



## **CENTRAL BLUE MOUNTAINS ROTARY CLUB INC.**

***"Service above Self"***

***District 9685, Australia***

**A SHORT PRECIS (Who, What and Where !)**

### **WHO AND WHAT ARE WE ?**

Central Blue Mountains Rotary is one of five rotary Clubs located in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

We are innovative and progressive... we are a **"Can Do"** group of Rotarians, proud of what we achieve, and we have fun doing it.

We are a club of 43 members. In Rotary, women are the fastest growing membership segment and we are proud to say that 1/3 of our members are women.

Our club meets weekly on Wednesday at the "Grandview Hotel", 174 Great Western Highway, Wentworth Falls at 6.30pm. Our meeting format is relaxed and we have great guest speakers.

Sure, we sell raffle tickets and we cook and sell sausage sandwiches just like other Rotary clubs - we have a big catering van to do this....It's great! But our community service activities are the heart of what we do, ranging from local projects to helping communities overseas.

We have a website <http://centralbluerotary.org/>

### **WHERE ARE WE ?**

We are located in Wentworth Falls, a town in the Blue Mountains which is a rugged region approximately 50 Km west of Sydney CBD in Australia's New South Wales.

Known for dramatic scenery, it encompasses steep cliffs, eucalyptus forests, waterfalls and villages dotted with guesthouses, galleries and gardens.

Katoomba, a major town in the area, is just a few kilometres further west and borders the Blue Mountains National Park and its bushwalking trails. A popular attraction is Echo Point with its views of the storied Three Sisters sandstone rock formation.

Blue Mountains City has an area of 11,400 Km<sup>2</sup>. There are 27 towns and villages spread over 100km from the Nepean River in the East to Mount Victoria in the West; 70% of its area is World Heritage listed National Park.

Blue Mountains National Park was declared in 1959, its total area is 247,000 Hectares. Blue Mountains National Park is also a major part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area – an area of over 1 million hectares of wilderness – consisting of this and several other adjoining National Park areas which was awarded world heritage status in November 2000 as an area of 'outstanding geographic, botanical and cultural significance'.

Major Towns are Glenbrook, Springwood, Wentworth Falls, Leura, Katoomba and Blackheath with a total population of around 82,000. Distance from Sydney to Katoomba - by car - 110kms, by rail - 2 hrs from Central Station, Sydney to Katoomba.

The region can be accessed by road (via either the Great Western Highway or the Bells Line of Road) or by rail from Sydney.

Climate is Cool temperate. Average temperature in Katoomba: Summer (Dec-Feb) 13 - 24°C, (Winter Jun-Aug) 2 - 10°C.

### **WHY ARE THE MOUNTAINS BLUE ?**

The 'Blue' Mountains are known for the distinctive blue haze which has earned the Blue Mountains their name is quite different and of a deeper hue than that is found in any other part of the world. Although constantly varying in intensity, this attractive haze is always present.

Known as "Rayleigh Scattering" after Lord Rayleigh, who first investigated the phenomenon, it is caused by scattered rays of light coming in contact with fine dust particles and droplets of oil dispersed from the eucalyptus trees in the valleys. The first official use of the name "Blue Mountains" is attributed to Captain William Paterson, of the New South Wales Corps, in his dispatch describing his attempt crossing of the mountains through the Grose River Valley in 1793.

### **YOUNG COLONY. A NEED TO EXPAND WEST. A ROUTE IS FOUND. A ROAD BUILT.**

The Colony of New South Wales was discovered by Captain James Cook RN in 1770. Captain Arthur Phillip raised the British Union Jack on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1788. Various explorers unsuccessfully searched for a way across the Blue Mountains to allow the colony to expand west.

The failure of the explorers was bad for Sydney's graziers. By 1812 the colony had expanded across the Cumberland Plain to the Nepean and Hawkesbury rivers. There was a shortage of good grasslands - particularly when the Sydney area was hit with a severe drought and a plague of army worms in 1812 and 1813.

Gregory Blaxland, a wealthy free settler with a property near St Mary's, approached fellow grazier William Lawson and the young William Charles Wentworth to go with him on a land-finding expedition across the Blue Mountains (they hoped to be rewarded with land grants for their efforts). Despite Governor Macquarie's objections, and with a party that included four servants, five dogs and four packhorses, they set out from St Marys in May 1813. They decided to follow the mountain ridge-tops, and quite by chance chose the main ridge of the Blue Mountains (where the railway and Great Western Highway now run). Doggedly hacking their way through thick bushland, they climbed higher and higher. At times they struggled along steep and narrow paths, with sheer precipices on either side. At one point they found themselves trapped by an impassable barrier of rock, and were forced to retrace their steps.

But they eventually made it. After 17 days, they arrived at Mount York and looked down on the fertile plains of the Western Tableland (at the time, the plains were blanketed in rich forest, but they were soon to become grasslands). When Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson returned to Sydney, they were widely praised. Each was given 400 hectares of the new land out west.

A few months later in November 1813, Governor Macquarie sent surveyor and artist George Evans out west. Evans's mission was to plan a road across the mountains, and to explore the country that lay further west. Crossing the Great Dividing Range, he descended down into the valley onto the Bathurst Plains, discovering the west-flowing rivers there, and continued 150 kilometres further west to the future site of Bathurst, Australia's first inland city.

Evans had surveyed the road; William Cox was given the job of building it. In July 1814, Cox took a convict gang of just 28 men into the mountains. They laid 160 kilometres of road in just six months - an amazing feat for such a small team, in such difficult conditions, using primitive equipment. For their efforts, the convicts gained their freedom.