Year in Review 2017 - 2018

Blue Mountains City Council is committed to building a sustainable and successful future for the Blue Mountains. Here is an overview of our achievements for 2017-2018...

Managing waste and resources
Almost 1.3 million waste (red lid) bins were emptied during 2017/2018. We saw a 2.8% (965 tonnes) reduction in waste generation, compared to the previous year. The EPA funded Community Recycling Centre (CRC) at Katoomba tip received 48.5 tonnes of household hazardous and problem wastes.

Implementing Local Planning Panels
The Blue Mountains Local Planning Panel commenced on 1 March 2018. Local Planning Panels were introduced by the NSW Government in 2016, across Councils in Sydney, Wollongong and the Blue Mountains. The focus of the panel is on the determination of development applications that are uncommon.

Revealing local roads
During 2017-2018 we completed approximately 135,000m2 of road, which is equivalent to approximately 28km in length. Approximately 21,000m2 or 400m of unsealed roads have also been sealed. These projects improve access and enhance usability in the Blue Mountains.

Flushing for coordinated multi-Council flood control and disaster recovery
We also continued our ongoing partnership with the other Western Sydney councils supporting responses for Council’s staff, enhance usability of the Blue Mountains through a range of projects.

Our leaders work with the Prime Minister, United Nations, and the Prime Ministers.

Planning for Scenic Eastern Escarpment
Council adopted a long-term plan for the Scenic Eastern Escarpment that will guide the future development of nature-based and culture-based recreation and tourism opportunities in the lower mountains. The Master Plan will assist in obtaining government investment in recreation infrastructure. We also made progress on the Southern Scenic Escarpment programs including completion of walking track and lookout upgrades in Katoomba.

Improving visitor infrastructure & funding equity
We support Western Sydney Infrastructure Strategy to improve the equity in the funding of visitor infrastructure for the City. The plan explores a large range of funding options for visitor infrastructure, visitor services and city service delivery, including partnerships and public-private projects.

Upgrading Visitor Information Centre
We’re developing a new Visitor Information Centre at Glenbrook and the project is close to completion. The upgrade is co-funded from a range of sources to ensure it is accessible to all and promotes the Blue Mountains as an inclusive, healthy, safe and vibrant destination.

Delivering community infrastructure
We continue to invest in scenic drives and 2 major cultural facilities – the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Blue Mountains Visitor Information Centre + Community Hub. We also provide 14 public halls and meeting places, 12 childcare centres and preschool buildings.

Asbestos and safety management
The Council has shown strong leadership and been proactive in its approach to a range of complex issues that arose during 2017-2018. This includes compliance with a Performance Improvement Order, issued by the Minister of Local Government, and managing unforeseen asbestos remediation projects. The need to identify and manage asbestos containing material is a challenge faced by all councils and communities across NSW. We have made considerable progress to date to strengthen our safety and asbestos management and in responding to the recommendations of the independent asbestos investigation initiated by the Council in 2017.

- Ongoing rollout of a comprehensive Asbestos Management Training & Awareness Program, including workplace education and awareness campaigns.
- Establishing a 24-hour asbestos hotline to improve the ease of staff notification of potential asbestos finds.
- Establishing an Asbestos Response Team to manage small scale asbestos finds and remediation.
- Initiating a multi-agency Asbestos Management Committee which brings together all key stakeholders including SAWSWAN NSW, the Environment Protection Authority, United Services Union and worker representatives.
- Improving our website to include easily accessible asbestos safety information at www.bmac.nsw.gov.au/ and our Facebook.
- Providing easy to understand printed health and safety information at libraries and community centres for community use.

We are working hard to nurture a better practice safety culture. This includes an “Fair and just” approach that means staff feel empowered to raise safety issues. This approach recognises that human error can sometimes happen in organisations and safety systems may need to be improved. This approach also ensures the organisation continues to learn and improve.

Each year we deliver an extensive range of services to 78,705 residents and over 3 million tourists, across 27 towns and villages. We manage, renew and maintain over $1.1 billion worth of built assets.

We are proud that the 2018 Community Survey results indicated a high level of community satisfaction with our performance. The overall satisfaction rating was higher than the average satisfaction score for all NSW councils. Annually, our Customer Contact Centre receives more than 80,000 calls and process almost 60,000 transactions.

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- Appointing a Chief Safety Officer to oversee the Council’s asbestos management response.
- Ongoing rollout of a comprehensive Asbestos Management Training & Awareness Program and asbestos training.
- Establishing an Asbestos Response Team to manage small scale asbestos finds and remediation.
- Initiating a multi-agency Asbestos Management Committee which brings together all key stakeholders including SAWSWAN NSW, the Environment Protection Authority, United Services Union and worker representatives.
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