



City of Blue Mountains

The City Within a World Heritage National Park



Blue Mountains City Council

# Library Services

Strategic Plan  
2004-2025

*"Living & Learning through Libraries"*

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## Introduction

The Blue Mountains City Council Library provides library services to the people of the Blue Mountains and beyond, through its six (6) branch libraries strategically positioned throughout the local government area. Library Services operates as a Business Unit within BM City Services, the Provider area of Council's relatively new Policy/Purchaser/Provider Model.

This Strategic Plan is the first developed by the Blue Mountains City Council Library Service. The plan has been developed using information gathered from Strategic Plan working parties, Library planning sessions, consultations with the community and stakeholders, and the expertise of the staff of the Blue Mountains City Council Library Service.

Current strategic relationships and networks exist with the Library Advisory Group of Blue Mountains City Council, State Library of NSW, membership of both the Metropolitan and Country Public Libraries Associations, membership of ALIA (Australian Library & Information Association), International membership of LIANZA (New Zealand) and specialist membership of various relevant Reference & Information, Children & Youth, Local Studies and Management organisations.

The purpose of this document is to assist in shaping the future direction of library services in the Blue Mountains over the next twenty one years in accordance with the 25 Year City Strategy, and with other Blue Mountains City Council planning documents.

At a time when resources are constrained, there is a need for the Library Service to take charge of its future and reveal a vision for the community. The Library Service will embrace continuous improvement through innovation and creation of best practice in the delivery of services, which are affordable and relevant to community needs. Reliable information resources, commitment to a dedicated technology infrastructure, skilled staff, attractive, efficient and welcoming buildings – people places – are all essential elements in providing effective library services to the community.

The Blue Mountains City Library network is one of the most important community spaces provided by the local Council. Our service philosophy encourages people to feel comfortable when they visit the library for their latest reading material, videos, CDs or DVDs; meet friends; use the Internet; peruse the newspapers and magazines, or research for their latest project.

*Our libraries shall be the cultural hub and focal point of the community; free and safe places to be, where people can connect with each other, seeking recreation, education, information and lifelong learning experiences. Our aim is to promote the Library as the "living room of the City", warm and welcoming, that relates to the people it serves in an inviting and friendly way.*

Public library services are, and must continue to be, important community resources for support of our educational system and lifelong personal and work pursuits. To be successful, public libraries must be responsive to their customers, make effective use of their resources, and be partners in community collaborations that facilitate achievement of their goals.

To achieve our goals and key result areas, we must develop and maintain a strong strategic position within the organisation of Council, particularly with the guidance of the Library Advisory Group, consisting of representation from Councillors, Management of Blue Mountains City Council and the Library. The Library Advisory Group's finite terms of reference are to oversee the completion of a Strategic Plan for Library Services. We will also continue to build partnerships with existing and other groups and institutions, including organisations from the governmental, non-profit and private sectors.

## **Blue Mountains City Council**

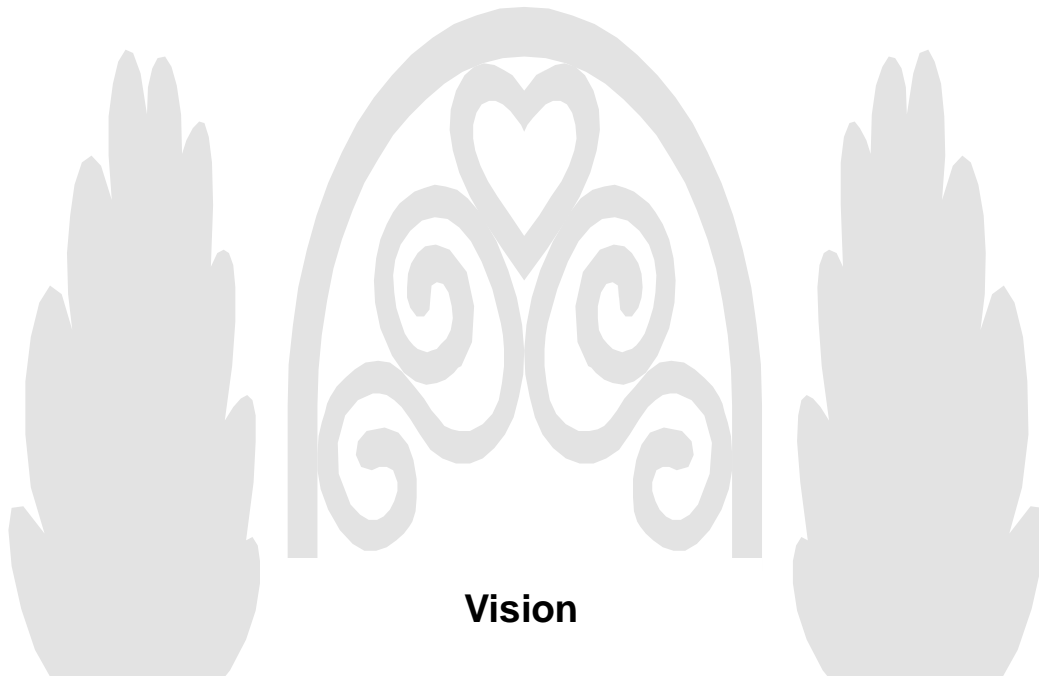
### ***Vision***

The City within a National Park with distinctive places and communities, carefully planned to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations, respecting our heritage and safeguarding our fragile environment

## **Blue Mountains City Council**

### ***Mission***

Working in partnership with our diverse communities to ensure local needs and wider responsibilities are met through effective leadership, efficient provision of high quality services and facilities and sound environmental management



## **Vision**

**To provide an innovative and sustainable library service that will be the pride of our community, will enrich the quality of life and will be a symbol of its potential and success.**

**We will be the gateway for the community journey to lifelong learning.**

## **Mission**

**Blue Mountains City Library will:**

- Provide relevant collections and services**
  - Value the role of all staff**
  - Be responsive to change**
- Offer excellent customer service**
  - Work in partnership with government, business and community organisations**
- Be accessible and equitable.**

## Library Strategic Plan Actions

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
1. <b>Accommodation and Access</b>	1.1 Ensure buildings, facilities and access to collections and information meet future community needs.	1.1.1 Provide Buildings, facilities and outreach services that allow for the transformation of the Libraries to meet the community needs of the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review each service point and make recommendations to Council via Library's Promotion and Marketing Team</li> <li>2. Initiate joint use partnership opportunities eg. Local interest groups, Art Gallery/Museum link, TAFE and universities planning for new facilities</li> <li>3. Develop open collection concept across libraries to enhance access</li> <li>4. Explore options for outreach services e.g. housebound services, mobile services to aged care facilities, etc.</li> <li>5. Investigate mobile library services as per <b>A Map for Action</b> to build on emerging mobile services that connect those without access to transport to services and Addressing the significant differences in socio-economic well-being and health status between the Upper and Lower Mountains</li> <li>6. Expand 24 hour remote access to a range of library resources and services online</li> </ol>	<p>Revitalise interiors eg. Zones, colours, shelving, furniture</p> <p>Investigate branded external signage eg. banners and permanent signage</p> <p>Investigate possibilities of major renovations and relocations of Libraries</p> <p>Investigate potential of using community buses to bring older people to the Library</p> <p>Investigate additional space for all Branches</p>	<p>Library management - inhouse</p> <p>Liaison with Council, Branches &amp; external groups</p> <p>Library management – Inhouse</p> <p>Liaison with Council, Branches &amp; external groups</p> <p>\$350,000</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Council/Grant application</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council/Grants</p> <p>Council/Grants</p>

						Sponsorship/Grant/ Council
Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
		1.1.2 Provide opening hours that reflect community needs	1. Review library hours to suit the needs of local communities, especially when planning for new or extended libraries e.g. proposed new Katoomba Library	Investigate ways of redistributing existing branch hours  Consultation with local community groups regarding preferred hours  Investigate Sunday opening	Staffing costs	Council   Council
		1.1.3 Provide a safe and friendly environment for people of all ages, backgrounds and education	1. Schedule facility upgrades and train staff in customer relations, to encourage community use of libraries as safe and pleasant meeting places, and promoting the concept of libraries as the <i>living room of the Learning City</i>	Provide staff training to increase awareness in cultural, physical and emotional needs  Update, consolidate and regularly review list of useful phone numbers to assist Staff with difficult situations	Increase training component of budget	Council  I

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
2. Collections and Services	2.1 To provide equitable access to relevant collections and services that will entertain, enrich and inspire the lives of our learning community	2.1.1 Develop new and/or enhance existing programs/services to meet specific customer needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate better ways of supplying popular materials e.g. purchase practices and outsourcing options</li> <li>2. Build closer links with community groups to establish acquisition targets</li> <li>3. Develop partnership with Branch's Family Day Care service to enhance services to children</li> <li>4. Expand existing services to include value-added programs e.g. Commercial toy library service or closer liaison/co-operation with existing services</li> </ol>	<p>Survey to establish community needs</p> <p>Develop an Aboriginal collection &amp; activities</p> <p>Encompass all the Priority Actions through a dynamic annual Business Plan</p>	Component of new Katoomba Library	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council/sponsorship/grants</p>
		2.1.2 Develop a collection relevant to the Blue Mountains community as a whole	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review branch library collections to ensure equitable content across the service</li> <li>2. Develop a strategy of regular rotation of all material formats between branches</li> <li>3. Extent of collection per site determined by population density</li> <li>4. Explore concept of regionalisation of specialist collections/services to be more effectively managed at the regional centres of Katoomba and Springwood – as per <b>A Map for Action 4.3.1 Centralise the location of services and facilities in key service centres</b></li> </ol>	Undertake major weeding of out-of-date and infrequently used stock	<p>Revised courier program</p> <p>Component of new Katoomba Library</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
		2.1.3 To organise and preserve the library's cultural resources for future generations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate new technologies for preservation, storage and dissemination</li> <li>2. Review Collection Development Policy providing for a balance between acquisition of print and digital resources</li> </ol>	Adjust Council's Cultural Register as the Library's Local Studies Collection is reassessed	Minimal, reorganizing operation to reduce costs	<p>Grant funded</p> <p>Council</p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
3. Customer Service	3.1 To provide a customer focused approach to the provision of Library services that will provide entertainment and support the diverse needs of a learning community	3.1.1 To be customer oriented	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement Library specific customer service training</li> <li>2. Implement Council's new Customer Service Charter</li> <li>3. Investigate options for off-desk time to maximise customer relations</li> </ol>	Management restructure	Position upgrades	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>
		3.1.2 To ensure collections and services are relevant to the Blue Mountains community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop regular general and specific interest community surveys to support the Library's need to maintain awareness of community expectation and assist future planning and development</li> </ol>	Develop subject specific resource sheets		<b>Council</b>
		3.1.3 To maximise the resource base available to the library service in order to provide services of a high standard, and to do this in the most efficient and sustainable way possible. Maintain and improve capital based assets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure funding commitment from Council based on productivity gains and community expectation</li> <li>2. Maximise utilisation of funding opportunities</li> <li>3. Investigate installation of express check-out/in services to maximise efficiencies and enhance customer service delivery</li> <li>4. Ensure maximum collection coverage by reducing duplication except for top fiction</li> <li>5. Restructure courier service to maximise access to the collection</li> </ol>		<b>\$60,000</b>	<p><b>Council</b></p> <p><b>Grants/sponsorship/Income generation</b></p> <p><b>Grant/Council</b></p> <p><b>Council</b></p> <p><b>Council</b></p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
		3.1.4 To be recognised for excellence as a service provider	1. Investigating opportunities for the library service to act as a Council shopfront in the provision of a range of seamless customer services for their community, particularly when planning for new libraries			Council & Council Groups
		3.1.5 Develop programs that will give our community the digital literacy skills required to access information	1. Develop partnerships with appropriate groups or volunteers to assist in implementing training programs  2. Develop training programs – WP, Internet, iPac, research skills	Conduct a wide range of information literary programs		Council/sponsorships  Council
		3.1.6 Develop a Library Presentation Standard across all Libraries	1. Implement a daily, weekly, monthly checklist	Implement an internal signage strategy  Establish standards for community notice boards		Council

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
4. Technology	4.1 To improve and expand core services by making more effective use of relevant technology in all libraries for remote and on-site customers	4.1.1 Position and develop the libraries as the community hub for information, recreation and lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing website development to enhance services and to create a Cyberbranch for the service</li> <li>2. Create a team responsible for the Virtual Library</li> <li>3. Ongoing Web iPAC development</li> <li>4. Develop partnership with Council's IT section to enhance service quality and timeliness</li> </ul>			Council
						Council
						Council
Council, IT						
		4.1.2 Provide access to a wide range of databases and services and foster the development of access to local and global information resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Devise team to keep abreast of developments and recommend relevant improvements to existing databases and services</li> <li>2. Digitisation of Local Studies material</li> </ul>		\$23,000	Council
Grant						
		4.1.3 Develop Web solutions to give our customers new, innovative ways of accessing a wide range of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop education and training programs for library users in Internet, PC and word processing skills</li> <li>2. Increase public access Internet, PC and other computer hardware across all branches of the Service</li> </ul>	<p>Develop online forms for submitting requests eg. ILL requests, purchase requests, new borrower registrations etc)</p> <p>Investigate options for DIY computer bookings</p> <p>Investigate the possibility of online external reference services (eg link to</p>		Council
Council						
Council/Grant						

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		4.1.4 Recognition of the role of technology in our library service with a commitment to invest in technology that responds to changing needs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invest in SMART Card technology across the service</li> <li>2. Invest in patron self-check out/in units</li> <li>3. Introduce commercial self-service Internet booths (email kiosks)</li> <li>4. Ongoing maintenance/upgrade of library management system</li> <li>5. Provide regular review and recommendations for future development of the library system</li> <li>6. Explore new technologies as they become available</li> </ol>	<p>State Library).</p> <p>Consider replacement of library system within 10-15 years</p>	<p>\$80,000</p> <p>\$60,000 x 2</p> <p>\$60,000 x 2</p> <p>\$100,000 (funded by I.T.)</p>	<p>Sponsorship/Grants</p> <p>Grants/Council</p> <p>Grant/Council</p> <p>Grant/Council</p> <p>Grant/Council</p> <p>Council</p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
5. Marketing	5.1 To improve the sustainability of the Library and Information Service by effective marketing and the development of partnerships with local and external stakeholders.	5.1.1 Proactively market library and information services in traditional and virtual environments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a Promotion and Marketing team as a resource for raising the library profile</li> <li>2. Develop Guidelines for the Promotion and Marketing team</li> </ol>	<p>Investigate the use of community radio</p> <p>Implement a promotional calendar</p> <p>Develop branding</p>		<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>
		5.1.2 Promote the library as a facility for community recreation as well as being the gateway to lifelong learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop the Library Web page as a means of marketing</li> <li>2. Conduct user and non/user surveys to determine needs</li> <li>3. Actively promote within Council operations and seek opportunities to cooperate on projects of mutual benefit</li> <li>4. Contribute to Council promotional campaigns</li> <li>5. Develop regular local media news spots</li> <li>6. Develop partnerships with local literary groups and support the Arts in the Blue Mountains</li> <li>7. Devise a Memorandum of Understanding with the local and family history groups to enhance the collection and overall library usage</li> </ol>	<p>Investigate possibilities of increased storytimes, book readings and youth activities, homework help, study skills etc.</p> <p>Implement John Stanley retailing concepts eg. End caps, shelf talkers, bookmarks, pyramidal book displays</p> <p>Introduce rotating and themed book displays</p> <p>Investigate feasibility of regular newsletter for borrowers</p>	<p>Staff redirection &amp; volunteer support</p> <p>Volunteer support</p>	<p>Sponsorship/Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council/volunteers</p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
		5.1.3 Develop an entrepreneurial-like spirit of innovation and revenue opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore the inclusion of (Internet) coffee shops in new library building projects as part of business development</li> <li>2. Develop corporate partnerships/sponsorships to enhance service delivery</li> </ol>			<p>Sponsorship</p> <p>Sponsorship</p>
		5.1.4 Develop partnerships within the Community and beyond	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate in Library Council of NSW grant programs</li> <li>2. Develop marketing opportunities with local businesses e.g. bookshops</li> </ol>			<p>Grants</p> <p>Sponsorship</p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
6. Staff/People	6.1 Our staff will be approachable and friendly guides to community recreation and lifelong learning	6.1.1 Sufficient, friendly, skilled, innovative and knowledgeable staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review position descriptions with new management structure to improve service provision</li> <li>2. Ensure staff development and training programs for improved customer service and information technology skills</li> <li>3. Prepare a strategy in anticipation of State legislation to mandate permanent part-time positions in lieu of regular Casual employment</li> <li>4. Review and assess staff performance annually</li> <li>5. Investigate feasibility of a succession planning program</li> </ol>	<p>Encourage a culture of easily identifiable staff (eg use of name tags, uniforms, use of colour)</p> <p>Increase skills through continuing education</p> <p>Morale boosters eg staff recognition, internal newsletters (social and professional), encouragement of participation in marketing of library through book reviews by staff or photos in Gazette</p>	Salary cost review	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council/sponsorship</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>
		6.1.2 To select, develop and retain a committed team of permanent and casual staff, friends and volunteers, able to support the programs of the Library, and be our advocates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review staff selection policy and recruitment techniques to ensure EEO principles</li> <li>2. Encourage the formation of a "Blue Mountains Friends of the Library" group</li> <li>3. Develop a Volunteer policy and program within the Service</li> <li>4. Develop concept of staff teams or working groups to enhance aspects of the Service, and utilise Family Day Care staff expertise where appropriate e.g. promotions, website and cyber branch development, and a staff development team</li> </ol>	<p>Local FOL groups to be sub-units.</p> <p>Examine wide range of options for volunteer assistance</p>	<p>Volunteer support</p> <p>Cross-branch sharing</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Council/volunteers</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>

Strategic Area	Outcome	Objectives	Priority Actions Over 5 Years	Further Detail Breakdown	Estimate of Costs	Funding for Priority Actions Over 5 years
		6.1.3 Encourage a culture of lifelong learning	1. Encourage people to access information in all its formats	Develop & maintain training programs		Council

## CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually. It will be a major driver for business and service development of Library Services during the life of the Plan, and linked to the annual budget processes of Council.

The performance and success of our library services will be measured against its own key performance indicators and against other agreed best practice benchmarks. The Library Services Business Plan will also draw its actions from this Strategic Plan each year.

The development of this Strategic Plan has been a valuable opportunity to gather the ideas and opinions of staff, customers and non-users, Councillors and Council management, colleagues and others. From this broad level of contribution has emerged a document that will provide the foundation for working towards sustainability, and for the future success of our libraries and information centres over the next two decades.