

Nature Based Recreation Strategy

2005-2015

towards a more sustainable blue mountains



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Nature Based Recreation Strategy

2005–2015



blue mountains
City Council

DECEMBER 2004

1.

INTRODUCTION



The natural environment attracts millions of visitors to the Blue Mountains each year, and nature based recreation plays an important role in the regional economy.





Blue Mountains City Council has prepared this Nature Based Recreation Strategy in consultation with key stakeholders:

- To guide management of recreation in natural areas on public lands; and
- To support land use planning policy for public and private lands within the City.

The Strategy responds to the community endorsed 25 Year City Vision Towards a More Sustainable Blue Mountains by presenting a strategic framework for more sustainable management of nature based recreation in the Blue Mountains.

It links with other key planning policies and strategies for the Blue Mountains such as Blue Mountains Regional Tourism Plan 2004-2007 and the Blue Mountains Sport and Recreation Strategy (see Appendix 1).

It has also been informed by applicable policy and plans prepared by other levels of government.

Within the Blue Mountains region nature based recreation activities occur on privately owned lands, on Local Government managed Community lands, in the National Parks, on Crown lands reserved for recreation, environmental protection and other uses, and in State Forests.



This strategy primarily focuses on the management of nature based recreation activities in those areas of the City of Blue Mountains outside of Blue Mountains National Park.¹

There are many different stakeholders involved in the use and management of nature based recreational sites in the Blue Mountains.

This strategy aims to provide a wholistic regional framework, across different land tenures, that stakeholders can respond to and work cooperatively to achieve.



¹ This includes lands zoned Rural Conservation (RC), Bushland Conservation (BC), Recreation (REC), Recreation Environmental Protection (REC-EP), Environmental Protection (EP), Environmental Protection-Acquisition (Epac), Regional Open Space (R), Lands categorized as Natural Area within Plans of Management for Community and Crown Lands, and other areas of natural bushland within the City.

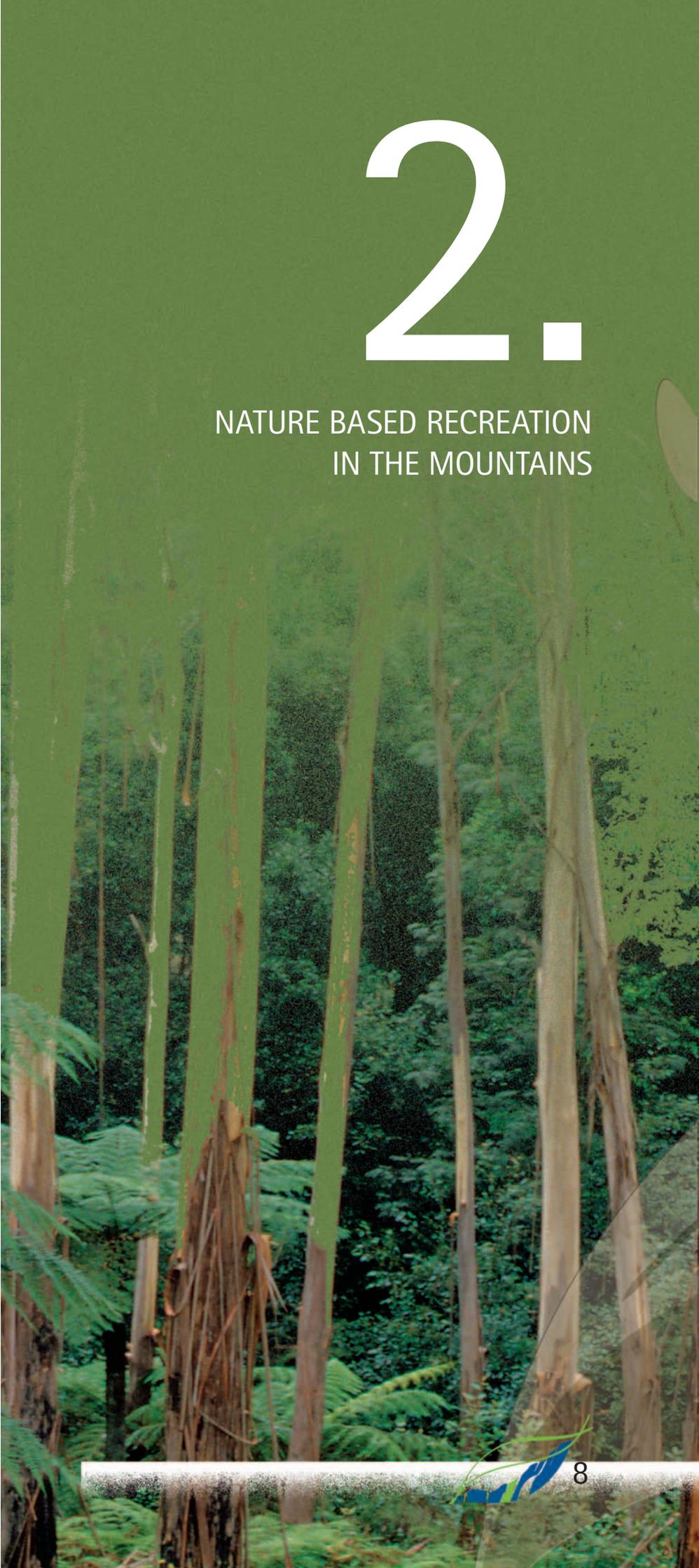
Key stakeholders include:

- Blue Mountains residents, local recreation and historical organisations
- Independent recreation participants: groups and individuals
- Commercial recreation operators
- Private landowners
- Traditional Land Owners
- Public agencies including adjoining Local Government Authorities, Department of Education, Parks & Wildlife Division of the Department of Environment & Conservation (NPWS), Lands Department (Lands), Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR), NSW Forests, NSW Fisheries, and Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR)
- Industry representatives including NSW Technical and Further Education (TAFE), Blue Mountains Tourism Limited (BMTL), and the local tourism industry.



2.

NATURE BASED RECREATION IN THE MOUNTAINS



2.1 Existing Nature Based Activity

Nature based recreation is an important aspect of the lives of many residents and visitors to the Blue Mountains.

79% of Blue Mountains residents participate in nature based recreation regularly ² and over 2.7 million visitors to the Blue Mountains experience nature based recreation each year. ³

² Blue Mountains Recreation & Sport Strategy 2002, Blue Mountains City Council, p.44
³ NSW Nature Tourism Discussion Paper 2001, NSW Tourism, pp24-25



2.1 Existing Nature Based Activity (cont'd)



The quality, quantity and diversity of opportunities for nature based recreation contribute significantly to the lifestyle, health and economic well being of the community in the Blue Mountains. Nature based recreation also forms a key core experience for the marketing of tourism in the Blue Mountains.

The combination of 3 factors influence whether an activity is nature based. These are recreation activity, recreators' intent and recreation setting.

For the purposes of this Strategy nature based recreation activities can be defined as those that:

- Are dependent on the natural environment;
- Have appreciation of nature as the key motivational factor;
- Do not require substantial modification of the natural environment; and
- The natural environment is critical to the participation and satisfaction of the recreators/participants.

The Greater Blue Mountains has been a prime destination for nature based recreation since its early settlement and now offers a wide diversity of recreational experiences both for local residents and for visitors. Recreational opportunities occur in a wide range of settings, ranging from remote wilderness to developed areas such as Echo Point.

The region caters to a wide range of participation from commercial tours to informal groups and individuals, and provides for a wide range of skill, from the novice to the very experienced.

Commercial recreation is an important activity within the greater Blue Mountains. It contributes to the regional economy and enhances recreational opportunities available to visitors and residents. It fosters a greater appreciation and understanding of significant natural values and provides a means to better manage visitor impacts and safety. Commercial and group recreation, unless well managed, can also intensify use and subsequent impacts, and lead to deterioration of recreation sites.

All commercial use within the City of Blue Mountains requires approval of the land manager. NPWS, Lands Department and BMCC require licensing of commercial and group recreation use. Council may also require development approval for recreation use and development of recreation facilities on private land.

The range of recreation activities currently undertaken in natural areas of the Blue Mountains City includes those listed below:

- Abseiling
- Bird watching
- Base jumping
- Bouldering
- Bushwalking
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Canyoning
- Caving

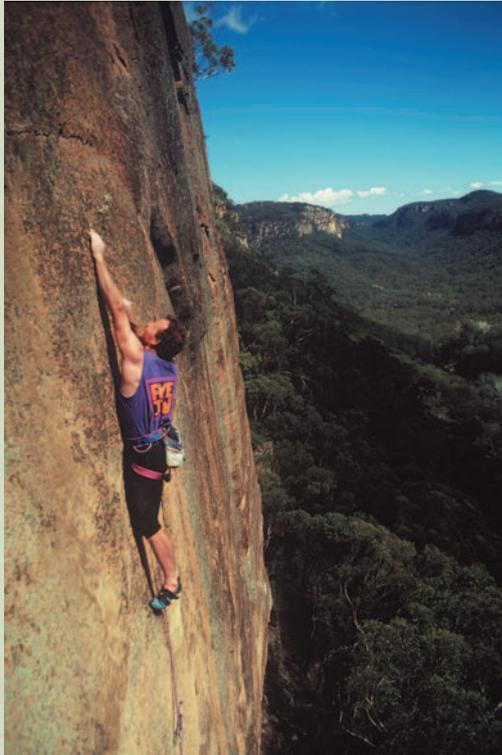
- Dance parties
- Dog walking (on leash)
- Driving for pleasure
- Filming
- Fishing
- Four wheel drive touring
- Four wheel drive training
- Hang gliding
- Hiking
- Horse riding (endurance and trail)
- Mountain biking (touring)
- Mountain biking (cross country)
- Mountains biking (downhill)
- Nature study
- Orienteering
- Photography
- Picnicking
- Quad biking
- Rock climbing
- Rogaining
- Running (cross country)
- Sight seeing
- Survival skills training
- Swimming
- Trail bike riding
- Team building
- Wildlife viewing

A number of activities currently undertaken in natural areas do not meet the criteria for nature based recreation and are not supported for continuation while for others some form of regulation is proposed.

A more detailed overview of each of these recreation activities is provided in Appendix 4 including an assessment of location (supply) characteristics, key management issues and actions recommended.



2.2 Council Land in Use for Nature Based Recreation



Blue Mountains City Council manages 4,730 hectares of natural bushland. Council owns approximately 966 hectares of Community Land Natural Area, and 291 hectares of bushland on DIPNR Regional Open Space is vested in Council management as Community Land. Council is also responsible for 3,473 hectares of natural area on Crown Public Recreation Reserves and other Crown Lands. See Figure 1 for a Map of Natural Areas in Blue Mountains City.

2.2.1 PUBLIC LAND RATIONALISATION PROJECT

Tenure and management of a major proportion – 3,628 ha - of Council managed bushland is under review in the Public Lands Rationalisation Project (PLRP). This project aims to simplify and rationalise public land ownership and management in the Blue Mountains. The project has been divided into 2 stages. These are described in Appendix 1.6. Figure 2 overleaf shows the lands subject to consideration for management change.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF NATURAL AREAS IN BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY

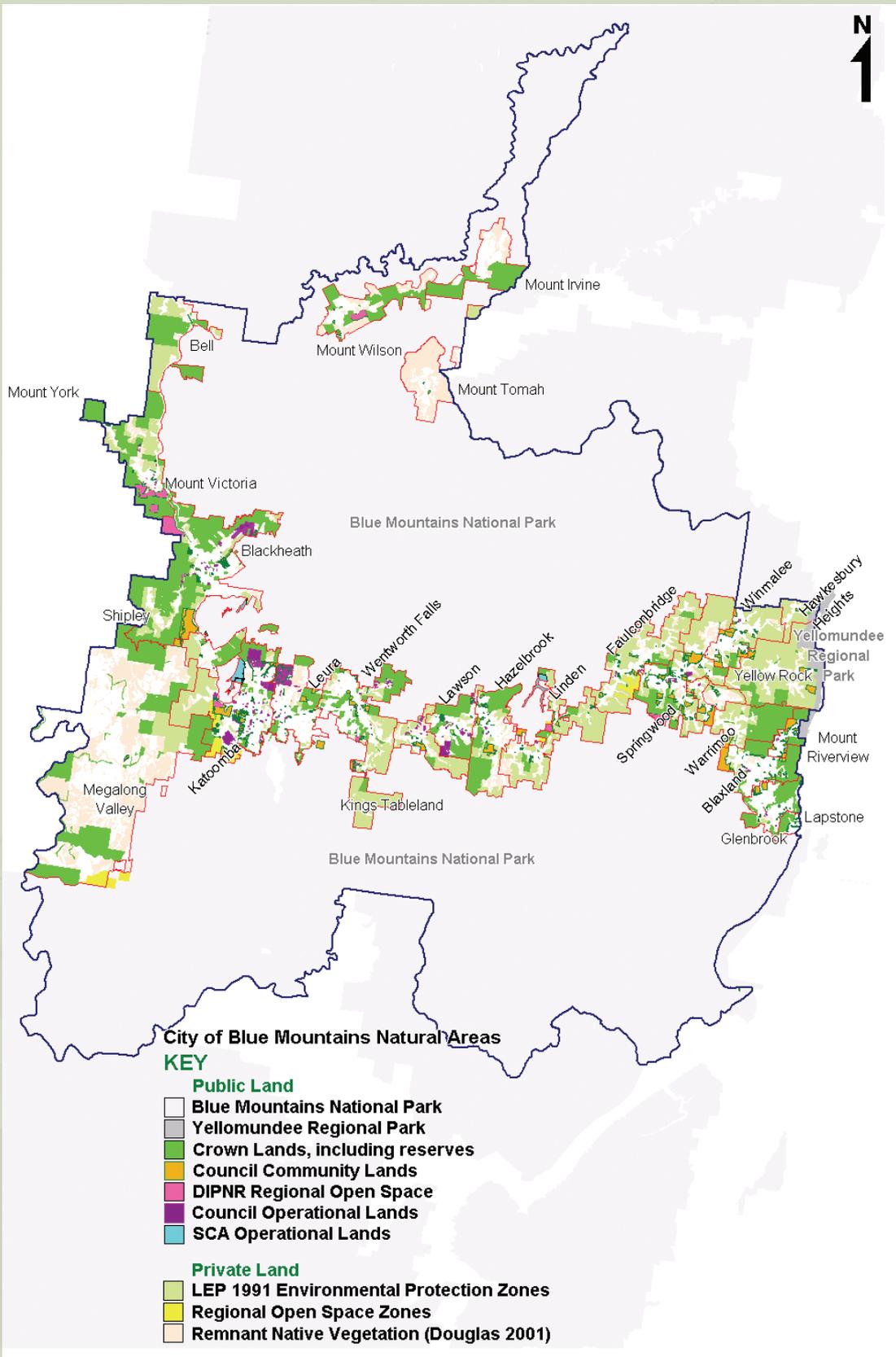
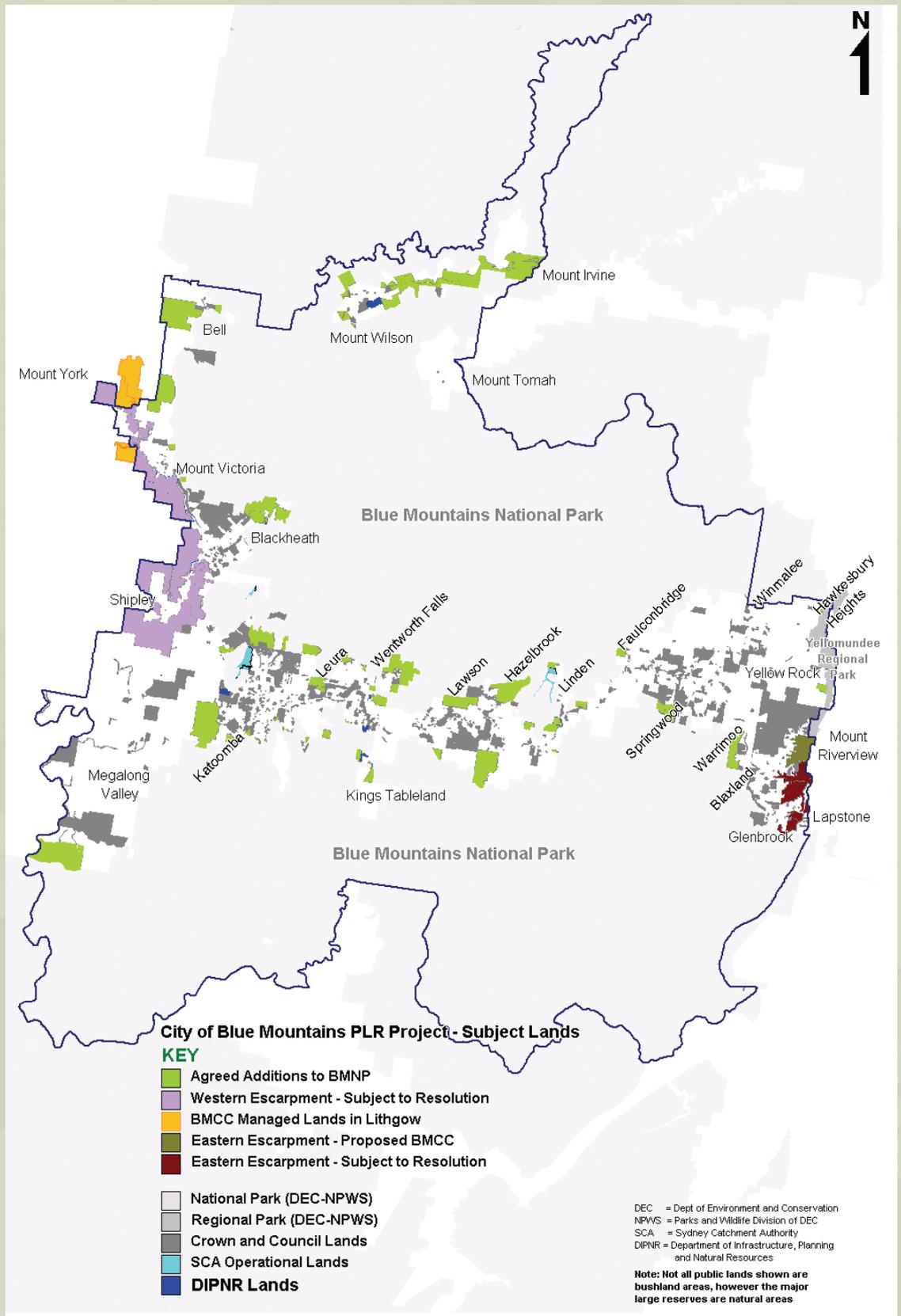


FIGURE 2: MAP OF PUBLIC LANDS RATIONALISATION



The Minister for Environment has announced the transfer approximately 4,028 hectares of public land (including 2,216 hectares managed by BMCC) to Blue Mountains National Park. At the time of publication of this strategy, the management of largely contiguous parcels of public land along the eastern and western escarpments is yet to be determined. This strategy has been completed with the assumption that Council will remain as Trustee for both the Eastern and Western Escarpment areas. However the recommendations of the strategy would apply to any option for management.

A change of management should not threaten the overall use of these areas for recreation, although the detailed management approach may differ with different agency management objectives and approach. The degree of change will be reduced where interagency agreements are in place or are negotiated with the transfer of lands. For example an agreement for staged review of existing commercial recreation uses would maintain stability of the local Tourism industry.

Significant management resources will be required to manage these lands effectively, given the intensity of use and the extensive reserve boundaries. Resources are required for the planning and management of intensive recreation sites; heritage listed walking tracks; historic relics; culturally significant landscapes and sites; rare species, and fire management.



2.3 Demand for Nature Based Recreation

2.3.1 LOCAL RESIDENTS



The Blue Mountains Household Recreation and Sport Survey (2001) showed that 79% of residents over 18 years old participated in nature based recreation in the preceding 12 months. Nature based recreation was found to involve a wide range of the population, including a large representation of females and older adults. There was high participation in nature-based recreation across all income levels, and across all areas of the City. As a comparison, 28% of residents participated in organised sport, with the majority being males under 45 years of age.

According to the survey, the third overall most popular recreation activity for residents is bushwalking, with 72% of the adult population going for a bushwalk an average of 16 times a year. Participation rates in a range of other active, passive and nature based recreation activities are shown in the table opposite.

The 2001 Household Recreation and Sport Survey also identified a number of natural area issues of importance to residents. These are summarized below:

- [The need for improved maintenance and upgrading of walking tracks](#) was a key issue for residents. Also of concern were signage and track markers on walking tracks. These comments related

TABLE 1 - BLUE MOUNTAINS RESIDENT RECREATION PARTICIPATION SURVEY 2002

Activities	Participation Rates in 12 month period to 2001			
	Residents over 18 years old	Would like to but...	Boys 5-12	Girls 5-12
Walking in Urban Setting	81%			
Nature based	79%			
Bushwalking	72%	5.5% No time	61.3%	62.9%
Sight seeing	71%			
Driving for pleasure	62%			
Social Swimming	46%		11.2%	14.4%
Using ovals for social games	34%		61.2%	58.5%
Cycling	29%		69%	63%
Camping	24%	0.9% No time	33.0%	33.1%
4WDDriving	18%	1.6%		
Fishing	16%	2.0%No facilities		
Mountain biking	15%	0.6%No facilities	28.4%	15.7%
Rock sports	12%		22.1%	14.5%
Horse riding in natural settings	6%	1.3%No facilities	8.9%	18.6%

to the condition of walking tracks, safety of walkers, effects on enjoyment of walking and the loss of historical walking tracks.

- **Preservation of the natural environment** was a key issue for residents. In particular people were concerned with the threat of overdeveloping the mountains and losing bush land.
- **Motorized use of natural areas** was also raised as an issue of concern. Motorized use relates to Four Wheel Drive Vehicles and Trail Bikes. Concerns were raised over the safety of bush walkers and the impact on natural areas. Half of the comments stated that there was a need for areas where these activities could take place.
- **Rock climbing** was addressed with concerns of overuse of areas by groups, the need to support Cliff Care, and the banning of sites because of the behaviour of a small minority of users.
- Issues relating to **lookouts** were the dumping of rubbish and anti social use.
- In relation to **mountain biking**, the issue raised was the need for more mountain biking trails or access in the mountains.
- There were suggestions for more **education** for people on how to use the bush and how to respect and care for it.



2.3.2 NATURE BASED TOURISM



Just over half of all visitors to the Blue Mountains (52%) participate in some form of nature tourism, with nearly all nature tourists⁴ coming from urban areas. An estimated 2,700,000 visitors went to National Parks in the Blue Mountains in 1999/2000.

The highest proportion of nature tourists come from the Backpacker market, with the next highest proportion from the domestic market, and the highest proportion of non-nature tourist comes from the international market.⁵

Since 2000 the number of tourists visiting the Blue Mountains Region has been static. In response to this, a number of actions around nature based tourism will be taken to increase overall visitation to the Blue Mountains by 2009. The Blue Mountains Regional Tourism Plan 2004–2007 identifies 'Nature Based Experiences' as a key area of market appeal. The vision for tourism in the Blue Mountains is:

The Blue Mountains region will become Australia's premier nature based recreation destination and an internationally recognised leader in sustainable tourism practices.

Tourism NSW now uses images of the Blue Mountains to promote NSW as a nature tourism destination.

⁴ Various definitions are used for Nature Tourism. Broadly it is "all forms of tourism that rely on or incorporate visitation to natural environments ..." which can include ecotourism, soft and hard adventure activities, indigenous tourism and special interest tourism - definitions of these are included in Section 4.5.

⁵ Tourism NSW, 2001, *NSW Nature Tourism Discussion Paper* pp24-25

2.3.3 NATURE TOURISM INDUSTRY CHARACTERISTICS

The World Tourism Organisation reports that nature tourism is the fastest growing sector in world tourism. A study by the US World Resources Institute estimates that nature tourism was worth \$14 billion in 1997 and growing at between 10 and 30% per year.

This reflects increasing interest in the natural environment, concern about sustaining bio-systems, and interest in learning while traveling. This also reflects social changes in first world countries such as higher education levels, increased disposable income, better levels of health and advances in global communication.

The nature tourism industry commonly exhibits structural issues that affect the stability of the industry. Most nature tourism businesses are small, and have limited financial capacity to grow their businesses and market their products.

The Blue Mountains region has historically proven the capacity to support a nature tourism industry, but action needs to be taken to ensure:

- Quality product,
- Maintenance of natural resources supporting the industry; and
- Wellbeing and amenity of the local community.

The basis of successful and sustainable nature tourism is the availability of:

- A wide range of high quality places in a wide range of landscapes or recreational settings, and opportunities to participate in a wide range of outdoor activities.
- People who can competently deliver experiences and services based on the available activity and setting combinations
- Resources, planning and management systems to ensure the site setting quality and diversity do not diminish over time
- Infrastructure to support access, accommodation, and entertainment needs of visitors.

There is a lack of detailed market research and analysis on existing and emerging nature tourism markets for the Blue Mountains. Preparation of this strategy included consultation with industry representatives, and research into this industry has also been conducted. A summary of this research is outlined in Appendix 5.



3.

CHALLENGES FOR NATURE BASED RECREATION

Research undertaken in preparation of this strategy included:

- an extensive review of literature
- recreation site inspections and assessment
- consultation with key stakeholders including focus workshops with representatives of recreation participants, commercial recreation operators, schools, industry bodies and government departments
- specific research on the local Nature Based Tourism Industry⁶; preparation of a recreation site inventory and a setting classification system; and development of site assessment methodologies.

⁶ IRIS Research Ltd (August 2003). "Blue Mountains City Council Nature Based Recreation Study An online survey of businesses conducting adventure tours to the Blue Mountains" (unpublished)



3.1 Challenges

This research identified a number of major challenges facing nature based recreation in the City. These are summarised below:

- The high significance and low carrying capacity of much of the natural area of the Blue Mountains
- High population growth in the Sydney basin and subsequent increasing demand for outdoor and nature based recreation
- Urban expansion of the Sydney metropolitan area, and the Blue Mountains which has decreased the land available and subsequently decreased opportunities available for different recreation activities such as horse riding and trail bike riding
- Increasing demand for new forms of nature tourism and recreation
- Competition between different types of recreation for resources
- Disparate groups pushing for different goals
- Unapproved and inappropriate development and use of areas
- Lack of recognition by those responsible, of the impacts caused by unauthorised development of facilities in natural areas
- Lack of coordination and consistency of management between land management agencies
- Crisis management approach to maintenance and upgrade of areas
- Insufficient funding to maintain existing facilities
- Unrealized potential for assistance from residents and visitors in maintenance and management of recreation facilities

- Inadequate information for stakeholders about the economic, social and environmental benefits of nature based recreation for locals and visitors.

Challenges include the need for improvements such as:

- Adoption of a consistent approach to planning, construction and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities across the mountains
- Need for standardisation of signage and classification of recreation facilities
- Target marketing of the nature tourism opportunities to meet visitor expectations and needs
- Matching recreational expectations with experiences
- Managing fire risks to natural area users and to natural area recreation sites and facilities
- Minimising impact to the Tourism Industry from site closures due to fire or other safety concerns.
- Encouraging users to “Tread Lightly”
- Development of opportunities and maintenance of access for the residents across the 26 separate settlements spread along the 100 km ridgeline of the mountains
- Development of regional walking tracks and cycle routes crossing the mountains and linking with tracks in western Sydney and to the Central West
- Linking existing sites and facilities to transport networks to provide accessible recreational opportunities.

3.2 Key Issues and Discussion

A number of key issues were isolated through analysis of the challenges presented to nature based recreation in Blue Mountains City. These are discussed below and recommendations are made to address these issues. Council's response to these recommendations is outlined in the pullout Section 5.

3.2.1 LACK OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND LIMITED RESOURCES

The management of the nature recreation resource outside of the National Parks system lacks coordination and cohesive direction. Cumulative impacts from recreation are increasing with demand for new land uses such as extreme sports, and demands from existing uses for expanded access.

Lack of integrated planning and limited funding for new works, and recurrent maintenance of nature based recreation sites and facilities are major constraints for public land managers including Council and NPWS.

Lack of information and feedback from users of nature based recreation sites and facilities also hampers the ability of land managers and the tourism and recreation industry to best meet recreation demand within available resources, and opportunities.

Council manages approximately 4,730 hectares of natural area, 1300 hectares in addition to those lands involved in the Public Lands Rationalisation Project. The current level of management in most of these areas is minimal.

Council's structure, staff skills and resources are currently more suited for intensive management of limited areas. A redirection of existing resources and staffing will be required to better equip Council to meet the expectations of the community in management of recreation sites in large natural areas.

Additional funding will be required to adequately maintain and monitor the quality of the nature based recreational sites and facilities on natural areas managed by Council, not including those lands involved in the PLR Project. This may largely involve reallocation of existing funding, supplemented by levies and grants to assist planning and upgrading works.

The resources required for management of the eastern and western escarpment lands have not been estimated at this stage, however NPWS have indicated that a Financial Impact Statement on the western escarpment lands will be prepared.

Recommendation:

This strategy recommends development over the next 10 years of an integrated framework for sustainable management of public land managed by Council composed of:

- Plans of Management
- Asset Management Plans
- Facility Management Guidelines
- Visitor Information and Interpretation Guidelines
- Research and monitoring of user demand, user satisfaction and impacts from nature based recreation on the natural, social and cultural environment.



Practically this means:

Plans of Management for community lands and crown reserves under Council management. These provide the “why, how and by whom” an area of public land should be managed, and are prepared in accordance with Local Government Act and Crown Lands Act requirements.

Asset Management Plans for the major facility types in natural areas including walking tracks, horse riding trails and multiple use tracks. The overall objective of asset management is to provide a desired level of service in the most cost effective way for present and future customers. The plans need to demonstrate responsible stewardship of community facilities and to identify life cycle (long term) costs to provide an agreed level of service.



Facility management guidelines prepared jointly with other public land management agencies which provide a consistent approach across the land tenures. They would provide agreed standards, priorities and desired outcomes for management of facilities. Management factors to be addressed include a classification system for facilities; construction and maintenance; signage; monitoring of environmental and safety issues, social and economic factors; and visitor and resident needs and satisfaction.

Information and interpretation guidelines for recreation experiences and facilities which include information on a hierarchy of facility provision, listing iconic sites and facilities. These guidelines would aim to balance recreational use between the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and recreational lands managed by local government. Recreation participants would benefit from readily available information about managed sites and improved directional and educational signs on these sites.

Research into user demand, user satisfaction and environmental impacts to assist management identify and meet recreation needs and ensure recreation is environmentally sustainable.

3.2.2 AMENDMENT OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INSTRUMENTS

In response to this strategy Council's Environmental Planning Instruments may require amendment. Any amendment will need to take into account the proposed permissible activities in the actions for consideration as outlined in Appendix 4. A methodology for impact assessment of cliff recreation has been described in the report commissioned as part of preparation of this strategy by Elanus Word and Image in association with EcoGIS (January 2004) "*Blue Mountains Cliff Recreation Site Assessment Final Report*" (unpublished). This methodology can also be broadly applied to other forms of nature-based recreation.

In support for amendment of Council's Environmental Planning Instruments a summary Impact Assessment of the implementation of the Nature Based Recreation Strategy has been included as Appendix 2.

Recommendation:

That Council's Environmental Planning Instruments and other related codes and policies are reviewed in response to this strategy and that amendment is pursued as necessary to permit appropriate nature based recreation activities and facilities in natural areas.

3.2.4 ADEQUACY AND CONDITION OF EXISTING RECREATION SITES

Many of the existing facilities were developed over period of a hundred years or more and are not compatible with current safety, design and maintenance standards. Facilities may now have unacceptable environmental or cultural impacts, or may be inadequate to cater to current uses such as high volume tourism.

The increasing use of existing recreation sites with little or no management intervention has resulted in deterioration of the natural values of the settings. Public safety has become an issue where multiple uses are incompatible, or there is conflict between uses. Conflict of use can result where new recreation activities become popular on existing facilities that are not designed to cater to these new activities. For example mountain biking over steep heritage walking tracks with long flights of stairs; and rock climbing over narrow walking tracks with no protection for walkers under climbing routes.

Social crowding of sites can also detract from the natural recreation experience in areas that have become popular, such as the Cliff Top Walking Tracks in Katoomba-Leura or sports climbing areas in Centennial Glen and Upper Shipley.

Recommendation:

A review of existing recreation sites and facilities and development of a program for maintenance, and/ or upgrading of facilities are necessary. Provision of information on alternative attractions may assist in spreading the use across suitable sites. Some sites and facilities may need management intervention to regulate use or even to be closed to recover from overuse. Maintenance of recreation settings needs to be considered. Planning Tools for this assessment are included as Appendix 3.



3.2.4 UNAPPROVED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SITES

The unapproved development of new recreation sites has been rapidly increasing. On many sites impacts from use are evident. Social crowding from high use of the area, pollution from litter and human waste, trampling of vegetation, and compaction and erosion of soil are common. Informal tracks are often poorly located in sensitive areas, with inadequate construction for the steep slopes, and inadequate drainage.

Lack of formal parking often leads to development of informal parking areas with resulting clearing of vegetation, and soil compaction and erosion. Nuisance to adjoining property owners can also be a result with cars blocking driveways, and recreators trespassing on private land to gain access to recreation sites.

Recommendations:

1. Informal recreation sites need to be surveyed and assessed for suitability for continued use in the appropriate recreation setting. Maintenance and/or upgrading of sites, or temporary or permanent closure of sites may be required.
2. Education and regulation are required to discourage unapproved development of further new recreation sites. Coordination with publishers of information on new sites, and provision of information on approved sites will assist to discourage development and publicity of these sites.

3.2.5 DAMAGE TO SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE RESOURCES

Many significant cultural and environmental heritage sites and landscapes have been identified in the Blue Mountains and are protected through Council's Heritage Register and/or NSW Heritage Register. There are also many natural areas that still require investigation to identify areas of significance, and management strategies prepared to protect these.

In many areas of the Blue Mountains recreational use occurs on or close to archaeological sites or landscapes of cultural and environmental significance.

The sites may have buried or surface artifacts, or be adorned with paintings or carvings. Legislation strongly protects these areas. However inadvertent damage may happen to heritage items through ignorance. After the initial identification of heritage significance, one of the biggest challenges in managing heritage sites is education of the public without necessarily informing users of the exact locations of specific resources.

Recommendation:

Survey of recreation sites is necessary to assess the presence or likely presence of heritage items, sites &/or landscapes. Where cultural values are present, adoption of site management strategies are essential to ensure protection of these values. Plans of Management and site management processes for nature recreation sites need to survey for heritage values and include measures for ongoing protection of heritage items and landscapes. Preparation of Conservation Management Plans may be necessary.

3.2.6 MONITORING OF IMPACTS TO RECREATION SITES

Monitoring of impacts to recreation sites is essential to identify and arrest degradation of natural settings, and loss of recreation quality. A number of methods for monitoring are proposed in this strategy.

These include photo monitoring of specific areas to gauge changes in vegetation and soil cover as proposed in the rock climbing assessment prepared for Council by Elanus Consultants (see Abseiling & Rock climbing in Appendix 4). Other measures such as monitoring the extent of human waste disposal at recreation sites may also assist in assessment of social crowding and overuse of sites.

Recommendation:

That within available resources, approaches to monitoring impacts on nature based recreation sites be developed and implemented.

3.2.7 RISK MANAGEMENT AND LIABILITY

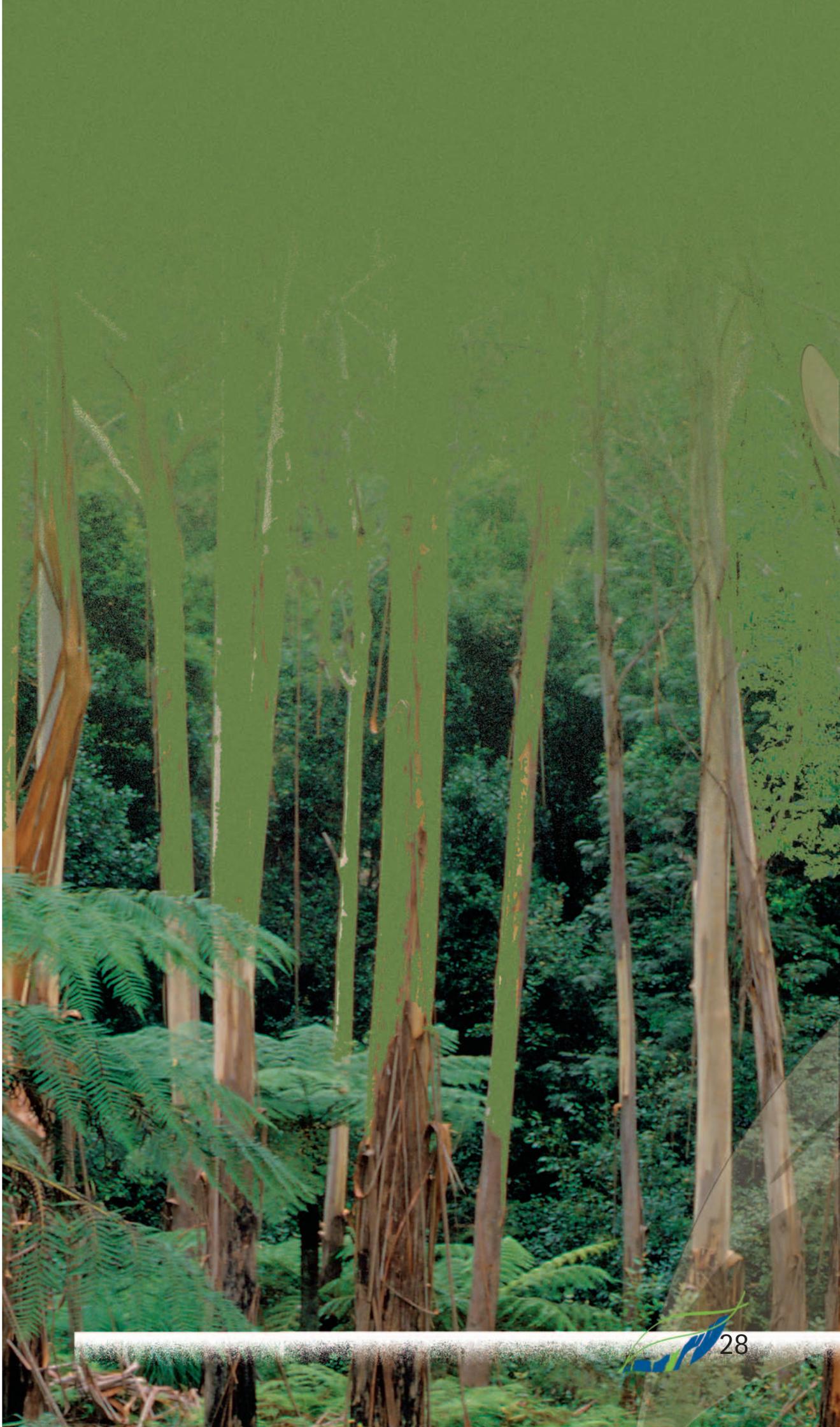
Council has a duty of care to people using natural areas managed by Council. However many nature based recreation activities are inherently high-risk. Recent reforms to Insurance Liability legislation have placed much of the responsibility for personal safety in recreation activities back onto the individual participant.

Reforms address the definition of negligence; risk warnings; and assumption of risk matters. General principles have been established for determining liability including a requirement to consider the financial and other resources that are available to an authority, the range of activities of the authority and compliance with general procedures and applicable standards.

Recommendation:

That Council adopts use of consistent standards for planning, construction and management of recreation activity sites as a means to minimize risk to the public and manage Council's risk liability.





4.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR
SUSTAINABLE NATURE BASED
RECREATION IN THE CITY OF THE
BLUE MOUNTAINS



4.1 Moving Forward to a More Sustainable Blue Mountains

Nature based recreation is sustainable when it is affordable, accessible and does not degrade the natural, cultural and social resources on which it depends.

Blue Mountains City Council plays a number of different and sometimes conflicting roles in the management of recreation in natural areas. Council is a major public land manager, a promoter of tourism and economic health of the region, and a land use regulator. Recognising these different roles, this framework presents a basis for Council policy and decision-making in the management of sustainable nature based recreation opportunities and sustainable nature based tourism in the Blue Mountains.

It also provides a basis for cooperation between land managers in working to ensure natural areas are more sustainably managed. The framework actively encourages the participation and ongoing engagement of residents and user groups in the management of nature based recreation sites.

The strategic framework for a more sustainable management of nature based recreation supports the 25 Year Vision for the City and Map for Action 2000- 2025 contributing in particular to the achievement of the following 25 Year Outcomes:

Looking After Environment

- The Blue Mountains natural environment is protected and conserved.
- The impact of existing and new development on the environment is reduced.
- Blue Mountains people live sustainably in harmony with the environment.

Looking After People

- The health and wellbeing of Blue Mountains people are improved.
- Services and facilities are accessible and fairly distributed.

Using Land for Living

- A strong sense of local identity and place is created.
- Well-managed infrastructure supports sustainable living.

Moving Around

- Safe environmentally friendly transport choices promote healthy lifestyles.

Working and Learning

- The local economy is strengthened and diversified.
- The Blue Mountains is a model for sustainable business and industry.
- A culture of life long learning is nurtured in the Blue Mountains.

4.2 Guiding Principles and Assumptions Used in this Strategy

A number of assumptions and principles have guided this strategy. These are stated below:

1. Nature based recreation provides valuable social, spiritual and health benefits to the community.
2. The recreation experience desired or expected from recreation participation varies according to an individual's level of specialisation, commitment and experience.
3. This strategy will guide the management of natural area recreation on Council lands to support and complement the primary conservation requirements of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area National Parks.
4. Change of recreation use occurs when recreation settings change or deteriorate due to impacts of recreation use or actions of management. This can lead to a change in use of the site, with new users being attracted to the site and old users dispersing to open up a new site. This will result in continual pressure on new areas and loss of recreation opportunities when options for new sites are exhausted.
5. Natural areas available for recreation are finite and non renewable. Restoration of degraded natural areas is expensive and often unsuccessful. The precautionary principle should apply where there is doubt about the ability of an area to sustain a recreation or tourism use.
6. Where nature based recreation and tourism are significantly affecting special environmental and/or cultural values they will need to be either modified; restricted in use; closed to use temporarily for spelling; or closed to use permanently.
7. There is a need for improved user awareness of impacts of recreation activities and of methods to minimise these impacts. This can be assisted by:
 - User recognition of impacts each activity causes;
 - User selection and application of minimal impact techniques;
 - Information to help user selection of appropriate sites;
 - Interpretation of both natural and heritage values of sites;
 - User education and involvement;
 - Appropriate management of sites; and
 - Enforcement of regulations.



4.3 Vision and Outcomes for Nature Based Recreation in the City of the Blue Mountains

TIME FRAME OF THE STRATEGY

2005-2015

VISION:

A City where residents and visitors have ready access to an integrated network of sustainable nature based recreation experiences that showcase the World Heritage Area, protect the environment and provide recreation, tourism, lifestyle, health and economic benefits to the people of the Blue Mountains.

OUTCOMES:

1. An integrated framework for sustainable management of recreation in natural areas of the City is in place by 2010 with ongoing management based on sound planning, good data and effective consultation.
2. The Blue Mountains region is recognised internationally as a premier nature based recreation destination in Australia offering a range of dynamic and diverse world-class experiences accessible to visitors and local residents.
3. Natural area users share the resource appropriately, amicably and safely; and important natural, social and cultural values of recreation sites are protected, with the impacts of nature-based recreation controlled and remediated to an acceptable and sustainable level. Natural areas users are educated about the potential environmental impacts of their nature based recreation activities and are able to use best practice to mitigate the potential impacts of those activities and protect the environment.
4. Management of natural recreation within the Blue Mountains is implemented cooperatively and costs of management are shared between Federal, State and Local Governments, land management agencies, the tourism industry, recreation providers and recreation participants.
5. State and Federal Governments recognise and provide support for appropriate infrastructure to meet the management and promotional responsibilities for nature based recreation within a City adjoining a World Heritage Area.

4.4 Measuring the Effectiveness of Nature Based Tourism in Achieving Sustainable Outcomes

In order to measure progress in achieving the identified outcomes a hierarchy of performance measure is proposed. Initially this will measure implementation of the strategy. Over time a series of direct and indirect indicators will be developed to measure the effectiveness of nature based recreation in achieving the 25 year City Vision of a more sustainable Blue Mountains.

INDICATORS	TIMEFRAME FOR INTRODUCTION
<p>Sustainable City Outcomes</p> <p>Measures movement towards achievement of 25 Year City Vision</p>	<p>Introduced progressively as the plans and monitoring tools nominated in the strategic framework are developed; and reported within State of the City Monitoring</p>
<p>Nature Based Recreation Outcomes</p> <p>Measures improvement in user awareness & minimal impact behaviour; and success with provision of quality of recreation sites & experiences</p>	<p>Introduced progressively as the plans and monitoring tools nominated in the strategic framework are developed; and reported within the annual report of Council activities and/or the State of Environment Reporting</p>
<p>Outcomes and performance measures of this Strategy</p> <p>Measures implementation of the Actions and achievement of performance measures outlined in Section 5 of this Strategy within nominated timeframe</p>	<p>Reported each year within the annual report of Council activities</p>
<p>Nature Based Recreation Needs</p> <p>Measures the community's nature based recreation needs and priorities</p>	<p>Monitored through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Residents Recreation Participation Survey on a 5 yearly basis or as funds permit and • The post visit survey as this is developed and implemented



4.5 Definitions

Bolt: Bolts are small devices used to protect climbers where there are no cracks for other types of protection. They are put in place by drilling a hole, using either a hand-turned or battery powered drill, then driving in the device, which is designed to hold through mechanical expansion, forced compression or an epoxy resin. The placement of bolts allows climbers to attempt extremely difficult and previously unprotected rock faces, and to place fixed anchors to descend by abseil. The term “fixed” means they are permanently placed in the rock, although deterioration will occur over time, depending on the bolt specification, amount of use and local weathering processes.

Bouldering is the practice of climbing on small rock formations, low enough to the ground so that no technical safety equipment (i.e. ropes) is necessary.

Chalk: This refers to the magnesium carbonate powder carried by climbers in a pouch at the waist. It dries the hands to improve grip.

Commercial and group abseiling and climbing are distinct from recreational abseiling and climbing and include paying and non-paying groups involved in organised instructional, training and recreational activities. Groups are comprised of identifiable leaders or instructors managing a number of less experienced persons and can be large, with up to 20 or more people. For the purposes of site management, small scale guided climbing activities involving groups of two to four, even though conducted on a commercial basis, are excluded from this category as they are more properly considered as part of the background recreational climbing pattern.

Conservation Management Plan means a document prepared in accordance with the requirements of the NSW Heritage Office that establishes the heritage significance of an item, place or heritage conservation area and that

identifies conservation policies and management mechanisms that are appropriate to enable that significance to be retained.

Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism, with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation. (Source of definition: Ecotourism Association of Australia).

Environmental heritage means a landscape, place, building, structure, relic, object or other work of heritage significance.

Hard adventure activities commonly involve a higher level of physical or rugged involvement or a potentially greater personal challenge for participants. The risk factor can also increase. Hard adventure activities in the Blue Mountains with a nature basis or need include caving, trekking, kayaking, rock climbing, canyoning and hang gliding.

Heritage item as described in BMCC LEP 2005 means: a building, work, archaeological site or place specified in an inventory of heritage items that is available at the office of the Council and the site and a description of the nature of which is described in Part 1 of Schedule 6 and shown on Map Panel C, or

1. a place specified in an inventory of heritage items available at the office of the Council and described in the inventory as an Aboriginal place or object.

Heritage significance means historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value.

Indigenous tourism usually includes a high reliance upon natural areas for demonstration and interpretation. There are already operators in the Blue Mountains conducting tours based

upon indigenous culture and there is potential for development of this market. NSW Tourism has published guidelines that recommend recognition of rights to indigenous tourism rest with the local indigenous people.

Interpretation: A special process of stimulating and encouraging an appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of a region, as well as a means of communicating nature conservation ideals and practices. (Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service)

Soft adventure activities commonly require a moderate level of physical involvement by participants and are less physically challenging than hard activities. In the Blue Mountains they include hiking/bushwalking, mountain biking/ cycling, camping, horseback riding, orienteering, walking tours, wildlife spotting, river and lake canoeing and fishing. (Source of definition: information sheets Tourism New South Wales)

Special Interest Tourism: Nature based tourism and its various subsets can also encompass some particularly challenging and high spending, special market segments. These can often comprise socially and environmentally aware, highly educated and potentially demanding visitors who travel both to learn and to achieve personal and social goals. E.g. bird watchers, and the "not for profit " travel sector catered to by local organisations such as "Australian Trust for Conservation Volunteers".

Sport climbing: Climbs that are protected exclusively with fixed protection, usually bolts, are called sports climbs. Sports climbs are typically short- generally a single rope length (50 or 60 metres) or less. Sport climbing is relatively easy to learn and requires less equipment than traditional climbing. Due to the fixed bolt protection and limited height it provides an apparently safer environment than traditional climbing. This has

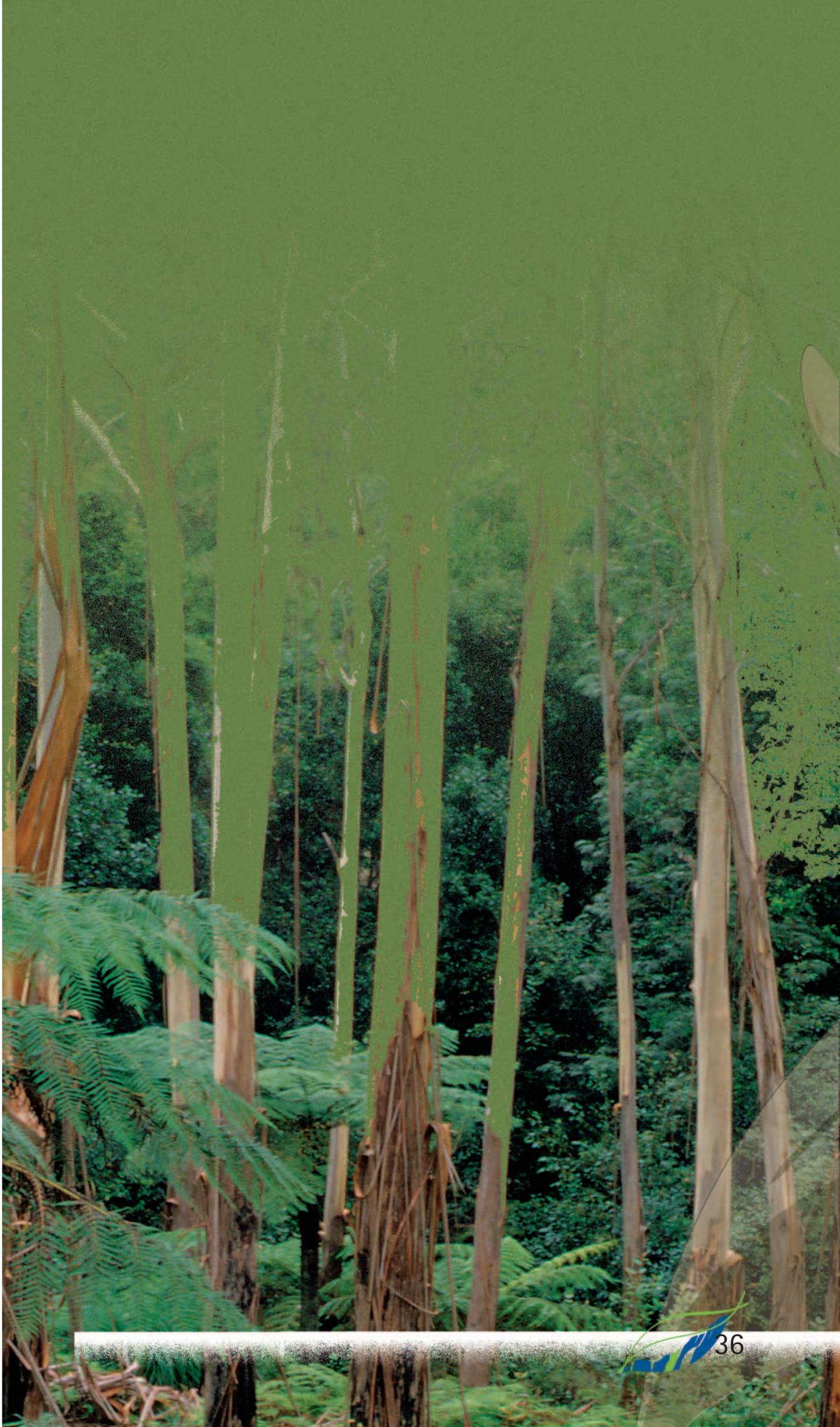
made sport climbing popular, and it has allowed climbers to push their ability with little fear from falls. Previewing and practicing a climb is common, and the emphasis is on the technical difficulty of a climb.

Sustainability: For nature based recreation to be sustainable in the Blue Mountains there is a need to ensure that decisions made and actions taken support a balance of economic, environmental and social outcomes for the City and:

- Promote the efficient and effective use of resources;
- Can be maintained or renewed given the limited resources available to the community;
- Promote individual and community wellbeing by following a path of economic development that safeguards the wellbeing of future generations;
- Protect biological diversity and maintain ecological processes and life support systems;
- Deliver equity within and between present and future generations;
- Promote the creation of liveable communities with a sense of place and identity and assist in preserving the values celebrated in the World Heritage listing.

Traditional climbing sometimes called free climbing is how rock climbing started, and has strong historic associations. It is the foundation of the different forms of modern climbing. The term applies to a style of climbing where protection is placed by the ascending partner and removed by the second partner. Traditional climbers progress up a rock face using natural hand and footholds, with the rope and technical climbing gear used for safety in case of a fall. Value is placed on unpracticed ascents. It generally involves multi pitch climbs. Many traditional climbs have the occasional fixed bolt, and often have fixed anchors for abseils or belays.

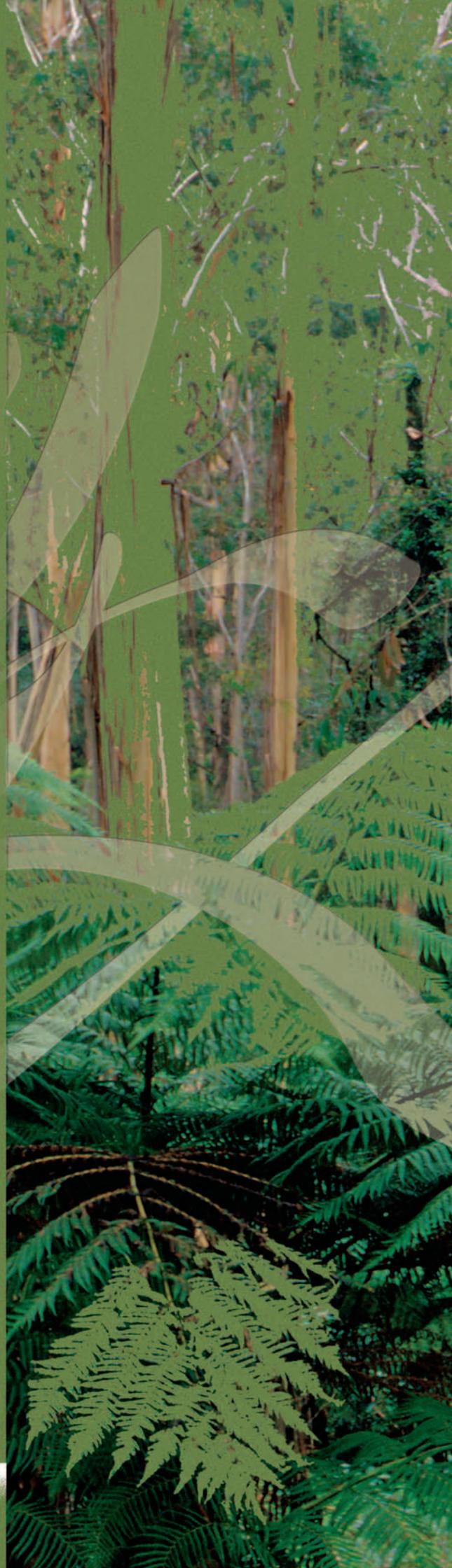




5.

BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO THE NATURE BASED
RECREATION STRATEGY

PULLOUT SECTION 5 OF THE BLUE
MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL NATURE
BASED RECREATION STRATEGY



OUTCOME 1: MANAGEMENT

An integrated framework for sustainable management of recreation in natural areas of the City is in place by 2010 with ongoing management based on sound planning, good data and effective consultation.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>1.1. In close consultation with key stakeholders prepare and then progressively implement Plans of Management; Asset Management Plans; and Facility Management Guidelines to ensure adequate policy and programming of resources is made to support sustainable recreation provision.</p> <p>Consider actions outlined in Appendix 4 in the preparation of these plans and guidelines.</p> <p>N.B. Detailed costs and resources required to implement the various Plans and outputs of these actions have not been estimated at this stage.</p>	<p>a) Prepare Plans of Management for public lands managed by BMCC which meet legislative requirements, ensure complementary provision of appropriate recreation opportunities across the mountains and which identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial uses permitted while allowing flexibility for innovative commercial uses • Visitor infrastructure required • Sustainable levels of use • Maintenance required • Performance targets • Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms <hr/> <p>The program for preparation of Plans of Management is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megalong Reserve (including horse riding trail management guidelines) • **Mount York Historic Precinct • In the interim the recommendations of the Commercial Cliff Recreation Study regarding Mount York climbing areas and protection of key heritage sites such as The Block and Cox's Road are to be examined and implemented where appropriate • **Western Escarpment Lands (including rock climbing facility & site management guidelines) • **Eastern Escarpment Lands and other natural areas managed by BMCC in Areas 4 and 5 (including mountain biking facility management guidelines) • Natural Areas in Planning Area 1,2,4,5 • N.B. The option should be considered in preparing the Plans of Management for the Eastern and Western Escarpments to include other natural areas managed by Council within the relevant Planning Areas, being Area 1 for the Western escarpment, and Areas 4 & 5 for the Eastern escarpment. • N.B. **these actions relate to land currently managed by Council. This may be subject to change dependant upon the outcomes of the Public Lands Rationalisation Project.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Preparation and implementation of nominated Plans of Management and Asset Management Plans by nominated times
- Joint completion of the Walking Track Management Guidelines with NPWS and Department of Lands by December 2007
- Commercial recreation operations on land managed by BMCC are licensed and operate sustainably

PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
See below	See below	See below
2004-2006	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff & Licensing fees.
2006-2008 2005-2007	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff to be supplemented by grant assistance with the PLR Stage 1 transfer of lands (\$35,000)
2007-2009	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff to be supplemented by grant assistance with the PLR Stage 1 transfer of lands (\$35,000)
2008-10	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff to be supplemented by grant assistance with the PLR Stage 1 transfer of lands (\$35,000)
As resources permit	BMCC City Solutions	Currently unfunded.



OUTCOME 1: MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>1.1. (CONT'D)</p> <p>In close consultation with key stakeholders prepare and then progressively implement Plans of Management; Asset Management Plans; and Facility Management Guidelines to ensure adequate policy and programming of resources is made to support sustainable recreation provision.</p>	<p>b) Develop and implement guidelines for Walking Track provision and maintenance to encourage consistent standards of service and facility provision:</p> <p>Stage 1 Walking Track Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classification of recreational sites according to desired recreational management setting and appropriate national standards, including difficulty, level of management intervention, signage and risk levels • Classification system for walking tracks in BM • Construction & Maintenance standards • Safety and risk management • Track Inventory and Condition Report established • Asset Management Plan <p>Stage 2 Walking Track Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and Interpretation <p>Stage 3 Walking Track Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer policy & guidelines; Volunteer Program and Volunteer Training and Accreditation • Monitoring condition of sites • Monitoring client behaviour & satisfaction
	<p>c) • Develop individual recreation site/ facility management plans and associated approvals with priority given to commercial recreation sites and key visitor destinations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding for development, maintenance and management of recreation sites • Implement management plans for commercial and group recreation sites and key visitor destinations • Introduce site improvements appropriate to use levels and recreation setting such as site hardening, site protection, access provision, minimal impact visitor facilities

An integrated framework for sustainable management of recreation in natural areas of the City is in place by 2010 with ongoing management based on sound planning, good data and effective consultation.

PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
<p>See below</p> <p>Stage 1 guidelines completed.</p> <p>Inventory and Condition report to be undertaken within Asset Management Plan 2005</p> <p>Brief to be prepared 2004-5; commencement of Stage 2 dependent upon funding.</p> <p>2005-9 & ongoing</p> <p>2006-7 & ongoing</p> <p>2006-7 onwards or as funds are available</p>	<p>See below</p> <p>BMCC City Solutions & City Sustainability in cooperation with BMTA, NPWS & Lands Department</p> <p>BMCC City Solutions & City Sustainability in cooperation with BMTA, NPWS & Lands Department</p> <p>BMCC City Solutions in cooperation with BMTA, NPWS & Lands Department</p> <p>BMCC City Solutions</p> <p>BMCC City Sustainability & Solutions in cooperation with BMTA</p>	<p>See below</p> <p>Programmed resources for Asset Management Planning</p> <p>Stage 2: BMCC contribution to joint agency exercise currently unfunded. Grant funds to be sought, (See 3.1)</p> <p>Stage 3: 0.25 E.F.T. unfunded (See 4.6, 4.10)</p> <p>Existing staff: (See 3.6)</p> <p>\$30,000 unfunded; Grant funds to be sought (See 2.2)</p>
<p>2005-2015</p>	<p>BMCC City Solutions</p>	<p>Existing staff as resources are available</p>



OUTCOME 1: MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>1.2. Monitor and review progress of Implementation of Nature Based Recreation Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate outcome based performance measures into State of City monitoring program • Undertake an annual review of progress with implementation of this Strategy • That in the annual review of the Nature Based Recreation Strategy the priority for Plans of Management Preparation be reviewed in line with further decisions on the Public Lands Rationalisation Project and the current condition and imminent threat to significant values of the Western escarpment, Mount York precinct, the Eastern escarpment and other natural areas in Planning Areas 1,2,4 & 5 • Update Council's response to the Nature Based Recreation Strategy to guide BMCC Management Plan 2012–2016 • Review Nature Based Recreation Strategy & City Outcomes in approximately 10 years as required
<p>1.3. Implement an approvals system linked with industry standards and accreditation for nature based recreation on Council managed lands.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review BMCC environmental planning instruments and related codes and policies to reflect Council's Nature Based Recreation Strategy and support appropriate, innovative nature based recreation land uses and developments. b) Develop and implement Licensing process for commercial and group nature based recreation on lands managed by BMCC in accordance with legislative requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult commercial operators and major affected groups in development and ongoing implementation of licensing system • Provide consistency of policy and process between state and regional land management agencies • Give reasonable notice to stakeholders of intended changes to policy or prices • Provide continuity of access to recreation sites for licensed users in accordance with the conditions of licence
<p>1.4 Link licensing and marketing with accreditation to foster private sector commitment to sustainable practice and principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Tourism, TAFE and industry bodies for continued development and provision of industry training in low impact sustainable tourism practice • Promote appropriate accreditation through the public land licensing process

OUTCOME 2: QUALITY RECREATION EXPERIENCES

The Blue Mountains region is recognised internationally as a premier nature based recreation destination in Australia offering a range of dynamic and diverse world-class experiences that are accessible to visitors and local residents.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>2.1. Review best options for recreation provision on a regional scale in cooperation with DIPNR and major land holders/ managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cooperative strategies with regional planning & land management agencies for provision and management of recreation facilities in Blue Mountains which give special attention to mountain biking and rock climbing requirements
<p>2.2. Monitor visitor use of areas and coordinate with Blue Mountains Tourism Authority on post visit surveys of visitor needs, aspirations and satisfaction levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish survey to monitor visitor recreation needs and satisfaction levels • Survey visitor demographics, geographic origins, psychological requirements for recreation • Identify and monitor market segments • Inform recreation management and tourism marketing
<p>2.3. Monitor recreation demand and trends locally, regionally and on an international level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review recreation provision against participation and demand for recreation opportunities
<p>2.4. Encourage partnerships between arts and tourism industry to maximize cultural tourism opportunities; foster 'sense of place'; and build opportunities for early European exploration and settlement, wilderness and Indigenous-based education and learning experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with implementation of Blue Mountains' Regional Tourism Plan 2004-7 and Cultural Strategy development • Integrate information on nature based recreational opportunities with Cultural Trail planning and delivery • Support communication and consultation between traditional owners of the Blue Mountains and the tourism industry

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Maintain resident participation rate over 75% (measure through 5 yearly resident recreation participation survey)
- Establish benchmark and monitor visitor satisfaction with nature recreation experiences through introduction of post visit survey
- Increased numbers of overnight visitors experiencing nature based recreation (benchmark to be established as above)

PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
2005-2010 & ongoing	BMCC City Sustainability & Solutions	Existing staff: In consultation with DIPNR NPWS Lands NSW Forests Adjacent LGAs
2006-2007 & onwards or as funds are available	BMCC Tourism and City Sustainability	See 1.1b Stage 3
Ongoing	BMCC City Sustainability	Existing staff
2004-2007 2006-2007 Ongoing	BMCC City Sustainability & Solutions BMCC Tourism BMCC City Solutions BMTA	Within existing & proposed work programs



OUTCOME 3: IMPACT & RISK MANAGEMENT:

All natural area users share the resource appropriately, amicably and safely; and important natural, social and cultural values of recreation sites are protected, with the impacts of nature-based recreation controlled and remediated to an acceptable and sustainable level. All natural areas users are educated about the potential environmental impacts of their nature based recreation activities and are able to use best practice to mitigate the potential impacts of those activities and protect the environment.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>3.1. Ensure user information and signage program supports safe, sustainable and minimal impact nature based recreational activity.</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive information and interpretive program for the Blue Mountains to provide access to and engagement with the regions' natural recreation experiences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadside signage and information; • Touring routes and trails with supporting information; • Trail signage and information; • Preparation and distribution of suitable information; • Linkage of information systems (e.g. guide books, maps, websites, information centres, land management and tourism agencies); • Clearly communicate to visitors and residents what experiences to expect at different sites, including difficulty and length of route; • Provide warnings to non obvious risks on site and through literature <p>Project outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop brief for project and seek funding • Develop Interpretive and Information Guidelines for Walking Trails Management Strategy in cooperation with BMTA, NPWS, Lands and BMCC • Review existing tourism information; update and distribute web and printed information on available recreation experiences <p>Develop and Introduce new information into tourism marketing with emphasis upon themes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Heritage Area • Minimal Impact • Cultural Heritage: Indigenous and European • Water Catchment • Community Stewardship

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Benchmark established at high use sites and deterioration remediated through programmed management intervention using Annual condition inspection & Site monitoring photo points
- Accident statistics (Benchmark to be established)
- Number of unauthorised recreation developments located in natural areas managed by Council per annum
- User conflict identified through inspections, customer complaints, user consultation
- Annual increase in awareness of minimal impact behaviour measured through post visit survey and resident participation survey (Benchmark to be established)
- Number of targeted nature based recreation 'Sustainable Living' projects per annum

PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
2004-2009 & ongoing: See below	BMCC City Solutions and Sustainability in cooperation with BMTA NPWS Lands	See 1.1.b Stage 2 and below
2004-2005	See above	See 1.1b Stage 2
2006-2008 or as funds available	See above	See 1.1b Stage 2
2005-7 & ongoing	BMCC Tourism	Existing resources
2008-2009 & ongoing		To be identified: See 1.1b Stage 2



OUTCOME 3: IMPACT & RISK MANAGEMENT:

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>3.1 (CONT'D)</p> <p>Ensure user information and signage program supports safe, sustainable and minimal impact nature based recreational activity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue tourist routes and road side signage project in coordination with BMCC Tourism, BMCC, NPWS, RTA, NSW Tourism • Review BMCC Roads Signposting Strategy • Secure resources to promote and develop sustainable tourism practices • Develop Environmental Education Programmes for schools, tourism industry personnel, local residents, and recreation activity clubs and organisations. Special attention is to be paid to rock climbing and mountain biking activities. • At key visitor destinations clearly indicate locations, routes and distances to toilets where provided • Investigate the availability of resources and feasibility for installation of critical waste reduction facilities at key recreation sites.
<p>3.2 Maintain safety of recreation areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement risk management and signage guidelines from Walking Track Management Strategy with emphasis upon heritage walking tracks and cliff recreation access tracks • Review Council managed multiple use and mountain bike tracks in consultation with NPWS and the Royal National Park Plan for signage of mountain bike tracks • Reassess existing program to monitor recreational water quality within natural waterways used for swimming and other primary contact activities • Enforce environmental regulations throughout the City to protect water quality

All natural area users share the resource appropriately, amicably and safely; and important natural, social and cultural values of recreation sites are protected, with the impacts of nature-based recreation controlled and remediated to an acceptable and sustainable level. All natural areas users are educated about the potential environmental impacts of their nature based recreation activities and are able to use best practice to mitigate the potential impacts of those activities and protect the environment.

PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
2004-2006	BMCC City Solutions BMCC Tourism	Existing resources
2006-7	BMCC City Solutions	To be identified above
2005-2007	BMCC Tourism , BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff and grant funds
2004-7	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff and grant funds
2006- ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Within available budget
2006- ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Within available budget
Ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Within available budget
Ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Within available budget
2005-7	BMCC City Solutions	Within available budget
Ongoing	BMCC E& CS	Within available budget



OUTCOME 3: IMPACT & RISK MANAGEMENT

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>3.3. Survey recreation sites for items and landscapes of environmental, historical, cultural and aesthetic significance and identify management strategies to protect these within adopted Plans of Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure resources for site assessment in development of Plans of Management • Undertake surveys of recreation sites • Rigorously assess recreation impacts upon cultural heritage: natural and built, BMCC Scheduled Vegetation Communities, sensitive geological formations, species, ecological communities, populations and critical habitats listed under NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 • Develop management strategies to reduce impacts and protect items and areas of significance • Consult with traditional owners and wider community on management strategies • Implement management strategies consistent with resources
<p>3.4. Identify recreation areas containing items or landscapes of environmental, historical, cultural and aesthetic significance for protection in Council's land use regulatory schemes and other plans and policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include natural recreation areas in the environmental and archaeological studies in the review of Local Environmental Plan 1991, and include items and landscapes of environmental, historical, cultural and aesthetic significance for consideration for protection through Council's land use regulatory schemes, and ensure this is translated into Plans of Management and Asset Management Plans for Council managed land
<p>3.5. Monitor recreation impacts and ensure protective responses are implemented at the appropriate time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within Asset Management Plans develop monitoring and maintenance systems to identify and mitigate adverse visitor impact including waste disposal, informal track formation, vegetation disturbance, soil compaction and erosion. • Link this to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) • Identify sustainable thresholds for impacts on recreation sites. Within Asset Management Plans identify asset inspection and maintenance programs to regularly inspect, maintain and stabilise key recreation sites within thresholds for acceptable and sustainable level of impact; or if this is not achievable close and rehabilitate them. • Include asset inspections in SLAs

All natural area users share the resource appropriately, amicably and safely; and important natural, social and cultural values of recreation sites are protected, with the impacts of nature-based recreation controlled and remediated to an acceptable and sustainable level. All natural areas users are educated about the potential environmental impacts of their nature based recreation activities and are able to use best practice to mitigate the potential impacts of those activities and protect the environment.

	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
	2005-2010	BMCC City Solutions	See 1.1.a
	2005-2008	BMCC City Sustainability	Within available budget
	2007 & ongoing Ongoing 2004-2008 & ongoing 2004-2008 & ongoing	BMCC City Solutions BMCC City Solutions and Services BMCC City Solutions	Programmed resources See 1.1a & 1.1b Stage 3 Within available budget Within available budget Within available budget



OUTCOME 4: COOPERATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Management of natural recreation is implemented cooperatively and costs of management are shared between Federal, State & Local Governments, land management agencies, the tourism industry, recreation providers and recreation participants.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>4.1. Strengthen ongoing cross tenure regional communication, coordination and consistency of approach to natural area recreation planning, land management, recreation promotion, interpretation and visitor information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue development of joint agency Blue Mountains Region Walking Track Management Strategy as model for coordinated asset management across agencies • Convene a regular joint agency forum for ongoing natural recreation management
<p>4.2. Pursue recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal people in the management of natural areas for recreation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult effectively with traditional owners of areas of cultural significance managed by Council
<p>4.3. Coordinate Council's commercial licensing processes with land management agencies and the tourism industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain consistency with regional, state and national commercial licensing policy and processes, and coordinate and share information on a regional basis
<p>4.4. Coordinate cross tenure maintenance of recreation areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review maintenance agreements with NPWS to address the road/ trail and picnic facility interface between National Park and Council managed areas.
<p>4.5. Encourage active involvement of recreational and commercial users in the management, maintenance and repair of natural recreation sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop volunteer policy and guidelines for Blue Mountains Region Walking Track Management Strategy consistent with Blue Mountains City Council Bushcare policy and practices • Develop volunteer program in consultation and coordination with volunteer programs of other land management agencies • Provide accredited training for volunteers to meet recognised standards and give capacity to work with minimal supervision

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Volunteer contributions: Volunteer program established by 2007 & benchmark established by 2008;
- Commercial user contributions assist maintenance of commercial sites: Dollars raised per annum for site maintenance and upgrade
- Regular interagency forum conducted to assist coordination of nature based recreation provision.

PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
2005-2009 & already commenced	BMCC City Solutions & Sustainability in coordination with NPWS Lands BMCC Tourism	See 1.1.b & 3.1
2005 & ongoing	BMCC City Sustainability	Existing staff
Ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff
Ongoing	BMCC City Solutions in coordination with NPWS Lands BMCC Tourism	Existing staff
2005-2006	BMCC City Solutions in consultation with NPWS	Existing staff
2006-2007	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff See 1.1b Stage 3
2007-2008	BMCC City Solutions	To be identified See 1.1b Stage 3 & above
2008-2009 & ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	0.25 E.F.T. unfunded



OUTCOME 4: COOPERATION AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

STRATEGY	ACTIONS
<p>4.6. Encourage community groups to adopt key sites throughout the Blue Mountains.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage reformation of Blue Mountains Cliffcare. • Engage activity interest groups, especially walking clubs and mountains bike clubs, in discussions to scope opportunities to develop volunteer programs for stewardship of key recreation sites
<p>4.7. Engage recreation community in management of natural recreation sites.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult relevant recreation clubs, organisations and active individuals in development of plans and management policy, and ongoing management of natural recreation areas
<p>4.8. Conduct management of commercial recreation in consultation with commercial operators and community recreational representatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct annual review of commercial nature based recreation operations and licensing process with licensed operators, and recreational representatives • Incorporate self-monitoring and maintenance of commercial recreation sites with licensing of their use.
<p>4.9. Investigate potential resources for facility provision and maintenance, including volunteer contributions; sources of income such as grants, revenue, fees and charges; and adjust management program to resources available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek grant funding and corporate sponsorship to achieve stated objectives, strategies and actions • Identify areas with potential for user pays nature based recreation • Introduce licensing fees and charges to assist management and provision of sites for commercial and group recreation • Develop management framework including asset management system to clearly identify resources required for asset maintenance and replacement • Regularly review maintenance and use of recreation sites to adjust visitor levels to resources available for management and maintenance

Management of natural recreation is implemented cooperatively and costs of management are shared between Federal, State & Local Governments, land management agencies, the tourism industry, recreation providers and recreation participants.

	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
	2005-2007	BMCC City Solutions	See 4.5
	2006-2007	BMCC City Solutions	See 4.5
	Ongoing	BMCC City Solutions & Sustainability	See 1.1a & b
	2005-2006 & ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff
	2006-2008 & ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	See 1.1b Stage 3, 1.3 & 4.9
	2005-2006 & ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff
	2005-6 & ongoing	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff
	2004-2005	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff
	2005-2008	BMCC City Solutions	Existing staff and programmed resources, See 1.1.b
	Ongoing once process developed	BMCC City Solutions	See 1.1b Stage 3, 4.8



OUTCOME 5: RECOGNITION OF WORLD HERITAGE AREA RESPONSIBILITIES

State and Federal Governments recognise and provide support for appropriate infrastructure to meet the management and promotional responsibilities for nature based recreation in a City within a World Heritage Area.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- State and Federal Government resources provided to support nature based recreation infrastructure in the Blue Mountains.

STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	BUDGET
5.1. Lobby the State and Federal Governments to recognise the importance of sustainable nature based recreation to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and the regional economy.	Develop partnerships with other land management agencies, research, industry and tourism bodies to lobby for increased funding to nature based recreation in the Blue Mountains	2005 & ongoing	BMCC City Sustainability & Solutions	Existing staff

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APPENDICES: Nature Based Recreation Strategy

2005–2015

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APPENDIX 1

NATURE BASED RECREATION IN RELATED PLANS AND STRATEGIES

A1.1 BLUE MOUNTAINS SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY, 2002 (BMCC)

The Plan recommends a Nature Based Recreation Strategy to consider:

- Motorised use; commercial use; all activities conducted in natural setting; developing standards for walking tracks and lookouts; interpretation standards and protocols.
- Be consistent with NPWS standards for walking tracks.
- Ensure a diversity of recreational experiences.
- Develop an inventory of supply.
- Develop interpretation protocol.

A2.2 BLUE MOUNTAINS NATURAL AREA STRATEGY, 2000 (BMCC)

Recommends to:

- P36: Develop a process for recreation planning for natural areas.
- P39: Completion of Public Lands Rationalisation Process (in progress).
- Adoption and implementation of Community Lands Plans of Management.

A1.3 BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS

Council's Local Environmental Plans (LEP's) are the central strategic planning instruments through which open space use and tenure is determined. The individual instruments interpret and implement the outcomes and recommendations of their respective Environmental Management Plans. One of their primary objectives is to provide for an appropriate balance and distribution of land for residential, commercial, retail, employment, and tourist related development, recreation, entertainment and community facilities and protection of the environment.

A second objective is to provide appropriate control on the use and development of environmentally sensitive land. The employment of mechanisms such as split zonings and environmental conservation area zones provides protection for existing natural systems and therein maintains catchment water quality, biodiversity and the region's landscape character.

BMCC LEPs provide the principal strategic and regulative planning tools in terms of the provision and use of open space in the Blue Mountains.

LEP 2005 applies to the area known as the core City area following the general alignment of the Great Western Highway. Accordingly the LEP is focused toward accommodating urban consolidation and sustainable development principles. Nevertheless, it also provides for formal recreation and bush land conservation to maintain the character and recreational setting of the mountains.

LEP 1991 applies to the fringe areas of the City and includes semi rural areas, Megalong Valley and Mt. Wilson and Mt. Irvine. Consequently, LEP 1991 has a greater focus on natural heritage preservation and recreation within the open space context, whilst providing for rural pursuits and protection of biodiversity. LEP 1991 covers most areas in use for nature based recreation.

Key objectives of LEP 1991 relevant to nature-based recreation include:

Pollution and Erosion Control

- In the short term to attain water quality appropriate for recreational use in the headwaters of the Blue Mountains streams.

Environmentally sensitive design and bushfire protection

- To locate, design, carry out and service development so that it does not exceed land capability



and other physical constraints of the Blue Mountains.

- To ensure that new development is located and managed so as to reduce the threat from bushfire.

Economic development and Employment

- To encourage tourism and other economic enterprises and the creation of employment opportunities which are sympathetic to the Blue Mountains character, and promote long term sustainability in the use of resources.

Social environment

- To maintain and improve the social environment by ensuring the planned development of community facilities, services, programmes and other activities relevant to the needs and aspirations of residents of the City.

And for Megalong Valley

- To conserve the rural and natural landscape of the Valley, and views within the Valley and from public lookouts.
- To ensure that development for tourism and recreation is consistent with the conservation of the rural and natural landscape, heritage and agricultural qualities of the Valley.

All zones within LEP 1991 permit Recreation Areas and Walking Tracks; all zones excepting Environmental Protection and Environmental Protection-Acquisition permit visitor facilities, and only 4 zones (Rural Conservation, Bushland Conservation, Light Industrial and Recreation) permit Recreation Facility. The interpretation of the definition of four terms (Recreation

Area, Recreation Facility, Visitor Facilities and Walking Track) is critical in the permissibility of nature based recreation activities and sites in the Blue Mountains. Consistency in the definition and application of these terms between LEP 1991 and Draft LEP 2002 is necessary to adequately support Nature Based Recreation in the City.

A1.4 BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK PLAN OF MANAGEMENT, MAY 2001 (NPWS)

The specific objectives for recreation are:

- Provision of a range of high quality visitor facilities and information to encourage awareness and appreciation of the park and maintain the regional significance of the park in providing nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities.
- Management of wilderness areas in conjunction with the adjoining national parks and reserves to maintain and enhance opportunities for solitude and self reliant recreation, while ensuring the maintenance of natural processes.
- Management of recreation and tourism within the park to ensure sustainable use, to minimise the impacts on the park's natural and cultural features and to maintain opportunities for a diverse range of recreational experiences.

The management strategies that are relevant to recreation are:

- Ongoing monitoring and improved management of public and commercial recreation activities, which have the

potential for adverse impacts on the parks natural and cultural features, particularly its wilderness areas.

- Assessment and improved management of the parks historic recreation and tourism facilities.

The policies and framework for management of the park is broken up into three sections:

- Conservation of natural heritage;
- Conservation of cultural heritage; and
- Use of the park.

Recreation is dealt with under the use of the park section. The Plan of Management provides policies and actions on a wide range of recreation activities that occur in natural areas. This includes:

- Recreation opportunities;
- Vehicle access;
- Day use and camping;
- Walking tracks and bushwalking;
- Horse riding;
- Cycling;
- Adventure recreation;
- Commercial recreation.

A1.5 THE BLUE MOUNTAINS REGIONAL THREE-YEAR TOURISM PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM, DRAFT 2004

This plan promotes actions to address the falling market share and industry profitability currently being experienced by Tourism in the Blue Mountains.

Sustainable Tourism is a major objective being stated as:



- Destination development and marketing practices that help protect and promote the region's nature and heritage assets and values through sustainable tourism initiatives.

Enhanced Visitor Experience is another with:

- Delivery of an enhanced visitor experience through the development of improved and integrated interpretive and information provision, and facilitation.

The regional plan aims to reflect Nature-based and Heritage Tourism Plans being developed at Local, State and Federal level, and recognises that Nature/heritage is the prime visitor attraction to the region. Strategies and actions to achieve this are outlined.

BMCC Tourism and Blue Mountains Tourism Limited have commenced implementation of this plan.

A1.6 BLUE MOUNTAINS PUBLIC LANDS RATIONALISATION PROJECT

This project aims to simplify and rationalise public land ownership and management. The project has been divided into 2 stages:

- Stage 1: The identification and transfer of public lands that would be more appropriately managed as a dedicated conservation reserve, either as part of Blue Mountains National Park, a Regional Park, a State Park or Community land.
- Stage 2: The rationalisation of management of multi-tenure and/or multi-classification reserve systems within the more

developed areas of the City of Blue Mountains.

Stage 1 proposals have been placed on public exhibition, and the project Taskforce has met to consider transfer of lands. Additions to Blue Mountains National Park (Category 1 lands as exhibited) have been generally supported. At the time of writing this strategy a decision on the future management of the Eastern and Western Escarpment Lands is still to be announced by the Minister for the Environment. The strategy has been completed with the assumption that Council will be appointed Trustee to manage both of these areas under consolidated Crown title.

A decision on the future management of the remaining Stage 1 lands, comprising largely contiguous land parcels along the eastern and western escarpments, is still to be resolved. It has been proposed that Council manage the eastern escarpment lands but there is still debate over the preferred management for the western escarpment lands. The western escarpment lands include land parcels located in Lithgow City Local Government Area.

A1.7 ASSESSING RECREATION DEMAND AND OPPORTUNITIES: WESTERN SYDNEY REGION. DIPNR, AUGUST 2003

Prepared by DIPNR this report assesses the regional recreation demand and opportunities for open space in Western Sydney. Of importance are recommendations to:

- Maintain regional trail and track systems at a more uniform, high standard through better regional coordination and funding;
- Develop at a regional scale a framework for the regional network;
- Identification and mapping of existing trails and tracks;
- Design guidelines for trails and tracks.
- Identify areas for noisy sports such as trail-bike riding through dedicated facilities and reduce potential conflicts through regional planning and coordination; and
- Ensure that future demand for adventurous activities such as mountain-bike riding, abseiling, rafting and rock climbing, is met appropriately while managing impacts on affected natural areas. Selected areas could be set aside for higher impact activities in order to protect areas that are more sensitive. Planning should explore purpose-built facilities for meeting demand, such as climbing walls and regional mountain-bike facilities.

A1.8 OTHER RELATED COUNCIL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

These include Bush Fire Management, Noxious Weeds Control Plans, Bushcare Policy, and Community Lands Plan of Management for Area 3, and Area Sport and Recreation Plans.



APPENDIX 2

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTING THIS NATURE BASED RECREATION STRATEGY

General impacts of implementing this nature based recreation strategy will be:

A2.1 POSITIVE:

- Recognition of existing nature based recreation land uses in Council policy;
- Ability to grant development approval for nature based recreation activities and facilities;
- Strategic direction for further development of management guidelines and planning controls;
- Environmental assessment and monitoring of sites to minimise impacts;
- Protection of escarpment areas through active management rock climbing areas;
- Protection of bushland through provision of areas for cycling;
- Legal approval mechanisms and licensing of commercial recreation operations;
- Standards for groups and commercial recreation operations;
- Support for local outdoor recreation businesses;
- Support for local casual employment for outdoor guides;

- Support for employment in maintenance of natural recreation sites and facilities;
- Support for local education courses such as outdoor recreation guiding;
- Nature based recreation opportunities for visitors;
- Nature based recreation opportunities for local residents;
- Opportunities for elite nature based sports training;
- Provision of education programs promoting minimal impact practices;
- Increase in monetary value of nature based recreation sites and surrounds;
- Incentives for maintenance and preservation of privately owned natural areas;
- Wider recognition of World Heritage Area status of National Parks and Protected Areas in Blue Mountains and complementary land uses to support this status.

A2.2 NEGATIVE:

- Potential for increasing environmental impact on recreation sites with increasing use;
- Disturbance to residential amenity where access to recreation sites adjoin urban areas;
- Potential for further restriction to recreational opportunities;
- Increased visitor use of local recreation sites used by residents;
- Tourism Market is affected by global events and air industry issues;
- Increased regulation together with rising insurance and other business overheads are making outdoor recreation industry less profitable and closing a proportion of businesses;
- Increased requirements for management of recreation sites will place greater demand for funding on land management agencies and funding limitations may result in closure of sites that cannot be adequately monitored and maintained.



A2.3 WHO WILL BE AFFECTED?

- Local residents and local recreation participants;
- National and international recreation community;
- Commercial outdoor recreation operations;
- Communities adjoining popular recreation sites;
- Tourists especially backpackers and young travellers;
- Regional tourist operations;
- Land management agencies;
- Local food and service business;
- Accommodation houses.

A2.4 WHAT LEVEL OF ANALYSIS HAS BEEN PROVIDED THIS STRATEGY?

- Broad environmental, social and economic impact assessment of Nature Based Recreation and site specific impact assessment of high use commercial and group recreation sites managed by BMCC.
- Capability assessment of key areas to sustain use and limits to growth potential of nature-based recreation.
- Identification of ongoing maintenance and monitoring required for sustainable use of key recreation sites and facilities.
- Understanding of industry in terms of financial capacity and expertise base.
- Understanding of visitation to Blue Mountains: origin, age, preferences, and visitation patterns.
- Understanding of resident recreation patterns and preferences.

- Range of recreation opportunities available and trends in participation.
- Description of site requirements for different activities.
- Methodology for assessment of recreation proposals.



APPENDIX 3

NATURE BASED RECREATION SETTING ASSESSMENT

As defined earlier in this document nature-based recreation activities are those:

- That are dependent on the natural environment;
- For which appreciation of nature is the key motivational factor; they do not require substantial modification of the natural environment; and
- The natural environment is critical to the participation and satisfaction of the recreators/ participants.

The combination of 3 factors: recreation activity, recreator's intent and recreation setting determine whether or not an activity is nature-based.

Activities that value natural areas for other reasons other than their naturalness and/or place the primary focus on goals other than the appreciation of nature (e.g. winning, fitness, use of equipment etc) are not inherently nature based.

Natural attributes of a setting or location refer to the characteristics that are determined by nature (including climate, terrain, soil type, endemic plants and animals, soundscape, animal behaviour and water quality and hydrology).

Naturalness is not an absolute condition. Naturalness of a setting can be expressed on a range from completely natural to completely modified-unnatural-developed, depending on the proportion of natural and human-modified elements in the landscape.

As a result, there is a subtlety of recreation settings ranging from completely natural- remote (e.g. Wollemi Wilderness Area) through to partly natural (e.g. rural landscapes with some remnant native vegetation left along creeks and ridges), through to developed (Scenic World) and completely modified (Echo Point).

A3.1 APPROPRIATE TO THE SETTING

Within the broad range of sites that can be classified as natural there are a range of biological, social and managerial conditions that contribute to the naturalness of a setting. Activities can be considered appropriate to a setting if they do not change the characteristics of the place. The degree of impact that the activity has on the setting will depend upon the way the activity is undertaken: whether competitively, actively or leisurely, individually or in groups; and where it is undertaken.

A3.2 RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM FOR MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RECREATION SETTINGS

From a management perspective it is important to minimize impacts and to find the most appropriate (most disturbed/least natural) setting that will satisfy demand for specific activities. To retain setting quality care must be taken with any management modifications to prevent overall change of the setting to a more developed class. The following table demonstrates the process for classification of recreation settings:



RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM FOR MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RECREATION SETTINGS

ROS CATEGORY	CLASS 1	CLASS 2	CLASS 3	CLASS 4	CLASS 5
	Remote	Semi-remote non-motorised	Roaded-natural	Semi-developed	Developed
GENERAL DESCRIPTION	Essentially unmodified environment of large size	Predominantly unmodified environment of moderate to large size	Predominantly natural environment, generally small development areas	Modified environment in a natural setting- compact development area	Divided into 2 classes- Intensive and Urban: Intensive applicable to Natural settings
ACCESS	No roads or management tracks- few or no formed walking tracks	No roads – management tracks and formed walking tracks may be present	Dirt roads- management tracks may be present	2WD roads (dirt and sealed), good walking tracks	Substantially modified environment, natural backdrop
MODIFICATIONS AND FACILITIES	Modifications generally unnoticeable- no facilities, no structures unless essential for resource protection and made with local materials	Some modifications in isolated locations- basic facilities may be provided to protect the resource (such as pit toilets and BBQs)	Some modifications but generally small scale and scattered- facilities primarily to protect the resource and public safety- no powered facilities	Substantial modifications noticeable- facilities may be relatively substantial and provided for visitor convenience (such as amenities blocks)	Substantial modifications which dominate the immediate landscape- many facilities (often including roofed accommodation) designed for large numbers and visitor convenience
SOCIAL INTERACTION	Small number of brief contacts, high probability of isolation from others	Some contact with others, but generally small groups	Moderate contact with others- likely to have other groups present at recreation sites	Large number of contacts likely – variety of groups, protracted contact and sharing of facilities common	Large numbers of people and contacts- groups of all kinds and ages
VISITOR REGULATION	No on-site regulation- off-site control through information and permits may apply	Some subtle on-site regulation such as directional signs and formed tracks	Controls noticeable but low key (such as information boards, parking bays)	On-site regulation clearly apparent (such as signs, fences, barriers) but should blend with natural backdrop	Numerous and obvious signs of regulation- staff likely to be present
EXAMPLES	Wollemi National Park	6 Foot Track	Mount Piddington	Old Ford Reserve Megalong Valley	Echo Point, Katoomba Falls Caravan Park



APPENDIX 4 ACTIVITY SPECIFIC DISCUSSION

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>1. ABSEILING ROCK CLIMBING</p>	<p>Abseiling and rock climbing is undertaken in the escarpment areas of the greater Blue Mountains, on lands managed by Blue Mountains City Council, public land in the Greater Lithgow City Council area, National Parks and private land.</p> <p>These climbing cliffs comprise some of the most heavily used and most popular rock climbing areas in Australia. Bouldering is also becoming popular in areas adjoining the escarpments.</p> <p>Within the City of Blue Mountains, the majority of cliff recreation occurs on BMCC-managed land, with only a small portion (perhaps 10% or less) occurring on National Park and private land. The major proportion of rock climbing sites is located in Katoomba or on the Western escarpment, stretching from Medlow Bath to Mount Victoria.</p> <p>These lands are under consideration for management rationalisation in the Public Lands Rationalisation Project (see Section 2.2) and the long-term land tenure and management structure has yet to be determined.</p> <p>A number of the climbing and abseiling sites are in a degraded condition and this degradation is continuing to increase with growing participation in rock climbing and commercial and group activities.</p> <p>Several sites have been developed</p>	<p>For Blue Mountains City Council managed sites the following recommendations are made:</p> <p>1.1 COORDINATED MANAGEMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop cliff recreation and bouldering management strategies and actions in consultation with climbers and NPWS. <p>1.2 DETAILED SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF CLIMBING SITES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey condition and map group abseiling, climbing and bouldering sites. • Assess capability of sites to support climbing and abseiling using the process developed by Elanus Word and Image for BMCC in January 2004. Include assessment of suitability of access, parking and waste disposal including human waste disposal. Establish site use limits for management purposes. • Identify areas of concern for environmental or cultural protection. • Identify areas of user conflict. <p>1.3 MONITORING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify major impacted areas and establish monitoring points. • Re-survey annually the disturbances and impacts at each site, including re-photography of the photo-monitoring points established in this initial survey. <p>1.4 CONSULTATION AND LIAISON:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain open communication and dialogue throughout the management process with a representative consultative group of cliff recreation stakeholders, including commercial operators, recreational climbers and conservationists.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
1. ABSEILING ROCK CLIMBING (CONT'D)	<p>for commercial activities without authorisation or adequate visitor infrastructure, and demand exists for additional sites on both public and private land. Current commercial operations outside of the National Park have no formal approval. Existing land use policies and planning policies are inadequate to provide a decision-making framework.</p> <p>1A CLIFF RECREATION IN BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK</p> <p>Within the Blue Mountains National Park Plan of Management rock climbing is generally permitted but bolting of climbs is prohibited and the following areas have been closed to abseiling and climbing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Aboriginal sites; • The Jamison Valley cliff line, from Rocket Point to the Valley of Waters; • The Grose Valley cliff line, from the south side of Govetts Leap to Horseshoe Falls; • Any cliff line above a constructed walking track. • Additional areas closed to Abseiling are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenbrook Gorge; • All formal lookouts. 	<p>1.5 SHARED USE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the extent of shared use appropriate at sites. • Manage the promotion and presentation of each site to ensure compatibility with the identified preferred uses. • Passively discourage use of climbing trails by non climbers through limiting signage, inconspicuous trail entrances, and discouraging inclusion of trails in bushwalking guides and community maps. <p>1.6 MANAGING COMMERCIAL AND GROUP ACTIVITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish approved sites for commercial and group use within adopted Community &/or Crown Land Plan/s of Management to guide site management. • Conduct management of commercial cliff recreation in consultation with commercial operator and recreational climber representatives. • Monitor use of sites and impacts and it may be necessary to limit group sizes and total use of sites to specified site limits. • Monitor the distribution of commercial cliff recreation opportunities between the identified sites, and between operators to ensure identified acceptable impacts are not exceeded. • Establish a commercial activity approvals system to manage and monitor site use, use levels, impacts, public safety and access issues and costs to maintain sites.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>1. ABSEILING ROCK CLIMBING (CONT'D)</p>	<p>1B CLIFF RECREATION OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL PARK</p> <p>In Blue Mountains City Council managed areas and on much of the private land, recreational use is unmanaged and unregulated. Regulations for climbing areas are however common both in Australia and overseas. In some areas, prohibitions are in place on bolting climbing fixtures. In others, permission is required to install new climbs.</p> <p>Publication of new climbs through books, magazines and web sites encourages increasing access to existing and new climbs in the Blue Mountains.</p>	<p>1.7 MANAGING RECREATIONAL CLIMBING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct all management of recreational climbing in consultation with recreational climber and commercial operator representatives. • Promote (in consultation with climbers) a climbers' 'code of conduct' to encourage support for management actions and shared use practices, impact minimisation and restraint on areas used. • Discourage promotion of prohibited areas or sites with low carrying capacity in climbing guides and climbing associated media. • Permit the use of fixed protection by the climbing community except in areas where fixed protection is prohibited. Promote this information widely. • Monitor trends or changes in the use of bolts. • Promote information through the Sydney Rock Climbing Club, climbing clubs and gyms to increase environmental knowledge of new ascensionists and climbers. • Sponsor the development of a new ascensionist policy for the Blue Mountains (in consultation with climbers). Encourage adoption of this through all media publications and guides to climbing areas in the mountains. • Investigate the formation of a clearinghouse for new climbs to ensure new routes are not promoted without sufficient assessment of potential impacts of climbing use. <p>1.8 ONSITE CAMPING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourage onsite camping except in approved camping areas with adequate facilities. <p>1.9 SAFETY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where signage is used, provide a warning that safety will continue to be the primary responsibility of climbers or the group or commercial operating business identity. <p>1.10 PARTNERSHIPS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with the recreational climbing community and the commercial cliff recreation industry to fund and implement site



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>1.</p> <p>ABSEILING ROCK CLIMBING (CONT'D)</p>		<p>protection and management works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate appropriate cost recovery mechanisms in the commercial operator licensing system. • Encourage the involvement of climbers as volunteer labour for site management. • Encourage the revitalisation of Blue Mountains Cliffcare. • Seek funding support for site management from external sources. <p>1.11 PRIORITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map and broadly assess all climbing sites on public land managed by Blue Mountains City Council. • Identify areas with high aesthetic, environmental and cultural values or other recreational uses incompatible with climbing activity and adopt appropriate protection measures for these areas. • Identify broad carrying capacity of climbing sites and encourage appropriate levels of climbing use. • Amend LEP 1991 and the Better Living DCP to include assessment criteria for climbing and abseiling sites on private land. • Consult with climbing community on priority site actions identified in Blue Mountains Cliff Recreation Site Assessment (Elanus Word and Image, 2004). • Seek funding and implement priority actions as identified through consultation.
<p>2.</p> <p>BASE JUMPING</p>	<p>Base-jumping is prohibited in National Parks in NSW. It is a high risk activity that is not nature dependent, and is likely to be incompatible with public safety values of bushland available for public recreation. For this reason base-jumping is not considered appropriate on lands managed by BMCC.</p>	<p>Prohibit base jumping in natural areas managed by BMCC.</p>



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
3. BIRD WATCHING, NATURE STUDY & WILDLIFE VIEWING	Bird watching, nature study and wildlife viewing are popular in the Blue Mountains. Commercial tours and club-organised activities are available. Access is generally available by constructed walking trails.	Council approval policies to consider bird watching, nature study and wildlife viewing as low impact nature based activities when conducted on existing approved facilities such as walking tracks.
4. BMX AND DIRT BIKE RIDING	For the purposes of this strategy this is not considered a nature based recreation activity.	For detailed recommendations refer to the Dirt Bike Strategy adopted by BMCC on 8 October 2002.
5. BOULDERING	<p>Bouldering is climbing on small rock formations without protection of a rope and was once considered practice for rock climbing. It is now a sport in itself, and is increasing in popularity in the mountains. Bouldering does not take climbers far from the ground, or from each other, and can be a very social activity. As such it can create high impact. Bouldering impacts concentrate around the rocks, in areas that may be used by few other users. Impacts can include trampling of vegetation, soil compaction leading to soil erosion, and unsightly use of chalk or chipping and gluing the rocks. Formation of a network of informal tracks to popular bouldering areas is common. In the Blue Mountains bouldering has had minimal impact to date.</p> <p>Boulderers are a diverse user group. Bouldering has a high participation of females, and has a youthful culture, as it is accessible for young people on small incomes. Outreach and education may be successful in influencing participants towards minimal impact behaviour.</p>	Management actions outlined for abseiling and rock climbing would also apply to bouldering.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>6.</p> <p>CAMPING AND DAY USE PICNIC AREAS</p>	<p>A range of car based camping, and walk in camping areas are available within the greater Blue Mountains region in Developed and Natural settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only major car based camping area managed by NPWS is located in Euroka Reserve, near Glenbrook. This area has parking, toilets, barbeques, walking tracks and interpretive facilities. • Council manages two commercial camping areas in Developed Settings, at Katoomba Falls and Blackheath. • Council manages day use and camping areas in Mount York, Old Ford Reserve and Quota Reserve in Megalong Valley and Mount Wilson at Cathedral Reserve and Cathedral of Ferns Walk. These areas are generally run down with inadequate toilets, no delineated parking and poor amenities. There is little regulation or supervision of these areas, and no fees are charged for their use. • Basic camping facilities are provided at a number of walk-in campsites., and self-reliant overnight camping occurs at many popular locations associated with wilderness or remote walking routes. • Developed setting day use areas are mainly provided in Glenbrook area, Jamison Valley escarpment from Wentworth Falls to Katoomba, the Grose Valley Escarpment at Blackheath and at Mount York. In many areas these facilities are located between NPWS and BMCC land, and are cooperatively managed and maintained. • Informal camping detracts from day use areas and visitor attractions in areas such as Mount York and Mount Piddington. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review use of existing Council managed day use and camping areas in Natural and Developed Settings. Consider upgrade of existing day use and camping areas within standards for Natural Settings to better provide for increasing usage. • Provide environmentally sound toilets located away from watercourses where appropriate to the setting. • Locate camping areas out of view from day use, lookouts and picnic areas to reduce conflict between the different users. • Clearly contain designated camping areas and parking areas. • Examine measures to reduce impacts at camping areas such as limits on numbers of sites, containment of camping and cars, site rotation, and camping permits. • Negotiate joint agency maintenance agreement/s for road/trail and picnic facility interface between National Park and Council managed areas.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
7. CAVING	Caving opportunities are available in adjoining Local Government areas at Kanangra-Boyd National Park and Jenolan Caves.	Not Applicable
8. CANOEING, KAYAKING AND BOATING	Boating is generally undertaken in adjoining Local Government areas on water bodies such as Lake Lyell. Low key boating is undertaken in Blue Mountains City in areas such as Wentworth Falls Lake. Some impact results from this use.	Impact from boating should be monitored and landing areas located as needed to reduce environmental and social impacts. Requests for commercial or group use need to be assessed according to social, environmental impact and carrying capacity of the water body.
9. CANYONING	Canyoning opportunities are available in the National Parks, and also Crown lands in adjoining local government areas. Established canyons and access paths have been damaged with the increasing popularity of canyoning. Social crowding is also an issue at popular canyons. Restrictions have been placed upon commercial and group use of canyons to manage these impacts.	Not Applicable in Council managed areas
10. CYCLING: MOUNTAIN, CROSS COUNTRY, DOWNHILL, FREE RIDING	Mountain biking is growing in popularity as an individual and competitive sport. Rapid improvements in bike technology have increased the accessibility of the sport to people with a wider range of abilities, and have also made areas with difficult terrain more accessible. Different forms of riding have emerged as separate sports and include cross-country, downhill, stunt and free riding Dirt bike riding is also popular in the mountains and many informal courses have been constructed in bushland close to urban areas in the mountains.	Considerations for improved mountain biking provision are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support representations to Western Sydney LGAs and state government agencies for better provision of mountain biking opportunities for Western Sydney to relieve pressure on natural areas of the mountains. • Continue consultation with cyclists and other land management agencies to identify additional area/s for provision of cycling opportunities to serve local riders and those from wider Sydney. • Review BMCC tracks in use for potential approval as shared tracks, and encourage NPWS to follow a similar process.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>10.</p> <p>CYCLING: MOUNTAIN, CROSS COUNTRY, DOWNHILL, FREE RIDING (CONT'D)</p>	<p>The lack of adequate provision for off road riding within the metropolitan area has increased pressure of use on hinterland areas such as the Blue Mountains.</p> <p>A number of the areas currently in use by mountain bikers are unauthorised and within natural bushland. Use of these areas has developed informally through word of mouth and email.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey riders of local tracks to identify place of residence, riding preferences, and knowledge of “soft riding” practices. • Target education programs on minimal impact riding practices for mountain bike enthusiasts, especially through schools. <p>A priority of the Nature Based Recreation Strategy is to identify means to address demand for planned facilities for bike riding, in a way that will minimise unauthorised use of natural areas.</p>
<p>10.1.</p> <p>CROSS-COUNTRY</p>	<p>There are around 40 main tracks in use for Cross-country Mountain biking in the Blue Mountains on a range of roads and tracks. These include public roads, management trails, cycle tracks, shared tracks, informal use of walking tracks and unplanned tracks. These generally follow ridgelines emanating from built up areas. They range in difficulty from those suitable for general family rides through to those with extreme terrain and difficult surfaces and requiring high levels of skill and fitness.</p> <p>Not all of the tracks in use are specifically approved for mountain bike usage, and a number have locked gates and signage to discourage use by bikes. The majority of tracks lie within the National Parks but BMCC also manages a number of tracks, or track heads that lead to tracks in National Parks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public roads include Hat Hill Road and Rutland Road in Blackheath and are generally paved or well-maintained gravel roads with low vehicle traffic levels and reasonable sight lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review construction and improve maintenance programs for cycle tracks paying special attention to effective drainage on tracks. • Develop volunteer assistance for maintenance of tracks. • Seek funding to improve maintenance and signage of bike tracks. • Promote approved riding opportunities to riders <p>BIKE PARK PROVISION</p> <p>Provision of a challenging bike park would meet many needs for access to riding and training within the mountains, and adjoining metropolitan areas. A multiple use bike park could be designed to cater to technical riding, bike jumps and downhill riding. Such a park could be provided as a partnership between State Government, regional local governments and the recreational community. Clubs such as Western Sydney Mountain Bike Club are actively investigating sites and funding for provision for downhill and other extreme riding for riders from Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.</p> <p>Location of a suitable site is an important first step.</p> <p>Essential criteria for bike park provision would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A major range in altitude across the site, for example a 200 to 300 metres drop; • Accessibility for vehicle shuttle or return loop path to top of course; • Rocky terrain resistant to erosion • Accessibility from public transport and • Adequate parking provision.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
10.1. CROSS-COUNTRY (CONT'D)	<p>These are suitable for less experienced riders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are two categories of Public Access Vehicle Roads: Developed setting and Natural setting. Often these roads are narrow with poor sight lines, and have high potential for conflict with vehicles. • Management Trails: these have a lesser maintenance level and will often have drainage humps and fallen timber or other hazards on the tracks. Again there is potential for vehicle conflict. These are generally only suitable for experienced riders. • Designated Cycle Tracks such as Woodford Oaks Track. These have less potential for vehicle conflict and are generally single-track and suitable for more experienced riders. • Shared Tracks: these are available for non-vehicular use such as walking and cycling. They are wider than single track and have reasonable sight lines. • Walking Tracks: NPWS and Council policy do not permit cycles on walking tracks. Some tracks have potential for shared use and could be assessed for suitability as shared tracks in order to provide access to tracks from each town across the mountains. • Informal tracks: these are unplanned tracks constructed by cyclists and not necessarily sited or constructed to sustain regular use. Cycle use of these tracks is not permitted within Blue Mountains City. • Yellomundee Regional Park has special provision for cross-country riding and events, and NPWS manage this area in consultation with Western Sydney Mountain Bike Club. • Iconic trails attract many riders from overseas and around Australia. These include Glen Raphael Drive on Narrow Neck, The Anderson Fire Trail and the Oaks Fire Trail. 	



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
10.2. DOWNHILL	<p>There is strong demand for downhill racing but little provision within the Blue Mountains and the greater Sydney metropolitan area. Representatives of Western Sydney Mountain Biking Club have been investigating options for a course in the Western Sydney region for some time with no success to date. Lithgow Mountain Biking Club is seeking to develop a course in the Lithgow area.</p> <p>Manly Dam is one of few approved areas in Sydney. Megalong Heritage Farm has an approved private course that is used for events. The other approved downhill tracks in the Blue Mountains region were located in Yellomundee Regional Park, managed by NPWS; and at Hassans Walls, in the Lithgow Council area. Both of these have been closed over the past two years.</p> <p>There are a number of unapproved downhill tracks and circuits that have been constructed in natural areas throughout the City. These range from major tracks such as near Old Bathurst Road, Glenbrook and off Mount Riverview, through to local tracks built in bushland adjoining townships and used by youth from adjoining residential areas. Withdrawal of approved riding opportunities has placed increased pressure of use on these areas.</p> <p>Generally these tracks have been constructed in natural bushland areas of high value, and have the potential for major detrimental impact on these areas. The sandstone soils of the mountains are particularly fragile, and downhill tracks erode quickly from both bike use and the action of water. Construction methods used to date have shown little success in arresting this erosion on downhill tracks, and the resulting heavily rutted tracks are often abandoned after relatively short period of time.</p>	See above recommendation for cross country and bike park provision



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>10.3.</p> <p>FREE RIDING, STUNT RIDING</p>	<p>Free riding and stunt riding have been developing in popularity since the late 1990s and have resulted in construction of a number of unauthorised tracks in natural areas, with rickety wooden jumps and structures.</p> <p>A number of illegal small free riding courses have been established within bushland reserves managed by Council throughout the mountains. These have relied upon natural hazards together with timber boardwalks and bridges. No formal provision has been made for this sport in the region.</p>	<p>It is not considered that stunt riding and free riding are appropriate in the natural areas of the Blue Mountains.</p>
<p>10.4.</p> <p>PROVISION: RAIL TRAIL</p>	<p>There is potential for development of a "Trail adjoining the Rail" in the upper mountains to provide an alternative route for cycling between towns. This would have high Tourism destination appeal. Investigation of the options for such a trail is recommended.</p>	<p>Undertake feasibility review of a bicycle "Trail adjoining the Rail" through the upper mountains.</p>
<p>11.</p> <p>DANCE PARTIES</p>	<p>Dance parties are a regular occurrence in forests of northern NSW and Queensland. Generally they are unapproved events notified through email and word of mouth.</p>	<p>Dance parties in bushland areas should demonstrate minimal environmental and social impact, and would require development approval.</p>



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>12.</p> <p>DOG WALKING (ON LEASH)</p>	<p>Dogs are prohibited from National Parks but exercising dogs is a popular use of many Council managed walking tracks adjoining residential areas or with parking available.</p> <p>There are generally few issues of conflict of use on low use walking track but in high use areas such as Centennial Glen this should be monitored. Dogs may pose a threat to fauna, and this should also be monitored and access restricted to areas of high habitat significance.</p> <p>Management consideration is needed to encourage responsible disposal of dog faeces, and to indicate areas dogs are permitted. Signage at track heads and tenure boundaries should provide information on access.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on permitted dog access on signage at track heads. • Monitor compatibility of dog access with other users at high use sites such as Centennial Glen, Blackheath. • Prohibit dog access to areas of high habitat value that is likely to be threatened by dogs.
<p>13.</p> <p>FILMING</p>	<p>BMCC has an existing policy on filming. This policy needs to ensure activities that are portrayed are appropriate and sustainable activities in the World Heritage context.</p>	<p>If nature based recreation is to be filmed the activity should be permissible within the location of filming, and the appropriate activity code of conduct should be followed.</p>



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>14. FISHING</p>	<p>A variety of opportunities are available for recreational fishing in waterways of the greater Blue Mountains. The waterways range from lakes and large dams such as Lake Lyell and Lake Wallace, to the Warragamba catchment with fast running mountain streams such as Duckmaloi, Cox and Kowmung Rivers. Warragamba Dam is totally closed to fishing and public access, and an exclusion zone surrounds the dam to 3 km.</p> <p>A recreational fishing license from NSW Fisheries is required to fish in any waters of NSW, and regulations apply. Native fish and trout are protected in various locations and during spawning season. In the City of Blue Mountains, Wentworth Lake is stocked annually by NSW Fisheries with trout fingerlings. Glenbrook Lagoon has previously been stocked but in recent years this has ceased due to concerns about the water quality of the Lagoon. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential impacts from exotic fish such as trout to protected species in this catchment.</p> <p>At least one commercial fishing operator conducts fishing tours in the region, on public and private property.</p> <p>Continued recreational fishing is dependent upon retention of high water quality and suitable habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That BMCC continue to monitor water quality within natural waterways of the city, and enforce environmental regulations to maintain habitat and water quality. • That BMCC continue to liaise with NSW Fisheries to encourage responsible stocking of non-native fish within waterways of the city. • That applications to BMCC for commercial and group fishing licenses be considered in relation to the environmental and social impact on the site, and the wider catchment implications.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
15. 2WD VEHICLE TOURING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Sight seeing 	
16. HANG GLIDING AND OTHER NON POWERED AIRCRAFT	<p>Blue Mountains Hang Gliding Club operates from hang gliding launch facilities at Mount Blackheath. Gliders land in the Kanimbla Valley below. The launch pads adjoin the Council managed picnic area. On occasions there is insufficient parking for the numbers participating. The toilets at this site have been closed, and there are problems with waste disposal at the site. Conflict with other users such as sightseers and picnickers can also occur.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not considered appropriate to provide elsewhere for this activity. Expansion of use of the site may require development approval, and provision of support facilities. • Management measures are required to address peak use at the Mount Blackheath site. The user group should undertake ongoing maintenance of the launch facilities and the wider amenity area as a condition of use of the site. • See Picnicking
17. HUNTING	<p>Hunting is not available on public managed land within Blue Mountains City.</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
18. NATURE STUDY	<p>See Birdwatching, Nature study and Wildlife Viewing</p>	
19. ORIENTEERING AND ROGAINING	<p>Competitive orienteering and rogaining events are not a regular activity on public land managed by Blue Mountains City Council.</p>	<p>Applications for these activities should be considered on their merits with special attention paid to potential conflict of uses and environmental impacts.</p>



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>20.</p> <p>HORSE RIDING: ENDURANCE, AND TRAIL RIDING</p>	<p>There has been a reduction in available land for horse riding in the Blue Mountains area due to urban development and imposition of more stringent environmental controls. A number of local commercial horse riding establishments have closed or moved west to Lithgow or Oberon Local Government Areas in recent years.</p> <p>In natural areas horse riding is generally restricted to access roads and approved trails. Horse riding is permitted on public access roads throughout National Parks. Horse riding is prohibited in Wilderness Areas and Schedule 1 and 2 of Warragamba Special Area. A number of important horse riding trails are located in the greater Blue Mountains. The Bicentennial or National Horse Trail, from Cooktown to Healesville, passes through Rydal and Jenolan Caves area to the west of Blue Mountains City.</p> <p>Specific bridle trails are located within the National Parks in areas such as Rileys Mountain near Mulgoa. Dedicated horse trails are located in Yellow Rock Road area of Winmalee. BMCC reserves in Megalong Valley and Sun Valley are used mainly for equestrian sports, including pony club use. Riding for the Disabled (Blue Mountains) operate from a Council reserve in Blaxland. They have limited access to trails for riding. A commercial operator uses Crown Reserves in Megalong Valley for trail riding.</p> <p>Private lands in Shipley and the Megalong Valley and in the Lithgow and Oberon area cater for commercial horse riding, and adjust horses for Blue Mountains residents.</p> <p>There are problems with erosion of trails and creation of multiple trails in high use areas such as Crown Reserves in Megalong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess suitability and capability of Megalong Crown Reserve for horse riding use. Map and assess condition of existing trail network, and prepare plan to maintain, restore, upgrade, close as necessary to provide a sustainable trail network. • Review use of Megalong Crown Reserve considering public access for recreational riding as well as commercial use. • Prepare necessary approvals for appropriate horse riding on Megalong Crown Reserve. • Map existing bridle trails and assess potential for provision of a bridle trail network in Megalong Valley for local recreational riding. • Provide signage and maintenance to horse trail systems in Megalong Valley, the Lower Mountains and other approved horse trails. • Monitor impacts of horse riding and take appropriate management action to address continued degradation. • Promote minimal impact horse riding code to riders and through clubs and commercial establishments.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
20. HORSE RIDING: ENDURANCE, AND TRAIL RIDING (CONT'D)	<p>The sandstone soils of the Blue Mountains are very susceptible to erosion, and horses are considered to have a higher impact than walking or bicycle use. There is a need to provide clear signage on areas where horse riding is permitted. On public horse riding trails construction methods used, and continued maintenance to drainage are critical to reduce impacts from use. These trails should be regularly inspected and maintained to minimise erosion, or closed and restored if degraded beyond repair.</p>	
21. PHOTOGRAPHY	<p>Amateur nature photography is generally a low impact activity. See Filming for commercial photography and filming recommendations.</p>	<p>Minimal impact codes of behaviour should be promoted to residents and visitors.</p>
22. PICNICKING	<p>Picnicking is usually associated with vehicle access routes, cleared park areas and lookouts. Shelters are provided by BMCC for this purpose at a number of lookouts and camping areas, especially in the upper mountains and the MOUNTAINS.</p> <p>NPWS also provides picnic areas throughout the National Parks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of picnic areas is recommended. Provision of improved facilities should be considered where intensity of use exceeds the capacity of the site. • Sites for consideration of additional or improved facilities include Old Ford Reserve in the Megalong Valley, Waterfall Reserve and at Mount Blackheath Lookout where conflict occurs between picnickers and hang gliding club use.
23. QUAD BIKING AND TRAIL BIKING		<p>See Trail bikes and 4WD Touring and Training.</p>



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
24. RUNNING (CROSS COUNTRY)	Cross-country running may be appropriate on approved trails capable of sustaining the use. However organised group use of heritage walking tracks for running events would not be an appropriate use.	Generally cross-country running would not be considered a nature based recreation activity, unless confined to existing trails.
25. SIGHT SEEING	<p>Provision of adequate visitor infrastructure is necessary to support the commercial bus tour industry, as well as sight seeing by private vehicle. Tour operators need options to structure packages to suit the time, levels of physical ability, and specialised interests of groups. Adequate areas are needed to view scenic vistas, areas of heritage interest and experience recreation of the Blue Mountains.</p> <p>It is important to provide high quality visitor infrastructure such as parking, toilets, adequate turning circles and recreation destinations suitable for large groups use. Echo Point is an example of such provision.</p> <p>Aerial sightseeing by plane and helicopter can be intrusive on recreation in natural areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing communication and cooperation of the RTA and NPWS, BMCC and BMTA is important to provide scenic circuit drives and visitor destinations with appropriate signage, roadside viewing areas and associated visitor information. • Council's roadside signage policy, practices and forward strategy need to maintain currency. • BMCC should encourage NPWS liaison with the flight industry, local airports and the Civil Aviation Authority to restrict flights over natural areas of the Blue Mountains, especially wilderness areas and to minimise impact of aircraft use in natural areas.
26. SURVIVAL SKILLS	Training in survival skills are considered to generally have minimal impact on natural areas.	Low impact organised training in survival skills would generally be permitted on BMCC managed public lands subject to an approved license for commercial/ group use.
27. SWIMMING	There are a small number of natural swimming areas in the Blue Mountains, generally associated with day use and camping areas. Many pools used by early residents of the mountains have since filled with sediment and are no longer available for swimming. In other areas the	A management strategy is required for water bodies used for primary or secondary contact recreation. This should seek to provide adequate water quality to meet the community demand for water-based recreation at a particular site. Risk management should consider short term and long-term management actions as follows:



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>27.</p> <p>SWIMMING</p> <p>(CONT'D)</p>	<p>water quality is considered unfit for primary contact water activities such as swimming and canyoning.</p> <p>Maintenance of water quality is essential to maintain continued access to safe swimming areas. Storm water must be of high quality before entering natural watercourses. Priority should remain on pollution prevention, catchment of sediment and treatment of storm water in urban areas.</p> <p>BMCC tests the recreational water quality of the major sites, for primary or secondary contact. Those tested are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenbrook Lagoon; • Wentworth Falls Lake; • Old Ford Reserve; and • Jelly Bean Pool in Blue Mountains National Park. Other pools in the park such as Ingar, and Empress Canyon are not tested. <p>Important outcomes to be provided are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of recreational water quality for primary contact water-based recreational activities such as swimming and non-traditional activities such as canyoning. • Retention of water quality for secondary contact recreation (e.g. paddling, wading, boating and fishing) and other recreation (e.g. scenic appreciation, picnicking and walking). • Prevention of overcrowding of the limited areas available for swimming in freshwater. • (NB: This water-testing program has in the past been reported to DIPNR who have coordinated Nepean Catchment recreational swimming quality testing results. The DIPNR work has recently been discontinued, and Council is to review the water-testing program.) 	<p>Short to mid term actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate signage using a signage assessment process (e.g. Statewide Mutual 1999) • Active discouragement of activities not recommended • Prominent signage of entry/access routes; and • Provision of management advice through different media to users on the suitability for various recreation activities. <p>Long term/strategic actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remedial action to reduce or minimise sub-catchment impacts, e.g. stormwater management strategies, building works impact reduction, urban runoff control, human and animal waste control; • Participation in a multi-agency working group to standardise signage and response measures so that consistency occurs amongst managers in response to recreational water quality monitoring; • Adoption of appropriate environmental indicators and measures to evaluate the state of sites in sub-catchments and assist in measurement of catchment health; and • Ensure appropriate funding for long-term site management responses such as remedial works both on-site and at a sub-catchment level, as required.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>28.</p> <p>TRAIL BIKES AND 4WD TOURING AND TRAINING</p>	<p>There is rapidly increasing ownership of off road bikes and 4wds throughout the nation. Many owners live in urban areas and seek opportunities for recreational off road riding in adjoining hinterlands such as the Blue Mountains. There are however limited opportunities for 4wd and trail bike use off road in the City of Blue Mountains.</p> <p>4wds and registered trail bikes are restricted to the use of public roads within Blue Mountains City and management trails in Blue Mountains National Park. NSW Forestry Service permits 4wds and registered trail bike use of fire trails in the Newnes and Lithgow areas. Provision for 4wd touring and training within the greater Blue Mountains region is largely in the Oberon and Lithgow areas on NSW Forestry trails.</p> <p>Roads within the Blue Mountains National Park are generally maintained to allow access to facilities such as picnic and camping areas and walking tracks, and for emergency access. They may also be used for vehicle touring, cycling and horse riding.</p> <p>The erodible nature of the sandstone soils and the associated high maintenance costs for the extensive public vehicle access routes result in differing standards of road maintenance throughout the natural areas. High use of approved roads can result in dangerous situations, and conflict between users.</p> <p>Roads to developed settings are generally well maintained to a 2wd standard. Other roads in the natural settings are maintained to a lesser</p>	<p>BMCC should coordinate with NSW Police, and state agencies to encourage responsible off road driving practices through media, advertisements and with sale of motorised recreational vehicles.</p> <p>In September 2001 BMCC placed “a blanket restriction upon the use of reserves managed by Blue Mountains City Council by motorised vehicles until and unless more comprehensive assessments, coordinated with the management of the National Park and incorporating adequate community consultation, can demonstrate whether and where such restrictions will be lifted and how access will be managed in such discrete areas as may be determined.”</p> <p>Investigations undertaken for this NBR Strategy have reinforced the need for continuation of this policy.</p>



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>28.</p> <p>TRAIL BIKES AND 4WD TOURING AND TRAINING</p> <p>(CONT'D)</p>	<p>standard, consistent with their levels of use.</p> <p>Vehicle access to Wilderness Areas is limited to points on the boundary, and within Restricted Areas is available only to McMahons Lookout.</p> <p>There are also 275 km of vehicle trails that are maintained by NPWS, BMCC and other authorities for management purposes only, which are not available for public vehicle access.</p> <p>Unauthorised use of Council reserves, and Crown lands throughout the city has continued despite coordinated enforcement of Council regulations by NSW Police and BMCC Rangers.</p> <p>This is a national problem, which organisations such as Tread Lightly are tackling. Higher resources may be required to place physical boundaries on natural areas as well as to promote responsible use of off road recreational vehicles.</p>	
<p>29.</p> <p>WALKING TRACKS AND LOOKOUTS</p>	<p>There are over 300 historic walking tracks within the greater Blue Mountains. These walking tracks allow users to access outstanding natural environments of the Blue Mountains. These tracks are a major part of the regions tourism infrastructure, attracting large numbers of domestic and international visitors to the mountains each year. Their origins include Aboriginal footpads, miners and timber getters tracks, surveyor's routes, early roads and purpose built recreational tracks.</p> <p>The walking tracks are generally narrow single tracks that are steep with many steps. They travel through a wide variety of vegetation types and landscape types and have frequent scenic lookouts. (cont'd over)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with development and implementation of the joint agency Blue Mountains Regional Walking Track Management Strategy. • Develop a maintenance agreement for the road/ trail and picnic facility interface between BMCC and NPWS lands.



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
<p>29. WALKING TRACKS AND LOOKOUTS (CONT'D)</p>	<p>35 Blue Mountains walking track networks have been assessed as having State Heritage Significance. The tracks cross a number of land tenures including National Park, Crown Land, Community and private land, and are managed by a variety of agencies and private companies or individuals.</p> <p>Many tracks are in poor repair as a result of age and use, the rugged terrain, the highly erodible soils, poor track location or construction, and/ or lack of adequate maintenance funds. The fragile sandstone soils and the effects of water exacerbate track deterioration. Some tracks need major reconstruction. Many historic tracks are overgrown and need assessment to determine their future status. There is a general lack of information and directional signage on tracks for users' information and assistance. On popular tracks increasing usage is detracting from the recreation experience through crowding, pollution, and visible effects of trampling and erosion on the tracks.</p> <p>Funding is very short for capital works and for maintenance of walking tracks. BMCC, NPWS and Lands Department are currently developing a walking track management strategy in order to better maintain, and promote the historic walking track fabric. Guidelines for construction and maintenance, risk management and signage have been developed to date.</p> <p>A classification system has also been agreed between the agencies and the 300 odd tracks have been assessed against the Australian Standards for Walking Tracks, AS 2156.1-2001. This Classification and Signage standard outlines 6 Classes of walking track (Class 1 being the highest standard and Class 6 being the most primitive.)</p>	



ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	ACTION FOR CONSIDERATION
29. WALKING TRACKS AND LOOKOUTS (CONT'D)	<p>Assessment of the tracks has shown that there are only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 x class 1 • 3 x class 2; and • 15 x class 3 tracks in the mountains. <p>The majority of tracks lie within classes 4 to 6, which reflects the steep gradient of the tracks due to the terrain, and the general lack of management intervention such as safety, directional signage and infrastructure on the tracks and track heads.</p> <p>Many of the class 4, 5 and 6 tracks are of regional or local recreation significance. Management of these is divided between NPWS, BMCC, Lands Department, the Jenolan Caves Trust and private lands such as the Hydro Majestic Hotel.</p> <p>Each agency is preparing an inventory of tracks they manage and assessing the condition of the tracks. The next stage of the walking track management strategy will be to prepare guidelines for coordinated interpretation and visitor information. This will include a grading of tracks for promotion purposes.</p> <p>Specific issues surround the interface between Council managed areas and commencement of tracks and lookouts in the National Park. The walking track guidelines will assist consistency in management of these areas, but a formal maintenance agreement outlining responsibilities would assist best presentation of these areas. Agreements have been made for this purpose in the past, but these require updating to cover recent changes of land tenures and transfer of land to the National Park.</p>	



APPENDIX 5 NATURE BASED RECREATION INDUSTRY

In June 2003, Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) commissioned IRIS Research to undertake an online survey amongst tour operators who conduct nature tours to Council managed areas in the Blue Mountains.

The broad aim of the survey was to profile the Blue Mountains nature tour industry and gain information

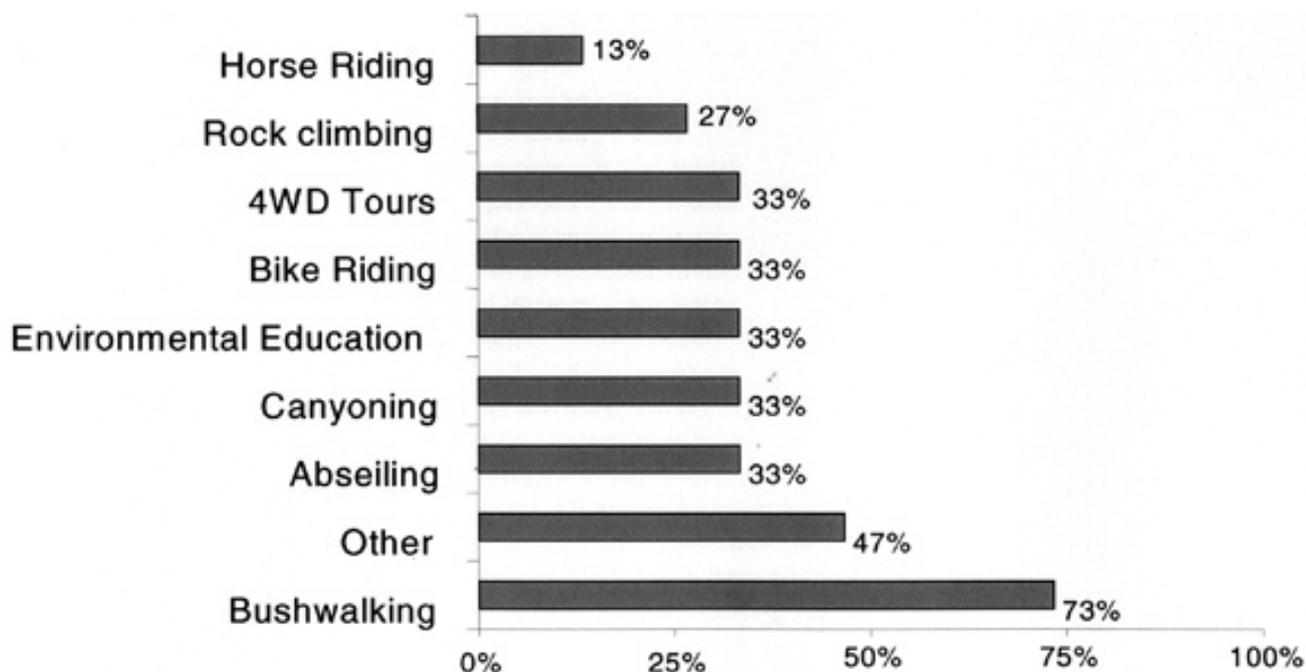
from stakeholders. Survey fieldwork was carried out using the IRIS online survey system during late July and August 2003. The key results from the survey are summarized below:

A5.1 GENERAL USAGE PROFILE:

When asked what types of tours they operate in the Blue Mountains, 73%

of respondents reported offering bushwalking tours. Other tour activities offered by multiple operators included abseiling, canyoning, environmental education, bike riding, 4WD and rock climbing. The survey did not include general sightseeing tours that may visit lookouts along with non-natural destinations.

FIGURE 3: RECREATION ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED



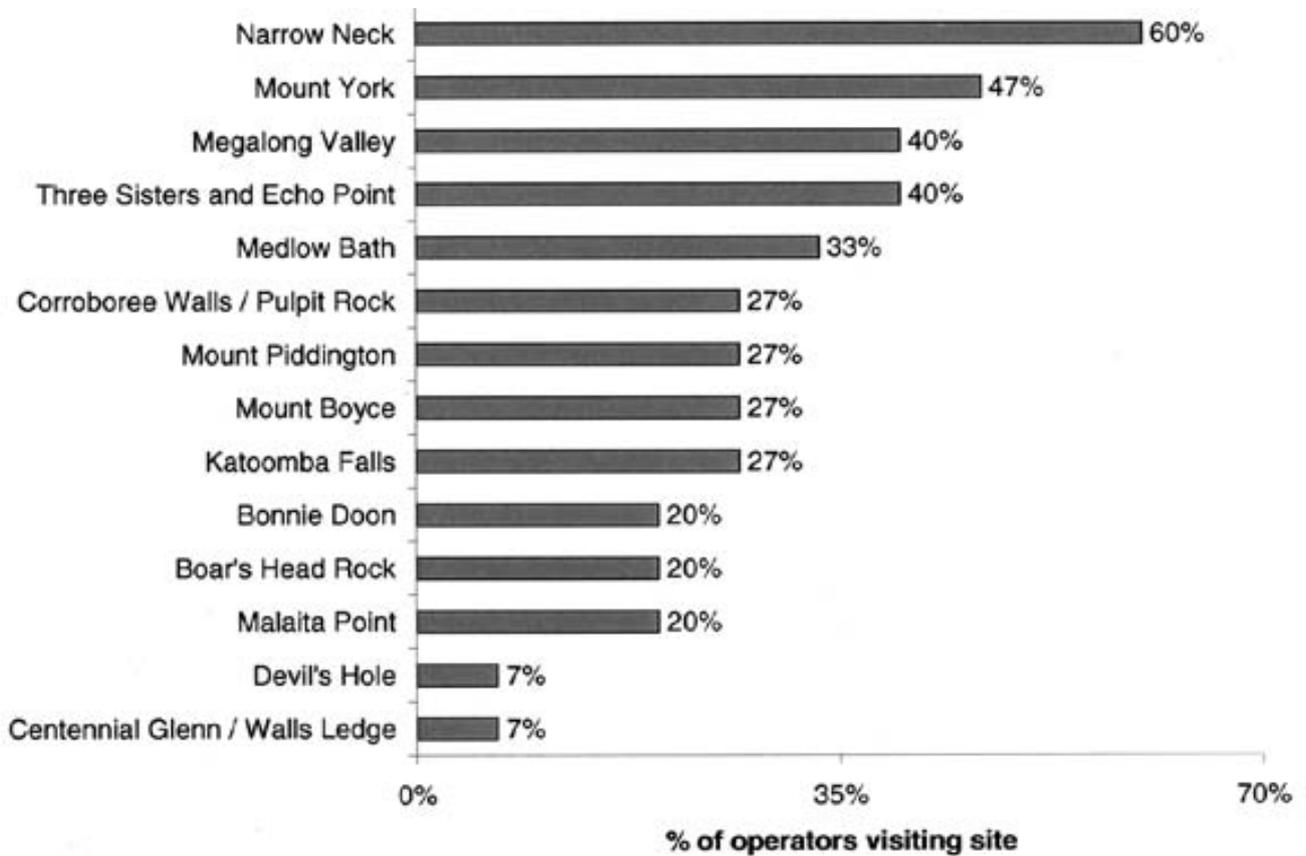
53% of survey respondents reported conducting tours to the Blue Mountains on a daily basis, with the remaining 47% conducting tours on an 'as needs' basis.

The 'typical' nature tour participant travels to the Mountains for the day in a private vehicle from Sydney. They are usually an independent traveller and aged between 25 and 54 years.

The average tour group size was 10 participants. Looking at individual responses, average group sizes varied greatly - from 2 participants for smaller operators to 45 participants for the largest operator. The 'average' ratio of participants to guide was 7 to 1.



FIGURE 4 PROPORTION OF OPERATORS VISITING LOCATION IN LAST 12 MONTHS



There were 5,020 nature tours to the Blue Mountains conducted by the sample group in 2002, compared with 4,413 the previous year and 2,672 back in 1998. Most respondents estimated 2003 would end with either stagnant or declining tour volumes. Overall, tour numbers were predicted to reach about 4,582, down 9% when compared with 2002.

The most popular season for nature tours to the Blue Mountains is summer, with 37% of tours conducted at this time.

The majority of operators conduct full day tours (67%), with tours equally split between weekdays and weekends.

Three quarters (73%) of operators stated that their tours stop somewhere for lunch, with hotels, pubs and clubs the most popular destinations.



A5.2 RECREATION SITE USAGE & ISSUES:

60% of surveyed operators stated that their tours visit Narrow Neck. Other sites visited by a wide range of operators include Mount York, Megalong Valley, Three Sisters and Echo Point and Medlow Bath.

The most frequently visited area by the sample group was Medlow Bath, with a total of 1,332 tours visiting that area during the 12 months prior to the survey. Other frequently visited areas included Narrow Neck (1,065), the Three Sisters and Echo Point (743) and Corroboree Walls and Pulpit Rock (722).

Track maintenance, interpretive signs and maps, toilets and garbage bins were facilities often rated as priorities for many of the sites visited by nature based tour operators.

A5.3 DEVELOPING A LICENSING APPROVAL PROCESS:

73% of the operators surveyed hold a current NPWS license for the Blue Mountains National Park. Those operators currently holding a NPWS license are generally satisfied with the current fee structure imposed.

87% of nature tour operators have some form of professional tour accreditation.

A5.4 BUSINESS PROFILE:

53% of the operators surveyed were proprietary limited companies, 13% were limited companies, 13% were partnerships and a further 14% were owner operated.

14% had an annual turnover of over \$1,000,000, 50% had a turnover between \$1,000,000 and \$100,000, and the remaining 36% had an annual turnover of less than \$100,000.

The vast majority (93%) of respondent businesses started their operations prior to 2000.

Just less than half of all respondent operators (47%) conducted their business out of the Blue Mountains. A further 33% stated that their business headquarters was located in Sydney, with the remaining 20% operating out of 'other' areas.

Respondent businesses estimate that they employed 183 staff in 2002, up from 153 in 2000 and 118 in 1998. The industry is heavily casualised, with 72% of all employees from businesses in the sample group employed on a casual basis. Most respondents are fairly optimistic about future employment growth, with employee numbers set to grow by 50% over the period to 2008.

Respondents were also asked how many tours their business operates (to all areas, not just the Blue

Mountains). The results show that the nature tour operators in the survey conducted, on average, about 300 tours each in 2002.

The number of touring vehicles owned by operators ranged from none (e.g. horse riding tour operators) to four. On average, adventure tour operators owned two touring vehicles.

A5.5 BLUE MOUNTAINS REGION NATIONAL PARKS' LICENSED TOURS:

NPWS figures show that of 93 businesses that have held licences for Blue Mountains Region National Parks between 1996 and 2003, 30 businesses (32%) were based in the greater Blue Mountains, 57 businesses (61%) were based in Sydney and 6 businesses (6.45%) were based in Victoria.

Informal figures from NPWS show that in 2004 there were 86,391 passengers registered for commercial tours through the Blue Mountains Region National Parks. This number has increased over time from 34,770 in 1997 to 85,391 in 1999 and decreased to 71,726 in 2002.

¹ This includes lands zoned Rural Conservation (RC), Bushland Conservation (BC), Recreation (REC), Recreation Environmental Protection (REC-EP), Environmental Protection (EP), Environmental Protection- Acquisition (Epac), Regional Open Space (R), Lands categorized as Natural Area within Plans of Management for Community and Crown Lands, and other areas of natural bushland within the City.

² Blue Mountains Recreation & Sport Strategy 2002, Blue Mountains City Council, p.44

³ NSW Nature Tourism Discussion Paper 2001, NSW Tourism, pp24-25

⁴ Various definitions are used for Nature Tourism. Broadly it is "all forms of tourism that rely on or incorporate visitation to natural environments ..." which can include ecotourism, soft and hard adventure activities, indigenous tourism and special interest tourism- definitions of these are included in Appendix 5.

⁵ Tourism NSW, 2001, NSW Nature Tourism Discussion Paper pp24-25

⁶ IRIS Research Ltd (August 2003). "Blue Mountains City Council Nature Based Recreation Study An online survey of businesses conducting adventure tours to the Blue Mountains" (unpublished)

