



# Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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## Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2016

To: The General Manager  
Blue Mountains City Council  
Locked Bag 1005  
Katoomba NSW 2780

By Email to: [council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au)

Subject: **Submission on Draft Leura Tourist Bus Strategy**

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with over 820 members. Its mission is to help conserve the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains, and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

I write on behalf of our Membership to comment as part of the community consultation process on the Draft Leura Tourist Bus Strategy. The Society has read the available material and briefly inspected the areas under consideration.

We commend Council for the effort put into the considerations detailed and understand the difficulty of reaching a solution that would please all stakeholders.

We believe that Scenarios 1 to 10 inclusive do not fall into our area of interest or expertise, however we have serious concerns about Scenario 11; all comments listed in our submission relate to that Scenario. The issues we raise are mainly to do with environmental damage, however there are issues relating to residents' amenity which are not discussed here.

### **Direct Environmental Damage**

Blue Mountains City Council has spent thousands of dollars and various community members invested hours of time into raising the profile of Blue Mountains Upland Swamps and their value to the environment and the community at large. This has been a successful campaign over many years and continues with volunteer workers restoring and maintaining swamps, particularly at the urban interface.

Scenario, #11, proposes that a coach layover and access road be built through Rest Park (Grose St) with through access to Hartley Esplanade. This is the swamp that constitutes the main headwater of the main tributary of Gordon Falls Creek, via Lyre Bird Dell & Pool of Siloam.

It is obvious that driving a new road through Rest Park will severely impact on the swamp and environmentally protected land east of the park. The idea of destroying or severely damaging an intact swamp area situated in an urban area is unimaginable. What message would this very obvious destruction send to those with less knowledge of the issue? We know what it would say to the people who work in and understand the function of the swamps.

### **Indirect Environmental Damage**

Damaging, restricting or diverting the water flowing from the swamp in Rest Park will have a significant effect on the volumes of water available to flow at Gordon Falls.

One less swamp in the Gordon Creek catchment, as effectively proposed by option #11, means a less regular flow in the stream and has obvious ecological implications. A Society member reports that "as a frequent user of the Prince Henry Cliff Walk I notice tourists targeting Gordon Falls as a destination", so option #11 would also be damaging to the tourism industry.

The swamp currently acts as a sponge and filter on the water captured from the surrounding urban areas. The water released is at least somewhat healthier than when it enters, as shown in Council's documentation on swamps in general. Removing or damaging the swamp will diminish its cleaning properties at the very least.

The Falls are likely already significantly depleted in flow because of the destruction of the swamps in the non-NPWS areas of the other two tributaries, namely Abbey Street and Everglades Avenue. If the Hartley Esplanade swamp were to be destroyed, this is gambling with the constancy of the remaining flow over Gordon Falls, which is an already heavily stressed watercourse.

The swamps in the National Parks & Wildlife Service section of the Hartley Esplanade tributary are in a reasonable condition but are always subject to major weed infestation and require constant monitoring and treatment. The stream in this section displays extensive evidence of bank erosion due most likely to the conversion of a large section the upstream natural flow line into a walled ditch with the remaining section mostly piped underground before emerging into the National Park.

### **Stormwater**

The management of stormwater must also be taken into account.

Depending on the engineering solutions used, interference with the Hartley Esplanade swamp could have further ramifications by increasing the concentration of water flow density and volumes during heavy rain events and accelerating the rate of erosion of the swamps in the National Park section.

### **Summary**

The Society takes the view that damaging the swamp is totally unacceptable and that Scenario 11 should be removed from consideration.

The impacts down-stream in terms of reduced and contaminated flow are unacceptable and the items listed in Council's Business Papers in the "Cons" sections should be sufficient to not even consider Scenario 11.

Should Scenario 11 proceed, we request at a minimum that a full Environmental Impact Statement be completed and the proposal be referred to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, as it involves impacts on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this process.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "T. Cameron".

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