

# NSW GOVERNMENT COULD DESTROY BLUE MOUNTAINS' JEWEL

## CROWN LANDS MUST UPHOLD DECISION: REJECT HELICOPTERS

The Hon. Melinda Pavey, MP  
Minister for Water, Property and Housing

Dear Minister

**The Blue Mountains is a place like no other. Rising to over 1,000 metres above sea level its soaring cliffs, deep forested valleys and canyons provide a window to an ancient land - one that's been in the making for hundreds of millions of years. Yet this peaceful sanctuary, loved and valued by millions, will be destroyed by the buzzing of helicopters if the NSW Government bends to developer pressure.**

The Blue Mountains is recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its outstanding natural heritage, with the World Heritage area drawing roughly 4.7 million visitors a year to marvel at its beauty, immerse themselves in its wildness or enjoy its peace.

Add to this its small, attractive townships and proximity to Sydney and you begin to see what a precious and valuable area it is.

It is for this reason that in 2019 the community and visitors overwhelmingly opposed the proposed commercial lease over Katoomba Airfield that would have allowed commercial helicopter flights over the internationally-significant World Heritage National Park and nearby towns.

Katoomba Airfield is one of the last remaining inholdings along the Blue Mountains ridgeline. Located between Medlow Bath and the cliffs of the Grose Valley, it is surrounded by national park. As an 'inholding', use of the site has a profound impact on the eco-systems and sustainability of all the land around it which the NSW Government has a duty to manage with minimal impact to its World Heritage values.

Sitting merely 700 metres from the Airfield is the renowned Grand Canyon which, just four years ago, underwent a Government-funded

\$4.7 million restoration. The century-old track is one of the country's most popular, providing hundreds of thousands of visitors a year with a tranquil experience deep into the heart of the Park. The natural quiet will be shattered if the Airfield development is allowed.

On 13 January 2020, after assessing the proposal that included helicopter flights, Crown Lands announced its decision to decline a commercial lease over the Airfield primarily due to overwhelming opposition. More than 12,000 people had signed a petition against any commercialisation; 85% of submissions opposed the commercial lease with concerns over noise pollution, protection of Aboriginal heritage and pollution of water supplies.

Surprisingly, after pressure from the developer, the decision was reviewed. The developer was then allowed to submit another proposal, which is currently being considered.

Opposition to any commercial venture was resounding and we call on you to listen. Public confidence in the NSW Government's decision-making is being undermined and it is only a fair process if there is full transparency.

The decision, now with the Government, risks ruining the National Park for the vast majority of visitors and the community, while supporting the commercial interests of a developer.

**We therefore ask you, Hon. Melinda Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing, to ensure that the original decision is honoured and that the Katoomba Airfield site is added to the National Park.**

Yours sincerely,

Australian School of Mountaineering  
Birding NSW  
Blackheath Streetscape Group  
Blue Mountains Adventure Company  
Blue Mountains Bird Observers Inc  
Blue Mountains Bushcare Network  
Blue Mountains Design Group  
Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill  
Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute  
Bushwalking NSW Inc  
Cittaslow - Katoomba Blue Mountains  
Coast and Mountain Walkers  
Colong Foundation for Wilderness  
Cr Brent Hoare

Cr Kerry Brown  
Cr Romola Hollywood  
Cr Shae Foenander  
David Stratton  
Dr Haydn Washington  
Dr Peter Smith and Dr Judy Smith  
ECOdesign Architects  
Gully Traditional Owners  
Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Inc  
Hon Bob Debus AM  
Katoomba Airfield Community Group  
Medlow Bath Residents Association  
Megalong Valley Community Land Owners Association  
Megalong Valley Pony Club

National Parks Association (NSW)  
Nature Conservation Council (NSW)  
Paddy Pallin Foundation  
Rosemary Morrow OAM  
Springwood Bushwalking Club  
Sydney Bush Walkers  
Sydney University Bushwalkers  
The Australian Canyoning Association  
Total Environment Centre  
Trish Doyle MP, Member for Blue Mountains  
Upper Blue Mountains Bushwalking Club  
Vipassana Meditation Centre, Blackheath  
Wild Magazine  
World Expeditions



For more information go to the Katoomba Airfield campaign website at [www.bluemountains.org.au/airfield](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/airfield)

Sponsored by Blue Mountains Conservation Society [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)

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