

Blue Mountains City Council

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# Dirt Jump Strategy

*A strategy for the management of unauthorised trail construction for dirt jump riding*

**Adopted 8 October 2002**

# Dirt Jump Strategy



City of Blue Mountains

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The City Within a World Heritage National Park



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## Introduction

This document further develops the Dirt Jump Strategy approved by Blue Mountains City Council in February 2001. The Strategy was developed to specifically address one component of recreation in bushland: unauthorised informal construction of dirt jump trails for BMX bicycles.

Dirt jump riding has become an increasingly popular sport and major trail systems have been constructed in a number of reserves within the City of Blue Mountains. Numerous small jumps have also been formed within or on the edges of natural areas across the City.

Today there are a number of specialised aspects of BMX riding: racing; 'flatland' stunt work, usually performed on bitumen or concrete surfaces; the 'street' scene emulates the type of tricks developed by skateboard riders such as grinding handrails and landing on ledges or fixtures such as garbage bins; the 'park' scene utilises formal outdoor and indoor skateboard facilities to perform stunts; and 'dirt jump' riding. Dirt jump in particular has become increasingly popular as extreme sports have increased in profile. The major dirt jump trails in the Blue Mountains are well known within the Sydney Basin and are also advertised in international dirt jump media.

This implementation report integrates consideration of the demand for dirt jump sites in the Blue Mountains with risk management issues, recreation planning and environmental management. The strategy has been developed over a period of 12 months, following preliminary investigation of sites in the previous year. A multi-disciplinary corporate project team contributed to the assessment of sites and development of the strategy. All major sites were assessed in terms of their recreational and social context, the risk management perspective and their environmental impact, as well as being rated by riders in terms of trail features and site potential. The results of the assessment processes are in a supporting document available from Blue Mountains City Council.

It is important to note that this strategy only pertains to lands managed by Blue Mountains City Council. It does not apply to Blue Mountains National Park, lands managed by other agencies, or private land. The Strategy will be used to coordinate management actions with these agencies.

## Policy Statement

Council will:

- Provide sites in designated locations for authorised BMX dirt jump trail construction subject to satisfactory results from environmental impact assessments.
- Require sites to include a range of jump sizes suitable for a wide range of skill levels.
- Develop options for the location of these sites in liaison with rider groups, residents and relevant stakeholders.
- Investigate options for the management of these sites, including leasing of sites, and a system of ongoing environmental monitoring.
- Work towards the possible provision of up to five BMX dirt jump sites across the City, with one per planning area.<sup>1</sup>
- Close and rehabilitate existing unauthorised sites in inappropriate locations as formal sites become available.
- Close and rehabilitate any unauthorised new trail construction.

## Resolutions

- *That Council approve the following sites for interim operation: Blackheath Aerodrome, Blackheath; Pitt Park, Wentworth Falls; Oaklands Road, Hazelbrook; Olivet Street, Glenbrook.*
- *That Council approve the closure of all other sites, with the closure of the sites at Ellison Road, Winnalee and Old Bathurst Road, Blaxland to occur after further stakeholder consultation.*
- *That other site development work and rehabilitation work be scheduled according to budget availability.*
- *That Council endorse the further investigation of potential long-term sites with the objective that dirt jump sites will be located and managed as intensive recreation rather than bushland recreation facilities.*

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<sup>1</sup> Council will not necessarily provide or manage these sites, but will support the establishment of up to 5 authorised sites if there is adequate demand and available corporate or government resources.

## Recommendations

The adopted recommendations are that:

1. The Council give In-Principle support to the provision of one authorised dirt jump site in each of the 5 Planning Areas. Selection of locations will be dependent upon finding sites where the environmental impact is minimal and can be contained. The final outcome will be dependent upon the risk management, financial components and statutory requirements being satisfied.
2. It is recommended that the following sites are retained as interim sites pending a full recreation survey to determine appropriate alternative sites:

### Area 1

- The existing Hat Hill Rd site on the former Blackheath Aerodrome is proposed for interim retention with site management measures implemented to mitigate impacts.

### Area 2

- The existing Pitt Park site at Wentworth Falls be relocated a short distance as an interim site within the same reserve to alleviate adverse environmental impacts on the archaeological site. This interim site will be subject to the outcome of the preparation of the Plan of Management for this reserve.

### Area 3

- The Oaklands Road site in Horseshoe Falls Reserve, Hazelbrook, is recommended for interim retention but the layout will require amendment and management to reduce impacts on residents and the environment.

### Area 4

- The Ellison Rd site in Ellison Park, Winmalee will be closed and rehabilitated. An alternative site is to be identified as part of the proposed recreation survey.

### Area 5

- The existing Olivet St site in Knapsack Gully Reserve, Glenbrook be retained as an interim site ahead of the development of a longer term management plan for this significant reserve which is exhibiting considerable degradation from conflicting uses. It is possible that this site could be developed as an authorised site over the long-term however less costly alternatives are possible, including closer to Knapsack Park.
- The West St site in Reading Street Reserve, Glenbrook will remain closed and will be rehabilitated to bushland.

All other unauthorised sites in inappropriate locations will be closed and rehabilitated.

3. Unauthorised new construction in non-designated areas will be closed and rehabilitated, and the strategy communicated to the riders and adjoining residents.

4. In non-bushland areas Council provides the facility in a similar manner to skate parks: a site is designated as a dirt jump site and fill is brought to the site for the construction of mounds. No excavation would be permitted, and signage and perimeter fencing would be required. Council may maintain these sites or may undertake a management arrangement with riders to maintain the sites.

For sites in bushland areas, riders establish and manage a riders association to ensure that insurance cover is available to all participants and that riders manage sites to maximise safety and to meet local and rider amenity. Established clubs have indicated a willingness to extend membership services to the riders of the dirt jump sites. Council can act as a facilitator for these discussions which should be led by the rider representatives.

The establishment of additional dirt jump sites in each Planning Area only be supported on the basis of the full lease and/or management of the site by an incorporated rider group, sports club or government sport agency. This model is employed by other Councils and would provide considerable advantages as the basis for long-term provision of formal dirt jump facilities within the City of Blue Mountains. However leasing of sites and the incorporation of rider groups is likely to be a protracted matter and will not offer a short-term solution.

5. The co-location of sites with established recreation facilities is a priority as it provides for economies of scale in the provisions of the site amenities, is compatible with other riders and provides good accessibility and safety for site riders.

On average, a site located away from established recreation facilities will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to provide essential facilities whereas establishment costs for a site co-located with existing recreation facilities are in the range of tens of thousands of dollars. Recurrent costs are also relatively low for co-located sites, being principally directed at erosion/sediment control, fencing/signs repair, and administrative support for the facility.

Any new infrastructure will be designed to be ecologically sustainable and to minimise any potential adverse impacts on the surrounding environment.

6. The establishment of additional facilities in each Planning Area is only likely to be supported on the basis of the lease of a suitable site to an incorporated rider group, sports club or sports agency.

## Site Management

### Administrative Arrangements

Once fully established, authorised sites will be categorised and managed as *Sportsgrounds* under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

If the site is in a park or other modified open space, Council may be able to obtain insurance cover and the site will be open to general public use subject to the plan of management for the site and riders meeting the requirements described on signs.

If the site is in bushland, Council's preference is that the site be leased by an association, sports club or government agency and managed by a riders association, sports club or business. Council will not manage these sites. Council will not authorise these sites as permanent sites unless an association or sports club or business manages the sites.

Where sites are not leased by a commercial organisation, sports club or government agency, sites may be able to be managed by riders if they can cover public liability insurance and other Council requirements.

Where authorised sites are not subject to formal lease arrangements, they may be maintained either by Council through a service agreement or by the riders through a similar agreement with Council.

If sites are leased, it is preferred that the lessee will maintain them. Conditions will be included in the lease to ensure that the site is designed, developed and managed correctly.

It will be the responsibility of riders to alert the manager of the site to any potential dangers. Council may provide advice on safety issues but is unlikely to be in the position to manage safety issues.

Council will not design or build dirt jump sites. The site lessee, manager or the riders will be responsible for the design and development of the jump trails.

Authorised sites will be designed for optimal safety within the constraints of the sport. Trails are to be designed to minimise the risk of collisions.

### Site Facilities

Adequate fencing around the perimeter of all sites and appropriate signage will be installed:

- ❑ Near road edges, fencing will be cyclone wire to a height of at least 1.5 metres. Fences will be set at a distance from road edges to allow the retention and/or planting of a shrub screen.
- ❑ Away from roads, fencing along reserve boundaries will be up to 1.5 metres in height, made of galvanised iron pipe with or without cyclone wire mesh, or an equivalent standard.
- ❑ Signs will specify that helmets and suitable clothing must be worn, and direct that head-on crashes are to be avoided.
- ❑ Sites will be designed to adequately control access, and limit visual intrusion on the adjacent residential and/or natural area and the streetscape.

Sites will require:

- ❑ Visibility from a publicly-used area to ensure a safe environment for riders.
- ❑ Adequate car parking on site or nearby.
- ❑ Toilet facilities on-site or within 5 minutes bicycle riding distance.
- ❑ On-site water supply or an easily accessible nearby public water supply.
- ❑ Adequate shade.
- ❑ Garbage disposal facilities.

## Risk Management

There are risk management issues associated with the unofficial construction of trails and the use of these for an inherently dangerous sport. These issues include:

- ❑ The potential liability of Blue Mountains City Council for not stopping construction.
- ❑ The potential liability of Council for not stopping usage of these areas.
- ❑ The potential for an injured rider to bring legal action against Council.
- ❑ The potential for a member of the public to be injured due to the change in terrain.

Council will advise that only official sites should be used by riders and signs will be erected at unauthorised sites, prior to their closure or relocation, advising that Council does not authorise the use of these sites and that riders use these sites at their own risk. The signs will remind riders that helmets and protective clothing are recommended for all BMX dirt jump riding.

Signs will be prominently erected at entrance points to official sites, stating that:

- ❑ Riders are to avoid potential head on crashes.
- ❑ Helmets and protective clothing must be worn.
- ❑ Riders are advised to become members of a registered association or club.

For a site in a park or in open, obstacle-free area, it may be possible for Council to obtain insurance cover if Council has a plan of management in place for the site.

For any sites in bushland, formal insurance arrangements, which include a requirement for *Public Liability Insurance* for a sum of at least \$10 million, are to be implemented by the riders.

Council will facilitate discussions between dirt jump riders regarding the formation of a registered riders' association or the joining of BMX club as members, to help cover insurance requirements. The carriage of these arrangements will remain the responsibility of the riders, and will be required to be in place before Council implements action to facilitate use of dirt jump trail sites.

There are two main options for insurance and public liability. If the sites are retained in bushland, Council is not likely to be able to obtain insurance cover for the sites. If the sites are in parks or other modified open space, it is possible that Council could obtain insurance for the sites.



## Specific Recommendations for Existing Sites

The following table summarises the adopted recommendations for the sites assessed under the Strategy.

**Table 1: Comparison of existing major sites within Planning Areas**

Area	Site	Reserve	Tenure	Recommend	For	Against	Comment
1	Hat Hill Rd	Blackheath Aerodrome Blackheath	BMCC Operational Land	Retain as an interim site	Adequate parking Screened from residents	Lacks facilities Potential residential land if sewer can be extended	This site may need to be replaced in future because this land is Operational
2	Hill View Rd	Hillview Reserve Katoomba	BMCC Community Land	Close and rehabilitate	Local access	Safety issues Residential amenity issue Incompatible with zoning	In future a new site at BureauPark could replace this site. This site has been closed.
	Pitt Park	Pitt Park Wentworth Falls	BMCC Community Land	Move trails away from historic site and formalise as a venue, pending PoM	Links with existing recreation facilities Well separated from residents	A new Plan of Management will be required Site is relatively intensively used	A Plan of Management has been in preparation for this site for some time
3	Railway powerline easement	North Lawson Park Lawson	DLWC Public Recreation Reserve	Close and rehabilitate	Local access	Cuts into edge of swamp On proposed new boundary of National Park	This land is managed by Rail Access for powerline access
	Oaklands Rd	Horseshoe Falls Reserve Hazelbrook	DLWC Public Recreation Reserve	Retain as an interim site	Highly developed popular site, large area, potential to manage impacts	Close to houses Lacks facilities	This site may need to be replaced in future
4	Ellison Road	Ellison Park Winmalee	BMCC Community Land & DLWC Unreserved Crown Land	Replace, then close and rehabilitate current site	Local access	Poor parking Close to houses Difficult for maintenance Main part of site is subject to a land claim	Alternative options to be investigated for Area 4
	Cross Street	Cross Street Natural Reserve Warrimoo	DLWC Crown Reserve	Close and rehabilitate	Local access	Incompatible with reserve use & zoning Major impact on public area	Rehab to be undertaken by Bushcare Group
5	West Street	Reading Street Reserve Glenbrook	DLWC Public Recreation Reserve	Site remains closed and is rehabilitating	Good access for riders south of hwy, closer to amenities than Olivet St, relatively large site, potential to manage impacts	Incompatible with reserve, conflicts with local use of reserve, generated strong objection from residents	Olivet St in Knapsack Reserve is currently providing an alternative
	Olivet Street	Knapsack Reserve Glenbrook	DLWC Crown Reserve and Unreserved Crown Land	Retain as an interim site Permanent solution dependent upon management plan for this reserve	Good access for riders north of hwy, separation from residents, area partly degraded by historic & current use	Incompatible with reserve, risk mgt issues, potential high asset mgt cost	Although a costly option for long-term development, this site will be kept in situ as interim solution.
	Old Bathurst Road	Major Mitchell Reserve Blaxland	DLWC Public Recreation Reserve	Close and rehabilitate, pending liaison with riders	Local access	Incompatible with reserve	There may be a need for a site in this vicinity

**Sites to be retained as interim sites in their present locations**

The following existing sites will be left in situ as interim sites:

- ❑ Hat Hill Road Site, Blackheath Aerodrome
- ❑ Oaklands Road Site, Horseshoe Falls Reserve, Hazelbrook
- ❑ Olivet Street site, Knapsack Gully Reserve, Glenbrook
- ❑ Weatherboard Inn site, Pitt Park, Wentworth Falls will be moved to a more suitable location within Pitt Park, pending the preparation of the Plan of Management.

The retention of these sites at their present location will depend on:

- ❑ Approval by the Department of Land and Water Conservation for Oaklands Road and Olivet Street
- ❑ Approval for the continuing use of Operational Land at the Hat Hill Road site,
- ❑ The development of a Plan of Management for the Pitt Park site,
- ❑ Further investigation of the Knapsack Park option as a replacement for the Olivet Street site in Knapsack Gully Reserve, Glenbrook
- ❑ The establishment of adequate access and appropriate facilities,
- ❑ The agreement of any neighbouring residents,
- ❑ The results of a full environmental impact assessment.

**Sites to be replaced**

- ❑ Ellison Road site, Ellison Park, Winmalee
  - ❑ For example to Summerhayes Park, Winmalee; or the Springwood Golf Course community land (separate from golf course) or another suitable location, pending assessment of available sites.

The existing site will be phased out with closure after the new site has been established. Signage will be erected at the existing site explaining that the site is to be closed and showing the location of the new site.

**Sites to be closed**

Existing sites in inappropriate locations will be closed and rehabilitated:

- ❑ Hillview Reserve site, Katoomba.
- ❑ Cross St site, Cross Street Natural Reserve, Warrimoo
- ❑ All other minor sites will be closed immediately (*see Table 2*).

**Sites to be closed, pending recreation planning and liaison with riders**

- ❑ Old Bathurst Road site, Major Mitchell Reserve, Blaxland.

**Sites to be closed, pending liaison with easement manager and riders**

- ❑ Railway power easement site, North Lawson Park, Lawson.

**Table 2: Summary of actions for all currently recorded sites**

Area	Reserve	Site	Status	Action
5	Darks Common	Off Pedder Street	Active	Close & rehabilitate
5	Bluff Reserve	Off Emu Rd	Inactive	Rehabilitate
5	Major Mitchell Reserve	Old Bathurst Road	Active	Close & rehabilitate
5	Knapsack Gully Reserve	Olivet Street site (Lennox Trails)	Active	Retain as interim site
5	Mitchells Pass Reserve	Cnr Mitchells Pass & Glenbrook Road	Inactive	Rehabilitate if required
5	Knapsack Natural Area	Off Yoogali Terrace	Active	Close & rehabilitate
5	Reading Street Reserve	Lennox Street site	Active	Close & rehabilitate
5	Reading Street Reserve	West Street site	Closed	Rehabilitate
5	Cross St Natural Reserve	Cross Street site	Active	Close & rehabilitate
4	Ellison Park	Ellison Road site	Active	Replace, then close
4	Henry Parkes Park	Near Rail Station	Closed	No further action
3	Former Quarry	Off Belmont St	Inactive	No further action
3	Memorial Park	Cnr Falcon St & GWH, Hazelbrook	Unknown	Rehabilitate if required
3	Waterhouse Park	SCA Special Area	Closed	No further action
3	Terrace Falls Reserve	Off Lake Road	Closed	No further action
3	Horseshoe Falls Reserve	Oaklands Road site	Active	Retain as interim site
3	North Lawson Park	Off Hughes Ave	Active	Close & rehabilitate
3	Redgum Park	Off Genevieve Rd	Inactive	Rehabilitate if required
2	Pitt Park	Off Adele Ave	Active	Establish new interim site Close & rehabilitate old site
2	Leura Park	Off Jersey Ave	Inactive	Rehabilitate if required
2	Vacant block	Off Kurrawan Rd	Active	Private land
2	Falls House site	Off Peckmans Road	Active	Private land
2	Frank Walford Park	In centre of Catalina Racing Circuit	Closed	No further action
2	Bureau Park	Off Barton Street	Inactive	Rehabilitate if required
2	Hillview Reserve	Cnr Hill View and Fourth Avenues	Active	Close & rehabilitate
1	Centenary Reserve	Off Palmer Crescent	Inactive	Rehabilitate
1	Blackheath Aerodrome	Cnr Hat Hill Road and Robb Avenue	Active	Retain as interim site

## Further Implementation of the Strategy

### Potential sites

Potentially suitable sites at better locations will be investigated, during the next stage of the implementation of the strategy, for possible designation as BMX dirt jump trail sites, including:

- ❑ Frank Walford Park, Katoomba, near existing recreation complex.
- ❑ Wilson Park, Lawson, near swimming pool.
- ❑ Bureau Park, Katoomba.

A comprehensive land evaluation process will be used to assess the suitability of these sites.

### Unapproved new sites

Illegal new construction in non-designated areas will be closed and rehabilitated:

- ❑ If the construction is in a natural area, the relevant asset manager will assess the level of disturbance and develop a site restoration plan for implementation by a suitable service provider.
- ❑ If the construction is in a park, sportsground or general community use area, the level of disturbance will be assessed by the relevant asset manager in association with environmental management personnel and a site restoration plan developed for implementation by a suitable service provider.

### Closure procedure

Unauthorised sites will be closed within 1 month of being recorded:

- ❑ New sites in bushland<sup>1</sup> or parks<sup>2</sup> will be assessed by Council
- ❑ Any sites in Areas of Cultural Significance<sup>3</sup> will be assessed by an appropriate specialist

A sign will be erected at the site stating that the site is to be closed within one month, that Council does not authorise use of the site for dirt jump riding, giving the locations of the nearest authorised sites and directing any enquiries to (the relevant officer).

Sites will be assessed in terms of the type of rehabilitation work required, cost of restoration, and the effectiveness of monitoring the site. Where possible, local Bushcare groups will undertake restoration works if within their capability. If not, contract bush regenerators will be employed to undertake the initial site restoration, with maintenance by a local Bushcare group if possible.

Where major restoration is required, a contract will be drawn up specifying the work and how it is to be undertaken. (The contract may be granted internally or externally.)

<sup>1</sup> Bushland = natural area (including bushland, wetland, watercourse, escarpment)

<sup>2</sup> Park = park, sportsground, general community use

<sup>3</sup> Area of Cultural Significance on Community Land or Crown land managed by Council

## Financial Analysis

**Table 3: Estimated cost of authorising an existing site and providing facilities**

<b>Circa \$150,000 median cost</b>		
<b>Provision of facilities</b>		<b>Total cost range</b>
<b>Low level</b>	<b>Unit cost</b>	<b>\$7,000 - \$32,000 per site</b>
Fencing	\$30 to \$50 per metre	\$18,000 - \$30,000 per site
Signage	Circa \$150 per sign (\$40 labour, \$110 materials)	\$600 - \$1,500 per site
<b>Medium level</b>	<b>Unit cost</b>	<b>\$9,500 - \$35,000 per site</b>
Carpark	Circa \$30 per square metre Using 5 spaces minimum & 15 maximum:	\$4,500 - \$13,500 per site
Water	Circa \$50 a metre Using 50m min & 200m max distance:	\$2,500 - \$10,000 per site
Shade	\$500 to \$1000 per square metre Using 5sq.m min & 10sq.m max area:	\$2,500 - \$10,000 per site
<b>High level</b>	<b>Unit cost</b>	
Toilets	\$1000 to \$1500 per square metre Using 50sq.m min & 100sq.m max area:	\$50,000 - \$150,000 per site
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$78,500 - \$217,000 per site</b>

**Table 4: Estimated cost of establishing a new site closer to existing sporting facilities**

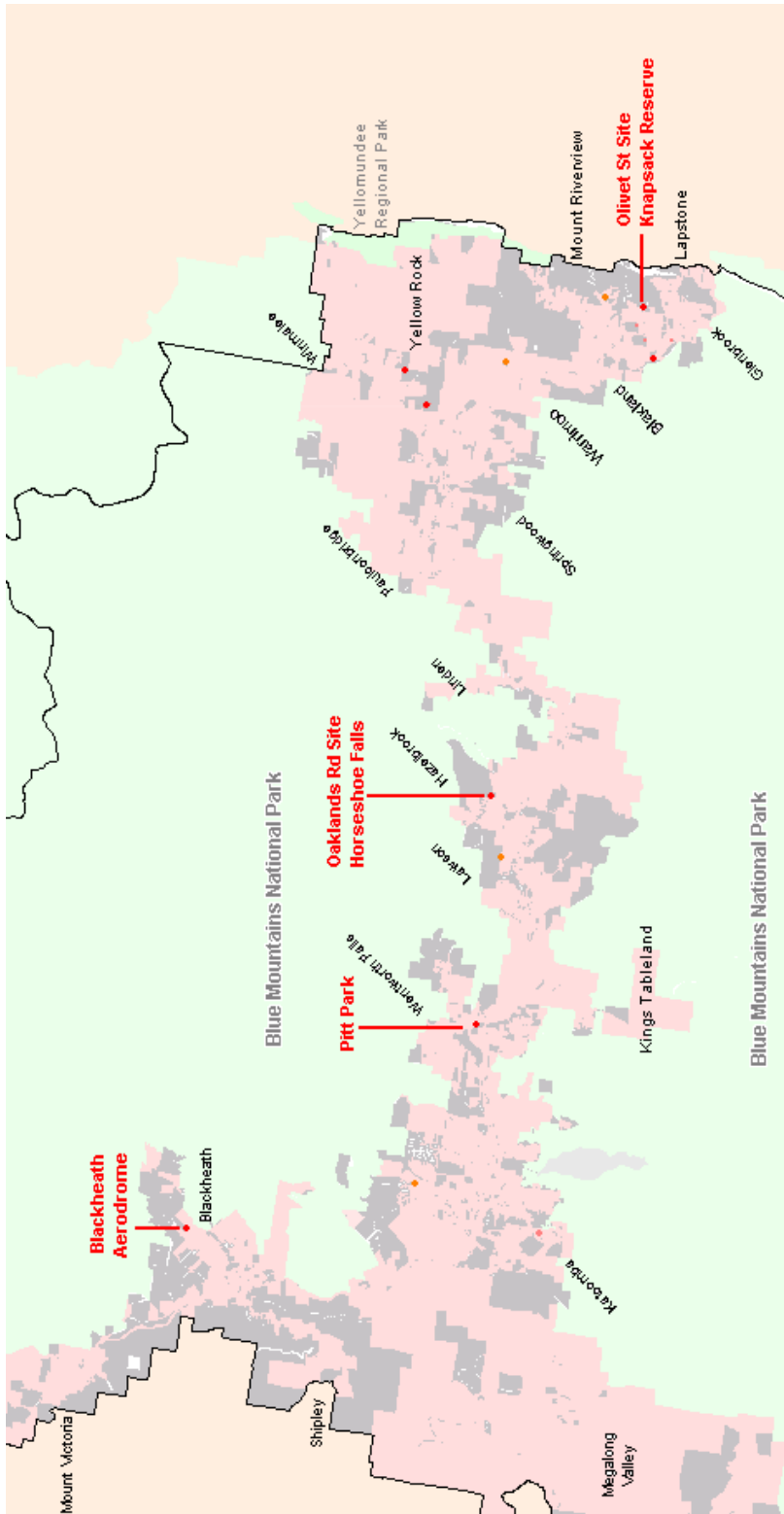
<b>Circa \$28,000 median cost</b>		
Recreational survey	Circa \$3,000 per site	\$3,000 per site
<b>Implementation</b>		
Fencing	\$30 to \$50 per metre	\$18,000 - \$30,000 per site
Signage	Circa \$150 per sign (\$40 labour, \$110 materials)	\$600 - \$1,500 per site
<b>Total Cost</b>		<b>\$22,000 - \$35,000 per site</b>

**These costs do not include building the dirt jump trails themselves.**

At this stage it is envisaged that riders will construct the trails. There is no Standard for construction of these trails, nor a base cost. Trails may be designed in consultation with safety engineers or companies with relevant expertise.

# Appendix 1

Map 1: Locations of dirt jump trail sites with interim approval



## Appendix 2

### Sample Risk Management Sign

# Horseshoe Falls Reserve Dirt Jump Trail

## WARNING

**RIDERS MUST WEAR HELMETS  
AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

**HEAD-ON CRASHES  
MUST BE AVOIDED**

**THIS IS AN INTERIM SITE ONLY  
RIDERS USE THIS SITE AT THEIR OWN RISK**

By order of the General Manager  
Blue Mountains City Council



City of Blue Mountains

The City Within a World Heritage National Park

## Appendix 2

### Closure and Rehabilitation

# CROSS STREET NATURAL RESERVE

# NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF UNAUTHORISED DIRT JUMP TRAIL THIS DIRT JUMP TRAIL IS TO BE CLOSED AND THE SITE REHABILITATED

COUNCIL DOES NOT APPROVE OR ENDORSE  
THE USE OF THIS SITE AND ANY USE OF IT  
BEFORE CLOSURE IS AT RIDERS OWN RISK

By order of the General Manager  
Blue Mountains City Council



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