

# KATOOMBA CHARRETTE OUTCOMES REPORT & TOWN CENTRE REVITALISATION STRATEGY



April 1999

*Report prepared for*

**BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL**

*by*  
**Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty. Ltd.**

243 McKean St, North Fitzroy Vic, 3068  
Tel 03-9481-0637, Fax 03-9481-0585



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We, Chip Kaufman and Wendy Morris, are the co-writers of this Report and the co-directors of Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd (ESD), who led the Charrette for Katoomba's Town Centre. We hope that the outcomes are already beginning to meet some of the expectations of the many stakeholders of this important project, and that history will mark the Charrette as a key turning point in Katoomba's revitalisation.

This has been a phenomenal team effort, which would surely have foundered without the enlightened input and cooperation of so many committed citizens, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and in particular the staff and leadership of the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC). First and foremost we acknowledge the critical role of the Mayor of Blue Mountains, Councillor Michael Neall, who, through his approaches to State Cabinet, was able to establish the Katoomba/Echo Point Planning Advisory Committee and the focus and imperative for the revitalisation of both Katoomba and Echo Point. This committee provided the vital link between the Council and the community during the process and has been seeking the means to allow Katoomba to reach its full potential for a number of years. We are deeply indebted to Paul Grimson, who initiated the idea of a Charrette for Katoomba and has been steering this project toward fruition. Luke Nicholls, the Charrette manager, has been in at the 'coal face' of making this project work in every conceivable way from its outset, with unflagging determination. James Driver led the conversion of mountains of information into clear and useable existing condition drawings and aerial photographs for the Charrette Team and many stakeholders to design from. In addition, John Newbery provided crucial sage advice and steering of this project on behalf of the State.

Katoomba took a big risk with this project, due to its very tight time frames and its reliance on the extraordinary approach of a joint client/consultant Charrette Team. ESD's small team of 'Charrette veteran' sub-consultants performed like clockwork and designed, we think, brilliantly in the extremely demanding pressure-cooker environment of the five-day Charrette. Most of the ESD team arrived in Katoomba from outside NSW, from as far away as Perth and Auckland, although only a few had never been to Katoomba before. The client side of the Charrette Team, as well as many citizen stakeholders, were crucial in educating the Charrette Team in the specifics of Katoomba and how it functions.

This has been a hard and memorable commencement of a journey toward the revitalisation of Katoomba, which is only now just gaining steam! We thank you for what we have ourselves learned, and for the new friendships that have been forged in this Charrette process. We look forward to returning to Katoomba many times to see your ideas and hard work blossoming.

Wendy Morris, Charrette Leader

Chip Kaufman, Lead Urban Designer

## **PART I - KATOOMBA'S REVITALISATION CHALLENGE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Purpose and Contents of this Report**

The main purpose of this document is to report the outcomes from the Katoomba Charrette and subsequent public submissions to Council, and to propose related strategies and action plans for Katoomba's revitalisation.

This report explains what the Charrette was, why we did it and what happened during it. This report explains Katoomba's existing context, its issues and challenges, so that readers can understand what we had to work with and the reasons behind the outcomes. This report explains the proposed Charrette designs and the rationales behind them. General and specific strategies to expand employment are also detailed. This report suggests briefly what may happen next, and how the Charrette may be implemented. An implementation program is already under way, which this Report is intended to inform.

#### **1.2 The Intended Users of this Report**

This report should be useful to anyone wanting to understand the Charrette in detail, or to implement its proposed designs. That includes those who may be responsible for implementing it, such as the Blue Mountains City Council and other members of a Charrette Implementation Task Force, as well as persons who may be moving to Katoomba, buying or developing properties there, or considering business ventures.

#### **1.3 How to Use this Report**

The Katoomba Charrette Outcomes and Town Centre Strategies are necessarily quite comprehensive and complex, as is this Report. The detailed Table of Contents is the crucial 'road map' for finding specific information.

Because the proposals and strategies are all so inter-dependent, users should take care to ensure that they understand a given project in its context with neighbouring proposals and strategies. Please do not expect to deal successfully with a specific project in isolation!

Key sites are organised geographically into sections relating to the Town Centres Northern End, Central Area, and Southern End. This is because key sites in the Town Centre so affect each other, especially adjoining sites. Each of the three sections dealing with the key sites begins with a plan showing all its key sites. Also, an overall plan of the Town Centre, showing all the key sites, is provided in Section 5; the sites are keynoted and cross-referenced to the sections where they are explained in detail.

The Report provides numbered 'Actions' as a guide for future implementation.

## 1.4 The Katoomba Study Area and Key Sites

The photograph below shows Katoomba from the air. All aspects of this study area were open to review during the Charrette. The Charrette also considered areas and factors beyond the borders of this photograph, which affected and were affected by the Town Centre.



Aerial photograph of the Katoomba town centre

## 1.5 How this Report Will Affect Future Development

This Report has been preceded by the Katoomba Town Centre Future Directions Document that was an interim representation of the ideas and strategies that emerged from the Charrette. This document was placed on public exhibition in late 1998, and numerous public submissions were received. This Report has considered these submissions and will be presented to Blue Mountains City Council for formal endorsement. Then, once approved formally by the Blue Mountains City Council, this Report will inform new Local Government development control regulations and funding measures for Katoomba, including consideration in the revisions to the Draft Local Environmental Plan 97, or potentially a specific new Local Environmental Plan for Katoomba, as well as possible place-based Development Control Plans or Design Briefs for Key Sites. How the Charrette outcomes should affect such regulations has not yet been resolved.

The Project Design Briefs detailed in this Report for specific key sites will likely influence consideration of development on those sites.

## 1.6 The Accuracy and Completeness of this Report, and Public Consultation

An exhaustively complete record of all the information and public input gathered as a result of this Charrette, as well as all the possible designs considered, is well beyond the scope of this Report. Minor omissions surely exist. However, once approved formally by the Client, this Report is meant to serve as the definitive record of the Katoomba Revitalisation Charrette.

Hundreds of stakeholders were involved in this well-attended Charrette. The Charrette was quite well publicised beforehand, and letters of invitation were sent to key stakeholders, including government agencies. However, it is just not possible to consult with absolutely everyone. Some stakeholders may have been out of town or ill or unaware of the proceedings. The Charrette organisers regret if anyone feels he/she was left out; we hope they can forgive the inadequacies inherent to public consultation, even in the best of circumstances.

## 1.7 Post-Charrette Stakeholder Input

The Blue Mountains City Council received numerous submissions from stakeholders after the Charrette, mostly favourable toward the Charrette, and many with constructive suggestions. The content of most of those submissions has been absorbed into this Report without specific reference to their sources, or whether the input came during or after the Charrette.

## 1.8 The Present Non-Binding Status of this Report and of the Katoomba Charrette

While the Blue Mountains City Council has approved the Charrette in principle and other organisations have come out in its favour, nothing presented here is cast in stone. Indeed, one purpose of this Detailed Report is to encourage readers to find and suggest improvements to the Charrette Proposals.

This Report has been principally written by Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd (ESD), the consultants hired to lead the Charrette. This Report reflects ESD's understanding of the Charrette. Recommendations made in this Report do not necessarily represent precisely the desires or positions



of any or all of the Clients for the Charrette, or the agencies involved.

If any of the designs suggest changes to properties you own or are interested in, do not panic! While the designs are fairly detailed, they often describe one of several means of reaching a goal, for which there may be a better way that could affect your property differently or not at all. Contact the Blue Mountains City Council, City Planning Section, for further information, or if you have such concerns at 02-4780-5000.

## **1.9 Designs are Indicative; Revisions Should Adhere to Project Design Briefs; Proposed Project Locations May Evolve Over Time**

The proposed Charrette designs may appear quite specific, but they are only indicative. Over time, better designs may evolve. For this reason, the key rationales behind each proposal have been extracted into Project Design Briefs. Design revisions and/or new designs proposed during implementation should comply with these site-specific Project Design Briefs.

It is even conceivable that certain projects, or parts thereof, may end up locating on sites other than indicated in the enclosed plans. For example, parts of, or even all of the proposed Cultural/Visitors Centre proposed in Section 10.1 might locate elsewhere in the heart of Town, such as in an improved Civic Centre, the Savoy, or even the Parke Street frontage of the Carrington. Or, a new supermarket might locate in an unexpected but appropriate location in the heart of Town, which the Charrette did not recognise. Over time, there will hopefully be many more improvements and developments to the Town Centre, which the Charrette did not identify or design.

## **1.10 This Document Supersedes the Interim Future Directions Booklet**

As an interim means of explaining the Charrette in the short term, while this Report was being prepared, Blue Mountains City Council has endorsed a booklet called Katoomba Town Centre Strategy Future Directions. The strategies and action plans of that booklet have been embedded and refined into Sections 6 - 12 of this Report, so that this Report now supersedes that Future Directions booklet.

## **1.11 Limited Indemnification of Ecologically Sustainable Design, Pty Ltd (Esd)**

While ESD was responsible for leading the Katoomba Revitalisation Charrette and for writing this Report, all recommendations from the Charrette and in this Report are based on information provided by the Client and/or received through public consultation during the Charrette. Therefore, ESD's professional liability, in drawing conclusions and making recommendations during the Charrette or in this Report, is limited, if information on which this work was based turns out to be incorrect.

## 2. WHAT IS A CHARRETTE, WHY DID WE DO IT, AND THE CHARRETTE OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 What is a Charrette?

A Charrette is an intensive five day-long, design-based, publicly-interactive planning and design process, held in a local venue, which Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd pioneered in Australia, and which is intended to resolve complex, large and/or controversial projects, such as town centre revitalisation activities.

### 2.2 Why Did We Do It? Our Key Charrette Challenge: A Broadly Supported Vision for Katoomba

Many problems, accumulating over the past decades, have weakened Katoomba, with efforts thus far to correct the decline having been far from successful. Efforts to date, which had generally tried to solve one problem or issue at a time, were not seeming to stem the decline of Katoomba. Indecision and conflicting opinions about how to deal with Katoomba's challenges were hobbling progress.

Anticipated increases in tourism because of the Olympics, plus a forthcoming State Government election, triggered local initiatives to get state funding for improvements to Echo Point. Echo Point is a world class tourism destination without commensurate facilities. With the advent of the Echo Point initiative, the idea also emerged of seeking related state and local funding to revitalise Katoomba's Town Centre. However, state and local leaders recognised that funding for the Town Centre was not likely if the context of indecision and conflicting opinions persisted. They needed to find a way to forge an achievable vision for an improved Town Centre, which would earn broad local support.

The Blue Mountains City Council, in consultation with state government leaders and their representatives, agreed that they had to undertake:

- ◇ A process, which was as rigorous and comprehensive as Katoomba's problems are complex and inter-locking;
- ◇ A process which could bring all stakeholders together to deal with these problems;
- ◇ A process which could produce a practical plan which could earn strong support and could therefore be both funded and implemented; and
- ◇ A process which could deliver results quite quickly, well prior to the forthcoming state elections.

Blue Mountains City Council decided that a Charrette or intensive design workshop was the right process to achieve these goals. After a limited public tendering process, Ecologically Sustainable Design Pty Ltd (ESD) was commissioned by the Blue Mountains City Council to lead a Charrette in October of 1998.

### 2.3 Charrette Objectives

During the preparation phase, ESD and the Blue Mountains City Council considered Katoomba's challenges and came up with the following objectives, which served as the 'values' which drove the Charrette outcomes:

- ◇ To clarify a vision for the Katoomba Town Centre, and to achieve community consensus for future planning directions in Katoomba;
- ◇ To improve businesses and the town's image, safety and amenity to gain more benefit from tourism;
- ◇ To improve access for pedestrians, cars, and public transport users and to address parking issues related to both the town centre and Echo Point;
- ◇ To upgrade Katoomba's built heritage in the context of the proposed World Heritage listing for the Blue Mountains;
- ◇ To achieve more sustainable development;
- ◇ To generate new business and employment activities in Katoomba, including mixed use development; and
- ◇ To develop proposals for eight key redevelopment sites.

### 3. WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE AND DURING THE CHARRETTE?

#### 3.1 Charrette Preparation

During the several months before the Charrette, a Charrette Preparation Team comprised of the Blue Mountains City Council (the Client), state government representatives and ESD staff completed thorough logistical preparations. ESD prepared a detailed Client's Charrette Manual to guide the Client in its Charrette preparation and management responsibilities. The Team also conducted extensive research to resolve unknown information determined to be needed to inform the Charrette.

The information that was collected prior to the Charrette included:

- ◇ Extensive consultation with the local community, particularly through a household survey and a series of focus groups with interested parties;
- ◇ Collection of base environmental, social and economic information about Katoomba, particularly through a social profile completed by Council's Cultural and Social Planning Branch, input from Council's Environmental Management Branch and other expertise from across Council.

This information was presented in a briefing booklet that was used during the Charrette to identify and clarify issues.

This Charrette Briefing Booklet became a crucial source of information that guided the Charrette. The Contents Sheet of that document is reprinted in the Appendix 'Y', and the Charrette Briefing Book is available for review at the Blue Mountains City Council.

A rigorous assessment of existing and potential employment contexts and opportunities was also conducted prior to the Charrette. The initiative was directed by Derek Kemp of Brisbane, a member of the Charrette Team.

There was extensive public notice of the forthcoming Charrette, including weekly articles in the local paper, posting out of an information brochure to the residents of Katoomba, and discussions with local community groups.

## 3.2 The Charrette

From 22-26 October, 1998, at the TAFE facilities in Parke Street, hundreds of residents used their local knowledge to work with a diverse design team (see Appendix 'X' for members' names) to consider all aspects of Katoomba's inter-related problems and opportunities all at once, rather than looking at each issue one at a time.

A public meeting on the first night outlined the process and gave people a chance to air their concerns. On the second day there was a key session with government agencies, where agency heads or their representatives were briefed and asked to address together the address ten key issues shown the box below.



Charrette team member Steve Goldie consulting with citizens during the Introductory Meeting.

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES MEETING ISSUES

- Issue 1: Availability, Features and Timing of Release of Surplus Government Sites
- Issue 2: Katoomba's Role in State Tourism - facilities and improvements needed to lengthen stays, beds demand, etc.
- Issue 3: Possibility and potential benefits of relocating NPWS District Office to Katoomba, and opportunity of linking NPWS information service with BMCC information service, together with the possible impact of World Heritage Listing on the region.
- Issue 4: Should Katoomba establish an Arts and Cultural Facility, and if so, what functions should it serve and how would it be funded?
- Issue 5: What is the future role of TAFE in Katoomba? Are there plans for expansion?
- Issue 6: Adequacy and image of Main Roads including Accesses through and into Katoomba, and possibilities for more direct connections from the Highway to Katoomba St or Lurline St,
- Issue 7: Possible changes in the station precinct including surplus land/air space disposal,

pedestrian underpass enhancement and opportunity for at-grade crossing.

- Issue 8: possibilities for improving public transport for both locals and visitors, including Echo Point shuttle (and parking requirements), providing a direct service between Echo Point and the Skyway, joint rail/bus ticketing, mountain expresses, etc.
- Issue 9: what initiatives are possible to help generate employment and business development in Katoomba?
- Issue 10: What needs have been identified for future housing diversity and affordability in Katoomba?
- Discussion: Integration of Issues and Opportunities identified, to draw conclusions for the Charrette to test by design.

Over the next few days urban designers, traffic engineers, planners, experts in ecology, public transport, community and economic development and engineering all worked together with residents, businesses, landowners, government agencies and interest groups such as youth and the Katoomba Main Street Committee, to produce the Charrette Outcomes explained in this report.

Designs and/or new uses were proposed for privately and publicly owned key areas in the heart of Katoomba, including the State Rail Authority's Railway Goods Yard and State Rail Authority property north of the station, the 'Goldsmiths site, the 'Gateway' site at the intersection of Parke and Main Streets, the Carrington Hotel's front lawn, the Civic Centre, Kingsford Smith Park, the Telstra property and the Bible College on Katoomba Street, the Renaissance Centre, the Savoy, the Old TAFE and new TAFE East sites, or other properties in the Town Centre. Many improvements were proposed for transport systems including the streets, bus network and pedestrian/cyclist access and amenity. Charrette Proposals are explained in detail in Part II of this Report.

Charrette leader Wendy Morris of ESD presented the outcomes in a concluding public meeting, attended by about 400 enthusiastic citizens. A video tape of that meeting can be viewed at the Blue Mountains City Council. Soon thereafter an interim report called Katoomba's Future Directions was prepared, which this Report now supersedes.



Local citizens design with Charrette Team members during Sunday's 'open studio' session.

**Day 1: Thursday 22nd October**  
**Introduction to the Charrette – Public Meeting.**  
**7.30pm – 10.00pm, Katoomba Civic Centre Hall.**

This is the Charrette session that everyone should attend, particularly if you intend to come to the Topical and Special Interest Meetings on Friday afternoon.

Charrette leader, Wendy Morris will explain exactly how the Charrette process works. Wendy, an experienced urban designer, will outline the issues and objectives of quality urban planning, showing how these relate to Katoomba.

Workshopping of different views will be an integral part of this meeting, with all participants given the opportunity to contribute in small group discussions after the initial presentation.

**Day 2: Friday 23rd October**  
**Topical and Special Interest Meetings**  
**2.30pm – 6.30pm Blue Mountains College of TAFE, Katoomba Annex.**

Anyone with a special interest in the following issues is encouraged to attend these afternoon and evening meetings (and should also attend the Thursday night meeting).

**2.30pm – 3.30pm**

- Environment meeting: Sustainability between the town centre and the natural environment
- Katoomba Senior Citizens meeting
- Aboriginal Issues meeting
- Developers and town centre property owners meeting

**3.30pm – 4.30pm**

- Katoomba Youth meeting.

**3.30pm – 5.30pm**

- Employment, tourism, business development and home based business meeting.
- Housing needs and choice meeting

**5.30pm – 6.30pm**

- Retailers meeting
- Public transport, traffic and community safety meeting

- Cultural recreation, community services & youth facilities, (including access) meeting
- Heritage and town character meeting.

**Charrette Design Studio, 7.30pm – 9.30pm.**  
**Blue Mountains College of TAFE – Katoomba Annex.**

**Group 1** – Arts and cultural facilities / locations  
**Group 2** – Strengthening “Main Street” including issues, buildings, retail, traffic, public space and heritage  
**Group 3** – Railway station and highway precinct  
**Group 4** – Possible sites for a new supermarket.

These groups will work with designers and investigate a number of the issues relevant to the Katoomba Town Centre. To allow these groups to actively participate in designing, participants in these groups will be limited in number and registration in advance will be essential. Interested parties and community groups should register with Michaela Derry by telephoning 4780 5686.

**Day 3: Saturday 24th October**  
**Charrette Design Studio open to the public.**  
**10.00am – 12.00pm Blue Mountains College of TAFE, Katoomba Annex.**

**Day 4: Sunday 25th October**  
**Charrette Design Studio open to the public. 2.00pm – 4.00pm**  
**Blue Mountains College of TAFE – Katoomba Annex.**

These are opportunities to work directly with designers on specific issues or to discuss ideas that you may have.

**Day 5: Monday 26th October**  
**Closing Presentation and discussion – Public Meeting.**  
**7.30pm – 10.00pm Katoomba RSL Club.**

Charrette leader, Wendy Morris will present the outcomes of the previous five day’s effort including the specific Charrette designs for the revitalisation of the Katoomba Town Centre. During the evening there will be opportunities for all members of the public to comment on the results.


  
 BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL      New South Wales Government

Copy of the printed Charrette Program

## 4. KATOOMBA’S CONTEXT: INTER-LOCKING ASSETS & PROBLEMS

### 4.1 Introduction to this Section

In order to propose solutions to Katoomba’s problems and to capitalise on Katoomba’s potential, the Charrette Team and stakeholders needed firstly to understand them. Through the Charrette process a complex but reasonably focussed picture emerged of Katoomba, a town blessed with potential but plagued with inter-locking problems, explained here as Katoomba’s ‘Inter-locking Assets and Problems’ which informed the Charrette Proposals.

‘Inter-locking’ is the right word to describe both Katoomba’s problems and the solutions required to solve them. Although explained one at a time, the following questions and challenges are functionally inter-locking and, if Katoomba’s revitalisation is to succeed, the initiatives pursued and how they are implemented must be just as strongly linked together.

These inter-locking challenges can be grouped into several inter-dependent categories, which have formed the contents of this chapter. We found that a fundamental problem was how the public reported they were generally feeling about Katoomba. While showing great potential, the urban structure was found to be holding Katoomba back, as well. We have organised these urban structure problems into ‘holes, barriers and bypasses’. The public realm did not feel or function as well as it perhaps could and should. By ‘public realm’ we mean the appearance of the Town Centre, and what it has to offer, including civic activities and public spaces. Katoomba’s economy was found to be limping a bit. To some extent, urban run-off was found to be degrading parts of Katoomba’s natural

beauty. The weather, albeit spectacular, was reportedly more a problem than an asset being capitalised upon.

## **4.2 General Public Opinion In Katoomba: Deep Care, But Frustration & Uncertainty**

### **4.2.1 Deep Care, But also Frustration and Uncertainty**

Katoomba is blessed by a citizenry who generally care deeply for it. However, some of them have trouble taking pride in Katoomba's Town Centre because of the problems explained below, such as its 'down-at-heel' appearance. Many citizens have been frustrated with seemingly intractable problems such as the long-term closure of the Savoy Theatre and ongoing decline of so many businesses. They report it is sometimes hard to commit wholeheartedly to the place, when there are so many 'unknowns' potentially beyond their control, such as the mooted 'Gateway Shopping Centre' at the north end of Parke Street or seemingly on-going threats of multi-national drive-through fast food outlets dominate and/or blight the town entry.

### **4.2.2 Some Traders Discouraged, Many with Dwindling Business Prospects**

Since Katoomba's heyday before the Second World War, Katoomba has been declining. There has come the gradual dominance of car and bus visitation to Echo Point over primarily train visitation which focussed on both the Town and Echo Point. The closure of the Katoomba Street on-grade railway crossing and its replacement with Yeoman's Bridge have made access to the heart of town far less direct; drivers generally bypass Katoomba Street in favour of Parke or Lurline Streets. The Coles supermarket development with its easy Parke Street access further cemented this bypassing of the heart of town, effectively stranding many businesses on Katoomba and Main Streets. Struggling shop tenants have trouble finding time and money to maintain their buildings, and stagnating rents also discourage owners from maintaining their premises. With little hope in sight, these difficulties have become a vicious cycle, with tattered buildings and struggling businesses unintentionally dragging down their neighbours.

### **4.2.3 Regulations May Jeopardise Town Centre Viability**

Despite the best of intentions, some regulations governing how the Town Centre functions and develops may be hampering its vitality.

On-site parking requirements seem to be keeping small properties with existing buildings on them from re-modeling, expanding their floor areas or uses, or re-developing. On-site parking requirements have also stalled out the revival of the Savoy. While parking is vital, the requirements seem to be choking progress; they do not seem to suit the Town Centre context very well.

Present regulations seem to allow multi-national fast food drive-through at least to make development proposals, which might compromise the character of the town entry and, inappropriately located and designed, jeopardise the viability of competing existing businesses in the heart of town.

The Development Control Plans for the Town Centre are topical, and not place-based. The regulations have allowed developments to be constructed, which damage the pedestrian and

urban amenity and identity of the Town Centre. A glaring case in point is the Coles supermarket 'frontage' along the corner of Waratah and Parke Streets.

The present Town Centre Zone in the 1987 Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is too large, extending beyond the core of the Town Centre, thereby allowing commercial development which might actually weaken the actual Town Centre. The edge of the zone in the centre line of Parke Street has encouraged commercial development on the east side, which in many cases is not compatible with the residential development on the West side.

Regulations generally have not encouraged compatibly mixed use development in the Town Centre, and instead have led in some cases to development uncertainty, as with the Gateway Shopping Centre proposal explained below.

#### **4.2.4 Gateway Shopping Centre Proposal is a Symptom of these Problems**

The Gateway site is a group of adjoining properties at the northern 'dog leg' on the western side of Parke Street at the roundabout with Main Street. The present Local Environmental Plan allows the Gateway Site to be developed as an enclosed shopping centre, which, if it were built, would jeopardise the viability of the Town Centre (see Section 7.8.1 for further details). While that development application has been in and out of the City Offices of late, no one can be sure what will become of the Gateway site. Such major uncertainties discourage other developers or existing businesses from moving forward on other initiatives which might benefit the Town, because, for example, they might be overwhelmed by the Gateway Shopping Centre if constructed.

The talk around town for many years of a new supermarket and the possibility of its going either to the extreme north or extreme south end of the Town Centre has reportedly created such uncertainty that retailers have been unable or unwilling to plan or position themselves for the future. Thus even the uncertainty has disadvantaged existing businesses.

The progressive decline of the Town Centre, hampered by difficult regulations and resultant unknowns, seem to have trapped the Town Centre in a 'Catch 22'.

### **4.3 Urban Structure : Great Potential, But too Many Holes, Barriers & Bypasses**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

What do we mean by urban structure, and why bother with it? 'Urban structure' means how buildings, streets and open spaces are assembled; it governs our behaviour; it can make or break a town. Just as a room without doors and windows becomes a prison, a town without good access does the same. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the urban structure of a place, we can propose private developments and changes to the public realm which will incrementally improve how the place works, and how we can flourish within it.

This section explains the assets and problems in the urban structure of Katoomba.



### 4.3.2 Great Potential But...

Surrounding natural attractions...Why can't Katoomba be their central focus?

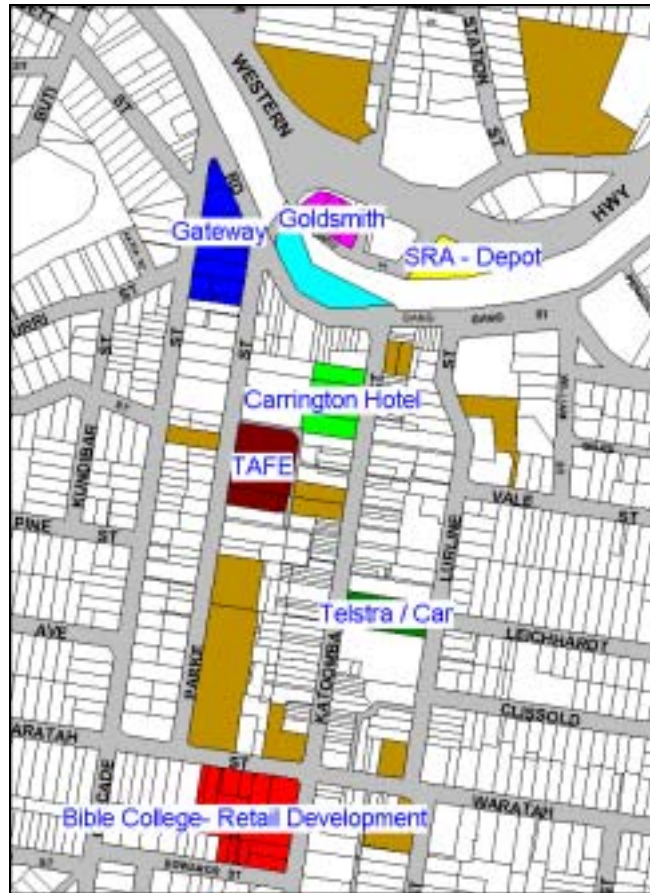
There may be no other town in the world surrounded by such a stunning national park, while also being so close to a major city such as Sydney. Katoomba has the basics, to put it mildly, but it is not working as well as it should. From high in the air, Katoomba appears the centre of the natural attractions, but the urban structure of the place is holding back its potential. Too much visitors' custom bypasses the heart of town, to some extent because the street network and major destinations now tend to bypass Katoomba Street, and partly because people choose not to go there because it is not as appealing as it used to be. We will explain these problems more thoroughly in this section.

**Katoomba has most of the same assets as it had in its heyday.** So, why is Katoomba not flourishing still? At the turn of the century, train and pedestrian access concentrated visitors into Katoomba's Centre, while today's dominant access by cars and buses tends to disperse visitors and bypass them past the Town Centre.

### 4.3.3 Holes (Both Problems & Opportunities)

Urban fabric and structure works best, especially in a town centre, when it is fairly contiguous...ie, where there are few holes or gaps (including vacant buildings), and where assets capitalise on their adjacency with each other, in order to achieve a 'critical mass' of vitality. The heart of Town has been riddled with holes. Fortunately, one of the most conspicuous holes, the Carrington Hotel, is newly renovated and operating once again. However, many holes still remain, which make it, at the very least, boring, if not unsafe to get through or past them. These 'holes' keep existing assets from flourishing as well as they should.

Because this problem of holes is so pronounced in Katoomba, the Charrette Team was contracted actually to address most of them by proposing designs for their redevelopment or re-modelling, so that the many holes in the urban structure of Katoomba could be healed, as detailed in Sections 9 to 11 of this Report. The following are the most crucial holes:



Katoomba's Town Centre, keynoting all the 'holes' discussed below, with key streets and lanes labelled

### Former TAFE (Former Katoomba High School Site)

The large and centrally located old TAFE and its property on the east side of Parke Street is a brilliant site going begging. Its present blight, however, limits the appeal of the Carrington and other adjoining properties, and it discourages pedestrian access in that area between Katoomba Street and Parke Street. The historic high school building, while presently derelict, appeared to be rehabilitable during the Charrette, if conditions would allow. See proposals for this site in Section 10.1.

### The Carrington Hotel, Its Front Lawn and Parke Street Frontage

The Carrington's front lawn is just northeast of the Old TAFE site and affected by its dereliction. The Carrington lawn is presently informally used by the public, but access to it is uncertain once the Carrington Hotel formally has reopened, and the garden has been restored. The Charrette found a strong desire on the part of the community for more publicly accessible green open space. Whether the Carrington's front lawn might serve that purpose was a key issue in the Charrette (see Section 10.2). So long as it stays private, the lawn is nice to look at, excellent for Carrington patrons, but to some extent still a 'hole' in Katoomba's urban fabric, as far as the public is concerned.

The Carrington's Parke Street frontage, not yet finished or open, has a historic building with extraordinary re-use potential, and some vacant ground presently not in use or open to the

public. Because the property is fenced and boarded up at present due to ongoing construction, it also acts as a gap or hole in the urban continuity of Parke Street. That all could change in time (see Section 10.4).

### **The Savoy**

The Savoy Theatre/Trocadero on Katoomba Street, with its extraordinary complex of entertainment and performance facilities, was once a glory to Katoomba and should be again. But now it is a 'hole' in Katoomba Street. The Charrette learned that the Savoy's redevelopment was recently denied due to its inability to comply with on-site parking requirements for its projected uses. The facility is in tatters but appears to be restorable, if its redevelopment (refurbishment) were permissible and if it could prove viable in terms of financial feasibility (see Section 8.4 Car Parking and Section 10).

### **State Rail Authority (SRA) Goods Yard**

The State Rail Authority (SRA) Goods Yard, between the station and Main Street, contains some important historic rail-related buildings and an old crane structure, but is mostly a vacant and dusty hole in the urban fabric. Safety there at night is a concern, and the Goods Yard is hardly used in the daytime. This was a key site the Charrette Team was contracted to deal with (see Section 9.1).

### **SRA Depot (North) and Highway Frontage of the Gearin's Hotel**

These two sites flank the top of Katoomba Street at the Great Western Highway, marking the 'front door' to Katoomba with a less than inspired image at present.

The State Rail Authority (SRA) Depot site, on the southeast corner of the Great Western Highway and Katoomba Street, is potentially a brilliant site for a signature development which reflects Katoomba's assets and character, but it presently functions as a 'hole' with a vacant lot near Katoomba Street with a limited use for car parking, and the now under-utilised depot itself further to the east. The SRA has indicated that this property is available for redevelopment, and the Charrette Team was contracted to deal with it (see Section 9.3).

While the historic Gearin's Hotel at the top of Katoomba Street on the corner with the Great Western Highway is a treasure, its frontage to the highway is not. Its north face is a blank brick wall with an empty space about 5 metres wide stretching to its rear, between the elevated highway retaining wall and the building itself. This unfortunate frontage to the highway may have come about as a result of the highway construction. This blank wall and empty space function as a 'hole' or missing face of this key corner of Katoomba's Town entry at Katoomba Street (see Section 9 for proposals).

### **Goldsmiths Site**

The Goldsmith's Hardware site, just north of the station and west of the Gearin's Hotel, is set about 7 metres below the grade of the adjoining highway, at the base of a vertical retaining wall. The hardware store is operating, but the owners would like the property to be re-developed, and the property acts effectively as a 'hole' in the urban fabric, at least compared to its potential.

This site, especially if built above its retaining wall to address the highway, would be quite valuable due to its exposure to passing trade, and it has been the focus of concerns about a McDonalds or other fast food restaurant moving into the Blue Mountains. See Section 9.2 for

proposals for this site.

### **Gateway Site (Parke Street & Bathurst Road)**

Because it is largely unoccupied at present and so prominently positioned at the entry to the Town Centre, the Gateway site acts as a 'hole' in the urban fabric, one which seems to signal that Katoomba may be in decline. On the other hand, if the Gateway re-develops into a successful project that complements instead of threatening the Town Centre (see Section 9.5), it will just as decisively proclaim Katoomba's resurgence.

### **Gaps in Retail and Pedestrian Continuity**

Katoomba suffers from many smaller holes or gaps in its retail and pedestrian continuity. Both shoppers and pedestrians generally tend to be fickle. Both retailing and pedestrian studies have consistently shown that gaps in building frontages, along which shoppers or pedestrians walk, tend to discourage their going further. Gaps can be caused by buildings either missing or set back too far, by boring or blank frontages, by gaps in weather protection of awnings or verandahs, or by other characteristics in the route, which might tend to intimidate or offend.

Such gaps in Katoomba's retail and pedestrian continuity include but are by no means limited to:

- ◇ Telstra frontage (see Section 10.9 for proposed improvements),
- ◇ Coles frontage along both Parke and Waratah Streets,
- ◇ some of the lanes connecting to Katoomba Street, especially after dark when badly lit,
- ◇ the SRA Goods Yard,
- ◇ the Parke Street frontage of the Carrington (until it re-opens).

### **Civic Centre**

The Civic Centre on Katoomba Street contributes importantly to the Town Centre, but its frontages both to Katoomba Street and College Lane are not very inviting. Proposed improvements to these frontages and a major internal redevelopment are explained in Section 10.7.

### **Telstra & adjoining Council Car Park**

The Telstra Building on Katoomba Street contains important communications infrastructure for the region, but it does not contribute to the civic vitality of the Town Centre. Proposed improvements to the frontage of the Telstra Building (and redevelopment of the rear of the site) are explained in Section 10.9.

### **Plaza at City Offices Precinct Use Presently By Skateboarders**

Skateboarders appear to appreciate the plaza in front of the City Offices, but it seems that hardly anyone else uses it. This is probably not the fault of the skateboarders. Rather, the plaza may not be ideally located, and/or it may be oversized and missing a 'back-drop building' to its east, which might give the plaza a stronger sense of place and possibly more activity. At present, while some may think this plaza is nice, it is not generally recognised as the Town's main plaza, nor used heavily, despite its being the only main public plaza in Town. If there is redevelopment of Council's Civic Centre, the SRA Goods Yard and the revitalisation

of the Carrington Lawn with some limited public access, then this City Office plaza may further become surplus to need, and be more clearly recognised as a 'hole' waiting to be partly or entirely filled with a more vital use.

#### **Renaissance Centre, at the North End of Civic Place**

This important site is presently vacant and for lease...another 'hole' and a glowing opportunity. See Section 9.6 for proposals and Section 13 for a report on progress since the Charrette.

### **4.3.4 Barriers**

Katoomba has many 'barriers' in its urban fabric, which limit access between its assets and thereby keep the Town Centre from functioning at its full potential.

The Railway acts as a barrier, and access to Katoomba Street from the highway via the Yeoman's Overpass is too indirect, at the expense of businesses along Katoomba Street. Before the Katoomba Street railway crossing was closed, Katoomba Street had much more direct and beneficial vehicular access from custom travelling to and from Sydney. The historic pedestrian underpass at the station is perceived by many as unsafe, especially at night, and the Yeoman's Bridge access is too indirect and unappealing for substantial pedestrian use. North Katoomba is relatively cut off from the heart of Katoomba by the railway. See Section 8 for proposed solutions to this 'barrier'.

The ridge, on which Katoomba sits, features spectacular distant views, but limits pedestrian access and nearby population to support the Town Centre. Ideally for its retail and commercial viability, a town centre should be surrounded by neighbourhoods whose population would patronise the town centre, either walking, cycling, taking public transport or driving. Katoomba has a relatively small adjoining population catchment, with spectacular views from the cliff edges instead! We cannot do anything about this geographical penalty and blessing. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that it acts as a 'barrier' to more nearby population to support the Town, and, therefore, that the available land on the ridge becomes all the more important, as does access to the Town from nearby towns in the Upper Mountains and from Sydney. Steepness, too, discourages some from climbing up to the Town Centre by foot or cycle.

The environmentally constrained land of Katoomba's northern plateau and its non-urban zoning limit further population there, which might have supported the Town Centre. The only undeveloped land on Katoomba's ridge is the already subdivided land adjoining Katoomba to its north. However, due to its environmental qualities, that land has been so far determined by the local community, independent of the Charrette, to be inappropriate to develop, and that it should stay effectively as a forest 'barrier' to future growth in that direction, meaning there can be no additional population catchment to support the Town Centre from there.

Many of Katoomba's intersections don't work well; they impede vehicular access to Katoomba Street and other destinations, and they are hard for pedestrians to cross. Thus these difficult intersections act as 'barriers' to vehicular and/or pedestrian access to the Town Centre. Traffic at the Yeoman's Bridge roundabout backs up during peak hours, and it is hard for pedestrians to cross it, especially when traffic is heavy. The intersection of Waratah and Katoomba Streets generates congestion, and pedestrians find it difficult or unsafe in crossing. Frequent pedestrian crossings at this intersection tend to impede efficient traffic flows; intersection improvements should work better both for cars and vehicles here. Prior Place intersects as a one-way street with Katoomba Street, thus acting as a 'barrier' to two-way traffic, even though Prior Place has enough width to accommodate two-way traffic. Readers can find these

intersections on the preceding aerial photograph of Katoomba's Town Centre. All of these intersection 'barriers' were dealt with in the Charrette (see Section 8.4).

Parke, Lurline Streets and other 'temptations to speed' act as barriers to pedestrian access across and along them. Parke and Lurline Streets are quite wide; their design and contexts induce speeding far faster than their posted speeds. Not only are their carriageways quite wide, they also have parking restrictions along much of their lengths, which limit important parking capacity for the Town Centre and tend to encourage cars to speed even faster. This conditions makes these streets unpleasant and to some extent unsafe to walk or cycle along or to cross them, and thus they act as 'barriers' to their being crossed.

Limited Parking in and near the Top of Town Limits Vehicular Access to It

Limited car parking in and near the Top of Town can be interpreted as a 'barrier', hurting its vehicular access and business vitality. See Section 8.8.1 for Charrette proposals to address this difficulty.

### Lanes in the Town Centre

The many under-used small lanes associated with Katoomba Street often seem unsafe to pedestrians (especially at night) and act too often as barriers to pedestrian access. The Charrette proposed improvements to these lanes, as explained in Section 8.3.2.

#### 4.3.5 Bypasses

Katoomba Street, the original heart of town, used to be better connected to its vicinity than it is now. To some extent it has been bypassed, which seems to be part of its problems.

Prior to changes to the Great Western Highway in the 1980's, traffic from Sydney followed the alignment of the present Civic Place, crossed the railway at grade right at the station at Katoomba Street, and then headed west on Main Street to Bathurst Road. While little can be done now to redress this major change, the business decline of Katoomba Street may be attributed in part to this 'bypassing' of the heart of town by the Great Western Highway.

Yeoman's Bridge, which solved the perceived dangers of an at-grade vehicular railway crossing, also bypasses Katoomba Street; most traffic now heads south along Parke Street, especially to access the Coles and Jewels shopping centres. Much traffic heading for Echo Point, which might in the past have taken Katoomba Street, also bypasses it via Lurline Street.

Thus, while originally Katoomba Street was the main north-south artery for town, it has now been bypassed for most traffic, making it harder for Katoomba and Main Street businesses to compete.

## 4.4 How the Public Realm Feels & Functions: Great Potential But Tattered & Not Synergising

### 4.4.1 Ordinary Streetscape & Dilapidated Building Facades

Despite some recent well-intended improvements of planting and some seating, the streetscape of the Town Centre is quite ordinary, and many of the building facades are becoming dilapidated. This condition can reflect badly on neighbouring buildings and

businesses, causing a self-perpetuating downward spiral of appearance, morale and business prospects. Part II of this Report explains the numerous inter-locking Charrette proposals to rectify these problems.

#### **4.4.2 Synergies Between Locals And Visitors**

The word 'synergy' means the mixing of two or more things, to their mutual benefit, where together they equal 'more than the sum of their parts'.

There appears not to be enough synergy between locals and visitors, to their respective disadvantages. Most tourists pass by the Town Centre, opting only for a short Echo Point stop, with obvious lost business opportunities for the Town Centre, as well as for visitors who miss what the Town Centre has to offer.

Indeed, it seems that the Town Centre is potentially the 'Great Good Place' where both locals and visitors could come together and mix, but it is not yet operating at its maximum potential. Corresponding town centres in other world tourist destinations (for both natural and urban attractions) are teaming with both visitors and locals. The Charrette proposed to unlock that potential for Katoomba, as explained throughout Part II of this Report.

#### **4.4.3 Arts & Heritage**

Katoomba and the Blue Mountains enjoy a strong Arts community. However, the many 'holes' and 'barriers' in the urban fabric of Town, as noted in Section 4.4.3 and Section 4.4.4, have limited the ability of Arts and Heritage to mix and 'synergise' together. Although there are fifty four galleries in the Mountains with a large proportion located in and around Katoomba, their presence is not that obvious or as powerful as it could be, because they are not close enough to each other to synergise as much as would be ideal. The heritage buildings, despite their proximity to each other, are not flourishing as much as perhaps they should. This may be partly because many of the heritage buildings are somewhat down-at-heel; partly because the Arts have not capitalised enough on these heritage buildings; and partly because not enough visitors bother to patronise them. Of course, these reasons are quite inter-dependent. Part II of this Report explains inter-locking solutions to deal with all these problems at once, so that we do not solve one problem, only to have another torpedo the first.

#### **4.4.4 Town Entry**

The Town entry does not promote the Town Centre as much as it should. The Charrette proposes numerous inter-related strategies to address these problems, as explained in Section 7.5.

#### **4.4.5 Alternative Life Styles**

Many of the more conventional and/or elderly stakeholders at the Charrette expressed concern about the 'alternative life style' population of Katoomba, and particularly their reported 'colonisation' of parts of the Top of Town, leaving other citizens reportedly unwelcome or unsafe. These more flamboyant or non-conventional members of the community also expressed concern at feeling 'quarantined' by the more conventional. The Charrette gave both sides the rare opportunity to interact with each other on neutral ground, where they both felt welcomed. Many found much in common with each other, new and unexpected friendships began to form, and prejudices born more of ignorance than reality began to break down. Both

groups seemed to support the outcomes of the Charrette, and perhaps both sides may become more a source of interest and learning than fear or prejudice.

Safer and more attractive public spaces may advance this breaking down of cultural and age barriers. Needed improvements to Katoomba's public open spaces were also addressed during the Charrette, as noted below.

#### **4.4.6 Public Open Spaces Seem Unsafe, The Parks Under-Used**

Many Charrette participants reported feeling that Katoomba's public open spaces felt unsafe to them, and its parks under-used. These are related problems, with inter-related causes, many of which have been listed in this Section 4.

Indeed, many of spaces used by the public are not public, including the Carrington Lawn and the SRA Goods Yard. Many private spaces adjoining the public realm in the Town Centre are derelict and potentially unsafe, such as the Old TAFE site at present. While the resultant concerns for safety are the same regardless of ownership and responsibility, the solutions differ. Part II of this Report explains how the Charrette dealt both with public as well as private open spaces that were making the place feel unsafe, and how the Charrette proposed to deal with increasing usership and attractiveness of the parks.

#### **4.4.7 Civic Centre Has Both Problems & Opportunities**

As many Charrette participants complained about how the Civic Centre looks and feels, as praised it for what it offers. The many problems of the Civic Centre are explained in Section 10.7.1, and design proposals are explained in 10.7.3.

### **4.5 Economy: Has Potential, But Is Under-Achieving**

Katoomba's economic challenges and performance were key subjects of the Charrette, seen as parts of Katoomba's inter-locking challenges. Katoomba has higher unemployment than the rest of the Blue Mountains, and not enough high-income starters of new small business. The per capita economic output of Katoomba is well below the rest of the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney. The Town Centre and the Arts Community are not capitalising enough on Echo Point tourists. Katoomba and the neighbouring town of Leura (which does capitalise on Echo Point) do not complement each other as much as they should. Katoomba's economy can and should work much better. These and other challenges are explained in detail, along with an economic revitalisation strategy, in Section 12 of this Report.

### **4.6 Environmental Impacts: Urban Run-Off Degrading Natural Environment**

Urban storm water run-off, especially flowing through construction that disturbs ground cover, and/or during 'first flush' rain storms, can adversely affect downstream water quality and/or erode stream beds if volumes become excessive. Concern was expressed during the Charrette for the quality of the streams downstream of Katoomba's Town Centre. A strategy and action plan is noted in Section 7.8.2.



## 4.7 Weather: Spectacular & Appealing, But Sometimes Uncomfortable

Katoomba's weather seems almost always to be dramatic in one way or another. Katoomba seems neither to be protecting itself well from the bad aspects, nor to be capitalising on the good. Winter winds can howl through the Town Centre, with little shelter specially to deal with them. Some of the Charrette designs in Part II of this Report propose better shelter from Katoomba's bad weather, and public open spaces located and designed to take advantage of Katoomba's equally dramatic sunshine. Section 12 proposes ways to capitalise on Katoomba's weather to diversify and strengthen its economy.

## PART II – CHARRETTE OUTCOMES & STRATEGIES

### 5. INTRODUCTION TO PART II: INTERLOCKING SOLUTIONS FOR INTERLOCKING PROBLEMS

The Charrette Proposals cumulatively paint a comprehensive vision of Katoomba revived, where the Town Centre is vital, safe and attractive, bustling with many more residents, workers and shoppers, where all the formerly isolated parts of Katoomba are much better connected and working well together, and where Katoomba's 'hidden' assets are more accessible and celebrated.

Because Katoomba's problems are so inter-locking, their solutions must be equally so. Each component of the Charrette proposals explained below aims to redress several inter-locking problems at once, rather than to tackle one problem at a time. It is important to recognise that ultimately to implement only a few of the Charrette Proposals may well jeopardise the whole initiative.



## 5.1 The Structure of Part II of this Report

The Charrette Outcomes, Strategies and Action Plans fall into several categories, and hence sections of Part II. First, in Section 6, we deal with general proposals for augmenting the overall role and function of Katoomba in the Blue Mountains and in the state. Then Section 7 deals with strategies and actions that apply across the entire Town Centre or large areas of it. Section 8 concentrates on specific access and transport proposals.

Sections 9 - 11 detail indicative development proposals for specific key sites, whose designs were produced in the Charrette. Appropriate redevelopment of these key sites is crucial to Katoomba's revitalisation. The designs proposed and described in these sections are detailed enough for users to understand and scrutinise in some depth. However, they illustrate usually just one solution to a set of objectives, which are presented as 'Project Design Briefs' for each site. While those who wish to develop these sites may follow the designs quite literally, they may also propose other designs which also comply with the Project Design Briefs.

Lastly, Section 12, written by Derek Kemp, ESD's employment expert, concentrates on employment and visitors strategies. This section has employment action plans, as well.

Despite their being separated into sections for clarity of organisation, these proposals should be considered and implemented holistically.

## 5.2 Implementation and Action Planning

Because we cannot expect simply to achieve all the proposed outcomes right away, we need some way to move forward through the implementation choices and challenges with some sort of strategy. It is important for this strategy to identify key actions, who should do them, their timing, and their approximate costs and funding sources. Because there are so many players in this complex game, the 'playing field' will constantly shift. Therefore, the strategy cannot be rigid, it should be adaptable and opportunistic, as should its implementors.

This strategy will necessarily be only a crude but important beginning, which will surely evolve as circumstances change and we learn more.

While Section 6 contains general intentions for Katoomba which do not involve actions, the remaining sections all propose appropriate actions. Therefore, after each action proposed in Sections 7 - 11, there will generally follow a table which names the appropriate action as a base for implementation.

## 6. THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE TOWN CENTRE IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

### 6.1 The Main Tourism Destination for the Blue Mountains, Coupling with Echo Point

Katoomba clearly needs to 'couple' better with Echo Point, where they together become the main visitor destination in the Blue Mountains. Katoomba should become the urban historic and cultural 'Mecca', while Echo Point continues its position as the natural and scenic 'Mecca'. This will not happen just by wishing or saying it; many of the actions of this strategy, in subsequent sections, will need to be implemented before this general goal becomes reality.

## 6.2 The Main Shopping, Service and Employment Centre for the Upper Mountains

Katoomba already plays this role to a large extent, but this role needs to get stronger. While Katoomba's shopping attractions should not cause other Upper Mountain towns to wither, Town Centre shopping should be strengthened by better parking, access, maintenance of premises, synergies among shops, etc., as detailed in subsequent section of Part II. Too many private and professional services for the Blue Mountains are actually 'down the hill' in the Western Sydney, and public social services should concentrate better in the heart of Katoomba and become more accessible. Katoomba is generally behind the other Upper Mountains towns in terms of employment and value generated per capita. Katoomba can and should 'lift its game' in terms of employment and commercial vitality (see Section 12 for specific proposals).

## 6.3 A 'City of the Arts' on a National Scale

With 54 private galleries, the Blue Mountains is a major arts centre already. Due to its artistic history, the State has designated Katoomba a "City of the Arts".

However, it lacks good performing arts facilities, teaching and working artists' facilities, and a crucial synergy among the existing cultural assets. Subsequent sections in Part II make specific proposals to redress these shortcomings.

## 6.4 Administrative Capital of the Blue Mountains

Katoomba is already the administrative capital of the Blue Mountains, as far as local government is concerned. However, the City Offices north of the Great Western Highway are relatively cut off from the Town Centre. As proposed specifically in subsequent sections, other state and federal agencies may do well to relocate to Katoomba, as well.

## 6.5 Home to an Enlarged and Diverse Populace

While Katoomba is home to about 10,000 residents, there is considerable capacity in its existing urban fabric to accommodate many more. Katoomba has more low income people than the other Upper Mountains towns. While we need to be careful not to displace these important members of the community, Katoomba needs more middle and higher income earners, who will start their own businesses, hopefully employ many under-employed existing residents, and spend their disposable incomes in Katoomba (see Section 12 for details).

The many 'holes' in Katoomba's urban fabric (see Section 4.3.2) offer key opportunities for new mixed use developments, including residential, close-in to the Town Centre, without impacting on existing dwellings. Also, many existing dwellings were built to accommodate families, while the average household size in them is now much smaller than when they were built. Many of those larger houses, mostly on quite large lots, should be incrementally re-modelled and/or re-developed, in sympathy with their neighbours and Katoomba's character. Such developments should be controlled by regulatory mechanisms that are not in place in the Mountains at this time, such as Victoria's Good Design Guide for Medium Density Developments.

## 7. REVITALISATION STRATEGIES & ACTION PLANS FOR THE TOWN CENTRE

### 7.1 Introduction

This section contains the general topical town-wide revitalisation strategies and action plans for the Town Centre, which aim to improve its urban structure, in order to achieve the goals laid out in Section 6 above. These strategies should generally apply as a whole to the entire Town Centre and any site within it, including to the specific key sites which appear in subsequent Sections 9 - 11.

The drawing/cartoon below shows many of these strategies for the Town Centre, and hopefully communicates how comprehensive and inter-related these strategies are. The following sections explain these strategies, organised into related topics.



Drawing/Cartoon Listing All Components with arrows to their locations in the Town Centre

## 7.2 Infill & Redevelopment to Complement Existing Assets and to Increase Safety, Amenity and Housing Choice Near Services & Transport

### 7.2.1 General Planning Strategies & New Regulatory Initiatives to Implement them

This multi-faceted strategy aims to guide any development (re-modelling, expansion, redevelopment) of private properties in the Town Centre toward cumulative improvements which:

- ◇ complement existing adjoining properties and assets;
- ◇ improve the safety and amenity of the place; and
- ◇ consolidate diverse residential opportunities close to services and public transport.

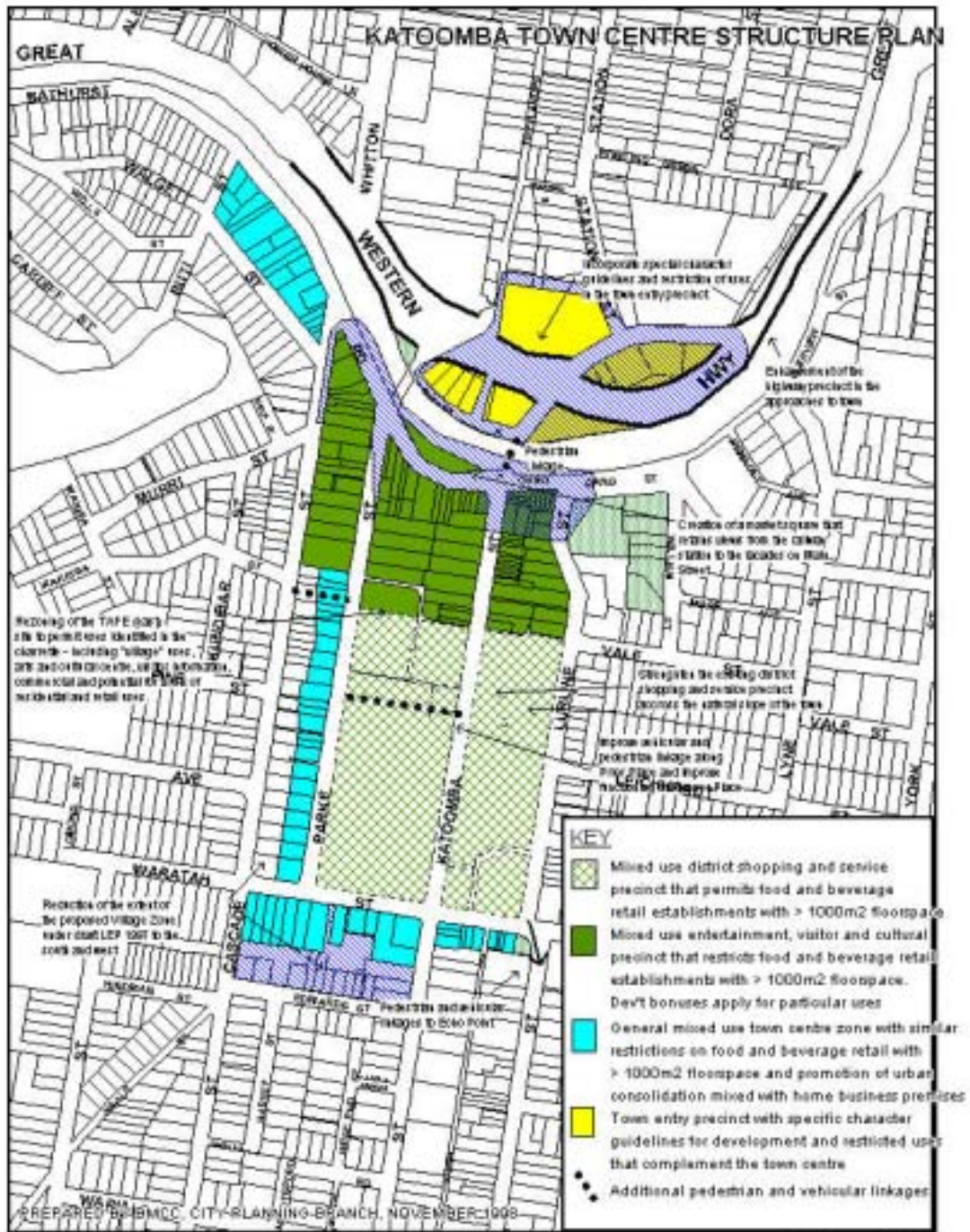
**Action 7.2.1A** - Design guidelines should be prepared to guide future redevelopment. Amongst other things, redevelopment of key sites should provide activities that address the street, positively contribute to the streetscape and that are consistent with the scale and character of the town.

**Action 7.2.1B** - Reassess existing regulatory requirements (ie. in relation to car parking, height and floorspace restrictions) as well as potential development bonuses that will promote the provision of an appropriate range of housing in the town centre. These requirements should be considered in a Development Control Plan, or similar, specifically prepared for Katoomba.

**Action 7.2.1C** - Introduce a mixed use "Village" Zone as proposed in draft LEP 1997 in the town centre. This "Village" Zone should be revised within a specific LEP for Katoomba to be prepared for Katoomba.

**Action 7.2.1D** - Streamline statutory approval processes to facilitate the rejuvenation of heritage premises in the Town Centre.

Actual revisions to the LEP and a new zoning plan for the Town Centre were beyond the scope of the Charrette. However, a revised zoning plan might look roughly like the following Katoomba Town Centre Structure Plan. Until a new LEP has been approved, this plan may be used to illustrate Charrette intentions for the Town Centre, and may inform development, if Council chooses, until the new LEP is in place.



Print Ref.: c000069

Preliminary Land Use Structure Plan for the Town

## 7.2.2 Housing Diversity and Affordability

Katoomba's Town Centre would flourish better with more local custom from a larger local population, if the population gain were compatible with existing development and could access the Town Centre easily. Furthermore, population gains should be diverse in household size, income and backgrounds. Presently, Katoomba's population has more low income, more unemployed or under-employed, and more transient households than the rest of the Blue Mountains. While existing community members should not be substantially displaced, new residents should be composed more of higher income earners, who will spend more on the local shops and start new businesses, generating more jobs for the rest of the community. This employment strategy is explained much further in Section 12 of this Report.

**Action 7.2.2A** - Revise the regulatory context to encourage a diversity of housing types and costs (including individually owned as well as short-term accommodation) within the Town Centre, including in 'vertically mixed use buildings' within the 'Village Zone' heart of town.

**Action 7.2.2B** - Liaise with the NSW Housing Department to provide additional public housing in the town centre, particularly as a component of future redevelopment projects.

**Action 7.2.2C** - Work with the Department of Housing and private developers to ensure an appropriate provision of affordable housing in the town centre.

**Action 7.2.2D** - Undertake a study with residents in Katoomba to ensure the continued provision of opportunities for low cost housing.

There are a many properties where these incremental improvements may take place; every property can and should do its appropriate part, according to its context and capacity. There are several key sites, many of which can accommodate residential development upstairs or in other mixed use contexts, for which the Charrette produced specific designs. Those sites are shown in the drawings in Sections 9 - 1.

## 7.3 Townscape Improvements

### 7.3.1 Private Building Facade Improvements

The decline in the upkeep of building facades is significant, particularly along Main and Katoomba Streets in the Town Centre. To reverse this decline, the Charrette proposed a Private Building Facade Improvement Scheme, wherein both skilled crafts persons/painters and volunteers (especially youth) would work together to teach and learn how to refurbish the historic building facades to their original splendour.

Expert advise for building owners and tenants is imperative generally to getting a successful facade upgrade for the Town Centre. During the Charrette a group of buildings, at the Top End of Town, was briefly studied. The study referred to historic photographs and other material, and proposed facade restorations and other approaches to enhancement.

An approach was devised where the Council would potentially offer design advice, funding, a discount paint scheme, technical support and reference to skilled trades people and possible youth volunteers who might provide labour in return for being taught the trades.

Examples of proposed facade improvements are shown below.





Heritage Improvements that could occur at the top of Katoomba Street

**Action 7.3.1A** - Encourage the restoration of heritage facades and original verandahs. A facade improvement program will be initiated to provide professional heritage and architectural advice with the potential for seed funding to assist building owners in undertaking improvements.

**Action 7.3.1B** Support the establishment of training programs for citizens (especially youth) to develop skills in renovation and painting of heritage buildings.

### 7.3.2 Public Streetscape & Maintenance Improvements, Including Public Art & New Bins

The Town Centre's streetscape and maintenance have room for improvement. The existing triangular street tree planters, left over from an earlier and abandoned one-way system for Katoomba Street, have insufficient trees in number and size. Reportedly, there is not enough public seating, especially for people who have some difficulty climbing the slopes. Street lighting is reported to be insufficient, particularly in several of the adjoining lanes. The existing concrete-covered bins do not have enough capacity for the collection frequency, rubbish blows out of them when they are overfilled, and some have even been thrown through shop windows!

Charrette stakeholders urged the input from local artists in Katoomba's streetscape.

The whole Town Centre will benefit if its 'Townscape' image can improve itself, and if these improvements can celebrate the character of the place, as interpreted through input from local artists and other stakeholders.



Improvements to the streetscape of Katoomba Street

**Action 7.3.2A** - Undertake streetscape improvements for Katoomba, Main and Waratah Streets that include the provision of new street furniture, street tree planting and new lighting (potentially in heritage style).

**Action 7.3.2B** - Integrate the Arts, particularly sculpture and ironwork, into the streetscape through support for an "arts in public spaces" program where artistic works are used to improve the attractiveness of the town centre. Local artists and artisans should be commissioned to contribute to streetscape improvement projects.

**Action 7.3.2C** - Promote a cleaner appearance to the Town Centre through improvements to the design, appearance and maintenance ease of street bins. Designs should be developed for street bins that retain rubbish in high winds and complement the heritage streetscape.

**Action 7.3.2D** - Review Council's and private maintenance regimes for Katoomba and investigate measures to ensure adequate maintenance levels.

**Action 7.3.2E** - Work with the Main Street Committee to identify and promote measures that business owners can undertake to personalise and improve the streetscape, particularly immediately fronting their businesses.

### 7.3.3 Encouraging Improvements to the Existing Coles Shopping Centre

The existing Coles Shopping Centre is an important contribution to Katoomba's convenience retail choice, but parts of the complex could stand improvement. Pioneer Place, the parking area in front of Coles and owned by the Council, is somewhat bleak, with few trees and little amenity.

The Parke and Waratah Street frontages of the building itself are quite unfortunate, presenting harsh blank walls to both streets and to the adjoining uses across those streets. This makes for a bleak gap in the pedestrian and general urban environment of the area. The necessary loading docks and structured car parking could have been sleeved for most of their lengths with fronting uses more compatible and synergistic with their neighbours. However, despite good intentions on the part of all those involved, the regulatory controls for the Town Centre

did not and so far do not demand better street frontage performance, and Coles was fully within their rights to propose what they built.

**Action 7.3.3 A-** Revise the regulations to require active and compatible frontages along public streets in the Town Centre.

**Action 7.3.3 B** - Encourage Coles in its next re-fit to redress these problems of street frontage and to work with the Council to improve Pioneer Place.

Since the Charrette, Coles has reportedly approached the Council to initiate consideration of improving both its Parke and Waratah Street frontages and Pioneer Place.

## 7.4 “The Whole Town is the Cultural Centre” ...Improve and Increase Cultural Amenities For Locals and Visitors Alike

While consulting with the public during the Charrette, we recognised that there is extraordinary depth and breadth of cultural and Arts assets throughout Katoomba. Therefore, rather than a single site or building, the whole town is proposed to be strengthened and celebrated as its ‘cultural centre’.

### 7.4.1 ‘City of the Arts Experience’

There was, however, also general agreement that cultural facilities were not very well linked to each other; that they were not synergising together; that the depth and breadth of cultural assets were not apparent or accessible enough to new visitors. Therefore, a prominent and well-located chain of cultural assets was proposed for the heart of town, nicknamed the ‘City of the Arts Experience’ (see illustration below).



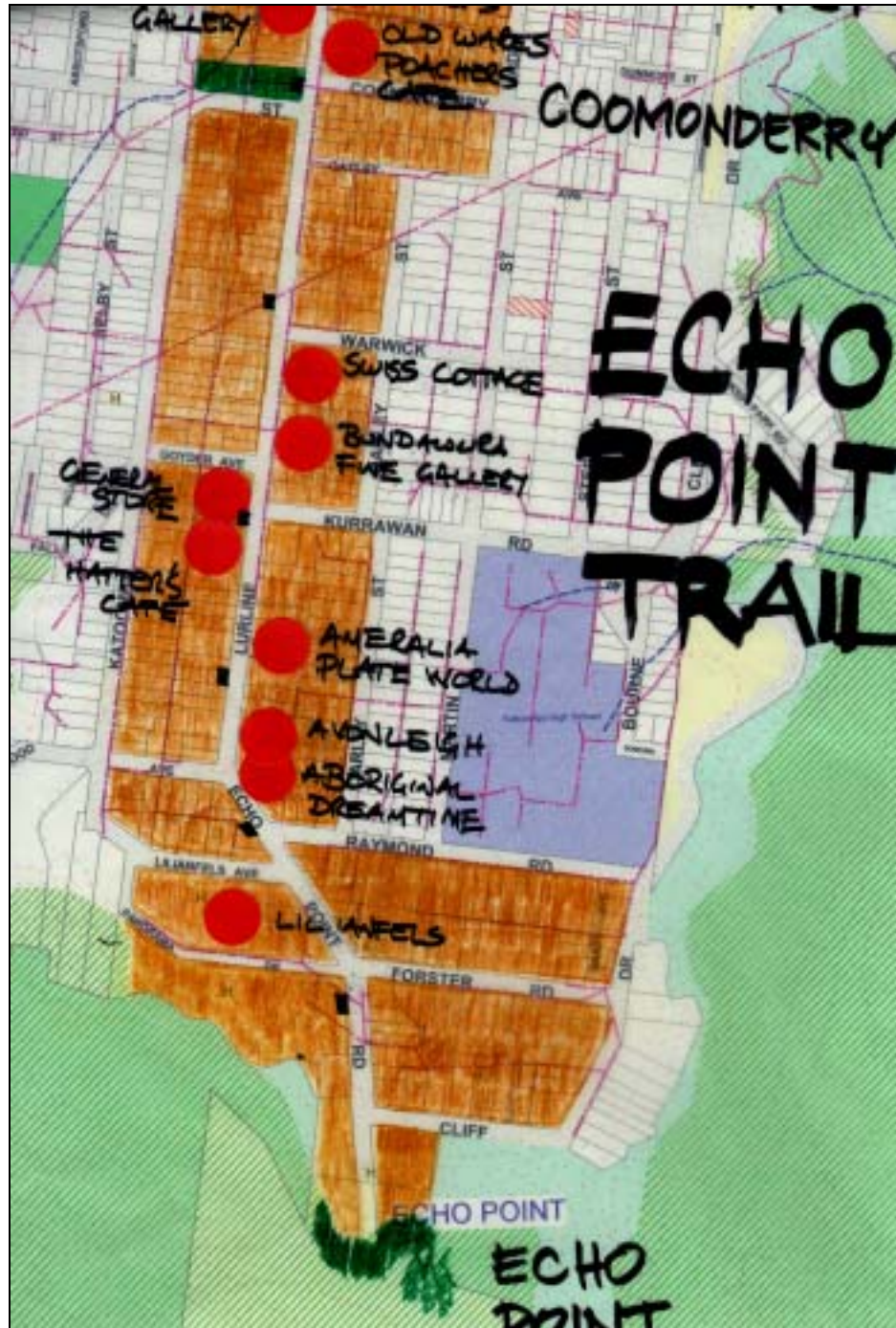
Cultural/Visitors Centre “City of the Arts Experience”

It was further proposed that this 'City of the Arts Experience' should be incorporated into several key building proposals, wrapping an arc of new and/or under-utilised existing assets together across the heart of the town, and synergising also with heritage assets at the same time.

#### 7.4.2 Katoomba - Echo Point Arts & Heritage Trail

Several Charrette team members, in studying and enjoying Katoomba, walked from the Town Centre to Echo Point, some of whom then caught the bus for the return trip. The whole of this walking route was found to be strewn with interesting heritage sites, good views, shops, etc., which made us think that this 2.5 kilometre walk seemed quite pleasant, especially for visitors or locals when not in a hurry. It was recognised further that discreet signage at key points along the route might help interpret the experience, strengthening a pedestrian or cycle link between the Town Centre and Echo Point. A drawing follows, depicting features of and proposed enhancements to this proposed trail.





Katoomba - Echo Point Heritage Trail

**Action 7.4.2-A** Establish and interpret the Katoomba - Echo Point Arts and Heritage Trail by means of installing explanatory small plaques along the way at key sites.

**Action 7.4.2-B** Publish Trail brochures to be distributed at the train station, Visitors Centre, etc.

## 7.5 The Town Entry

The 'Town Entry' means the entry from the Great Western Highway into the Town Centre, which includes the highway, the intersections of Katoomba Street and Parke Street, Yeoman's Bridge to the roundabout, and the Station area.

### 7.5.1 General Planning Strategies and Possible Regulations

The Charrette found that the Great Western Highway improvements of the 80's, including Yeoman's Bridge and the closure of the on-grade crossing of the railway at Katoomba Street had compromised access to and commercial exposure of the heart of town along Katoomba Street, from along the highway. Furthermore, the increased traffic passing by the town entry now tempts fast food outlets to seek to locate along the highway, possibly jeopardising the character and economic feasibility of the rest of the Town Centre. The Charrette proposed to rectify these entry image and access problems, and to deal pro-actively with further proposals for fast food outlets. Town entry access improvements per se are dealt with in Section 8 of this Report.

A Town Entry Study was prepared for Council prior to the Charrette; the Charrette recommendations should be compared rigorously with those of that Study to evolve a single set of Council policies for the Town Entry. Appropriate uses for the Town Entry should be identified and regulated.

**Action 7.5.1** - Designate a town entry precinct, within the relevant statutory instrument, that identifies design and character guidelines for development that reflects the character of the Town Centre. This precinct should identify appropriate uses that are more limited than those permitted for the broader Town Centre.

### 7.5.2 Fast Food Performance Criteria

There was considerable divergence in how stakeholders viewed the prospect of fast food outlets on or near the Highway, ranging from desires for outright rejection to inclusion. The Charrette proposed some key criteria for fast food outlets, which, if complied with, might allow such development:

- ◇ there shall be no drive-through facilities, only sit-down or take-away facilities.
- ◇ such facilities shall locate only within the heart of Katoomba, not at its entry, and shall locate in such a way that such outlets encourage their patrons to linger in Katoomba and to patronise other businesses, as well.
- ◇ all fast food outlets (or 'family restaurants') shall respect their surrounding neighbours in terms of noise and other emissions.
- ◇ the external and internal building design and image of all fast food outlets shall be consistent in scale and detailing with Katoomba's character, and the character and scale of adjoining properties in particular.
- ◇ car parking for such facilities shall be either on-street or intra-block, not on-site in front of such facilities.



Slide of well-behaved McDonalds Restaurant demonstrating the design brief noted above

**Action 7.5.2** - Prepare regulations for fast food restaurants, embodying the above performance criteria.

### 7.5.3 Town Entry Streetscape

The streetscape itself of the Town Entry is ordinary and lacks any real 'Katoomba identity'. The highway is void of street trees in this area and is anonymous, basically identical to long distances of highway either side of Katoomba. The Council Offices are pulled back from the Highway with a void between them and the Highway. The intersection of Katoomba Street with the Highway is void of meaning or a sense of invitation (see Section 9.3 for information and design proposals for the Gearin's Hotel improvements and the SRA Depot Site). There is an exposed rock cutting on the north side of the Highway to accommodate a grade change, which might offer some sort of public art opportunity.

The Charrette proposed that both the streets with their landscaping, plus adjoining buildings, should celebrate the character of Katoomba, and should be positioned so as to frame key views in to the heart of town.



Sketch of the potential for the town entry to Katoomba

**Action 7.5.3A** - Plant vegetation in the highway reserve to the east and west entrances to central Katoomba that highlights views to the town centre and signifies arrival in a special town.

**Action 7.5.3B** - Work with the RTA to incorporate streetscape improvements, lights phase improvements, highway signage, etc into their presently planned funding package for improvements to the Great Western Highway.

**Action 7.5.3C** - Investigate capitalising on the rock cutting face on the north side of the Highway for public art works.

#### 7.5.4 Town Entry Signage

Signage along the Highway and within the Town Centre is minimal at best. Visitors unfamiliar with Katoomba's assets will likely continue to miss them until better and more discreet but locally relevant signage is installed, which also interprets certain assets, where possible.

**Action 7.5.4** - Install directional and informational signage at key entry points to Katoomba. These points should include the Bathurst Road, Goldsmith Place and the Yeoman's Bridge entrance from the Great Western Highway. Artists and designers should work collaboratively with planners to ensure that signage is well designed, distinctive and aesthetically relevant.

## 7.6 The 'Top End of Town'

### 7.6.1 The Role of the 'Top End', General Planning Strategies and Possible Regulatory Initiatives

The Top End of Town is an area dominated by the Carrington Hotel and bounded to the north by the barrier of the railway, and including some properties between the Carrington and Froma Lane.

The 'Top End of Town' is blessed with heritage buildings but relatively isolated in terms of easy access and deprived of adequate parking for its struggling businesses (see Sections 4.3 and 4.4 for further information). The powerfully located Coles/Jewels shopping centres have considerable parking and good Highway access via the Yeoman's Bridge and Parke Street. This situation, along with the hole created by the vacant Old TAFE site and the (until recently) vacant Carrington, have effectively combined to isolate the Top End of Town. Despite their proximity to each other, the Town entry and the Top of Town appear to function as distinct areas...this distinction seems to confirm the relative isolation of the Top End of Town.

The Charrette identified and proposed to strengthen the role of the Top End of Town as a place for visitors, the Arts, culture and heritage, with cafes for locals and tourists, specialty shops with local wares. The Top End contrasts with the lower end of town, which mostly serves local and district level convenience retail.

The Top End has many vacant and/or under-used spaces, which need redevelopment and enhancement to link existing assets and enable them to create synergies. Several of these key sites are dealt with in detail in Section 9. Section 8 of this Report explains proposals to redress the isolation of the Top of Town by means of improved pedestrian and vehicular access, and by increasing the parking capacity of the area. Sections 7.4 details initiatives to strengthen heritage and tourism attractions for the area.



**Action 7.6.1** - Encourage new development and historic restoration in the town centre through revision of the statutory requirements for car parking and related contributions. This will involve a review of the current requirements and incorporation of flexibility to promote revitalisation.

## 7.6.2 Visitors / Culture / Entertainment / Accommodation

There was general support in the Charrette for attracting more tourism, visitors, entertainment and accommodation.

The Top End of Town enjoys an important concentration of heritage features, cultural facilities (present and future), choices of accommodation and modes of access. The Carrington Hotel, the Main Street crescent of historic buildings and the Savoy are among the heritage treasures of the area. The Charrette proposed a Cultural/Visitors/Arts 'crescent' of facilities spanning the TAFE West, the Old TAFE Site, the Parke Street frontage of the Carrington, John Lekkus' Clarendon shops property, and the Savoy, all explained in detail in this Report. The Top End enjoys accommodation features including the Carrington and several attract smaller overnight accommodations, with perhaps more to come. Lastly, the Top of Town is the welcoming gateway for visitors arriving both via the train station and the Highway. The Top of Town is contrasted with and complemented by the lower end of Town, which caters more to convenience shopping, with a somewhat lower concentration of heritage buildings and cultural features.

The Action Plans below will promote this concentration of visitors, culture, entertainment and accommodation in the Top End of Town.

**Action 7.6.2A** - Provide incentives within statutory planning provisions (ie. parking and development bonuses) for redevelopment that contributes positively to tourism uses in this precinct.

**Action 7.6.2B** - Promotion and marketing of the Katoomba Town Centre and the Top End of Town in particular as a tourist destination and overnight stay location in association with **the surrounding natural areas**.

**Action 7.6.2C** - Provide improved facilities for tourists and visitors. These facilities should include the following:

- ◇ accessible and quality toilet facilities;
- ◇ a visitor information service in conjunction with the NPWS, potentially on the TAFE east site, to provide information about the Blue Mountains, the National Parks and the opportunities available for visitors in Katoomba;
- ◇ coach parking facilities in association with redevelopment of the TAFE east site and, in the short term, an increase in lay-over areas in Parke Street (see Section 8.8 for specific proposals);
- ◇ additional information and interpretive facilities throughout the town centre, particularly at the train station entry point to the town.

### 7.6.3 Arts/Cultural Concentration

**Action 7.6.3A** - Encourage the development of a number of visitor attractors that will complement the Carrington Hotel and the proposals for creating a more attractive physical form. Many of these features would be privately run, however examples of some attractions identified in the Charrette would include:

- ◇ A "City of the Arts" cultural centre and public art gallery as outlined in previous sections;
- ◇ Redevelopment of the Savoy Theatre;
- ◇ Markets in the goods yard site adjoining the railway station;
- ◇ Festivals and community events;
- ◇ Additional shops that cater to the shopping needs of visitors, particularly overseas visitors;
- ◇ Building on the heritage character of the town centre;
- ◇ Opportunities to purchase local artists and artisan's products.

### 7.6.3 Marketing the Top End of Town

**Action 7.6.3** - Investigation of the appropriate shopping product required to attract the tourist and visitor market and encouragement of the establishment of these types of shops in the northern section of the town centre.

## 7.7 Strategies for Improvements to Recreational, Cultural and Urban Open Space Facilities

### 7.7.1 General Strategies

The Charrette concluded that certain public recreational and cultural facilities and urban open spaces and in the Town Centre, listed below in Sections 7.7.2 - 7.7.7, needed improvement and/or additions. The Charrette also concluded that increased access to and improvements to certain presently non-public areas and facilities would be beneficial, including the Carrington Lawn, the Savoy, and a possible health and recreation facility. However, no such agreements between BMCC and these private owners have been reached; these are only Charrette recommendations.

Specific problems needing improvement are explained in each sub-section. Such additions and improvements would strengthen the amenity and attractions of the Town Centre, both for tourists and locals, for the whole range of users, from the elderly to skateboarders to parents with infants.

**Action 7.7.1A** - Increase the range and quality of recreational and entertainment opportunities for the general community and visitors in the Town Centre. Key sites include the Savoy/Trocadero complex and Kingsford Smith Park.

**Action 7.7.1B** - Provide public spaces for passive recreational activities and community events and gatherings. A number of public spaces were proposed in the Charrette that offer a

range of opportunities including the following:

- ◇ Redevelopment of the SRA Goods Yard site to include dedication and embellishment of the eastern portion of the site, as part of rezoning negotiations, for a market square and relocation of the goods shed and crane into this space. This space will provide areas for public uses and market stalls as well as local community and visitor activities (see Section 9.1)
- ◇ Improvements to the Civic Centre including creation of linkages through to the TAFE east site (proposed arts and cultural precinct), development of grassed terraces spilling down into Katoomba Street and new toilet facilities (see Section 10.7).
- ◇ Provision of small informal rest areas on Katoomba Street that can be used for sitting, lunching and resting.
- ◇ Provision of open-air children's play area/s.

**Action 7.7.1C** - Review statutory regulations so they promote the development of privately operated entertainment facilities in the town centre that could include a cinema, gymnasium and recreational orientated facilities

### 7.7.2 The Civic Centre

The Charrette found the facilities of the Civic Centre to be well located and appreciated by many, especially the elderly, but that this building, designed in the late 1960's 'Brutalist' style of architecture, did not complement the town's character. The building was found to be badly laid out and 'unfriendly' to Katoomba Street, with a fairly dark, crooked and difficult connection past retail shops to College Lane behind it. Demand emerged also for better and daylight public open spaces associated with the Civic Centre.

**Action 7.7.2A** - Improve the physical appearance and expand and improve the functions of the Katoomba Civic Centre.

**Action 7.7.2B** - Expand or adjust the hours of operation of the Katoomba Library to allow for improved access by the general community after working hours.

The Charrette proposed an extensive remodelling of the Civic Centre, which is illustrated and explained in Section 10.7 of this Report.

### 7.7.3 Cultural/Visitors Centre

As explained in more detail in Section 10.1 devoted to the Old TAFE Site, the Charrette identified the Old TAFE site was the best place for a Cultural/Visitors Centre for the Town Centre, which should incorporate both visitor information and a major art gallery. The Charrette proposed three indicative designs for this Cultural/Visitors Centre, which are illustrated and explained in Section 10.1 of this Report.

**Action 7.7.3** - Develop a Cultural/Visitors Centre that provides information for the local community about events, opportunities and local Government services information, as well as information to visitors and newcomers.

#### 7.7.4 Toilet/Restroom Facilities

The Charrette concluded that both more and better toilet facilities were needed for both tourists and locals, and that safety and security would be key issues. Widespread desire was voiced for upgrading the toilets in the Civic Centre in particular, with better supervision and linkage to the Library.

A specific new toilet facility is proposed in front of the Telstra site, as illustrated and explained in Section 10.9 of this Report. Improved toilet facilities for Kingsford Smith Park are explained in Section 10.6.

**Action 7.7.4** - Improve the toilet facilities around the Town Centre. Toilets should be well located (preferably on the Street), safe to use, have disabled access, baby change facilities in both men's and women's toilets.

#### 7.7.5 State Rail Authority Goods Yard

The State Rail Authority's Good Yard, situated between Main Street and the Katoomba Railway Station, contains important rail-related heritage items, but is under-utilised both for rail and other purposes, and is seen as relatively unsafe after dark.

The Charrette proposed a specific design for this site, illustrated and explained in Section 9.1.

**Action 7.7.5** - Future redevelopment of the SRA Goods yard site to the south of the railway station should strengthen the retail opportunities in Main Street by its becoming a more active and well-lit tourism/gathering facility.

#### 7.7.6 Kingsford Smith Park

The Charrette determined that Kingsford Smith Park has serious access, safety and vandalism problems, and is under-used, largely because of its isolation, topography, overgrown vegetation, lack of passive surveillance, poor maintenance and generally unappealing facilities.

The Charrette proposed specific improvements to the park, which are illustrated and explained in Section 10.6 of this Report, along with more information on the problems of this park.

**Action 7.7.6** - Improve the safety and usage of Kingsford Smith Park by means of improved access, better passive surveillance through more properties overlooking the park and more activities within it, throughout the days/evenings and all seasons.

#### 7.7.7 Skateboard Park

The Charrette concluded that the Town Centre needed at one good skateboarding facility. It was generally agreed that the present ramp, just south of the highway and west of Yeoman's Bridge, needs improvement, or that a better site should be found and developed. The use by skateboarders of the plaza in front of the City Council Chambers was a cause for concern to some.

In consultation with local skateboarders and by observation, it was recognised that skateboarders generally like a range of skating 'contexts' and challenges. They also like to be seen by their peers and the general public, and usually need some form of supervision, at least from passersby.

**Action 7.7.7** - Provide a greater range of youth recreational activities, including but not limited to improvements to the skateboard park west of Goldsmith Place. Another possible skate board facility should be investigated for Frank Walford Park.

### 7.7.8 Health/Recreation Facility (Private)

The Charrette concluded that there is a need and market for an all-weather health/recreation facility, which would cater both to visitors and locals. Activities might include massage, personal counselling, naturotherapy, aerobics/weight training, indoor racquet sports, etc. Such a facility would:

- ◇ provide activities during poor weather both for locals and for visitors (to encourage them to stay longer in Katoomba);
- ◇ could hopefully become a 'restorative destination' in its own right, encourage multi-night visitation;
- ◇ encourage more new people to relocate their homes and businesses to Katoomba.

The Charrette identified a suitable site in the precinct to the north of the railway station (the Goldsmiths Hardware site, see Section 9.2 for design and explanation). However, other sites may be just a suitable, and the Goldsmiths site might be developed appropriately for other uses compatible with and supportive of the Town entry.

**Action 7.7.8** - A private recreational and health facility should be encouraged to locate as one of the appropriate uses in association with the Town Centre.

### 7.7.9 The Carrington Lawn

Prior to the Charrette, various concepts had been contemplated for major modifications to the Katoomba Street edge of the Carrington Lawn to create a 'town square'. However, these proposals had not appreciated that the Carrington Lawn was on the State Historic Register and is required to be restored more purely to its original use as a formal lawn for the enjoyment of hotel guests.

The Charrette concluded that most citizens would greatly value the use of the Carrington Lawn for passive recreation and gathering, due to its central location and fine position in relation to the now refurbished Carrington Hotel.

However, the Carrington Lawn is private property and officially the domain of Carrington guests only. The Charrette Team had discussions with the Carrington ownership, aiming to find a way for the Carrington to allow public use of the Lawn, while the Carrington could retain ownership and the ability in the future to deny public usage of the Lawn, if its public use became too much of a problem for the Carrington. At the same time, the Blue Mountains City Council would take responsibility for the Lawn's maintenance, public liability and safety, in some sort of leasehold arrangement. No agreement was reached during the Charrette.

Concern was also expressed during the Charrette about the bus stop in front of the Carrington Lawn. Specific proposals for this bus stop are in Section 8.2.2 of this Report.

**Action 7.7.9** - Negotiate an arrangement with the Carrington whereby the public may use its private Lawn, so long as the Blue Mountains City Council takes responsibility for its maintenance, public liability and safety, and only if the Carrington has the right to deny public use in the future, if such becomes too much of a problem for the Carrington.

### 7.7.10 THE SAVOY

Many Charrette stakeholders voiced the need for performing arts facilities in the Town Centre to augment its Arts focus, as well as the need for cinemas, especially art, documentary, cartoons or other non-mainstream films. While the closed-down Savoy and Trocadero performing arts, dancing and cinema complex at the top of Katoomba Street are now in disrepair, they appear still to be restorable to their former glories.

Rather than having the empty Savoy sitting there on Katoomba Street as a sad reminder of a struggling Town Centre, most stakeholders felt that the Council should devise some sensible regulatory flexibility to enable a profitable private sector restoration of the Savoy/Trocadero. It was recognised that considerable money would be required to restore the street facade of the building, to upgrade for public safety and disabled access, and to re-open cultural and entertainment operations.

On-site parking requirements were reported to be the main impediments to the Savoy recently losing an opportunity to be re-opened. It was observed that, especially for evening or weekend performances, there is enough off-site parking capacity nearby, which would be relatively available during the evenings. Thus, the Charrette recommended that on-site parking requirements for the Savoy in particular (and other historic buildings whose uses would generate non-weekday peak parking demands) should be substantially reduced or waived.

Because the Savoy was seen to be such an asset to Katoomba when restored and functioning, and such a detriment to Katoomba in its present state, the Charrette recommended that BMCC should be proactive in supporting the re-opening of the Savoy by means of reviewing all regulatory requirements affecting it, and by expediting and facilitating regulatory approvals within reasonable constraints of public safety and historic preservation guidelines.

**Action 7.7.10** - BMCC should devise some sensible regulatory structure to enable a private sector restoration and re-opening of a restored Savoy/Trocadero as a performing arts venue, dance hall, and cinema complex, with on-site parking requirements either reduced or waived.

## 7.8 If a New Supermarket is to Proceed, then it Should Strengthen the Town

### 7.8.1 The Supermarket Paradox

During the Charrette, there were diverging points of view expressed about the possibility of another supermarket in Katoomba.

Supermarket chains such as Woolworths have expressed considerable interest in the Katoomba 'market', largely because the demographics suggest enough expendable income within the catchment of the Upper Mountains to support another supermarket in Katoomba, and because the present Coles reportedly charges relatively high prices and generates the highest per-

square-metre returns of any Coles supermarket in NSW. It was suggested that the increased competition of another supermarket would likely lead to lower prices and better service for consumers.

Against this market momentum, many citizens expressed concern about the Upper Mountains being overrun by anonymous chain stores, which might in turn drive out the more local small businesses. Concern was also expressed that, if another large supermarket were to locate in Katoomba, then the local Jewels, which offers fairly low cost groceries, might not be able to compete for a reduced and more competitive 'piece of the supermarket pie' and might close down, thereby closing off a relatively cheap source of food for the Upper Mountains.

Thus, a pronounced paradox emerged, where some recognised a need for more competition and enough population to support it, while others wanted to 'protect' the Upper Mountains from further 'outside' supermarket chains.

There was general consensus, however, that any new supermarket should **strengthen** the Town Centre, not further jeopardise its viability. Both location and shopping centre layout and function were identified as factors that would affect how such a new supermarket might or might not strengthen the Town Centre. It was generally agreed that a supermarket shopping centre, located closer to the highway, and functioning as a stand-alone enclosed 'big box' with many specialty stores within it, would likely damage the Town Centre.

### 7.8.2 Gateway Shopping Centre Proposal

The Gateway site, at the intersection of Main, Bathurst, and Parke Streets, is presently zoned for commercial development and would allow such a shopping centre as described above. Such a proposal was about to be submitted during the Charrette for that site. Members of the Charrette Team met with the proponents for that development in an effort to explain how it might damage the Town Centre, and to offer alternative more compatible development options (see Section 9.5 for alternative mixed use proposal). It is considered essential to the achievement of the revitalisation of Katoomba that the Gateway site be redeveloped either as a consolidated site or into individual ownerships in a manner which will contribute positively to the overall Katoomba Revitalisation Strategy, without negatively impacting on the existing district shopping precinct. BMCC negotiations with the proponents of the Gateway or the individual owners should steer these sites to a positive set of outcomes for the Katoomba.

**Action 7.8.2** - Negotiate for the Gateway site/s a use that does not risk damage to the economic viability of the Town Centre, and then change the regulations to encourage uses there that will indeed strengthen the Town Centre instead.

Since the Charrette, the proposal for a stand-alone shopping centre anchored by a large supermarket on the Gateway site has not eventuated. However, there has not been time yet for the LEP to be adapted to achieve the above Action Plan 7.8.2.

### 7.8.3 Other Supermarket Site Possibilities

The Charrette investigated quite a number of possible supermarket sites (see plan below). Most of the sites were determined to be inappropriate, against the criterion of strengthening the Town Centre. However, two sites emerged as relatively appropriate. One is the Old TAFE Site (see Section 10.1 for illustrations and explanations). The other appropriate supermarket site is on Beverly Lane (as explained and illustrated in Section 11.1).

### Preferred Sites of Beverly Lane or the Old TAFE

The Beverly Lane site was seen to work the best of all the sites, for the criterion of redressing the present 'imbalance' of retail strength in the south western corner of the Town Centre at the Coles Supermarket, which disadvantages retail shops both on the eastern side of Katoomba Street and near the Top of Town. Development of a supermarket on Beverly Lane would 're-balance' retail concentration to both sides of Katoomba Street, positioning at least the lower end of Katoomba Street quite favourably between these 'anchors'.

On the other hand, the Charrette recognised the need to make a shuttle bus system work between the Town Centre and Echo Point, in order to induce car- and bus-bound visitors to patronise the Town Centre as well as Echo Point, and to reduce parking impacts at Echo Point. To make such a system work, the Charrette recognised that about 300 additional parking spaces would be needed in the Town Centre, ideally at the Top of Town where main visitor attractions are concentrated, to accommodate visitors during the approximately twenty peak visitor days of each year. A dedicated structure for 300 spaces might cost about \$3 - 4.5 million, an amount for which there was no known sufficient public source. Thus, it was seen as important to find a user that would need that many spaces, in the Top of Town. A supermarket occupying the southern portion of the Old TAFE Site, if designed properly, might be such a use, whose development could help subsidise this badly needed visitor parking capacity for the Top End of Town and the shuttle system, which would complement a proposed Cultural/Visitors Centre for the northern end of the Old TAFE Site. This is explained further in Section 10.1.

Thus, not knowing within the time constraints of the Charrette whether one or the other option could actually be achieved, the Charrette Team proposed either of these sites as a possible supermarket development. This Report contains project design briefs for both sites, within which development interest and feasibility could be tested, and meant to ensure safety and compatibility for neighbours of those sites, if such a development were to be built on either site.

### Site South of Waratah Street

A site on the south-west corner of Katoomba and Waratah Streets was put forward as the appropriate site for a supermarket, prior to the Charrette. However, this site was not supported by the Charrette, or the recent BMCC Draft Local Environmental Plan 1997, as it was seen as:

- ◇ further extending the already very long retail street of Katoomba Street;
- ◇ not providing enough synergy with the existing core convenience shopping area;
- ◇ because the site's steep topography was likely to result in a very high exposed wall structure along the north edge of Edwards Street, a residential street;
- ◇ and because it would likely result in the demolition of the historic Bible College building.

Refer to Section 11.2 for more specifics on this site and for the Charrette alternative design proposal for that area.

### The Gateway Site

The Gateway site supermarket shopping centre location and the design being put forward during the Charrette by its proponents were seen by the Charrette Team as detrimental to the Town Centre. The design was essentially a large enclosed shopping centre, with underground



parking and forty additional specialty shops, totalling about 5,000 square metres of new retail. All the shops oriented primarily to the inside of the enclosed box, and only secondarily along Parke and Bathurst Streets, if at all. The project would have introduced, therefore, a gain of about a quarter of the total present retail space in Katoomba, in a strategic 'gateway' location where car-borne custom from the Highway might have been funnelled into the underground parking of the enclosed centre, at the expense of the rest of the Town Centre.

The Cascade frontage of the design had blank walls to the street for the parking structure and truck deliveries and disposals across the street from existing residences on the west side of Cascade Street. The design proposed blank walls to overlook Frank Walford Park, limiting passive surveillance of the park for safety within it, and presenting a large blank bulky building as seen from the park.

The design and location would have worsened congestion at the Parke Street roundabout. Traffic on Cascade Street would have doubled from about 2,500 trips per day to about 5,000 trips per day. The internalised parking would have primarily the retail within the enclosed box, with little or no benefit to nearby shops in the Top of Town.



Supermarkets Options Diagram

### 7.8.4 Project Siting and Design Brief

Any new supermarket development associated with Katoomba should achieve the following:

- ◇ by its location and design, the new supermarket development should strengthen the Town Centre, not weaken it;
- ◇ the development should integrate compatibly with its context and open to the street/s it adjoins, rather than acting as an internally oriented 'stand-alone' shopping centre;
- ◇ the development should have the right balance of supermarket, independent shops, offices and residential, located on the site to support and complement its neighbours, rather than to disadvantage them;
- ◇ the development should be compatible and sympathetic with its context in terms of its physical image, uses and impacts (including noise, smell, hours of operation, etc).

This Project Design Brief was developed in order to compare alternatives to the Gateway shopping centre development, then under consideration (see Section 7.8.2).

### 7.8.5 Strategies and Regulatory Initiatives

The Charrette generated the following regulatory action plans.

**Action 7.8.5A** - Identification of the southern section of the town centre as the district shopping and service precinct. Additional large-scale intensive retail (with floorspace greater than 1000m<sup>2</sup>) should be restricted to this precinct to strengthen the existing district shopping activities, as identified in the attached structure plan.

**Action 7.8.5B** - Designation of the northern section of the town centre so as to restrict major retail development with individual floorspace greater than 1000m<sup>2</sup>.

**Action 7.8.5C** - Prepare design and character guidelines for new development within a LEP/DCP for the Katoomba town centre that requires integration into the existing urban form, providing a positive contribution to the streetscape.

## 7.9 Sustainability and Urban Impacts on the Natural Environment

### 7.9.1 A Holistic Approach

Underlying all the Charrette proposals is the Charrette Team's understanding that ecological sustainability means benefits, which can be sustained for future generations, to the community, the economics and the environment of a specific place, such as Katoomba or the Blue Mountains. As far as the Charrette Team members and most stakeholders could determine, the best way comprehensively to achieve this for Katoomba is by implementing all the strategies listed in Sections 6 - 12.

Mitigating urban impacts on the natural environment is only one important leg of this 'three-legged stool' of the community, environment and economics, which supports ecological sustainability. The Charrette Team believed that a balance of win/wins must be found to support these three 'legs' all at the same time.

## 7.9.2 Storm Water Quality

Katoomba lies at the head of the Warragamba Dam Water Supply Catchment, and above the sensitive natural environment of the Blue Mountains National Park. Like most established towns, there has historically been little control or management of urban storm water run-off.

Urban storm water run-off, especially flowing through construction that disturbs ground cover, and/or during 'first flush' rain storms, can adversely affect downstream water quality and/or erode stream beds if volumes become excessive. Concern was expressed during the Charrette for the quality of the streams downstream of Katoomba's Town Centre. It was agreed that, to the extent feasible, downstream storm water quality should be maintained at its present state or better, in terms of water-borne pollutants (floating litter and dissolved contaminants), turbidity (muddy water) and volume (to mitigate excess erosion).

The Urban Runoff Control Program, a major state initiative in this regard, is underway.

**Action 7.9.2** - Take measures, to the extent feasible, to maintain storm water quality in streams affected by the Town Centre, at its present state or better, in terms of volume (minimise erosion), water-borne pollutants (floating litter and dissolved contaminants) and turbidity (muddy water).

## 7.9.3 Other Impacts on the Natural Environment

The Charrette was asked to focus on the urbanised Town Centre of Katoomba, and did not have the opportunity to address other aspects of possible concern relating to the natural environment of Katoomba and its surrounds. These issues should be picked up in the preparation of BMCC Draft LEP 1997.

# 8. ACCESS, TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS

## 8.1 Introduction & General Strategies

This section covers all proposals specifically involving access, traffic and transport strategies, and related action plans and specific designs. If these proposals are implemented comprehensively, the Charrette Team propose that they will improve pedestrian, vehicular and public transport access, efficiency, safety and amenity, while reducing congestion at key intersections.

## 8.2 Public Transport

### 8.2.1 A Dedicated Echo Point - Town Centre Shuttle System & Car Park?

During the Charrette there was considerable debate over the notion of a dedicated shuttle system between Katoomba's Town Centre and Echo Point, so that Katoomba could capitalise better on the high visitor numbers to Echo Point.

The hourly Sydney-Katoomba train service, combined with the central location of the station provides a good basis for enhancing public transport use to the town and from it to Echo Point. However, relatively few tourists presently use the train to visit the Mountains, and Echo Point in particular. Increasing public transport usage by tourists would both reduce parking pressure

on Echo Point and ensure that more visitors would come through the Town Centre and patronise it.

Even a light rail system between Katoomba and Echo Point was mooted, although the Charrette Katoomba – Echo Point Shuttle Study (1998) that was conducted prior to the Charrette identified that the cost of installing a short length of light rail service was prohibitively expensive (about \$25 million), compared to other equally viable alternatives such as improved bus service.

### **More Car Parking Capacity to Support the Echo Point Link with the Town Centre**

There was no argument that a stronger Town Centre link with Echo Point was needed to attract tourists also to the Town Centre. The questions, however, were how much parking was needed in the Town Centre to make this link work, and how could such additional parking be paid for.

The Echo Point Shuttle Study (1998), prepared prior to the , recommended that upwards of 600 dedicated parking spaces would be needed in the Town Centre in order for an Echo Point shuttle system to function successfully. A multi-deck car park in the Town Centre for this many cars would have cost about \$9 million!

ESD's traffic engineer, Jim Higgs, re-calculated the Town Centre parking demand for a shuttle link to Echo Point, considering existing Town Centre parking capacity, and considering the fact that the peak demand times for Echo Point did not directly coincide with peak demands for existing parking capacity. Instead of the demand now for 600 spaces, suggested in the earlier study, Jim Higgs calculated that the highest single peak demand on Australia Day in the year 2025 might require a bit over 300 additional spaces.

### **How Parking Demands for Echo Point in the Town Centre were Calculated**

The following explains the rationale behind the revised parking demand calculation. On Australia Day, 1994, the peak demand was at 1:00pm, with 278 cars parked in 346 available spaces at Echo Point. The Echo Point Plan of Management seeks to reduce parking at Echo Point by 64 spaces to 286 bays. Projected demand in the year 2010 at 90% of the maximum peak is projected to be 550 bays. Such demand would produce a 'shortfall' of parking capacity of 264 bays, potentially to be provided in Katoomba's Town Centre. The current parking supply in the Town Centre of Katoomba is about 1100 bays, of which only the purely retail component is fully active during this peak period. The remaining parking capacity would be available to accommodate the Echo Point peak.

Furthermore, future developments in the Town Centre will provide additional parking which would add to week-end and other related 'off-peak' availability of spaces, which could be used by Echo Point patrons. Existing on-street parking in the Town Centre is generally underutilised. The Charrette plans include parking for commercial activities, commuters and gallery users, all of which have Echo Point patrons as a major part of their target market. This further reduces the need for additional dedicated car parking capacity for the Echo Point/Katoomba link.

### **Joint User to Help Fund Additional Parking Capacity for Shuttle Service**

Also, it was agreed that a public transport linkage for the roughly 20 peak visitor days of any year, would not be justified financially in a parking structure dedicated exclusively to shuttle usage. Therefore, the Charrette Team agreed that a 'joint-user' for this additional parking of as many as 300 spaces needed to be found, which would use and therefore help pay for the

added parking capacity.

### **The Need for Improved Public Transport Routing and Services**

Because the tourist route to Echo Point can overlap the route connecting destinations for locals, the Charrette Team agreed that a dedicated tourist shuttle system was neither justified, nor financially feasible or appropriate.

A key problem with existing bus routes is that there are several competing private bus companies serving disconnected routes radiating from the Town Centre, and with no direct connection, for example, between Echo Point and the Scenic Railway or the Clairveaux Aboriginal Centre, all of which are south of town. Thus tourists dependent on buses need to ride back and forth to the Town Centre, if they want to see more than one of these key destinations. This circuitous bus riding takes so long that hardly anyone uses it, which further explains the very large car parking demands at both Echo Point and the Scenic Railway.

Therefore, an integrated bus route noted in Section 8.2.2 below became the recommended solution for a better link to Echo Point.

As far as finding and paying for more parking capacity in the Town Centre to encourage tourists to stop there, patronise the businesses and take the bus to Echo Point, an indicative solution to 'kill many birds with the same stone' was evolved for the Cultural/Visitors Centre, as explained in Section 10.1 below.

### **8.2.2 Integrate & Coordinate Public Transport Network to Link Destinations for Both Tourists and Locals**

The present public bus transport system should be coordinated into an integrated network, which will improve route efficiency while reducing travel times. This will take cooperation among the various bus providers, and leadership from the NSW Department of Transport. This bus network should integrate also with the train both physically and in terms of scheduling.

The proposed new integrated bus route should be located so as to link Echo Point to the Katoomba town centre, with potential for the incorporation of the Scenic Railway, the Clairveaux Centre and Frank Walford Park. This route will require the discussion of appropriate routes with bus company owners.

#### **Recommended Minimum Service Requirements**

- ◇ 7-day operation
- ◇ 12 minute service between 10:00 am and 3:00pm on 200 week-days
- ◇ 25 minute service interval on all other days between 9:00am and 10:00am and between 3:00pm and 5:00pm (to accommodate higher demand from Echo Point visitors)
- ◇ Direct service to Echo Point, Scenic Railway, Katoomba Town Centre, and other key locations as marked on the integrated route plan above
- ◇ Return Cost of no more than \$4.00

#### **Implementation of these Public Transport Improvements Should Happen Very Soon**

It is quite important that this integrated public transport system and routing be implemented

very soon, as other revitalisation initiatives for the Top End of Town depend on the certainty of this system being already in place or at least forthcoming by a specific date.

### Joint Management and Marketing of the Echo Point/Katoomba Public Transport Link

To strengthen the public transport linkage between Katoomba and Echo Point, the Charrette recommended that the following measures should be implemented:

- ◇ provide managed parking for Shuttle patrons in the Town Centre, so visitors unfamiliar with the parking arrangements can easily use the system;
- ◇ provide themed signage for the Shuttle system;
- ◇ market the Shuttle service in both the Blue Mountains and from origin points in Sydney;
- ◇ link the management of parking infrastructure for both Katoomba and Echo Point, including parking fees, to optimise the interaction between them;
- ◇ promote the use of themed and interpretive public transport vehicles to add value to the tourists' experience.

**Action 8.2.2A** - Coordinate with local bus operators to provide a frequent and regular shuttle bus service between Echo Point, the Clairveaux Aboriginal Cultural Centre, the Scenic Railway the Katoomba town centre and Frank Walford Park. The route of this bus should provide for visitors and consider drop-off points including the train station and the shopping precinct for local users. This bus service should be integrated with other transport services including the train and tour buses from Sydney.

**Action 8.2.2B** - Council should will work with bus operators and City-Rail to address public transport issues including improved weekend and after-hour train and bus timetabling and services.

### 8.2.3 Better Bus Stops, Especially at the Carrington Hotel

Katoomba's weather makes comfortable bus stop shelters quite important, especially en route between Echo Point and the Town Centre/Station, for use by locals and tourists alike.

The present bus shelter in front of the Carrington Lawn obscures viewing of the Carrington from Katoomba Street and should be replaced with a more comfortable transparent one.

**Action 8.2.2** - Redesign and reconstruct a new transparent bus shelter at the front of the Carrington Lawn, and provide additional shelters in association with improved public transport to Echo Point and coach and shuttle drop-off areas in the Town Centre.

## 8.3 Pedestrian Access & Cycle Facilities

### 8.3.1 ELECTRONIC PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AT THE RAILWAY STATION

The railway acts as a barrier to north-south access across it for pedestrians, despite the historic underpass, as it is seen by many as unsafe, especially at night. An electronic pedestrian gate crossing should be installed at grade at where Katoomba Street used to cross the railway, with good night lighting, to connect better the Town Centre to points north of the railway. Such an improvement would likely cost less than about \$200,000, which is certainly

less than an elevator system reportedly being considered by the State Rail Authority during the Charrette, for which there was not funding reported to be committed at that time. Access and personal safety improvements to the existing pedestrian underpass were seen as less cost-effective than the electronic ped-gate.



Photo of potential ped-gate for adjoining Katoomba Station

**Action 8.3.1** - Construct an electronic pedestrian gate crossing at grade with the railway at the former Katoomba Street crossing, with good night lighting.

### 8.3.2 Improve Access, Safety and Amenity of the Town Centre Lanes

Stakeholders at the Charrette generally agreed that most of the lanes in the Town Centre did not feel safe to use, especially at night. The few east-west public ways between Katoomba Street and Parke Street are not generally inviting to pedestrians, due to derelict buildings, bad lighting, lack of passive surveillance for safety, and/or needing to pass through bleak car parks. The case is similar between Katoomba Street and Lurline Streets, but east-west access here is even harder because of the steep grade change between the two.

Extensive improvements should be achieved from the west, as noted in Section 8.3.5. One pedestrian link through the Telstra Site is proposed in Section 10.9.

**Action 8.3.2** - Improve the safety and attractiveness of pedestrian lanes through measures such as encouraging redevelopment of premises along them to address these lanes with more active frontages and increased public lighting along the lanes.

### 8.3.3 Phasing Improvements to Lights @ Great Western Highway

This proposal is explained below in Section 8.6.1.

### 8.3.4 Disabled Access

Elderly, people with prams, and disabled persons are especially disadvantaged in Katoomba because of the hills and weather, and a general lack of pram ramps at intersection kerbs. Making easier and more equitable access was a high priority for the Charrette.

**Action 8.3.4** - Use design guidelines and standards to improve access for elderly, baby strollers, etc.

### 8.3.5 Access from Cascade & Parke Streets to Katoomba Street

The street block bounded by Cascade, Parke, Bathurst and Waratah Streets, is over 600 metres-long, about four times longer than most pedestrian-friendly urban street blocks in a town centre. Access both for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians to the Town Centre from the west is very difficult. Extensive access improvements from the west should be achieved, as in the following Action Plans.

**Action 8.3.5** - Investigate the potential for development of additional link roads and pedestrian routes throughout the town centre. Such link roads would include:

- ◇ providing link street/s or at least pedestrian way/s between Parke and Cascade Streets to provide greater pedestrian and vehicular permeability. These links should be considered in association with any redevelopment of sites in this area;
- ◇ improved pedestrian linkages between the TAFE east site and Katoomba Street, possibly located beside the Carrington Hotel
- ◇ redesign of the Katoomba Civic Centre to provide additional safe and attractive pedestrian links between Katoomba Street and the redeveloped TAFE site and district-shopping precinct.

### 8.3.6 Echo Point To Katoomba Heritage Trail

The distance of about 2.5 kilometres between the Town Centre and Echo Point was recognised at the Charrette as not too far to walk or cycle as a recreational journey, and many agreed that the Lurline Street route was quite pleasant for the most part. This walking/cycling link between Echo Point and the Town Centre deserves to be enhanced and celebrated, by interpreting key features along the way with some sort of plaques to inform passers-by and to make the passage all the more appealing.

The Charrette also proposed improvements in the vehicular and pedestrian function of a couple of key intersections along the route (see Sections 8.6.5 and 8.6.6).

**Action 8.3.6** - A 'pedestrian trail' along the footpath, with route information, should be developed between Echo Point and the Town Centre along Lurline Street. Possible measures to achieve this would include preparation of a self-guide brochure, signage and interpretive information at major highlights and improvement of the pedestrian amenity along the route.

### 8.3.7 Cycle Facilities

Cycle facilities, such as places for cyclists to shower after arriving at work, or for bike racks where cycles can be stored and locked, are too few in the Town Centre. Such improvements would encourage more cycle use both for locals and visitors, thereby increasing public fitness while reducing energy consumption and the need for road improvements for larger vehicles.

**Action 8.3.7** - Investigate proposals from the Bikeways Plan to encourage environmentally sustainable transport use.



## 8.4 Proposed New Street Links to the Town Centre

The Charrette identified the significant deficiency of east-west linkages into the Town Centre, due largely to the exceedingly long north-south street blocks. The Charrette Team produced the following indicative plan for new street linkages, to improve access to the Town Centre and to relieve congestion at its too-few intersections.

Only two possible public street opportunities, in the street block between Cascade and Parke Street, could be identified at present due to land ownerships, existing development and topographic constraints. These were through the Department of Housing Property, but this opportunity was lost because the Department of Housing was "too far" along in an already approved cul de sac development on this property. The other link already exists physically in the form of a private roadway at the southern edge of the Gateway site, abutting the TAFE West site. This opportunity should be protected by zoning it as a public street.



Charrette Proposed New Linkages Plan

**Action 8.4 A-** Increase the permeability of the town centre for vehicles through promoting alternate road linkages, particularly between Parke and Cascade Street. This will involve incorporating these road linkages into new development or investigating the purchase and development of appropriate linkages. These linkages will also improve the pedestrian permeability from the town centre to the residential areas to the west.

**Action 8.4 B -** Protect the existing road link between Cascade and Parke Streets along the south edge of the Gateway site by BMCC purchasing and dedicating this private way as a public street, and then by constructing footpaths along it.

## 8.5 Improvements to Katoomba & Waratah Streets

This section deals with Katoomba and Waratah Streets themselves; see other parts of this section for related intersections, improved connections to it, and nearby parking improvements.

### 8.5.1 Existing Problems

The pedestrian safety and urban amenity of Katoomba and Waratah Streets need to be improved, which should also help the vitality of the businesses enfronting it. In turn, many of the premises along Katoomba and Waratah Streets present blank walls to the street, when instead they should contribute to the streetscape with more inviting and active frontages (see Section 4.3.4 for further details). Streetscape and bins are addressed in Section 7.3.2.

Many stakeholders said that traffic flowed too speedily along Katoomba and Waratah Streets, while others said these streets were too congested. The volume of traffic on Katoomba Street at about 6,000 vehicles per day is not high; in fact most good main streets have at least double that volume of traffic. Katoomba Street's businesses in fact could benefit from much more passing custom (more volume). The problem is not volume, it is behaviour of the vehicles, which often speed. This speeding is because Katoomba Street is so wide that, when there are few cars in the way, impatient drivers have little constraint on their speeding along. When the physical characteristics of a street do not discourage speeding, then drivers often break the posted speed limit.

Katoomba Street is wide enough for delivery vehicles to double-park along it, while vehicles behind them must slow down to pass within the ample street width. Ironically, double parking is one characteristic of Katoomba Street, which actually may help to slow the traffic, at least temporarily.

The Charrette street design below addresses all of the above problems together.

## 8.5.2 Proposed Design for Katoomba Street Improvements



Katoomba Street With New Central Median and New Street Trees, Bins and Street Lamps

### Median Strip Pedestrian Refuge

The changes to Katoomba Street shown in the plan below serve several purposes. An intermittent median strip is proposed, which is 2 metres wide. This median is wide enough to serve as a pedestrian refuge, so that pedestrians only have to walk across 5.3 metres between the existing kerbs and the median (only one lane of moving traffic), rather than having to make it across 12.6 metres of existing pavement and two lanes of moving traffic going in opposing directions. Breaks between the intermittent median strips enable turning access into all lanes.

### Slower Traffic but Adequate Clearance

The introduction of these intermittent median strips will slow vehicular traffic by narrowing the carriageways to a width of 5.3 metres for a row of kerbside parallel parked cars and a lane of slowly moving traffic.

This carriageway width is narrow enough to slow the traffic, but wide enough to let coaches pass even wider than normal vehicles, parked parallel along the street. If a vehicle is very badly parked, too far from the kerb, then coaches and/or other vehicles may ride up on the kerb of the median to get past.



Katoomba Street Plan

### Street Trees and Old-Style Light Standards

There is also room in these intermittent median strips for recommended street trees and light standards, which are proposed to have a historic character to match the street, as shown in the sketch below. The plan below shows where trees are proposed, which are located to correspond with existing or new trees to be planted in the existing triangular kerbside planters in the parking lanes, so that they form a band of three trees in a row across the street.

This arrangement should substantially improve the streetscape and lighting of the street, while slowing the traffic and making it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross.

### Rear Access vs. Double-Parking for Truck Deliveries

Of course, truck deliveries to businesses along Katoomba Street are also essential. However, double parking along Katoomba Street is only one means of delivery. Most successful main streets enforce delivery from the rear of premises whenever possible, and/or they limit double-parked deliveries to off-peak times such as early in the morning.

The Charrette Team analysed the buildings along Katoomba Street to determine which ones could presently accommodate rear-deliveries. Also, a shared parking design, with improved rear delivery access and manoeuvrability, is proposed for several business premises east of Katoomba Street at the Top End of Town (Section 8.8.5). By using rear delivery instead of trucks double-parking out front, the overall urban amenity, retail appeal and pedestrian safety of Katoomba Street will benefit.

The Charrette analysis of existing shops' capacity for rear deliveries was necessarily brief. The breaks in the median may need to be adjusted or expanded with further review and consultation with shop owners. However, the amount of median presently shown should stay not be substantially reduced, or else the other benefits of slowing the traffic and pedestrian safety would be too compromised.

### 8.5.3 Proposed Design for Waratah Street Improvements

As shown on the plan above, Waratah Street is to receive similar improvements to those of Katoomba Street, particularly the intermittent median strips, to provide pedestrian refuges, on which street trees and old-style lighting standards can be installed (see sketch above which also illustrates how Waratah Street might appear).

**Action 8.5 A** - Consult with Katoomba Street businesses to verify and possibly fine-tune locations of median breaks to enable double-parked truck deliveries where there is no other choice, such as rear access deliveries.

**Action 8.5 B** - Implement the Charrette street improvements for Katoomba and Waratah Streets, after being modified if necessary, as per Action Plan 8.5A

## 8.6 Improve Intersections for Better Access and Circulation

### 8.6.1 Phasing of Traffic Signals & Streetscape Improvements on Great Western Highway

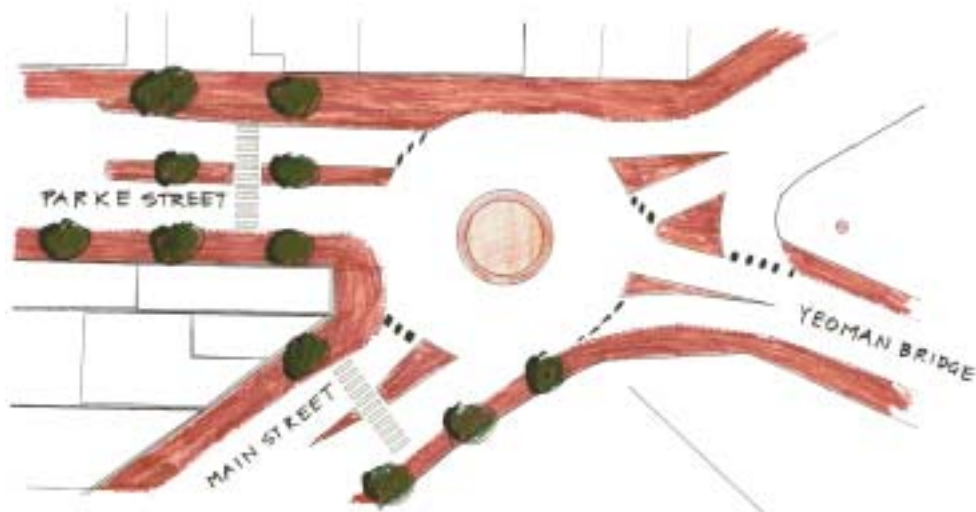
At present the Great Western Highway past town does not especially celebrate or respect the Town Centre or its entry. The Highway is detailed the same there as it is for several kilometres in either direction, indicating no arrival or uniqueness for the town entry. Moreover, the relatively short-duration pedestrian phasing of the lights at Katoomba Street and Yeoman's Bridge make it difficult for those less fit to cross, particularly the elderly or disabled. In this regard, there is no pedestrian refuge or median in the centre line of the highway. It was reported to the Charrette that the RTA has funding to improve the stretch of the highway as it passes through Katoomba. The Charrette proposed that the design below, in conjunction with longer pedestrian crossing phases at the lights, should be implemented with the present funding for improvements to the highway.

**Action 8.6.1** - Use existing RTA funding for improvements to the Great Western Highway to implement the improvements proposed by the Charrette, including longer pedestrian light phases at Katoomba Street and Yeoman's Bridge.

### 8.6.2 Roundabout at Bathurst Road and Parke Street

This roundabout experiences congestion at peak hours, and it is hard for pedestrians to cross east-west along Main Street because the stopping line for northbound vehicles is too close to the roundabout. The phasing of the Yeoman's Bridge traffic light at Great Western Highway also needs adjustment to optimise traffic flows through the roundabout during peak hours. The lights phasing change at Yeoman's Bridge would provide more potential for northbound traffic on Parke Street to get onto the Highway and help free up the roundabout during peak traffic times.

The Charrette determined that the performance of the roundabout could be improved significantly and the pedestrian crossing made easier, by means of the design shown below.



Improved Roundabout and Pedestrian Crossing at Bathurst Road/Main Street/Parke Street

**Action 8.6.2** - Relocate the roundabout to the south a few metres and redesign the Bathurst Road and Parke Street roundabout to improve traffic flows and pedestrian safety, as per the Charrette design.

### 8.6.3 Main Street and Katoomba Street Intersection

The intersection of Main and Katoomba Streets is not perceived to be working very well, for cars turning to Katoomba Street or for pedestrians. The intersection was perceived by many as not detailed to encourage visitors arriving via Main Street to turn down Katoomba Street, hopefully to support the Town Centre better.

The Charrette concluded that improved Town Entry signage (see Section 7.5.4) and an upgrading of the facades (see Section 7.3.1) and more active uses for the key buildings fronting this intersection are likely to be more valuable in attracting more users than major intersection improvements. A roundabout for this intersection was considered and discarded because of its expense and, more importantly, because, while it would distribute vehicular traffic well, it would disadvantage pedestrians trying to cross.

The Charrette proposed a much less costly and higher-return minor improvement to this intersection. The kerb on the southwest corner is to be extended northward into the intersection, as shown on the drawing for Katoomba Street Improvements above (Section 8.5.2). This kerb extension will reduce the pedestrian crossing distance, introduce more space for sunny outdoor dining and/or display of items for sale, and will help to protect parallel parked cars along the south side of Main Street from being hit by west-bound traffic.

**Action 8.6.3** - Construct proposed Charrette Improvements for the intersection of Main and Katoomba Streets.

### 8.6.4 Prior Place and Katoomba Street Intersection

Prior Place is the street passing from Katoomba Street to Parke Street just north of the Jewels Supermarket. This street presently has no right turns allowed into it from its intersection with Katoomba Street. This condition unduly causes congestion and excess distances to be travelled. There is enough width in this present one-way length for it to function well as a two-way street, and to have turning access from Katoomba Street in both directions, which is what the Charrette proposed. This improvement was completed by Council immediately following the Charrette. There remains a need to ensure that the future streetscape improvements to Katoomba Street include consideration of this area, particularly sight lines and plantings.

**Action 8.6.4** - Change Prior Place to a two-way street, with turning access from Katoomba Street and priority given to north-south Katoomba Street traffic.

### 8.6.5 Katoomba and Waratah Streets Intersection

This pivotal intersection in the Town Centre has several inter-related problems. Despite traffic volumes not being very high, congestion takes place for several reasons. There are no right turn pockets, which would separate turning traffic from through traffic at the intersection and allow the through traffic to proceed past the traffic waiting to turn. The pedestrian cross walks (or some form of pedestrian priority and protection) are important to have, but the many pedestrians crossing the street so frequently and erratically tend to congest the vehicular

traffic flows. Also the Katoomba Street has vehicular priority over Waratah Street, although the north side channel crossing appears as a 'stop' liner to many drivers, and consequently southbound traffic tends to give way to Waratah Street traffic even though it has the right of way. This causes further delays. The steeper slopes of Waratah Street make holding at the intersection somewhat difficult for some drivers.

There are no traffic signals, although these are not needed at present, if the design proposed below is implemented. The following Charrette design introduces a number of adjustments to the intersection which, together, will relieve the vehicular congestion while improving pedestrian safety and ease of movement.

Two metre-wide median strips are introduced onto Waratah Street either side of the intersection to serve as pedestrian refuges, so that pedestrians only have to cross traffic flowing in one direction (rather than two) before reaching a point to rest and/or to wait for passing traffic. The kerb extensions across Katoomba Street on the north side of the intersection is to be retained, as it works quite well to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians. This will improve pedestrian crossing ease and safety, while reducing the duration when pedestrians are actually crossing the street, giving more time for vehicles to pass.

Right turning lanes are provided in all four directions for the intersection, which will allow through traffic vehicles to pass through without having to wait for right-turning vehicles ahead of them. Lastly, the give way and priority relationship between Katoomba Street and Waratah Streets is to be reversed; now Katoomba Street has priority, but there are higher volumes and steeper slopes on Waratah Street.

This combination of improvements to the intersection should enable the intersection to work adequately without needing to incur the additional expense of installing traffic lights (about \$110,000 plus operation and maintenance costs). However, the design is detailed so that traffic signals can be installed if ever needed without further changes needed to the intersection.

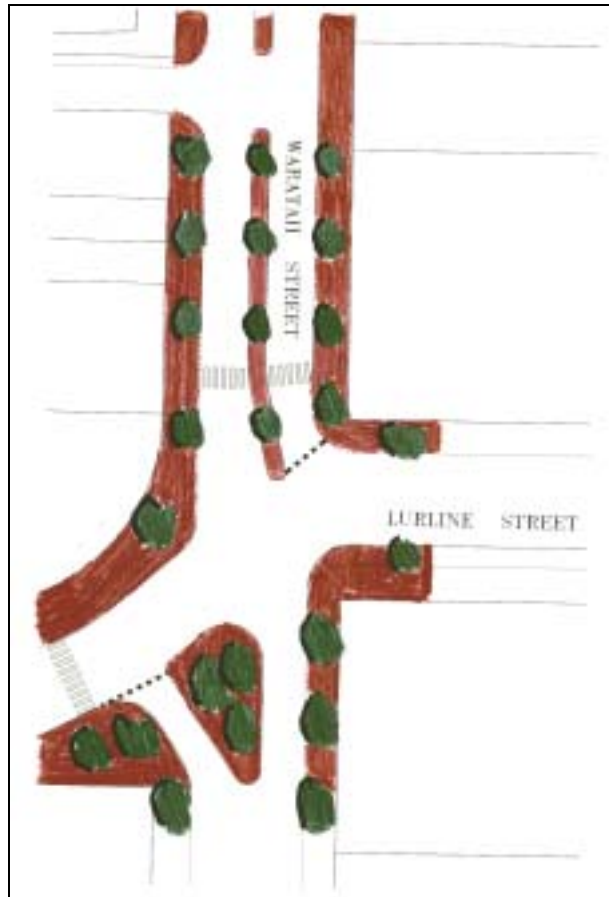


Katoomba and Waratah Street Intersection

**Action 8.6.5** - Construct the Charrette intersection improvements to this intersection.

### 8.6.6 Waratah and Lurline Streets Intersection

There is far too much open pavement in this intersection at present. As a result, cars tend to speed through the intersection, endangering pedestrians and other vehicles. The proposed design 'tightens up' the vehicular movements in all directions, forcing vehicles to negotiate this intersection at an appropriately slower speed, and making life safer and more pleasant for pedestrians as a result.



Improvements for the Intersection of Waratah and Lurline Streets

Several improvements combine to achieve this end, as illustrated in the plan above. A large tree on the northeast corner, which has cracked the kerb nearby, is proposed to be preserved, and the damaged kerb (needing to be replaced or repaired) to be extended westward into the intersection to make a larger plot of ground for the tree to continue to flourish. This kerb extension will tighten down the north-south movement of traffic past this narrowing.

A median strip is to be constructed on Waratah westward from the intersection, with a slight north-bending 'dog leg' in it at the intersection itself. The median provides a pedestrian refuge for north-south moving pedestrians, who might be using the proposed new Echo Point Trail (see Section 8.3.6). This dog leg forces east-bound traffic heading across the intersection to slow down in order to resume alignment with the carriageway on the eastern side of the



intersection.

Across the intersection a large triangular-shaped and landscaped new island is to be constructed, in which an existing tree is again to be retained. This island forces west-bound traffic on Waratah to divert its path south of the island, and then to manoeuvre back into alignment to continue west on Waratah. Southbound traffic from the east would have to slow down to turn left past the island.

Thus, while this design gives priority to north-south traffic, all directions of vehicular traffic are slowed through is now safer intersection.

**Action 8.6.6** - Construct the proposed Charrette Intersection Improvements.

## 8.7 Improvements to Lurline and Parke Streets

Vehicles speed along both Lurline and Parke Streets all too frequently. This is because both streets are much wider than they need to be to carry their present or projected traffic volumes, and because parking is restricted along much of their lengths. Parking is prohibited along much of the 600+ metre length of Parke Street on its eastern side, much of it because high speed traffic and poor sight lines over the crest of the hill make it unsafe for vehicles to pull into or out of parallel parking bays (or for pedestrians to cross!). This limits viability of present and/or future uses nearby which would benefit from such on-street parking. There is no footpath along most of the eastern side of Lurline Street. Thus drivers have few obstructions or physical reasons to obey posted speed limits; instead, the streets allow and might seem even to encourage a higher speed limit than that which is appropriate for them.

### 8.7.1 Parke Street Improvements

As shown on the plan below, intermittent raised median strips are proposed from the planned reconstruction of the roundabout at Main Street and Bathurst Road southward to the crest of the hill. These medians will provide pedestrian refuges for people presently (and many more anticipated to be crossing back and forth from the new TAFE) and to and past the Carrington Hotel.

Parallel parking, protected by kerb outstands, is practical over much of the frontage of Parke Street. Formalising this parking will encourage its use and contribute to a speed control effect through effectively narrowing the Parke Street carriageway.

South of the crest of the hill, the medians stop, and tour coach parking begins along the eastern kerb of Parke Street (see Section 8.8.4). Beyond the southward point where enough length of street has been provided for coach parking, then on-street car parking should be reinstated to the corner of Waratah, except where it would directly affect the truck deliveries for the Coles Supermarket. The medians at the north end of Parke Street not only will slow the traffic along that northern length, but they will also slow the approach of traffic over the crest of the hill, so that parallel parking can be negotiated more safely by the coaches, and passengers can disembark more safely and cross Parke Street to its western side.

**Action 8.7.1** - Implement and construct the Parke Street improvements proposed above.

### 8.7.2 Lurline Street Improvements

Traffic needs to be slowed along Lurline Street, and pedestrian amenity and safety improved. To do this, the eastern side of Lurline Street should be improved by means of constructing a footpath along that side (there is one already on the western side), plus planting of trees in the eastern parallel parking lane of the street to slow the traffic and improve amenity. While for now, there may be less demand for parking in Lurline Street than Parke Street, due to the grade to reach the Town Centre and limited access through private properties, the street trees in the parking lane will themselves act to slow the south-bound traffic in particular.

**Action 8.7.2** - Construct proposed Lurline Street improvements.

## 8.8 Car Parking Improvements

### 8.8.1 The Car Parking Context And Challenges for the Top End of Town

The Top of Town especially suffers from several inter-related car parking problems.

- ◇ The Top End of Town is generally under-parked, compared to the lower end of the Town Centre.
- ◇ Present parking requirements are fairly onerous. For example, to change the use within an existing historic building may require new additional on-site parking, or else contributions to off-site parking fees at \$15,000 per required space (the approximate cost of a parking space in a multi-deck parking structure). Required parking ratios are applied presently, regardless of the circumstance of the property involved, in terms of its size or its historic importance. And there are no known significant car parking sites right in the Top of Town, to which such off-site parking fees could be applied through a Council purchase and car park development initiative, where they would actually do much good for the Top of Town.
- ◇ Relatively ample parking north of the railway is hard to reach, despite its proximity to the Top of Town, because of the 'barrier effect' of the railway itself.
- ◇ The Top of Town is generally made up of small and historic parcels, being forced to comply with the above parking requirements. This had made for a 'Catch 22' for improvements to many existing buildings.

We have a 'Catch 22' where more car parking is needed, but, at the same time, parking exemptions are needed for businesses in the Top of Town, because they cannot gain on-site parking capacity due to generally small and cramped premises!

### 8.8.2 Proposed Strategies for Car Parking in the Top of Town

The Charrette proposed to accept the nearby parking shortage and instead to make the area more attractive, so customers would be more willing to park in car parks slightly further away and still walk to the Top of Town.

#### Reduced On-Site Parking Requirements

Key buildings like the Savoy should be encouraged to proceed with minimal or zero on-site parking requirements, as peak parking demand for the Savoy would not likely coincide with parking demands for most of the rest of the existing parking capacity in the Top of Town. Cafes and restaurants should be encouraged to operate without parking requirements, again

because of their evening peak parking demands, and because car parkers using the cafes in the daytime would hopefully be parking also to patronise other uses at the same time (thereby increasing parking efficiency by reducing single-destination parking demand). Services that are oriented to goods and services suited for pedestrians should be encouraged in the Top of Town, while discouraging more car-dependent uses where people need to carry large items to cars, such as building supply stores or mattress shops.

Adaptive re-use of an existing building, including to a different use, should attract no additional parking contribution requirements if the gross floor area is not increased through such improvements.

The Charrette recommended that, where proposed new uses in the Top End of Town will generate parking demands, the availability of existing parking to serve such new parking demands should be assessed and should count for such requirements, including all publicly available parking within a distance of 400 metres of the subject site. Off-peak considerations should be considered in calculating such parking capacities.

In other parts of town nearby, decisions about car parking requirements should be made on a site-by-site and proposal-by-proposal basis, with flexibility particularly being used to encourage those uses that will help catalyse visitor uses (ie the Arts), lead to the rehabilitation of historic buildings and their facades, or contribute to the revitalisation of the Town Centre.

#### **Institutionalise Shared Parking**

Shared parking of all existing parking in the Top of Town should be shared and institutionalised by the Council.

**Action 8.8.2A** - Council should review its parking requirements, especially for the Top of Town, as per the above Charrette recommendations.

**Action 8.8.2B** - Increase parking capacity for the Top End of Town by means of shared or public parking facilities nearby (especially the Old TAFE Site, Goldsmiths and the SRA Depot on week-ends in particular when there is less demand for train commuter parking), and by means of improving pedestrian access between those facilities and Top End of Town businesses.

#### **8.8.3 Commuter Car Parking at the Station**

Additional parking is envisaged to be located on the street in Goldsmith Place, and off-street commuter parking is proposed as part of any redevelopment of the State Rail Authority Depot site. Additional parking in this location will service both commuters, especially during the weekdays, as well as users of the railway precinct and the Top of Town on the week-ends and evenings, especially when the proposed at-grade electronic pedestrian crossing of the railway is in place (see Section 8.3.1).



Goldsmith Place Commuter Car Parking North of the Railway Station

**Action 8.8.3** - Provide additional commuter and visitor parking within the railway station / Gearin's precinct.

#### 8.8.4 Visitor Centre & Echo Point 'Shuttle' Car Parking

Please refer to Section 8.2 for information on public transport challenges and Charrette proposals. The largest scale alternative proposed for the new Cultural/Visitor Centre on the Old TAFE Site (see Section 10.1) aims to incorporate about 300 parking spaces, to be shared between a proposed supermarket and other businesses at the southern end of this development, and visitors who might park there and then take the bus to Echo Point or walk there along its improved 'trail' (see Section 8.3.6). Financially to make such parking capacity a reality, the Charrette Team concurred that a joint-use car park was needed to share the benefits and costs, whether a supermarket was involved with the Old TAFE Site or not.

#### 8.8.5 Tourist Coach Parking

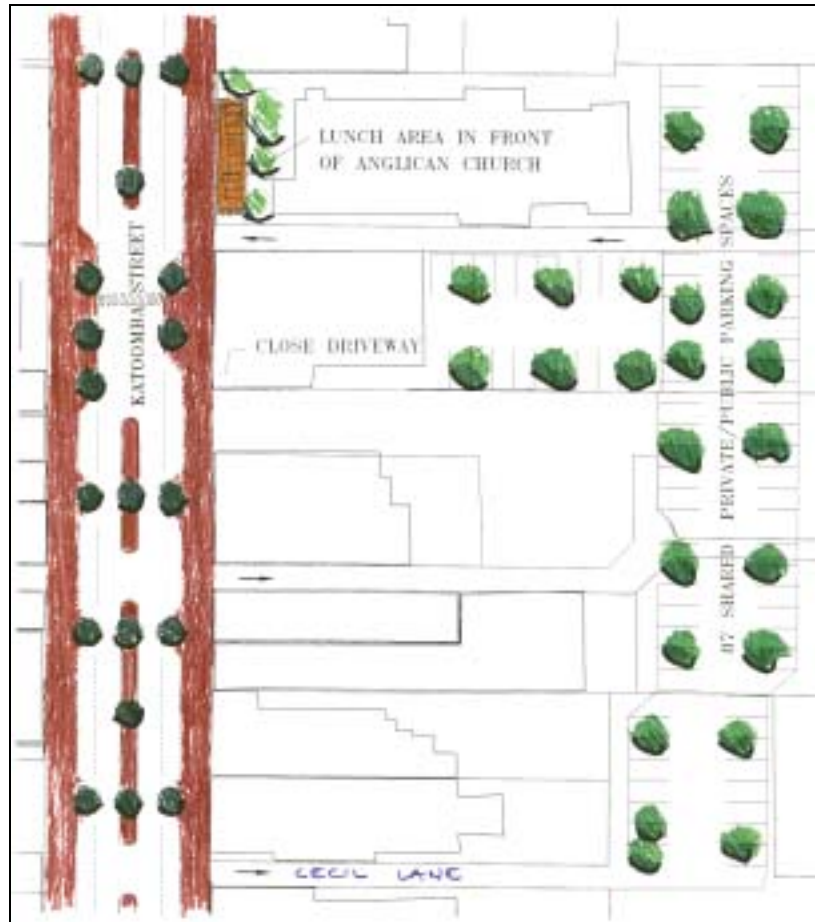
The Charrette Team determined that tourist coach parking could feasibly be accommodated along the eastern side of Parke Street, adjoining the proposed Visitors Centre on the Old TAFE site (see Sections 8.2 and 10.1).

**Action 8.8.5** - Provide stops and toilet/locker facilities for tourist coaches along Parke Street (see Section 10.1). These facilities would include additional coach lay-over parking as part of the future redevelopment of the Old TAFE site, a centrally located drop-off zone and refreshment and restroom facilities.

#### 8.8.6 Shared Intra-Block Car Parking

The multiple lanes stemming from Katoomba Street to cramped rear parking were found generally to be relatively inefficient. Many of the rear parking areas, in particular between Katoomba and Lurline Streets, were actually adjacent to each other, but access from one

parking are to the next was not possible either because of fences and/or slight grade changes. The Charrette Team determined that re-construction could address the usually small grade change problems to accommodate an enlarged and shared parking area (see plan below), whose cumulative efficiency is meant to justify the construction costs and special management required including labelling dedicated spots (these would be minimised). This parking area is meant to improve somewhat the car parking capacity for the Top of Town.



Plan of Shared Parking Area between Katoomba and Lurline Streets

**Action 8.8.6** - Promote as many integrated parking areas as possible to the rear of existing buildings between Katoomba Street and Lurline Street. Access to these shared private and public parking areas should be rationalised.

### 8.8.7 Goldsmith Place Parking

The Goldsmith Hardware site is one of several opportunities to gain both on-street and potentially on-site car parking capacity for the Top of Town and for commuter parking for the train. As shown on the plan in Section 9.2, there is width in Goldsmith Place (the street in front of Goldsmiths) for head-in parking on the railway side; this arrangement would increase the on-street parking capacity.

The Goldsmith site itself is large enough to accommodate considerable parking capacity, not only on-grade, but as a reasonably efficient multi-deck. Of course, if this parking were for

commuters and/or for the Top End of Town, then some compensation arrangement would be required which would justify Goldsmith's dedicating that site in part or as a whole for such a use. The design and use proposed in Section 9.2 does not exclude this possibility.

There have been proposals to construct a multi-deck car park on the Goldsmiths site. However, there appears to be insufficient demand from train commuters and Top of Town users and/or funding source presently from Top of Town users and property assessments for off-site parking. The development of the Old TAFE Site (see Section 10.1) seems better located and positioned in association with the proposed Cultural/Visitors Centre, as a target for off-site parking assessment improvements (if any) from the Top of Town. If built on the Goldsmiths site, a multi-deck should not extend above the level of the highway (about 7 metres from grade), as it would block views of Main Street and the Station and damage the image of the town entry.

**Action 8.8.7A** - Increase on-street parking by implementing the on-street parking plan shown in the design for Goldsmiths.

**Action 8.8.7B** - Goldsmiths should consider on-site parking possibilities in conjunction with development of its site, for use by commuters and/or the Top End of Town, with appropriate compensatory arrangements.

### 8.8.8 Short-Term Car Parking at the Old TAFE Site

The Old TAFE Site is vacant at present. As a short-term measure, the Charrette proposed that the two derelict sheds along Prior Lane should be demolished, the existing toilets be refurbished, and that the open land north of the Old TAFE building should be paved for parking (see second plan in Section 10.1). This parking will also support the Top End of Town.

Since the Charrette, the State has determined that the buildings on the Old TAFE Site have no great historic significance, and that they could be demolished. If this were to happen in the short term, then these derelict buildings could be removed from the heart of town (except for the toilets which should be refurbished), and a much larger temporary car parking facility for the Top of Town could be provided.

**Action 8.8.8** - Utilise the TAFE east site for short-term temporary car parking with access via College Lane.

### 8.8.9 Pioneer Place Car Park Improvements

Stakeholders during the Charrette generally agreed that the Pioneer Place car park in front of the Coles Supermarket was not inviting enough, and that its landscaping should be upgraded. The Charrette proposed that a plan should be prepared in collaboration with Coles and K-Mart to address issues in this area.

**Action 8.8.9** - Create an attractive streetscape for Pioneer Place that complements the existing district shopping precinct. This will involve preparation of a detailed design for this area that promotes pedestrian accessibility, promotes additional buildings along the eastern frontage and provides undercover linkages between the supermarkets and Katoomba Street.

## 8.9 Signage for Traffic, Pedestrian, and Public Transport

The Charrette recognised that, especially for visitors, the assets of the Town Centre were not well signed, especially from the Town entry.

**Action 8.9 A** - Provide a comprehensive and legible signage system that clearly indicates preferred movement patterns for pedestrians and vehicles within and around the Town Centre.

**Action 8.9 B** - Provide easy to understand information about public transport at key locations throughout the town centre.

**Action 8.9 C** - Provide signage at the entry to Katoomba identifying the opportunities available in the town centre and information about location of: parking for the Echo Point shuttle; Echo Point; and town centre shopping areas.

**Action 8.9 D** - Revise signage that presently directs Echo Point traffic via Lurline Street to encourage more to go to and from Katoomba Street.

**Action 8.9 E** - Provide information and interpretive signage along a designated Echo Point walking trail linking Echo Point to Katoomba along Lurline Street.

## 8.10 The Benefits of an At-Grade Vehicular Crossing Of The Railway for Katoomba Street

Closure of the at-grade railway crossing of Katoomba Street in the 1980's and the construction of the Yeoman's Bridge at Parke Street was a long, hard and costly process. However, the decline of businesses along Katoomba Street since then would suggest that this closure may be contributing to their struggle. Custom from vehicular traffic is now diverted to Parke Street, and much of it bypasses Katoomba Street, often en route to the Coles/Pioneer Plaza development, or to Echo Point via Parke Street or Lurline Street.

It is technically possible to re-instate the at-grade crossing, but politically too hard for the foreseeable future. Electronic signalling technology exists for crossings at a curve of the railway, such as that of Katoomba Street. The Middleborough at-grade railway crossing in Box Hill, Melbourne is a case in point. The economic benefits of re-instating the at-grade crossing for Katoomba Street may outweigh the cost. Furthermore, signalling technology and resultant safety continues to increase. Perhaps a time will come when signalling/safety technology improves to the point where a re-consideration of this issue may be appropriate.

## 9. PROPOSALS FOR KEY SITES - NORTH END

This section of the Report explains key sites in the northern part of the Town Centre, for which specific and relatively detailed designs were developed during the Charrette. They are presented together, as they and their benefits are inter-dependent.



Key Sites in the North End.

## 9.1 State Rail Authority Goods Yard Site

The State Rail Authority (SRA) Goods Yard, between the station and Main Street, contains some important historic rail-related buildings and apparatus, but is mostly a vacant and dusty hole in the urban fabric. Safety there at night is a concern, and the Goods Yard is hardly used in the daytime, either for rail or other purposes. Yet the site is quite important, being directly across the rail line from the station platform. It is wrapped by the crescent-shaped Main Street with historic buildings.

### 9.1.1 Site Context Analysis and Stakeholder Input

#### Historic Fabric

The goods shed, a rail-related building alongside the rail, and the crane on the site represent historically significant rail heritage. The larger goods shed was reportedly moved to the site in about 1930, so that its particular present location was reportedly less significant than the relatively portable building itself. A smaller rail building, older and in its original position, is next to a flourishing small cafe complex, whose owner expresses the desire to expand his premises with a deck adjoining this old building, in which to serve outdoor meals, overlooking this space and the station.

#### View Priorities

The Charrette noted that views to the Main Street crescent of historic buildings should be preserved, both from the station and from the highway to the north. Another safety-related view priority is from the station in to the site, in that the Station Master's building just west of the station building is reportedly occupied around the clock.



### Orientation, Existing Street Trees and Grade Change

The northern edge of Main Street is lined by several mature important trees along the footpath. Main Street meets the accessway to the goods yard at its eastern end and then gradually rises 3 or 4 metres on a shelf above the goods yard. The site receives excellent northern sunshine, and its being slightly depressed gives the site protection from harsh winds, making it climatically well-suited as a public open space. However, if the site was fully dedicated as a park, it would have insufficient daily activity and attraction to make it either safe or busy, or to optimise benefits to the Main Street businesses across from it.

### Stakeholder Input

Many at the Charrette expressed the desire for this space to be come a public square complemented by the historic rail buildings, while others wanted the buildings removed and for the space to be devoted to car parking for nearby shops (and possibly commuters). The SRA wanted to see significant development recommended on the site, to increase its land value at the time of its sale by SRA.

### Use for Car Parking?

The Charrette Team tested this irregularly shaped site for car parking capacity, and determined that its shape in plan is not efficient at all for car parking; its north-south dimension is too small, especially at its western end as it tapers to only a few metres in width.

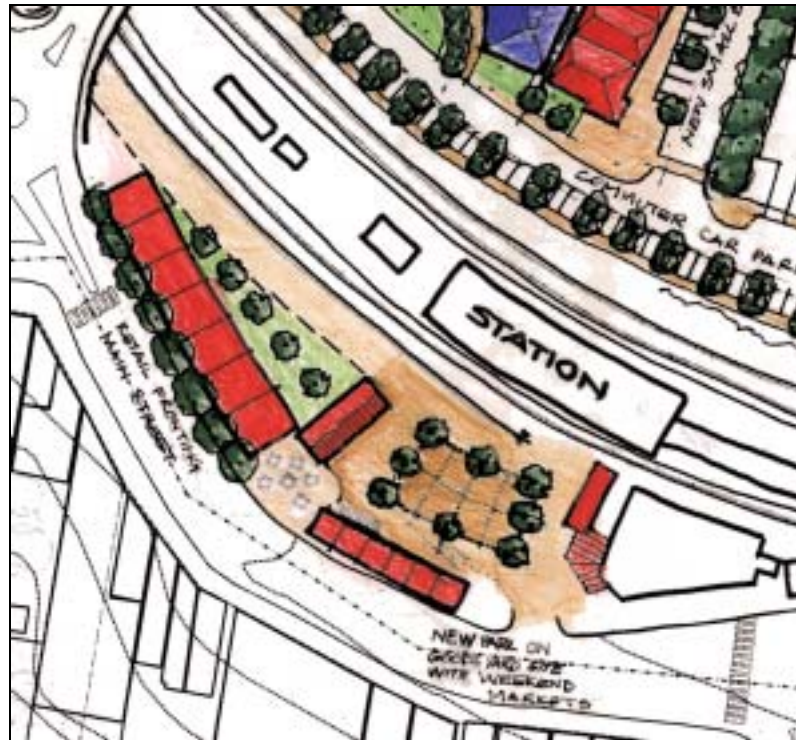
## 9.1.2 Project Design Brief

The Charrette determined that development of the site should comply with the following:

- ◇ Part of the site should be a small north-facing public open space, where week-end markets and other possibly train and heritage related events could take place, and where people could sit and have lunch enjoying the sunshine, and towards which the adjoining cafes to the east could orient outdoor dining;
- ◇ Shops and open-air stalls should line the southern edge of the site against its vertical edge to Main Street, so long as they do not significantly compromise view lines from the station and the highway to the Main Street historic buildings crescent, or from approximately the eastern half of Main Street down to the site;
- ◇ The historic fabric on the site should be retained and possibly re-used for other purposes, but only the small railway building adjoining the railway needs to stay in its exact original location. This recommendation should be subject to an assessment of heritage prior to finalisation of designs for this site;
- ◇ The design and lighting of the site should support its passive surveillance and safety, including after dark;
- ◇ Any development should retain the ability of persons in the station masters building on the station platform to observe the site around the clock, to improve safety on the site, especially after dark. To achieve such, no buildings should be positioned any further east on the site than shown on the Charrette plans.

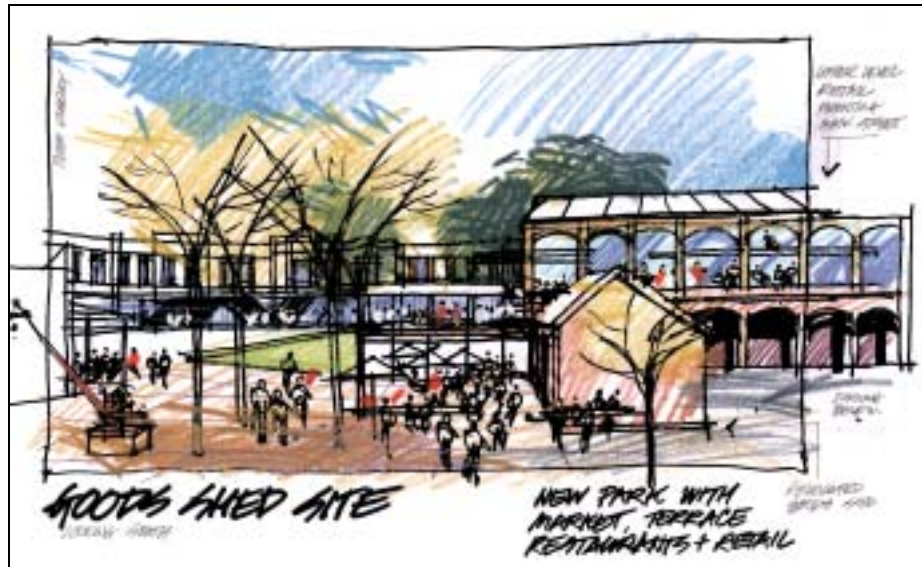
## 9.1.3 Proposed Charrette Design

The proposed Charrette design complies with the Project Design Brief above, as follows.



Proposed Charrette Design of the SRA Goods Yard Site

A small public space is proposed directly across from the station and adjoining the cafes to the east, so that they can build a deck to overlook this space for outdoor dining. Directly south of this space is proposed a row of small open-air stalls against the vertical edge of Main Street, from which artisans can sell their products. The historic goods building is to be moved again (moved most recently in 1930) to orient north-south instead of east west, in order to form a good western edge for and to open to the public open space. Further west along the increasing vertical drop of Main Street is proposed a line of two-storey shops, whose ground floor opens to the lower goods yard site, and whose upper floor aligns with the Main Street footpath. The furthest east shop is a cafe whose outdoor tables sit atop the roof of a final single storey shop. This is shown in the plan above and in the two perspective sketches below.



Perspective Sketch of the Goods Yard Site, as seen from the Train Station



Perspective Sketch of the SRA Goods Yard Site, as seen from the east alongside existing cafes

**9.1 Action** - Develop the site as per the Project Design Brief and as indicated by the proposed Charrette design.

## 9.2 Goldsmiths Place

### 9.2.1 Site Description and Influences

The Goldsmith's Hardware site, just north of the station and west of the Gearin's Hotel, is set about 7 metres below the grade of the adjoining highway, at the base of a vertical retaining wall along the highway. The hardware store is operating, but the owners would like the

property to be re-developed. In terms of the site's contribution to the Town Centre, the property acts relatively like a 'hole' in the urban fabric (compared to its potential) despite its present operation as a hardware and building supplies store.

### Potential Uses and Sources of Value

This site is valuable due to its exposure to passing trade on the highway. Because the site is also across the street from and just north of the rail line and station, it is a candidate for both commuter car parking and tourist car parking, as well as overnight tourist accommodation or a range of commercial uses. The site is big enough for a reasonably efficient car parking layout, on grade or in a multi-deck. Also, the public street which it fronts is wide enough to accommodate head-in parking on at least one side. The Charrette noted that Katoomba may be able to support a health-oriented indoor sports/recreation facility, and that this site might accommodate such.

The site has been the focus of concerns about a McDonalds or other fast food restaurant moving into the Blue Mountains. There was broad agreement that a fast food outlet in that location, especially with a drive-through and an image not specific to Katoomba, might be profitable for the owners but would be a detriment to the Town Centre.

### View and Orientation Issues

While the site is hard to see from the highway in its present one-storey development, set about 7 metres below the highway, it could be developed in several storeys to become more visible from the highway, and might even block views of the historic Town Centre if too high. The site is clearly visible from Yeoman's Bridge and from Main Street across the railway. As opposed to the SRA Goods Yard Site (see above), the Goldsmiths site does not enjoy good northern sunshine, due to the 7-metre retaining wall on its northern boundary.

### Adjoining Property to the East

The site adjoins an under-utilised parcel owned by Jane Young, which might either function well as an assembled part of the Goldsmiths property, or as an extension of the Gearin's operation. A public right of way extends northward to the retaining wall and highway, between a row of tall trees on the Gearin's side and this parcel on the west.

## 9.2.2 Project Design Brief

The Goldsmiths Site (and the adjoining parcel to its east) should comply with the following:

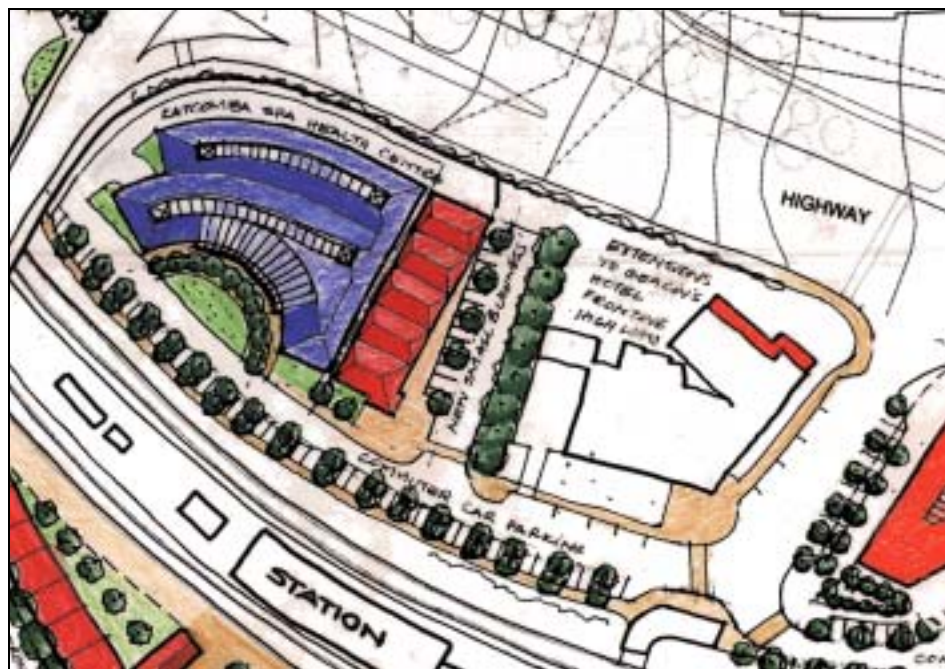
- ◇ The 'buildable envelope' of the development should not extend so high or in such a configuration that it substantially blocks views of the Main Street crescent from the adjacent length of the Great Western Highway (however, small parts of the building could block such views).
- ◇ The design of the building should relate to the character of the buildings in the historic northern end of Katoomba, especially any elevations visible from the Highway, Station platform or Main Street/Yeoman's Bridge.
- ◇ If the roof is below the Highway level and many people would look down onto it or over it, the roof itself should, if feasible, be designed to create interest and to respect the traditional pitched roof character of larger historic buildings.
- ◇ Development of the site, for any use or combination of uses, should support the Town

Centre and not detract from its economic viability, and should contribute positively to Katoomba's Town entry in terms of its appearance and use/s.

- ◇ Development should not include a fast food outlet, especially one with a drive-through facility and/or an image relating little to Katoomba.
- ◇ Development should also involve improvements to the public street (Goldsmith Place) it fronts, including head-in public parking on at least one side, which should be counted to contribute to any parking required by that project. If not needed by the site, then this parking could be done by BMCC and/or SRA.

### 9.2.3 Proposed Charrette Design

The Charrette Design complies with the Project Design Brief, but is only one of many possible development responses and uses, which could also comply quite well.



Plan of Spa and Health Centre on Goldsmiths site, plus adjoining properties including the Gearin's

The Charrette Design is for a privately owned Katoomba Spa and Health Centre. The building's configuration follows the curving retaining wall behind it, generating a distinctive glass roof that would hopefully favourably contribute to the Town entry's image. Parts of the building are two storeys, but it does not in any way block the view of Main Street from the highway; one would look down onto the roof, which is designed to provide interest and to break up the bulk and blandness of an otherwise large roof surface. See the perspective sketch of the design on the following page.

Head-in parking is provided on the street along the railway.

The adjoining parcel to the east is to be small health professionals and related business premises, with head-in parking off the adjoining public north-south street at the highway retaining wall.



View of the Goldsmiths Place Spa and Health Centre, in context with the station

**Action 9.2** - Implement the proposed Charrette design or another development in compliance with the Project Design Brief.

## 9.3 State Rail Authority (SRA) Depot Site & Gearin's Hotel Improvements

As drivers round the bend on the Great Western Highway from Sydney en route to Katoomba and points beyond, their important first view of Katoomba includes in its foreground the Gearin's Hotel and the State Rail Authority's (SRA) Depot site. Therefore, it was important for the Charrette to consider this key entrance and how it might be enhanced.

### 9.3.1 Site Description and Influences

#### *9.3.1.1 SRA Site, Image And View Issues*

SRA Depot buildings, at the furthest eastward extremity of the site, are surplus to its needs and can be removed or re-used. These buildings are not visible from the highway, as they sit down below the highway cutting and can be seen over; plus trees line the south side of the highway on a small ridge at this point. The much more visible west end of the site is vacant and slopes more gently away from the highway, dropping away not much more than a metre. While the absence of any buildings at this end allows a deeper view into the Town Centre, the broad highway at this first intersection seems to sweep drivers past Katoomba rather than encouraging them to slow down and enter the town.

Along with having a position as an important entry statement, the site is very well positioned to contribute as a development to the Town Centre. The site is between the City Offices to the north and the station and Top of Town to the south. While Katoomba Street no longer connects directly to the Town Centre for vehicles, the traffic light and easy left turn south into Katoomba Street for cars and buses gives this

site excellent exposure and access.

The site is presently used informally for commuter parking and access to the depot works. The stanchions of the railway line overhead cables are located within the site, and development would need to fit in around these.

### **Spectacular Scenic Views from the Site But Rail Noise**

The eastern extremity of the site enjoys spectacular distant views southward to the Blue Mountains, which will never be blocked, as Kingsford Smith Park is directly south of the site and set much lower than the depot site.

However, this narrow strip of the site is directly adjacent to the railway and subject to railway noise, including late-night coal trains.

### **Possible Uses Considered**

Uses considered for this site are similar to those of the Goldsmiths site, including:

- ◇ car parking for site occupants, commuters, Echo Point shuttle bus users, and the Top End of Town;
- ◇ business uses related to the Council Offices and/or to tourism or health;
- ◇ tourist overnight accommodation due to proximity to the Station and Tourist Coach drop-offs;
- ◇ a scenery or rail heritage related enterprise, including possibly a National Parks and Wildlife Service information centre;
- ◇ highway retail and/or a fast food outlet.

Because the site is so vital as an entry statement for Katoomba, there was little support in the Charrette for highway retail or a fast food outlet, especially a multi-national outlet designed in standard corporate style.

### **Ownership Disposition**

The State Rail Authority has indicated that it would consider reuse of the site. The SRA wishes to maximise financial returns from the disposal of the site, while considering the continuing operation of the Depot functions in association with Katoomba Rail Station. The SRA also sought about 100 commuter car parking spaces for the site, if possible. Other state objectives, in favour of the Town Centre, may also influence how it is disposed and developed, however.

### **Stakeholder Input**

The general community reportedly wanted this site to contribute to the Town Centre in its use and image, and they do not want it completely to block deeper views to the Town Centre.

#### ***9.3.1.2 The Gearin's Hotel***

While the historic Gearin's Hotel is a treasure, its frontage to the highway is not. Its north face is a blank brick wall with an empty space about 5 metres wide stretching to

its rear, between the elevated highway retaining wall and the building itself. This unfortunate exposure to the highway may have come about during the highway construction. This blank wall and empty space function as a 'hole' or missing face of this key corner of Katoomba's Town entry at Katoomba Street.

### **Ownership Disposition**

No consultation occurred with the Gearin's ownership about its north facade during the Charrette, although it is understood that they are currently considering some refurbishment and expansion.

### **Stakeholder Input**

There was general support during the Charrette for improving the north facade of the Gearin's.

## **9.3.2 Project Design Briefs**

### ***9.3.2.1 SRA Depot Site***

Development of the SRA Depot Site should comply with the following conditions:

- ◇ Development should not totally eclipse deeper views to the Town Centre from the highway, although some of the site should form an important foreground 'entry statement' whose image and use is supportive of the Town Centre. Ideally this entry statement should front right up to the corner at the Katoomba Street intersection, so that the new building frames the deeper view of Town, and so that it makes that intersection seem more urban by its presence and character, instead of the present blank highway feeling (see sketch below).
- ◇ This corner development should contribute in its use/s to the Town Centre, should be related to Katoomba in some way/s, and may be two or three storeys. Uses might include but not be limited to offices, overnight accommodation overlooking the valley, or public meeting spaces related to the Council offices.
- ◇ The building should be detailed to complement and respect historic buildings in the Town Centre visible from the Highway in front of this site, of a high quality worthy of its prominent site, and will all building masses (or components thereof) and openings detailed to appear taller than they are wide.
- ◇ The remainder of the site, past which people on the highway can see the Town, should not be developed to block the view, and should ideally optimise itself for car parking capacity, for the site occupants and/or for the other car parking uses noted above.
- ◇ The further eastern extremity of the site, where the present depot buildings sit, may take advantage of the spectacular distant views, and could be developed to more than one storey without compromising views from the highway, so long as its use and construction can deal with the railway noise, and provide adequate car parking.

### ***9.3.2.2 Gearin's North Facade***

Improvements to the presently blank north facade of the Gearin's Hotel should comply



with the following conditions:

- ◇ Improvements should respect and respond to the Gearin's historic architecture and should create a frontage to serve as an entry statement that better supports the Town.
- ◇ Improvements may occupy the entire empty space between the present building and the footpath along the highway, and be more than one storey, in order to provide enough buildable space financially to justify the improvement to the Town entry.

### 9.3.3 Proposed Charrette Designs

The proposed Charrette designs for these two sites are illustrated in the sketch below.



Sketch of proposed improvements to the north facade of the Gearin's Hotel and SRA Depot Site

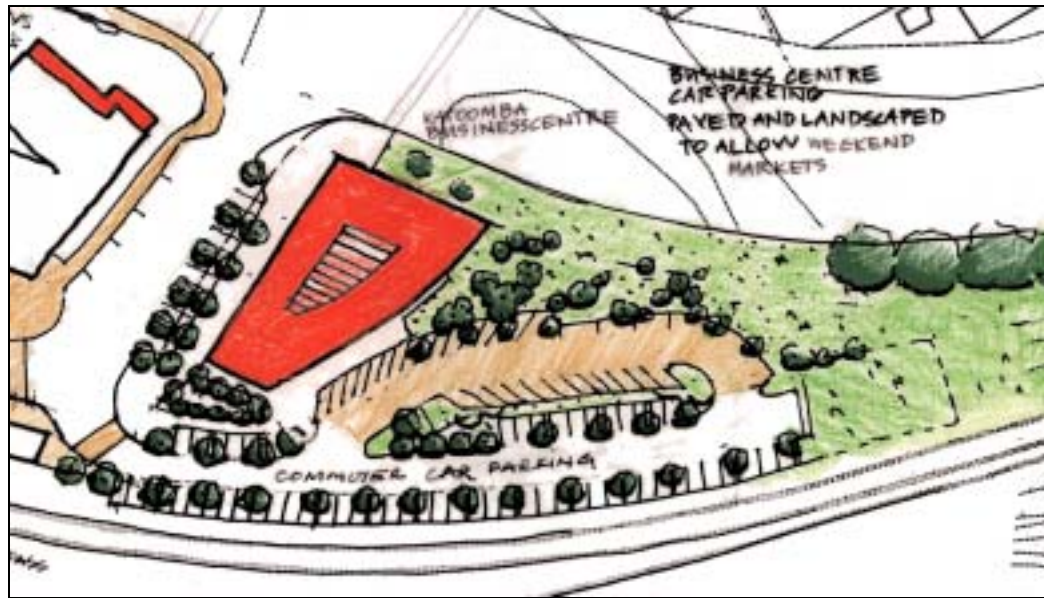
#### Gearin's Improvements

Improvements to the north facade of the Gearin's include two storeys of additional rooms with insulated glass tall windows for acoustical protection from passing traffic and to receive the north sun. The layout envisaged converting the existing rooms on the north facade into ensembles, and adding new rooms to the north of each of them. Refer to the Goldsmiths Plan for an indicative plan of the Gearin's expansion of its north facade. The Gearin's, BMCC and the RTA may be well advised to discuss the long term highway configuration and determine whether the Gearin's could expand into the present highway reserve up to the present south edge of the footpath.

#### SRA Depot

The proposed design features an 'entry statement' building of architectural quality, positioned right up to the back of the footpath at the Katoomba Street intersection with the Highway. The SRA, BMCC and the RTA may be well advised to discuss the long term highway configuration

and determine whether this development could expand into the present highway reserve up to the present south edge of the footpath, to match a similar initiative for the expansion of the Gearin's on the opposite corner.



Charrette Plan of Proposed SRA Depot Development

The two-storey building (could be three) is roughly trapezoidal in plan, to fit the corner. The building tapers in plan to the south, so that a wider cone of vision from the Highway is protected for a more panoramic view into the Town Centre across the railway. An atrium space with roof skylights is shown in the centre of the wider portion of the building, so that more rooms within it can enjoy natural daylight. The southeast-facing windows will enjoy distant views of the Blue Mountains over Kingsford Smith Park.

The building is envisaged mostly for office use. Occupants of the building could range from a Council annex, to legal offices related to the nearby Courthouse, to private businesses, or possibly to overnight accommodation, especially along the southeast view windows which are more protected from the highway noise and relatively remote from the railway.

Surface car parking is shown, to be used by occupants of the site as well as the SRA-requested rail commuters, visitors to the Town Centre, the City Offices, etc.

**Action 9.3A** - Implement improvements to the SRA Depot Site as per its Project Design Brief.

**Action 9.3B** - Implement improvements to the north facade of the Gearin's Hotel, as per its Project Design Brief.

## 9.4 The Skate Boarding Site

The present skateboarding site is a sliver of difficult-to-use land just west of Yeoman's Bridge, south of the Highway, and north of the railway. There was general support for an appropriately located and improved skateboarding site. There was also minor concern about the skateboarders using the plaza in front of the Council Offices. In the absence of a known better site than the present above-ground skate ramp just west of Yeoman's Bridge between the railway and the highway, there was general

support for improving that one, in the hope that it might attract skateboarders presently using the Council Offices plaza.

However, the site is presently isolated, hard to access and lacks the exposure that many skateboarders desire.

The design of the site should be interesting when viewed from above to encourage pedestrians on the Yeoman's Bridge and Highway to stop and watch. The design should also incorporate a variety of types of skateboarding manoeuvres to make it more appealing. Steps (or even a skateboarding ramp) down from the highway would help the facility, if either could be made to be feasible.

**Action 9.4** - Consult with local skateboarders to devise improvements for the present skateboarding site, and then implement them.

## 9.5 Gateway Alternate Mixed Use Development

### 9.5.1 Earlier Gateway Proposal for Supermarket Has Not Proceeded

During the Charrette there was the issue of a supermarket and shopping centre proposal for the Gateway site at the very strategic corner of Bathurst Road and Parke Street, as explained in Section 7.8.1 and 7.8.2. Refer to those sections for more details about the site and its context. While the Gateway supermarket proposal was seen by many stakeholders as not beneficial to the Town Centre, and alternate more appropriate supermarket locations were encouraged instead.

However, the Gateway site is very important to the future of the Katoomba, and, in an effort to deal with the then Gateway proposal, the following Project Design Brief and Alternate Mixed Use Design were proposed, which are still valid.

The proponents of the Gateway development had reportedly arranged consolidation of the site, and the design option explained below was designed on that basis. However, since the Charrette, it has become known that the site is not in fact consolidated, and future development is likely to be on a site-by-site basis, with the prominent car yard corner site a key focus.

### 9.5.2 Site And Its Influences

The Gateway site is well named, as its exposed Parke Street and Bathurst Road frontage commands the attention of everyone arriving across Yeoman's Bridge from the Highway. The site is the assemblage of several parcels including the old fire station, the Antiques Building, the old Family Hotel, and a holden car lot forming its northern boundary. From the Parke Street frontage, the sites drops several metres down to its Cascade Street frontage, which enjoys distant views to the west and southwest of the hills and valley.

The site includes a private gated accessway running from Parke Street to Cascade Street along its southern boundary with the New TAFE, which is an important potential public connection between Cascade Street and Parke Street. This accessway also gives access to the interior of the site, potentially for intra-block and/or underground car parking.

The site contains several historic buildings, fronting Parke Street, and these should be retained, with new development designed to complement them.

The Parke Street frontage lends itself to a street level extension of the Main Street commercial activities. The upstairs of the Parke Street frontage might support offices and or residential, including tourist accommodation. The rear of the site with its splendid views but less commercial exposure might well support more residential development or short-term accommodation. It has good views down the valley, over Frank Walford Park.

### 9.5.3 Project Design Brief

Development of the Gateway site (or its component parcels) should comply with the following:

- ◇ Development should help to strengthen, not weaken, the economic viability of the Town Centre.
- ◇ The development should result in a perimeter block development fronting all adjoining streets, should incorporate mixed use in response to the site and should be at least two and preferably three storeys on both Cascade and Parke Streets, with underground parking taking advantage of the sloping site.
- ◇ The architectural character of the buildings should complement the historic Town Centre.
- ◇ The mixed use development should take advantage of its different edge conditions, suitably including:
  - Parke Street level commercial,
  - Upper storeys along Parke Street for offices and/or residential, including short-term accommodation,
  - Short or permanent residential to the rear of the upstairs Parke Street frontage and the Cascade Street frontage.
- ◇ Provide and dedicate the accessway along the boundary with TAFE as a public street with footpaths.
- ◇ All building frontages should respect their adjoining historic contexts in materials and form, and all building masses or components and window openings should be taller than they are wide.
- ◇ Existing historic buildings should be retained.
- ◇ Verandahs should be provided on at least 50% of the frontages of both Parke and Cascade Streets over their footpaths.

### 9.5.4 Proposed Charrette Design

The proposed Charrette design for the consolidated Gateway site complies with its Project Design Brief, as follows.

#### Parke Street Frontage

The existing historic antiques shops, fire station and hotel are integrated into a mixed use development. A three-storey development along Parke Street is appended to the existing fire station, with a new lift at the juncture serving both buildings. A basement car park beneath the new Parke Street development is accessed from both Cascade and Parke Street. The upper two storeys of the new Parke Street frontage are served by a double-loaded corridor, with possible offices out front with double-storey verandahs over the footpath, and with

residential/short-term accommodation in the rear (or more offices).



View of Gateway design from Bathurst Road



View of proposed Gateway from Main Street.

A particular occupancy is proposed for the Parke Street frontage in this design, focussed on health-oriented overnight accommodation, for hard-working executives, whose only chance for elective health treatment is during their vacations. The old fire station is to form a new

hotel, with some of its rooms overlooking the view at the southwest corner of the site. Private car parking below is accessed from the east-west through street along the southern boundary. Adjoining the hotel are medical suites at street level to the rear of the Parke Street frontage (where normal commercial or residential would be less viable).

The plan and site section below shows this Parke Street frontage, as well as how the slope of the site can be capitalised upon for underground parking. The section also shows how secured individual parking can be provided for the two-storey terraces along Cascade Street. Note further in the section how the rear of the Parke Street frontage enjoys views to the west over the terraces.



Upper and Lower Level Plans and Site Section through Proposed Gateway Charrette Design

The southern corner of Cascade Street's overnight accommodation sits atop its own sub-grade parking, accessed from the accessway connecting Cascade to Parke Street. It is proposed that this private roadway be sold to the Council and made a public street with footpaths, to improve connectivity through this 630 metre-long street block between Cascade Street and Parke Street and Bathurst Road and Waratah Street.

An increase in residential population close-in to the Town Centre should help support restaurants, improve housing diversity, support the train use, make the place safer through increased passive surveillance, and be generally beneficial to the Town Centre. The commercial street level development along Parke Street is an opportunity for realtors and other semi-retail businesses, presently located in the Top of Town, to relocate to this frontage, thereby freeing up key spaces in the heart of town for more tourist-related and intensive retail and the Arts.

Now that the earlier Gateway proposal for a stand-alone supermarket and shopping centre has been withdrawn, there is a heightened opportunity to develop this key site (or independent parcels) in a way that truly benefits the Town Centre, as illustrated by the Charrette design. Depending on whether the different parcels within the site are developed together or separately, and depending on the creativity and judgement of the developers and their architects, other developments of and uses for the Gateway site may eventuate, which would also need to comply with its Project Design Brief.

**Action 9.5 A-** Find a new owner for this consolidated site, or implement development with the several existing owners, as per the Project Design Brief.

**Action 9.5 B** - BMCC should work with existing owner to protect the existing private accessway as a future public street, acquire it and construct improvements including footpath/s.

## 9.6 Renaissance Centre

The Renaissance Centre is a very large historic multi-storey building previously used as a private school, with a mix of large halls, small classrooms and a commercial kitchen. It is in good condition, empty and for lease (and possibly for sale), with great potential to benefit itself and the Town Centre, on whose northern extremity it sits.

### 9.6.1 Site and Its Influences

The spectacular Renaissance Centre is located prominently on Civic Place, which was the original highway route into the Blue Mountains, and was bypassed by the new Great Western Highway in the 1980's. The site is quite large and contains undeveloped land to the north of the main building complex, with attractive trees and an elevated position commanding excellent views in most directions.

The property may not yet have found new user/s, because it is so vast a property, that a big enough single user may have been hard to find. It seemed to the Charrette Team that the approach to its re-use may have been limiting its success thus far. During the Charrette, the following uses and development approaches emerged for the Renaissance Centre, which could happen individually or in combination:

- ◇ The Renaissance Centre management might offer the facility for lease to different complementary users, rather than to one single hard-to-find tenant (perhaps with leasehold residential accommodation upstairs);
- ◇ Universities might be approached with the Renaissance Centre as a Blue Mountains-specific extension to their teaching agendas, either by a secondary campus and/or by interactive video teaching;
- ◇ The current TAFE facility on Parke Street might either expand and/or relocate itself to the Renaissance Centre, with an increased focus on the Arts, which could free up all or part of the existing TAFE site for new mixed uses including a concentration of residential close-in to the Town Centre.

**Action 9.6** - Facilitate attraction of new uses for the Renaissance Centre, which are complementary to the Town Centre.

## 10. PROPOSALS FOR KEY SITES - CENTRAL AREA

This section of the Report explains key sites in the central part of the Town Centre, for which specific and relatively detailed designs were developed during the Charrette. They are presented together, as they and their benefits are inter-dependent.



Key Sites in the Central Area.

### 10.1 Cultural & Visitors Centre for the Old TAFE Site and/or Related Properties

Redevelopment of the Old TAFE site is pivotal to the revitalisation of Katoomba. Presently it is a big hole in the urban fabric of the Town Centre, blocking synergies and limiting access between existing and future assets. The adjoining RTA Building to the south, available for redevelopment, was considered as part of this site, as was the possibility of including the next parcel to the south, on which sits a building along Prior Place, occupied by the businesses of Civic Video and Retrovision. Three different indicative designs were prepared during the Charrette, reflecting different use scenarios for these sites, as explained below.

#### 10.1.1 The Cultural/Visitors Centre

##### Right Place for the Cultural/Visitors Centre

The Old TAFE site became recognised during the Charrette as the most appropriate site for a proposed 'Cultural/Visitors Centre' for Katoomba, to serve both locals and visitors as a source



of information and culture, and as a 'point of entry' for visitors to the Town Centre, arriving both by car and coach (visitors by train would take advantage of this facility, as well, directed to it from the station). The Old TAFE site was the best located option in the Town Centre to serve these purposes, plus it is owned by the State, which is willing in principle to consider such a use for this site, possibly to be purchased and developed by others.

### **Multiple Functions within the Cultural/Visitors Centre**

Recognising that Katoomba could strengthen its attraction and value by centralising more public, commercial and cultural functions, and in consultation with numerous stakeholders, the Charrette Team evolved several functions for the Cultural/Visitors Centre including:

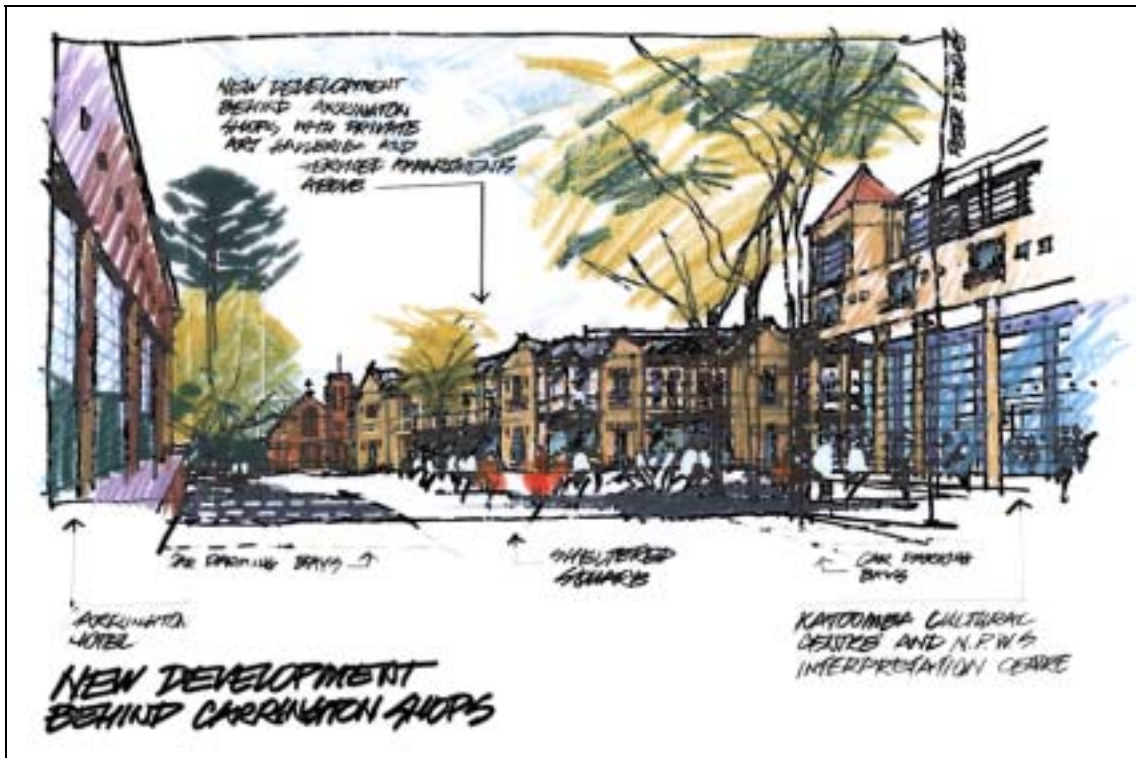
- ◇ the National Parks and Wildlife Service's regional headquarters and information centre;
- ◇ a visitors' information centre for the Town and Echo Point (in addition to the one at Echo Point);
- ◇ a public gallery of state-wide significance for visual arts ranging from Katoomba-inspired traditional illusionistic paintings and sculpture, to leading edge contemporary works;
- ◇ a possible local Aboriginal interpretive centre;
- ◇ the normal services of toilets, lockers, and the administrative offices of the centre; and
- ◇ ample tourist coach and car visitors car parking.

A preliminary design (see below) was devised for the Cultural/Visitors Centre component of this development, which could adapt slightly to fit any of three alternate indicative development schemes for the rest of the site, shown below. The Cultural/Visitors Centre design features two viewing towers for visitors at the east and west corners of a mostly windowed, high-ceilinged series of public spaces to accommodate the above public uses at street-level. The northern front of the centre opens across Froma Lane to the Carrington Hotel, whose southern facade hopefully will respond in kind to this forthcoming major contribution to Katoomba.

The central roof of the centre is kept low enough for the upper floor of windows of the Carrington (the only windows on its southern facade with clear glass instead of stained or textured glass) to have a horizontal view out to the distant Blue Mountains. The eastern facade of the Centre curves in plan to feature a 'turret' of glass which terminates the vista for a lane approaching it from Katoomba Street. Administrative offices and other secondary less public uses (except for the viewing tower/s) would probably be upstairs.



Aerial Perspective Sketch of Northeast Corner of the Cultural/Visitors Centre



Sketch Of Lekkus Contemporary Arts Gallery With Cultural/Visitors Centre to the right and the south facade of the Carrington Hotel to the left

### **Public Courtyard Between Cultural/Visitors Centre and the Carrington**

The space between the Centre and the Carrington, comprised of Froma Lane and the Carrington's present car park, would hopefully become a sunny, sheltered high quality outdoor urban space, as illustrated in the sketch above. While vehicular traffic should definitely still pass through this space in order to connect at least with College Lane (if not into the Carrington Lawn), this urban space should be devoted primarily to gathering rather than car parking.

The present new car park for the Carrington would not contribute, in its present state, to such a high quality urban space. In order to reduce the amount of car parking in that area, either other spaces would need to be found on the Carrington property, or else perhaps an arrangement could be made with the Cultural/Visitors Centre for some limited but dedicated Carrington car parking, or perhaps the parking requirement might be reduced. Furthermore, the present car park drains to the west, which has forced the eastern end to be raised with a retaining wall at its southeast corner. This condition is not conducive to the priority of pedestrian access from the proposed Cultural/Visitors Centre out to the Carrington Lawn and to Katoomba Street, or to Katoomba Street via improvements to the Clarendon shops property to the south of the Carrington's lawn. Hopefully these difficulties can be resolved through cooperation between the Carrington, the Clarendon shops ownership (John Lekkus), BMCC and the Cultural/Visitors Centre proponents.

### **Additional Cultural Facilities Nearby as Part of the Experience**

Along with the Carrington across Froma Lane, a private Contemporary Art Gallery is proposed for a new building behind the Clarendon Shops to the east, on John Lekkus' property (see Subsection 10.3). Hopefully visitors and locals alike would be drawn further east to Katoomba Street and the Savoy Performing Arts Centre, and to the west across Parke Street to the New TAFE Arts Centre (see Section 10.5).

### **Need for Large Car Parking Capacity and Tourist Coach Drop-off and Parking**

As explained in Section 8.2.3 on car parking, the Charrette recognised that a large visitor parking capacity will be needed to optimise the public transport linkage between the Town Centre and Echo Point, by means of inducing cars and coaches to stop in the Town Centre first, and then for visitors to take the bus to Echo Point and back (or walk). The Charrette estimated that about 300 spaces might be needed for this purpose. Any additional complementary uses in the Cultural/Visitors Centre, as mentioned above, would also need some additional parking capacity on the site. However, peak demands for the various uses will hopefully not all coincide, so that the shared parking capacity can serve respective parking demands at different times, thereby requiring fewer total spaces.

The Old TAFE site, especially if assembled with properties to its south, was big enough potentially for a larger parking structure, associated with the Visitors Centre, along with other users of the parking capacity. The RTA Building just south of the Old TAFE property is owned by the State, and would hopefully become part of this project, as well. When approached by the Charrette Team, Jane Young, owner of the building housing Civic Video and Retrovision to the south of the RTA Building, expressed verbal willingness in principle to consider a joint venture or sale of the property, that would effectively join these properties to enable a larger development (see indicative design option C below).

The combined sites generally slope enough for access to underground parking without expensive and space-hungry internal ramps.

### **Tourist Coach Parking along Parke Street**

The Charrette determined that this location for the Cultural/Visitors Centre could be served by tourist coaches quite feasibly along the eastern kerb of Parke Street. Coaches arriving from the Great Western Highway would park just beyond the Froma Lane corner of the Centre to discharge and pick up their passengers, and 'lay over' further south in a row of spaces along Parke Street. A total of eight coach parallel parking spaces were determined to be needed and feasible.

### **10.1.2 Benefits of Residential Accommodation on the Site**

Town centres generally enjoy better personal and property safety when people actually dwell in them. Residents of town centres tend to regard the nearby public realm as an extension of their own 'turf' and, through their routine activities, a passive surveillance takes place, which generally improves personal and property safety.

Katoomba has relatively few permanent residents in its Town Centre to contribute to its safety through passive surveillance. The Town Centre has many features to attract permanent residents, including its urban amenities, views and heritage. However, the safety problems explained in Section 4 were tending to discourage permanent residency in Katoomba's Town Centre up until the Charrette. One or more successful medium-density residential developments in the Town Centre were determined to be needed, in order to show how they can improve local safety by their design, to demonstrate that people will choose to live there under the right circumstances, and to catalyse still more medium density residential developments and short-term or overnight accommodations in the Town Centre, as well.

An ideal early medium density residential demonstration opportunity exists at the Old TAFE Site. It is ideally located for access to all that the Town Centre has to offer, as well as being within walking distance of several parks and Echo Point. It is only a few minute's walk to the station with rail access into Sydney. It enjoys excellent views over the town and the distant valleys and ranges, especially from one or more storeys up.

The public frontages of the Old TAFE Site along Froma Lane, College Lane and Parke Street are relatively quiet and suitable for residential development, especially above street level. Home-based businesses at the street level could support further economic activity in the Town Centre, while strengthening the medium density residential market further by offering this home-office option. If constructed as a mixed use project which justifies a parking structure, then residents could enjoy secured dedicated parking (probably only needing one parking space per dwelling).

Lastly, this site is in public ownership, giving the public sector a chance to implement a development that would lead the market toward more residential vitality and amenity in the Town Centre, to help revitalise Katoomba.

### **10.1.3 Multi-User Joint Venture to Help Fund the Centre**

The Cultural/Visitors Centre and the large car park to support visitors stopping to patronise the Town Centre were recognised as very costly. It was also recognised that tourism visitation peaks during only about 20 predictable visitor days per year. A very large parking facility built exclusively for only 20 visitor days per year was seen as very hard to justify financially. Therefore, the idea emerged that a joint development, all of whose users could take advantage of the large car park, especially outside the 20 peak visitor days of the year, might be a more

feasible approach for helping to develop the Cultural/Visitors Centre and car park.

The three indicative designs below all reflect this joint-development approach. The designs investigated how adjoining sites could be co-developed to make a large enough site to make the joint use project more feasible to develop. All three designs incorporate a cinema complex, a use for which there is reportedly a market. A cinema complex also would need a lot of parking, but mostly in the evenings, 'off-peak' to the mostly daytime use of the Cultural/Visitors Centre and bus use to Echo Point. This means a smaller amount of total parking capacity could be shared by both uses. In all three designs, the cinema complex is wrapped or 'sleeved' by commercial premises, so that it presents no blank walls to the streets surrounding the site.

Since the Charrette, the feasibility of a cinema complex has reportedly diminished, due to other similar proposals within the sub-region. Therefore, this cinema component in all three designs may need to be re-considered. However, a market may still exist for a 'Timezone' type entertainment complex in this project.

### Three Design Options

Three design options were prepared (each including the Cultural/Visitors Centre) to show the results of various site assembly, use scenarios and car parking capacities. Option A keeps the Old TAFE Building, uses all three properties and has the least car parking capacity. Option B removes the Old TAFE Building, does not include the Civic Video property, and has more parking than Option A but possibly still not enough parking to optimise the visitors parking in town and use of the bus to Echo Point. Option C (the most intensive development) removes the Old TAFE Building, uses all three properties, incorporates a supermarket and reaches the car parking capacity estimated by the Charrette to be needed, if shared, for all the uses on the site.

These designs should not be construed as the only ways to achieve the objective of making the Cultural/Visitors Centre and visitors car parking a reality; further study may evolve better co-development approaches and designs. However, the Project Design Brief, which follows the designs, spells out the key design and performance characteristics that any development of this site should incorporate.

#### 10.1.4 Multi-Use Option 'A' Which Keeps the Old Tafe Building

This preliminary design retains the existing historic TAFE building, which was originally the Katoomba High School. In considerable but superficial disrepair, this building appears to be still sound and restorable, at a cost. The building crowns the hill, enjoying spectacular views from its top floor. The Old TAFE Building might be part of the Cultural/Visitors Centre, although its specific use was not specified in the design. It is also suited to office use and/or training functions.

This site incorporates the sites of the present RTA Building and what is now Jane Young's video hire outlet. The Cultural/Visitors Centre described above (or something like it) would be constructed north of the Old TAFE Building, with surface car parking to its east (see plan below). South of a proposed new east-west lane, which terminates at the rear of the Civic Centre, is proposed a cinema triplex, sleeved by retail and/or commercial businesses on its exposed south, east and west sides. This important 'sleeving' means that no blank walls front public streets needing activity and passive surveillance for safety, while still giving the cinema complex a prominent entry and movie title board on Parke Street. A vehicular accessway along the north side off Prior Lane gives access into underground parking beneath this part of the site (up to the northern edge of the new east-west lane).

While the north and south parts of this design could be developed independently of each other, this design offers the chance for a joint venture development of the whole project, with shared parking. The Cultural/Visitors Centre might have its peak use during the afternoons, while the cineplex's peak parking demand for the same parking spaces would be in the evening.



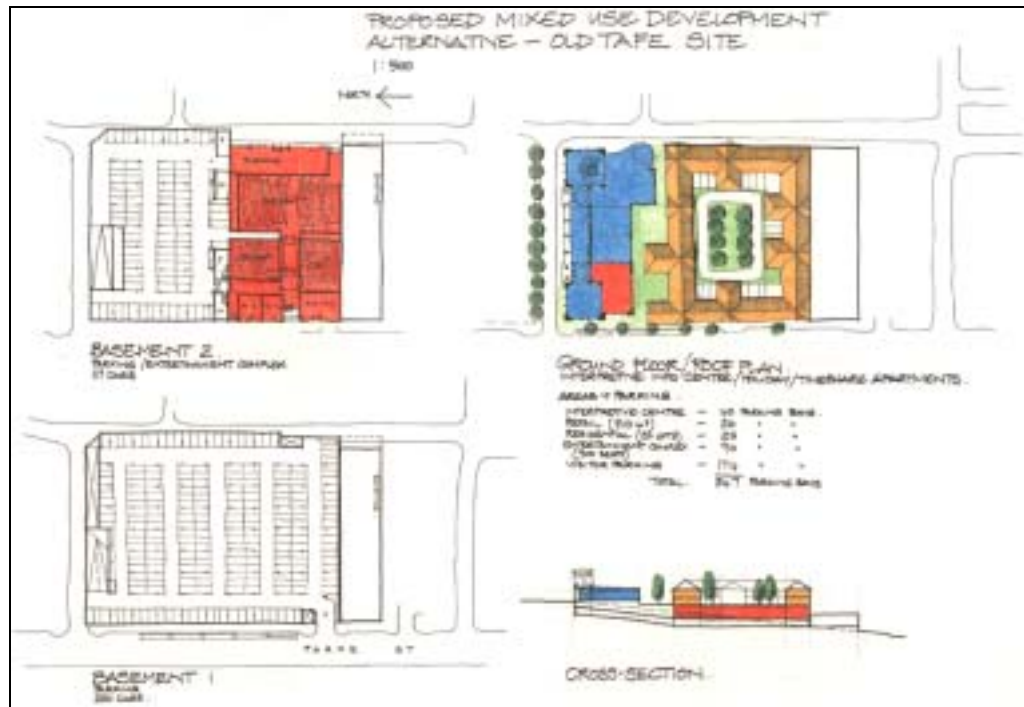
Design Option 'A' for the Old TAFE site, which Keeps the Old TAFE Building

#### **Apparently Inadequate Car Parking Capacity**

An apparent weakness of this scheme is that retaining the Old TAFE Building will limit car parking capacity to only about half the anticipated parking capacity understood by the Charrette Team to be needed to optimise the visitor parking to take advantage of the bus to Echo Point during peak visitor days, and thereby to attract more visitors to the Town Centre.

#### **10.1.5 Multi- Use Option 'B'**

This preliminary design features roughly the same Cultural/Visitors Centre as explained and illustrated above in the perspective sketches, but this one has the Old TAFE Building removed, in order to make more efficient use of the site, especially to gain more underground parking capacity. The southern base of the development abuts and looks over Jane Young's existing Civic Video and Retrovision building, which is to be retained in this design (see Building Section below).



Plans and Section of Mixed Use Option B

This scheme has again a cinema triplex, sleeved in order to retain active street and lane frontages, by retail and/or commercial businesses on the College Lane and Parke Street side, and by the video outlet to the south. Upstairs is developed as two stories of residential with quite spectacular views to the south and west, and an internal shared treed courtyard (see plan above). This residential development would also improve safety in the Town Centre through passive surveillance, as explained above in Section 10.1.2.

#### Ca Parking Capacity of Option B

This scheme has about 350 car parking spaces in all, 25 of which would be private and dedicated to the residences, while the rest would be shared (see parking calculations next to the plan). About 175 visitor parking spaces could be used normally for the Cultural/Visitors Centre and for the bus shuttle to Echo Point. This is still about half the estimated 300 parking spaces needed to optimise car parking by car-born visitors to the Town Centre, who would then hopefully take the bus or walk to Echo Point and back.

### 10.1.6 Multi-Use Option 'C' Including Supermarket Development

As explained in Section 7.8 of this Report, there is a demand for another major supermarket in Katoomba, based on the amount of expendable income available within this retail catchment, and on the fact that the local Coles is reportedly the highest dollar-per-square-metre producer in NSW. If it comes, the new supermarket should locate in the Town Centre, where the customers it attracts will also patronise existing local shops and businesses.

The supermarket component was added to this design because of its high demand for a lot of car parking, year-round, which hopefully would help pay for some of the parking for the Cultural/Visitors Centre, etc. It was hoped that the 20 peak visitor days of the year would not be too much of an intrusion on the efficient functioning of the supermarket and the shared car

parking, and would thereby help to justify the cost of the required multi-deck parking for both.

The southern end of the assemblage of sites, including the Old TAFE, the RTA Building, and Jane Young's Civic Video and Retrovision premises, was identified during the Charrette investigations as one of two ideal sites for a supermarket in the Town Centre. The supermarket would face southward into Pioneer Place, quite close to the Jewels and Coles.

### **Supermarket and Related Shops**

A 3500 sqm supermarket is integrated into this design, with its entrance at street level, facing Pioneer Place, as illustrated in the perspective sketches above. As the section shows, the perimeter of the rear of the supermarket slips below ground, which is where the plan widens out to extend below grade out to the face the street level shops above on Parke Street, and to the eastern edge of College Lane. Where the supermarket is above ground, at its southern end and corners, it is lined with specialty shops, so that no blank walls face public streets. Some of these shops also face into the supermarket space, for uses such as butchers, delicatessens and bakeries. Truck deliveries access off Pioneer Place at grade, through a relatively narrow but efficient slot (see plan).

### **Cultural/Visitors Centre Distinct from Supermarket**

This design again features the same Cultural/Visitors Centre component at its north end, facing across Prior Lane to the Carrington. The 'cultural end' would be quite separated from the 'supermarket end'. The sketch below illustrates the view from the south along Parke Street of the 'supermarket end', with the 'cultural end' up the hill and in the distance, marked only the Carrington chimney in this sketch. A cinema triplex and entertainment complex is integrated within the development, as shown in the plans and section below.

### **Rooftop Residential Development**

Atop this large structure is a two- and three-storey up-market residential development, with treed courtyards and spectacular views of the Blue Mountains in the distance and the Town Centre nearby. The complex steps down the slope of the site to the south, giving each top floor a southward view over the next one down the hill (see Roof Plan and Site Section below). These dwellings could be permanent apartments, short-term accommodation, and/or serviced apartments. Dedicated secure car parking for the residential (at one car space per dwelling maximum, unless three bedrooms or more) could locate in the underground parking structure, generally directly beneath each dwelling, and accessed either by stairs and/or by lifts to the roof gardens, from which front doors of the dwellings would typically be reached.

The street frontages of both Parke Street and College Lane would be lined with either home-based business premises, small offices, secondary retail, or actual residences, as shown in the sketch below of the Parke Street frontage. The north-south slope of the site gives the privacy advantage of enabling the residential floors at street level to have their front doors at grade, and then to have the public grade slope down past other rooms, whose windows would be elevated above the footpath, so that passers by could not see directly in to these enfronting rooms. This slight elevation is an ideal transition between public footpath and private interior, and is also ideal for passive surveillance to enhance public and personal safety in the enfronting streets. This is particularly important for College Lane, which at present does not feel safe, due to lack of passive surveillance.



**Car Parking**

The plans and sections below show how the parking works for car. The four levels of parking step down the slope, each level with its own access at grade. In this scheme, the parking capacity is maximised for the site by means of extending the underground parking out under both Froma Lane and College Lanes, which the Blue Mountains City Council could permit. Other than the access points, there is no car parking in this scheme which would be visible from the surrounding streets.



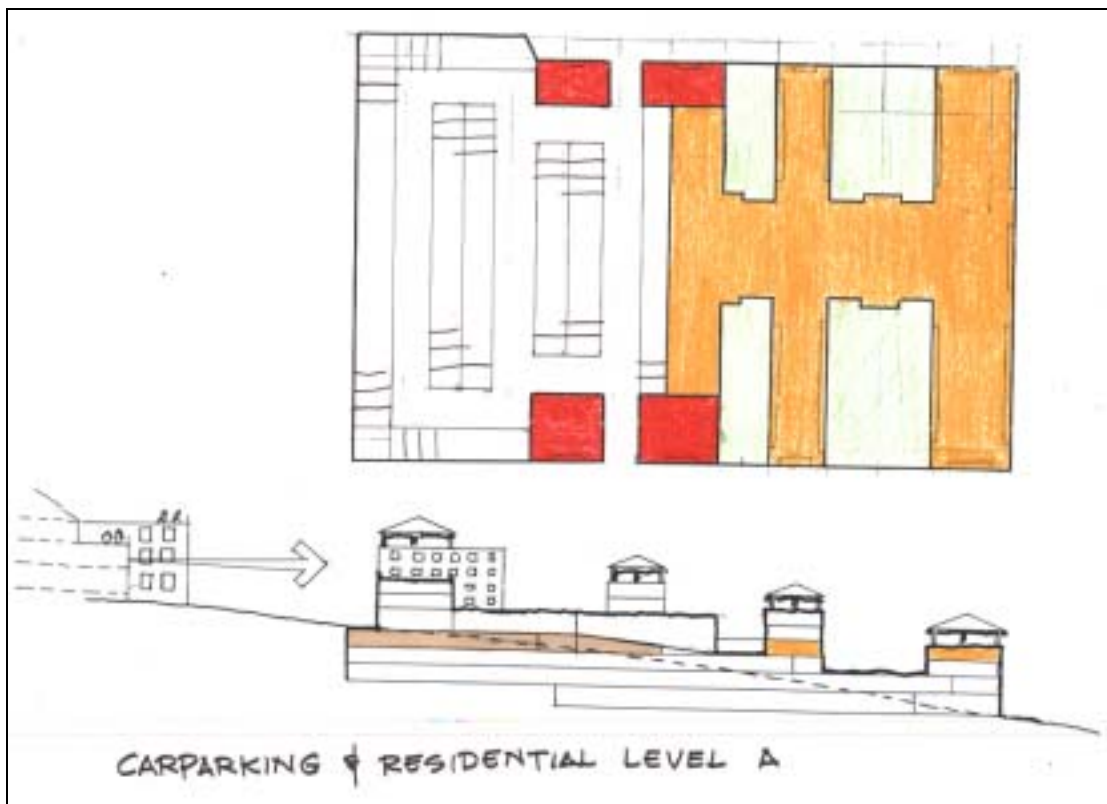
Edgeley Persp From Southwest Showing Supermarket And Park Street Frontage



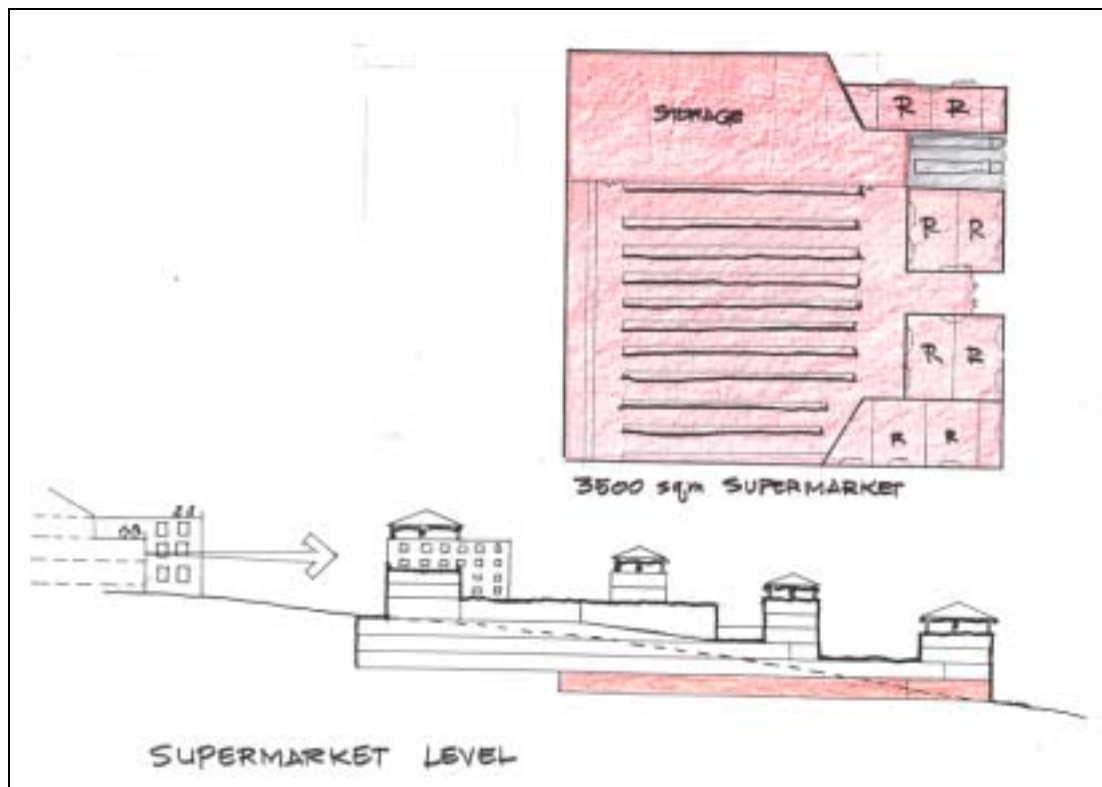
Aerial Axonometric By Chip Kaufman of Multi-Use Complex with Supermarket at the right end.



Roof Plan and Site Section of Residential Development atop Multi-Use Building with Car Parking Beneath, Cultural/Visitors Centre at Top End, and Supermarket and shops at the Downhill End.







Plans and Building Sections of the Multi-Use Development with Supermarket

### 10.1.7 Project Design Brief

The designs above illustrate compliance with the following proposed design and performance requirements, with which any development for the Old TAFE Site and related properties should comply:

- ◇ Development should incorporate a high quality public Cultural/Visitors Centre at the northern end, facing across Froma Lane to the Carrington, with public spaces for the uses noted above in Section 10.1.1, including at least one multi-storey tower for public viewing of the surrounding scenery. Total floor climate controlled area for this facility should equal about 10,000 sqm (Luke, please calculate floor areas from the design and fill this in; we don't have scale plans). The open space between the Center and the Carrington Hotel should be improved (by joint venture with both parties to their mutual benefit) as a high quality, sunny, sheltered public open space, accommodating slow-speed vehicular traffic through to College Lane and possibly into the Carrington Lawn's driveways.
- ◇ The development should incorporate medium density residential and/or short term accommodation atop the majority of its roof, except for the roof of the Cultural/Visitors Centre component, some of which should be dedicated to a public viewing area. Each dwelling should enjoy at least 8 square metres of private open space in the form of balconies and/or roof terraces. The residential development should contribute, where appropriate, to activating the street frontages for passive surveillance and public safety, by occupying frontages at street level for residences or home offices, especially along College Lane and Parke Street, if commercial premises along those frontages are not as feasible. While access to the some upstairs residences may be via lifts from the underground parking, entry doors are also encouraged at or near street level, especially along College Lane and Parke Street, to increase residential activity and passive surveillance. Dedicated car parking for dwellings should be minimal, as all daily needs would be in walking distance, as well as access to Sydney via the railway station, also in walking distance.
- ◇ The roof design of the building should preserve a commodious view-way, southward and roughly horizontally out to the distant Blue Mountains, from the top floor clear windows of the Carrington's south facade.
- ◇ Development should provide enough shared (not designated) parking to serve the Cultural/Visitors Centre and day-long parking to enable many town visitors to leave their vehicles and take the bus to Echo Point or other destinations. It is assumed that the parking capacity may not completely meet the few peak visitor day demands of the year, if they occur on days when the supermarket and cinemas are all open simultaneously.
- ◇ Street level development should incorporate active frontages with at least 50% contiguous verandahs or other weather protection, and at least 50% clear windows distributed roughly evenly along all adjoining public streets, including Froma Lane, College Lane, Park Street and Prior Lane (if applicable).
- ◇ The Development should offer a dignified and sheltered access connection to the Civic Centre, aligning with the proposed new Civic Centre rear access at College Lane.
- ◇ Car parking should be largely internalised, with only vehicular accessways visible at street level. The car parking should be shared, with the possible exception of dedicated spaces for permanent apartments in the development, if applicable.
- ◇ The architectural image at the Cultural/Visitors Centre end of the development should respect the Carrington and manifest its use, and should 'read' differently from the architectural image of the southern uses, when not related to the Cultural/Visitors Centre (such as the supermarket in Option C).

- ◇ All facades of this development should be highly articulated, especially vertically, to reduce their appearance of bulk, by means of:
  - upstairs balconies,
  - deeply recessed windows for strong shadow lines,
  - varied and articulated cornice heights and roof lines,
  - minor articulations in plan along facades (perhaps 150 mm) from grade to roof usually, to cause vertical shadow lines;
  - apparent building masses, windows and other openings (except vehicular access) should generally appear taller than they are wide.

**Action 10.1** - Implement a development that incorporates a high quality Cultural/Visitors Centre in Town Centre, as per the Project Design Brief above.

## 10.2 Clarendon Contemporary Arts Gallery And Upstairs Residential Accommodation

The Charrette proposed a privately owned Contemporary Arts Gallery building with upstairs short term accommodation (or residential), on John Lekkus's property behind the existing five small historical Clarendon Shops on Katoomba Street, to complement the Cultural/Visitors Centre to its west (see Section 10.1) and to contribute a sunlit active frontage to the Carrington Lawn. A sketch of this proposal, as seen from the west along Parke Street, is in Section 10.1.1 (as the sketch also depicts the Cultural/Visitors Centre explained in that sub-section).

John Lekkus expressed verbal interest in principle to this initiative, which would link the Cultural/Visitors Centre with Katoomba Street.

### 10.2.1 Project Design Brief

The project should incorporate the following design and performance characteristics:

- ◇ the image, scale, proportions and materials of the two-or three storey building should respond to and respect the earlier Clarendon Hotel, which occupied the site in roughly the same location, at the turn of the last century (see photo below);
- ◇ the north-facing front of the street-level gallery or similar tourist-based business should open directly to a footpath along the boundary with the Carrington Lawn, giving public access all day and through the night will good lighting for pedestrians, connecting Froma Lane to Katoomba Street;
- ◇ car parking for the facility should be inconspicuous, either tucked away either behind and/or underneath this building (or located nearby in shared parking development/s).

**Action 10.2.1** - Implement this development as per the above Project Design Brief.

## 10.3 Carrington Artists Live/Work Studios

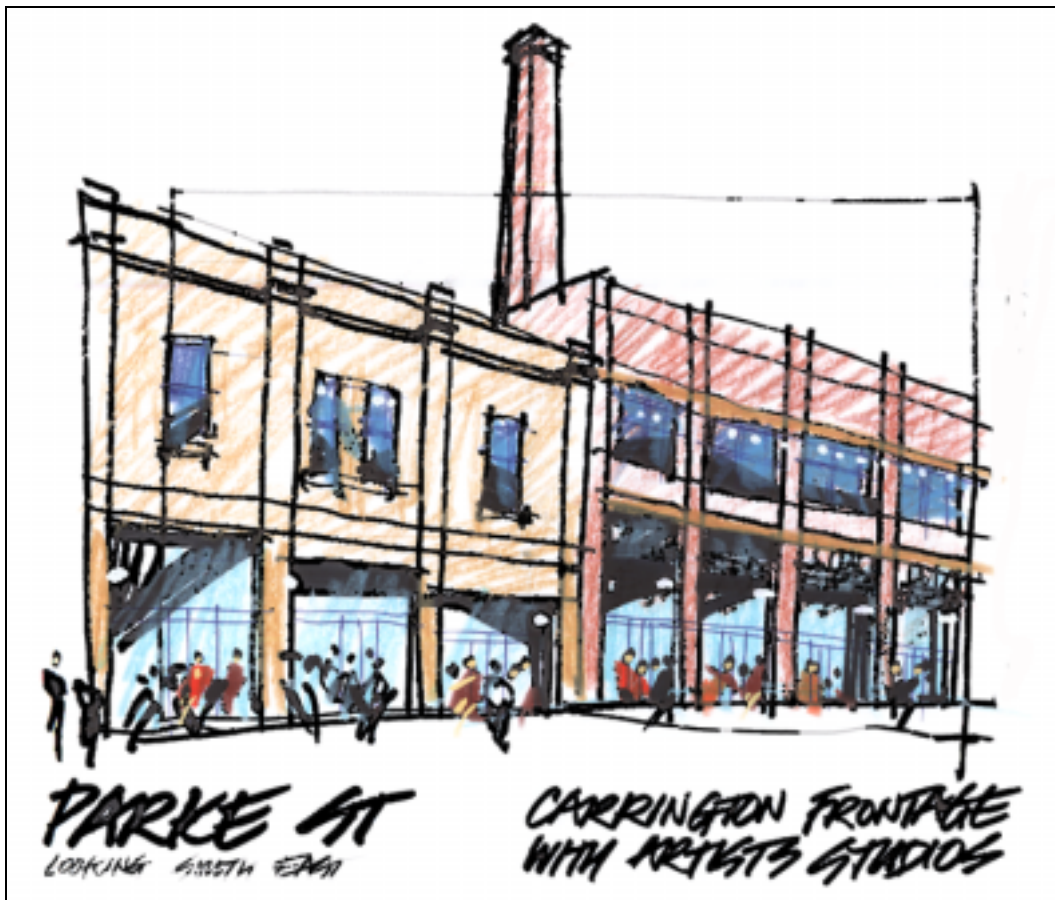
The historic two-storey Parke Street frontage of the Carrington, which is yet to be refurbished, appears to be an ideal opportunity to develop live/work artists studios and/or galleries, which should

be open to the public and should play an active role in the cultural life of the heart of Katoomba, in close association with the Cultural/Visitors Centre, the Clarendon Contemporary Arts Gallery, and the New TAFE Arts Complex directly across Parke Street.

This building is very prominent of the ridge crest. The restoration of this facade, and the creation of active business frontages to Parke Street (and possibly across Froma Lane to the proposed Cultural/Visitors Centre on the Old TAFE Site, see Section 10.1) will create a vital change of image to this key street frontage.

Other uses, including a brew pub or cafe on the corner with Froma Lane may also be appropriate for part of this frontage. The Carrington complex is State Heritage listed and all restoration will need to be in accordance with the State's requirements. However, this Parke Street frontage is presently quite a bland and severe 'back' and would benefit from the addition of features and activities which would create a sense of 'front'.

At the time of the Charrette, the Carrington ownership expressed verbal interest in the broad principle of this proposal.



Carrington Artists' Studios Edgeley Sketch

### 10.3.1 Project Design Brief

This development should comply with the following Project Design Brief:

- ◇ The Project should retain the historic west facade of the Carrington, although awnings and other features such as discreet balconies and or verandahs may be added, subject to State Heritage approval;
- ◇ The premises should have street level working gallery spaces open to the public during normal business hours, or should somehow admit the public on a regular basis, frequently enough to support an active life of the Arts in the district;
- ◇ The premises should incorporate upstairs and or loft residences for the artists or their associates;
- ◇ The street level windows shall be clear glass with no curtains or shades except for optional protection from the western sun during the summer and for night-time use, especially to keep the winter cold out;
- ◇ Municipal on-site car parking requirements should not be applied to the development of this project, beyond provision of limited parking for residents, as many of the visitors to this development will have parked elsewhere in the Town Centre, or on Parke Street.

**Action 10.3.1** - Facilitate development of this project or a similar concept, as per its Project Design Brief above.

## 10.4 New TAFE Facilities to Gain Stronger Arts Focus and Residential Additions

The New TAFE is the educational complex on the west side of Parke Street, across from the Carrington. During the Charrette many stakeholders expressed support for the New TAFE to expand its educational focus further into all the Arts.

This TAFE is a collection of different style and scale buildings, ranging from a historic primary school at its core, to an old cottage at its south end, and to relocatable class-rooms in the north. It is presently not fully used, as many TAFE functions have recently been relocated to a new complex in Wentworth Falls. The TAFE on this Katoomba site has capacity to increase its range of classes.

The Charrette concluded that retention of TAFE facilities in Katoomba was vital, and probably on this centrally located site, as it brings people into the Town Centre. However, an option preliminarily considered during the Charrette of relocating all or some of the TAFE activities to the Renaissance Centre should also be supported. This option would open this TAFE site up to other development and/or uses that could also complement the Town Centre.

It was also noted that there seems to be relatively under-utilised land along the western and southern edges of the property, enjoying excellent distant views in both cases. Vandalism was reported to be quite problematic for the New TAFE, as virtually every week-end some new graffiti or other acts of vandalism were reportedly committed there. This problem might be addressed by introducing residential development along the extremities of the site, whose residents would be present at night. Their presence would discourage further vandalism, as well as support the Town Centre with additional close-in population. These residents might or might not be part of the Arts teaching endeavours. The residences could, for example, be short-term accommodation for visiting teachers



or artists or other students, for permanent residents, or for tourists. The dwellings would likely be attached terraces, as shown in the plan below. Returns from this development could go to TAFE curriculum improvements, etc., and their management could be taken care of by the existing TAFE management and grounds crews.



Plan of Proposed Residential Development at Extremities of TAFE west Site

#### 10.4.1 Project Design Brief

The design and performance of the residential developments component of the site should comply with the following:

- ◇ new residential development should be limited to the perimeter of the site along its south and west boundaries, overlooking the deep views;
- ◇ all dwellings should be two- or three-storeys;

- ◇ each dwelling should be limited to a one-car garage per dwelling, whose garage should be set back at least one metre from the face of the building and 5.5 m back from the front of the front garden (to allow a second car parked in tandem out front). The non-garage parts of the dwellings may project to within 2 metres of the front of the front garden, and verandahs could extend the whole way to the front of the front garden, for up to 50% of the dwelling frontage. No guest parking should be required, as guests could park in the street or in existing parking for the TAFE, which is usually close to empty overnight;
- ◇ each dwelling should have windows onto the street or accessway;
- ◇ each dwelling should have at least 8 sqm of private open space, either in a courtyard and/or balconies.

**Action 10.4 A** - Consult with TAFE to develop a concept for the future use of these facilities as an expanded Arts-related focus, and/or to re-locate some activities to the Renaissance Centre.

**Action 10.4 B**- Implement this residential development as per its Project Design Brief.

## 10.5 Kingsford Smith Park Refurbishment and Additions

Despite its proximity to the Town Centre, Kingsford Smith Park is loved by many, but used by few. Because the park is in a deep hollow, walking to it from the adjoining streets above is quite strenuous. Yet virtually all stakeholders in the Charrette were determined to find ways to make the park a safer, better and more heavily used asset to the Town Centre, as it has been in the past.

The park is historically significant in part because of its design by Paul Sorensen, a prominent Sydney landscape architect from the turn of the Century (Paul Grimson to elaborate, please, as appropriate) The original planting scheme is now very mature and in some cases huge trees on the steep land slip-prone slopes may be dangerous.

The park is currently established as an amphitheatre focussed on a 1960's stage, now covered with graffiti and making the whole of the park feel derelict. This use of the park now needs review.

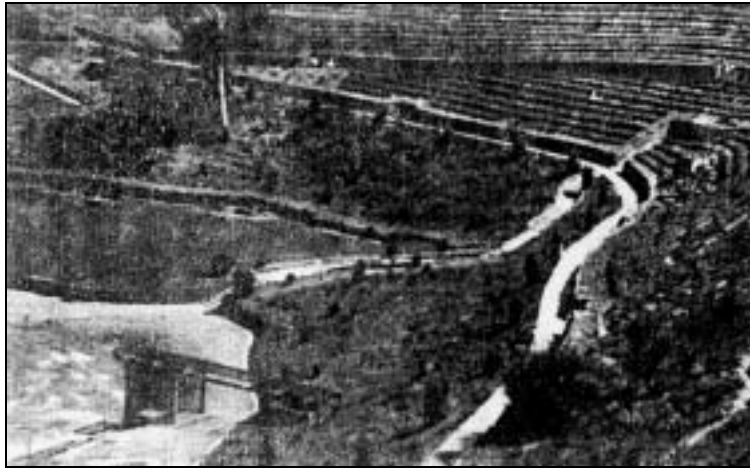
Toilets are located on the southern entry off Vale Street, but are now so covered with graffiti and overgrown with vegetation that many would-be users are now deterred.

### 10.5.1 Inter-Related Problems

As explained in Section 4.4.6, Kingsford Smith Park suffers from an inter-related set of problems including lack of use, vandalism, lack of passive surveillance from adjoining properties, overgrown bush, and deteriorated access paths. The switch-back paths up to Lurline Street have deteriorated and a recent land slip has made matters much worse.

#### Safety and Surveillance

This park cannot feel safe, especially at night, when there is little or no activity within it, when there are not guards or caretakers, and when no one lives close-by, who could thereby see into the park to report misbehaviour. Even the nearby residences on the northern slope cannot see into the park well because the trees have become quite bushy. Historic photographs of the park show a much less bushy condition, where one can see from one slope of the park clearly across to the other.



Historic Photo of Kingsford Smith Park Showing Younger Trees

### **Vandalism**

As a result of the lack of perceived safety, hardly anyone uses the park, except for those who choose it as a place to misbehave, knowing that they can get away with it because no one else is around. The extensive vandalism attests to this problem, which will persist until the underlying conditions that allow such behaviour have improved.

### **10.5.2 Project Design Brief**

To address the above problems and to make the park a better, safer and more heavily used asset to the Town Centre, the following design and performance should be achieved:

- ◇ Maximise residential development and other activities overlooking the park, whose occupants would provide passive surveillance of the park, around the clock, to increase its safety. On-site parking requirements may need to be relaxed due to the steep grades of some of the possible sites; on-street parking should be considered as an alternative. Vehicular access through the edges of the park may be required in some cases, but this is seen as justified to improve activity in and passive surveillance of the park.
- ◇ Introduce a caretaker dwelling within the park, with a full-time live-in caretaker.
- ◇ Introduce park improvements and whatever activities which would increase its use into the evenings and winter, and would improve personal and property safety within and near the Park.
- ◇ Repair and upgrade toilets, other facilities and pedestrian access to the park.
- ◇ Maintain the trees in the park to facilitate passive surveillance of the entire park from its perimeter, including removing some trees and by trimming the lower trunks of others.

### **10.5.3 Proposed Design**

The design below illustrates one way that the Project Design Brief above can be implemented.

#### **New Residential Development**

Four residential developments were proposed in this design to overlook the park to increase its

passive surveillance, usership and safety. Two multi-unit developments are located at its southwest corner, mostly on private land where an earlier residential application had been lodged and refused recently by BMCC. (Since the Charrette, the Land and Environment Court has approved that development as originally proposed, so this part of the design is indicative only, and will not likely be implemented as shown.) More residential development is proposed in the deep rear lots of several existing dwellings along Vale Street; these, of course, would be the option of those owners. These dwellings would front onto the park and be accessed from a new car park in the park. The fourth multi-unit development overlooks the northwest corner of the park, well above it and accessed from William Street.

### Caretaker Dwelling and Entry Kiosk

A caretaker dwelling is proposed to be constructed to span the small creek in the southwest corner of the site, near the vehicular entry, which should receive a new entry kiosk beside it. This live-in care-taker is seen as key to the safety and attractiveness of the park.

### Ice Skating and/or Roller Skating Rink

On the lower flat area of the park, which is presently turf, an ice skating rink is proposed, which would be used in the winter, kept frozen by mechanical means during some cold winter months. Ideally, this rink should be convertible in the summertime to a roller-skating rink.



Proposed Improvements to Kingsford Smith Park

### Bush Tucker Cafe

A small cafe is proposed in the park, which might serve authentic bush tucker, with much of its seating outdoors in the fresh air.

### Car Park

An expanded car park is proposed, as shown.

### Pedestrian Trails and Stairs

The pedestrian trails and stairs, as shown, should be refurbished. The stair, which starts in the top northwest corner, is quite important, as a good view is afforded down it for passive surveillance, and it would give a more direct access than the switch-back trails.

### Tree Thinning and Trimming

To achieve this design, some trees will need removal, and many others should be trimmed, especially where such trimming will improve passive surveillance from key areas above and along the perimeter of the park.

**Action 10.5 A** - Implement improvements to the Park, as per the Project Design Brief.

**Action 10.5 B** - Develop residential development in conjunction with adjoining property owners, to encourage housing to occur which will overlook the Park, as per the Project Design Brief

## 10.6 Civic Centre Remodel

The Civic Centre in the central section of Katoomba Street is appreciated by many for what it provides, but by none for how it looks. Its 1960's 'Brutalist' style facade on Katoomba Street is seen by many as barren and inconsistent with Katoomba's character. Its subterranean entrance and crooked dark connection at the rear to College Lane were described at the Charrette as good habitat for bridge trolls. The ground level shops along an open-air atrium reportedly struggle for lack of exposure. Yet the Civic Centre is well located, its elderly facilities, toilets and library are crucial assets to the community.

### 10.6.1 Project Design Brief

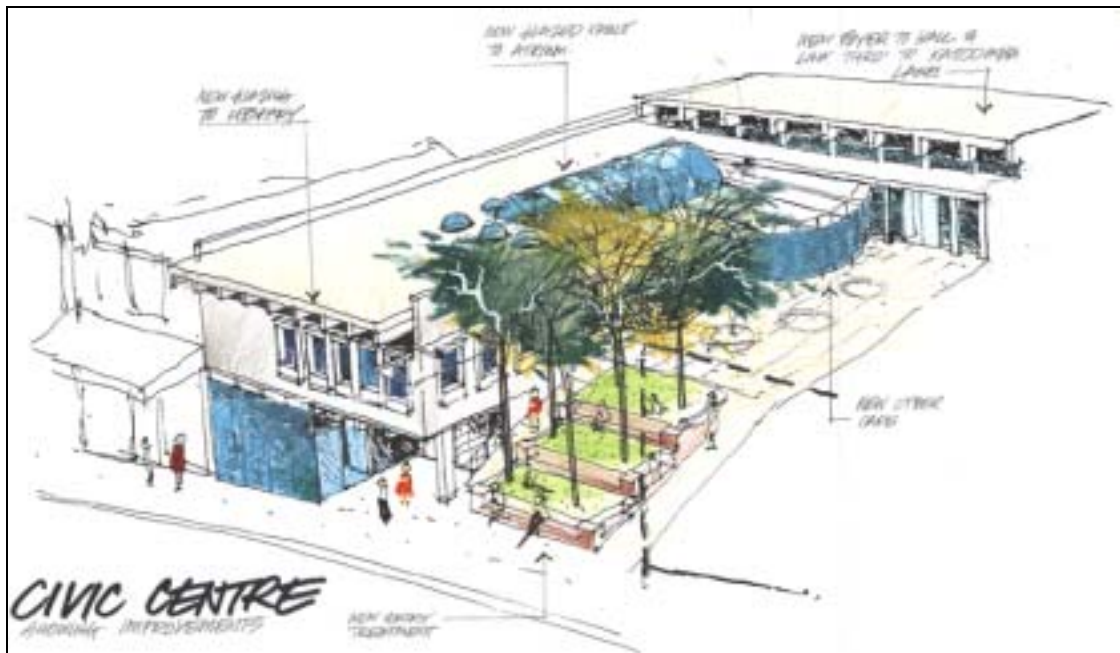
To improve the assets of the Civic Centre and to fix its problems, the following improvements to its design and performance should all take place:

- ◇ improve the Katoomba Street frontage, by opening the blank walls with windows, and by making it more inviting to passers-by;
- ◇ introduce outdoor, and possibly weather-protected public space/s, where anyone can gather, and where children can be minded (refer to Section 7.7.2);
- ◇ make the connection between Katoomba Street and College Lane more direct and more appealing to use;
- ◇ extend or adjust operating hours of the library, and introduce Internet facilities;

- ◇ establish an 'Internet' or 'Cyber Cafe', where locals and visitors can 'surf the net' and send or receive emails, and which may serve as a 'satellite' remote teaching outlet for a participating university or other teaching facility;
- ◇ introduce a small indoor playground for infants and young children;
- ◇ improve lighting and amenity of access to the ground floor premises;
- ◇ consider other redesigns and redevelopment/s which would achieve the above objectives and further revitalise Katoomba, subject to consultation with the Katoomba and Leura Senior Citizens organisation.

### 10.6.2 Proposed Design

The proposed Charrette design, pictured below, is a good way to implement the Project Design Brief.



Aerial Sectional Perspective Showing Public Open Space and More Open Street Frontage

#### Opening Up of the Katoomba Street Frontage

The design proposes more windows upstairs from the library, and a brighter shopfront at street level at the southeastern corner on Katoomba Street.

#### New 'Vestpocket Park' Steps Out to Katoomba Street, Links Directly to College Lane with Disabled Access

A sunny new 'vestpocket park' is proposed along the northern side of the property, stepping down to the street, as shown in the sketch above, with ramps for disabled access up a slight rise to outdoor seating, overlooked by the new 'Cyber Cafe' (see below). The trees in the stepped terraces down to the street level are deciduous, so that they will lose their leaves in winter and let the sun shine into the space. This outdoor space extends back right through to College Lane via a new walkway at the north end of the present meeting hall, with a direct view

line, and another disabled ramp beside the College Lane stairs, to make a much more appealing and safer connection between College Lane and Katoomba Street.

#### **Lower Passageway to College Lane to Receive Barrel-Vaulted Glass Weather Protection and Better Connection with Activities Above**

The lower level open passageway through to College Lane is to receive a barrel-vaulted glass roof, two storeys up, so that both the adjoining library to the south and the new 'Cyber Cafe' to the north can both look down into this space, increasing its vitality and safety. Some of the shops on the southern side gain in area slightly, as well as weather protection.

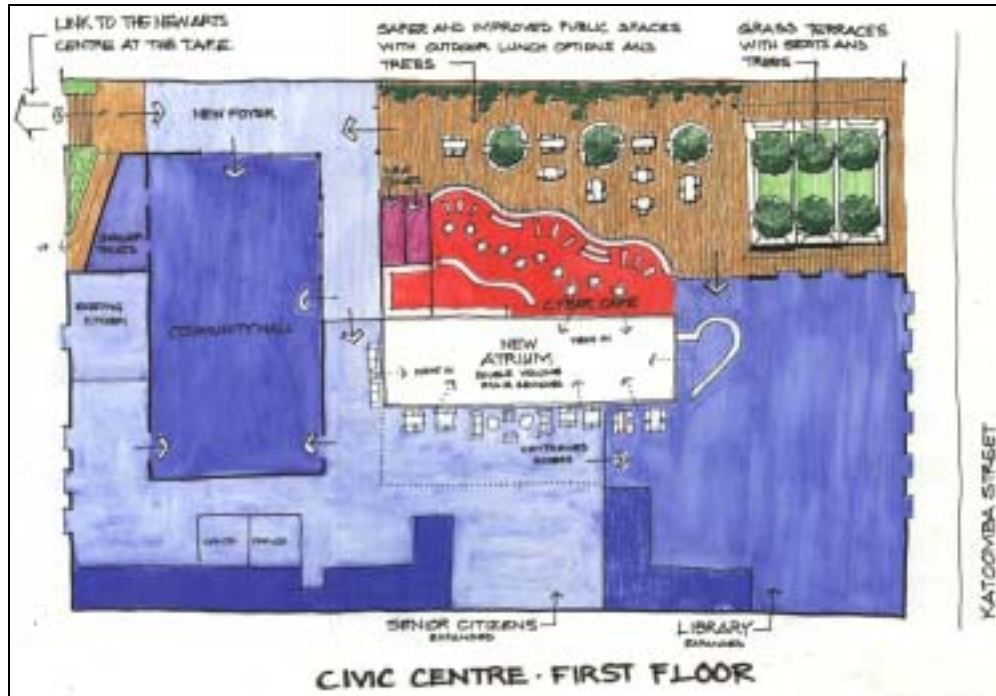
This vaulted space is likely to have excellent acoustic qualities, so that choral or similar groups may choose to perform in this brightly lit space in the evenings, even when the weather is bad outside.



View of the barrel-vaulted glass enclosure over the lower passage through to College Lane

**Slightly Expanded Senior Citizens Area and Library, with Adjusted Open Hours**

This Civic Centre remodel provides a slightly enlarged Senior Citizens Area and Library, retaining all the original services. It is proposed that the Library should expand and adjust its operating hours, so that young people (among others) may access the expanding Internet facilities after school or daytime jobs.



Upstairs Plan of the Proposed Civic Centre Remodel



Downstairs Plan of the Proposed Civic Centre Remodel



### **New 'Cyber Cafe' overlooks Vestpocket Park and Barrel-Vaulted Atrium Below**

Across the skylit atrium from the Library, a new 'Cyber Cafe' is proposed (see plan above). This 'New Age' cafe would offer normal fare, complemented with Internet computer terminals, where locals and visitors can pay to access the Net or their email address to send and receive mail. Internet cafes have been sprouting up across the world in town centres, especially ones frequented by tourists. This Internet system could also serve as a 'satellite' video-interactive learning facility in conjunction with a university or other teaching establishment.

The cafe overlooks the double height barrel-vaulted atrium to the south, and the new public vestpocket park to the north, onto which its tables should spill out in good weather.

The cafe is relatively small, but toilet new facilities are nearby, shown at the stairs up to College Lane, just to the west of the relocated community hall space. This space, retained at its present size, is moved south the distance of the new passageway that directly links College Lane to Katoomba Street.

### **Indoor Playground**

In the lower level on the south side is located a small playground for young children, right next to the existing toilets.

### **Upgrade the Toilets?**

Feed-back from stakeholders subsequent to the Charrette has urged improvement of toilets in the Civic Centre to include infant changing facilities. If the indoor playground is constructed as proposed, the toilets next to it would be the likely candidates for such upgrades. In addition new toilets are provided upstairs.

**Action 10.6** - Construct the Civic Centre Remodel as per the above Project Design Brief.

## **10.7 Department Of Housing Site • Design and New Street Link From Parke to Cascade Streets**

As explained above in Section 8.3, east-west access to and from the Town Centre is quite difficult, especially for pedestrians. One key reason is the 600+ metre length of the street block of Parke and Cascade Streets between Waratah Street and Bathurst Road. A key opportunity to make a vehicular and pedestrian link through this very long block was identified during the Charrette on a vacant lot owned by the Ministry for Housing. The design below was proposed, but it was subsequently found that the MoH was too far along in the development of their then vacant lot to enable changes to be made. Thus the design below is only indicative of how possibly other adjoining lots from Cascade to Parke Street can be combined and designed to accommodate both a through street and shallow development of medium density lots on the south side, so that they gain sunshine and access along that new street link.



Photo of Charrette Design for Parke Street site (left hand side of picture)

**Action 10.7-** Consult with landowners in the central part of Parke Street/Cascade Street, south of the TAFE, and along the centre of the Lurline/Katoomba Street block, to find opportunities to construct new street links and medium density developments enfronting them, to improve vehicular and pedestrian links to the Town Centre, especially along Cascade, Parke and Lurline Streets.

## 10.8 Telstra Additions & Improvements to Council Car Park Next Door

### 10.8.1 Problems and Opportunities Associated with the Telstra Site and the Adjoining Council Car Park and Church

While the Telstra Building plays a vital role in the communication infrastructure for the region, it makes a big gap in the retail and civic continuity of Katoomba Street. It is set back behind about 10 metres of bitumen from the footpath and presents a largely blank wall to the street. Set between two churches and a Council car park, this break in activity (except on Sundays when the churches are very active) totals about 90 metres in length. This big gap significantly limits retail function along the street. Good retail main streets normally have little or no breaks in their street level retail or public uses, with the exception perhaps of 20 metre-wide street intersections every couple of hundred metres or so. The Charrette Team recognised opportunities to address these difficulties, to the benefit of both the Town and Telstra, as explained below.

The rear of Telstra's property beyond Telstra's car park steps down a few metres to a relatively un-used space abutting but well above Lurline Street, with an empty old building on part in some disrepair. The building is appreciated by some, and has moderate historic significance, and might be re-locatable. In addition, to the north of this site to the rear of the Uniting Church is an old weatherboard house on a relatively large piece of land.

This large shelf of land in the rear of Telstra and the Church (above name again) enjoys spectacular views east across the town below and out to the distance. So close to the centre of town, this space in the rear seemed a golden opportunity, again, to benefit both the Town and Telstra.

It also suggested the possibility of a pedestrian link though the rear of the Telstra site up to Katoomba Street, in along a length of this street block with very limited east-west pedestrian access.

The Council car park next door to the south of the Telstra property is heavily used. However, it presents an unpleasant streetscape of bitumen and parked cars to Katoomba Street, and contributes to the 90 metre-long gap of inactivity noted above. Furthermore, the Council mens toilets at the rear of the car park lack surveillance and may not be ideally located for ease of access and safety. Citizens have reportedly been accosted there, and many do not regard these toilets as safe or pleasant to use.

### **Access Issues**

The best opportunity to provide car access to this rear development site is through the Council car park. This can be legally done. In addition, if semi-mature trees were planted between every three car spaces, the car park would more resemble a short street than a car park.

### **10.8.2 Project Design Brief**

Development on the Telstra and Council Car park sites (hopefully, the following would need to be seen by Telstra as a benefit to them as well as the Town while retaining Telstra's necessary functions and access from Katoomba Street, develop a hopefully two-storey building with an active frontage (eg street level shops) in front of the existing building, along the Katoomba Street footpath;

- ◇ relocate the Council toilets to the front of the property and make them safer and more pleasant to use and walk past;
- ◇ develop the rear of the Telstra Property (and possibly the adjoining ? Church land) with access via the Council car park, medium density residential and possible home-based businesses and/or secondary businesses at the Lurline Street level, in order to add live-in population to the Town Centre and increase its vitality and safety at night through passive surveillance. Capitalise on both proximity to the Town Centre and on the eastern views. Public pedestrian access should be provided between Lurline Street and Katoomba Street, by means of stairs up from Lurline Street, through this development, and then to Katoomba Street via Council's public car park. Disabled access should be provided for the ground level units via Katoomba Street, where the grades are easier;
- ◇ provide car access to the rear of the Telstra site through the Council car park.

### **10.8.3 Proposed Charrette Design**

The proposed Charrette design complies with the Project Design Brief above, for what appears to be a clear win/win both for Telstra and for the Town Centre.

**Katoomba Street Frontage: Telstra Development with Council Toilets Relocated to Front Katoomba Street**

A two-storey development is designed for the roughly 10 metre bitumen set-back in front of Telstra. The building retains the image of its historic neighbours along Katoomba Street, as does the smaller toilet building. (Actually, the Council could also joint venture with Telstra and build a larger two-storey building on the Council property, basically extending the Telstra development, while retaining the public toilets at street level (not shown in sketch)). This building could attach to the southern part of the blank-walled Telstra front, but needs to leave room for access to the existing doors and windows further along the front to the north, as shown in the plan below.



Sketch of Telstra Development and New Council Toilets alongside



Plan of the Telstra and Council Car park Development

### Medium-Density Residential Development of the Rear of Telstra

A very pleasant multi-unit development is proposed on the rear of the Telstra (and adjoining Church) property, which forms a C-shaped building. The legs of the 'C' wrap around a grassed and treed plaza, as they step down to Lurline Street (see sketch below). Vehicular access would be via the Council car park, then down a ramp beneath the residences to plenty of secure car parking. This parking access requires cooperation from Council for an easement for Telstra.

This design assumes that the old building in the rear is either relocated or demolished after being properly documented historically. If this building were retained or if the Church property was not included, the overall development would be redesigned for the smaller area.



View of Telstra's Rear Residential Development, as its steps down to Lurline Street



Three Floor Plans and Building Section of Proposed Design for Rear of Telstra Property

**Action 10.8 A** - Implement development of the Telstra property fronting Katoomba Street, as per the Project Design Brief.

**Action 10.8 B** - Implement development of the toilets fronting Katoomba Street and street tree planting in the Council car park.

**Action 10.8** - Implement development of the Telstra and ?? Church rear properties, as per the above Project Design Brief.

## 11. PROPOSALS FOR KEY SITES - SOUTH END

This section of the Report explains key sites in the south end of the Town Centre, for which specific and relatively detailed designs were developed during the Charrette. They are presented together, as they and their benefits are inter-dependent.



Key Sites in the South End

### 11.1 Beverly Lane Supermarket and Live/Work Development

As explained in Section 7.8.1, if a new supermarket is to come to Katoomba, it should be located and designed to strengthen the Town Centre, not weaken it. This is one of the two appropriate sites identified in the Charrette; it is understood that the development of this supermarket will be a market decision, and not subsidised.

The Beverly Lane site is located at the south end of Katoomba Street in the Town Centre convenience retailing area on the east side. For this site to work, several parcels would need to be assembled or

joint ventured together, between the ??? Catholic Church and the ??? Church (now forthcoming local family restaurant in same buildings) at the corner of Waratah Street. The assembled sites would need to run through for a frontage onto and pedestrian access from Katoomba Street.

### **11.1.1 Project Siting and Design Brief**

The Beverly Lane site and design emerged during the Charrette as a result of the enquiry-by-design process, and it seems to achieve best the Project Design & Siting Brief in Section 7.8.4 on the issue of supermarkets.

### **11.1.2 Proposed Charrette Design**

#### **Ideal to Strengthen the Town Centre's Retail Balance**

The Beverly Lane development and site described below is the preferred supermarket option (see Section 7.8.3), as it most successfully would strengthen the retail structure of the Town Centre, as explained below.

The Coles and Jewels development behind Katoomba Street on Pioneer Place cause the retail condition of the Town Centre to be lopsided. By concentrating so much retail power, car parking and attraction in the southwest corner, especially behind Katoomba Street rather than fronting more directly onto it, the shops along the eastern side of Katoomba Street are put at a disadvantage. This Beverly Lane development would 're-balance' the two sides of Katoomba Street and the Town Centre, positioning Katoomba Street favourably right between the two supermarket location anchors. Being within walking distance of each other (and with the 'ant track' between them crossing Katoomba Street) the new supermarket would provide positive competition to the existing supermarkets rather than weakening the Town Centre, as the Gateway proposal would have risked.

At the same time, this large development appears to be able to sleeve itself compatibly among its neighbouring properties, if designed sensitively at the detail level.

#### **Capitalises on Site Assembly to Benefit the Town Centre**

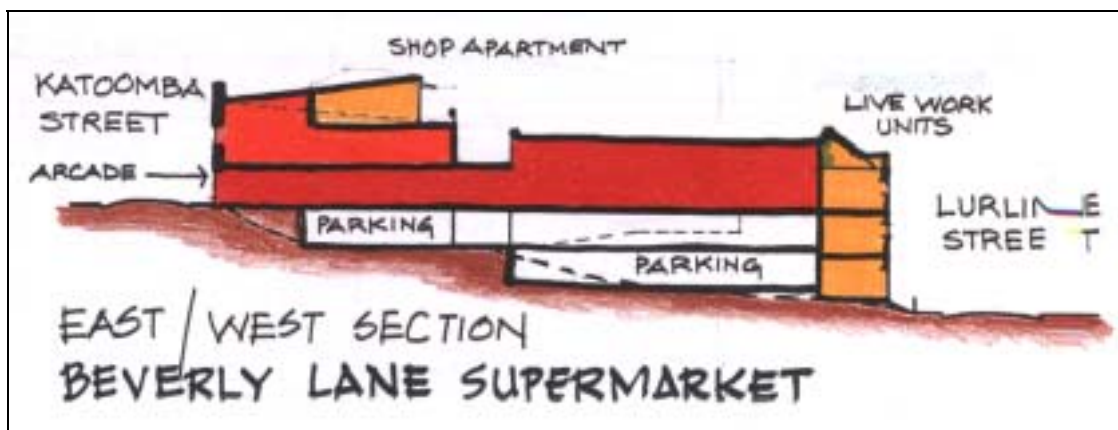
This supermarket-focussed mixed use development had not been recognised as a possibility at all, until Steve Goldie of the Charrette Team unexpectedly came up with it during the Charrette. It creatively capitalises on how Beverly Lane penetrates the lower street block bounded by Katoomba, Lurline and Waratah Streets, thereby giving internal access to a site formed by assembling several properties. While it may be somewhat difficult to assemble these properties, the benefits may justify the effort and profit the relevant owners, assuming they choose to participate. There was not time during the Charrette to consult with the owners, but they have been alerted to this possibility since then; decisions are yet to be taken. It may be possible that other property combinations in the same vicinity of Beverly Lane could also work in similar ways.



Plan of Proposed Beverly Lane Supermarket Development, on Several Properties to be Assembled

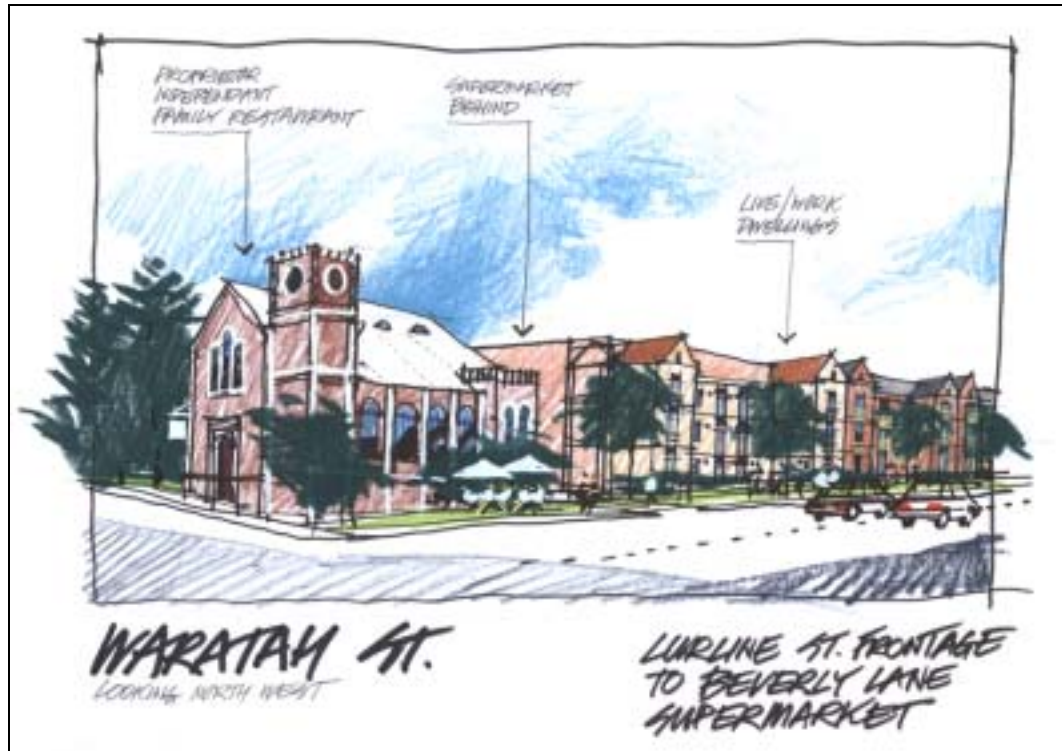
The plan above shows an arcade access from Katoomba Street, with new specialty shops or other businesses on either side, opening into a 3200-3500 square metre supermarket. The Lurline Street frontage is lined with a three-storey single aspect apartment development, enjoying distant views to the east and down across that side of Town, with an active street frontage of possibly home offices at the Lurline Street level (see plans and building section below).

Crucial truck deliveries for the supermarket use Beverly lane for access via Waratah Street, where the trucks would drive in forward, then back into the loading docks as shown, and then drive out forwards. The design shows proper truck turning clearances and loading dock dimensions, appropriate for such operations. The unloading of trucks would be internalised within the side boundary walls of the development, to minimise noise impacts on neighbours. Internalising the deliveries and disposals for this design is in stark contrast to the intrusive Coles counterpart abutting the corner of Waratah and Parke Streets.



Site and Building Section for the Beverly Lane Supermarket and Live/Work Development





Sketch of Beverly Lane Live/Work Apartments fronting Lurline Street next to a potential family restaurant in the existing historic Church.

As shown above in the site and building section above, the site slopes down to the east for a grade change of about 6 metres from its Katoomba Street frontage to Lurline Street. Clever use of this cross grade will permit the construction of a large retail/mixed-use development which is still compatible with and respectful of its neighbours.

Access to Katoomba Street is proposed to be via a new arcade on a redeveloped single storey government building site. It would present as two storeys to Katoomba Street, with the supermarket arcade access at street level with office and/or residential uses upstairs, and with a potential additional very attractive third residential floor set back from Katoomba Street with spectacular views looking east across the valley to the distant ridges.

Car parking of about 200-250 spaces is provided below the supermarket level. The plan also provides for three entry and three exit lanes to the car park (sufficient for the efficient movement of vehicles at peak times) separate to the main loading dock. Rear loading access is provided to all other adjoining properties on Katoomba and Waratah Streets, and secure private car parking for the Live/Work Terraces fronting Lurline Street is to be provided in the lower car parking level of the supermarket.

#### **Fits the Project Design and Location Brief**

This Beverly Lane supermarket and live-work development is an ideal example of how to comply with the above Project Design and Location Brief. The development is in the right place to support the Town Centre. In contrast to the present Coles supermarket and Pioneer Square, all public streets are greeted by active frontages and not blank walls, and all the car parking is discretely tucked into the development, taking advantage of the sloping site.

### **Both Beverly Lane and the Old TAFE Supermarket Scheme Would Benefit the Town Centre**

If another supermarket is to come to Katoomba, the Charrette determined that either the Old TAFE site or this Beverly Lane development would be ideal mixed use developments, that could sensitively incorporate a big supermarket in the right place and with the right design, to maximise benefits to the Town Centre.

**Action 11.1** - Bring together the relevant parties and ownerships to investigate the feasibility of this development, and hopefully implement it, if City leaders agree that a new supermarket is appropriate for the Town Centre, under these circumstances and this Project Location and Design Brief.

## **11.2 Bible College Re-Use for Elderly or Backpackers Accommodation, With Medium Density Residential to West Into Valley**

Prior to the Charrette, the Bible College in particular, and other properties within the street block bounded by Waratah, Katoomba, Cascade and Edwards Street, were another focus of real estate interest, this time by Woolworths, in relation to a possible new supermarket shopping centre. As explained in Section 7.8, there is reportedly a market for a additional supermarket in Katoomba. After public consultation and site analysis, the Charrette came to the conclusion that such a use in this street block would not be beneficial to the Town Centre (see Section 7.8.3). An alternative mixed use infill design was produced for part of this street block, in compliance with intentions explained below in the Project Design Brief.

### **11.2.1 The Site and its Influences**

#### **Larger than usual sloping Street Block, with Undeveloped Land in Its Centre in Multiple Ownerships and with Access Challenges**

This street block is substantially deeper than normal, with a pronounced north/south slope. Normal urban street blocks are usually between 60 and 80 metres deep, while this one is about 105 metres deep (measured north to south). This larger than normal spacing between Waratah and Edwards Street may historically have accommodated the relatively steep slope between the two, recognising that, especially in early times, building on this slope would be less practical than on the more flat sites nearby.

However, now that Katoomba has matured, the proximity of this street block to the Town Centre, with rising real estate values over the past several decades, have now made it more feasible to develop both the available lands within the centre of the street block, as well as to re-develop and/or re-use several of the existing well-sited buildings. The several small but deep residential lots on Edwards and Cascade Streets have adjacent undeveloped rear yards which, cumulatively, amount to a significant opportunity for further development of the street block, if access and cooperation among the owners (or land assembly) can be achieved.

#### **Possibility of Compatible Medium-Density Infill Development in Mid-Block**

Unrelated to the supermarket intentions, the Charrette Team recognised that the middle of this street block might be appropriate for medium-density infill development, if the existing owners so chose. The Charrette Team was also made aware of the unfortunate large commercial development by the DSS which badly overlooks many of the residences on Edwards Street. This development illustrates well how this Waratah frontage should not be developed

further, but the Team recognised that better development could affect more of a win/win for the Town and the existing owners, if they chose.

The residential lots seem deep enough possibly for their rears to be developed, compatibly with existing dwellings at the fronts of the lots, with minimal overlooking and privacy conflicts. This could possibly introduce more population close in to the Town Centre, which would help its economic and social vitality. There appears to be no significant habitat in this area which would be negatively affected by such development; a few existing trees could possibly be built around.

### **Multiple Ownerships and Land Assembly Implications**

Such development may not have been considered previously because the street block is under many ownerships, especially the rear lots of the roughly 50 metre-deep residential lots with houses located near the fronts of the properties. Plus most owners may not have been interested (and still may not be) in such possibilities. Developing small lots is often not as profitable as larger ones, especially with access challenges to the interior of this street block. However, there are several access opportunities to the interior of this street block, which make consolidation of the rear areas for redevelopment worth considering. These include:

- ◇ extending the mid-block private driveway coming west off Katoomba Street just north of the small strip of business premises (Waratah Arcade);
- ◇ using the existing driveway belonging to the large development off Waratah Street (DSS);
- ◇ one or more 3 metre-wide driveways north from Edwards Street, to run past existing houses.

### **Bible College and Service Station Sites**

The largest parcel on the street block is the Bible College on the corner of Katoomba Street and Edwards Street. This building at present appears to be relatively under-utilised, compared to its real estate and location value. This multi-storey historic building is in good physical condition and occupied by various tenants. A closed petrol station is located on the key corner of Waratah and Katoomba Streets, another key site.

### **11.2.2 Project Design Brief**

While the supermarket options was not recommended for this street block, other infill redevelopment and/or re-use was indeed seen as beneficial to the Town Centre, if it complied with the following conditions for this street block:

- ◇ New development and/or redevelopment should be reasonably compatible with adjoining residential properties in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, bulk and scale, noise, and other possible negative impacts.
- ◇ New uses for existing buildings should contribute to increasing the population, diversity of uses, and revitalisation of the Town Centre.
- ◇ a multi-storey active frontage building on the key corner of Katoomba and Waratah Streets should be built generally up to both street frontages, whose architectural character should be respectful of its surrounding historic buildings context, and whose main massing elements and window openings should appear taller than they are wide, and whose street facades should be otherwise articulated to reduce their appearance of bulk.

- ◇ Access into undeveloped lands within the centre of this street block should be shared among such developments, wherever physically feasible, to minimise unnecessary multiple driveways and to increase the permeability of this street block to encourage walkability, especially north-south across it to and from the Town Centre.

### 11.2.3 Proposed Charrette Design

#### **Bible College Increased Use**

The relatively under-utilised Bible College is proposed to be converted to an accommodation for the elderly, or perhaps a backpacker accommodation. Whatever the new use, it should increase the diversity of accommodation and vitality of the Town Centre.

#### **Service Station**

The existing service station is proposed to be re-used, at least temporarily, as a business incubator operation, or some other 'holding use' until real estate values rise to the point of justifying a much higher and mixed use development for this site, again in compliance with the above Project Design Brief.

#### **Cascade Street Medium-Density**

Medium-density residential is proposed for the several empty or under-utilised lots on Cascade Street. These smaller dwellings are perhaps two storeys, some are dual-occupancies, and they should all be compatible with their neighbours and surrounding context in terms of privacy and architecture.

#### **Intra-Block Medium-Density Infill Development/s**

Two types of development are shown for the undeveloped mid-block lands. The more intensive options involve consolidation, using the existing private driveway serving the new strip of business premises off Katoomba Street is extended to serve a number of small dwellings at the rear of the properties fronting Waratah and Edwards Street. This scheme would need cooperation from the various affected owners, either through a joint venture or by purchasing and assembling the land and creating a new street.

The alternate approach development/s is based on adding new access driveways beside existing buildings on Edwards Street to enable medium-density development in rear yards. This development does not require assembly of adjoining properties, and could be done incrementally, as various owners choose to develop their rear properties.

#### **One Way of Perhaps Many to Develop in Compliance with the Project Design Brief**

This design indicates only two of perhaps many ways to comply with the Project Design Brief, and hopefully to affect win/wins both for the existing owners and for the Town Centre.



Charrette design for potential redevelopment of the south of Waratah Street

**Action 11.2** - Facilitate regulatory changes and negotiations among owners that encourage development in this street block in compliance with its Project Design Brief.

## PART III – WHAT’S HAPPENED SINCE THE CHARRETTE, AND WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

### 12. PROGRESS SINCE THE CHARRETTE

The Katoomba Town Centre Charrette was conducted at the end of October 1998. During the time that was required between the completion of the Charrette and the presentation of this Report to Council, a number of activities have been taking place that will impact on ongoing implementation.

These activities included the announcement of a significant funding package from the NSW State Government in January 1999 based on an interim document (Katoomba Town centre Future Directions Document).

#### 12.1 Katoomba Town Centre Future Directions Document

Council has endorsed the broad principles that were developed during the Charrette. This broad strategy was called the Katoomba Future directions Document and was placed on public exhibition for comment in November and December 1998. This allowed additional comments from the community to be considered in the preparation of this final strategy.

The Katoomba Future Directions Document will be superseded by this report.

## 12.2 Funding

The funding package that was announced by the NSW State Government included the following elements for the town centre. Detailed funding was identified in a press release by the Premier of NSW in January 1999 and are not reproduced in this report.

- ◇ Heritage building and Facade Improvement Program including grants for improvements to select building facades in the town centre.
- ◇ Construction of 60 commuter car parking spaces at Goldsmith Place and associated streetscape improvement works.
- ◇ Consultancy to evaluate impact and identify appropriate controls for stormwater management;
- ◇ Provisions of youth arts facilities/programs.
- ◇ Strategic assessment and masterplanning of the TAFE East site by the State Government's Infrastructure Partnership Services (including the envisaged provision of an Art Gallery, Cultural Centre and Council/NPWS Visitor Centres) and ongoing marketing;.
- ◇ Masterplanning of surplus State Government sites including the Katoomba Goodsyard and SRA Depot.
- ◇ Katoomba Streetscape Improvement works including heritage lighting provision, at-grade pedestrian access across the railway line at Katoomba Station, general street beautification works and pooling of car parking on the eastern side of Katoomba Street.
- ◇ Design and construction of new shuttle bus shelters in the town centre.
- ◇ Design and construction of improvements to the Katoomba Civic Centre (dollar for dollar partnership with BMCC).
- ◇ Detailed design and Stage 1 restoration of Kingsford Smith Park.
- ◇ Funding for a Project Manager for the Katoomba and Echo Point Project for a period of four years.

This funding, as well as the funding for improvements to Echo Point, will be phased over the next four years.

In addition, the Blue Mountains City Council will provide funding from the capital works budget as part of the ongoing town improvement programs in the Blue Mountains.

## 13. ESD'S IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

### 13.1 Introduction

Since 1992, ESD has led fifteen Charrettes in Australia and New Zealand. There are lessons to be learned for Katoomba's implementation, from the implementation successes and failures of these earlier Charrettes. This section has two categories of implementation recommendations for Katoomba, general recommendations and project-specific recommendations.

## 13.2 General Implementation Recommendations

Hopefully for the sake of the project, these recommendations will be heeded as a complete functional package, rather than following some while postponing or disregarding others.

### 13.2.1 Keep the Charrette Ball Rolling!

The Katoomba Charrette has generated a ground swell of support; ride that wave and do not let it dissipate. Unexplained delays in progress expected by the community have led to lost confidence and opportunities in previous Charrettes.

#### Keep The Community Informed & Involved

Before the Charrette, the Katoomba Client Team did an excellent job of drumming up community support for the Charrette process. Now it is time for a similar and on-going public relations campaign to keep the community informed, involved and supportive. A fortnightly local newspaper column should update the community on progress. Such updates will be especially important for keeping the public apprised and supportive of the larger longer-term projects, whose progress may not initially be visible, and for non-physical progress, such as regulatory reform or funding initiatives. Progress updating on the Old TAFE Site is a case in point. Spice up the column with photos of completed projects.

#### Make At Least Small Improvements Constantly, And Promote All Results

Promote all Charrette improvements to the Town Centre. The town of Midland (another Charrette client) has a big banner, reading "Another Charrette Success!!", which they hang over each project as it is completed and then hang again over the next new achievement. This promotion applies to even relatively small things such as new bins, sign posts or trees. Throw a big public party when a big achievement is made or more major project commenced or completed. Keep the Charrette in the forefront of the public awareness; in Katoomba's case this will help build tourism in the Town Centre at the same time.

#### Put this Charrette Report, the Video And Brochure/s Into Heavy Use

Spread the word by means of this Report, the video tape of the Concluding Charrette Meeting, and possibly by means of small brochure/s. For the New Lynn and Midland Charrettes, small colour brochures were published and distributed widely to visitors, realtors, tourism operators, possible developers, other government agencies, etc. So much progress has already been made with the Katoomba Charrette already, that a small brochure abbreviating the Charrette outcomes and trumpeting implementation progress may now be timely.

If edited properly, a video tape of the Concluding Charrette Meeting, when Charrette leader Wendy Morris presented the Charrette outcomes, will be quite useful as a very accessible method of explaining the Charrette to people new to the process and evolving outcomes. Many will find this video to be more accessible and stirring than a written document.

This detailed Report will also prove quite useful to people wanting seriously to research and respond to the Charrette outcomes and Katoomba's Revitalisation Strategy.

#### Maximise Professional Recognition Of The Charrette

Most of the previous Charrettes have enjoyed substantial recognition in professional journals

such as the RAPI Planning News, as well as even in the Newsweek Bulletin. Several Charrettes have won local, state and national planning and urban design awards. Such recognition is quite valuable to stoke local enthusiasm and, especially, to encourage politicians to move forward decisively with continued or increasing support of the Charrette outcomes. Consider submitting articles and putting in for awards.

### **Get Organised To Implement**

Hopefully the Charrette has unleashed a great deal of positive activity for Katoomba. How this activity gets managed, and by whom, is crucial. This is explained in Section 15, entitled Setting Priorities, Funding, Phasing, & Who Implements.

### **Implement The Economic, Employment And Visitors Strategy**

A key fulcrum of the revitalisation leverage is jobs. A task force should be formed very soon to commence the Economic, Employment and Visitors Strategy in Section 12 of this report, as soon as possible. This strategy should capitalise on the forthcoming Olympics-driven visitation. Note that the lead-time is often quite long to adjust tourist programming and marketing.

### **Retain And Support The Client's Charrette Team**

Even this quite detailed report and the Charrette Briefing Booklet represent only the tip of the iceberg of the information and rationales behind the Charrette outcomes and how to implement them. Because the Client's Charrette Team was so deeply involved in forging the outcomes during the Charrette, they should generally be encouraged to stay with the project through its implementation, and often their skills and authorities should be enhanced. The Waitakere (western Auckland) City Council Charrette Team have not only carried the ball brilliantly to implement their New Lynn Charrette over the past three years, but they have also led new design workshops for other areas in their local government area, with increasingly stronger skills and less dependence on ESD.

## **13.2.2 Review & Reform Regulations to Support the Charrette Objectives**

Several past Charrettes have catalysed reform both of local government regulations and of their approaches to development reviews and approvals. Several local and state government clients have recognised that their own 'rule books' were partly causing their problems. As a result of their Charrettes, the Shire of Swan (Midland Charrette) and the Waitakere City Council (New Lynn Charrette) have both restructured their organisational approaches, emphasising place-based multi-disciplinary council team approaches to replace departmental and less place-based organisations. Both local governments also re-worked their statutory planning documents.

With the Blue Mountains local government area in particular, it may be appropriate to consider a more place-based Katoomba Local Environmental Plan and related Development Control Plans, as well as expanding and refining some of the key site Project Design Briefs. This is because its towns are distributed generally along in a linear form along the Highway ridge, rather than in a single mass of urbanism such as in Western Sydney. Compared to Western Sydney, this linear configuration makes each town operate more as its own catchment, suggesting that each town may have its own place-based set of challenges and opportunities, which should be dealt with by specific LEPs and DCPs.



### **Be More Proactive, Less Reactive**

As a result of past Charrettes, several local governments have also restructured their regulatory approaches to be much more proactive and less reactive. Compared to before the Charrette, BMCC and Katoomba now have much clearer plans of action and community support for Katoomba's revitalisation, supported by strong rationales and indicative designs, with which to be more proactive and decisive. Make this change known to the community.

### **Charrette Design Advisory Service**

A Charrette Design Advisory Service should be a key tool in proactively negotiating proposals into real projects which support Katoomba's revitalisation. Such a service should be Council-staffed and answerable to or advising of the Implementation Task Force (see Section 15). This service should interact with development proponents and other stakeholders, for both design revisions and for testing of development feasibility, to help proponents profitably to attain their Project Design Briefs. Recognising a lack of in-house expertise, the Waitakere City Council in western Auckland hired Kobus Mentz (a Katoomba Charrette ESD team member based in Auckland) to lead up this design advisory service and to train their staff to take over the job, once they had developed adequate skills to do so.

### **Mandatory Site and Context Analyses**

Because virtually all possible projects associated with the Town Centre have adjacent neighbours, which would be impacted by proposals, it will be important to institute requirements for mandatory 'Site and Context Analyses' as part of any Development Application for the Town Centre. Designers for proponents should be required to submit early such an analysis not only of their own site but of adjoining sites that may be impacted. The City of Newcastle has been using such an approach now for a couple of years with considerable success in town centre contexts. Refer to their Mixed Use Compatibility Development Control Plan, written by ESD; BMCC may be able to use the same component of that document.

### **13.2.3 See Clearly, Think Laterally & Adapt**

Despite the apparent clarity of the many indicative Charrette designs, there is no clear path to revitalising Katoomba. Underlying circumstances of ownership and other redevelopment dynamics will change. Most development proposals will deviate, for one reason or another, from the indicative Charrette designs. Some will be better solutions than those of the Charrette. Some will respond to new or differently understood design and development criteria. The implementation team will need to discern these differences and respond accordingly.

### **Stay In Touch With The Fundamental Revitalisation Objectives**

Each new proposal must contribute to Katoomba's revitalisation. That is the bottom line. The implementation team and project proponents must understand how their projects will physically affect Katoomba, in terms of personal and property safety through passive surveillance, in terms of jobs generation, of raising Katoomba's image, of impacts to neighbours, etc. Beware of verbal claims of compliance by project proponents; assess what the actual built project will do to its context.

The revitalisation objectives must function collectively, like a chain. Sacrificing one link can weaken the whole system. There will be many contests between alleged project costs and the

revitalisation objectives. Allowing one or more bad projects through, just to get the ball rolling in Katoomba, could do more harm than good. Sections 4.3 and 4.4 explain the present problems of Katoomba's urban structure; do not let new projects make them worse.

### **Use the Project Design Briefs!**

Waitakere City Council, ESD's financially-strapped client for the New Lynn Charrette, had to fuel their revitalisation "by the smell of an oily rag." The New Lynn Charrette could not afford a final report like this one with Project Design Briefs. But the New Lynn Charrette catalysed a tremendous market demand for medium density at the Town Centre, with four hundred new dwellings now built or approved in only three years, when virtually no development was happening in New Lynn before the Charrette.

The implementation staff had relatively minimal development controls with which to get compatible medium density development with good amenity and safety in the public realm, and adequate pedestrian and vehicular access through the area. In the early days, believing that some development was better than no development, some early projects were built that now compromise the whole somewhat. Had the implementation team been equipped with Project Design Briefs, they could have negotiated better outcomes, we think.

Each indicative Katoomba Charrette design describes only one of perhaps many ways that a particular site should contribute to Katoomba's revitalisation while making money for its owners. While the designs give a very useful vision that people can see and understand, the real target is and should continue to be the Project Design Brief, provided for each key site in this Report. The Project Design Brief verbalises the major elements of performance, which that particular project should contribute to Katoomba's revitalisation. The indicative design illustrates one way the project could satisfy the requirements of the Project Design Brief.

### **Everything Is Connected To Everything...Consider The Impacts**

In a mixed use Town Centre like Katoomba, every project will affect both its immediate neighbours as well as its locality. Of course, the project must work well in its own right. However, the project must also work for its neighbours. Many development assessors are trained to consider only the one project they have at hand. In Katoomba's case, assessors must learn to recognise how each proposal affects the collective system of the Town Centre.

### **Dealing With 'Left-Field' Initiatives**

Expect 'left-field' initiatives, which differ profoundly from the Charrette designs. While some may be useless, others may be very good for Katoomba's revitalisation. Others may have kernels of value that can be re-configured to work very well. Do not rely literally on the indicative Charrette designs.

### **Think Laterally; Recognise And Seize New Opportunities**

If implementors and developers think laterally about how to achieve Katoomba's revitalisation, then certain sites may yield unexpected benefits to the town and their owners. A given site may evolve into something quite different from that which the Charrette envisioned.

A possible example may be the Beverly Lane supermarket site (Section 11.1). The Charrette proposed that this site could be developed primarily into a supermarket with sub-grade car parking and a few street level shops and other uses above, such as residential. However, if the Old TAFE Site gets developed with a supermarket, then there will be no further demand for a

supermarket at the Beverly Lane site. But the Beverly Lane site, or other site assemblies in that area using Beverly Lane, may well yield other opportunities, born of its excellent location, views and access via Beverly Lane. A different sort of mixed use development may eventuate there instead, if the Old TAFE Site gets developed with a supermarket...or vice versa.

### **13.2.4 Outlast White Ants and Changes Of Government**

Town revitalisation initiatives born of Charrettes are potentially quite vulnerable, politically and otherwise. They are complex and often difficult to understand. They represent change, something that many of us are loath to embrace...changes in the place, changes to our ways of thinking, and changes to how things get done. They can deliver political kudos, but the changes they represent can also be used as political footballs, at the expense of the revitalisation.

#### **Expect White Ants**

There will be critics of the Katoomba Charrette. Some criticisms will be accurate and constructive, seeing past existing shortcomings to make the project stronger. Other critics will be 'white ants' who may see the Charrette as a risk to a status quo with which they have become comfortable and established. Entrenched regulators may not want to re-consider or adapt their ways of doing things to support the Charrette. They may see their jobs, status or self esteem threatened by a 'new way'. These challenges are normal in the process of change. Council leaders will need to address the white ants, with the wisdom to recognise constructive criticism and the diplomacy to support white ants past their apprehensions.

#### **Position The Charrette Outcomes To Outlast Governments Presently In Power**

The Katoomba Charrette could not possibly have taken place without the enlightened support of both the Blue Mountains City Councillors and the State Government (especially Local Member Bob Debus). However, Katoomba's revitalisation could well take longer than the elected tenures of either local or the state politicians. When new politicians come into office, they often feel compelled to establish their positions by starting new initiatives and/or by disbanding existing ones. Some Charrettes have fallen victim to this tendency of new governments.

Furthermore, the Katoomba Charrette will surely generate some controversies in one way or another; it represents too many changes, for it not to. In ESD's experience, when an election looms near, councillors may tend to lose resolve. This has been the case in several town centre Charrettes. The spectre of a council election, regardless of its outcomes, can risk putting the implementation of a Charrette into limbo for a good year or more.

This is why it is important to position Katoomba's Charrette as both born of present politicians, but also based on a depth of community support, and so responsive to the needs of the Town Centre, that stakeholders will agree that the Charrette objectives should outlast electoral shifts.

### **13.2.5 Document and Monitor Progress**

By documenting early projects, lessons learned from them can inform incoming proposals. Rigorously document 'before' and 'after' conditions photographically, and note their costs, strengths and shortcomings. The historic facade improvement program is a good case in point. Tick off the action plans listed in this report to track progress. This record keeping will also serve to remind people of how far the project has come, some years from now.

### 13.2.6 Prepare for Blast Off!

Often a Charrette will cause an acceleration of activity for a project site. Almost overnight, New Lynn was transformed from a virtual development wasteland before its revitalisation Charrette in April of 1996, to become a major centre of redevelopment in Auckland. Three years later there are four hundred new medium density dwellings built and approved, and major changes completed in the Town Centre, including major new commercial buildings, a new street through the heart of town, a pedestrian bridge over a newly rehabilitated stream, and a major AMP-owned enclosed shopping mall now having opened itself up to the new street with active public frontages.

Since the Charrette for Beacon Cove in Port Melbourne in 1992, that 30-hectare infill site has become the best-selling and most award-winning development project in Victoria, with nine-hundred medium density dwellings and a trendy new mixed use centre at a tram stop on the waterfront.

For both these Charrette projects, benefits to their areas, market performance and developer profits have far outstripped everyone's expectations. Katoomba could well be similar. Get ready to ride a big wave of revitalisation activity in Katoomba. Riding that wave will not be easy; it will bring many unexpected challenges and opportunities, with much at stake.

## 13.3 Recommendations to Optimise Progress

### 13.3.1 Introduction

Section 15 of this Report gives a more complete explanation of project prioritisation and phasing. This section notes only a few key initiatives, which we see as crucial to address early, before some other needed projects can move forward.

### 13.3.2 Catalyst Initiatives

#### Facade Improvement Program

The proposed historic building facade improvement program (Section 7.3.1) costs relatively little and yields conspicuous improvements to Katoomba's image. This project is already underway, thankfully, and should be accelerated.

#### Implement The Integrated Shuttle Bus Route

It is important, as soon as possible, to integrate the public bus shuttle system, directly to connect all key visitor destinations. This will decisively strengthen Katoomba's link with Echo Point, in particular, to deliver more tourism benefits to Katoomba and to relieve parking impacts on Echo Point. It will boost business prospects for the Top End of Town.

#### Raze the Peripheral Old TAFE Buildings and Provide Temporary Car Parking

This initiative is explained in Section 8.8.9. To remove the derelict low-rise buildings near the Old TAFE Building will also help to remove a key blight in the heart of town. The northern portion of the site should be cleared, paved and opened for temporary car parking with good night lighting to support the Top End of Town and the new integrated shuttle bus system. The existing toilet block should be retained and refurbished. Communicate that this is a short-

term parking arrangement, to be replaced by still more parking capacity when the Old TAFE site has been properly redeveloped for the Cultural/Visitors Centre.

#### **Resolve the Design and Development of the Cultural/Visitors Centre on the Old TAFE Site**

The Cultural/Visitors Centre is a key linchpin of Katoomba's revitalisation, whose implementation needs to be commenced quickly and decisively. This will trigger a ripple effect of confidence across the Town that Katoomba's renaissance is truly at hand. Resolution of the design will also determine whether or not a supermarket is to be included in the project, and where on the site. This in turn will trigger decisions about nearby properties, as well as for the Beverly Lane site. Right now, the Beverly Lane project (Section 11.1), and probably many other smaller projects, are in relative limbo until the supermarket decision with the Old TAFE Site has been made. Design resolution of the Old TAFE Site will also enable the detailed planning and design of proposed improvements to the Civic Centre to go forward (Section 10.6).

#### **Commence Regulatory Reform And Organise the Implementation Process and Task Force**

Both these initiatives are already underway, but not fully resolved as yet. Speedy, reasoned and conspicuous progress on these initiatives must continue, and the community should be updated perhaps every fortnight in the proposed newspaper column on implementation. See Section 15 for more implementation information.

These key initiatives should help catalyse the revitalisation of the whole of Katoomba.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

The strategies and proposals that are incorporated into this report are a guide of the outcomes that emerged from the Charrette to promote the revitalisation of the Katoomba Town centre. Some of these proposals have received funding from the NSW State Government or from Blue Mountains City Council, particularly in relation to physical improvement works and the redevelopment of key sites and facilities.

However, this strategy is wide ranging and is a blue print, not just for Government, but also for the general community, business owners, community groups and property owners to become actively involved in revitalisation activities in Katoomba. To be successful, this wide community involvement will be required.