

8.1. MM01: Vale Councillor Tony Bleasdale OAM, Mayor Blacktown City Council

Councillor Tony Bleasdale OAM, was born in 1946 in Liverpool, United Kingdom. His father, Frank, was a Liverpool docker for 50 years and his grandfather, George Bleasdale, died a prisoner of war in France in 1918.

He remained a loyal Liverpool FC supporter throughout his life.

As a young man, Councillor Bleasdale hoped to follow his grandfather into the British Army. However, when his mother refused to sign the British Army forms, he joined the “Big Brother” movement.

At that time, “Big Brother” sponsored young people to migrate to Australia, mostly to rural areas.

Councillor Bleasdale arrived in Sydney in 1963 and at first worked as a bricklayer. Later he started his own labour hire business. Before becoming Managing Director of National Contractors, a major construction industry labour hire firm, Councillor Bleasdale was Group Industrial Relations Manager with the McNamara Group and Assistant Secretary at the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU).

Throughout his life he demonstrated a fierce passion for social justice whether in his significant works for charity or in his tireless work on behalf of the people of Blacktown.

In 2010 Councillor Bleasdale was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List for his service to the community as a supporter of charitable organisations, and for his contribution to local government in the Blacktown City area.

His charitable works included:

- financial supporter, Gynaecological Cancer Research Fund, Westmead Hospital;
- supporter, Blacktown Relay for Life, Cancer Council NSW;
- financial contributor and fundraiser, Schizophrenia Research Institute;
- sponsor, Construction Industry Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign (since 2005);
- financial supporter, Mount Druitt Town Rangers Soccer Club, since 2007; and
- financial sponsor, Matt McFadyen, Antarctic Explorer, 2003.

Councillor Bleasdale was first elected to Blacktown City Council in November 1996 as a Labor councillor and served as Deputy Mayor between 2016 and 2019. He was elected Mayor in October 2019.

The Blacktown City Council area has an estimated population of 435,000 people (2023) and is the largest Council in New South Wales, the fourth largest in Australia.

On 3 May 2024 Councillor Bleasdale tragically passed away on a flight returning from a trip to Blacktown City Council's sister cities of [Liaocheng](#) and [Suseong-gu](#).

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that Premier Chris Minns paid tribute to Councillor Bleasdale and said:

[He was] “a generous man with a big heart”, who worked to develop Sydney’s west and held a particular passion for helping disadvantaged constituents. “His legacy is written across the city he loved” (SMH, 3 May 2024)

Councillor Bleasdale leaves his wife, Nina, four children and a large extended family with many grandchildren.

I therefore recommend:

- 1. THAT** Council acknowledge the contribution of Councillor Bleasdale to Blacktown City Council, his community and to local government.
- 2. THAT** Council write to Councillor Bleasdale’s family and to Blacktown City Council expressing condolences, acknowledgement, and gratitude for Councillor Bleasdale’s service and contribution to the Blacktown and broader community.

COUNCILLOR ZOË BAKER
MAYOR