

LEURA

GARDEN VILLAGE

Leura Village Association

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SUBMISSION

Blue Mountains City Council draft *Towards Zero Waste Strategy 2022-2031*

The Leura Village Association thanks BMCC for the opportunity to respond to your draft *Towards Zero Waste Strategy 2022-2031*.

We welcome the Circular Economy, Proximity Principle and Planetary Health approach in the draft strategy. These interlinked goals in which 'waste' becomes a locally-used resource can help build new enterprises and reduce and reverse environmental damage. However, for this to happen, it will require innovation, courage and long-term thinking from all of us.

The value for money principle stressed by the Council should be value for money across the generations. What will our actions and inactions today cost the people of the Blue Mountains in 20, 30 and 50 years?

We note that a major challenge for the Council is to extend the lifespan of Blaxland waste management facility so that landfill is not being trucked out of the Blue Mountains in another decade at greater cost to ratepayers, the environment and road safety. In a circular economy, 'waste' becomes a resource and 'landfill' ceases to be the final outcome for any product.

Domestic Food Waste

This is literally low hanging fruit. Food waste has been identified by the Council as a resource that should be removed from landfill through the introduction of the Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) domestic waste collection. Unfortunately this waste will not be locally composted. We encourage the Council to explore opportunities for more localized bulk processing of FOGO.

It is our view that the Council should also continue to educate, encourage and resource residents to compost their food and garden waste in their own gardens as the preferred action in line with the values of a circular economy, proximity principle and planetary health.

NOTE: 92% of Blue Mountains residents have a house and garden.

Commercial Food Waste

At the moment, most of the food scraps and excess generated by commercial outlets in the Blue Mountains are going to landfill as the easiest/ cheapest option. This is a terrible waste. Food scraps are a resource that can save businesses money and potentially create social enterprises that help our planet's health.

We acknowledge the support of Blue Mountains City Council with the Zero Waste Leura Project, a NSW Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) Partnership project, funded by the NSW waste levy to avoid food waste, increase profitability and reduce environmental impact.

The Zero Waste Leura partnership between Leura Garage, Leura Village Association, Blue Mountains City Council, the Institute for Sustainable Futures and the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA), was established with the goal of 'zero-food waste' in Leura's hospitality sector. It began with the initiative of the Leura Garage to purchase a Closed Loop composting system with EPA grant assistance and to investigate and measure the outcomes.

To continue to develop the project, Leura Garage and the Leura Village Association hope to collaborate with the Council on a local Compost Hub for the town centre public domain green waste and the output from Leura Garage's Closed Loop commercial composter. The LVA gardener and garden volunteers (Gollies) have identified a potential site on public land in the town centre. This weedy and overgrown 'no man's land' in the back NE corner of the Council car park would be cleared and managed by the Gollies. It is where the green waste from their public domain gardening is currently collected by the Council. Under this new scheme, most of the green 'waste' would now be composted with the Leura Garage Closed Loop output to become a soil conditioner, ie. resource, for the public gardens.

We see this as Stage Two for Leura Zero Waste project in which a practical local 'model' project is established and can be built upon.

The Leura Village Association hope that the Closed Loop management of food waste can eventually be extended to other hospitality outlets in Leura and other townships through social enterprise or co-operatively owned composting technology and hubs. Stage Two would be the start of this.

We ask that the Council continue to prioritise local composting of commercial food waste and to work with the LVA and Leura businesses to this end.

Leura Village Association Committee
April 2022