

Blue Mountains City Council **Heritage Strategy 2014 – 2017**

The Cultural Planning Framework

Blue Mountains City Council has developed a comprehensive vision for its future through extensive community consultation and involvement over many years. 2000 was a milestone for Blue Mountains City Council with its commitment to build on existing work in planning for a more sustainable future and its recognition of the need to improve Council's decision making to achieve a more sustainable Blue Mountains. Key strategies developed at that time included a 25 year vision for the City¹ and a map for action providing a framework for the period 2000-2025².

In response to the above framework Council developed an overall Cultural Strategy in 2006 to identify cultural strengths and advantages of the Blue Mountains, along with the aspirations of the local community and visitors. It aimed to be inclusive to different forms of cultural protection, preservation, interpretation, and public presentation especially in relationship to economic development and tourism.

The strategy recognised that culture in its widest sense was about what mattered to people and communities; was about identity, history and sense of place and was about our way of connecting the present with the past and the future. Key components of Blue Mountains culture were seen as the arts and their heritage. It was acknowledged that *“our heritage involves what we as a community have inherited from the past and value. Heritage provides a link with the work and way of life of earlier generations, helps us to understand who we are today, and shapes what we will hand on to future generations”*³

The Cultural Strategy noted that heritage can involve:

- Aboriginal heritage places
- Natural heritage and landscapes
- Built heritage
- Moveable heritage
- Documentary heritage
- Local histories
- The Arts
- Intangible heritage, beliefs and customs

Council's Vision

The 25 Year Vision adopted by Council included the following heritage related aspects:

- We live in a vibrant, healthy community. Our towns and villages are distinctive and contained.
- We have maintained the bush between our settlements and protected the World Heritage environment that surrounds us.
- We celebrate the rich creativity, culture and heritage of the Blue Mountains.
- Peoples of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and enjoy equal rights. We acknowledge the Aboriginal presence in the Blue Mountains.

¹ “Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains – A 25 Year Vision for the City”, BMCC, 2004

² “Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains – A Map of Action 2000-2025”, BMCC, 2004

³ “Cultural Strategy 2006-2016, Inaugural City of the Arts & City within a World Heritage Area”, BMCC, 2006

The 2006 Cultural Strategy

This Strategy presented a staged program to understand and progressively make improvements to the standard of protection and presentation of cultural heritage across the City. The key outcome is **“The unique sense of place and history of the Blue Mountains continues to underpin the character and identity of our towns and communities for present and future generations”**.

The Strategy outlined broad guidelines and priorities for “Historic Heritage”, and “Aboriginal Heritage”. Those guidelines included recommendations for (i) results (ii) actions (iii) management plan year and (iv) resources and responsibilities.

The key ‘results’ were:

1. Council policies and planning instruments reinforce conservation of significant heritage
2. Council effectively manages heritage matters across its areas of responsibility
3. Blue Mountains Library facilitates documentation, promotion and display of Aboriginal heritage stories and material and
4. Blue Mountains community understands and supports the value of our heritage

Each of the above key ‘results’ includes a series of specific tasks or actions. Refer to the Strategy for those details.

Relationship to this Document

The aim of this Heritage Strategy 2014 - 2017 is to

- (i) build on the ‘results’ and ‘actions’ set out by the 2006 Cultural Strategy;
- (ii) focus on the aspect of ‘historic heritage’ (ie built heritage, moveable heritage, documentary heritage and local histories;
- (iii) address the Heritage Branch publication “Recommendations for Local Council Management”; and
- (iv) follow the standard format template for “Heritage Strategy Annual Reporting” established by the Department of Planning.

A requirement of the *NSW Heritage Grants* Local Government heritage advisor program is that each Council must prepare, adopt and implement a 3 year Heritage Strategy. This strategy should be based on the Heritage Branch / Department of Planning publication for local Council heritage management⁴.

The current strategy period for the Department of Planning is 2014-2017. Funding as part of the NSW Heritage Grants program was approved for Blue Mountains City Council by the Heritage Branch in late 2013 and this is the second full three year cycle for a Heritage Strategy to be prepared by Council. The strategy has been prepared by Council's Community and Corporate Directorate through City Planning in association with Council's Heritage Advisor.

⁴ “Recommendations for Local Council Heritage Management”, Heritage Information Series, Department of Planning, 2001 rev2007

This Heritage Strategy comprises a number of components. These include:

- (i) nine recommendations;
- (ii) a broad strategy to follow for each recommendation in order to achieve its intent;
- (iii) detailed actions to implement; and
- (iv) associated outcomes of the strategy. Reference is also made within this document to existing results and actions from the 2006 BMCC Cultural Strategy.

Key Tasks 2014-2017

The main task for 2014-2015 is for the Council to complete and have gazetted its Standard Instrument LEP known as DLEP 2013. This draft LEP will contain a revised heritage schedule which combines all of Council's current heritage schedules contained in LEP 2005, LEP 1991 and LEP 4. Timeframes imposed by the State Government to prepare DLEP 2013 led to no work on the Heritage Review for LEP 1991. Council had to re-organise its tasks outlined under its previous Heritage Strategy in order to meet those deadlines

The key tasks therefore will be:

1. Ensure currency of the heritage schedule included in the Draft Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan 2013 (DLEP 2013), which is expected to be in place by the end of 2014. Any changes to the heritage schedule of DLEP 2013 will focus on the following:
 - a) correcting any errors and anomalies. The DLEP 2013 Heritage Schedule was developed by amalgamating the existing schedules in LEP 1991 and LEP 2005, and whilst some errors and anomalies were corrected, there are still some that remain and which require correction;
 - b) Review of the items included in the DLEP 2013 Heritage Schedule. This work had already substantially commenced with the review of the heritage schedule in LEP 1991, but was deferred when DLEP 2013 commenced. The review of the (then) LEP 1991 items will continue to completion and should be supplemented by further consideration of the items presently listed under the LEP 2005 heritage schedule, and the need to include other items such as walking tracks and identification of some heritage conservation areas.

Additionally, a new comprehensive Development Control Plan is being developed to align with DLEP 2013, and which will include a section on heritage considerations;

2. Update the tasks associated with Recommendation 1 which relates to the functions and tasks of the Heritage Advisory Committee (Page 4 of Attachment 1);
3. Update the tasks associated with Recommendation 5 which relates to the continuation of Council's Local Heritage Fund (Page 8 of Attachment 1).

Recommendation 1

Establish a heritage advisory committee to deal with heritage matters in the Blue Mountains area.

Strategy

Council will continue to hold Heritage Advisory Committee meetings and ensure that Committee members are involved in heritage matters across the Blue Mountains LGA as they arise.

Tasks

1. To continue to hold regular quarterly meetings or as required with the Committee.
2. Continue up-skilling Committee members via regular briefings and presentations on related heritage matters, to ensure that their skills are maintained and improved to make their contributions valuable.
3. Investigate ways in which the Committee can be used to outreach heritage issues in the community.
4. Provide feedback to the Committee on their input into decision making and increase their awareness of Council processes.
5. Re-enforce the Committee's involvement by encouraging their involvement or feedback during Committee meetings from key heritage organisations on key heritage matters that arise.

Outcomes

- Increased community participation, awareness and appreciation of heritage in the Blue Mountains area.
- BMCC heritage committee will be an active working committee.
- The committee provides advice on heritage-related matters which are of interest to the community by providing expertise, local knowledge and guidance.
- Heritage committee members to assist with funding procurement and grants.

Recommendation 2

Identify the heritage items in the Blue Mountains area and list them in our local environmental plan.

Strategy

Council policies and planning instruments reinforce conservation of significant heritage (ref 2006 CS *Result* item 1).

Tasks

1. Regularly review and update listings of heritage sites, landscapes and items of significance in Council's planning instruments (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 1.1).
2. Complete the Review of the BMCC LEP 1991 heritage items, conservation areas and period housing areas and initiate a review of the heritage items in the former 2005 LEP (now DLEP 2013).
3. Liaise with local historical societies, heritage bodies and other interested groups in finalising the Review.
4. Liaise with other government departments and agencies.
5. Consult with the community and heritage property owners to seek their involvement and agreement.
6. Continue to update Council's Heritage Inventory Sheets / SHIDATA which have now been made available on the Heritage Branch website which will be linked to that site from Council's website.

Outcomes

- Increased knowledge and active management of heritage in the Blue Mountains area.
- Broader appreciation of local history, heritage significance and heritage listings through internet access of background support material.

Recommendation 3

Appoint a heritage advisor and urban design advisor to assist the Council, the Community and owners of listed heritage items.

Strategy

Continue to support and fund the heritage advisory program to assist Council, the Community and owners of heritage listed items⁵.

Tasks

1. The primary task of the Heritage Advisor is to provide professional heritage advice that assists Council to work with the Community to ensure that heritage conservation and urban design are well managed and presented in the Blue Mountains.
2. Continue to provide a heritage advisory service to provide advice to the community and Council on proposed development in the Blue Mountains (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 1.5).
3. Continue to provide a heritage advisory service to provide support and guidance to the community and Council on strategic planning matters in the Blue Mountains.
4. Continue to gradually expand the heritage advisory service to provide technical advice to owners of historic and heritage buildings in the Blue Mountains area.

Outcomes

- Professional advice provided by the heritage advisor to inform decision-making by staff and owners of heritage items in order to best manage, conserve and protect heritage in the Blue Mountains.
- Increased community participation and proactive heritage and urban design management in the Blue Mountains area.

⁵ The previous heritage advisory program established by Council lapsed in the 1990s. This was re-initiated again in late 2008 and subsequently approved by Heritage Branch in 2010 for inclusion within the NSW Heritage Grants program for funding assistance. The professional advice that the heritage advisor provides is critical to ensuring best practice management for environmental heritage in the Blue Mountains. The role of the Heritage Advisor is articulated in the Heritage Advisor Duty Statement developed by the Department of Planning.

Recommendation 4

Manage local heritage in a positive manner.

Strategy

Council policies and planning instruments reinforce conservation of significant heritage (ref 2006 CS *Result* Item 1)

Tasks

1. Develop a heritage DCP or DCPs for the Blue Mountains area and its towns and villages that incorporates the intent of the urban design guidelines in the former BMCC LEP 2005.
2. Clarify and support responsibility for heritage matters across Council (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 2.1).
3. Engage staff with expertise to address heritage matters across Council's range of activities and provide advice to Council and the Community (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 2.2)
4. Review the Cultural impact of Council policies, plans and regulation (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 2.4).
5. Continue to support and encourage the local historical societies with funding and the continuation of information sharing.
6. Develop and maintain the Local Studies Collection and Council's archives as accessible community assets (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 2.3).
7. Consider waiving, reducing fees or other conservation incentives for sympathetic development applications involving heritage items.
8. Continue to adopt a flexible and sympathetic approach to conservation works, planning, building requirements or other proposals.
9. Support heritage societies in implementing a monitoring program for heritage listed sites (ref 2006 CS *Action* 1.2).
10. Council continues its use of the Burra Charter as a reference tool for assessing developments within the City of the Blue Mountains.

Outcomes

- Active heritage and urban design management in the Blue Mountains area.
- Increased community awareness and engagement in the importance and relevance of heritage in the Blue Mountains area.
- Councillors and Council staff actively considering heritage as a key consideration in performing their duties.

Recommendation 5

Introduce a local heritage incentives fund to provide small grants to encourage local heritage projects.

Strategy

To maintain a newly introduced Local Heritage Fund with assistance from a range of potential sources, including local government, state government and local business sponsorship.

Tasks

1. Continue administering the Local Heritage Fund
2. Explore the possibilities for local business sponsorship of the program on an annual basis.
3. Continue the role of the Heritage Advisory Committee in being ambassadors for the Local Heritage Fund program to encourage applications from the community.
4. Publicise the successful applications when completed.
5. Investigate additional funding to supplement the Local Heritage Fund for example: local businesses, Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism (BMLOT).

Outcomes

- Increased community participation and proactive conservation and management of heritage in the Blue Mountains area.
- Increased appreciation of the value of the significant heritage in the area.

Recommendation 6

Continue a main street program approach for town centres.

Strategy

To provide strong connections between Council and Chambers of Commerce to promote town centre improvements throughout the LGA.

Tasks

1. Provide and maintain street furniture, footpaths, public domain open space, landscaping, monuments and public toilets in town centres.
2. Encourage Lawson Town Centre redevelopment in response to Great Western Highway widening.
3. Continue redevelopment of laneway connections in Katoomba Town Centre (as part of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre, New Katoomba Library and Mixed Use Precinct project).

Outcomes

1. Council, owners and the community actively participate in attractive and well managed heritage main streets.

Recommendation 7

Present educational and promotional programs.

Strategy

Blue Mountains community understands and supports the value of our heritage (ref 2006 CS Result item 4). Continue to fund and present educational and promotional programs.

Tasks

1. Raise standards through working with volunteers managed collecting organisations across the mountains through the Museums Advisory Service and other avenues to progressively (i) strengthen relations between Council and voluntary Museums (ii) identify heritage organisation needs and priorities (iii) understand the significance of collections (iv) prepare a strategic plan to support museums and collections and (v) upgrade skills and capacity of voluntary organisations (ref 2006 CS *Action* 4.1).
2. Support the development of the programs of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 4.2).
3. Deliver education programs to develop community awareness and stewardship of Blue Mountains heritage (ref 2006 CS I item 4.3).
4. Develop fixed and temporary heritage exhibits for the World Heritage Interpretative Centre of the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre (ref 2006 CS *Action* 4.4).
5. Council staff and Councillors to continue to attend and participate in the Department of Planning and Heritage Branch training and educational programs.
6. Supplement appropriate heritage information material in the form of brochures, websites and guidelines for the assistance of the community and owners of heritage listed properties.
7. Council features the Burra Charter on its website which will help explain its intention and relevance to the City of the Blue Mountains.

Outcomes

- Increased awareness and appreciation of heritage by the Council, owners and the community in the Blue Mountains area.
- Council staff and Councillors are better equipped to make informed decisions on heritage management and the implementation of conservation policies, planning instruments and other documents.

Recommendation 8

Set a good example to the community by properly managing places owned or operated by Council.

Strategy

Council effectively manages heritage matters across its areas of responsibility (ref 2006 CS *Result* item 2).

Tasks

1. Clarify responsibility for heritage matters across Council (ref 2006 CS *Action* item 2.1).
2. Engage and train staff with expertise to address heritage matters across Council's range of activities and provide advice to Council and the community (ref 2006 CS *Action* 2.2).
3. Recognise Council managed heritage places and items with interpretation and promotion (ref 2006 CS *Action* 2.5).
4. Prepare asset management plans for Council owned / managed properties with action plans for heritage assets.
5. Prepare CMPs or CMSs for State significant heritage assets Council owned / managed properties.
6. Secure an appropriate annual works budget for heritage asset maintenance and repairs.

Outcomes

- Council actively conserves and manages its heritage assets.

Recommendation 9

Promote sustainable development as a tool for heritage conservation.

Strategy

Promote sustainable development as a tool for heritage conservation.

Tasks

1. Support sustainability and heritage awareness courses for Councillors, staff, heritage owners and the community.
2. Encourage pre-DA advice on sustainable and energy efficient modifications (power, water, waste, carbon neutral).
3. Encourage heritage development applications for infill development and / or additions works.
4. Encourage heritage development applications for adaptive reuse, regeneration and urban design works.
5. Update and refine the 2006 Cultural Strategy when appropriate to include the issue of sustainable development as a tool for heritage conservation.

Outcomes

- Proactive heritage and sustainable development in the Blue Mountains area.