



## CARBON OFFSET PROJECT

### Q & A SHEET

- Q.** *Why is Blue Mountains City Council doing this?*
- A.** Blue Mountains City Council wants to show leadership in the community in terms of addressing the causes of climate change. Scientific evidence overwhelmingly indicates that carbon emissions (including from cars and trucks) are contributing to climate change. The planting of trees can help to negate these emissions by absorbing carbon from the atmosphere.
- Q.** *Exactly what is being offset?*
- A.** The carbon emissions from BMCC's maintenance vehicle fleet (cars and trucks).
- Q.** *What type of trees are on offer?*
- A.** A selection of native trees that occur in the Blue Mountains are being offered. These trees have been specially propagated for this project by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society. Trees of different sizes (growing to heights of 10m to 30m), and suited to different parts of the mountains, are on offer.
- Q.** *Why not offset all of Council's fleet, or all of Council's emissions?*
- A.** As this is the first time that BMCC has attempted such a program, it was decided to set a manageable target in the first year with a view to expanding the program in subsequent years.
- Q.** *How is the offset calculated?*
- A.** The offset has been calculated based on the total fuel usage in litres for the included vehicles (petrol and diesel) using Greenfleet's Online Tree Totaller.

- Q.** *Is this offset accredited in any way?*
- A.** No. Accreditation of carbon offsets is complex and is designed for organisations that wish to sell carbon credits or obtain third party validation of their scheme. As this is a trial community-based program, this is not warranted.
- Q.** *Why doesn't BMCC just purchase offsets from greenhouse accredited companies?*
- A.** This was considered and may be an option for the future. At present, the "Free Tree" project as currently planned is aimed to engage the Blue Mountains community and also to have a positive impact on the local landscape. Purchasing commercial offsets would not achieve this.
- Q.** *What if the trees don't survive? Do I get a replacement?*
- A.** It is possible that a small percentage of trees will not survive for various reasons. More trees than are required to offset the targeted carbon emissions are being distributed to cover this eventuality. On the positive side, it is expected that people who are motivated to get involved in this program will also take good care of their trees. A free planting guide is also being distributed to assist in the process. Trees that do not survive for whatever reason will not be replaced.
- Q.** *Aren't there enough trees in the mountains already?*
- A.** The Blue Mountains certainly has an abundance of trees. However, in residential areas, trees are constantly being lost through old age, storm damage, or ongoing development. The local environment can easily support additional trees and it was felt appropriate to give residents of the mountains an opportunity to enhance their local amenity as part of this carbon offset project.