



**Briefing on a proposal to establish a Blue
Mountains Community Land Trust Pilot
Project in Katoomba**



Cover Artwork by Aunty Pip Smith: 'Another number – another statistic', 2022

My painting is about tracks going around in life

**Here we go again
Homeless – just another number
just another statistic
Here we go again - around and around
trying to get a key to security
but
always out of reach
never found.**



We acknowledge that our work takes place on Darug and Gundungurra Country, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We also acknowledge Aunty Pip Smith whose artwork adorns the cover of this briefing. Pip was member of Walanmarra Artists & Friends and an advocate of the Blue Mountains Community Land Trust. Her story guides our work and inspires us to keep working towards housing and land justice in our community.

Pip Smith passed away on March 12th, 2023

Blue Mountains Community Land Trust (BMCLT) is a First Nations and Community led organisation working towards secure and affordable housing for local people, formed in 2021. In consultation with Traditional Owners and the community, the BMCLT has developed a proposal for a Pilot Community Land Trust Project for the old Clairvaux sites in Katoomba. This Pilot Project is outlined in this Briefing Note.



Site Visit at Clairvaux site with BMCLT Committee, IDG Architects, Wild Plant Rescue & Uncle Ed

Based on considerable consultation, BMCLT is proposing a model of community ownership and stewardship of the old Clairvaux sites in Katoomba, which would deliver:

- *Affordable Housing with Secure Tenure: To be achieved by land ownership held collectively, preventing displacement and ensuring long-term affordability using a recognised community land trust model. We estimate that the sites could accommodate 28 single-story dwellings, with private, semi-private and communal spaces.*
- *Connections to Country: BMCLT is committed to at least 50% Indigenous housing, and to First Nations co-governance and leadership. This model recognises the importance of Traditional Owners being able live on Country, and the important intersections between housing and multiple dimensions of wellbeing of First Nations peoples.*
- *Community Space: Providing a space for local community organisations to remain on site and have access to secure and affordable long-term tenure. This would improve community access to services and help ensure their growth and success.*
- *Economic Empowerment: The pilot project could provide opportunities for eco-tourism, social enterprise, arts and cultural activities that could generate diverse employment opportunities.*

The proposed pilot project will contribute to local, state and Commonwealth government policy priorities including the urgent need for affordable housing, including for key workers; Closing the Gap targets; and accommodation for important community services. To enable this project, BMCLT would ultimately need the transfer of land from DCJ, as well as funding partnerships with government, philanthropic sources and/or community organisations to enable Precinct Planning and Precinct Delivery.

The two Clairvaux sites are owned by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). One site (Lot 3) has been unoccupied for around 6 years, while the other (Lot 2) is currently occupied by two important community organisations, which have been unable to secure alternate accommodation.

Clairvaux is a former Residential Child Welfare Home, and has considerable importance to the Blue Mountains community, and particularly to First Nations communities and care leavers. On this basis, it would be inappropriate for commercial sale or development. The future of the site should be decided in consultation with the community and dedicated to community advancement.

At this stage, we are seeking from Minister Rose Jackson:

A moratorium on the sale of the 2 lots until BMCLT is in position to proceed

Facilitation of partnerships with relevant government agencies to develop the project under UPPP funding

Commitment to ongoing Ministerial collaboration and support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Introduction

2

Pilot Project: Case Study

3

Blue Mountains Community Land Trust

4

Why a Community Land Trust?

5

Clairveux: Past, Present, Future

6

Projected Outcomes & Benefits

7

Recommendations to the Minister

90% of all available rentals are Short-Term Rentals

HOUSING SNAPSHOT	NO.
AVAILABLE RENTALS	158
SHORT TERM RENTALS	1000+
HOMES FOR SALE	538
EMPTY HOMES	3566

TABLE 2.



Local Elder Uncle Ed with Auntie Leanne Tobin's Artwork at the Clairvaux.

The Urgent Need for Innovation

The Blue Mountains sit at the nexus of world heritage listed National Parks and residential and commercial urban settlement patterns with a strong tourism sector. Current visions for Katoomba foreground the importance of Traditional Custodian's leadership and the importance of centering First Nations knowledge and culture to safeguard our built and unbuilt environments for future generations.

The Planetary Health Precinct is one such exemplary model that draws on the knowledge of Traditional Owners to guide us toward a just and regenerative future.

But, with the worsening housing crisis, there is a risk of not just Traditional Owners but the broader Aboriginal community, the cultural and creative communities, and the critical key workforce that sustains the Blue Mountains economy being displaced by a lack of affordable and appropriate housing.

Current solutions to the supply of affordable housing are not easily adapted to the Blue Mountains Local Government Area with an urgent need for innovative approaches to ensure we have a thriving and inclusive community.

TABLE 1. WHAT CAN LOCALS AFFORD?

	NURSE	TEACHER	CLEANER	GOV
RENTAL	✓	✓	✗	✓
OWNERSHIP	✗	✗	✗	✗

A Local Snapshot

In the 2021 Census, 45% of rental households in the Blue Mountains experienced financial stress, exceeding the 36% observed across New South Wales.

Housing affordability and availability are major issues with the Blue Mountains experiencing a severe shortage of varied and affordable housing options. Both lower and moderate-income earners struggle to secure housing that aligns with their financial means and household requirements. This issue is particularly acute in the upper mountains, where the highest proportion of rental and low-income households are located, exacerbated by limited rental options.

While mortgage stress is lower than the NSW average, it remains a concern, affecting 13.3% of households in the Blue Mountains in 2021, compared to the NSW average of 17.3%. These statistics underscore the urgent need for innovation to address the unique challenges of the region.

Housing Availability

As a major tourist destination, 90% of all possible rental homes in the Blue Mountains are listed as short term rentals. The availability of rental homes is at an all-time low of 153 in total across the entire LGA.

Median house prices in the Blue Mountains have more than quadrupled over the last two decades, and current prices are out of reach for many locals. There are currently 538 homes for sale across our LGA at an average of \$900K, and no homes currently affordable for key workers (see Table 1).

This is further exacerbated by limited supply of suitable land for housing, planning and development constraints that limit the availability of housing and the prevalence of empty homes with 3566 homes currently sitting empty (ABS, 2021).

INTRODUCTION



Darug & Gundungurra Elder Aunty Carol Cooper (front), Prof. Louise Crabtree-Hayes, CLT lead Genevieve Murray & Prof. Peter Phibbs briefing Council's strategic Planning team on the Blue Mountains Community Land

Local Housing Response

Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) has a 5 year housing target of 600 new homes. In tailoring their response BMCC has developed a robust Housing Affordability Policy to enable perpetually affordable and place-based responses to meeting their targets and the needs of the community.

Community Land Trusts are included in the Policy as a suitable vehicle for place-based affordable housing solutions, with a focus on ensuring that First Nations community members and particularly Darug & Gundungurra Traditional Owners can remain living on Country.

Leading up to the introduction of the Housing Affordability Policy, Blue Mountains Community Land Trust worked

collaboratively with BMCC to ensure the inclusion of Community Land Trusts in the Policy and advocated for the inclusion of levers that may enable the appropriate use of Council owned land for affordable housing. We advocated for the stipulation that all affordable housing projects enabled by the policy would be affordable into perpetuity, thereby ensuring the lasting impact of the policy and the stability of the sector. We also successfully advocated for the inclusion of Aboriginal Community Housing Providers in the policy to ensure cultural safety for the community.

The BMCC State of the City Report 2024 set some goals on housing that included:

- Ensuring residents have access to a range of affordable housing that meets diverse needs.
- Affordable and well-designed housing options, relevant to diverse community needs, that are environmentally sound.

Blue Mountains City Council's Housing Affordability Policy has laid the groundwork for a lasting and integrated affordable housing sector.

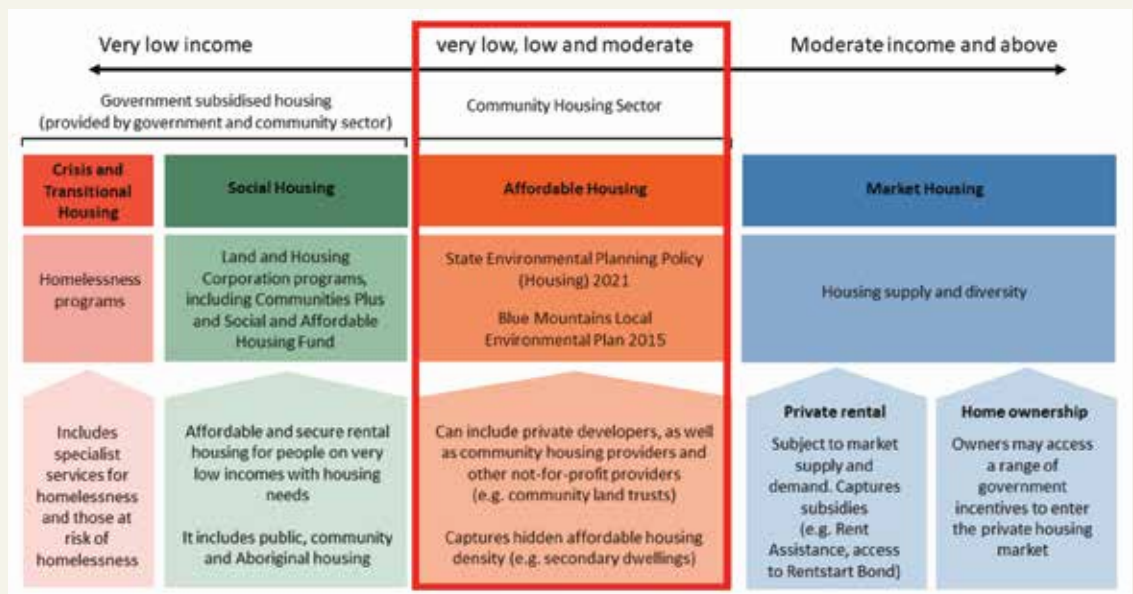
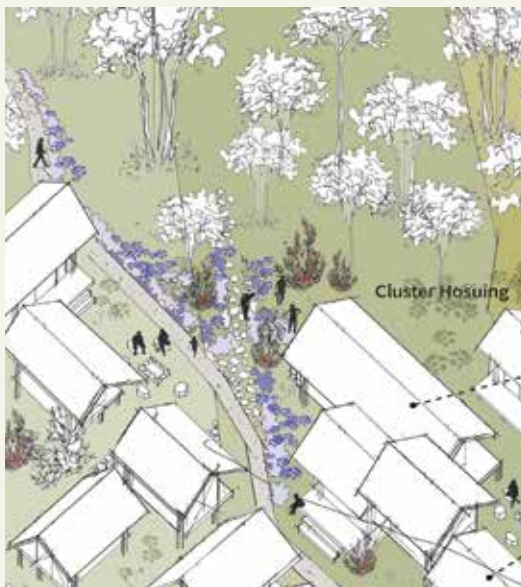


Table 2. The Housing Continuum, Blue Mountains City Council Housing Affordability Policy

PILOT PROJECT

Purpose



Student proposal for Cluster Housing developed through a Co-Design process with Masters of Architecture studio in 2023

Housing, Community & Social Enterprise

The Blue Mountains Community Land Trust (BMCLT) in partnership with Wild Plant Rescue and other community organisations is seeking to retain DP1121828 Lot 2, 26-38 Oak St, Katoomba & DP1121828 Lot 3, 14 Oak St, Katoomba for the establishment of a Pilot Innovation Precinct and Pilot Community Land Trust Project ('the Pilot Project').

The Pilot Project incorporates innovative solutions to the housing and climate crisis to ensure a just transition to net zero, with First Nations governance and leadership ensured through the BMCLT. Securing no or low-cost land is critical to the Blue Mountains Community Land Trust being able to deliver affordable housing into perpetuity. The initiative would include resale restrictions on the housing in order to ensure ongoing benefit for future generations. As such these two sites represent a rare and exciting opportunity.

The proposed Pilot Project does more than help meet local housing targets. It sets a precedent for environmentally sensitive precinct development that incorporates culture, community, and social enterprise alongside perpetually affordable housing.

Community & Country

We believe First Nations wisdom can inform how we respond to the housing crisis. From a First Nations perspective the co-location of health services, recreation and community facilities with employment and social enterprise, places wellbeing, family/kin/culture alongside appropriate housing (see Diagram 1).

The proposed Pilot Project is zoned C4 environmental living precinct, and with its rich cultural history and long association with key community organisations, it is an ideal setting for a project that meets these combined ambitions.

Objectives

Our goal is to work with key stakeholders to strike a healthy and sustainable balance between the proposed housing, existing community uses, social enterprise and environmental care and preservation. The innovative BMCLT model ensures Darug & Gundungurra Traditional Owners are not only engaged throughout the process, but hold leadership and governance roles in the organisation and have access to secure affordable housing, on Country.

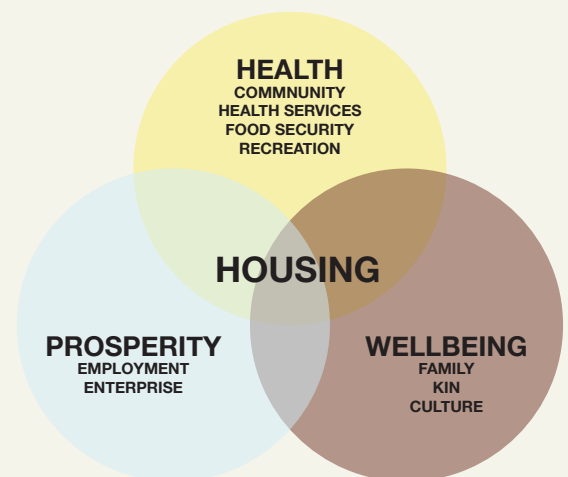
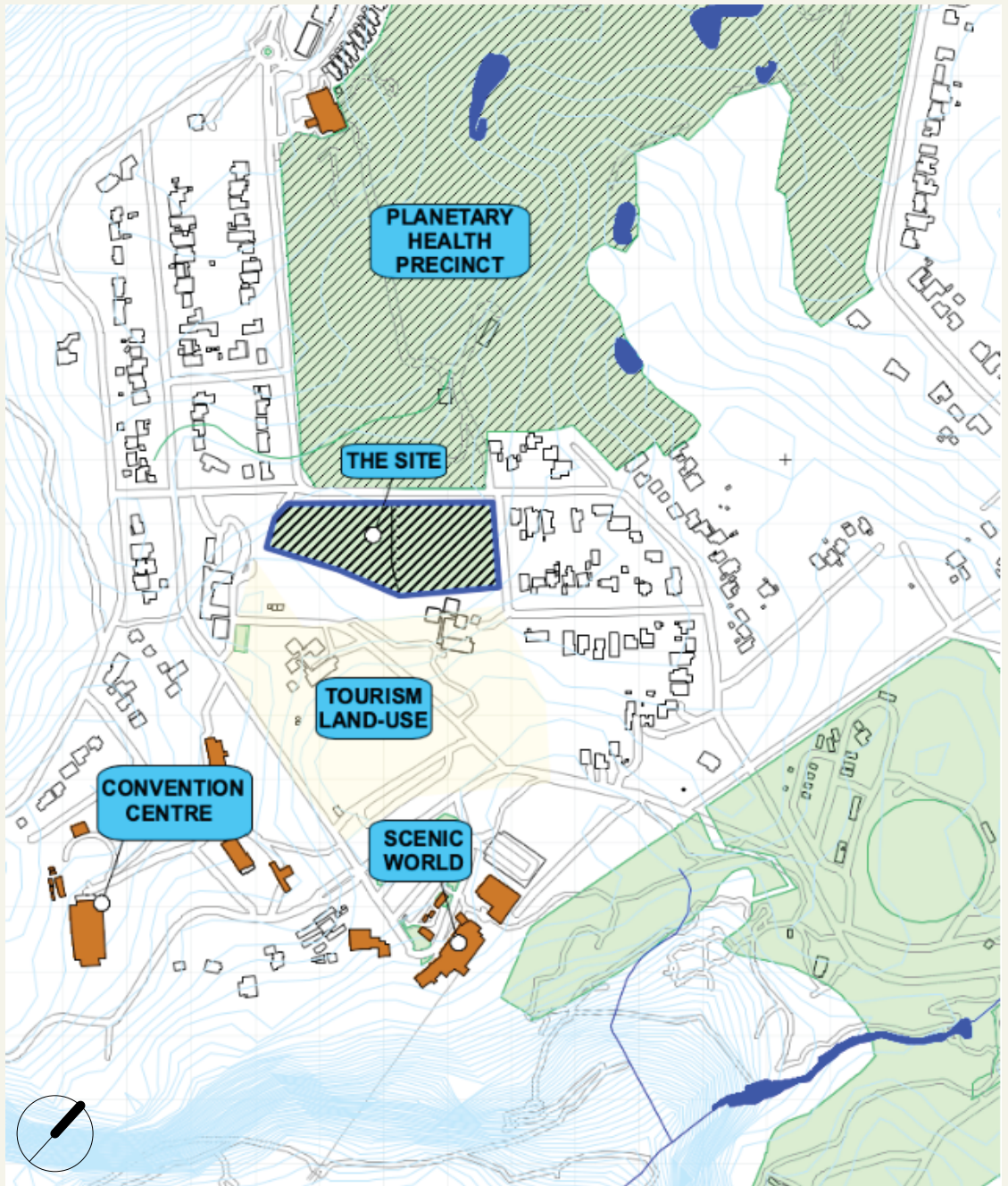
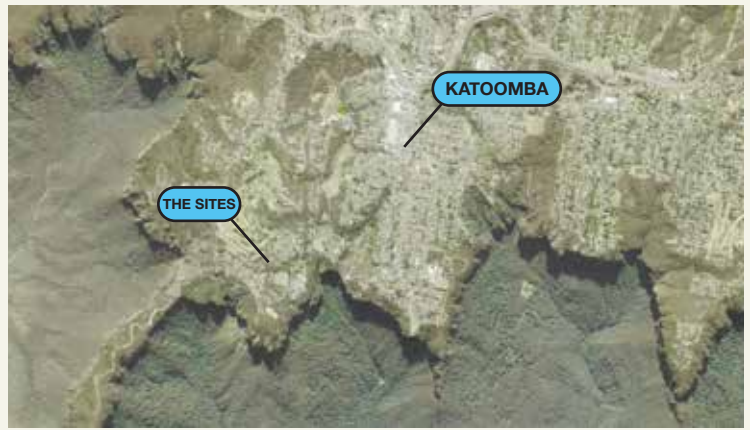


Diagram 1. Diagram adapted from Reimagining Indigenous Housing, Health and Wealth: The Necessary Ecological Response to Unlock the Potential in the Indigenous Estate by Kerry Arabena, Chris Holland & Shane Hamilton

PILOT PROJECT Site & Context

The Pilot Project sites form an important ecological bridge between the Centre for Planetary Health to the north, the Burragarang Valley to the south, and form part of an emerging innovation precinct amidst a low rise residential neighbourhood with good public transport links and suitable zoning.



PILOT PROJECT

Planning & Zoning

Planning & Zoning

The sites are zoned C4 Environmental living, and are well suited to the range of intended uses including residential dwellings with the advantage of dual street frontage and a minimal slope.

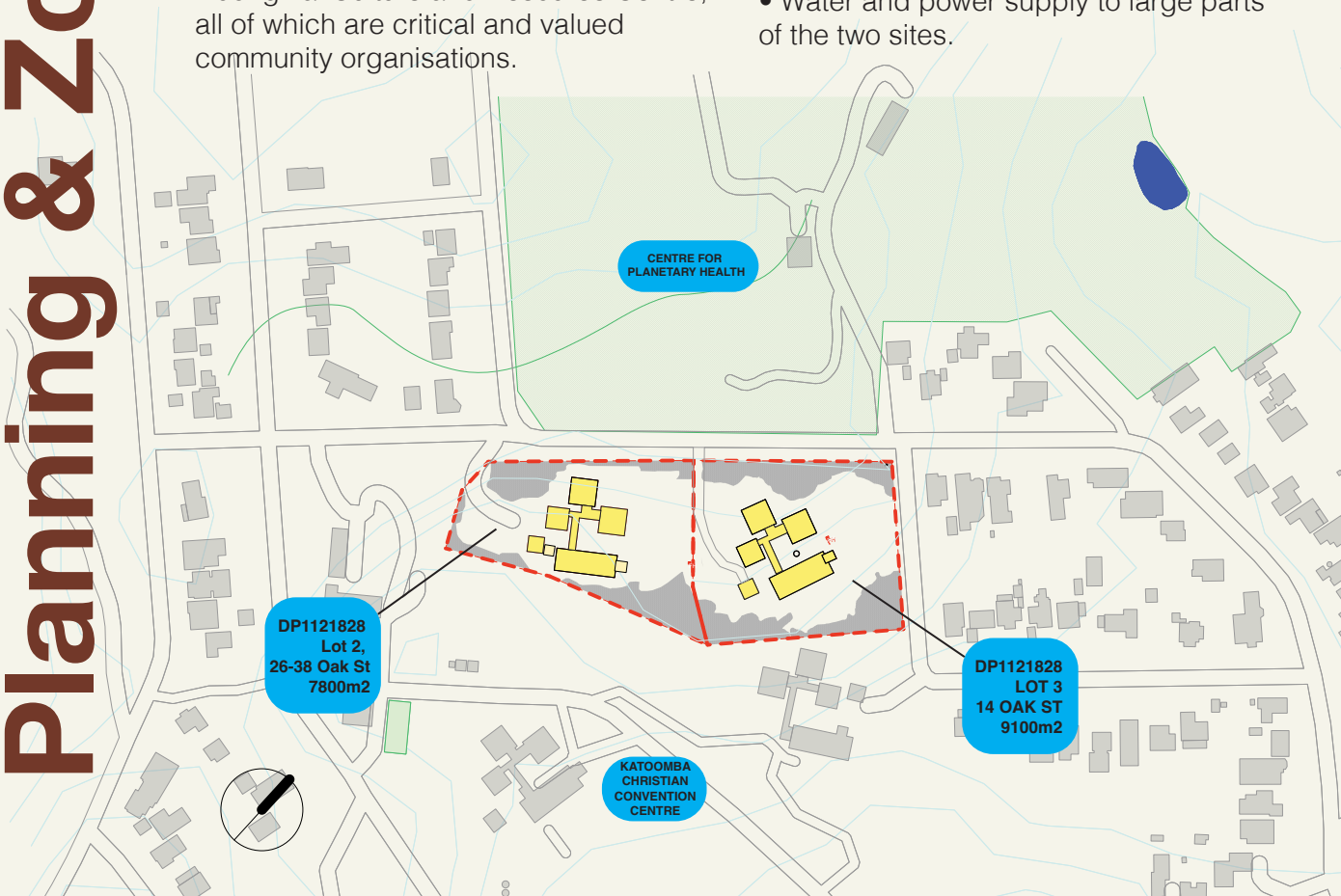
There are two existing community and accommodation buildings of 861m², one on Lot 2 and Lot 3 (see plan below). Both structures are well designed and have functioned successfully as community spaces since 1993. The buildings on No.14 Oak St (Lot 3) have been vacant for approximately 6 years and have suffered from water damage and neglect. Much of the structure is intact and could be retained. We consider that this site is better suited to housing, and under this proposal, it is here that the affordable housing would be located.

Lot 2 (26-38 Oak St) is currently occupied by Gateway Family Services, Wild Plant Rescue & Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre, all of which are critical and valued community organisations.



Key Strengths:

- Suitably zoned for the intended use.
- Relatively flat with good access and egress.
- Suitable orientation for passive heating and cooling.
- Existing buildings that form a natural hub for the project.
- Existing electrical sub-station on site.
- Water and power supply to large parts of the two sites.



PILOT PROJECT Proposed Use

Affordable Home Ownership

This project seeks to deliver affordable home ownership and/or affordable long-term rental accommodation for low-middle income earners.

Aboriginal Community Housing Provided (ACHP) Homes

There is a strong need for dedicated and culturally appropriate social housing in the Blue Mountains with currently no dedicated ACHPs in the region. The site is suitable for the inclusion of modest two story or low-rise social housing dwellings. However, to deliver housing that attracts Commonwealth Rent Assistance, the BMCLT would need to partner with a registered ACHP nominated by the community.

Community Use

There is a strong and thriving community sector in the Blue Mountains but very limited space for these organisations to function effectively. We intend to retain the existing services and further develop the site to enable a thriving community sector that includes a cultural and creative hub.

Food Security

Urban food production is increasingly important as cost of living sky rockets and access to food security diminishes. We intend to include community and/or social enterprise scale food farming on the site.



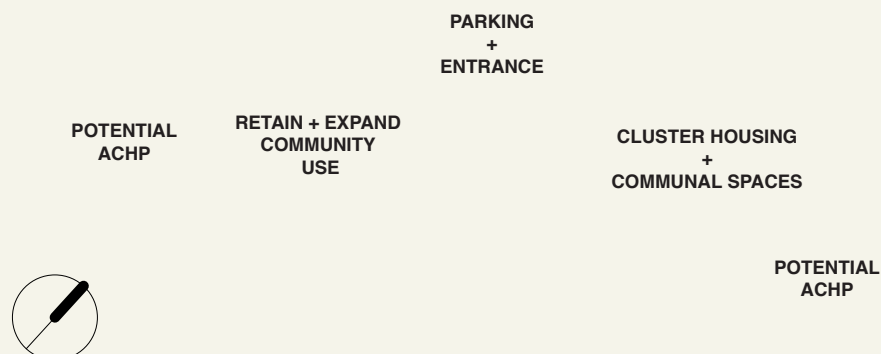
Lot 3. Clairvaux Community Space

Tenure Mix

The tenure mix of the residential component is intended to be diverse and responsive to local needs. BMCLT are committed to a minimum of 50% Indigenous housing, and to determining any proposed housing tenure mix with the community. Preliminary investigations determine that, with sensitive and suitable density, **the site can deliver a minimum of 28 single storey dwellings** as cluster housing with shared communal spaces.



Lot 3. Clairvaux Community Space being inspected by Auntie Carol & Uncle Ed



The estimated minimum yield using a pre-fabricated housing model is 28 homes.

Feasibility

To determine the feasibility of the two sites we have developed a speculative plan and costings based on professional expertise from Future Method Studio director & CLT lead Genevieve Murray, IDG Architects, Planning and Developments consultants Prof. Peter Phibbs and Stewart Lawler.

The sites have some advantages.

- Existing services on site: Fire Hydrants, Electrical substation, and mains water and sewer to central locations on both sites.
- Substantial terracing already in place.
- Surfaced roads and car parking providing good access on both Lots.
- Dual Street frontage
- Local Bus Route on Oak St
- In close proximity to an emerging innovation precinct and existing tourist hub.

Community Title

Community Title with a Co-operative model would enable sensitive environmental design. Sub-division is not recommended or desired.



**2 bed FABPREFAB Minima² costed at \$390K
Flame Zone rated including delivery,
foundations and craning (as of February, 2025)**



FABPREFAB Minima²

Pre-Fabricated Housing

To determine a suitable yield we have developed indicative plans (see over page) based on a Pre-Fabricated housing model by FABPREFAB that design and manufacture a functional, design-led alternative to conventional on-site construction that champions a low environmental and carbon footprint, higher efficiency, and waste minimisation (see attachments). The Pre-Fab housing whilst being modest in footprint and price ensures speedy construction and BAL Flame zone rated housing at a fixed price.



FABPREFAB Minima²

PILOT PROJECT Yield + Feasibility

POTENTIAL YEILD: 28 AFFORDABLE HOMES

*Clusters of
housing that
deliver a mix of:*

Studio	x 8
1 bed	x 10
2 bed	x 8
3 bed	x 2

PILOT PROJECT Yield + Typology

Housing Plan & Design

Our preliminary feasibility for the housing component of the proposed Pilot Project has been informed by:

- Prior community consultations,
- Existing planning regulations and controls,
- The history of the two sites
- Desired environmental performance.

The existing community buildings on Lot 2 will be wholly retained and extended if required. Retention of the community buildings on Lot 3, in a more derelict and water damaged state, is a decision that needs to be reserved for the community. If retained, in whole or in part, the not only provide continuity and a sustainable approach to the development but present the most appropriate location for any new housing given the area is already substantially cleared and has existing services.

The requirement for access roads and car parking for all residents has been a substantial consideration in our approach and our preliminary investigations suggest working with the existing terrain will reduce their impact and ongoing maintenance costs.

With these considerations in mind, we have been able to achieve 28 low impact and small footprint Cluster Style Pre-Fabricated Homes as a preliminary case study.

***Any plans for the two sites
require an extensive
Co-Design process with the
community and in
consultation with our
planning consultants, and
Council's planning team.***



FABREFAB home



Lot 3. Clairvaux Community Space
being inspected by Aunty Carol & Uncle Ed



Indicative Pre-Fab Cluster Plan Layouts



Meeting at Clairvaux, February, 2025
with Elders Aunty Carol Cooper, Aunty Bev Eaton,
Uncle Ed, IDG Archtiects, the BMCLT Committee
& Wild Plant Rescue Committee.

PILOT PROJECT The Numbers

Under current estimations local residents will have access to affordable home ownership at a fraction of relative market housing.

Feasibility

To determine the feasibility of the two sites we have developed speculative plans and costings with our working group and advisory group including Genevieve Murray, IDG Architects, planning and developments consultants Prof. Peter Phibbs and Stewart Lawler.

We have done our modelling based on a variety of scenarios to achieve an affordable home ownership model. The caveat is that these prices are indicative and should only be read as such.

Scenarios

- The implications of an Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) loan for First Nations residents is a substantial improvement in affordability (see Table 3)
- The second is modelling based on a mainstream 6% 30yr loan with 20% deposit. (See Table 4)
- We have also run two additional scenarios, one without any funding support through an Urban Precincts Partnership Program (UPPP) the other takes account of the benefit of this funding on the hip pocket of residents if both Streams 1 & 2 of the UPPP were factored in.
- Details on the UPPP are on the following page

TABLE. 3

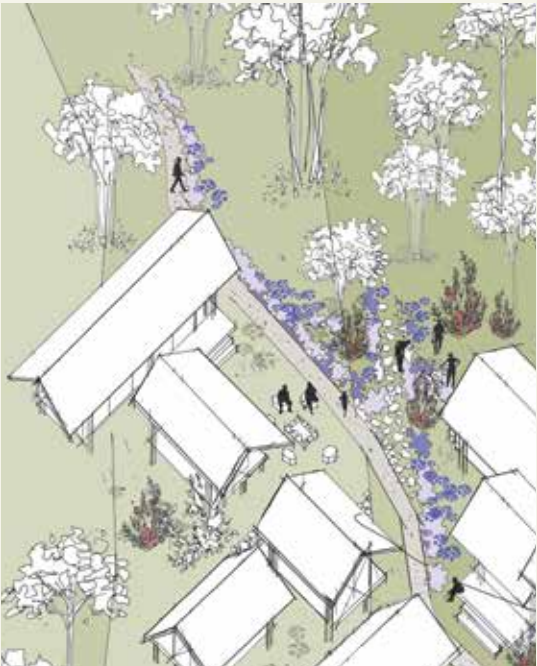
Indigenous Business Australia Loan 1.5% Interest Rate 3% Deposit over 30 years

Type	Total Weekly Repayments Without UPPP	Total Weekly Repayments With UPPP
Studio	\$118	\$102
1 Bed	\$162	\$146
2 Bed	\$193	\$157
3 Bed	\$263	\$226

TABLE. 4

Mainstream Loan 6% Interest Rate 20% Deposit over 30 years

Type	Total Weekly Repayments Without UPPP	Total Weekly Repayments With UPPP
Studio	\$364	\$315
1 Bed	\$501	\$451
2 Bed	\$598	\$486
3 Bed	\$812	\$700



Speculative ideas by Haziq Asari, Masters of Architecture Student, a project for cluster housing for the BMCLT developed in 2023
PLEASE NOTE - this design was not developed for the proposed sites and is indicative only.

There are substantial barriers to the financing and loan products available to CLT projects and residents due to their unique land tenure model.

But, there is progress being made by CLT other projects in NSW that demonstrate progress in the banking sector to support CLT projects such as these.

The Urban Precincts Planning Partnership program presents a unique possibility to consider this pilot project in relation to its broader context and potential.

PILOT PROJECT Planning & Delivery

Potential Innovation Precinct

The unique history of these two sites, their natural bush setting and proximity to major tourist precincts such as the Christian Convention Centre, Scenic World and the Centre for Planetary health places them in a prime position to be a thriving and vibrant hub for the community and visitors.

The Urban Precincts Planning Partnership (UPPP) is a perfect vehicle for a project of this nature and of this scale. UPPP funding is currently open with two streams with funding needing to be exhausted by March, 2027

The UPPP could be a vehicle for collaborative partnerships between governments, businesses, and communities. It focuses on creating multi-purpose, place-based precincts that enhance liveability, sustainability, and economic growth, while addressing local needs and aligning with a shared vision.

TABLE. 4

Urban Precincts Planning Partnership Stream 1 Precinct Development & Planning

Consultants	\$1,065,763
Development Application	\$566,187
Holding costs*	\$8,393
Outreach & Engagement	\$120,000
Total Draft Budget	\$1,760,343
UPPP Stage 1 \$500K-\$5Million	

TABLE. 5

Urban Precincts Planning Partnership Stream 2 Project Delivery

Residential Infrastructure	\$2,100,000
Site Establishment Works	\$1,329,800
Precinct Roads, Surrounding	
Infrastructure Upgrades & Amenity Upgrades	\$3,000,000
Community Buildings + Infrastructure	\$4,800,000
Solar & Environmental Upgrades	\$1,200,000
Total Draft Budget Precinct Delivery	\$12,249,000
UPPP Stage 2 \$5million-\$50million	



Site Visit Uncle Ed, BMCLT & Wild Plant Rescue.
Image by Tegan Geellie Rose

Blue Mountains Community Land Trust has been working closely with the community and other aligned community organisations for 5+ years now so we are in a strong position to proceed given the opportunities presented in this briefing.

Based on our proposed Pilot Project & with the idea of it being central to an Innovation Precinct we have outlined an indicative costing outlined in the below Table 3. UPPP Precinct Development and Planning, and Table 4. UPPP Project Delivery as a guide.

**Blue Mountains
Community Land
Trust (BMCLT) is a
First Nations and
Community led
organisation
working towards
secure and
affordable
housing for local
people.**



Community Forum 2022: CLT Workshop

Blue Mountains Community Land Trust began as a grassroots initiative in 2021 in response to the worsening housing crisis and while we knew the underlying issues and the need to advocate to government for change, we decided to proactively implement solutions to safeguard our community, particularly those most impacted by dispossession and displacement. The idea of the Community Land Trust suited our goals and ambitions as it was a model that could enable self-determination and a variety of solutions to the housing crisis that were responsive to place.

We convened our first online meeting with Aunty Carol Cooper and Aunty Jacinta Tobin, joined by 20 community members, in 2021. We initially came together with a focus on women's housing but with Aunty Carol's leadership we expanded our focus to a whole of community approach to housing. Aunty Jacinta underscored the essential role of self-determination and the right of her people to live and move across their Country, shaping our core values.

In 2022 & 2023 we met with local strategic planners and created an inter-agency network to tackle the housing crisis. We advocated to all levels of Government including submissions to key local policy platforms.

In 2023 we held a protest to highlight the worsening crisis and call for more action. We made the national news and created impact for the organisation.

Sydney University Partnership

In 2023 we ran a series of co-design workshops with University of Sydney masters of Architecture students to develop a masterplan for the CLT and understand community needs and how we could facilitate this through the Community Land Trust model. The students walked Country with Elders, Aunty Jacinta Tobin & Aunty Carol Cooper and created a Countermap of Country. They undertook a needs analysis and did a detailed assessment of available surplus land that could be repurposed for the Community Land Trust.

The students developed a variety of project briefs and designs based on the co-design workshops and we hosted an exhibition of their work and invited the community into a dialogue about housing and land led by Aunty Jacinta Tobin.

Collaboration with Walanmarra

In 2022 we began a collaboration with Walanmarra Artists & Friends, a First Nations women's art collective who were deeply concerned about the housing crisis. They invited us to speak at Shelter, an exhibition of works by local artists about their experience of housing precarity. Aunty Pip Smith and Aunty Kerrie Miller, members of Walanmarra, were both artists in this exhibition and became an important influence in our formation and direction. Aunty Pip's artwork, 'Another Number, Another Statistic' (2022) and Aunty Kerrie's Poem 'Have you Ever' will form the preamble to our constitution.



BMCLT Committee with Auntie Kerrie Miller, Aunty Bev, Aunty Carol, Anastasia Vickers, Aunty Norma Ingram,

BMCLT Our Story

BMCLT is committed to community led solutions to the housing crisis that enable stability and self-determination for those most marginalised by the housing system.

BMCLT Establishment



BMCLT Committee from left: Douglas Belton, Julie Nelson, Genevieve Murray, Aunty Carol Cooper, Annabel Murray, Alison Barnes & Anada Jones (not pictured: Nicole Kelly)

Organisational Capacity

BMCLT formed in 2021, and we are working towards establishment as an Incorporated Not for Profit Company by mid-late of 2025. The process of incorporation is often a swift and simple process. However, with no legal precedent in the Australian context for a Community Land Trust constitution that integrates Two-Way law/lore and governance, we have engaged a specialist Dr Michael Limerick of Limerick & Associates to facilitate the design of our Constitution through a process of consultation and workshopping with the community.

The primary goal in developing a CLT constitution for BMCLT is that it be multifaceted and culturally appropriate. It should be robust, fit-for-purpose and tailored to the CLT's unique needs, such as stewardship of land, housing and other community resources. Crucially, the development of the Constitution itself should be participatory, fostering co-design and ownership among all parties. A collaborative process, aimed at fostering consensus will ensure a solid foundation for the establishment and ongoing life of the organisation.



BMCLT has a passionate and skilled Establishment Committee made up of Elders and community members with lived experience of housing precarity and a grounding in community action.

BMCLT also has an Advisory Group made up of Elders and professionals who provide pro-bono expertise as required

Advisory Group

- Aunty Carol Cooper OAM, Darug & Gundungurra Elder, Senior Cultural Authority
- Aunty Jacinta Tobin, Darug Elder
- Aunty Bev Eaton, Wiradjuri Elder
- Prof. Louise Crabtree Hayes, Community Land Trusts, Zero Carbon Economies
- Dr Stewart Lawler, Property and Development Consultant,
- Emeritus Professor Peter Phibbs, Planning

Key Milestones for the BMCLT:

- Develop a Culturally Specific CLT constitution (in progress).
- Incorporate by August 2025.
- Establish a governance structure that reflects the values and priorities of the community.
- Secure funding through a diverse range of sources, including government grants, philanthropic donations, corporate sponsorships, and community fundraising.
- Develop a sustainable financial model that includes revenue streams from membership income, philanthropic organisations, and partnerships with key Government organisations.

Why a Community Land Trust?

Affordable & Culturally Appropriate Housing

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are a proven mechanism for channelling community needs and aspirations into permanently affordable housing and community benefit. Their community basis means they can provide everything from affordable rental through to permanently affordable resale-restricted housing options, and they have demonstrated resonance with Aboriginal housing and community aspirations.

CLTs are proven to deliver high quality design outcomes, reduce environmental impacts, and build healthy homes that are easy to heat and cool. Increasingly, CLTs' place-based membership, perpetual presence as stewards of diverse residential and non-residential properties, and commitment to broad community and environmental justice issues, means they are being sought out as long-term partners in equitable development and just transition.

CLTs have proven Environmental benefits and have been shown to:

- create 89% more sustainably designed buildings
- create a 71% reduction in resource extraction
- produce 75% less greenhouse gas emissions
- enhance biodiversity by 61%
- have 75% more efficient use of land,
- stimulate sustainable innovation by 82%
- create an 86% increase in support for environmental sustainability
- create increased environmental awareness among residents (64%) and among policy makers (82%)

(Source: European CLT Network)

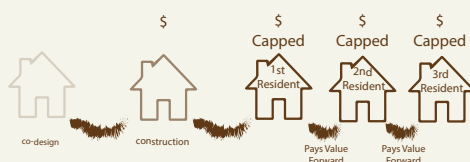


Table 6. Community Land Trust's Pay Forward the affordability with re-sale caps for residents.

Equitable Growth & Economic Empowerment

Current solutions to the housing crisis are focused on the levers available to government – predominantly inclusionary zoning and voluntary planning agreements – that aren't able to deliver on a broader range of community needs and ambitions.

Community Land Trusts offer a sustainable and long-term solution that can leverage surplus government or privately owned land otherwise unsuited for or unsupported as mainstream market housing, while safe-guarding affordable housing from market pressures and delivering equitable growth (see table 6).

Environmental Preservation & Connection to Country

CLTs are a vehicle for place-based and community led development. BMCLT is committed to working towards these ambitions throughout the design and build of the project. This includes:

- Supporting First Nations businesses
- Developing a Cultural Brief for the precinct
- Prioritising Country & Traditional Owner expertise in land management and care
- Ensuring Traditional Owner leadership & governance throughout the process
- Ensuring a minimum of 50% Indigenous Housing.

Affordable Housing is critical to ensuring the environmental preservation and stewardship of Country by Traditional Owners can continue.

CLAIRVAUX Past, Present, Future



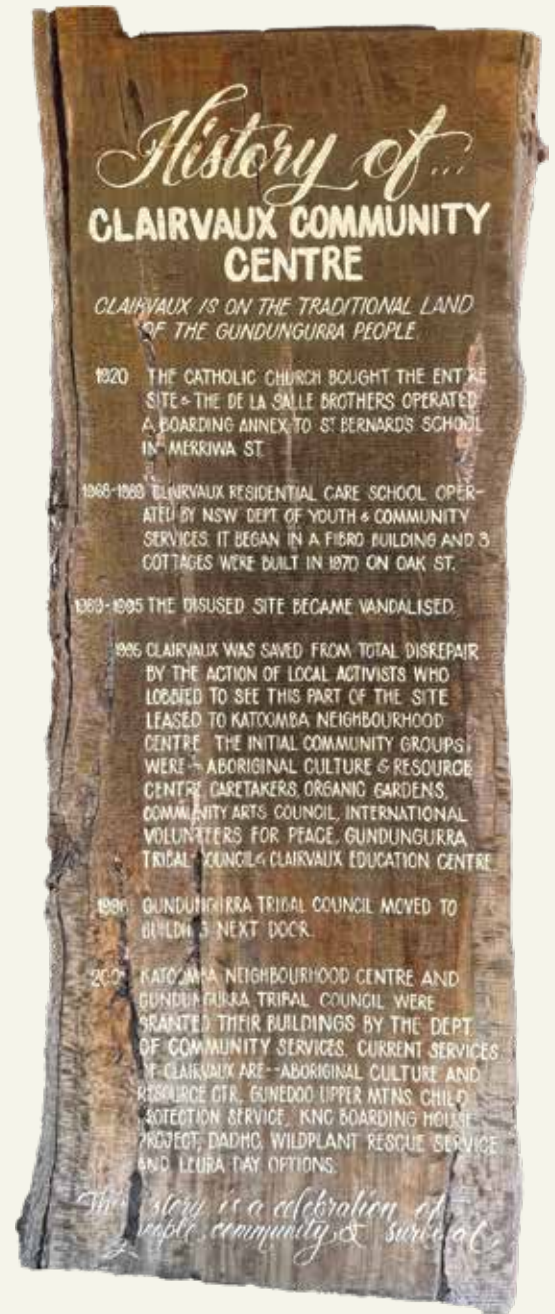
The Story of Clairvaux

Clairvaux has a long history of use by and for the local Community. Serving first as a church run boarding school, in the mid sixties it was developed by the State Government as a children's home for State Wards, with four new cluster homes constructed. First Nations children were among the many whose childhoods were spent there, and for whom it still holds many memories.

After the homes were closed, the buildings sat empty and neglected until the Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre (KNC) saw the potential to use part of the complex to house the many local community groups in need of accommodation.

DoCS granted them a license to use the premises but refused to assist with repairing the buildings or bringing them up to standard. This work was undertaken by KNC themselves but the task eventually proved too onerous for this small organisation and they gave up managing the site in 2009.

The resident groups at that time continued operating from Clairvaux, jointly contributing to necessary repairs but security of tenure proved a barrier upgrades or major repairs while awaiting the "permanent solution" which DoCS promised.



When The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ, who were DoCS) reappeared in 2000, they decided to evict all the tenants. Now, only Gateway Family Services and Wildplant Rescue Service remain. Rehoming a nursery has proved a near-impossible task for this valiant volunteer group.

'It is hoped a new partnership with the BMCLT will allow this site to remain as the valuable community asset it already is, and to continue serving the community into the future through the addition of affordable housing options.'



Wild Plant Rescue

In 2009 Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre decided to cease managing the site. They had attempted to get DoCS to agree to a manageable lease and to fix and maintain what they saw as DoCS responsibilities and these things did not come to fruition.

KNC did not have the resources to continue. The many resident community groups were informed by DoCS that they had no intention of evicting them while they looked for a permanent solution.

2019: The Gundungurra Tribal Council building was abandoned as it had become uninhabitable due to the refusal by DoCS to undertake necessary major repairs.

2020: DoCS, now known as the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ), announced their intention to evict the remaining community services that had been operating out of Clairvaux for the last 20 years and more. Leura Day Options, a day centre for disabled adults, and the Aboriginal Culture and Resource Centre (ACRC) both managed to find new premises.

2025: Where we Stand

The remaining community services still at Clairvaux are Gateway Family Services, Aboriginal Cultural & Resource Centre who maintain their presence and the BM Wildplant Rescue Service, a volunteer-run not-for-profit native plant nursery supplying bush plants to the Blue Mountains Community. Finding new premises for the nursery has been very difficult, they have been looking for many years. Blue Mountains City Council cannot offer any location, and DCJ have also been looking for some time unsuccessfully.

Current Demands on Community Spaces

The supply of suitable premises for community groups in the Blue Mountains is inadequate. Blue Mountains City Council has stated that as of late 2024, there are currently sixteen worthy community groups in the local government area who are in desperate need of suitable accommodation in order to be able to continue to provide their services.

Current Tenants and the Path Forward

The Blue Mountains Wildplant Rescue Inc has been searching unsuccessfully for an alternate location for its native plant nursery since they first moved to Clairvaux in 1999. The premises at Clairvaux have provided space for this important local resource which not only supplies plants for local gardeners to grow natural bush gardens, but for bushcare groups and the council to plant in parks and areas of bush regeneration. They are involved with local schools and environmental groups in helping to encourage biodiversity and promote appreciation of our unique environment here in the World Heritage National Park. A recent petition obtained over 1200 signatures.

CLAIRVAUX What Next?

Outcomes & Benefits

Key Outcomes of this proposal:

- **Improved Housing Outcomes**
- **Piloting Innovation**
- **Enabling economic and social sustainability and resilience**
- **Enabling Stewardship & First Nations Leadership**

Because Blue Mountains Community Land Trust's (BMCLT) focus is on land stewardship, community voice, and equity, they are well placed to deliver Closing the Gap targets at the intersection of health and housing.

The BMCLT with deep and established community networks can enable successful and collaborative co-design processes that support First Nations cultures of land care and management, fostering connections to Country and community through the process of delivering affordable housing.

The BMCLT is a model that can implement a deeply place-based approach, inherently grounded in the unique cultural, ecological, and social context of the Blue Mountains.



BMCLT have actively fostered collaborative partnerships with all levels of government, and non-profit organisations, and will draw on existing partnerships with experts in housing and environmental management as they progress.

Deep collaboration with the local First Nations community will form the foundation of the BMCLT. A community-led board will oversee the management of the land trust, ensuring that decisions reflect the priorities of the community, while clear mechanisms for accountability will be established, including regular reporting and evaluation of outcomes.

Stewardship of the land will emphasise shared management practices that may include cultural burning and native species regeneration, reflecting a commitment to both traditional knowledge and contemporary best practices.

Liveability & Resilience

BMCLT and the proposed pilot project is a vehicle for a vibrant and inclusive community that could help provide a greater sense of equity, belonging and well-being, through improving access to secure and affordable housing, cultural activities, recreation, and community services.

The Pilot Project will create economic opportunities for local social enterprises and community organisations while diverse, secure and affordable housing options improves the ability for community members to participate in the workforce, stabilising the local workforce and boosting the local economy.

Key Recommendations



Speculative ideas by Haziq Asari, Masters of Architecture Student, a project for cluster housing for the BMCLT developed in 2023
PLEASE NOTE - this design was not developed for the proposed sites and is indicative only.

To enable this exciting project, BMCLT would ultimately need the transfer of land from DCJ, as well as funding partnerships with government, philanthropic sources and/or community organisations to enable Precinct Planning and Precinct Delivery.

At this stage, we are seeking from Minister Rose Jackson:

- **A moratorium on the sale of the 2 lots until BMCLT is in position to proceed**
- **Continued legislative and regulatory support for the CLT model**
- **Facilitation of partnerships with relevant government agencies to develop the project**
- **Commitment to ongoing Ministerial collaboration and support**

We would lastly like to acknowledge Auntie Kerrie Miller who was a key member of Blue Mountains Community Land Trust, a much loved mother, friend and member of Walanmarra Artists & Friends. Aunty Kerrie is the reason we wrote to Trish Doyle and included the Clairvaux sites in our list of requests to Government in 2024

Her powerful poem, Have You Ever? forms part of the preamble to our future constitution grounding our our work in the lived experience of those most vulnerable to the housing crisis. Like Aunty Pip's artwork, her poem inspires us to work for a more just and equitable future that includes housing for all.

Aunty Kerrie Miller passed away in May, 2024
We honour her and her family.

Have You Ever?

Have you ever lost your job?

Have you ever been divorced?

Have you ever buried a partner?

Have you ever lost a child?

***Have you ever been unable to pay your rent or
mortgage?***

Have you ever had your gas or electricity cut off?

Have you not eaten for days?

Have you ever asked for charity?

Have you ever been abused?

Have you ever feared for your life?

Have you ever lived in your car?

Have you ever had to sleep on the street?

Have you ever...?

by poem Auntie Kerrie Miller

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

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Targets under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, The National Agreement on Closing the Gap, 2024

We would like to thank Elders Aunty Carol Cooper, Aunty Jacinta Tobin and Aunty Bev Eaton who have provided leadership and guidance throughout this process.

We would also like to thank the broader community, and our Establishment Committee Members past and present.

We would like to thank local community organisations who have contributed to our establishment and supported us along the way. Blue Mountains Women's Health & Resource Centre, Junction 142, Aboriginal Cultural & Resource Centre, and Walanmarra Artists & Friends amongst others. We wouldn't be where we are without you.

We would also like to thank our supporting partners and support organisations.

Especially our Auspicing Organisation
Belong Blue Mountains



Australian Community
Land Trust Network

FUTURE METHOD
STUDIO





BM  CLT