



**WHERE ARE WE NOW?
ISSUES AND TRENDS FOR THE BLUE MOUNTAINS**

**OUTCOMES FROM WORKSHOPS CONDUCTED WITH COUNCIL STAFF
8, 9 and 10 May 2001**

COMPILED BY BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL

**Paper No 7
Supporting Documentation for
*Blue Mountains Our Future***

August 2001

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WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL STAFF

ON

IMPROVING ACCESS AND TRANSPORT

8th May 2001

STAFF INVOLVED

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Rosemary Dillon	City Strategy Team
Nicole Moore	City Strategy Team
Rebecca Rafter	City strategy Team
Anne Berry	City Strategy Team

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Task

- Staff were requested to spend fifteen minutes to identify some of the changes they had noticed in the Blue Mountains since their arrival here.

Change Issues Identified

- Laneways are now resurfaced
- Widening of highway leads to splitting of communities
- Sideroad (alternative highway) surfaced
- Railway station upgraded (signage) – more improvements needed
- Highway – roadworks, bottleneck traffic, crosses
- Highway to four lanes, pedestrian crossing not being used
- Increase in traffic, resident streets, town centres, parking
- Improved safety
- Highway – Peter Sorensen Bridge – good – Woodford Bends
- Infill development
- Trucks, due to four lanes, increasing speed
- Linkage roads between villages
- Loss of land between towns – loss of identity
- Lack of public transport

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Task

- Staff were requested to challenge, confirm and add to the issues listed in their folders.

Now Issues Identified

- Highway
 - Safety
 - Volume of heavy traffic
 - Separate residents from traffic
 - Access to facilities – no crossings
 - Lack of crossings
 - Splitting villages
 - Place and experience – identity
 - Land between towns – preserve
 - Visual identity of the highway – crash barriers – graffiti walls – opportunity COA
 - Cycleways are being built into the highway
 - Appropriate rest stops for trucks

- . Appropriate rest stops for families
 - . Linking towns – alternative highway
 - . Due to increased lanes – more villages are linked
 - . Pedestrian
 - . Sealing of more roads
 - . More exists out of the mountains
 - . Local access to highway
 - . Rattrunning highway
 - . Tourist try to avoid highway at peak times
 - . Look at communities west of mountains re transport issues, eg: Mudgee
- Public Transport/Private Cars
 - . Cost is too high, car is cheaper
 - . Large number of cars owned
 - . Taxi fares double going over river, disadvantage to young people
 - . Condition of local roads is poor
 - . Safety – train system and stations – poor image
 - . Tea/coffee issue at stations – injury / attract youth to stay
 - . Guards/security at nights is positive
- Commuters
 - . Safety at lower mountains stations is a big issue
 - . Close circuit televisions wanted – commuters don't feel safe
 - . Lighting is not adequate outside station for access and car parking
 - . Many stations are difficult to access for pedestrians – need better paths
 - . Shortcuts are not lit
 - . Difficult to get to station without using car
 - . Bike lockers
- Public Transport
 - . Public transport using highway at same time
 - . Freight using public transport
 - . Continue Olympic strategies – 30 minute trains – buses linked with trains
 - . Worked short time – harder to run business long term
 - . Delivery times – late night
 - . Disability and aged have no access to trains
 - . Need to access other regions – hospital and health care facilities not in mountains
 - . Town access to stations
 - . Taxi for disabilities – gaining access to stations
 - . Peak hour trains –
 - . Faster trains into the city (decrease length)
 - . Car parking
 - . Use Olympic strategy
 - . Buses not in settlement areas
 - . No help for tourists at train stations
 - . No linkages with bus and train
 - . Need to assist locals and tourists

- Mismatch between bus and train timetables
- Infrastructure inadequate
- Other Issues
 - People put down public transport, but city level of public transport won't be achieved
 - Dispersed population/spines of development = difficult situation
 - People need to adjust expectations
 - Need to improve paths, car parks we already have
 - Paths need increased priority
 - 8.30 pm – 11.15 pm – hole in train services – relates to user numbers
 - Have we looked at other similar areas such as Central Coast and Illawarra
- Congestion on highway on weekends, especially 'Sunday due to tourists/visitors, particularly in single lane areas. May order lower mountains residents to avoid upper mountains during this time.
- Increasing pressure on highway due to increasing tourism to western NSW and by increasing freight from western NSW

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Impact of ageing of the population on provision of transport services.
- Limited job opportunities within the City and the need for people to commute outside to find work.
- Means of making transport tasks associated with tourist industries more sustainable.
- Transport of freight through the region to and from Western NSW.
- Population increase within the City and consequent increase in the transport task.
- In particular the increase in road traffic and consequent increase in visual, noise, atmospheric and water pollution.
- Splitting of villages and towns by the Great Western Highway augmentation.
- Railway infrastructure and use remaining more or less static.
- Localisation of work.
- Mixed use zoning of development and integration of land uses in villages and towns.

- Increasing population density in villages and towns.
- Tourism managed as a sustainable industry with urban and entertainment facilities focussed on towns to support nature-based activities in the National Park.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Task

- Staff were requested to list and agree on key trends which they thought, would shape and change the future.

Future Issues Identified

Social

- Ageing population
 - youth
 - middle
 - old
- Integration into town life
 - location – housing to towns
 - independent access
- Community attitudes
 - Expectations
 - proximity to public transport
 - density – housing
 - no increase in population growth

Environmental

- Transport
 - private car vs public transport
- Distances travelled by car
- Impact of growth
 - residential
 - tourism
 - developments
 - operators/bush
- Job opportunities
 - live/work
 - communal work environment (independence)
- Sustainable tourism
- Permanent part-time and full-time vs casual
- Local jobs
 - youth
 - women (cleaning)
 - professional

- More vibrant town centres
- Increased older population live near villages
- Live/work near towns
- Independent access to towns
- Provide choice for access
- Improved 'pedestrian' paths around towns/transport modes (bikes, gophers, wheelchairs/prams)
- Reduction in exit from LGA for work or shopping
- Managing 'life' west of great divide
- Alternate access through mountains
- How we manage freight
- Meeting expectations for public transport for all community sectors (mature, non car, youth)
- Increased train use for residents and tourists
- All main stations have access
- Market the 'experience' of the train journeys (historical significance)
- Maintain town identities (off highway access – cyclists and pedestrians)
- Develop link roads (local and crossing GWH)
- Selling concepts of change to community perceptions and expectations

RANKING OF ISSUES

Task

A list of the key issues and trends that had been identified throughout the workshops was placed around the room. Staff were given 3 sets of coloured dots and requested to prioritise the key issues and trends with the dots.

- Blue – First priority
- Red – Second priority
- Yellow – Third priority

The following Table summarises results of the ranking process.

Ranking of Access and Transport Issues

ISSUE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	TOTAL
Linkages	30	12	7	49
Safety when travelling	21	8	6	35
Isolation	9	10	4	23
Public transport	3	10	6	19
Character and amenity	3	10	1	14
Economic impacts and opportunities	6	4	1	11
Traffic	3		1	4
Access for disadvantaged groups	3			3
Community transport options and alternatives			1	1

WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL STAFF

ON

MANAGING SETTLEMENT GROWTH

AND DEVELOPMENT

10th May, 2001

STAFF INVOLVED

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MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- The dynamics of demographic trends and consequent changes in urban character.
- Affordability of housing.
- Employment link with educational levels and occupations of the Blue Mountains labour force.
- Building industry decline as land supply peters out.
- Potential to attract light clean industry.
- Environmental constraints imposed by topography and bushfire hazard.
- Advantages from a well educated and entrepreneurial community.
- Advantages of industries where people worked from home.
- Need for a tertiary education presence in the Blue Mountains.
- As an ageing population loses its mobility, loss of access to shopping, health and other services will be felt.

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Task

- Staff were requested to spend fifteen minutes to identify some of the changes they had noticed in the Blue Mountains since their arrival here.

Change Issues Identified

- Bushfire risk
- Highway
- Winmalee – growth – ‘big suburb’
- Slender ribbon through National Park – technology image
- Footprints extending
- Growth and development in Upper Mountains – challenge for environment
- House prices
- Less bike riding, more car use
- Growth in Penrith – increase in suburbia in lower mountains
- Increase in land prices and decrease in availability
- Less community feel in villages

- No change – always saying ‘enough people on Mountains’ – ‘need jobs for young’.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Task

- Staff were requested to challenge, confirm and add to the issues listed in their folders.

Now Issues Identified

- Resistance from community on multi-level housing
- Granny flats/dual occupancy have now been introduced
- New buildings can be designed with character to fit into villages
- Trade off between own private space and smaller blocks
- Springwood/Winmalee want/need public space – return to council
- Residents want play equipment
- If we increase population will we have the resources to satisfy residents
- Realise that we are unique and cannot be compared to Sydney
- Do we cap population/cap development – Where do we go?
- Utilise train lines, smaller bus services
- Terrain – need to use cars
- Restraint of climate and terrain in where we build
- Motorised bikes – public domain – alternative
- Higher density does not mean affordable housing
- Designing units to meet needs – at least one unit to be one bedroom
- Port Douglas had same issue – pushed residents out due to costs
- How do we stop the trends
- Making homes affordable
- Glenbrook – very vocal – do not change it
- Reluctant to face the issue
- Increased prices will lead to people leaving (isolation)
- Develop partnership with State Government on public housing
- People escaping the City will be coming to the Mountains
- Integration of issues (environment)
- Council leadership in all issues
- Indicator – can our children afford to live here?
- Provide safe and secure cycling facilities and people will use them
- Planning for no development
- Increase community value for open space
- Realise that we may not be everything to everyone
- Work out what our role is – what issues can we address
- Think more on a state level – not a local level

- Mix in community makes it strong
- Sydney-siders still feel that the community spirit is alive (newcomers)
- Shrinking availability of land (how do we make the most of what is here)
- Growth and development will decrease – more focus on management of what is here
- Greenfilled to the max
- Can the mountains infrastructure survive the population increase
- Growth will be in redevelopment
- Need to generate local employment
- Working from home can grow community spirit – not suited to young people
- Keep focus on young people’s unemployment
- Identify what industries we want in the mountains
- Need to look at how we **are** using land we **do** have – given constraints
- How do we increase housing levels/density
- Need to match housing to people’s needs
- How do we sustainably absorb higher density of population – because we can’t extend out
- Increase need for subdivision/granny flats
- Limited nursing homes and high prices causes people to stay at home
- Average size blocks of land are reducing

FUTURE SCENARIO

Task

- Staff were requested to list and agree on key trends which they thought would shape and change the future.

Future Issues Identified

- Age structure
 - Range
 - Where different ages are distributed (eg: +55 in Springwood, fewer in Bullaburra)
- Related to housing type and services
- Glenbrook as an example
- Commuter related ages parents (30/40) and children
- Grown children to Sydney – not Katoomba, Upper Mountains
- Mixed feelings about Blue Mountains/Sydney identity
- Income
 - high incomes in lower mountains will enable people to respond to increasing housing prices (also links to Sydney due to employment)
- Affordability

- mountains still relatively affordable to Sydney in parts
- Employment patterns
 - greater emphasis on home employment – linked to education levels and occupation types
- Decline in some industries, eg: building
 - linked to increase in others, eg: technology
 - linked to increase in education levels
- Promoting Blue Mountains as a place to set up ‘appropriate’ industry – light, clean, etc.
- Stable/declining population may work against positive economic growth and therefore impact on social fabric
- Fixed constraints
 - Escarpment – strong edge to urban growth
 - Bush fire risk
 - High value on environment
 - Increased awareness in local community about their environment (less so for bush fire)
- High priority
- More re-use of waste
- Infrastructure unable to cope with growth and even existing demands, eg: water
- Cost of housing increasing
 - some dislocation of people unable to afford housing
 - younger people staying at home longer
 - family assistance for young people to buy locally
- Socially homogeneous
 - declining diversity (cultural/societal)
- More professional/entrepreneurial community
 - maintain housing/renovate
- More vocal/informed and more protective of their patch (exclusivity)
 - provide employment opportunity
- Ageing population
 - increasing isolation of aged people
 - diminishing services
 - diminishing mobility
 - removal of family
- Reduced younger aged cohorts
 - 15-30 – work/education/housing
- Work from home (due to technology, etc.)
 - people remain local and contribute to community
 - increased networking locally for inputs/markets
 - employment opportunities locally
- Increased tourism (Eco-tourism, Youth Hostels, World Heritage) in some measure from government spending on facilities and roads
- Opportunities for new or enhanced niche/support industries (eg: linen supplies, publishers, guided tours, adventure groups)

- Education (remote teaching) - tailored to local conditions and issues - economic flow-on
- Based on social, economic and environmental characteristics Blue Mountains is full.
- Ageing population
- Increasing downward trend in affordability
- Declining population because aged/disabled population have to leave due to lack of appropriate housing and services
- Increasing gentrified, socially polarised managerial class
- Community has declined through home working and local industry
- Liberals rule
- High rents
- Environment protected and out of bounds
- Boom gate - with charges for visitors and electronic chips for all
- People happy, blonde, blue-eyed, rice, safe and comfortable
- 85,000 of us
- Well educated
- Soft industry – Silicon Hill, Education, Tourism and Hospitality
- No more DA's for new buildings – already a low number and likely to continue to decrease (95% are additions and alterations)
- Increase in retail particularly speciality - or - will spending be directed to housing, travel, etc.
- Focus awareness on environmental management
- Increased community group activity
- Creates a common community focus/pride
- Increased individual sense of responsibility
- Impact on local development industry
- New ideas for capitalising on environmental profiling/interest (demo projects, etc.)
- Housing prices will increase
- Incremental change in demographics (as a result of increasing price of land)
- Higher incomer earners
- Focus will shift from new development to redevelopment and renovation of building stock and public places (consolidation and upgrade of places)
- Focus will shift to the wellbeing and maintenance of existing community

RANKING OF ISSUES

A list of the key issues and trends that had been identified throughout the workshops was placed around the room. Staff were given 3 sets of coloured dots and requested to prioritise the key issues and trends with the dots.

- Blue – First priority
- Red – Second priority
- Yellow – Third priority

The following Table presents a summary of the results of the ranking process.

Ranking of Settlement Growth and Development Issues

ISSUE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	TOTAL
Use of available land given constraints	18	12	5	35
Social impacts	12	10	4	26
Infrastructure surviving population increase	6	6	3	15
Local employment	6	6	2	14
Constraints on development and redevelopment of land	9	2	2	13
Affordable housing	9	2	1	12
Regional context for growth	3	4	3	10

WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL STAFF

ON

SHAPING OUR IDENTITY AND IMAGE

10th May, 2001

STAFF INVOLVED

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Manager City Planning, Strategy Group

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WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Task

- Staff were requested to spend fifteen minutes to identify some of the changes they had noticed in the Blue Mountains since their arrival here.

Change Issues Identified

- Springwood was bohemia capitol – now very civilised.
- Leura ice creamery now closed
- Image remained the same
- World Heritage
- Alternative lifestyle (Katoomba – Nimbin of the Mountains)
- Diversity and acceptance of lifestyles (ferals)
- Change in streetscape – arts
- Change in identity due to facilities closing (Renaissance Centre) – ups and downs
- Change in pace (weekenders from Sydney)
- Conflict between old and new buildings
- Five minutes from wilderness – ninety minutes from Sydney
- Ribbon highway going through 26 villages – something to explore in all – each unique, parochial
- Tapping into our potential – promoting our individuality
- Highway – split villages
- Division of mountains was at Woodford bends
- Gentrification of the mountains
- Encroachment of the city into the mountains
- Change from bushland to suburbia
- Bohemian lifestyle coming out of the cupboard

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Task

- Staff were requested to challenge, confirm and add to the issues listed in their folders.

Now Issues Identified

- Does tourism ruin our identity or create it
- June and July peak months for tourism
- What are we doing for the tourist dollar

- Always had major festivals in the mountains – Rhododendron Festival, Winter Magic, Yulefest. Many villages had own festival – village identity/lifestyle
- Not looking after villages as a tourism industry
- Youth travelling out of region to ‘hang out’
- Due to globalisation we cannot exist by ourselves
- Communities not as focused on local activities as in the past
- People come to the mountains for privacy and solitude
- Historical identity
- Not all arts want to be accessed – private – others want the marketing and exposure
- Cultural tourism do not want to just walk around galleries but visit the village
- Guardianship –we do not own but are responsible
- Residents sacrifice some facilities for the environment/privacy – place in the community
- Identity is how the community sees itself
- Full of artist/alternative images
- Will mass tourism destroy our identity
- Area 2 – tranquillity, fresh air, peace, resident experience
- Loss of cultural identity
- Mixed images of the mountains
- Past time place
- Suburban creep is losing our identity (village)
- Highway amenity shaping image
- Tourism needs vs residents needs
- We tend to be ‘daggy’ not quaint
- People want to see little villages – residents/tourism
- Mismatch between expectations and reality
- Losing differentiation between villages
- Isolation
- Interesting people gather separate/special place
- Bush fire high risk
- High weekender population
- Image as ‘Blue Mountains’
- Natural setting – including buildings, arts
- People visit due to history
- What are we presenting and providing to the tourist
- More tourism can lead to more facilities – maintenance
- People want to remain in the past/others want to move on
- Confusion over identity and image
- Unique characteristics that need to be developed
- We’ve let things run down

- Community pride to enhance villages – looks nice will stay nice
- By cleaning up our villages we will increase tourism and community pride
- Tourism – three sisters, gardens, villages, arts. Increase cultural tourism
- Old villages but with new facilities (modern facilities) Leura is good
- Katoomba Street seen as old and daggy
- Good place to raise children – was seen as ‘drug free’
- Imbalance between Upper and Lower Mountains
- Need to expand tourism – attractions – experiences
- Dig deeper

RANKING OF ISSUES

Task

Staff broke into smaller groups and developed 10 Identity and 10 Image trends. Their lists were then displayed around the room and staff were given 3 sets of coloured dots and requested to prioritise the trends.

- Blue – First priority
- Red – Second priority
- Yellow – Third priority

The following Table summarises the results of the ranking process.

Ranking of Identity and Image Issues

ISSUE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	TOTAL
Scenery	102	2	1	105
Polarised community		42	1	43
Unique environment, ownership of environment	21	12	6	39
Distance from CBD – good and bad issues	12	8	3	23
Cultural shock			21	21
Cultural – good	15	4	1	20
Memories	3	10	3	16
Care about community and village character	6	2	1	9
Lifestyle	3	4	1	8
Safe and healthy	6		2	8
Bushfires		2	1	3
Work from home by choice		2		2
World Heritage Listing		2		2
Difficult Council		2		2

WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL STAFF

ON

CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

9th May 2001

STAFF INVOLVED

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MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Environmental responsibility in development should be the community's priority.
- The group envisaged a community of energy and activity, but one with an impact that rested lightly on the environment.
- A population 'cap' was seen as desirable but the group questioned whether this could be achieved without resulting in economic decline and community decay.
- Inclusiveness and diversity was seen as a key to community cohesion, but it was questioned as to how this might be achieved with a static population.
- Home based business and work was seen as very important and requiring flexible planning regulation to deal with it.
- The individual character of the urban villages in the Blue Mountains will be important in the community image and for retaining tourism-based industry and other environment-related employment.
- The need to get maximum benefit from visitors. At present many slip through the area, require facilities, but contribute little to the economy.
- Loss of social diversity as accommodation costs rise threaten the ability to provide certain services because of unavailability of the right kind of labour.

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Task

- Staff were requested to spend fifteen minutes to identify some of the changes they had noticed in the Blue Mountains since their arrival here.

Change Issues Identified

- World Heritage listing – huge growth
- Tourist industry cycles – peak now Winter
- Pressure on land availability
- Increased land value
- Increased gap between classes
- Opening of Savoy
- Development of Biznet – duplicate with cultural network
- Increase in traffic in local area – loss of village atmosphere
- Increase in tourism

- Positive view of council in supporting development
- Increasing difficulty in developing land
- Renaissance in Upper Mountains

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Task

- Staff were requested to challenge, confirm and add to the issues listed in their folders.

Now Issues Identified

- Job opportunities with career paths
- Higher levels of consultancies and home offices
- Encouraging/supporting home-based businesses
- Promoting technology-based industries and cultural business
- Home base of businesses
- Not utilising local residents on consultancy work
- Need to educate local residents re gaining contracting work – professional development
- Constricted vertically and horizontally re development
- Working in partnership with local residents/businesses
- Flexibility in responses – less authoritative
- Local councils to be greater leader in economy
- Challenge – tourist to stay longer – spend more money
- Theme park?
- Have we identified what industries are suitable for mountains – residents/tourist/economy
- Branding/presentation of mountains
- Sections of council working together to form one image
- Development of cultural industry – linking between groups
- Resistance for professional development
- Cultural needs to be marketed to tourists – access, improved information
- ‘Non professional’ sector larger than ‘professional’ sector
- Division between tourism and culture
- Alternative lifestyle – attraction for tourist (Byron Bay)
- Affordability of housings – increase in residents moving to Lithgow
- Budget accommodation – generally located out of mountains (Lithgow, Oberon)
- Increased land values – due to World Heritage
- Responsible economic development
- Minor sets – tunnel vision to their passion
- Fragmentation – fighting other sectors, not working together
- Establishments of sectors – working together

- Losing skilled residents to the city.
- Creative infrastructure – IT/arts/culture
- Youth unemployment – young population
- Limited educational opportunities – locally
- TAFE does not offer trade courses
- Do we try to become everything to everyone? Do you specialise – position area in excellence in hospitality training/education
- Development of apprenticeships
- What areas are manageable and specialise
- What incentives do we use to encourage people to come back to mountains
- What sort of nightlife do you provide to keep people here.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Task

- Staff were requested to list and agree on key trends which they thought would shape and change the future.

Future Scenarios Identified

Social

- Greater mobility
- Retaining diversity (Cultural)
- Challenges to less and affordability
- Increasing tourism – high yield
- Generates ‘higher’ housing and costs
- Money leak from LGA

Environment

- Managing the environment crucial
- Area of excellence in environmental management, educational, tourism
- Training in living environment
- Issues/Challenges
 - Mass tourism management
 - Social and cultural imbalance
 - Economic imbalance
- Support
- HBB
- Small local business
- Existing businesses

Trends

- Working from home
- Technology
- Lifestyle and prosperity balance
- Increased visitation
- Increased awareness of environmental responsibility
- Ageing population
- Continued environmental constraints for economic development
- 2020
- Capped population
- People in blue mountains are excellent custodians of the environment
- Most residents work locally ie less than 30kms
- There is a high residential concentration in major town centres – most sustainable
- There are a number of business packs providing live/work opportunities viable
- Blue mountains is a centre for viable technology/culture based industry
- Each town has maintained its individually
- There is a well managed urban/bushland interfaced
- Visitors stay for many days and spend a lot in order to enjoy diversity of experiences/activities
- More skilled residents will find work in the blue mountains
- Opportunities
 - More innovative and flexible thinking (challenge)
 - Co-operation partnerships between council and broader community and within sectors (issue)
 - Developing maintaining and enhancing town character while protecting the environment
 - Need a branding/marketing which reflects the natural and cultural assets
 - Blue mountains is an inclusive diverse population in its diverse range of affordable housing, ageing population (issue).

RANKING OF ISSUES

Task

A list of the key issues and trends that had been identified throughout the workshops was placed around the room. Staff were given 3 sets of coloured dots and requested to prioritise the key issues and trends with the dots.

- Blue – First priority
- Red – Second priority
- Yellow – Third priority

The following Table presents a summary of the results of the ranking process.

Ranking of Economic Issues

ISSUE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	TOTAL
Council leadership	18	6	1	25
Image, marketing	6	10	3	19
Fragmentation	9	4	4	17
Educational opportunities	9	6	1	16
Disparity of wealth	9	4	2	15
Appropriate industry	3	8	4	15
Local employment opportunities	3	6	5	14
Environment	6		1	7
Town character	6			6
Attitudes	3		2	5

WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL STAFF

ON

STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINING

COMMUNITY

9th May 2001

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MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- World heritage listing imposes additional constraints on territorial expansion of urban land uses.
- Environmental concerns placing constraints on development of tourism and tourist infrastructure.
- Increasing tensions between an environmentally-aware community and developers.
- Catering for an increase in home-based employment.
- Gentrification as an adverse consequence of decreasing housing affordability.
- Ageing demographics of the population.
- Need for greater diversity in housing choice.
- The need to promote cultural activities in tourism as a supplement to the environmental attractions of the City.
- Impact of highway 'improvements' on the functioning of communities.
- Increased crime levels within the City.
- Balanced employment opportunities within the City.

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Task

- Staff were requested to spend fifteen minutes to identify some of the changes they had noticed in the Blue Mountains since their arrival here.

Change Issues Identified

- Increase in tourism
- Upper Mountains has higher population
- Very easy to involve community in planning
- High sense of community
- Provision of Katoomba indoor swim centre
- Safety issue – need to lock house
- Higher social issues (drugs and alcohol)
- Significant demographic and commuter change in villages
- Considered living in bushland now suburbia
- Higher levels of commuting
- Closer to Sydney – road
- Split villages – via highway
- Lower Mountains more 'suburban' busier
- Council more professional
- Less bushland
- Now integral base of Sydney

- Much busier
- Community worked together on issues
- Breakdown in community structure – isolation
- Real possibility of some towns dying
- Resurfacing of roads – increased development (Hawkesbury Road)
- Increase in population
- Highway – major change in character
- Separation of townships
- Alienation experienced by minority groups, eg: young lesbians and young people in general
- Young people need to see that ‘businesses’ care eg: Lawson Mural
- Formal vs informal activities council could do in future
- Availability of affordable housing (World Heritage, lack of land)
- Closer look at available land/redevelopment
- People are wanting things council does not provide – eg: stake ring
- Community fear loss of identity
- Bad design of housing
- Prohibitive to developers to build
- Do we want to influence age structure
- Change of recreational trends
- Multi-level housing not always affordable
- Village identity – how do we strengthen/reconcile the differing needs
- Need to educate community on the impact of retaining village character
- Need to educate community on not having affordable housing
- Promote current identity and image and development to match
- Are we the next retirement village
- Affordable childcare
- Inclusive look at real estate price increase
- Lack of recreation facilities
- Community facilities vs bushland
- All of family recreation facilities
- Gap/lack of services and facilities in Mid Mountains

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Task

- Staff were requested to challenge, confirm and add to the issues listed in their folders.

Now Issues Identified

- General policing/safety – theft/harassment

- Fragmentation of community – age/class
- Lack of public spaces – comfortable integration
- High level of cost associated with vandalism (buildings/bushland), graffiti
- Lack of consideration for public domain
- Venues for youth – outlets NEEDED
- Three picture theatres used to operate in Katoomba
- Fragmented services and recreation areas
- Lack of local employment – sense of value – worth of young people
- Mind set – families / youth worth / no responsibility
- Issue around how young people are portrayed – 18-24 year olds – problem
- Young people dumped on – image as out group
- Aged – lack of access to facilities
- Isolation – young/aged also not valued
- Lack of planning to meet needs of age structure
- Breakdown of communities
- Divide between Upper and Lower Mountains
- Lack of exposure to ideas/employment in the Upper Mountains
- Huge imbalance in housing stock vs population demographics
- Caters to homogeneity not heterogeneity
- Strength of volunteers for short term work (family oriented)
- Stress on volunteer base to run longer term services, eg: youth and neighbourhood centres
- Legislation has changed on how Neighbourhood Centres are run
- Community services now “delivery arms” of government – complex requirements
- Funds raised for current risks/attitudes – not what is required
- People have little ‘time’ – both parents often working – changed lifestyles
- Changing nature of ‘community’/values/internet
- How do we create diverse communities – at least we acknowledge diversity but how to build on this.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Task

- Staff were requested to list and agree on key trends which they thought would shape and change the future.

Future Issues Identified

Social

- Gentrification
- Rising affluence
- Exclusivity
- Enclaves (relationships to wastelands...)
- Affordable housing
- Aged population – time rich and income poor
- Globalisation
- Changes in employment structure
- Technology – working from home – associated social issues
- Crime and safety
- Gentrification
- Housing stock
- Lack of diversification
- Smaller households
- Sydney/Mountains boundary blur
- Home-based employment
- Social Impact
- Social Need
- Ageing Population

Environmental

- Increasing importance of environmental – World Heritage listing
- Changed use of bushland (ageing population)
- Decreasing availability of land and implications for cost of building and infrastructure
- Increase cost of managing existing housing – cost prohibitive for poorer people
- Eco-tourism – world heritage
- Tourism
- Gentrification – development
- World Heritage Listing
- Development Pressures
- Tension between community and developers – yields
- Increased pressure from increased tourism
- National park
- Appropriate housing for a diverse community
- Increased employment opportunities
 - Promote cultural tourism
 - Home based employment

- Managing and Protecting environment
- Council has to lead – do right ourselves
- Role of Council
 - Recycling
 - Use of resources
 - How we manage our land
 - How does council develop land it owns?
 - Are we doing best practices?
- If services about environment management should demonstrate best practice
- Management of public lands – real priority – legislation says it is a charter for us.
- All this responsibility don't have resources
- Protection of environment on silt control – if we can do it you can do it
- Where we are now
 - Nobody knows in reality

Economic

- Employment SOHO
- Need to look for opportunities for young people
- Small business can lead to exploitation and exclusivity
- Commuting continue to grow leading increased isolation and dislocation etc
- BM economy increasingly tied to Sydney
- Tourism also brings costs
 - Roads congestion
 - Loss of local character
 - Impact on local amenity
- Service industries – employees
- The City of Light Industries
- Encourage local employment – not necessarily tourism
- Boutique industries – light and clean
- Transport linkages – freight – extra roadway lanes at Lawson
- Revitalise Lawson – industrial land not used
- Railway lands
- Create a unionised working class
- Opportunities for young people
- TAFE
- Relationship to Sydney
- Building links to education opportunities
- Look for campus location
- BM Alumni
- Look for niche markets and expand on them
- Ideas in similar communities

- Need to generate local employment
- Tourism
- Real estate prices
- Rationalisation – villages and services and facilities - Home Based Employment
- Increased housing cost
- Increased homelessness
- Increased gentrification
- Sustainable Tourism
- Cultural Centre
- We don't know as we have no measures in place
- Major issues
 - We are managing what we measure
 - SCE hasn't given effective data
 - Takes time to get data
- We have to have long term commitment to getting data
- Biodiversity – major goal very hard to measure
- AIS – not whole of government data base approach
- These people should all be working together to certain outcomes
- No real data
- Environment is managed in sectors
 - Local government only one trying to manage system
 - State Government pending DLWC Trust
- DATA one way flow
- Environmental indicators
- Pick out 8 or 3 – measure really key indicators
- Nature timelines
- Water, air, land, biodiversity
- Where now - in terms of community perception
- Economic view – something becomes valuable when scarce
- Can measure socially where at if get right then can better manage and protect
- Can't meet expectation
- Council
 - Redesign – sustainable thread
 - At moment – task orientated
 - Environmental performance and outcomes not there for every group
 - Instead of increased expectations
 - Should be realistic about money we have
- Sewerage tunnel
 - Start Katoomba sewerage works
 - Taken over by \$4million spent
- Waste
 - Long way behind community expectations

- . 35-40% reduction landfill waste
 - . Only 60% achieving
- Come about because land strategy didn't resource it.
- 100-120,000 tonner – delivered to landfill 64000 ends up in land
- Feeling on politically correct domestic waste but got to focus on customers and demolition parts development controls so mulch doesn't leave sites
- One of largest component is green waste
- Manage on source rather than centralising
- Stop erosion/nutrients
- Get developer controls - focus on financial benefit
- Contaminated waste has to be managed
- Commercial waste
 - . Contaminated cardboard
 - . Need to focus and develop waste minimisation plans for individual industries
- First audit council develop total waste management and minimise. Sell program to community.
- World Heritage has potential whole of government approach
- Difficulty working with other LGA's
- Have to sell to other LGA's

RANKING OF ISSUES

Task

A list of the key issues and trends that had been identified throughout the workshops was placed around the room. Staff were given 3 sets of coloured dots and requested to prioritise the key issues and trends with the dots.

- Blue – First priority
- Red – Second priority
- Yellow – Third priority

The following Table presents a summary of the results of this ranking process.

Ranking of Strengthening and Sustaining Community Issues

ISSUE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	TOTAL
Diverse community values	18	12	3	33
Local employment opportunities	21	6	1	28
Recreation	9	4	5	18
Health services	3	10	4	17
Community support	3	6	4	13
Culture	9	2	2	13
Inappropriate housing	6	2	3	11
Youth and aged issues	3	4	2	9
Split villages		4	4	8
Crime increase	6	2		8
Affordable housing		6	1	7
Village character			2	2

WORKSHOP WITH COUNCIL STAFF

ON

MANAGING AND PROTECTING

ENVIRONMENT

8th May, 2001

STAFF INVOLVED

Lee Morgan
Manager Environmental Management, BM City Services

Paul Richardson
Stormwater Officer, BM City Services

Alan Cattermole
Recreation Planner, Strategy Group

Rachel Sutcliff
Contracts Engineer, Assets and Corporate Services

Bill Langevad
Senior Strategic Planner, Strategy Group

MAIN ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Participants saw strengths in the community's own high priority in protecting the natural environment and in the volunteer base that has been traditional in the Blue Mountains.
- They saw threats to environmental management coming from:
 - Pressure on service levels of infrastructure with higher costs per household. Political pressure for higher population levels to share infrastructure service costs.
 - Degradation from existing uncontrolled 'historic' subdivision patterns and conflict with existing user rights, and particularly erosion and sedimentation of creeks from unmade roads.
 - Increasing unaffordability of housing and lack of employment pushing out young people who are part of the volunteer corps.
 - Threat to biodiversity from increasing development along present patterns.

WHERE HAVE WE COME FROM?

Task

- Staff were requested to spend fifteen minutes to identify some of the changes they had noticed in the Blue Mountains since their arrival here.

Change Issues Identified

- Vegetation cleared – residential
- Managing environment
- Sewerage and waste tips – gone
- Swimming in lakes now not possible
- Streetscapes have been built out
- Assessments of applications
- Greater awareness of living with the environment
- Highway has split villages
- Natural environment has remained

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Task

- Staff were requested to challenge, confirm and add to the issues listed in their folders.

Now Issues Identified

- Existing development
- Resource management
- Not looking at global issues
- Managing nature-based environment
- Depleting area of wilderness
- Look at leadership environment issue
- Educating the community – not council –m net to lead the community
- Treat source of problem
- How does council manage land – are we doing this?
- Management of public land
- Need to be seen to be doing the right thing as a leader/company
- No measures to tell us where we are now
- Need long term commitment or ‘real’ data – indicators/measurement
- Working with Sydney Water re quality of water in area.
- Management via sectors – dissolution of Trust
- Social measures vs actual measures
- Commercial waste
 - cardboard
 - vegetation
 - food scraps
- Funding crisis in government
 - new
 - trying to match expectations with resources
 - not effectively involving community and council
- Plans need to prove outcomes and provide performance indicators
- No environment thread running through council
- Audit council’s waste management – take to community
- No increasing rates base with increasing environmental management
- Funding generally follows peoples values
- Waste management below community expectations
- Currently developing waste management strategies
- Green-waste coming into landfill – costly.

World Heritage Issues Identified

- Grant programs
- Need long term to gain results
- How do we use world heritage to our advantage
- Bioregional planning
- World Heritage assists us but can limit our management
- To take a whole approach (umbrella)
- Limited success in selling value to other LGA – other councils highly resentful.

FUTURE SCENARIO

Task

- Staff were requested to list and agree on key trends which they thought would shape and change the future.

Future Issues Identified

- Water quality
- Infill development and density increase
- Existing undeveloped and marginal land
- Management of general impacts (eg feral animals/plants, habitat removal, corridor disruption)
- 'Historic' subdivision.

RANKING OF ISSUES

Task

A list of the key issues and trends that had been identified throughout the workshops was placed around the room. Staff were given 3 sets of coloured dots and requested to prioritise the key issues and trends with the dots.

- Blue – First priority
- Red – Second priority
- Yellow – Third priority

The following Table presents a summary of the results of this ranking process.

Ranking of Environmental Issues

ISSUE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW	TOTAL
Partnerships	15	2	2	19
Resource/waste management	9	2	4	15
Council	12		2	14
Decision making systems	6	4	2	12
Data systems	3	4	5	12
Values	3	6	2	11
Lack of resources	6	4	1	11
Biodiversity	6	4		10
Public lands management		8	2	10
World Heritage Listing	3	4	2	9
Water quality	3	4		7