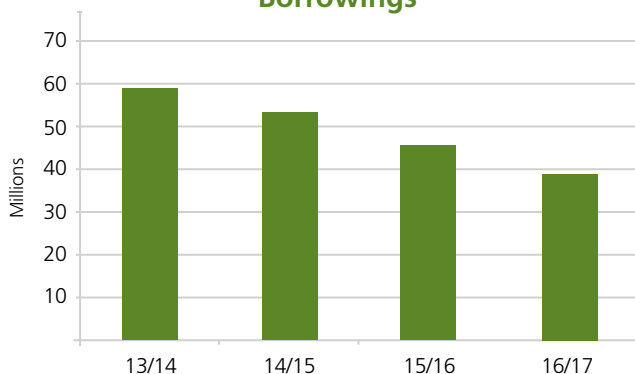
Manage Borrowings Responsibly

Implementation of this strategy in 2016-2017 has resulted in the Council's borrowing position as at 30 June 2017 reducing to \$38.8 million, well ahead of the previously projected position in the Long Term Financial Plan. This reduction has resulted from the Council:

- Stopping borrowing in the short to medium term, subject to annual reviews of borrowing capacity. In 2013-2014, the Council ceased the previous practice of borrowing \$2.3 million each year for asset works projects. Aside from reducing future debt, this action saved the Council interest rate payments on borrowings of around \$180,000 a year;
- Conducting annual reviews of the Council's borrowing capacity and only considering loans after a comprehensive business case;
- Reviewing and refinancing existing loan interest rate terms and conditions e.g. renegotiation of loans at lower interest rates (saving around \$430,000 a year);
- Using subsidised loan funding from the State Government where effective;
- Retiring and/or reducing debt by managing cash and cash equivalent reserve funds; and
- Directing any surplus cash funds to reducing borrowings wherever it is effective to do so.

Council has reduced debt continually over recent years as shown in the graph below, a substantial \$7 million reduction in debt each year for the past two years. This is reflected in a \$1.1M reduction in annual borrowing costs over the past four years.

Borrowings



STRATEGY 4

Increase Income

This strategy ensures the Council maximises income, where appropriate to do so. Over the past six years, the Council obtained over \$124 million in grant and contributions funding for the community including the Federal Government Financial Assistance Grants.

In 2016-2017, the Council made a number of successful grant applications resulting in \$23.6 million in grant and contributions income. This income comprised of \$21 million in operating income and \$2.6 million in capital income from the State and Federal Governments and other agencies. \$4.3 million of the operating grant income was for an advance payment of the 2017-2018 Financial Assistance Grant.

Importantly, the Council successfully applied for a special rate variation, which Council endorsed in June 2015. The special rate variation applies over the four years from 2015-2016 to 2018-2019, generating \$30.4 million additional revenue. This will help stop the decline in the City's \$1.2 billion worth of built assets and fund required renewal and maintenance. The extra revenue will provide greater capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies, deliver successful environmental programs and improve services to community. In 2016-2017 \$5.3 million special variation funds were spent.

In 2016-2017 the Council continued to review existing income strategies to ensure that revenue is maximised in an equitable as well as a business-like manner, resulting in improved income from Council's business activities. The Council's Property Disposal and Investment Program also generated land and property sales of \$2.1 million.



STRATEGY 5

Review and Adjust Services

This strategy involves the Council implementing ongoing service reviews in consultation with community to ensure we are providing quality, value for money services, responsive to changing requirements of the community. To support achievement of the service reviews the Council adopted a Best Value Service Framework in 2013, updated in 2015. Service reviews and adjustments completed to date, with ongoing cost savings in 2016-2017, include:

- A service level trade off tool developed and workshopped with Councilors, and a service model comparative analysis with other similar councils has been completed;
- A strategic internal review of the allocation of special variation funding for 2017-2018 onwards;
- Introduction of a green bin service in 2016-2017 extending the life of the Blaxland landfill;
- Update of outstanding rate debt collection processes with improved rates and annual charges outstanding ratio;
- Town Centres and Economic Development & Tourism reviews;
- Desktop review of maintenance expenditure for commercial properties;
- Review of Springwood Aquatic and Fitness Centre café and Katoomba Head Office coffee cart;
- Ongoing savings of approximately \$100,000 from the 2014-2015 review of the management and operation of the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility;
- Ongoing savings of approximately \$270,000 from the review of high energy use Council sites which resulted in a range of initiatives to reduce ongoing energy costs; and
- Ongoing savings of approximately \$270,000 from the sealing of unsealed roads program.



STRATEGY 6

Increase Advocacy and Partnerships

This strategy involves advocating to other levels of government for a fair share of funding and reduced cost shifting, and building partnerships with others to achieve positive outcomes for the Blue Mountains.

Supporting achievement of this strategy, in 2015-2016 the Council formed a Regional Strategic Alliance (RSA) with Penrith City Council and Hawkesbury City Council. The Councils are working together to strengthen strategic capacity, achieve economies of scale and efficiencies and a more unified approach to regional planning and advocacy.

In 2016-2017 the Council also advocated on behalf of residents on the following matters:

- Prepared a submission on the District Plan for Sydney West;
- Met with Sydney Trains to Lobby for improvements to access and parking at Blaxland Station;
- Partnered with Office of Environment and Heritage, Museums and Galleries and Environment Trust;
- Participated in Waste less recycle more 2014-2017 improvements - surveys and interviews;
- Worked with member agencies of Blue Mountains Bush Fire Management Committee and Local Emergency Management Committee;
- Western Sydney Airport Mayoral Reference Group met every 2 months. Council represented at a Forum on Western Sydney Airport (FOWSA);
- Worked collaboratively with seven western Sydney local governments to provide input on the Western Sydney Deal.

To date, the Council has been very successful in delivering key infrastructure meeting the needs of the City through partnership funding agreements. Some recent examples include obtaining:

- \$4.9 million to upgrade Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility;
- \$9.5 million grant from the Federal Government for the upgrade of the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub (Springwood);
- \$5.9 million grant from the Roads and Maritime Service joint venture to relocate and upgrade the Lawson Town Centre due to the widening of the Great Western Highway;
- \$5 million grant plus other funding from the partnership agreement with the State Government, Federal Government and the Coles Group to build the regional Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, new Katoomba Library & Civic Centre;
- \$3.4 million infrastructure grant from the Federal Government for the development of the Blue Mountains Business Park in Lawson; and
- \$2.5 million grant funding from the NSW Building Partnership Infrastructure Funding program.



Financial Statement Summary

The Council's sound financial management has resulted in a surplus end of year cash budget result with a net working capital position of \$1.85 million as at 30 June 2017. The successful implementation of the Council's Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability and progress towards implementing the Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal has contributed to this result.

A summary of the financial statement is provided in the table below.

A Summary of the Financial Statements	2017 \$'000	2016 \$'000
Income Statement		
Total Income from Continuing Operations	119,320	108,718
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	110,518	105,259
Net operating result for the year	8,802	3,459
Net operating result before grants & contributions provided for capital purposes	6,410	2,031
Statement of Financial Position		
Total Current Assets	44,841	42,166
Total Current Liabilities	(26,366)	(24,716)
Total Non-Current Assets	755,214	727,714
Total Non-Current Liabilities	(34,840)	(42,345)
Total equity	738,849	702,819
Other Financial Information		
Operating Performance Ratio	5.42%	-0.88%
Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio	80.06%	83.30%
Unrestricted Current Ratio	2.26 x	2.30 x
Debt Service Cover Ratio	2.59 x	1.88 x
Rates & Annual Charges Outstanding Ratio	3.40%	3.62%
Cash Expense Cover Ratio	4.41 mths	3.59 mths

How we financed our service delivery in 2016–2017

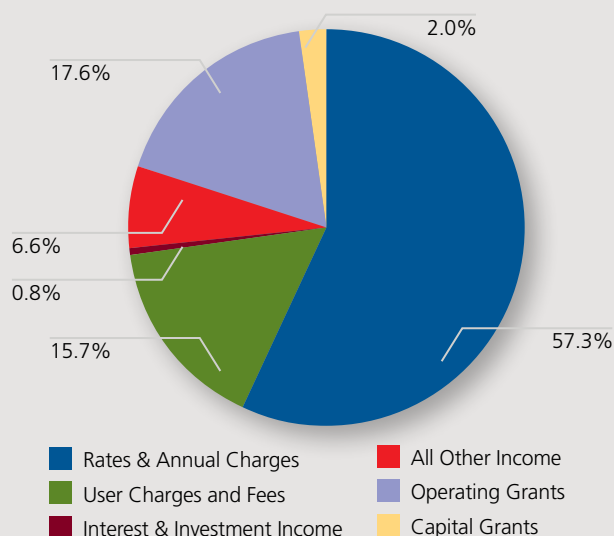
In 2016–2017, the Council received income of \$119.3 million:

- More than half of this (\$68.4 million or 57.3%) came from rates and annual charges;
- Another \$23.4 million or 19.6% came from operational and capital grants from other levels of government supporting provision of required services and facilities; and
- \$18.8 million or 15.7% of total income was from user charges and fees.

Other income from Council business activities contributed the balance of \$8.8 million or 7.4% of revenue. Other income included:

- Interest and investment income of \$1 million; and
- Gains on disposal of assets of \$1.5 million.

2016–2017 Total Income
\$119.3 Million

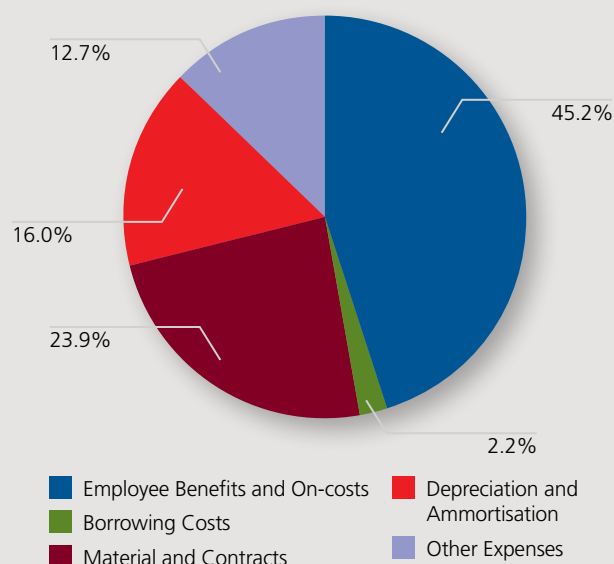


How we spent our money in 2016–2017

In 2016–2017, the Council expended \$110.5 million including:

- \$49.9 million or 45.2% on the cost of staff employment enabling delivery of an extensive range of services and facilities to just under 80,000 residents across 27 towns and villages and an increasing number of visitors estimated at three million tourists per annum;
- \$2.5 million or 2.2% on borrowing costs which have funded major essential infrastructure projects and supported intergenerational equity by sharing the cost over the period the benefits are enjoyed. This was a \$0.7 million reduction on the prior year's borrowing costs due to early repayment of debt;
- Another \$40.4 million or 36.5% on materials and contracts and other expenses to deliver a broad range of services to the community including emergency management statutory contributions, electricity, water and gas costs, street lighting, insurance, cleaning and waste management services; and
- \$16 million or 14.4% on depreciation of assets, which allocates an asset's usage over its useful life and \$1.8 million or 1.6% on impairment, to reflect a change in asset valuations.

2016–2017 Total Operating Expenses
\$110.5 million



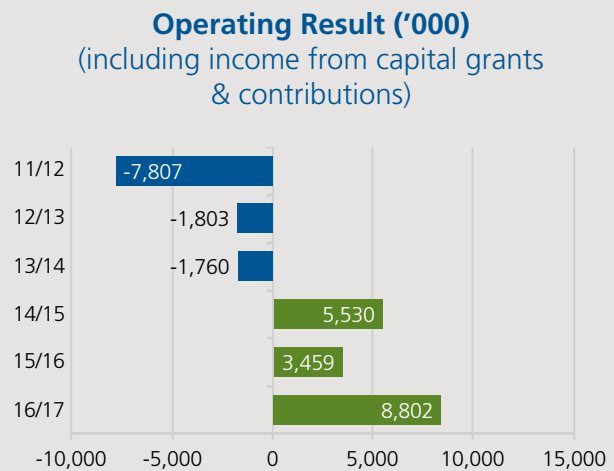
How does our performance compare with previous years?

Net Operating Result including depreciation and including capital grants and contributions

The Net Operating Result measures whether the Council has sufficient revenue to cover its expenditure requirements (including depreciation). The net operating result includes capital grants and contributions as reported on the income statement in Council's Annual Financial Statements.

In 2016-2017, the Council achieved a healthy surplus operating result (including depreciation and capital grants and contributions) of \$8.8 million, meaning the Council's income for the year was greater than its expenses. Council has been steadily improving the operating result over the past six years.

The increase in the Net Operating result from 2015-2016 is mainly attributable to an early \$4.3 million payment of half of the 2016-2018 Financial Assistance Grant.



Operating Result including depreciation but excluding capital grants and contributions

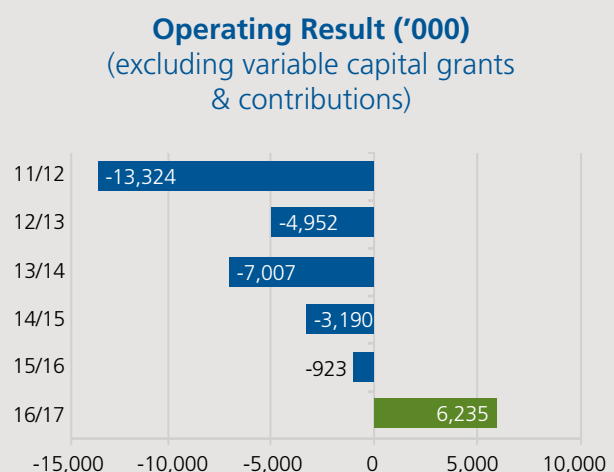
This Operating Result measures whether the Council has sufficient revenue (when we exclude capital grants, capital contributions and other non-operating income), to cover expenditure requirements (including depreciation). It is the key measure of the Council's financial health and the best measure of financial sustainability. This result is used to calculate the *Fit for the Future* Operating Performance Ratio.

The key rationale behind this measure is that a Council has to have sustainable income sources to match its ongoing expenditure requirements (including asset life cycle costs). Income from capital grants and contributions, which is variable each year and used for one-off capital projects, is excluded.

The Council's Operating Result was for the first time a surplus of \$6.2 million. This is a significant improvement.

Although the Council balances the annual cash budget, in the past it has had an operating deficit once the required funding to renew built assets is included (i.e. depreciation) and variable income from capital grants is excluded. This projected operating surplus highlights that, in the short term, the Council does have the capacity to fund on an annual basis all of the required maintenance, renewal and replacement of existing Council assets (roads, drains, footpaths, swimming pools, libraries, parks etc.).

The Council has set a target of achieving a three year average surplus Operating Result in 2019-2020. This is a *Fit for the Future* measure. The Council can only be sustainable if operating revenues cover operating costs (including depreciation). Council has been steadily improving the Operating Result over the past six years, and the 2016-2017 surplus is a favourable result that indicates Council is working towards achieving a three year average surplus from 2017-2018 to 2019-2020.



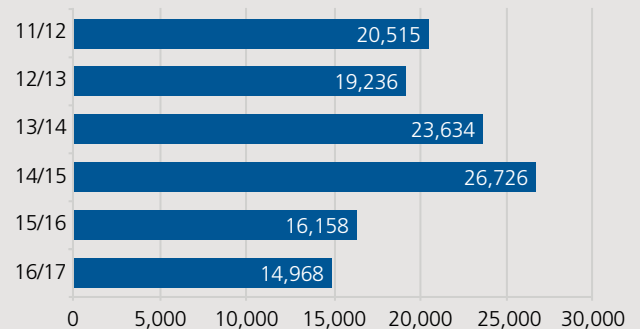
Investment in community infrastructure in 2016-2017

Maintaining a vibrant City and being responsive to changing needs and requirements of our community are key objectives. Major facilities such as the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Library in Katoomba and the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood, funded with the assistance of significant grants from other levels of Government, provide key anchors for the revitalisation of the City, socially, economically and environmentally.

Capital expenditure of \$15 million in 2016-2017 reflects the Council's commitment and continued efforts to renew and provide required facilities in the City. Such spending includes large capital items such as improvements to the Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility, improved Natural Area Visitor Facilities, road resurfacing, and the Hat Hill Road Blackheath development, as well as smaller items such as footpaths and playground equipment. Lower expenditure in 2016-2017 reflects the completion of major projects in earlier years, including the Cultural Centre and Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub.

Capital expenditure is made up of renewal, upgrade and new asset expenditure. This expenditure is determined by available funding from capital grants and contributions, and available operational income including additional income from the Special Variations to Rates Income.

Capital Expenditure ('000)



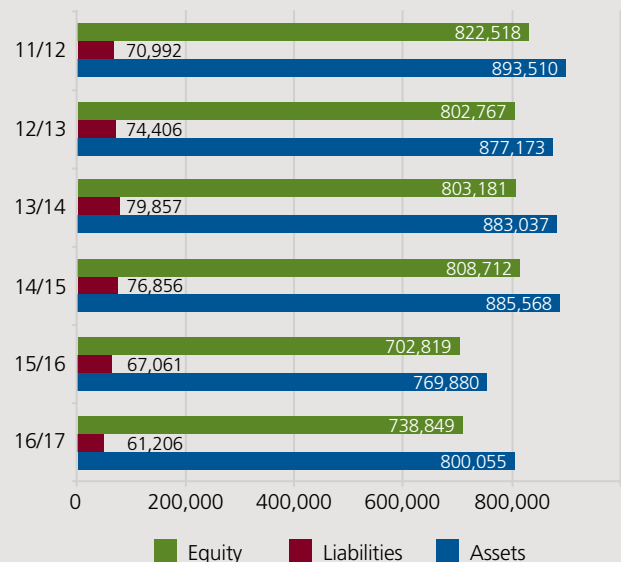
What is the Council's net worth?

The Council's total accumulated net worth is measured by its total equity or net assets position. The Council's net worth or net assets position shows the total amount owned (assets) less amounts owed (liabilities).

In 2016-2017, the Council had a favourable and healthy net worth of \$739 million as at 30 June 2017. This result was an increase in net worth of \$36 million from \$703 million in 2015-2016. The adjustment to assets and equity in 2015-2016 was due to a revaluation of Council owned land.

The following graph compares the Council's net accumulated financial worth as at 30 June 2017 to our position over the past four years. The net worth of the Council has remained relatively stable over this period and liabilities have been steadily declining as debt is being reduced.

Net Worth/Equity ('000)



Council's assets – infrastructure, property, plant and equipment

In 2016-2017, the Council continued its priority focus on reversing the decline in the City's built assets.

The Council owns and maintains approximately \$1.17 billion worth of infrastructure including roads, parks, buildings, stormwater drainage, bridges, footpaths, lighting, walking trails and lookouts. Much of the City's infrastructure was built many decades ago, often with funding from other levels of government, and now requires significant renewal. These assets, used by residents and visitors every day, deteriorate over time and require ongoing maintenance or replacement.

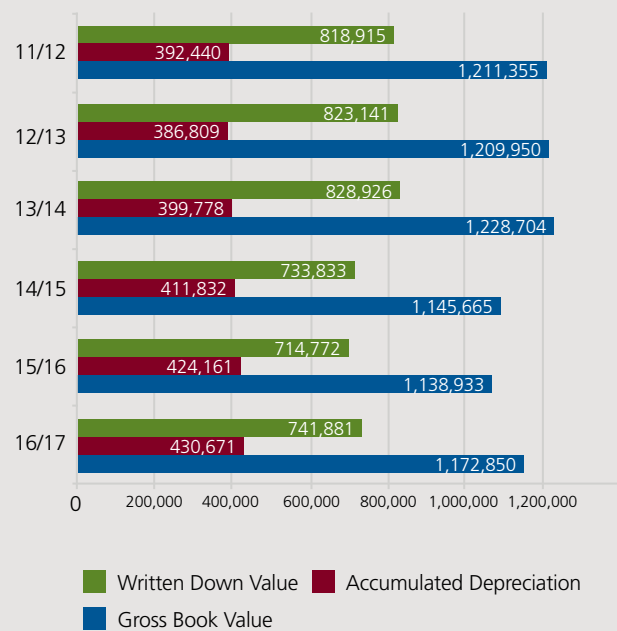
As shown in the adjacent chart, the Council's \$1.17 billion worth of infrastructure has depreciated in its estimated value by \$431 million or 37% of its useful life as of 30 June 2017, to a written down value of \$742 million. Deteriorating infrastructure is a major issue for all NSW local councils with a report released in June 2014 by the NRMA highlighting a \$3.87 billion funding backlog needed to bring NSW council roads up to a satisfactory condition.

Economic and legislative conditions such as rate pegging, cost shifting from other levels of government, and increasing costs for materials and utilities are significant challenges for all NSW councils, including Blue Mountains, and result in further restrictions on our ability to meet our existing and emerging community priorities.

As our population and demographics change, so does the demand for services and the use and impact on our assets. However, the pool of money available to the Council to maintain these assets does not keep pace

with increased costs. The result is a funding gap, a backlog of works and deteriorating assets. The age of our assets and their regular and growing use means we need to invest in renewal programs to ensure our assets continue to meet community needs and expectations. If the Council does not spend money on asset renewal now, we will need to invest more money in the future as asset conditions decline.

Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment - ('000) - Value

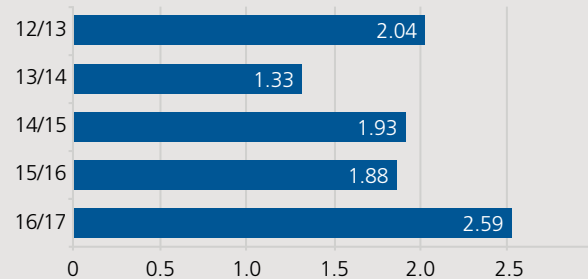


Key Financial Measures

Debt service cover ratio

This ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest and principal payments. It is calculated by dividing the operating result (before capital) by principal repayments plus borrowing costs. The benchmark target that the Council aims to achieve is a minimum ratio of 2.0 or greater. In 2016-2017, the Council's Debt Service Ratio Cover was approximately 2.59. Budget savings achieved in previous years were used to fund additional loan repayments of \$2 million. Had these repayments not been made, the debt service cover ratio would have been higher. The Council is committed to managing borrowings responsibly, which is one of our strategies to improve financial sustainability. There has been an improvement over the past few years in this ratio and Council is now well above the benchmark of 2%.

Debt Service Cover Ratio (%)



Rates and annual charges outstanding

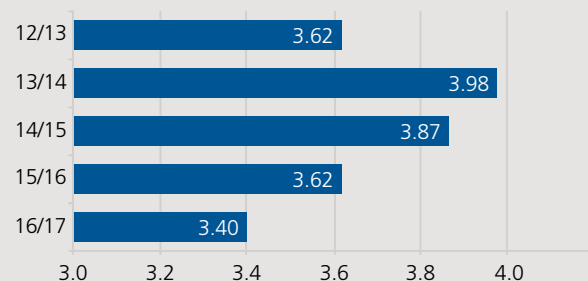
The rates and annual charges outstanding ratio is calculated from the amount of rates and annual charges outstanding as a percentage of the rates and charges collectible. The ratio measures the adequacy of Council's debt recovery practices. It also measures the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity.

The Council has maintained a strong recovery rate, with 3.40% outstanding rates and annual charges as at 30 June 2017. This compares favourably with the industry benchmark of 5 percent.

The ratio indicates that a very high proportion of residents are managing to pay their rates on time. Given that rates and annual charges comprise more than half of Council's revenue to fund the delivery of services and facilities, it is critical that this ratio is maintained within the benchmark. The circumstances of individual ratepayers are considered when determining any collection action.

There has been a steady improvement in this ratio over the past few years, with results well below the 5% benchmark, which is a reflection on Council's efforts to maintain financial liquidity.

Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding (%)



Fit for the Future

In October 2015 the Council was assessed as “Fit for the Future” by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). In November 2015 this assessment was endorsed by the State Government. All councils across NSW were assessed by IPART and deemed as either “Fit” or “Not Fit” for the future based on Scale and Capacity, Sustainability, Infrastructure and Service Management and Efficiency criteria.

Being assessed as *Fit for the Future* (FFTF) is an important result for the Council and for the City. It is a reflection of many years of work on long term strategic planning to build a successful future for the Blue Mountains.

The Council has a FFTF action plan for achieving financial sustainability, effective management of infrastructure and efficient best value service delivery into the future. The Council is well positioned to meet *Fit for the Future* benchmarks by 2019-2020. Key improvement strategies include:

- Implementing the Council's Asset Management Improvement Program including improving asset information systems and data informing asset planning, strengthening whole of life cycle strategic asset management to ensure optimal allocation of funding that both extends the life of assets and reduces long term costs; and
- Continuing to implement the Council's Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability (see section below) including ongoing community engagement on required and affordable levels of service and implementing best value service reviews.

Key Financial Measures

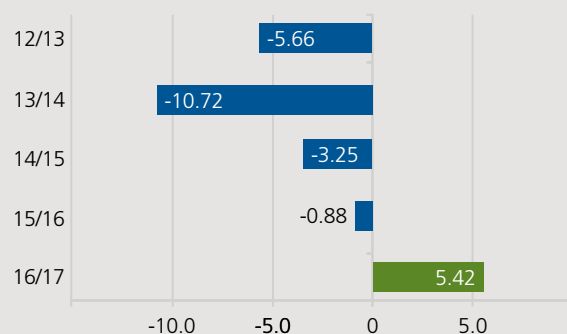
Operating performance ratio

This ratio measures whether the Council has sufficient sustainable income to meet its ongoing expenditure requirements (including asset life cycle costs and excluding capital grants and contributions). It is calculated by dividing the operating result (excluding capital items) by total revenue.

The benchmark target that should be aimed for is a ratio greater than zero percent. The Council's result has improved significantly and for the first time is positive at 5.42% in 2016-2017. This indicates revenue is covering expenditure requirements, particularly funding for asset renewal and maintenance. The improvement in this measure achieved since 2012-2013 is as a result of the Council implementing its *Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability* including achievement of increased income and reduced expenditure from cost savings and efficiencies. Continued implementation of these strategies and the *Fit for the Future* Improvement Action Plan will help to maintain the target ratio of 0% or better in future years.

The significant improvement over the past years in the operating performance ratio can be seen in the graph below where the 2016-2017 year for the first time is showing a positive result.

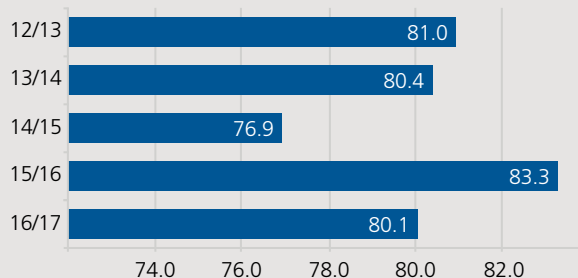
Operating Performance Ratio (%)



Own Source Revenue ratio

This ratio measures the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. It is calculated by dividing total operating revenue (excluding capital revenue) by total operating revenue. The benchmark is a ratio greater than 60%. The Council's result is 80.1% in 2016-2017 which continues to be well above the benchmark of 60%.

Own Source Revenue Ratio (%)

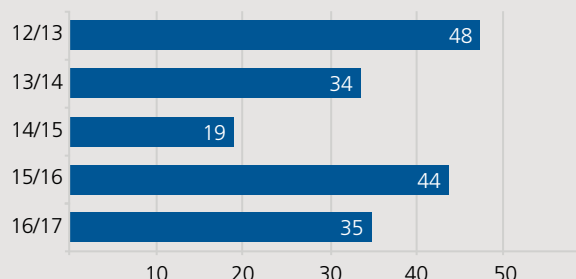


Building and Infrastructure asset renewal ratio

The building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio is the Council's ability to fund the renewal of road, drainage and building assets relative to the amount of funding projected to be required as measured by depreciation. The ratio is calculated by dividing Building and Infrastructure asset renewal expenditure by Building and Infrastructure asset depreciation. The NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* benchmark for the Building and Infrastructure asset renewal ratio is 100%. The Council currently is a long way from meeting this benchmark with a result of 35.1% in 2016-2017. The Infrastructure renewal included in the Council's *Special Schedule 7 – Report on Infrastructure Assets* is \$4.4 million compared to Infrastructure depreciation of \$12.6 million. Additional funds are planned to be allocated to Infrastructure renewal in future years from special variation funds.

This will improve future Building and Infrastructure renewal ratio results and achieve a substantial improvement in the three year average at 2019-2020 so that we achieve the Fit for the Future target.

Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio (%)



Infrastructure backlog ratio

The infrastructure backlog ratio is calculated by the estimated cost to bring infrastructure assets to a satisfactory condition, as a percentage of the total value of infrastructure assets. This ratio shows what proportion the asset backlog is against the total value of a Council's infrastructure. This ratio is calculated by dividing the estimated cost to bring infrastructure assets to a satisfactory standard by the carrying value of the assets. The NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* benchmark for the Infrastructure Backlog Ratio is less than 2%. The Council currently is close to meeting this benchmark with a result of 2.00% in 2016-2017. The Infrastructure Backlog included in the Council's *Special Schedule 7 – Report on Infrastructure Assets* is \$11.9 million.

This result is based on the best available data. Similar to many NSW councils, our asset management systems are still being developed and the quality of asset data improved each year. As the systems and data quality improve, we will be more informed about how best to target expenditure to manage and optimise the life of our assets most cost effectively.

Addressing the City's infrastructure funding gap and backlog will require focused attention over the next 10 years. The Long Term Financial Plan forecasts that the infrastructure backlog will reduce as a result of increased income from the Council's 2015 special variation being available for asset renewal. Key strategies to address the infrastructure backlog include:

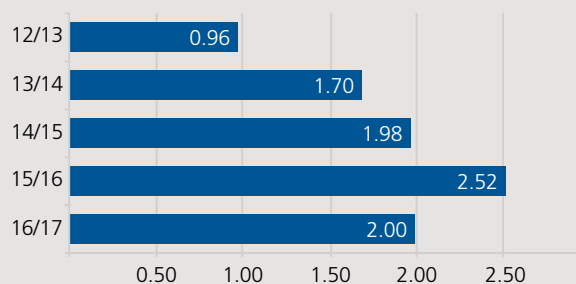
- Implementing "whole of lifecycle" asset management to understand when money needs to be allocated to renew and maintain assets most cost effectively and to extend their lives;

- Targeting special variation expenditure to addressing renewal of assets with high residual risk;
- Continuing to engage community on required and affordable levels of service; and
- Improving the sophistication of strategic asset management planning to assist in identifying more cost-effective and efficient treatment options into the future.

The key outcome from implementing these strategies will be reducing the Infrastructure Backlog by 2019-2020.

The Infrastructure backlog ratio is close to meeting the target of less than 2% and with additional funds from the special variation to rates being targeted to reduce the backlog Council should be able to stay under the benchmark in future years.

Infrastructure Backlog Ratio (%)

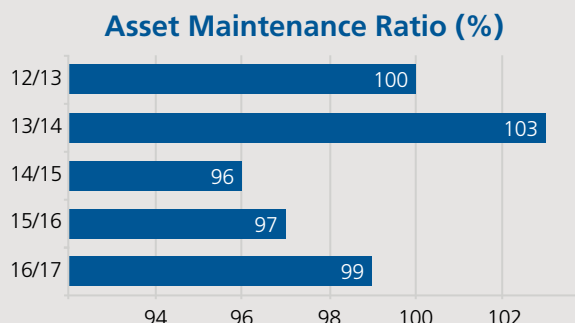


Asset maintenance ratio

The Asset Maintenance ratio reflects the actual asset maintenance expenditure relative to the required asset maintenance. The ratio is calculated by dividing actual asset maintenance by required asset maintenance. The ratio provides a measure of the rate of asset degradation (or renewal) as it shows whether the Council is fulfilling all its maintenance requirements, or allowing some assets to degrade.

The benchmark has been a ratio of greater than 1, which would imply that the Council's asset maintenance expenditure meets or exceeds requirements (and therefore the Council is maintaining or reducing its infrastructure backlog). On the basis of current data the Council has achieved a ratio of close to 1.0 in 2016-2017, which indicates it is allocating sufficient resources to maintain assets to a satisfactory standard agreed with the community. The NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* benchmark for the Asset Maintenance Ratio is a target of improving towards 100% average over three years by 2019-2020. The Council's Long Term Financial Plan projects that this ratio will have a three year average close to 100% in the 2019-2020 financial year and therefore will meet the *Fit for the Future* benchmark.

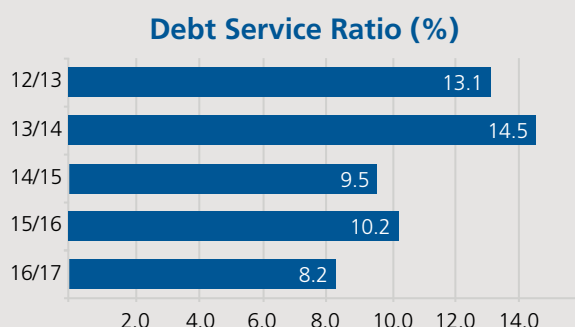
The Asset maintenance ratio is being maintained close to the benchmark of 100% over the past few years, and with the Long Term Financial Plan ensuring adequate funds are allocated to asset maintenance, the benchmark should be achieved in future years.



Debt service ratio

The debt service ratio is the percentage of the Council's total revenue used to service debt. The ratio is calculated by dividing loan interest and principal repayments by operating revenue. The NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* benchmark for the debt service ratio is less than 20%. The Council currently meets this benchmark with a result of 8.2% in 2016-2017. This positive ratio is as a result of implementing the actions in Strategy 3 Manage Debt Responsibly of the Council's *Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability*.

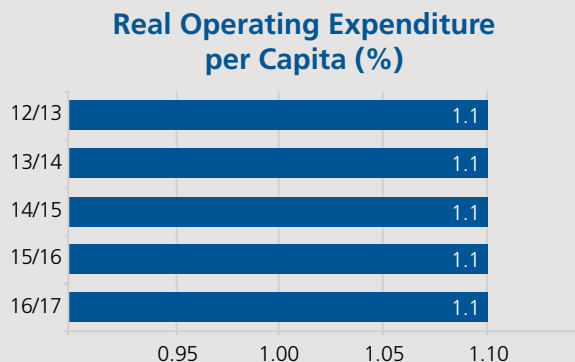
There has been a steady improvement in the debt service ratio over the past few years due to Council's debt reduction strategy and the ratio is well within the benchmark of 20%.



Real Operating expenditure per capita

The Council's real operating expenditure per capita indicates how well the Council is utilising economies of scale and managing service levels to achieve efficiencies. The NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* benchmark is a decrease in real operating expenditure over time. The ratio is calculated by dividing operating expenditure (discounted to the base year equivalent amount) by population, after excluding service improvements, such as additional special variation funds, after the base year of 2014-2015. The City has a low rate of population growth historically which makes this ratio slow to reduce over time.

The Council has maintained a consistent operating expenditure per capital over the past few years, with a ratio of 1.1% in 2016-2017.



Special Rate Variation

Background

Special rate variation 2015

Council commenced implementation of a special variation to rates in July 2015, following approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). This special variation provides greater capacity to fund required infrastructure renewal and maintenance and stop the decline in the City's \$1.2 billion worth of built assets; continue environmental programs previously funded by the Environment Levy; improve services to the community; enhance emergency preparedness and response; and improve overall financial sustainability.

Special variation funding allocation over 10 years

Program Area	Operating expenditure (\$m)	Capital expenditure (\$m)	Total expenditure (\$m)
Built Infrastructure	31.9	31.2	63.1
Environment	17.9	7.7	25.7
Emergency Preparedness & Response	3.5	1.7	5.2
Community & Recreation	11.3	16.2	27.4
Total	64.7	56.8	121.4

The first year of the special rate variation was allocated primarily to the continuation of important environmental programs. However, the Council resolved in August 2015 to start implementation of a number of other projects ahead of schedule, to better meet the needs of the community in the longer term and reduce the rate of deterioration of assets. These projects were funded from existing reserves, which will be repaid from the special rate variation income over a period of 10 years.

Special rate variation 2013

In 2013, the Council made an application to continue a special variation for asset renewal and maintenance. This application was approved by IPART, providing an additional \$23 million over 10 years to replace the annual borrowings of \$2.3 million used to fund the asset works program. It also contributes to reducing projected deterioration of priority public infrastructure.



Cataract Bridge - Lawson

Special variation budget and expenditure in 2016–2017

The tables below present a summary of expenditure in 2016-2017 from the 2013 and 2015 special rate variations. Outcomes achieved through the 2013 special rate variation are summarised below, while outcomes from the 2015 special rate variation are presented in more detail in the following section.

Special rate variation 2013

Service	Original proposed expenditure as submitted to IPART	Budget (including carry overs from 2015-2016)	Actual expenditure	Outcomes
SV 2013 OPERATING EXPENDITURE				
Transport & Public Access	\$210,000	\$210,000	\$210,000	467 tasks completed specialising in roadside vegetation works.
Parks, City Presentation	\$239,000	\$239,000	\$239,000	Additional tasks completed specialising in garden bed and park maintenance.
SV 2013 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
Strategic & Governance	\$95,000	\$95,000	\$95,000	Refurbishment works at the Springwood Depot completed.
Transport & Public Access	\$1,265,224	\$1,708,477	\$587,517	Roads resealing program, bridge renewal program and road safety and traffic works underway, of which part will be realised in 2017-2018. Completed Stage 2 of Pedestrian Access Mobility Program.
Water Resource Management	\$150,000	\$150,000	-	Jamison Creek Catchment Stormwater Drainage works completed.
Community Development	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$13,599	Disabled access to community buildings completed.
Sport & Recreation	\$34,000	\$20,000	-	Renewal of play equipment and replacement of failed park items completed. Wentworth Falls Lake telemetry system rescheduled to 2017-2018 due to changing requirements.
SV 2013 TOTALS	\$2,007,224	\$2,436,477	\$1,145,116	

Special rate variation 2015

Service	Original proposed expenditure as submitted to IPART	Budget (including amounts brought forward)	Actual expenditure	Variance between available budget and actual expenditure
SV 2015 OPERATING EXPENDITURE				
BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE				
Transport & Public Access	\$944,252	\$665,860	\$665,860	-
Water Resource Management	\$132,600	\$100,000	\$100,000	-
City Presentation, Economic Development & Tourism	\$85,393	\$216,800	\$129,572	\$87,228
Other (incl. operational building, asset management)	\$204,334	\$603,141	\$365,139	\$238,002
ENVIRONMENT				
Natural Environment	\$1,174,275	\$1,359,480	\$1,359,480	-
Natural Area Visitor Facilities	\$299,125	\$68,220	\$68,220	-
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE				
Emergency Management	\$190,000	\$190,000	\$173,973	\$16,027
COMMUNITY & RECREATION				
Community & Cultural Programs & Facilities	\$350,924	\$344,185	\$174,370	\$169,815
Sport, Recreation & Aquatic Facilities	\$118,663	\$110,179	\$74,057	\$36,122
SV 2015 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE				
BUILT INFRASTRUCTURE				
Transport & Public Access	\$892,320	\$963,705	\$612,477	\$351,228
Water Resource Management	\$109,000	\$190,493	\$15,023	\$175,470
City Presentation	-	-	-	-
Other (incl. operation buildings, asset management)	\$100,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	-
ENVIRONMENT				
Natural Area Visitor Facilities	\$375,800	\$394,700	\$394,700	-
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE				
Emergency Management	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	-

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

Service	Original proposed expenditure as submitted to IPART	Budget (including amounts brought forward)	Actual expenditure	Variance between available budget and actual expenditure
COMMUNITY & RECREATION				
Community & Cultural Programs & Facilities	-	\$ 185,000	\$ 185,000	-
Sport, Recreation & Aquatic Facilities	\$ 327,000	\$ 320,581	\$ 241,718	\$ 78,863
SV 2015 BRING FORWARD PAYBACK				
Brought forward amount 2015-2016 repaid	-	\$ 561,074	\$ 561,074	-
SV 2015 TOTALS	\$ 5,453,686	\$ 6,483,418	\$ 5,330,664	\$ 1,152,754

Notes

Expenditure on special rate variation projects has been reduced slightly due to the requirement of paying back reserves for the projects that were brought forward ahead of schedule. However, the total special rate variation spend over 10 years has not changed. Furthermore, not all of the special rate variation funding in 2016-2017 could be spent as planned due to delays in the start or completion of projects, and unforeseen difficulties in finding the right resources at the right time. Part of the variance between available budget and actual expenditure was carried over to the next financial year and included in the 2017-2018 budget.



Swamp Symposium

Key Outcomes from Special Rate Variation 2015 Expenditure in 2016–2017

Environment and Culture Program

Blue Mountains residents consistently rate our local environment as one of the most important aspects of our City. The portion of the special rate variation allocated to the environment provides important funding to enable Council to manage and protect these natural assets, ensuring our status as a responsible City within a World Heritage Area.

Council uses special rate variation funds to support Aboriginal Traditional Owners in caring for their Country, protect creeks and waterways, control weeds and restore wildlife habitats, protect sites of cultural and historical value and to maintain and upgrade visitor facilities, such as local walking tracks and lookouts.

Council obtained approximately \$945,000 of grant funding in 2016-2017 through leverage of special variation funds allocated to the environment. This funding has been, or will be, used to control highly invasive weeds, restore areas of high conservation value on both public and private lands, and undertake significant upgrades to walking track systems.

Bushland management

Special variation funds assisted with the management of more than 6,000 hectares of bushland in the Blue Mountains Local Government Area. Priority actions including bush regeneration, wetland restoration, weed control, re-plantings, and sediment and erosion management works were undertaken in 132 reserves as part of the following landscape conservation programs:

- Lower Blue Mountains Shale–Sandstone Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program;
- Upper Blue Mountains Plateau Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program; and
- Sandstone Granite Landscape Biodiversity Conservation Program.



Green Stream Frog

These conservation programs improve the condition of important fauna habitat for threatened species such as the Powerful Owl in the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest, the endangered *Leucopogon fletcheri* in Winmalee, and the Blue Mountains Water Skink in swamp systems such as The Gully, South Katoomba, Wentworth Falls Lake, South Lawson Creek and Jamison Creek, Wentworth Falls.

Other key outcomes for 2016-2017 include:

- Soil conservation works as part of the restoration of degraded landscapes at North Katoomba and North Leura quarries, Knapsack Park, Glenbrook and East Blaxland, protecting downstream natural systems from erosion and sedimentation; and
- Revegetation works that restored wildlife corridors linking fragmented areas of native vegetation across nine degraded and eroding sites. Council also undertook conservation earthworks, track rationalisation and access management works on these sites. Key sites included Mount Boyce, Blackheath, North Leura and North Katoomba quarries, Knapsack Park, Glenbrook and East Blaxland.

Noxious and environmental weed control

As a City within a World Heritage Area National Park, controlling noxious and environmental weeds on private and public lands is a priority. Council undertook an Urban Weeds Public Lands Program targeting highly invasive weeds in urban areas across all townships across the Local Government Area, integrating this work with the private lands inspection program.

Key outcomes in 2016-2017 include:

- Undertaking 5,500 private property inspections as part of the city-wide Biodiversity Conservation Program. This program seeks to control highly invasive weed species to support the ongoing restoration of key conservation landscapes, and in particular the rare and threatened forests of the lower Blue Mountains and swamp systems in the upper Blue Mountains;
- Carried out 36 on-site visits to provide bushland conservation and weed management advice to residents as part of the Resident Weed Support program;
- Urban weeds staff continue to control invasive weeds in the agricultural landscape on public lands as well as undertaking a comprehensive property inspection program; and
- Extensive preparation to enable a seamless transition from the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* to the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, which commenced 1 July 2017, ensuring minimal disruption to weed control and compliance programs.

Natural area visitor facilities

Visitor facilities provide our residents with a significant recreation amenity, and are an essential commodity that makes the City a highly popular domestic and international tourism destination.

Key projects for 2016-2017 included:

- Replacement of walking track bridges on the Cataract Falls track at Lawson and the Charles Darwin walk at Wentworth Falls; and
- Upgrade of a swampy, eroded section of the Malvern Rd track in Leura with an elevated boardwalk.

Environmental education and engagement

This year over 825 students from 18 local schools and preschools participated in Connecting Kids to Nature. The program has a number of elements including:

- BioBlitz – Citizen Science:
- Bush Trackers:
- Mountains to Sea:
- Stormwater projects:
- Streamwatch program; and
- Connecting communities with local bushland reserves.

In addition to the special rate variation funding, Council secured a \$50,000 grant from the NSW Government's Environment Trust, which will help support the Connecting Kids to Nature Program for the next three years.

In 2017, Council released the *Blue Mountains Waterways Health Snapshot*. This is a user-friendly brochure aimed at making our water quality monitoring results more accessible to the community. The snapshot shows each sample waterway in the Blue Mountains, the catchment within which it flows, and its state of ecological health (rated Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor). The detailed 2017 Blue Mountains Waterways Health Report will be available online soon at www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/waterways

Aquatic monitoring and catchment health

In 2016-2017, we continued to implement the Aquatic Monitoring and Action Program with the support of special rate variation funding. This program enables collection, analysis and reporting on data to assess the health of the City's waterways and to prioritise sites for protection and restoration.

Key outcomes in 2016-2017 include:

- Commencement of a Blue Mountains Water Sensitive City Strategy, to be finalised in 2017-2018;
- Creekline and wetland restoration works and stormwater treatment works as part of the Riparian Protection and Restoration Program. These works utilised a range of soft and hard engineered treatments to address stormwater damage in creek and swamp systems between Blackheath and Glenbrook, including Katoomba Creek, Leura Falls Creek, Jamison Creek/Wentworth Falls Lake, Glenbrook Creek, Lapstone Creek, Knapsack Creek and Glenbrook Lagoon; and

- Aquatic macroinvertebrate and water quality sampling at 71 sites across the Local Government Area, to track waterway health and assist catchment prioritisation.

Connecting to Country program

The Connecting to Country program focuses on engaging with Traditional Owners – the Darug and Gundungurra peoples – and other Aboriginal communities, to support caring for Country.

In 2016-2017, further work was undertaken on:

- Building the relationship between the Darug Traditional Owner community and the Council with the intention of establishing meaningful opportunities for co-management of Country; and
- Developing Connecting to Country activities in consultation with Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal Advisory Council. It is envisaged that these activities will provide a range of cultural experiences for Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal community which enhance and consolidate knowledge, while providing opportunities for intergenerational learning.



Aquatic Monitoring

Inventory framework for heritage assets

Council has completed the first stage of an inventory framework, which has been developed for assets with heritage value. This will assist in the management of approximately 150 heritage items that are listed in the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2015. In addition, Council manages many more assets that may contain heritage values but do not have a statutory listing. The inventory has been developed by qualified heritage specialists. For high priority assets, it contains heritage maintenance schedules, estimated costings and longer-term strategic heritage conservation advice.

Civil Transport and Operations

In the 2016-2017 Road Reseal and Renewal Program, special variation funding was allocated to road shoulder renewal. The shoulder sealing program commenced late in the year and will continue into 2017-2018. This will have the long-term benefits of reducing maintenance, reducing risks to the public, improving road drainage and improving the aesthetic value of road assets.

Special variation funding has supported the creation and operation of a second heavy patch team, and as a result the heavy patch output increased from 3,600m² to 7,000m² per annum. The funding also enabled the commencement of a crack sealing treatment on our roads. This approach prolongs the life of the road assets.

An additional street sweeper, funded through the special rate variation, has achieved an additional 900,000m of street sweeping in 2016-2017, avoiding the impacts of debris entering the drainage system. Actively reducing the debris entering the drains will reduce the required frequency of pit cleaning.

Additional funding has been directed towards transport infrastructure inspections to ensure funding is targeted at reducing risks and the potential for local flooding. This will be a 20-30 year program to gather condition data for pipelines and improve data confidence. It will also work towards restoring the full function of our drainage system. A roads data project has also commenced, improving baseline and condition data to enable road pavement modelling for both short and long term road renewal programs.



Parke Street Roundabout

Waste and Cleansing Services

Improvements have been made to precinct cleansing with the establishment of an ongoing program of precinct pavement cleansing. This year the program has provided pressure cleaning of war memorials, the Echo Point precinct, Leura, Katoomba, Blackheath, Hazelbrook and Wentworth Falls town centres, and cyclic cleaning of the major tourism precincts.

Special variation funding has enabled additional cleaning of high-use sporting amenities during the winter months, as well as more frequent cleaning of Leura town centre public toilets. Additional maintenance services have been provided in the maintenance program for parks, town centres and roadside vegetation maintenance.

Other key outcomes from 2016-2017 include:

- **Town centre footpaths:** all town centre footpaths have been cleaned at least once, a total of 7,990m³;
- **Toilet blocks:** 49 toilet blocks have been cleaned, including footpath areas around the amenities;
- **Bus shelters:** 147 bus shelter have been cleaned, out of 170 bus shelters within the City;
- **Park shelters:** 10 park shelters have been cleaned; and
- **Recurring activities:** high traffic toilets at Studleigh Place in Katoomba, Leura village, Echo Point, Sutton Park in Blackheath and Bulls Camp, Woodford have been cleaned on a more regular basis, along with town centre areas and war memorials.



Talking rubbish with residents at Glenbrook's growers market

Infrastructure and Strategic Assets

Great Blue Mountains Trail

Design work commenced on the extension of the Great Blue Mountains Trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria. This project will include an upgrade of footpaths in Blackheath, construction of a new shared path beside the Great Western Highway and use of existing infrastructure, including parts of the old highway. It is part-funded by the special rate variation, with additional funding from NSW Government grants.

Pedestrian Access Mobility Program

Renewal and upgrade of footpaths and bike infrastructure was completed through the use of special variation funding in 2016-2017. Delivery of high priority infrastructure improvements in identified key locations across the City included kerb blisters, pathways, pedestrian crossings, ramps, warning signs, hand rails and pavement markings.

Walking track and lookout upgrades

The Reids Plateau walking track upgrade, reaching from the Duke and Duchess of York Lookout to Reids Plateau, is under construction and expected to be completed in December 2017. Works include a concrete path, floodlighting, under-rail lights and balustrading. These improvements are part of planned upgrades to the Grand Cliff Top Walk that are scheduled over two financial years.

Improvements to asset management

The Asset Management Improvement Program has delivered data collection and mapping for Civil (Transport and Stormwater) and Recreation assets, Natural Area Visitor Facilities and Fire Trails. This informed the development of an updated Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plans, and annual reporting for 2016-2017.

Buildings data collection

The majority of Council-owned buildings have now had detailed data collection on structure, condition and value. This has assisted in prioritising asset maintenance, prioritising upgrades to be delivered through the community facilities strategy, and improving risk management across the buildings portfolio. Data collection on the remaining buildings will continue into 2017-2018.

Strategic Outcomes and Projects

Capture and production of elevation data

This year, \$128,000 of special variation funds was allocated for the capture and production of elevation data, including building footprints and aerial imagery via a fly-over across the City. Once integrated with Council's map layers, this new data will enhance flood modelling and mapping of water catchments and bushfire risk zones, and aid in the 3D-visualisation and mapping of key town centres for improved urban planning.

4

Major Projects



This section outlines the progress in delivering the major projects of the Council during 2016-2017. Major projects are those one-off projects that have a significant capital investment, require significant staff resources or involve extensive community consultation, and are usually implemented over more than one financial year.



Southern Scenic Escarpment Program

The purpose of the Southern Scenic Escarpment Program is to revitalise existing visitor infrastructure, provide growth in the hospitality and tourism sector, increase the capacity of visitor infrastructure, improve functionality of facilities and provide a greater range of natural area visitor facilities.

During 2016-2017, upgrades were completed at the Katoomba Tourist Park. These upgrades supported Council's commitment to provide a high level of tourism infrastructure across the local government area and to maintain the quality of user experience in its tourist parks. The project included the supply and installation of three new standalone two-bedroom cabins, and an upgrade of the amenities block.

Construction of the Silvermist Car Park upgrade was completed in early 2017 as part of the Southern Scenic Escarpment Program. This project formalised what was previously a bare-earth parking area on the eastern side of Cliff Drive, Katoomba. The upgrade provided 15 additional parallel parking spaces, as well as a wide footpath for shared bike and pedestrian use. Some areas were mulched and planted with local native grasses to help minimise stormwater run-off.

The Reids Plateau Walking Track upgrade, reaching from the Duke and Duchess of York Lookout to Reids Plateau, is currently under construction and expected to be completed in December 2017. Works include a concrete path, floodlighting, under-rail lights and balustrading. These upgrades will help to activate this area for evening activities.

Design development was undertaken for the Echo Point Visitor Information Centre upgrade, with works to progress in 2017-2018. Echo Point is an Aboriginal Place with a strong, continuing cultural significance, and the first point of arrival for many visitors to the Blue Mountains. The upgrade will include an interpretive meeting space that can be used for informal seating, talks, events and future cultural tourism.

Design development was also undertaken for the Katoomba Falls Kiosk upgrade and extension, with submission of development applications expected in early 2017-2018. Situated in a prime location adjacent to Katoomba Falls and the Prince Henry Cliff Walk, extension of this heritage-listed facility will be orientated towards the Jamison Valley.



Southern Scenic Escarpment - New Cabins - Katoomba Tourist Park

Great Blue Mountains Trail

In 2016-2017, Council was successful in securing grant funding of \$257,523 through the NSW Government's Metropolitan Greenspace Program to continue the delivery of the Great Blue Mountains Trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria. This grant funding will be matched by an equal contribution from Council.

The vision for the Great Blue Mountains Trail is to develop a regional trail from east to west across the Blue Mountains ridgeline, accessible from all towns, villages and train stations along the way. Once completed, the trail will play an important role in meeting the growing demand for safe cycling facilities whilst providing a safe corridor connecting residents and tourists with town centres and natural bushland environments.

Construction of the initial section of the trail, between Katoomba and Blackheath, was completed in 2015. Now, through securing additional funding, the Council is able to extend the existing trail from Blackheath to Mt Victoria, via a mostly separated shared path along the eastern side of the Great Western Highway.

The trail will pass in front of Mt Boyce Nursery and behind the heavy vehicle weigh station before accessing the old Soldiers Pinch Highway alignment and then exiting at Brownstown Oval. From this point it will connect to the new shared path network being constructed as part of the Mt Victoria Safety Works being completed by the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).

The grant application was originally submitted based on an equal three-way funding split between Council, the NSW Department of Planning & Environment and the RM. However the RMS did not meet this contribution as planned and a variation to the application was submitted based on a reduced level of funding.

The changes required as a result of this decision are that existing paths that form part of the trail will remain as they are and will not be replaced with wider paths, and the specifications for new sections of the trail have been changed from asphalt to a two coat seal, similar to the Katoomba Blackheath section.

Design works progressed in 2016-2017 with works to commence through 2017-2018.



Great Blue Mountains Trail



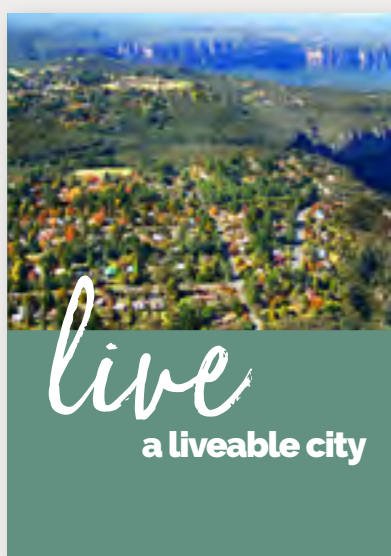
5

Progress Report on Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2016-2017



The Delivery Program and Operational Plan is the Council's response and commitment to implementing, within available resources, the priorities and aspirations of the Blue Mountains community as expressed in the City's Community Strategic Plan.

Section 5 presents service highlights and the results for service delivery performance measures for 2016-2017, across six key directions:





lead

inspiring leadership

together we lead

A sustainable city has inspiring community and civic leadership that acts responsibly in the broader interests.

It aspires to transform local communities into better places for current and future generations.

our aspirations and aims

We value our inspirational civic leadership whose stewardship and decision-making benefits present and future Blue Mountains residents.

Our leaders work together effectively with the community, local organisations and other levels of government to achieve a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains, environmentally, socially and economically.

**By 2035 we are a more sustainable,
successful and resilient Blue Mountains**

Elected a new Council

Council elections were held on 10 September 2016, resulting in the election of five new Councillors and seven Councillors re-elected from the previous term. At the first meeting of the new Council on 27 September 2016, Cr Mark Greenhill was elected as Mayor and Cr Chris Van der Kley was elected as Deputy Mayor, both for a term of two years. The results for each ward were:

- **Ward 1:**
Cr Don McGregor
Cr Kerry Brown
Cr Kevin Schreiber
- **Ward 2:**
Cr Romola Hollywood
Cr Chris Van der Kley
Cr Brent Hoare
- **Ward 3:**
Cr Mick Fell
Cr Daniel Myles
Cr Shae Foenander
- **Ward 4:**
Cr Mark Greenhill
Cr Brendan Christie
Cr Darryl Bowling

Councillor inductions were successfully completed during September and October 2016.

Engaged with community on Community Strategic Plan

In August 2016, a series of five area community workshops were held in Blackheath, Katoomba, Lawson, Springwood and Warrimoo. The aim of these workshops was to obtain feedback and input into the review and update of the Community Strategic Plan, and to better understand the priorities and aspirations of the community for the future of the Blue Mountains.

Each workshop was independently facilitated by IRIS Research, with a total of 130 residents attending across the five workshops. When asked to identify their top three priorities for action over the next 10 years, the most common responses were around improving housing affordability and diversity; protecting the environment and retaining our World Heritage Area; and improving public transport.

Strengthened Council's financial position

Council finished the 2016-2017 year in a strong financial position. In line with Fit for the Future targets, we delivered a surplus Operating Performance Result of \$6.2 million. Debt has been reduced ahead of projections, with a \$14.3 million reduction over four years from \$53 million to \$38.8 million, resulting in an annual borrowing cost reduction of \$1.2 million.

The preliminary end-of-year working capital is a healthy \$1.85 million, and we finished the year with a cash surplus of \$596k, mainly as a result of increased income generation from Visitor Information Centres, Tourist Parks, Development Applications and Road Restorations. These achievements have been made possible through the continued implementation of Council's *Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability* and the *Fit for the Future Action Plan*.

Progressed Regional Strategic Alliance

Blue Mountains formally entered into a Regional Strategic Alliance (RSA) with Penrith and Hawkesbury City Councils in August 2016. The RSA is an innovative and transformative approach by three forward thinking, passionate councils to change the face of collaboration in the sector. Deciding to align through a signed five-year formal agreement is an indication of the serious commitment these councils are making to achieve outcomes that will benefit their individual communities as well as the wider region.



Regional Strategic Alliance

Five stage one priority projects have been established across the following areas:

- Regional Asset Management;
- Regional Strategic Procurement;
- Regional Waste Management;
- Regional Tourism; and
- Regional Internal Audit.

Stage two projects have also been established in Customer Experience and Community Services.

Results to date include the establishment of multi-council strategic and operational working groups for each project, a joint tender for the hire of plant, receipt of funding for the establishment of a Regional Network on Employment for people with a disability (Nepean Jobs for All), joint training initiatives across the three councils, and the alignment of outsourced internal audits to reduce the spend across councils and create opportunities to benchmark results.

Endorsed State of City: End of Term Report

The State of City: End of Council Term Report 2012-2016 was endorsed at the final meeting of the outgoing Council on 23 August 2016. The report shows that substantial progress was made by the previous Council over its 2012-2016 term of office in delivering the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan and achieving the priority commitments and outcomes set through its annual strategic planning workshops.

Adopted new suite of Integrated Plans

Following extensive community consultation and research, the Council has developed a new suite of integrated plans which articulate our commitments for the next four and ten years, and set the framework for achieving a more sustainable, successful and resilient Blue Mountains. The integrated plans comprise:

- Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035;
- Resourcing Strategy 2017-2027;
- Delivery Program 2017-2021 and Operational Plan 2017-2018; and
- Fees and Charges 2017-2018.

These plans were adopted at the Council meeting of 27 June 2017 and inform the service delivery focus over the next Council term. When implemented together, they will ensure that the financial sustainability of the City is strengthened and the Council achieves required Fit for the Future benchmarks while meeting the needs of the community through best value service delivery.

Endorsed Strategic Priorities for 2017-2021

At the Councillor strategic workshops held in November 2016 and March 2017 the Council identified the following four-year Strategic Priority Outcomes as its major focus and commitment for 2017-2021:

Priority 1: Improve approach to asset management to support delivery of the Council's commitments to Fit for the Future targets, the State Government's expectations for councils and support value for money services to the community.

Priority 2: Deliver the Council's Fit for the Future targets – maintaining the Best Value Decision Making Frame to maximise the outcomes for the community from special rate variation income.

Priority 3: Commence the strategic review of the service levels that the Council provides to inform future decision making and priorities.

Priority 4: Increase focus and priority on Business Improvement and Innovation to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

Priority 5: Position the Council to be more proactive in communicating and engaging with the community on the business of the Council.

Priority 6: Develop a strategic approach to tourism and the visitor economy that also addresses the increased visitation, local community and funding options.

Hosted Sustainable Blue Mountains Together Community Forum

On 18 February 2017, the Sustainable Blue Mountains Together Community Forum was held at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub. This full day event brought together key decision-makers from across the Blue Mountains to review our progress over the last four years and consider our priority focus going forward.

A total of 120 people attended, representing 60 different organisations. In addition to organisational representation, there were a number of residents randomly-selected by IRIS Research from each of the five Council Planning Areas. The forum provided an opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft Community Strategic Plan objectives and strategies.

Released 2016 Community Survey results

The 2016 Community Survey results were reported to the Council on 26 July 2016. This survey, independently conducted by IRIS research, is used to assess community satisfaction with the overall performance and service delivery of the Council and to inform future planning priorities.

The results of the 2016 survey indicated a high level of satisfaction with Council service delivery. Overall satisfaction with Council performance has been on an upward trend ever since the survey first began in 1996.

In addition, satisfaction with Councillor performance has increased to a new high, continuing the strong upward trend since 2004.

Continued advocacy on Western Sydney Airport proposal

The Council continued to make representations to Commonwealth Government politicians and senior public servants on the issues and impacts of the proposed airport. The Western Sydney Airport Mayoral Reference Group met regularly to discuss emerging matters, and representatives were nominated for the Australian Government's Forum on Western Sydney Airport.

On Saturday 15 October 2016, Council hosted a public meeting at Glenbrook to discuss the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the airport proposal. Nearly 500 community members attended and heard from a number of elected representatives from across political parties who were in agreement with the community's criticism of the final EIS and their opposition to the airport proposal.

Community members spoke of key concerns including aircraft noise, air quality and greenhouse gases, human health, traffic and transport, airspace architecture and operation, landscape and visual amenity, the consultation process, socio-economic effects and irreversible environmental impacts to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Coordinated Asset Management Improvement Program

The Asset Management Improvement Program is well underway with various projects currently being undertaken in collaboration with numerous teams across Council. The program has focussed initially on data collection, condition assessments and identifying critical projects for the next four years. This information will be built upon during 2017-2018, with a full revaluation of infrastructure assets to align with delivered service levels and to model the long-term investment requirements for Council assets.

Contributed to Western Sydney City Deal

In October 2016, the State and Federal Governments agreed to work together with local governments in the development of City Deals across NSW, starting with Western Sydney. These City Deals formalise the partnership across the three levels of government and define priorities, actions, timeframes and accountabilities for achieving joint goals.

Blue Mountains is one of eight Western Sydney councils included in the Western Sydney City Deal. These councils have been working together to identify the major issues for the region and determine governance arrangements for potential funding. The City Deal provides a unique opportunity for the region and offers a new approach for local government to be a partner and have a say in the approach to planning, infrastructure, investment and governance.

Advocated for the Blue Mountains

Council made a comprehensive submission to the Greater Sydney Commission on its regional plan – *Towards a Greater Sydney 2056* – and on the draft West District Plan. The 24-page submission documented the needs of the Blue Mountains so that we're in a better position to compete for City Deal funds and to attract future grant funding. Council also encouraged residents, community groups and businesses in the Blue Mountains to make their own submissions.

In June 2017, Council made a submission to the NSW Legislative Council Inquiry into Regional Development and a Global Sydney. The inquiry provided an opportunity to make recommendations on how the Blue Mountains can benefit from Sydney as a global city, as well as ensure that the Blue Mountains retains those characteristics that distinguish it from the greater Sydney Region.

Increased use of social media

Over the past 12 months Council has significantly increased its use of social media as a means of engaging and connecting with community. Facebook posts are used to provide regular information about upcoming events and public exhibitions, and to provide tips for accessing services. It is also now possible to follow @BlumtsCtyCncl on Twitter for live tweets from Council Meetings, with a summary of decisions available on Facebook soon after each meeting.

Listened to our residents

In 2016-2017 Council listened and responded to our residents in a range of ways including:

- Responding to 89,753 telephone calls through the Council's Customer Service Call Centres;
- Serving 30,929 Council customers at our Katoomba and Springwood Customer Service Centres;
- Serving an additional 34,474 'Service NSW' customers at our Katoomba Office; and
- Responding to 16,140 logged Customer Service Requests.

The Council communicated, consulted and listened to the community through:

- Council Meetings and Councillor Briefings;
- The Blue Mountains City Council website;
- The quarterly Community Newsletter sent to all ratepayers;
- The Blue Mountains Gazette;
- Community forums, workshops and public meetings;
- Resident and ratepayer surveys;
- Public exhibitions of plans and project initiatives; and
- The Blue Mountains Have Your Say website - an online forum for the community to provide feedback to the Council on key projects, initiatives and issues.



Sustainable Blue Mountains Together Community Forum











lead Performance Measure Results

The Council has committed to a number of quadruple bottom line performance measures to track how sustainable we are as an organisation. The information below presents the results of the organisational sustainability performance measures, as at 30 June 2017.



The following key has been used:

Service Performance Measure Results	
Target achieved	✓ ✓
Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	✓
Target not achieved	○

Governance – Good Customer Service

Service Performance Measure Results	
 A rating of 3.5 (out of 5) for overall community satisfaction with the Council's performance	 A rating of 3.8 (out of 5) for overall community satisfaction with staff performance
 A rating of 3.7 (out of 5) for overall community satisfaction with Councillor performance – the highest result to date for this measure	 A rating of 3.3 (out of 5) for overall community perception of value for money against services received
 92% of telephone calls resolved in the first call to the Customer Contact Centre	 69% of calls picked up within 20 seconds at the Customer Contact Centre (compared with 80% target)
 87% of General customer service requests completed according to customer service standards	 93% of Councillor customer service requests completed according to customer service standards
 96% of Council resolutions completed according to agreed timeframes	 93% of correspondence responses completed according to customer service standards

Environment – Reduced Resource Consumption

Service Performance Measure Results	
 1% reduction in Council fuel consumption (compared with a target of 5%)	 1.6% reduction in Council paper usage (compared with a target of 5%)



Area Community Workshops - Warrimoo

Social – a Safe, Skilled and Diverse Workforce

Service Performance Measure Results	
<p>○</p> <p>54% employee engagement (compared with a target of 66%)</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>6.9% staff turnover</p>
<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>95% employee attendance</p>	<p>○</p> <p>17.6 lost time injuries per million hours worked</p>

Financial – a Financially Sustainable Council

Service Performance Measure Results	
<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>\$6.2 million surplus Operating Result (excluding capital items and including depreciation)</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>2.3x Unrestricted Current Ratio</p>
<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>8.2% Debt Service Ratio</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>80.1% Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio</p>
<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>\$1.85 million Unrestricted Working Capital</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>3.4% Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding</p>



protect

**an environmentally
responsible city**

together we protect

An environmentally responsible city is concerned with the human impact on the natural environment and how resources are used. The natural environment is valued for its intrinsic nature and role in maintaining all forms of life.

With an awareness of global and local issues, the City respects, conserves and restores the environment and avoids development in areas which are ecologically sensitive.

The importance of retaining natural areas within the urban footprint is understood.

our aspirations and aims

As a City surrounded by a World Heritage National Park, we strive to minimise the impact of our urban footprint on the natural environment and to be a model for sustainable living.

Living in harmony with the environment, we care for the ecosystems and habitats that support life. We look after, enjoy and actively manage the healthy creeks and waterways, diverse flora and fauna and clean air and fertile soil.

In response to climate change, we have developed strategies to prepare, adapt and build resilience to likely impacts. We have become a leader in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and increasing our use of renewable energies. We aim to conserve energy and the natural resources we use.

By 2035 we are a more environmentally responsible City

Improved resource recovery and reduced waste to landfill

The introduction of a new waste service for households on 4 July 2016 has significantly reduced waste to landfill, with garden vegetation being collected for recycling for the first time. There has been a 28% reduction in waste to landfill from households and close to \$1.9 million saved in disposal costs. The new green waste collection service has seen in excess of 7,000 tonnes diverted from landfill, with extremely low rates of contamination.

Operation of the newly upgraded Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility has also seen the introduction of computer and television recycling and polystyrene recycling.

Recognised for environmental excellence

We have been recognised as a leader in environmental management, coming away with multiple accolades from the 2016 NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards.

Blue Mountains was a joint winner with several other Western Sydney councils for the Climate Change Action Award. This was in recognition of the work undertaken as part of the Light Years Ahead Project which replaced almost 15,000 high-emission mercury vapour streetlights with energy-efficient LED lighting. In the Blue Mountains, 662 street lights were replaced, achieving a 77 per cent saving in electricity costs.

Council was also part of the winning group in the Natural Environment Policies, Planning and Decision-Making category, for the Sydney Peri Urban Network of Councils for Sydney Food Futures Project. This project modelled and mapped the impact of future urban growth scenarios on Sydney's food production to show spatial impacts of urban growth.

The Leura Falls Catchment Improvement Project received a Highly Commended in the Natural Environment Protection and Enhancement: On-Ground Works category. This work was done in partnership with Water NSW and involved construction of stormwater quality treatment systems at key locations within the Leura Falls catchment to protect Sydney's drinking water supply.

Adopted Carbon Abatement Action Plan

The Carbon Abatement Action Plan and Investment Plan initiative was adopted by the Council in June 2017 to improve our response and leadership in carbon reduction. It provides a strategic approach to identifying, evaluating and funding long-term CO2 reduction by establishing a revolving fund to reduce emissions by 20% over five years.

The Council also approved the investment of up to \$425,000 in carbon reduction projects from the revolving fund for 2017-2018, including installation of solar systems at various facilities, upgrades to lighting at the Katoomba Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility, and recommended upgrades to both Springwood and Katoomba Aquatic and Leisure Centres.

Celebrated 10-year anniversary of Council's Swamp Care Program

The 10-year anniversary of Council's innovative Swamp Care and Save our Swamps Programs was celebrated via a Swamp Symposium on 21 June 2017. This one-day conference attracted 65 attendees, and highlighted the significant and award-winning achievements of the dedicated Swamp Care volunteers who have collectively contributed over 10,000 hours towards protecting the endangered Blue Mountains swamps.

One of these Council-supported groups, Garguree Swampcare, recently won the prestigious Indigenous Land Management Award from the Greater Sydney Local Land Services for their hard work over many years to restore the The Gully ecosystem to its natural state and share cultural knowledge and practice.



Drain Stencilling Project - Katoomba Public School



Managed invasive weeds

Council undertook an Urban Weeds Public Lands Program targeting highly invasive weeds in urban areas across all townships across the Local Government Area, integrating this work with the private lands inspection program. In 2016-2017, Council performed 5,500 private property inspections as part of the City-wide Biodiversity Conservation Program. This program seeks to control highly invasive weed species to support the ongoing restoration of key conservation landscapes and, in particular, the rare and threatened forests of the lower Blue Mountains and swamp systems in the upper Blue Mountains.

Began development of Water Sensitive City Strategy

Council is currently preparing an integrated approach to water management that considers all aspects of the water cycle. This includes water supply, maintaining and enhancing the health of our waterways, mitigating the impacts of stormwater and urban runoff, and sustainably managing wastewater and groundwater. This strategy will seek to identify actions that generate multiple benefits that ultimately enhance the liveability of the Blue Mountains through innovative water sensitive urban design.

Supported community conservation programs

The Community Conservation Program delivered 10,471 volunteer hours during 2016-2017 for maintaining natural areas and walking tracks through Bushcare, Trackcare and Cragcare Programs. In June 2017, over 4 tonnes of sandstone and 1.5 tonnes of steel were heli-lifted into Centennial Glen at Blackheath as part of the Trackcare Program. These materials will help with walking track repair, erosion control and stabilisation works, as well as supporting volunteers from the climbing community.

Enhanced turtle habitat at Glenbrook Lagoon

Upgrades to stormwater basins around Glenbrook Lagoon are now complete, including homes for turtles. The eastern stormwater basin was the last to be upgraded in late 2016, after the lagoon water levels dropped enough for contractors to reshape the basin and introduce layers of sand, gravel and plants that will help purify stormwater before it flows to the lagoon.

Council is trying to establish and maintain turtle habitat at Glenbrook Lagoon to help protect and enhance turtle breeding areas. We are also looking at other ways to provide habitat for turtles at Glenbrook Lagoon, including using innovative "floating wetland" technology to outfox the foxes and protect turtle nests from predation.

Hosted catchment education day

A catchment education day was held with the students of Katoomba Public School (Squid Squad) at Leura Falls Creek in July 2016. This creek feeds the iconic Leura Cascades and flows into Warragamba Dam, which is Sydney's largest drinking water supply. The students surveyed litter being captured by the newly installed Stormwater Quality Improvement Device (SQUID), tested water quality in the creek and learnt how the creek is under pressure from pollution, litter and sediment from Katoomba township.

Raised concerns over pollution threats to Coxs River

Council wrote to the Minister for Planning, the Premier of NSW and the Local Member for the Blue Mountains expressing concern at the application made by Centennial Coal that would relax the licence conditions of its Springvale mine operations near Lithgow. The application proposed to delay Centennial Coal's order to eliminate toxicity from wastewater discharges into the Coxs River until mid-2019. The Coxs River flows through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and is the second largest supply of water to Lake Burragorang and Warragamba Dam. Peak environment groups suggested the toxicity and volume of the proposed mine discharge would kill most aquatic life in the river.

Trialled compost hubs

During 2016-2017, Council launched a trial compost hub, which links non-composting households with those that do compost. This program was developed in response to a recent waste audit that showed that approximately 26% of waste collected from household garbage bins is food waste that could be avoided or composted. For an average household, that equates to about 2kg each week and up to \$1,000 thrown away per year. By recycling organic waste in a compost bin, we can help to preserve our environment, increase the lifespan of the Blaxland landfill, recycle nutrients and improve our gardens.

Hosted workshop on wildlife management

Council hosted and facilitated a workshop on wildlife management in May 2017. The purpose of the workshop was to facilitate a discussion between interested organisations and agencies to explore how there might be better collaboration to improve outcomes for urban wildlife in the Blue Mountains.

The workshop was well received and well attended, with representatives present from the University of Western Sydney, Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Blue Mountains Wildlife Information and Rescue Service, Katoomba Vets, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, NSW Office of Environment & Heritage, NSW Local Land Services and RailCorp.

Connected kids with nature

During 2016-2017, we engaged more than 825 students from 18 local schools and preschools in 39 separate environmental education and engagement events across the Blue Mountains. These programs support our young people to live responsibly in our City within a World Heritage Area.

The Connecting Kids with Nature Program included Bioblitz activities, the Bush Trackers program, stormwater projects, and a new project – Mountains to Sea – being developed in partnership with the Nature Conservation of NSW, which guides students along the water journey from the top of the catchment here in the Blue Mountains, through to where the rivers join the sea.



Glenbrook Public School Stormwater Project



New Waste Service

protect Performance Measure Results

The Council has committed to a number of performance measures to track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of the service delivery outputs and standards, and the community perceptions of service performance. The information below presents the results of the community survey and service delivery performance measures for the PROTECT Key Direction, as at 30 June 2017.

The following key has been used:

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
High Satisfaction ★ ★ ★	Target achieved ✓ ✓
Medium Satisfaction ★ ★	Target almost achieved (within ±10%) ✓
Low Satisfaction ★	Target not achieved ○

Natural Environment

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
★ ★ • Protection of natural bushland • Clean creeks and waterways • Bush regeneration	✓ ✓ 6,400 hectares of native habitat was subject to active restoration or rehabilitation programs
★ • Weed control	✓ ✓ 52% of waterways monitored for water health recorded 'good-very good' SIGNAL-SF scores
	✓ 10,471 hours of participation in Council-supported community conservation programs including Bushcare, Landcare, Trackcare, Swampcare and Streamwatch (compared with a target of 11,500 hours)

Waste Resource Management

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
★ ★ ★ • Wheelie Bin garbage collection • Wheelie Bin recycling service	✓ ✓ 3,096,308m ³ gas flared at Blaxland Waste Management Facility, meaning less greenhouse gases released to the atmosphere
★ ★ • Waste Management Facilities at Blaxland and Katoomba	✓ ✓ A significant reduction in total waste to landfill per capita (including domestic, commercial and construction/demolition waste) from 575kg/person in 2015-2016 to 517kg/person in 2016-2017
	✓ ✓ A significant reduction in total material disposed of per capita (including recycling, landfill, illegal dumping etc.) from 889kg/person in 2015-2016 to 838kg/person in 2016-2017



Glenbrook Public School Stormwater Project

Water Resource Management

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
<p>★★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of stormwater and drainage 	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>100% of Development Application referrals assessed for compliance with water sensitive urban design principles, and new infrastructure projects assessed as required</p>
	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>2,951 stormwater pits cleaned</p>



care

**an inclusive, healthy
and vibrant city**

together we care

An inclusive healthy and vibrant city is concerned with the well-being of all residents.

It plans for and meets diverse needs, providing people with access to the basic resources required to live. Diversity enriches the city and makes it more exciting and vibrant. The fair distribution of resources fosters a stable and healthy community. Better health for all is promoted through preventative action and early intervention, provision of accessible local health services and through supporting people to live active, healthy lifestyles. Sustainable food initiatives that improve access to fresh local produce are supported. Community expression, creativity and cultural development are encouraged. Learning is understood to be a life-long enriching process.

our aspirations and aims

We value our strong connected and inclusive communities that support people throughout their lives, from childhood to old age. Blue Mountains people have fair and equitable access to essential services and facilities.

We have safe, healthy environments in which people of all ages, abilities and socio-economic backgrounds can live, work and play. Our residents have access to a range of housing that meets diverse needs and is affordable. Our ageing population is cared for and supported. We have stemmed the outflow of younger people from the City through provision of exciting opportunities for working and learning. Building on our rich cultural heritage and inspirational unique natural environment, we are a recognised centre of culture and creativity.

**By 2035 we are a more inclusive,
healthy and vibrant City**

Improved local emergency management

Council has improved local emergency management capabilities by installing new, state of the art technology in the Blue Mountains Emergency Operations Centre, ready for activation at any time during the upcoming bush fire season. The centre operates as a multi-agency facility, and is managed by a senior representative of the NSW Police Force with support from Council. The upgrades were developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including the Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and NSW Police Force.

In addition, the Springwood Country Club now has a new dam, constructed by Council, that is ready for use by firefighting aircraft during bushfire emergencies. This project, which was made possible through the combination of NSW Government funding, Council expertise and the Club's support, has enhanced the emergency services capabilities of the Blue Mountains.

Completed upgrades to Lawson Community Hall

Council has completed the finishing touches on the upgrade of Lawson Community Hall, which can now host bigger groups in the historic multi-purpose Mid Mountains venue. The hall has a new portico entrance with accessible ramp, new carpark that accommodates up to 100 people and includes landscaping and stormwater treatment, new accessible toilet, and a further upgrade of the back room.

Recognised as Best Family Day Care Service in NSW

Blue Mountains Family Day Care was awarded the Family Day Care Australia 2016 NSW Service of the Year for excellence in family day care service provision. This service provides support, training, service development and compliance monitoring for registered educators. The educators operate their services from their own homes, providing accredited, high-quality early childhood education and care.

The passion and dedication of Blue Mountains Family Day Care has been demonstrated by the number of innovative programs they have been at the forefront of developing. One initiative has been the introduction of educators working together to provide a service. This collegiate approach has many benefits for children, families and educators. It has proved to be an effective way of maximising care provision across the week for families as well as being an advantage to educators, enabling them to support each other when they take holidays or sick leave. A relief educator service for families and educators has also been introduced, which ensures educators can have a break while their service continues to operate and children and families have consistent care available in the educator's home. In 2016-2017 the Council's Family Day Care Service supported our local community through provision of a total of 42,000 hours of child care and education.



Lawson Hall



Excellence in Family Day Care Award Ceremony

Adopted Blue Mountains Ageing Strategy

The Blue Mountains City Council Ageing Strategy 2017-2027 was adopted by the Council on 27 June 2017. This strategy has been developed to proactively plan for the delivery of required services, facilities and actions to address the needs of our ageing population over the next 10 years. The development of the strategy was initiated by Council, with significant collaboration from older residents and service providers across the Blue Mountains.

The strategy provides a blueprint to address priority needs across the City. It will assist in delivering suitable services and infrastructure, while directing resources strategically to meet the diverse needs of older people. Some of the actions are in direct accordance with Council's current Delivery Program, while others will require new collaborative partnerships with external stakeholders and the community.

Commenced upgrade to Wentworth Falls Lake

Design development was undertaken for the Wentworth Falls Lake upgrade, after successfully securing \$652,774 in grant funding. This project will include the construction of an accessible walking track, new toilet facilities, improved car and bus parking, and the installation of interpretive signage. The new boardwalk and viewing platform will allow visitors to appreciate more of the lake's beautiful vistas, without damaging the sensitive vegetation of the endangered Blue Mountains swamp community at the western end of the lake.

Hosted Project NOW: Youth Congress

In September 2016, the Council hosted 50 young people from across the City for the three-day Project Now Youth Congress. The event was held in partnership with OzGreen and saw the group enjoy a stimulating program of activities with a focus on environmental and social justice concerns.

A total of \$6,000 funding was shared between the following four projects, which have since become a reality through the hard work of these motivated young residents.

- The Refugees and Youth Creating Connective Communities Project connected young Blue Mountains residents with refugees in Australia through a pen pal program.
- Youth Summit Radio has created a radio program to promote youth bands and local music on the local community station Radio Blue Mountains.
- The Food Forest Project has established a community garden for the Lower Mountains behind the Mountains Youth Services Team building in Manners Park, Springwood.
- One Planet Week has encouraged and educated the community to be mindful of our use of natural resources and suggested ways we can reduce our carbon footprint.



Engaged with Traditional Owners

Council further built its relationship with the Darug Traditional Owner community through the Connecting to Country program. The Visiting Country program was held over two days and involved members of the Darug community, from a range of life stages, connecting with their Country through visiting Council-managed reserves. One of the aims of this program was to establish meaningful opportunities for co-management of Country between Council and the Darug community.

Further work was undertaken on developing Connecting to Country activities in consultation with Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal Advisory Council. It is envisaged that these activities will provide a range of cultural experiences for Traditional Owners and the Aboriginal community which will enhance and consolidate knowledge while providing opportunities for intergenerational learning.

Installed new play equipment at Blaxland Oval Park

Council installed new Moduplay playground equipment at Blaxland Oval. The new play equipment meets the community vision for the Blaxland Oval precinct which includes partial wheelchair access, reuse of the existing spinner and swings, and complements the retained equipment for younger children. Blaxland Oval is one of a number of playgrounds across the City upgraded by Council in the last year, particularly by way of replacing soft fall under and surrounding play equipment.

Delivered an exciting range of arts and cultural experiences

The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub continue to thrive. These venues have vastly increased the opportunities for arts and cultural experiences in the Blue Mountains for local residents and visitors alike, and have contributed to the economic prosperity of the region.

In its fifth year of operation, the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre has established itself as a premier regional gallery space that attracts more than 110,000 visitors per annum. In 2016-2017, the Cultural Centre was successful in obtaining \$76,000 of grant funding from the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program for a regional tour of a popular printmaking exhibition. *As Far As The Eye Can See* features seven Blue Mountains artists and will tour nine venues around Australia over a period of two years, showcasing the artistic vibrancy of the Blue Mountains region to a national audience.

The Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub has expanded its operation during 2016-2017, with a diverse program of 112 events held during the year, attracting more than 40,000 attendees.

Renewed walking tracks

Council completed footbridge replacement on walking tracks at Fairy Bower Reserve, Mt Victoria and Cataract Creek, South Lawson. Construction of a new 20m elevated boardwalk at Malvern Rd, Leura was completed to protect sensitive swamp ecosystems, and unplanned works were completed for the remediation and re-opening of Prince Henry Cliff Walk, Leura following a significant landslide.

Provided a vibrant public library service

More than half of the people in the Blue Mountains are active library members. Council libraries continue to provide a vibrant and accessible library and information service, with more than 42,000 information requests answered during the year, and more than half a million library loans processed. In 2016-2017, the City had 43,400 library members and a total of 458,000 visitors to libraries.

In 2016-2017, Council libraries hosted a wide variety of events, boasting more than 18,000 participants. This represents a substantial increase on the previous year. Events included:

- Poetry Under the Stars (5th annual event with approximately 250 attendees);
- Tech Connect sessions at Springwood, Katoomba and Blaxland Libraries;
- National Simultaneous Storytime;
- Seniors Internet training;
- The Great Dragon Detective Quest, in partnership with the Children's Book Council of Australia;
- International Games Day;
- NAIDOC week exhibition;
- Mountains of Stories writing workshops; and
- *Books to Die For: Crime Writing Forum*, hosted at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub, with four authors and 60 attendees.

The Writers Journey was a significant seminar held in May 2017 in conjunction with Varuna Writers House and the Sydney Writers Festival. This event sold out well in advance and attracted positive feedback from both the panellists and the audience of approximately 80 people.

The Summer Reading Challenge for 2016-2017 saw an impressive 563 children participate in the program and 11,220 books read. This year also saw the launch of eMagazines, making available 68 titles that can be borrowed concurrently, covering a broad range of topics.

Secured grant funding for community facilities

Each year, Council provides support to a variety of community organisations that are seeking NSW Government funding to improve community facilities. Many of these organisations provide services from Council-owned facilities. Council assists with the grant application process through a variety of ways, such as preparing letters of support and consent, helping to scope projects and providing project management support.

The State Government recently announced successful projects for the 2016-2017 financial year, with nine projects across the City granted funding. These projects benefit diverse community facilities and services, including sporting facilities, arts and cultural facilities, nature-based recreation, and community services such as childcare and preschools. This year, Council supported applications for almost \$120,000 of funded projects and looks forward to their successful implementation.



Shipley Rural Fire Service Station

Rebuilt Shipley Rural Fire Brigade Station

Construction of a new station building for the Shipley Rural Fire Brigade was completed during 2016-2017. The previous station was damaged by storms about a decade ago, and since then the brigade has used other facilities as a temporary base. Funded by the Rural Fire Service (RFS), and delivered by Council, this project supports volunteer firefighters to undertake the important work they do to protect our local community.

Development applications were also approved for work at Blaxland RFS and Lawson RFS stations.

Extended celebrations for Blue Mountains seniors

Council, in partnership with local community services, hosted an action-packed program for the 2017 NSW Seniors Festival in March. Seniors in the Blue Mountains enjoyed a month-long program of events rather than the traditional single week program. The festival offered a range of activities and events from concerts and film entertainment, to fitness and gardening activities. Council also hosted the annual Blue Mountains Seniors Festival Recognition Awards at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood as part of the festival.

Endorsed the Disability Inclusion Action Plan for public exhibition

The draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan was developed during 2016-2017 and endorsed by the Council for public exhibition in June 2017. The plan provides a whole-of-city approach to effectively plan for, and deliver on, the diverse needs of people with disability in our community, providing opportunities to live, work and play in the Blue Mountains. Implementation of the plan requires collaboration between all service providers in the local government area, including Council, community, the non-government sector and other levels of government.

Improved sportsground car parking

The Council has adopted traffic and parking plans for Warrimoo, Lapstone and Knapsack Ovals to increase car parking spaces and improve public safety at these busy sports precincts.

Council completed upgrades to the carpark at the Lapstone Oval and netball precinct in March 2017. These works included formalising the existing unformed carpark and construction of additional car parking facilities. Savings made from the in-house delivery of this project were reallocated to the construction of new parking areas at Warrimoo Oval, which has also been identified as a high priority site.

Showcased achievements of the Aboriginal Advisory Council

The Aboriginal Advisory Council (AAC) held a community forum in November 2016 to showcase the achievements of their strategic plan 2013-2016. Community members who were present at the forum showed support for the volume of work and outcomes achieved by the AAC during their four-year term. This positive meeting set a strong sense of optimism for the newly elected AAC.

Completed upgrade to Chalmers Lookout

An upgrade to Chalmers Lookout, Glenbrook was completed with assistance from grant funding. This popular spot provides stunning views over Glenbrook Gorge, but like many other lookouts in the Blue Mountains it presents a challenge for standard construction equipment. Council staff took an innovative approach, including the use of a lightweight aluminium gantry used in the mining industry, to manoeuvre half tonne sandstone blocks into place without damaging the bushland. The project improved the viewing platform, replaced the safety railing, formalised the natural stairs, and installed sandstone block seats to admire the view.

Provided leisure opportunities for residents and visitors

Five aquatic and leisure centres are provided across the Blue Mountains. Year-round centres are provided at Katoomba, Springwood and Glenbrook and seasonal pools are provided at Blackheath, Katoomba and Lawson. The Aquatic and Leisure Centres provide a range of leisure opportunities that improve the wellbeing of the Blue Mountains community.

During 2016-2017 the Council's Leisure Centres:

- Provided community space and activities that were enjoyed 530,467 times by community members and visitors;
- Offered discounted Learn to Swim lessons, in conjunction with the Adam Crouch Foundation, to get kids water safe for summer;

- Secured an \$8,000 Staying Alive Grant to improve the health and fitness of people over 50 years of age, and to engage the Indigenous community;
- Provided lessons for more than 8,500 students at Glenbrook, Springwood and Katoomba pools through the Swim School Program;
- Held free community open days at each centre;
- Encouraged participation in indoor sports such as swimming, basketball, soccer, tumbling, trampolining and roller derby;
- Connected community members through morning teas and social activities; and
- Attracted more than 60,000 visits over the year through our group fitness program.

Supported the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia

Council, in partnership with the local community and key community organisations, hosted the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) event at Civic Place, Katoomba in May 2017. The Council also provided \$2,000 to assist with event preparations, delivery and promotion. This year, in addition to the flag-raising ceremony, the former Justice of the High Court of Australia, Mr Michael Kirby, addressed the event.

The hosting of the IDAHOT event enables the Council and community alike to have a greater understanding of the issues of discrimination experienced by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) community. It is also an opportunity for the LGBTIQ community to celebrate their sexual preference and to feel a sense of belonging in the Blue Mountains community.



IDAHOT Flag Raising Ceremony



Landmarks Exhibition at Blue Mountains Cultural Centre

Recognised outstanding citizens

Three local citizens were recognised for their outstanding contribution to the community at the 2017 Blue Mountains Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony. In addition, we welcomed more than 50 residents from 22 countries as new Australian citizens.

The recipients of the 2017 Blue Mountains Australia Day Awards were:

- **Citizen of the Year:**
Helen Walker – founder of Great Community Transport;
- **Young Citizen of the Year:**
Samuel Quinteros – inspirational young artist and rising star in the international arts world; and
- **Sportsperson of the Year:**
Joanne Brischetto – trail runner dedicated to increasing women's participation in the sport and encouraging children to be more active and enjoy the outdoors.

Delivered City of the Arts Trust grants program

Eight Blue Mountains artists and arts organisations have delivered projects in 2016-2017 that were funded from the Council's 2016 City of the Arts Trust grant program. The successful projects incorporated a range of art forms including theatre, music, choral, storytelling, writing, illustration, visual arts and digital/sound media. Projects included *Culturescape*, involving the projection of digital artistic animations onto the façade of the iconic Carrington Hotel in Katoomba, and *Sensory Concerts*, presented by a local musician in a space specifically designed for children with special sensory needs.

Celebrated NAIDOC week

Council, together with the Aboriginal Advisory Council and the Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre, hosted a range of events for NAIDOC week to celebrate and highlight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture, history and achievements. The theme for 2016 was *Songlines: The living narrative of our nation*. In addition to the annual flag-raising and awards ceremony, a community day was held in The Gully Aboriginal Place.



Smoking Ceremony for NAIDOC in the Gully

care Performance Measure Results

The Council has committed to a number of performance measures to track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of the service delivery outputs and standards, and the community perceptions of service performance. The information below presents the results of the community survey and service delivery performance measures for the CARE Key Direction, as at 30 June 2017.

The following key has been used:

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
High Satisfaction ★ ★ ★	Target achieved ✓ ✓
Medium Satisfaction ★ ★	Target almost achieved (within ±10%) ✓
Low Satisfaction ★	Target not achieved ○

Aquatic and Leisure Centres

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
★ ★ ★ • Swimming pools and leisure centres	<div> <div> ✓ ✓ 530,467 visitors to aquatic and leisure centres (representing a 10% increase on 2015-2016) </div> <div> ✓ Compliance with Royal Life Saving Association pool safety audits – 86% average across all pools (compared with a target of 90%) </div> </div> <div> ✓ ✓ Customer satisfaction with aquatic and leisure centres met industry standards – a rating of 5.8 for indoor facilities and 6.5 for outdoor facilities </div>

Community Development

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
★ ★ • Services and facilities for children and families • Services and facilities for older people • Services that support the local Aboriginal community • Services and facilities for people with a disability • Community centres and halls ★ • Services and facilities for young people	Not applicable



Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub

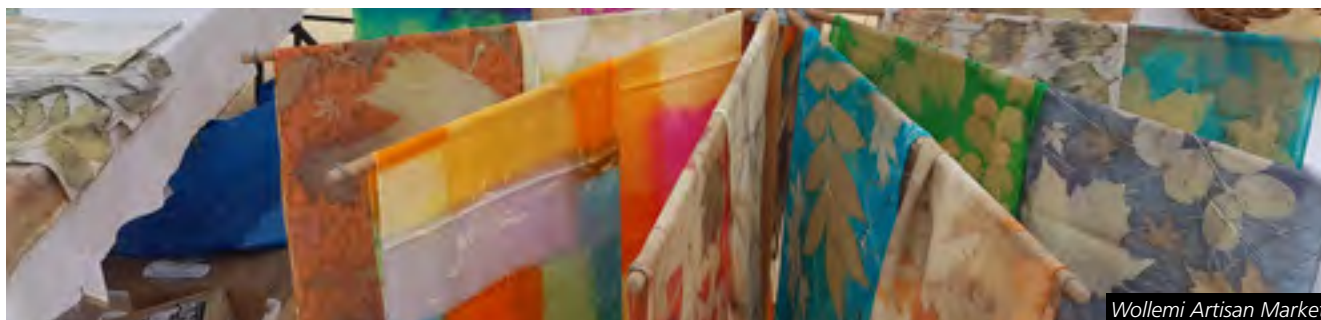
Cultural Development

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results	
★ ★ ★ • Cultural and arts facilities	✓ ✓ All City of the Arts Trust grants acquittals successfully delivered by June 2017	✓ ✓ 83 cultural events held on Council land, with 94 events processed in total (including cancelled events)
	✓ ✓ 113,962 visitors to the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre	✓ ✓ 1,300 active members of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre
	✓ ✓ 18 exhibitions plus one touring exhibition and 82 public programs held throughout the year at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre	✓ ✓ 112 events held in the Blue Mountains Theatre space

Emergency Management

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results	
★ ★ ★ • Planning for and supporting emergency management for the City	✓ ✓ 515 premises where bushfire risk has been mitigated by creating and maintaining asset protection zones	✓ ✓ 5km of fire trails subject to active maintenance and renewal programs
	✓ ✓ 99% of the annual Fire Mitigation Program delivered	





Wollemi Artisan Market

Environmental Health and Regulatory Compliance

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
<p>★ ★ ★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean, safe and healthy living environments 	<p>✓</p> <p>85% completion of Customer Service Requests related to environmental health matters</p>

Family Day Care

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>○</p> <p>Average of 100 children (equivalent full time) utilising Family Day Care service (compared with a target of 150)</p>

Libraries and Information

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results	
<p>★ ★ ★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Library services 	<p>○</p> <p>457,979 visits across all libraries (representing a 2% decrease on the previous year, compared with a target to increase patronage)</p>	<p>○</p> <p>532,902 loans across all libraries (representing a 3% decrease on the previous year, compared with a target to increase library loans)</p>
	<p>○</p> <p>2,866 new library memberships (representing a 14% decrease on the previous year, compared with a target to increase memberships)</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>683 library events held, with 18,550 attendees (representing a 24% increase in the number of events compared with the previous year)</p>

Sport and Recreation

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
<p>★ ★ ★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council lookouts and walking trails <p>★ ★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ovals and sporting grounds Parks and playgrounds 	<p>Not applicable</p>



live

a liveable city

together we live

A liveable city provides safe, healthy and vital spaces and places for people of all ages and abilities. Through creative planning and design, the development of vibrant places is fostered. The liveable city encourages community interaction and connection and facilitates people living close to where they work. Centralising population close to public transport uses land and infrastructure more efficiently. Local heritage and places of natural, cultural and historical significance that have intrinsic value to the community are retained and enhanced. Liveable cities promote development on a human scale and have distinct and attractive towns and streetscapes.

our aspirations and aims

We take pride in the character and distinct identities of our towns and villages. Our cultural and built heritage is important. We use our land to live in harmony with our surrounding World Heritage environment. Through innovative urban planning we have created a hierarchy of well-designed settlements that connect residents to services and facilities they need. We have created vibrant liveable places and spaces for people of all ages and abilities to live, work and play.

Affordable and well-designed housing options, relevant to diverse community needs, are available. Within the capacity of our natural and built environments, we have encouraged sustainable development in centres with access to public transport, required infrastructure, services and facilities.

By 2035 we are a more liveable City

Progressed masterplans across the City

During 2016-2017, master planning commenced in Blaxland, and significant progress was made with the Springwood and Blackheath masterplans. These plans help Council prioritise projects that enhance the function, character and appearance of town centres progressively as funding becomes available. Extensive community consultation was undertaken to guide the rejuvenation of these commercial centres and improve liveability for residents and visitors.

Development of Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan

Council is mid-way through a master planning process that will guide the future direction, planning and potential improvements to the Blaxland Town Centre over the next 15-20 years. The first community consultation workshop, held on Saturday 26 November 2016, was attended by about 130 people using a drop-in session format. A second workshop, held on 8 April 2017, attracted 100 participants and considered concepts for the town centre based on feedback from the first workshop.

Complementary consultation methods, including an online survey and interactive mapping tools, provided information about how people use the Blaxland Town Centre, what they like about it and what they think is needed. A progress report was provided to the Council at the 27 June Council Meeting.

Implementation of Springwood Masterplan

A Draft Planning Proposal to implement recommendations of the adopted Springwood Masterplan is currently under preparation. Supplementary works initiated include an additional building envelope study, Springwood Parks Masterplan, a Public Domain Plan for Macquarie Road and the engagement of a consultant to undertake traffic modelling.

Further Consultation on Blackheath Masterplan

Since July 2016, further work has been undertaken on the Blackheath Masterplan providing a detailed town square design and an engineering analysis of vehicular circulation in the Sutton Place carpark. A number of options to increase town centre parking have also been investigated, with further community consultation on the various car parking options undertaken during May-June 2017.

Completed first stage of Blue Mountains Heritage Review

The first-stage exhibition of the Blue Mountains Heritage Review was completed in February 2017. Council has an ongoing role in managing and protecting the environmental and cultural heritage of the Blue Mountains and this review will ensure that Council's heritage inventory is as up-to-date and accurate as possible. Consultation was also undertaken with the Consultative Committee for the Gundungurra Indigenous Land Use Agreement after the review highlighted the need for careful consideration of how current listings and any future proposed listings of places with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance are documented.

The response to the Heritage Review has been very positive, with many submissions providing additional historical information. This documentary evidence, along with the physical condition evidence from site visits, will ensure an improvement to the overall accuracy and quality of the Council's inventory. In addition, the positive contact between Council and heritage property owners will assist the long-term interest in and protection of heritage properties.

Launched e-planning

Council has successfully tested and launched a portal for online lodgement of development applications and planning certificates. Development of this online portal signals a change in the way we communicate with clients, making the lodgement of applications as convenient and environmentally-friendly as possible. From 1 January 2017, all development-related applications that require approval from Council can now be lodged online. This provides a direct line of communication with the assessing officer, resulting in quicker turn-around times and a reduction in postage costs.

Progressed Local Housing Strategy

During 2016-2017, progress was made on the preparation of a new Local Housing Strategy to replace the current Residential Development Strategy 2010. This strategy will update and reaffirm Council's position on housing, provide clear guidance in the assessment of rezoning applications, and respond to community concerns about the diversity of housing in the Blue Mountains. Importantly, it will also satisfy the requirements of the Metropolitan Strategy – *A Plan for Growing Sydney* – and the draft West District Plan, which require NSW councils to investigate how they will meet current and future housing needs of their communities.

There has been increasing interest from the community in regards to housing-related issues, particularly in response to changing demographics. This has been captured through a number of engagement processes with the community, particularly through the update of the Community Strategic Plan. An update on the Local Housing Strategy will be presented to Council in late 2017.

Managed environmental health and compliance

The Council implemented a range of inspections, investigations and patrols to safeguard the health and well-being of the community and the environment. In 2016-2017 this included:

- Inspecting 250 onsite sewage systems;
- Inspecting 772 food premises;
- Investigating 4,200 matters relating to health, safety and local amenity;
- Undertaking 800 patrols of off-leash dog areas; and
- Undertaking 3,890 parking patrols across the City and 350 parking patrols in school zones.



Blackheath Town Centre Master Planning

Adopted Glenbrook Park Plan of Management

The Glenbrook Park Plan of Management and Masterplan were adopted by the Council on 2 May 2017. These plans will guide future management of the park and its development as one of four District Parks in the Blue Mountains.

Glenbrook Park is already well-established as a family park, and as a tourism stopover for visitors to the Blue Mountains. The Plan of Management aims to build on these existing strengths, providing a range of recreation and social opportunities that draw families from the whole of the Lower Mountains and provide a tourism gateway with a strong Blue Mountains flavour. It will also be a place for large and frequent community events. The first components for delivery will be an upgrade to the Visitor Information Centre and an inclusive children's play area.

Finalised Local Environment Plan Amendments

Local Environment Plan 2015 (LEP 2015) Amendment 1 (Deferred matters) and Amendment 3 (Strategic Tourism Sites) were finalised by the Council during 2016-2017. Amendment 3 introduces a new land use zone into the Blue Mountains, namely the Special Purpose Tourist zone, which is being applied to a number of the major tourism enterprises. Amendment 1, which incorporates deferred sites from LEP 2015 into the planning instrument, is moving the Blue Mountains towards a single consolidated planning instrument.

Considered the future of Lawson Golf Course

Council has recommenced planning for the future of the former Lawson Golf Course. This is a 19.5ha area of Crown Land which is currently managed by Council. The plans for this precinct, which includes the adjoining oval and cemetery, will identify future use of the land and make recommendations on how it will be managed and funded.

An environmental study is underway to determine the environmental capacity of the land, with consultation to look at a draft range of uses. A further study will look at the cultural aspects of the site, such as heritage, community needs, transport and feasibility.

Advocated to State Government

Council continues to represent the interests of the community in relation to the planning reform agenda being implemented by the State Government. A range of submissions have been made to the State Government in relation to a number of proposed planning changes, including amendments to the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* and State Environmental Planning Policies on Infrastructure and Education. Advocacy also continues on introducing a new land use zone into the State Government planning scheme, specifically to address residential character areas in the Blue Mountains.

Managed land use

In 2016-2017, the Council determined 1,066 development applications and modifications, processed 4,370 applications requesting a certificate of approval and completed 2,272 building code compliance inspections of new development.

live Performance Measure Results

The Council has committed to a number of performance measures to track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of the service delivery outputs and standards, and the community perceptions of service performance. The information below presents the results of the community survey and service delivery performance measures for the LIVE Key Direction, as at 30 June 2017.

The following key has been used:

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
High Satisfaction ★ ★ ★	Target achieved ✓ ✓
Medium Satisfaction ★ ★	Target almost achieved (within ±10%) ✓
Low Satisfaction ★	Target not achieved ○

Building Certification

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
Not applicable	✓ ✓ 62% market share for competitive components of the Building Certification service

Burials and Ashes Placement

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
★ ★ • Cemeteries and ashes placement sites	✓ ✓ 100% of target response times met

City Presentation

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results	
★ ★ • Atmosphere, look and feel of our towns and villages • Litter control • Street cleaning • Parking for shoppers • Public toilets in town centres	✓ ✓ 83 applications approved for community events held on Council-managed land	✓ ✓ 100% of town centre volunteer groups/activities supported



Katoomba Town Centre

Land Use Management

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results	
<p>★★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing residential development Protection of heritage values in our towns and villages 	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>Minimum level of legal activity, comprising 2 appeals that were dismissed, 1 appeal discontinued and 2 appeals upheld with conditions</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>85 days gross determination time for processing development applications</p>



move

an accessible city

together we move

An accessible city makes it easy for people of all ages and abilities to move around and access services and facilities, work and recreation. It provides accessible pathways of travel leading to accessible places and spaces.

An accessible built environment is well-designed and inclusive. It benefits everyone, increasing their participation in the community and in the local economy. The environmentally friendly accessible city maximises sustainable choices for moving around – reducing reliance on cars and promoting less polluting means of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling.

our aspirations and aims

We value safe, well-planned and accessible pathways of travel for all, that improve our connections with destinations and each other.

We have sustainable choices for safe and environmentally friendly transport, including networks of pathways for cycling and walking integrated with reliable and accessible public transport services and facilities. The needs of commuters have been considered resulting in enhanced, more frequent and better integrated transport services and improved commuter parking facilities.

Through better management and creative urban design, the Great Western Highway is a safe, accessible and beautiful space that adds to our local amenity, economy and World Heritage identity.

By 2035 we are a more accessible City

Completed Pedestrian Access Mobility Program

The Pedestrian Access Mobility Program (PAMP) for 2016-2017 was completed as planned. This consisted of 146 actions worth approximately \$350,000. Stage 1 included the construction of 11 new kerb ramps and kerb and gutter replacements. Stage 2 included the construction of 44 kerb ramps, 42 new pedestrian crossing signs and a range of other works to improve accessibility and safety for pedestrians, including minor footpath works and the relocation of a pedestrian refuge. The 2017-2018 PAMP and future works programs will continue to implement infrastructure to create safe and accessible pathways of travel for people of all ages.

Adopted Leura Tourist Bus Parking Strategy

In July 2016, the Council adopted their preferred approach for tourist bus parking in Leura. This followed extensive community consultation with local residents, businesses and bus companies. Implementation of the preferred scenario will include construction of a new roundabout and footpath, and the installation of bus shelters and bins supported by multilingual signage. This will enable bus parking on Leura Mall, in front of the Ritz Nursing Home, replacing the current angle parking. The total cost of these upgrades is estimated at approximately \$600,000 with works to progress in 2017-2018.

Repaired and upgraded the City's road network

In 2016-2017, the Council resealed 4.5km of the City's road network, repaired over 6,000m² of road potholes, repaired over 580m² of major road failures and implemented a range of traffic management improvement and safety measures.

The sealing of unsealed roads also continued with 11,790m² sealed at Grand Canyon Road, Medlow Bath and 12,500m² sealed at Hat Hill Road, Blackheath. Since 2012, when the program commenced, 85% of all unsealed roads have now been sealed. The sealing of unsealed roads program should be completed by the 2020-2021 financial year.

Designed extension to Great Blue Mountains Trail

The final design was completed for the Blackheath to Mt Victoria section of the Great Blue Mountains Trail, and funding was received from the Metropolitan Greenspace Program for the Leura Cascades to Katoomba section. Further information can be found in Section 4 – Major Projects.

Improved fire trail maintenance

Between July and December 2016, Council completed vegetation management on a number of fire trails in the Springwood, Hazelbrook and Lawson areas. Work was completed on 9.1km of fire trails using special rate variation funding, with further work occurring between Mount Riverview to Mount Victoria in the first half of 2017. This work has included the separation of the tree canopy to maintain clearances along the fire trails, enabling safe access for all emergency service personnel and vehicles during bushfires and other emergencies.

Continued restoration of Lennox Bridge

Council continued its restoration work on the heritage-listed Lennox Bridge at Mitchell's Pass, Glenbrook. With matched funding from the Office of Environment and Heritage and the Heritage Council, we have been able to contract specialist graffiti cleaning services and a stonemason to undertake restoration works on the bridge, which is the oldest on mainland Australia.



Lennox Bridge Restoration

Council has also intensified the use of surveillance technology in the Lennox Bridge precinct in an effort to deter ongoing vandalism, such as graffiti and illegal dumping.

Progressed Integrated Transport Strategy

Significant progress was made on the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy in 2016-2017. The Integrated Transport Strategy will guide provision and management of transport-related services and infrastructure within the local government area, and identify specific strategies to strengthen the links between existing Council plans and strategies and the strategies and policies of other transport-related service providers and agencies.

A consultant has been engaged for the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy, with public exhibition of the draft strategy expected in late 2017.

Completed road improvements in Katoomba

The renewal of the Yeaman Bridge roundabout in Katoomba was completed as part of the Asset Works Program for 2016-2017. The pavement surface of the roundabout was remediated in accordance with engineering advice. In addition, the Council upgraded the pedestrian crossing located on Katoomba Street between the old Post Office and the Commonwealth Bank. This work was undertaken to improve pedestrian safety and was funded by the NSW Government's Black Spot Funding Program.

Hosted free workshops to build skills of community

Council hosted a brekkie and bike skills day at Lapstone Netball Courts in September 2016 in celebration of Bike Week. Council partnered with Blue Mountains Family Day Care, Mountains Outreach Community Service, NSW Police – Blue Mountains Local Area Command, Glenbrook–Lapstone RFS and AustCycle provider – Addventagious, to encourage more people to get out and about on their bikes, and teach them the skills to do so safely.

The Council, in conjunction with the NSW Roads and Maritime Service, also offered two free workshops for parents and carers who are teaching a young person to drive. These sessions were held at Katoomba and Springwood during August 2016.

Completed Road Safety Audit between Linden and Faulconbridge

In July 2016, the Council completed a Road Safety Audit of the Great Western Highway between Linden and Faulconbridge. The audit identified a number of safety concerns, most of which are the direct responsibility of the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS).

The recommendations of the audit are highly relevant in addressing safety issues that have been raised with the RMS for this section of the Great Western Highway over many years. The audit also resulted in a nomination being submitted to the Australian Government Blackspot Program 2017-2018.

Supported road safety initiatives

Council worked with the Roads and Maritime Services and NSW Police to promote the Slow Down in My Street campaign. Blue Mountains motorists were asked to slow down on local roads for the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

Council also supported Yellow Ribbon National Safety Week by asking the community to slow down and Drive So Others Survive, in order to promote safer Australian Roads and Highways. This campaign focused on motorists slowing down and taking responsibility for their role on our roads.

Progressed Citywide Parking Strategy

Significant progress was made on the development of a Citywide Parking Strategy in 2016-2017. The strategy will provide a comprehensive longitudinal parking profile for locations across the Blue Mountains Local Government Area, indicating trends and pressures over time. It will also provide a review of the key issues and options for addressing parking management and future parking needs in the City, informing wider planning processes and development.



Pavement Cleaning

move Performance Measure Results

The Council has committed to a number of performance measures to track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of the service delivery outputs and standards, and the community perceptions of service performance. The information below presents the results of the community survey and service delivery performance measures for the MOVE Key Direction, as at 30 June 2017.

The following key has been used:

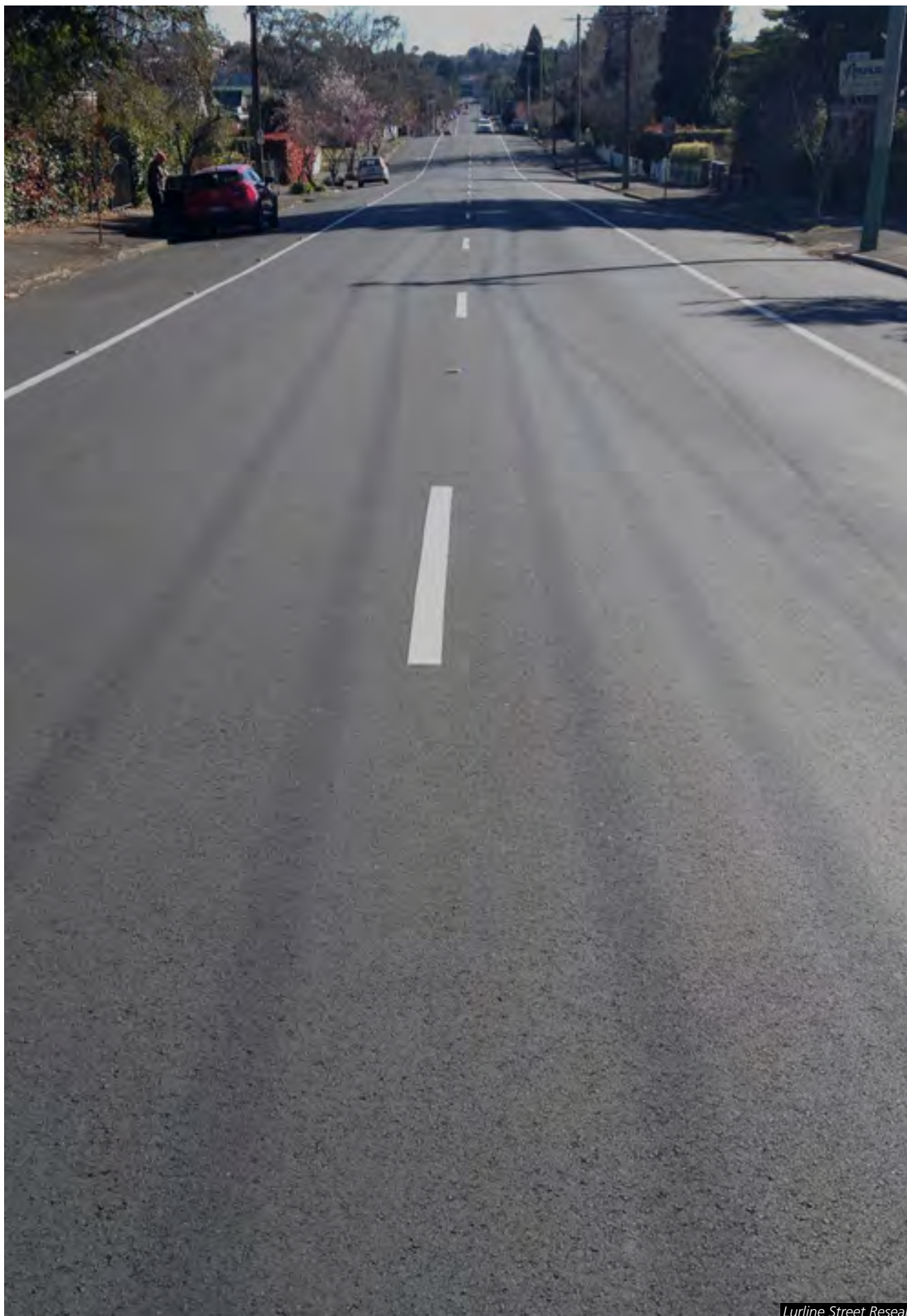
Community Survey Results		Service Performance Measure Results	
High Satisfaction	★ ★ ★	Target achieved	✓ ✓
Medium Satisfaction	★ ★	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	✓
Low Satisfaction	★	Target not achieved	○

Transport and Public Access

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results	
<p>★ ★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sealed roads Carparks Footpaths Commuter parking Bus shelters Traffic safety for pedestrians and vehicles Pedestrian access around shopping centres and community facilities 	<p>✓</p> <p>79% of Customer Service Requests relating to Council transport infrastructure were completed (compared with a target of 82%)</p>	<p>✓ ✓</p> <p>10% of bus stops were compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act standards</p>
<p>★</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cycle ways 		



Steel Reinforcing for Roundabout





thrive

**an economically
sustainable city**

together we thrive

An economically sustainable city facilitates a diverse, robust and environmentally friendly local economy that benefits local residents.

Sustainable businesses and industries that have minimal impact on the natural environment are encouraged and supported.

A vibrant city encourages and facilitates a variety of sustainable industries, enterprises and businesses.

our aspirations and aims

We value business and industries that support the needs of our community and are in harmony with our surrounding World Heritage environment. People of all ages are attracted to work, live and study in the Blue Mountains.

Through responsible economic development we have strengthened and diversified our local economy, creating growth in employment and educational opportunities. In doing this we have built on our inherent strengths and advantages in being a City with rich cultural and natural heritage surrounded by a World Heritage Area and a creative City of the Arts. We are a leader in sustainable tourism and visitor destination management.

By 2035 our local economy is stronger and more sustainable

Progressed Southern Scenic Escarpment Project

The Southern Scenic Escarpment Project will revitalise Katoomba's existing visitor infrastructure to provide a high-quality tourism destination for domestic and international markets. In turn, this will support the local economy and local jobs by enhancing the visitor experience at one of the most popular destinations in the Blue Mountains.

During 2016-2017, work progressed in the following areas:

- Echo Point Visitor Information Centre Upgrade – design consultants appointed;
- Katoomba Falls Kiosk Upgrade – design consultant appointed;
- Silvermist Carpark Upgrade – design completed;
- Katoomba Tourist Park – renovations to amenities block completed; and
- Katoomba Tourist Park – supply and installation of new cabins completed.

Further information can be found in Section 4 – Major Projects.

Exhibited Blue Mountains Destination Management Plan

The Blue Mountains Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a strategic document designed to build and manage the visitor economy for the Blue Mountains. The DMP provides guidance for the tourism industry to invest in, market and promote the region as a destination, and is expected to help facilitate grant funding from State and Federal Governments.

The aim is to increase overnight visitor expenditure (also a goal of the NSW Government) while supporting the growth of sustainable tourism by seeking funds to secure vital infrastructure. The DMP will seek to increase local employment opportunities and to balance visitor versus resident needs.

The draft plan was placed on public exhibition from March to April 2017. The submissions received were generally supportive, and many commended Council for undertaking the project.

Collaborated with BMEE to support new businesses

Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE) hosted the New Business Intensive event in partnership with Council at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub on 2 March 2017. Council promoted the event widely and this free event attracted around 90 participants. It was held as part of Back to Business Week – an initiative of the NSW Department of Industry designed to support small to medium businesses.

Expert speakers and panellists included senior business advisors from the Western Sydney Business Centre and Blue Mountains Regional Business Chamber and senior representatives from Council. The event was aimed at enabling those who have recently launched, or are thinking of establishing, a small business or home-based business. Information was provided on registering, marketing and financing a new business, planning approvals for home-based businesses and what support is available for the Blue Mountains business community.

Enhanced visitor experiences

Visitor Information Centres at Glenbrook and Katoomba provided direct recommendations and personalised service to 91,490 visitors during 2016-2017. A free visitor map was produced to assist visitors in their journey across the mountains. The map contains many ideas on where to stay, eat and play, and includes township maps of Glenbrook, Lawson, Wentworth Falls, Leura, Katoomba and Blackheath. Planning has been undertaken on a Blue Mountains Guide that will be provided to out-of-area Visitor Information Centres to assist them in guiding visitors to the Blue Mountains.





Commenced masterplan for Scenic Eastern Escarpment

The Scenic Eastern Escarpment is located on the eastern edge of the Blue Mountains, stretching from Lapstone to Hawkesbury Heights, and neighbouring Western Sydney.

The Council is developing a masterplan that will help guide the future development of nature and culture-based recreation and tourism opportunities in the lower Blue Mountains. The masterplan will provide a coordinated approach to recreational planning and visitor facilities management for the precinct by working with neighbouring land managers including National Parks and Wildlife Service, Crown Lands, and Penrith and Hawkesbury City Councils.

A public meeting was held in Glenbrook on 6 May 2017 with the purpose of providing an update on the project, a summary of the site user survey results and to outline some of the issues being addressed by the masterplan. The meeting was well attended with a diverse representation of residents and interest groups, providing an opportunity for discussion on some of the major issues being considered.

Reviewed commercial property portfolio

Council's commercial property portfolio was reviewed during the financial year. As of 30 June 2017, all commercial property that was available for lease was fully leased. The Council also sold property that was surplus to requirements, to the value of \$2 million. This revenue was directed to the repayment of the loan for the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub.

Supported sustainable tourism in the Blue Mountains

Council supported the formation of a regional tourism entity between Penrith, Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains City Councils, as a way of creating an organisation committed to growing the region's tourism-related employment, economy and visitation and leveraging Destination NSW funding. We also advocated to State and Federal Governments for additional funding for the tourism infrastructure required to manage projected increases in the levels of visitation to the Blue Mountains.

Significant work was undertaken during 2016-2017 to develop a Visitor Infrastructure Strategic Plan. Council faces the challenge of providing improved infrastructure and services for an increasing volume of visitors, while satisfying the expectations of the community and the local tourism industry. The purpose of this draft plan is to identify the investment required to support visitor infrastructure, visitor services and city presentation, and to identify appropriate revenue streams to fund this investment. Following an initial assessment of the range of funding options, five user pays models most relevant to the Blue Mountains context are explored in detail, namely paid car parking, paid bus and coach parking, camping charges, public toilet and shower charges, and nature-based licensing fees. The draft plan proposes priority actions and options for further investigation and implementation over a 10-year period, as well as identifying tourism infrastructure projects that require investment.

Undertook Winter Magic market research

Council engaged a consultant to undertake market research at the Winter Magic Festival in June 2017. Winter Magic is Australia's largest community street festival and has been running for 23 years. It is the largest event in the Blue Mountains calendar and attracts an estimated 45,000 people, however little is known about how long people stay, how far they travel to attend, or their motivations and spending habits. The objective of the study was to provide information on the economic impact of this event and to inform development of the Council's Events Strategy.

Supported Blue Mountains artisans through MTNS MADE

The MTNS MADE initiative was commissioned by the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE) as an opportunity to position the region as an internationally competitive creative hub with products reflecting the essence of the Blue Mountains. In addition to providing funding to BMEE through a four-year funding agreement, Council's Visitor Information Centres and the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre have included products from MTNS MADE artisans in their retail range. This is a way of increasing awareness of our local creative talent in the Blue Mountains to both domestic and international visitors and of generating income for the region.

thrive Performance Measure Results

The Council has committed to a number of performance measures to track if services have been delivered as planned in terms of the service delivery outputs and standards, and the community perceptions of service performance. The information below presents the results of the community survey and service delivery performance measures for the THRIVE Key Direction, as at 30 June 2017.

The following key has been used:

Community Survey Results		Service Performance Measure Results	
High Satisfaction	★ ★ ★	Target achieved	✓ ✓
Medium Satisfaction	★ ★	Target almost achieved (within ±10%)	✓
Low Satisfaction	★	Target not achieved	○

Economic Development and Tourism

Community Survey Results	Service Performance Measure Results
★ ★ ★ • Visitor Information Centres at Glenbrook and Echo Point ★ ★ • Caravan Parks at Katoomba and Blackheath ★ • Access to local employment opportunities	Not applicable





Winter Magic 2017





APPENDIX

Statutory Information

Rates and Charges Written Off

The following abandonments occurred during the 2016-2017 rating period.

Pensioner Concession Rebates	\$1,620,569.27
Postponed Rate Abandonments	\$54,467.09
Domestic Waste Charge Adjustments	\$47,698.19
Legal Fees & Extra Charges Written Off	\$16,999.28
Small Balance Write Offs	\$2,637.17
TOTAL ABANDONMENTS	\$1,742,371.00

Overseas Visits

There were no overseas trips undertaken by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing the Council (including visits sponsored by other organisations) for the year ending 30 June 2017.

Mayoral and Councillor Fees and Expenses

Mayoral and Councillor fees for the year 2016-2017 were determined by the Council as follows:

Annual fee for Councillors

Pursuant to Section 241 of the Local Government Act 1993, the amount paid to each Councillor was \$17,914 (excluding Mayoral fees).

Annual fee for the Mayor

Pursuant to Section 241 of the Local Government Act 1993, the Council determined the Mayoral fee would be \$39,110, with \$3,911 of this set aside for the Deputy Mayor when acting in the Office of the Mayor. The total fee received by the Mayor was \$57,024.

Payment of expenses and provision of facilities

The Council has a policy for the Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councillors as per the Local Government Act 1993. This policy is reviewed annually by the Council, and is placed on public exhibition as per Sections 248-254. It is titled Councillor Facilities and Expenses Policy and is located on the Council website.

The following summary shows the amount expended during the year on Mayoral and Councillor fees, the amount expended on the provision of facilities for use by Councillors and the payment of Councillors' expenses.

Nature Of Expenses	Actuals (\$)
Mayoral fees	39,111
Councillor fees & allowances	213,719
Councillor travel expenses	9,207
Conference fees & expenses	13,684
Councillor sundries	0
Councillor training	9,910
Office Equipment*	30,939
Out of pocket expenses	52
Telephone	12,032
Printing and stationery	3,313
Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor, being expenses payable in accordance with the Guidelines	0
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a Councillor	0
Catering for Council Meetings and briefings	32,761
Interstate visits by Councillors (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	0

**Provision of new equipment to Councillors for new term of Council following the 2016 Local Government Elections*

Contract Information

The following table details contracts awarded in 2016-2017 for amounts greater than \$150,000.

Council Meeting	Minute No.	Contractor	Description	Amount (ex GST)
26.07.16	213	The Almar Group Pty Ltd trading as API Commercial	Alterations and Additions to New Entry Portico and Associated Works at the Lawson Community Hall	\$259,295
26.07.16	214	CHROFI – Breakspear Architects Pty Ltd	Design Consultancy Services for the Upgrade of Echo Point Visitor Information Centre – Stage 1 and 2	\$471,000
15.11.16	336	W2R Kings Plains Pty Ltd	Tree, Garden and Wood Waste Processing Services at Katoomba and Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facilities	\$495,000
15.11.16	336	South Coast Plant Hire Pty Ltd	Tree, Garden and Wood Waste Processing Services at Katoomba and Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facilities	\$950,000
15.11.16	348	Better View Landscapes Pty Ltd	Construction of Pedestrian Infrastructure and Installation of Signage within the Blue Mountains City Council Local Government Area	\$258,783
31.01.17	19	Environmental Treatment Solutions	Periodic Household Chemical and Other Problem Waste Collections at Katoomba and Blaxland Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facilities	\$250,000
31.01.17	24	The Gardenmakers Pty Ltd	Concrete Walking Track Upgrade – Duke and Duchess of York Lookout to Reids Plateau at Katoomba – Stages 1 and 2	\$703,120
28.03.17	86	Australian Native Landscapes Pty Ltd	Transport of Bulk Garden Organics from Katoomba Resource Recovery and Waste Management Facility to ANL's Blayney Organics Processing Facility	\$870,000
30.05.17	160	The Almar Group Pty Ltd trading as API Commercial	Design and Construction of Lawson Rural Fire Station	\$811,435
27.06.17	185	Total Lining Systems Pty Ltd	Supply and Installation of a landfill Liner at Blaxland Waste Management Facility	\$538,503
27.06.17	186	J K Williams Contracting Pty Ltd	Detailed Excavation Works at Blaxland Waste Management Facility	\$467,000
N/A	N/A	Sharpe Bros (Aust) Pty Ltd	Road Shoulder Renewal Program works, under Local Government Procurement (LGP) Contract LGP213, RFQ Reference VP73300	\$349,555
N/A	N/A	Bernipave Pty Ltd	Road Reseal Program works, under Local Government Procurement (LGP) Contract LGP213, RFQ Reference VP62631	\$1,729,019

Legal Proceedings

During 2016-2017 the following amounts were incurred by the Council in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the Council.

Title	Status	2016-2017 Expenditure (ex GST)	Result
Land and Environment Court			
Prosecution re non-compliance with development consent	Ongoing	\$3,214.68	
Defend appeal against deemed refusal of development application	Concluded	\$44,126.42	Appeal dismissed
Defend appeal against deemed refusal of development application	Concluded	(with above)	Appeal upheld with costs awarded
Defend appeal against deemed refusal of development application	Concluded	(with above)	Appeal dismissed
Defend appeal against refusal of development application	Concluded	\$96,927.27	Appeal upheld
Prosecution of unauthorised use of a property	Concluded	\$164.33	Court orders issued with order for costs
Defend appeal against direction to comply with Swimming Pools Act 1992	Ongoing	\$22,852.84	
Defend Class 1 appeal against Council's order re fencing	Concluded	\$8,075.66	Revised orders made by consent
Defend appeal against actual refusal of development application	Ongoing	\$2,246.23	
Defend refusal of development application: Class 1 proceedings (s.56 appeal)	Concluded	\$2,703.64	Discontinued with each party paying own costs
Total Land and Environment Court		\$180,311.07	

Title	Status	2016-2017 Expenditure (ex GST)	Result
Local Court			
Defend penalty infringement notice re menacing dog	Concluded	\$5,187.00	Guilty plea entered
Defend penalty infringement notices (2) re illegal dumping	Ongoing	\$5,518.80	
Defend penalty infringement notice re overdue Annual Fire Safety Statement	Concluded	\$2,129.14	Guilty plea entered with costs awarded
Total Local Court		\$12,834.94	
NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal			
Review by NCAT re application for government information (GIPA)	Concluded	\$15,879.90	Council's decision upheld
Defend appeal against NCAT decision re application for government information (GIPA)	Ongoing	\$6,782.92	
Total NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal		\$22,662.82	
Total Legal Cost to Council for all Court Proceedings		\$215,808.83	
Total Legal Income to Council		\$19,099.00	

Work Carried Out on Private Land

No works were carried out on private land. No properties were entered in 2016-2017 to carry out works, as permitted under s.67 of the Local Government Act, to enforce an Order.

Financial Assistance

The following programs provide financial assistance to fund a wide range of community and cultural projects within the City of Blue Mountains, which is granted under Section 356 of the Local Government Act, 1993.

Community Assistance Program 2017

In 2016-2017, the Council allocated \$52,249 in funding to the Community Assistance Program 2017. An outline of community organisations that received funding under the program is provided in the table below.

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.	<i>Planting and restoration of area around new accessible toilet block</i>	\$850
Blackheath Area Men's Shed Inc.	<i>Venetian Blinds and Welding safety screens</i>	\$720
Mount Victoria Community Association Inc.	<i>Celebrating Mount Victoria</i>	\$1,000
Total Applications Received Area 1		\$4,320

St Hilda's Anglican Church	<i>KIDZARTZ 2017</i>	\$550
Katoomba Men's Shed Inc.	<i>Storage Units for donated screws, nails and bolts</i>	\$850
Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc.	<i>Community Connection</i>	\$1,750
Mountains Youth Services Team	<i>Katoomba High Breakfast</i>	\$1,750
Total Applications Received Area 2		\$4,900

Hazelbrook Association Community Inc.	<i>Community Fun Day at Gloria Park</i>	\$850
Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative Ltd	<i>Information & Referral Support</i>	\$1,750
The Girl Guides Association of New South Wales	<i>Continue Fire Protection Strategies for Lawson Girl Guide Hall</i>	\$850
Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc.	<i>MMNC Support of Community Activities level 1 organisation</i>	\$1750
Total Applications Received Area 3		\$5,200

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre Inc.	<i>Quarterly Newsletter and Equipment Purchase</i>	\$1,750
Glenbrook Preschool Kindergarten Inc.	<i>Children's Vegetable Garden Makeover</i>	\$850
Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW) Gateway Family Services	<i>Linked Up!</i>	\$1,000
Total Applications Received Area 5		\$3,600
R.D.A. (NSW) – riding for the Disabled Blue Mountains	<i>New Safety Helmets</i>	\$650
Mikayla Children's Centre Inc.	<i>Cultural Circle</i>	\$700
Connect Child and Family Services – YAWN (You Ask We Nurture)	<i>YAWN (You Ask We Nurture)</i>	\$1,750
Blue Mountains and Penrith Woodworking Club Inc.	<i>Various</i>	\$448
Academy Singers Inc.	<i>Choral Workshop</i>	\$700
Blue Mountains Orchestra Inc.	<i>Musical Fireworks</i>	\$850
Blue Mountains City Band	<i>The Ongoing Support of Blue Mountains City Band</i>	\$5,000
The Federated Music Clubs of Australia, NSW The Springwood Music Club	<i>Classical Music for All Ages</i>	\$750
Greystanes Disability Services ("Greystanes")	<i>Sensorial 2017 Art Exhibition</i>	\$500
Orpheus Strings Music Society (Blue Mountains) Inc.	<i>Annual Blue Mountains Young Performers Concert 2017</i>	\$500
Mountain Opera Chorus Inc.	<i>Community choral Performances</i>	\$500
Bentart Incorporated	<i>BentART 2018 Exhibition</i>	\$700
Creating Links (NSW) Ltd	<i>Sibling & Young Carers Support</i>	\$850
Mountains Community Resource Network Inc. (MCRN)	<i>Interagency Resourcing</i>	\$1,750

Group/Organisation	Project Title	Funding
Blue Mountains Pipe Band Incorporated	<i>Assistance to rent venue for band to teach and practice performance</i>	\$700
Children's Book Council of Australia (NSW Branch) Inc. – Blue CBCA (NSW) Inc. – Blue Mountains sub-branch	<i>Books on a Bus</i>	\$850
Blue Mountains Food Services Inc.	<i>Volunteer Training - Senior + Mental; Health First Aid; Self Care</i>	\$850
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre Inc.	<i>Winmalee Fresh Food Project</i>	\$1,750
Mountains Outreach Community Service	<i>Parenting Young Retreat and Activities of Mid-Mountains Community Hub in Lawson</i>	\$1,750
Kinship at Christmas Foundation	<i>Aged Care Christmas Gift Giving</i>	\$850
Iris Society of Australia – NSW Region	<i>Promotion of Iris to Gardeners, Residents and Visitors to Blue Mountains</i>	\$700
Blue Mountains Junior Roller Derby League Inc.	<i>Court Hire Fees for 14 Hours</i>	\$650
Blue Mountains Roller Derby League Inc.	<i>Court Hire Fees for 15 Hours</i>	\$700
Furaha Mamas Incorporated	<i>Support Group Playdates</i>	\$578
Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre	<i>Walk in Her Shoes</i>	\$850
Springwood and Districts Basketball Club Incorporated	<i>Coaching Tools</i>	\$750
Katoomba Children's Cottage Inc.	<i>Being in the Bush</i>	\$750
Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre	<i>Moving On After Trauma</i>	\$850
Blue Mountains Public Broadcasting Society	<i>Telephone Talk Back System</i>	\$850
Kunsang Yeshe Centre Inc.	<i>Audio Visual Equipment</i>	\$703
St George Monastery	<i>Guest House - Floor</i>	\$850
Platform Youth Services	<i>Get Your Own Place</i>	\$850
Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre	<i>Aboriginal Art Festival</i>	\$1,750
Blue Mountains Family Support Services Inc. (Thrive Services)	<i>Music Therapy Workshop</i>	\$1,000
Total Applications Received City-Wide		\$34,229
TOTAL		\$52,249

Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program 2017

In 2016-2017, the Council allocated \$42,800 in funding to the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust Grants Program 2017. Projects that received funding under the program are outlined in the table below. These projects will be delivered in 2017-2018.

Organisation/ Auspice	Individual Artist	Project Name and Description	Funding
Organisation Varuna – National Writers' House		City of the Arts Young Writers' Program This project aims to inspire and enable talented young people from across the Blue Mountains to express themselves using the written form. The program entails three full day creative writing workshops at Varuna Writers' House. Students will be selected, on merit basis, from each of the eight high schools in the Blue Mountains. These workshops will be run by professional author and writing facilitators.	\$8,000
Organisation Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre		Blue Shorts Film Festival & Associated Projects 2018 This is a multi-faceted project that will incorporate film and animation workshops for children and young people in different parts of the Blue Mountains for inclusion in the Festival. A short film will also be made by the Blue Shorts Team. These films and other entries will be shown at the Blue Shorts short film festival at Mt Vic Flicks.	\$5,000
Auspice Blue Mountains Artists Network	Grace Kim	Sensory Concerts #2 This project is a further development of the pilot Sensory Concerts project. It comprises a series of high quality live classical concerts made accessible to children (and now adults as well) with special sensory needs. Collaborating with a professional occupational therapist and psychologist, the concert space will be divided into various sensory spaces that will accommodate individual's sensory needs. The performers will be musicians of international standing.	\$8,000
Auspice Blue Mountains Artists Network	Stuart Christie	Ah Ha Circus Ah-Ha is a contemporary circus style cabaret performance project that will transform the City Art Gallery space into a late night cabaret style setting with multiple stages, performers hanging from trapezes on freestanding aerial frames, musicians set in the crowd and acrobats right in front of the audience.	\$7,000
Auspice Eleanor Dark Foundation	Camille Walsh	Lanterns of the Lake Lanterns on the Lake is an ephemeral cultural event which aims to bring the community together in an expression of gratitude at Wentworth Falls Lake. The project involves workshops to create many hundreds of lanterns for the evening performance as well as a range of performing artists and a Slam Poetry event.	\$7,500
Auspice Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre	Miriam Williamson	Observatory Latitude 33 42 Longitude 150 29 A curated exhibition of contemporary art by three established Blue Mountains artists drawing on the history, technology and landscape of the site of the Linden Observatory. In responding to the site artists will engage with the histories, technologies of observation of the night sky and the endeavours of the people who made tools and optical devices on the grounds of the site.	\$7,300
TOTAL			\$42,800

Capital Works Projects

During 2016-2017, the Council expended more than \$8 million through its Assets Works Program. Capital works are those projects that involve the planning and construction of new built assets or the improvement of built assets, such as footpaths, signage, roads and community halls.

The following section provides details of capital projects that either commenced or were completed in 2016-2017. Information on capital expenditure can also be found in the accompanying Annual Financial Statements.

Community Buildings

Council maintains a wide variety of different buildings including administrative offices, works depots, libraries, aquatic and leisure centres, childcare centres and preschools, visitor information centres, cultural facilities, community centres, halls, emergency services buildings, public amenities and other auxiliary buildings. These have a combined asset value of approximately \$154 million.

Community Buildings Projects undertaken in 2016-2017

COMMENCED

Refurbishment works

- Design and documentation of Katoomba Falls Kiosk Upgrade
- Design and documentation of Echo Point Visitor Information Centre Upgrade, Katoomba
- Design and documentation of Glenbrook Visitor Information Centre Upgrade and new car parking facility

New building works

- Design and documentation of Rural Fire Service Station at Blaxland
- Design and documentation of Rural Fire Service Station at Lawson

COMPLETED

Refurbishment works

- Cabin Renewal at Katoomba Tourist Park
- Amenities Block Upgrade at Katoomba Tourist Park
- Adult Change Facility at Echo Point Public Toilets, Katoomba
- Blackheath Hall/Library/Community Centre Upgrade
- Lawson Community Hall – portico, accessible toilet, back room refurbishment and carpark upgrade
- Katoomba Headquarters Retaining Wall Remediation works
- Katoomba Rural Fire Service Emergency Operations Centre upgrade (shed extension and carpark works)
- Construction of structural retaining wall, Rural Fire Service facility at Bullaburra

New building works

- Construction of Shipley Rural Fire Service Station

Building inspections

- Consultancy Services to conduct site inspections to all mezzanine floors in various RFS stations

Transport & Public Access Infrastructure

Council maintains approximately 700km of sealed roads and 75km of unsealed roads, with 13,500 roadside signs and 30 bridges. This road network is supported by other transport infrastructure including 180km of footpaths, 160 bus shelters and more than 76,000 m2 of sealed carparks. Altogether, these transport and public access assets are valued at approximately \$649 million.

Transport & Public Access Projects undertaken in 2016-2017

COMMENCED

Bridge repairs and inspections

- Development of project brief and procurement of specialist contractor for targeted level 2/3 bridge condition inspections at various locations within the LGA

Traffic studies and strategies

- Traffic Modelling and Concept Options Report for Springwood Town Centre
- Leura Bus Parking Strategy

Active transport infrastructure

- Design of Great Blue Mountains Trail Upgrade from Blackheath to Mt Victoria

COMPLETED

Road upgrade

- Newport Road, Oasis Nursery, Yellow Rock (providing access to a Neighbourhood Safer Place)

Road resurfacing

- Echo Point Road, Katoomba
- Lurline Street, Katoomba
- Parke Street, Katoomba
- Bathurst Road, Katoomba
- Cascade Street, Katoomba
- Railway Parade, Leura
- Railway Parade, Woodford
- Park Road, Woodford
- Leumeah Road, Woodford
- Coomassie Avenue, Faulconbridge
- Plateau Road, Springwood
- Old Bathurst Road, Blaxland
- Macquarie Road, Springwood
- Wilson Way, Blaxland

Road shoulder renewal

- Fern Avenue, Hazelbrook
- Rock Lea Street, Hazelbrook
- Lakeview Avenue, Blackheath
- Barratt Street, Blackheath

Sealing of unsealed sections of road

- Grand Canyon Road, Medlow Bath
- Hat Hill Road, Blackheath

Footpath construction based on Pedestrian Access Mobile Program (PAMP) priorities

- Birdwood Avenue, Katoomba
- Cascade St and Bathurst Rd, Katoomba
- College Lane, Katoomba
- Edward St and Cascade St, Katoomba
- Katoomba Falls Rd, Katoomba
- Lovel St and Wilson St, Katoomba
- Loftus Street Pedestrian Refuge Relocations, Katoomba
- Lurline St and Gang Gang St kerb ramps, Katoomba

Carpark upgrade

- Silvermist carpark construction, Katoomba

Bridge restoration

- Lennox Bridge Restoration Works (Stage 1)

Bridge barrier renewal

- Installation of guardrail at Megalong Rd, Megalong Valley
- Installation of guardrail at Neale Street, Katoomba
- Installation of guardrail at Peachtree Rd, Megalong Valley
- Installation of guardrail at Governors Drive, Lapstone

Roundabout renewal

- Yeaman's Bridge Roundabout Renewal, Katoomba

Pedestrian crossing

- Raised Pedestrian Crossing at Katoomba Street

Water Resource Management

Council maintains 190km of stormwater pipes and 50km of open channels, approximately 8,000 pits, 2,500 drainage headwalls and over 200 stormwater quality improvement devices. The water resource management service also provides more than 35 stormwater harvesting and reuse systems and 20 raingarden/biofiltration systems that help to minimise the impacts of stormwater runoff on bushland and local waterways. In total, these asset classes are valued at approximately \$110 million.

Water Resource Management Projects undertaken in 2016-2017

COMMENCED

Stormwater drainage renewal

- Jamison Creek Catchment Stormwater Drainage Infrastructure Renewal and Outlet Treatment Improvement Works, David Street, Wentworth Falls.

Flood plain management

- Bullaburra to Linden study
- Hazelbrook and Woodford Creeks Catchment floodplain study

Natural Area Visitor Facilities

Council provides a wide range of nature-based experiences in its bushland areas, involving the maintenance of approximately 130km of walking tracks, 85 lookouts, 5 campgrounds and numerous other picnic areas, shelters and toilets. Many of these facilities are in cliff top environments and experience high visitation, making it critical for public safety that these assets are in good, functional condition. Council's natural area visitor facilities have an asset value of approximately \$66 million.

Natural Areas Visitor Facilities Projects undertaken in 2016-2017

COMMENCED

- Construction of Walking Track and Lookout upgrades at Reids Plateau, Katoomba
- Renewal of bridge on Charles Darwin Walk, Wentworth Falls
- Design of sealed parking area at Lincolns Rock, Wentworth Falls
- Design of unsealed parking area at Railway Parade, Linden (Paradise Pools)

COMPLETED

- Renewal of bridge at Cataract Falls, Lawson
- Renewal of bridge at Fairy Dell, Mt Victoria
- Construction of new cliff face staircase at Mt York

Sports & Recreation Facilities

Council provides and maintains a wide range of recreation opportunities for the community and visitors including 105 parks, 22 sportsgrounds, 66 sports courts and 6 skate parks with 54 play-equipment settings, as well as sporting amenities, clubhouses, public toilets, picnic shelters and dog off-leash areas. These assets are valued at approximately \$55 million.

Sports & Recreation Facilities Projects undertaken in 2016–2017

COMMENCED

Sewer connection upgrade

- Lapstone Reserve sewer system

COMPLETED

Play equipment renewals and replacement of failed items

- Douglass Smith Park, Glenbrook
- Tom Chalmers Park, Faulconbridge
- Linden Park, Linden
- Summerhayes Park, Winmalee
- Hinkler Park, Katoomba
- Gloria Park, Hazelbrook
- Cathedral of Ferns Reserve, Mt Wilson
- Waterfalls Reserve, Mt Wilson

Park improvements

- Mt Victoria Memorial Park, Mt Victoria

Carpark construction

- Construction of Lapstone Oval Carparks

Other Infrastructure

Council maintains a range of other infrastructure including waste facilities, cemeteries, monuments and fire trails.

Other Infrastructure Projects undertaken in 2016–2017

COMPLETED

- Restoration of Lawson War Memorial Cenotaph
- Katoomba/Leura Bin Replacement
- Cemetery Maintenance – replacement of fences, railings, signage, seats and stormwater system in Katoomba, Lawson and Wentworth Falls



Lapstone Oval and Netball Precinct Carpark

External Bodies Exercising Council Functions

Other than Westpool (an insurance pooling group of ten Western Sydney Councils established under a joint agreement) and the United Independent Pools (UIP), no external bodies exercised functions delegated by Blue Mountains City Council in 2016-2017.

Companies in which Council held a Controlling Interest

Council had no controlling interest in any company during 2016-2017.

Partnerships, Corporations and Joint Ventures Involving Council

Council is a member of WSROC Limited, a company limited by guarantee, comprising eleven Western Sydney councils formed for the purpose of research, lobbying and fostering of co-operation between councils for the benefit of all residents of Western Sydney. Council is also a member of Westpool as detailed above.

The Blue Mountains and Penrith Council Alliance continues through a Memorandum of Understanding that was established in May 2008. The partnership supports the Minister for Local Government's reform initiative for councils to work together to improve resource sharing and efficiency in service delivery.

In August 2016 the Council formally entered into a Regional Strategic Alliance with Penrith City Council and Hawkesbury City Council. The Regional Strategic Alliance provides opportunities to strengthen Council's ability to deliver on key priorities through our Resourcing Strategy and Delivery Program, and ultimately our Community Strategic Plan. The Regional Strategic Alliance provides each council with an opportunity to work collaboratively on a range of initiatives that will provide significant benefit to the communities that each council serves.

The Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise was established by Blue Mountains City Council in late 2012 as an independent entity to promote economic development in the Blue Mountains.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Council is committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), fair treatment and non-discrimination for all existing and future employees. The EEO policy statement and management plan meet legislative requirements and are followed across Council.

Remuneration of General Manager and other Senior Staff

Council has four designated senior staff positions comprising the General Manager and three Directors. As at 30 June 2017, the total remuneration (including salary, motor vehicle, superannuation and performance payments) for these senior staff positions was:

- General Manager: \$355,186
- Other Senior Staff: \$696,783

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

There were no environmental upgrade agreements in place during 2016-2017.

Companion Animals Management

The Companion Animals Management Plan (CAMP) is a strategic document outlining a combination of traditional regulatory activities and non-regulatory strategies to encourage and promote responsible pet ownership. In June 2017 the Council adopted the Companion Animals Management Plan 2017-2021. A copy of this plan can be viewed on Council's website.

Lodgement of pound data collection returns

Returns have been completed and lodged indicating that 193 dogs were seized by Council Rangers, of which 97 were returned directly to their owner and 96 were taken to the pound. A further 161 dogs were taken or surrendered to the pound by the public. There were 196 cats taken to the pound.

Lodgement of dog attack data

Dog attack data is recorded on the Companion Animal Register. In 2015-2016 there were 50 incidents classified as 'dog attacks' involving people or animals.

Community Education Activities

Promotional material on the Community Animal Welfare Scheme (CAWS) program was provided and distributed through Council facilities such as libraries, neighbourhood centres, and council offices. Brochures on responsible cat and dog ownership and appropriate behaviours to minimise the impacts of cats and dogs on native wildlife, bushland reserves, wildlife protection areas and the environment are available on Council's website. Educational initiatives such as the "Design an Ad" campaign were held to encourage young children's involvement in responsible pet ownership. Online social media forums, including the Have Your Say website, were utilised to provide information and obtain feedback on topical issues in relation to dog exercise areas, and issues around shared spaces to help identify community priorities.

Strategies to promote or assist with de-sexing of dogs and cats

In conjunction with the RSPCA, the CAWS program provided low income earners and pensioners with subsidised desexing, vaccination and microchipping. Council assisted with promotion and fielded enquiries.

Strategies to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals

The NSW Companion Animals Act provides that micro-chipped animals be held for a minimum of 14 days and unidentified animals kept for seven days. At the expiration of the prescribed period, unclaimed animals are transferred to the RSPCA for sale. In some circumstances the decision may be made to euthanise. In the case of infant animals, this can occur without waiting the prescribed minimum time periods. Under these circumstances, the Shelter Manager will carry out an assessment based on the age, condition and likelihood of survival.

If the assessment discloses that it is not humane or practical to provide immediate or long term care and shelter, then the Shelter Manager, after consultation with the appropriate Council representative, may destroy the animal/s without waiting the prescribed time. Statistics show a continual decrease in euthanasia rates for cats and dogs from the Blue Mountains Shelter.

Off-Leash Areas provided in the LGA

Blackheath

Whitley Park

Lawn setting surrounded by bush and parkland.

Address: 171-175 Great Western Hwy, Blackheath

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Full dog off-leash area

Old Airstrip, Hat Hill Road

Open space from old Airstrip, mulched surface. Includes some bushland tracks.

Address: 244-318 Hat Hill Road, Blackheath

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared Recreation Zone

Medlow Bath

Medlow Park

Open park space surrounded by bushland. Shared with general recreation.

Address: 10-14 Railway Pde, Medlow Bath

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared Recreation Zone

Katoomba

Bureau Park

Sports Oval surrounded by bushland and playground.

Address: 28-40 Mistral St, Katoomba

Open: Monday to Friday sunrise till 10am then after 4pm, Sunday all day except when a competition cricket match is being played

Type of use: Shared Sportsground

Melrose Park

Sports Oval surrounded by recreation park and bushland.

Address: Fitzgerald St, Katoomba

Open: Monday to Friday, sunrise to 4pm

Type of use: Shared Sportsground

Katoomba Falls Reserve (Lower Oval)

Sports Oval surrounded by natural creek area, recreation area, caravan park and other sports fields.

Address: 101 Cliff Drive, Katoomba

Open: Monday to Friday sunrise to 10am, weekends after 5pm except when a competition cricket match is being played

Type of use: Shared Sportsground

Leura*Leura Oval*

Sports Oval surrounded by bushland including Lone Pine Ave memorial track.

Address: 34-36 Gordon Road, Leura

Open: Monday to Sunday, sunrise to 10am then after 4pm

Type of use: Shared Sportsground

Wentworth Falls*Pitt Park (Lower Oval)*

Sports Oval complex with adjacent bushland.

Address: 3-15 Matcham St, Wentworth Falls

Open: Monday to Sunday 24 hours, except when booked sporting or community events or oval mowing are in progress

Type of use: Shared Sportsground

Lawson*Former Lawson Golf Course (2 fairways)*

Open grassed fairways. Bushland surrounds.

Address: 48-78 Wilson St, Lawson

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared Recreation area, part of former Golf Course

Sun Valley*Sun Valley Reserve (Valley Heights)*

Grassed field bounded by bush reserve and private rural lots.

Address: 96-130 Sun Valley Road, Sun Valley

Open: Monday to Sunday, except when horses in reserve or booked games in play.

Type of use: Shared Recreation area, also used by horses

Woodford*Bulls Camp*

Open grassland in bush surrounding, near highway.

Address: 1-6 Great Western Hwy, Woodford

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared Recreation area, highway rest area

Winmalee*Summerhayes Park*

Grassed park adjoined by bushland and Summerhayes Park complex.

Address: 326-349 Hawkesbury Rd, Winmalee (access from Bunnell Avenue)

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Designated fenced and accessible dog off-leash area

Glenbrook*Whitton Park*

Open grassed area with play equipment and picnic shelter adjacent.

Address: 12 Moore St, Glenbrook

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared Recreation Area

Lennox Bridge

Track in bushland area. Creek with some clearings.

Address: Knapsack Reserve, Mitchells Pass Road, Glenbrook

Open: Monday to Sunday, 24 hours

Type of use: Shared track circuit



Bureau Park Off Leash Area, Katoomba

Amount of funding spent relating to Companion Animal Management

Council's net expenditure in relation to companion animal management for 2016-2017 was \$257,770. The direct costs of enforcement are detailed below.

Receipts	
Companion Animal Fund	-\$55,210
Pound income (release fees)	-\$15,482
Disbursements	
Enforcement by Rangers	\$254,725
Provision of pound facility	\$48,426
Veterinary costs	\$16,662
Sustenance	\$4,104
Education (public advertisements in news print)	\$4,545
TOTAL NET EXPENDITURE	\$257,770

Note: The contract for provision of pound facilities was renegotiated in 2016, which has reduced costs significantly.



Sustainable Blue Mountains Together Community Forum

Privacy Management Plan Notification

The *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIPA)* requires the Council to maintain a Privacy Management Plan.

On 23 June 2015, Blue Mountains City Council endorsed a reviewed Privacy Management Plan. The Council's Privacy Management Plan is available for viewing on Council's website.

Swimming Pools

Under Division 5 of Part 2 of the Swimming Pools Act, Council is required to undertake inspections of the swimming pool barrier on premises where there is tourist and visitor accommodation or more than two dwellings. Upon a satisfactory inspection Council may issue a certificate of compliance, or certificate of non-compliance for an unsatisfactory inspection.

Council issued five certificates for these premises in 2016-2017.

Government Information (Public Access) Requests

Information relating to the 31 formal *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA)* applications received during the period 2016-2017 can be broken down into the following tables as per Schedule 2 of the *GIPA Regulation, 2009*.

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome*								
	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	1	1	1	2	1	2	0	0
Members of the public (other)	10	3	4	1	1	6	0	4

*More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	11	6	5	3	3	8	0	4
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications

Reason for invalidity	Number of applications
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	1
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0
Total number of invalid applications received	0
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of the Act

	Number of times consideration used*
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive Council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	1
Excluded information	0
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0
Transport safety	0
Adoption	0
Care and protection of children	0
Ministerial code of conduct	0
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0

*More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of the Act

	Number of occasions when application not successful
Responsible and effective government	7
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	8
Business interests of agencies and other persons	7
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	3
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

Table F: Timeliness	
	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	28
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	3
TOTAL	31

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)			
	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total
Internal review	1	1	2
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0	0
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	1	0	1
Review by NCAT	0	1	1
TOTAL	1	2	4

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendation to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made.

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)	
	Number of applications for review
Applications by access applicants	3
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

Open Access Requests

During the 2016-2017 financial year Council received and processed 679 open access requests related to Development Applications.

Planning Agreements

There were no planning agreements in force during 2016-2017.

Public Interest Disclosures

The Council is required to report disclosures made by public officials under Section 31 of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (NSW) ('the PID Act'). The PID Act sets out a comprehensive framework for protecting public officials who disclose wrongdoing in accordance with this Act. Such disclosures are known as public interest disclosures or internal reports.

The Public Interest Disclosure Internal Reporting Policy was endorsed by the Council on 13 September 2013 and is available on the Council website.

The following table outlines public interest disclosures for the period July 2016 to June 2017.

	Made by public officials performing their day to day functions	Under a statutory or other legal obligation	All other PIDs
Number of public officials who made PIDs directly	1	0	0
Number of PIDs received	1	0	0
Of PIDs received, number primarily about:			
• Corrupt conduct	1	0	0
• Maladministration	0	0	0
• Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0
• Government information contravention	0	0	0
• Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Number of PIDs finalised in reporting period	0	0	0

During the reporting period, the Council undertook the following actions to meet its staff awareness obligations under section 6E(1)(b) of the PID Act:

- PID information is available on the staff intranet;
- The Public Interest Disclosure Internal Reporting Policy is on the Council website;
- Posters are displayed to promote staff awareness, with detail on where they can seek advice or make a report of wrongdoing;
- Internal reporting policy and procedures covered in staff induction sessions; and
- Information on internal reporting was presented in the staff newsletter.

Fit for the Future Action Plan

The Council was declared Fit for the Future in October 2015 based on the submission and action plan provided to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in June 2015. The action plan was developed to achieve Fit for the Future targets by 2019-2020.

The following key has been used:

Fit for the Future Action Plan Status	
Milestone complete	✓ ✓
Milestone partially complete	✓
Milestone rescheduled	○

The following table presents the status of each of the milestone actions for 2016-2017 as at 30 June 2017.

Actions	2016-2017 Milestones	Status at 30 June 2016
OBJECTIVE A. Achieve and maintain a balanced Operating Result by 2019-2020		
STRATEGY 1. Reduce long term operating costs through best value resource allocation		
Action 1.1 The annual budgeting process is guided by a best value resource allocation framework that includes a focus on risk management	Best value governance framework in place and guiding resource allocation	✓ ✓
	Service and Asset Plans updated to inform annual business planning and budget process	✓ ✓
	Operating Plan including budget complete within best value resource allocation	✓ ✓
Action 1.2 The Council has strengthened its asset management decision making and resource allocation to reduce whole of life cycle asset costs, maximise life of assets and manage risks	Optimised decision making framework/ approach developed	✓ ✓
	Improved "whole of life cycle" asset planning and management data available to inform allocation and timing of expenditure	✓

Actions	2016-2017 Milestones	Status at 30 June 2016
STRATEGY 2. Continue to progress implementation of service planning and service reviews to ensure best value services that meet changing community needs		
Action 2.1 Service reviews for parks, libraries and pools have been progressed	Community engagement on service reviews commenced	 Pending completion of Strategic Review of Council services
Action 2.2 Review of existing assets against required service provision and service levels	Ensure any service reviews undertaken confirm assets required to meet assessed required service delivery	 
	Asset rationalisation strategies completed where required	
STRATEGY 3. Increase income through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising returns from the Council's Property Disposal and Investment Program • Commercial Property Portfolio, Tourist Parks, Service NSW Agency • Seeking grant funding that supports delivery of required services and facilities • Providing sound financial management of the Council's investments 		
Action 3.1 Key commercial activities are guided by 4-10 year business plans/strategies	Complete 4-10 year commercial activity business plans/strategies	
Action 3.2 Implement income generating activities to achieve revenue	Planned service delivery implemented and returns maximised for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Disposal and Investment Program 	 
	• Commercial Property Portfolio	 
	• Tourist Parks	 
	• Service NSW Agency	 
Action 3.3 Monitor and seek grants that align with required service provision	Monitor grant opportunities	 
	Apply for grants that support delivery of required services and facilities	 
Action 3.4 Investments continue to be monitored to ensure best returns in line with the Council's adopted Investment Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and monitor investments to ensure best returns within prudent risk parameters. • Implement the Council's adopted Investment Policy and Strategy 	 


Actions	2016-2017 Milestones	Status at 30 June 2016
STRATEGY 4. Continue to lobby federal and state governments for reduced cost shifting, fair distribution of and increased access to funding for local government		
Action 4.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to lobby other levels of government on key matters adversely affecting financial sustainability of the Council Strengthen Regional Strategic Alliance role in lobbying for and influencing regional initiatives that benefit the three alliance councils 	Other levels of government lobbied as required	✓ ✓
	Regional Strategic Alliance lobbies on relevant regional matters	✓ ✓
OBJECTIVE B. Maintain and increase own source revenue at 80%		
STRATEGY 5. Continue to implement strategies that increase own source revenue including maximising returns from commercial activities and Property Disposal and Investment Program		
See actions 3.1 and 3.2 above and associated Milestones, Costs, Benefits, Risks and Assumptions		✓ ✓
OBJECTIVE C. Improve the Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio		
STRATEGY 6. Implement the Asset Management Improvement Plan (AMIP) to guide and target required expenditure on asset renewal		
Action 6.1 Implement the Asset Management Improvement Plan	2016-2017 AMIP actions implemented	✓ ✓
STRATEGY 7. Improve the accuracy of the Council's Financial Asset Register and alignment with required asset renewal expenditure		
Action 7.1 The Asset Register is materially improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asset register maturity improved Required revaluations implemented 	✓ ✓
OBJECTIVE D. Improve Infrastructure Backlog Ratio		
STRATEGY 8. Address the infrastructure backlog through targeting available revenue to residual high risk asset renewal		
Action 8.1 Service and asset/infrastructure planning informs required expenditure on asset renewal	Complete programmed service, infrastructure and asset planning work/strategies	✓ ✓
Action 8.2 Asset Management Plans and Risk Registers updated annually to identify and target high risk renewal expenditure	Asset Management Plans and risk registers updated	✓ ✓

Actions	2016-2017 Milestones	Status at 30 June 2016
STRATEGY 9. Continue to engage with community on required and affordable levels of service to ensure best value service provision that meets changing community needs		
Action 9.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the community on required and affordable service Engage community on service reviews including affordable service levels and trade-offs 	Required update of Integrated Plans completed in consultation with community Community engagement on service levels and trade-offs progressed	✓
OBJECTIVE E. Improve Asset Maintenance Ratio		
STRATEGY 10. Fund required maintenance using evidence based assessment		
Action 10.1 Implement agreed maintenance service level standards and monitor and report performance	Programmed asset maintenance work completed within available resources and agreed service level standards	✓ Required unplanned works have delayed programmed works
Action 10.2 Implement best value assessment of maintenance expenditure requirements	Required maintenance is funded within available resources	✓ ✓
OBJECTIVE F. Improve/maintain Debt Service Ratio within LTFP targets		
STRATEGY 11. Implement the Council's endorsed Borrowing Strategy		
Action 11.1 Annual and ongoing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borrowing capacity reviewed Opportunities taken to reduce debt through one-off savings or appropriate use of cash reserves New borrowings supported by sound business case Subsidised state government/ TCorp loan funding used where effective 	Borrowing Strategy actions for 2016-2017 implemented	✓ ✓


Actions	2016-2017 Milestones	Status at 30 June 2016
OBJECTIVE G. Decrease real operating expenditure per capita over time		
STRATEGY 12. Implement Regional Strategic Alliance between Blue Mountains, Penrith and Hawkesbury councils to drive strategic opportunities, capitalise on economies of scale and enhance sub-regional planning and advocacy.		
Action 12.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the cooperative agreement or Regional Strategic Alliance, identify opportunities to reduce costs and/or increase efficiencies through economies of scale Sub-regional planning strategy that recognises and maximises potential of all 3 councils developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the Regional Strategic Alliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalise the governance arrangements - Investigate and identify projects and initiatives - Develop Regional Alliance Action Plan - Implement 2016-2017 agreed projects and efficiency initiatives - Monitor and report outcomes 	 
STRATEGY 13. Implement the Council's Procurement Strategy		
Action 13.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain organisation priority on Strategic Procurement Implement revised procurement policy framework Continue maximising benefits of joint procurement of insurance through membership of the Westpool insurance group and procurement opportunities through WSROC and other procurement aggregators Continue to implement contract management efficiency initiatives e.g. electricity contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New organisation structure for Strategic Procurement in place Procurement strategy/policy framework reviewed Procurement of insurance through membership of the Westpool Insurance group continued Contract management efficiency initiatives implemented Review of energy contracts and energy efficiency projects commenced 	 
STRATEGY 14. Continue to implement business and process improvement initiatives that reduce costs, improve productivity and achieve best value effective and efficient service delivery		
Action 14.1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement work redesign, productivity, efficiency and cost saving initiatives Continue tracking of productivity, cost saving and efficiency initiatives 	<p>Work redesign, productivity, efficiency and cost saving initiatives implemented</p> <p>Track savings, efficiencies and productivity improvements</p>	 
STRATEGY 15. Implement Waste Service review action for reducing Domestic Waste Charge to ratepayers through changing from a weekly to a fortnightly recycling service (with a larger recycling bin)		
Action 15.1 NetWaste tender implemented with change to fortnightly 240L kerbside recycling service	Fortnightly recycling service implemented	 

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