

Minister for the Environment
Hon. Josh Frydenberg
PO Box 6022,
House of Representatives,
Parliament House,
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Please save Radiata Plateau - the missing piece in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

The Radiata Plateau (also known as Elphinstone) is located near Katoomba NSW and forms part of the southern Blue Mountains escarpment. The Plateau is the last remaining undeveloped peninsula-plateau in the upper Blue Mountains. It is currently held in private hands and is owned by Maharishi's Global Administration Through Natural Law. Major developments, including a large resort and conference centre were proposed in the 1990s, but ultimately did not proceed, leaving the Plateau wild and untouched.

Local residents and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society have long argued that the Plateau should be purchased by the State or Commonwealth Government and included in the Blue Mountains National Park, thus becoming part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The Blue Mountains City Council has supported these calls.

In 2016 development applications were lodged for three new buildings on the Plateau. The development went before the Land and Environment Court for approval. Residents and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society campaigned and made appearances at Court objecting to the developments, and the Court ultimately refused two out of the three buildings.

The fate of the Plateau is now in the balance as the approved development threatens its future. Fragmentation and development of the Plateau will result in the loss of its high conservation value, and likely prevent ongoing public access.

The Plateau has high conservation significance because it:

- is the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains, with spectacular and stunning views;
- contains significant biodiversity values, including the presence of rare Blue Mountain Swamps, a threatened ecological community in NSW;
- is home to many endangered animals, such as the Spotted Tailed Quoll and Greater Gliders. The Plateau is also home to two threatened plants, including one of only ten places where the highly endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine and the shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides* grows;

- includes an extensive network of walking tracks used by local residents, bushwalkers and birdwatchers, as well as internationally recognised rockclimbing crags and walls

- has significant Aboriginal heritage, including the Plateau being used as a traditional pathway down into the Megalong Valley.

We call on the State and Commonwealth Governments to purchase Radiata Plateau and include the area in the Blue Mountains National Park, and thus conserving the missing piece in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Sincerely yours,