

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS IS NOT ANOTHER SUBURB OF SYDNEY

The Hon. Robert Stokes, MP
NSW Minister for Planning

Dear Minister,

The Blue Mountains is a unique area — one that has been in the making for hundreds of millions of years. It's part of the system of National Parks that make up the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, which is globally recognised for its outstanding universal values by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The Greater Blue Mountains represents one of the largest, most intact tracts of protected bushland in Australia. It is a vast and beautiful area, inhabited by Aboriginal people over millennia. Its landscape has special significance to the Darug and Gundungurra people. The Greater Blue Mountains area is also home to unique species found nowhere else in the world, such as the Wollemi pine.

Few places in the world can boast of being surrounded by over a million hectares of wilderness. With its varied ecosystems and biodiversity, 300 metre cliffs, canyons and waterfalls, the Blue Mountains region is regarded as the 'lungs' of the Sydney basin.

Amongst this wild and rugged landscape, the Blue Mountains character townships and villages sit along the main ridgeline beside roads of historical significance, and are famous for their quiet tree-lined streets and houses in traditional garden settings.

The Blue Mountains — with its Aboriginal and European cultural heritage and outstanding environmental and scenic values — attracts a large and growing number of domestic and overseas visitors. This contributes to the economy of the Blue Mountains, where tourism and visitation is a significant economic sector.

We are sure you will agree that such an exceptional area deserves the utmost respect and protection to ensure its future preservation, as the NSW and Commonwealth Governments committed to at the time of the World Heritage listing.

In 2012 the NSW Government asked the Blue Mountains City Council to develop a new Local Environment Plan (LEP) consistent with the

mandated standard state-wide planning model. In developing the new plan, one of the key objectives for the community was to conserve our beautiful World Heritage Area and character towns and villages. The current planning provisions have successfully regulated the impact of urban development on the World Heritage Blue Mountains National Park, as well as ensuring our small Blue Mountains towns and villages are not subject to increasingly dense urban and high-rise development.

The previous Coalition Planning Minister, Brad Hazzard promised that special consideration would be given to the Blue Mountains in developing its new LEP. This commitment was reflected in the draft Blue Mountains LEP 2013, which was widely supported by the community during the public exhibition process. However, we understand that the NSW Department of Planning now has concerns with the draft Plan and advocates instead that key heritage and environmental provisions be removed or downgraded, because they do not fit the state-wide planning model.

The local community and Council have worked hard for over twenty years to develop a plan that will continue to protect the valuable Blue Mountains natural environment and character towns and villages. UNESCO, too, recognises the threat that development on the ridgetops poses and the careful management that is required to protect the World Heritage Area.

We find it incomprehensible that an area of such outstanding natural and cultural value is required to fit neatly into a generic 'one size fits all' development plan. The future of a very ancient, sensitive and globally significant area is being jeopardised if this is the case.

So we ask you, Hon. Robert Stokes, Minister for Planning, to recognise the ecological significance and cultural importance of the Blue Mountains. You must keep the commitment your government previously made to the community to preserve the current Blue Mountains planning framework. We urgently request that you approve the draft Blue Mountains LEP 2013, as exhibited and endorsed by Council.

Yours faithfully,

Blue Mountains
Conservation Society
Aunty Sharyn Halls
Australian School
of Mountaineering
Better Planning Network
Blue Mountains Aboriginal
Culture and Resource Centre
Blue Mountains
Adventure Company
Blue Mountains
Association of Cultural
Heritage Organisations Inc.

Blue Mountains
Bird Observers
Blue Mountains
Bushcare Network
Blue Mountains City Council
Mayor, Cr Mark Greenhill
Blue Mountains Design
Group (architects & planners)
Blue Mountains Greens
Blue Mountains Historical
Society Inc.
Blue Mountains World
Heritage Institute

Cittaslow - Katoomba
Blue Mountains
Colong Foundation
for Wilderness
Cr Annette Bennett
Cr Michael Begg
Cr Brendan Christie
Cr Mick Fell
Cr Romola Hollywood
Cr Brendan Luchetti
Cr Don McGregor

Cr Daniel Myles
Cr Sarah Shrubbs
Cr Chris van der Kley
Cr Anton Von Schulenburg
Emeritus Professor
Dexter Dunphy
Hon Bob Debus
Jenny Kee
Leura Cascades Creek
Catchment Working Group
National Parks Association
(NSW)

National Trust of
Australia (NSW),
Blue Mountains Branch
Nature Conservation
Council (NSW)
Peter and Judy Smith
Stop CSG Blue Mountains
The Global TV Show,
Radio Blue Mountains
Total Environment Centre
Trish Doyle MP for
Blue Mountains

We recognise that the Darug and Gundungurra people are the traditional owners of the Blue Mountains, and we pay our respects to elders both past and present.

We call on members of the public to email Mr Stokes office@stokes.minister.nsw.gov.au and support us with our plea to protect this valuable area.

Send copies of your email to
Trish Doyle, MP for Blue Mountains bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au
and to Stuart Ayres, MP for Penrith penrith@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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