

Background

- Established 1870s as successful Sydney merchants sought a cool climate 'Indian hill station' refuge
- Exotic gardens established in rich basalt soil to grow trees and shrubs from across the world
- Mt Wilson is unique, remote and with large gardens & extensive public areas
- Today's population is not large enough to support local café or general store
- Lithgow and Katoomba, 70 to 85 kilometres round-trip away, closest shopping and service centres
- While Mt Wilson is small and remote, the community supports active community organisations committed to improving, protecting and recording its history
- The Progress Association as agent for BMCC is responsible for maintenance of the street trees and verges, the reserves, walking tracks and the weekly task of putting out all the bins in the parks and reserves for rubbish collection

The Mt Wilson issues for BMCC

- The Mt Wilson community is significantly self-supporting through the work of the Progress Association as agent for BMCC, the local RFS and a highly efficient and reliable paramedic First Responders team
- The community does not have practical access to the BMCC services available to the larger centres such as swimming pools, libraries, community and social development programs, and assistance for people with disabilities or their carers
- BMCC is not active achieving hazard reduction in the high fuel, high threat bushland surrounding Mt Wilson
- The effectiveness, quality and efficiency of council maintenance work has room for improvement
- Important capital works remain outstanding
- Communication with some council staff demonstrates poor customer service focus
- Responsible manager authority seems weak and ineffective especially compared with similar levels of seniority and position in private enterprise
- No one manager is a "Go to" responsible manager for Mt Wilson so the community perceives no one is responsible and no one particularly cares

Housing & Population

20

Approximate situation

*Age of the population

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•	Number of houses in 1950	37	1 - 20	0%	
•	Number of houses in 2003	99	21 – 30	1%	
			31 – 40	4%	
•	Number of houses in 2012	107	41 – 50	8%	
•	Population in 2003	180	51 – 60	22%	
•	Population in 2012	186	61 – 65	16%	
•	Full time	62	66 – 70	17%	_ 65%
_		124	71 – 75	17%	_
•	Part time	124	76 +	15%	

Mt Wilson is a predominantly older age community with an unusual disproportionately small number of people 50 or under and with only one third of residents living full time in the area

^{*}Mt Wilson community survey Nov/Dec 2012

Economy of Mt Wilson

- Negligible commercial economic activity no café or general store, several small non-commercial livestock holdings, five B&Bs, some 'open gardens', small garden nurseries, and seasonal chestnut, walnut & home made jam sales
- Some garden, public property & household maintenance services; occasional home construction and renovation work
- Current regulation standards for a café-type business make it uneconomic to establish a business that relies on occasional weekend and holiday trade
- What has changed to see the disappearance of commercial activity in Mt Wilson?
 Logging, commercial horticulture and livestock businesses, guesthouses, live-in domestic service and a local telephone exchange have long since gone from Mt Wilson
- And what of the remaining tourism interest?

Visitor numbers declining

*Is it your perception there have been significantly fewer visitors to Mt Wilson, especially in Spring and Autumn, in recent years than 10 to 15 years ago?

Response: Yes—71% No —29%

Comments

- Garden owners now charge much more, petrol is much dearer
- There are gardens open to the public all over the country
- There are many more organised activities for everyone, especially during the weekends
- I think the visitors have perhaps come for different purposes more campers, bushwalkers, canyoners, chestnut pickers
- *Mt Wilson community survey Nov/Dec 2012

Property sales & values

*In the recent past, there have been about fifteen Mt Wilson properties on the market. In the past three years, only six properties have sold. As you consider your future in Mt Wilson, is this situation a concern for you? Response: 55%—Yes No—45%

Comments: The turnover of properties here is obviously of concern because most of them are high-value and many of the owners, who might find themselves in the situation of needing to release the funds tied up in those properties, may have difficulty if those funds cannot be made available.

This situation is obviously of concern to anyone who owns a property here and recognises that few of us will end our days here.

Once, properties were seldom advertised, and sold word of mouth. Now you can't give them away. My property 10 years ago was worth over a million, now I couldn't sell it for 800k, having substantially improved it.

There was a functioning Post Office, a school and regular deliveries from merchants in Lithgow. What is there to attract a young family with kids here except lots of travelling?

It seems the value of our investment has decreased upwards of 25% in the past 5 to 10 years. There is no indication that this will be reversed anytime soon making our continuing ownership in the Village a huge concern and financial disincentive.

People who are forced to leave due to ill health cannot wait for many years to sell their properties. I am concerned that there will be a number of "derelict" buildings that devalue surrounding properties.

^{*}Mt Wilson community survey Nov/Dec 2012

Mt Wilson & BMCC issues - 1

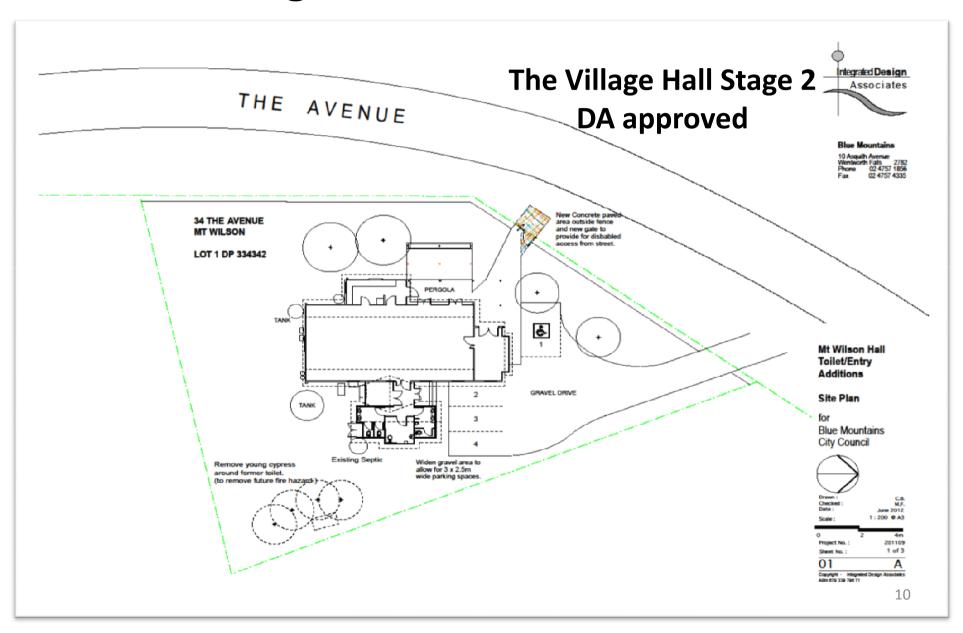
- MPWA generally enjoys good working relationships with BMCC staff
- MWPA is in contact with BMCC staff throughout the year with an issues report before and after each of the five meetings of the Association's Committee
- Most matters are formally logged as Community Service Requests (CSRs) and are followed up with the reception staff, the community relations staff and/or the responsible project managers
- Project managers at the request of MWPA have visited Mt Wilson, been briefed on issues, discussed solutions and agreed necessary work will be done
- These managers on too many issues have not had the authority to direct work be done, and set quality and completion deadlines, despite their apparent seniority.
 This leads to disappointment and frustration within the community
- What are examples and how is this unsatisfactory situation able to be resolved?
- But first . . . What are examples of what the community thinks is good work BMCC has done in Mt Wilson?

BMCC good work in Mt Wilson - 1



A new roof was put on the Mt Wilson Village Hall in 2012 under the BMCC maintenance program

BMCC good work in Mt Wilson - 2



BMCC good work in Mt Wilson – 3 CSR 156938



The careful hand trimming and gutter clearing in 2013 of ferns leaving the fronds facing away from Mt Irvine Road has been an excellent job

BMCC good work in Mt Wilson - 4



Clearing by an MWPA contractor in 2012 of the walking track/fire break at the back of Cathedral Reserve is good example of MPWA acting as agent for BMCC

Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 2 CSR 155429

Commitments not followed through

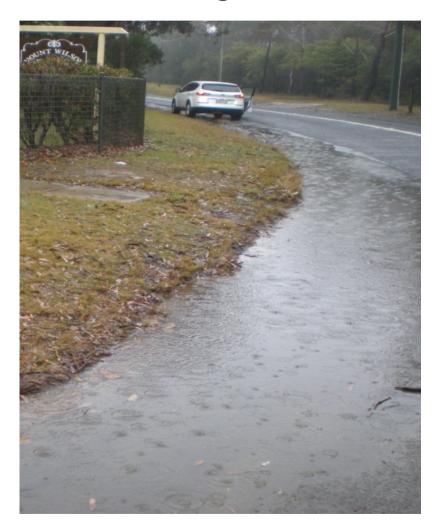
The Mt Wilson Village Hall gutter

BMCC letter 16 June 2009

Works are listed and will be completed during the reseal preparation program as part of the Capital Works Program. This is to provide shoulder sealing in the area requested to manage storm water

MWPA / BMCC manager meeting 17 August 2012

BMCC proposed asap action will be to remake hot mix gutter to achieve fall to NE culvert. Longer term will be drain under road from pit near turnstile to gutter drainage near start of DuFaurs Rocks Road



Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 3 WRR1109140037

Commitments not followed through

Mt Wilson road edge washaways

300 mm deep & dangerous

CSRs from 8 February 2010: Mt Wilson village area road edge washaways and leaf build-up require grader filling or trimming

MWPA / BMCC manager meeting 17 August 2012

BMCC agreed additional road edge repairs required, especially on The Avenue from the dip outside Withycombe to Church Lane where 300 mm deep



Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 4 csr 161944

Commitments not followed through

Mt Wilson Road roadside markers obscured by vegetation

CSR 160781 follow up **2 July 2012**: despite verge slashing many roadside markers remain obscured

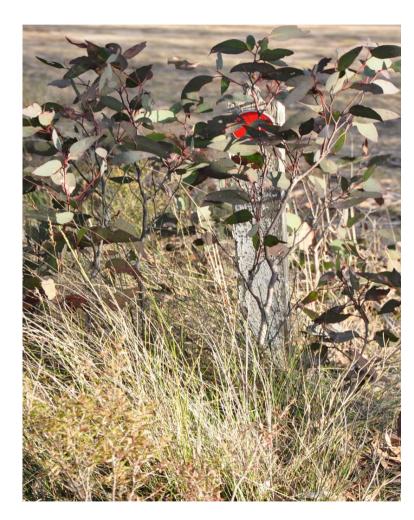
MWPA / BMCC manager meeting 17 August 2012

BMCC agreed vegetation needed to be removed and will be killed with spray to prevent regrowth

BMCC **1 November 2012**: Current plan is for posts to be removed and area slashed

BMCC **1 February 2013**: Job will be done next time shoulders are slashed

What about regrowth?



Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 5

Commitments not followed through

The Armco barrier torn out on the Mt Wilson Road zig zag during 2011-12 filming of The Great Gatsby has not been replaced

- Production company Basmark paid BMCC \$10,000 deposit to cover public property repair costs
- The damaged barrier is an unsightly 'first impression' of Mt Wilson
- BMCC 1 February 2013:

 'Minimal safety risk, will be replaced in due course' is not a reasonable response



Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 6 CSR 175537

Mt Irvine Road landslide

There is major work to do to build a new gabion rock wall to support the Anniversary Walk below historic Wynstay.

The landslide occurred following the torrential rain in late February and early March 2013





Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 7 CSR 156337

Road improvement & sealing priority: Farrer Road West



- Farrer Road West in Mt Wilson is a narrow, winding and unsafe dirt road frequently with deep potholes and channels developing following heavy rain
- New housing developments on Farrer Road and Smiths Road have led to high traffic with construction workers utes and heavy vehicles often speeding making the road particularly dangerous
- The highest priority for BMCC of Farrer Road West residents is for roll-over drains, gutters and culverts to be improved and kept clean, on blind corners the road widened, and it is sealed along its length and made safer

Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 8

Bowens Creek Road & Bridge

- February/March 2013 rain caused huge damage
- RFS, rescue & recreation access & heritage remain priorities for Mt Wilson & Mt Irvine community







Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 9 CSR 177403

Du Faurs Rocks Road in urgent need of repair







Pictures 5 May 2013



Du Faurs Rocks Road adjacent the Mt Wilson RFS brigade shed is an important access for the RFS and is currently in urgent need of repair

Mt Wilson & BMCC issues – 10

The Village Hall



Community has warmly welcomed the approval of the Stage 2 redevelopment
 DA – construction of new toilet block and store room at estimated cost \$160k

•	Current funds available:	\$60k
	BMCC October 2013 grant request	\$50k
	Shortfall	\$50k

- Mt Wilson Village Hall Committee fundraising working to cover shortfall by end September 2013
- The Hall Committee is looking for confirmation from BMCC that if the \$50k fundraising is successful the project will go ahead in 2014 – this assurance will be of major assistance for the fundraising

What would Mt Wilson like of BMCC?

- 1. Appointment of a single manager as the 'Go to' responsible manager for Mt Wilson so the community perceives there is one senior member of staff held responsible by council management for all capital and maintenance issues in Mt Wilson (and no doubt other areas and responsibilities)
- 2. With the Mt Wilson Village Hall Committee working to raise the \$50k final funding required for the Village Hall Stage 2 development, Council will have the construction complete within the mandated deadline period in 2014
- 3. A new gabion is installed to prevent further collapse of the roadside on Mt Irvine Road asap
- 4. The dangerously deep bitumen edge roadside washaways are repaired asap and Farrer Road West is widened, sealed and made safer
- 5. Council establish a plan & capital commitment for the eventual replacement of the iconic old failing elms in The Avenue, Mt Wilson
- 6. The Armco barrier torn out during filming of *The Great Gatsby* is replaced asap with the deposit funds provided for that purpose by the producers

A suggestion: Improving the CSR system

- **Problem:** (1) Emailed CSRs are not responded to by <u>reply</u> email with the original request, CSR number, and later . . .
 - (2) a follow-up email advising the requested job has been completed, or otherwise dealt with. (See following example of letter, without CSR numbers linked to separate requests, that could have been avoided with reply emails to save time, letter writing, delay and postage costs.)
- **Solution:** (1) Introduce a procedure for each individual emailed CSR to be responded to with a <u>reply email</u> with the CSR number (This establishes a communication chain with the original request and its associated CSR number useful for BMCC and the requestor to follow up.)
 - (2) Automatically advise the requestor when BMCC records the CSR 'completed'. (This saves requestor and BMCC staff time unnecessarily used with follow up inquiries and responses.)



20 March 2013

Development, Health & Customer Services

Customer Request Number: 175428

Mr R Beattie Mount Wilson Progress Association Packwood 115 Mount Irvine Rd MOUNT WILSON NSW 2786

Dear Mr Beattie,

Thank you for your enquiry concerning multiple issues at Mt Wilson

A Customer Service Request has been raised on your behalf to address these issues. If for any reason we are unable to complete this request or require further information you will be notified by a Council Officer

If you would like to provide further information or to check the status of your request, please allow 15 days from the date of this letter before contacting Council and quote the request number at the top of the page.

You are now able to lodge some service requests over the internet. Log onto www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au to see if your request type is available on line.

Yours faithfully

Customer Service Officer
Blue Mountains City Council