



# Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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**Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow**

6 March 2013  
Cr Daniel Myles  
Mayor, Blue Mountains City Council  
Locked Bag 1005  
Katoomba NSW 2780

Dear Mr Myles

## **Conversion of Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plans (LEP) 1991 and 2005 to the Standard Instrument LEP (SI LEP)**

As you know the Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a volunteer community organisation, with around 900 members, dedicated to conserving the World Heritage values of the Blue Mountains Region.

The Society has supported the approach Council has taken to date in terms of developing a consolidated LEP for the Blue Mountains. To that end the Society has been liaising and working with council officers throughout 2012 on the development of a consolidated local environmental plan (LEP) consistent with the approach and format of LEP 2005. Unfortunately several email requests to meet with Council staff at the end of 2012 to get an update on developments, met with no response.

The Society is now deeply concerned with recent developments as outlined in the December report to Council, including that the Minister of Planning is now requiring development of a consolidated LEP consistent with the SI LEP by the end of 2013. The Society also understands that the Minister of Planning is offering little if any flexibility in terms of departing from the SI LEP in the development of the new Blue Mountains consolidated SI LEP.

The Society has written to the Minister of Planning Mr Brad Hazzard (copy attached) opposing the approach the Minister has foisted on the community in terms of the development of a consolidated SI LEP for the Blue Mountains. The letter to the Minister details our concerns. As outlined in the letter the Society strongly supports the approach you and Council has taken to date in terms of strategic planning, including consistently arguing that the SI LEP format is not any way suitable for the Blue Mountains. Like you, the Society believes the Blue Mountains has unique environmental characteristics, and has a best practice, contemporary planning framework already in place, developed after extensive and thorough community input. The Society believes the SI LEP is a significant and fundamental downgrade on LEP 2005 and 1991, and represents a monumental step back in terms of environmental protection, the level and detail of mapping and information, and controls to ensure appropriate development. The Society is of the view that there is little understanding or awareness in the community of what the Minister of Planning is proposing and what the SI LEP means for the way we live, how

future development will occur and the risks to our environment and the World Heritage Area.

As a result of these concerns, the Society is launching a community campaign - "Hands of our LEPs!". More information on the campaign can be found in an article in the March edition of the Society's newsletter Hut News, which is widely distributed across the Blue Mountains and can also be found on the Society's website at <http://www.bluemountains.org.au>. To commence the campaign the Society is organising a public meeting to highlight our concerns and to ensure the community is made aware of what is happening and the risks to our environment and the World Heritage Area. We would be keen for you and senior Council staff to attend and address this public meeting, outlining Council's concerns in terms of the SI LEP, as detailed in October and December 2012 Council Meeting Reports. Invitations to attend will be sent shortly to all Councillors and the General Manager.

We have also written to the Deputy Mayor, Mark Greenhill, the local State MPs Mr Stuart Ayres (Penrith) and Mrs Roza Sage (Blue Mountains) outlining our concerns. In addition the Society believes the introduction of a SI LEP is likely to result in negative impacts on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, potentially risking the continuing world heritage listing. Conservation of World Heritage Areas is a responsibility shared by both the State and Commonwealth government, and we believe the Commonwealth should be actively involved on this issue. As a result we have also written to the federal member Ms Louise Markus, the local federal duty Senator, Mr Doug Cameron, and the Federal Minister for the Environment.

The Society requests an urgent meeting with yourself and the Deputy Mayor to further outline our concerns, and determine how the Society and Council can best work together to prevent what would surely be an unmitigated disaster for the community if the imposition of a SI LEP goes ahead in the Blue Mountains. The Society would also request that the regular meetings the Society was previously having with Council staff on strategic planning issues once again re-commences. We have also sent copies of this letter to the BMCC General Manager Mr Robert Greenwood and all Councillors.

I look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely

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Copies to:  
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