



# Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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**Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow**

15 March 2013

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

Dear Mr Myles

## **Release of the Planning Review White Paper and subsequent public exhibition period**

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a volunteer community environmental group of over 800 members dedicated to conserving the World Heritage of the Blue Mountains. The Society is also affiliated with the Better Planning Network, a coalition of over 300 community groups working together to achieve a better planning system for NSW.

The Society believes that a robust responsive planning system which includes legislated public input is essential to ensuring environmental and conservation outcomes. In light of this, the Society made a detailed submission to the NSW Government's *A New Planning System for NSW – Green Paper*. The Green Paper signalled a complete overhaul to the NSW planning system, including significant changes in terms of public input and consultation and the way development is controlled, approved and undertaken in NSW. The Society had significant concerns with some of the proposals included in the Green Paper.

The Society recently wrote to the Minister of Planning, and local members Mrs Roza Sage and Mr Stuart Ayres (copies attached) in regard to the next stage in the planning reform process – the imminent release of the NSW Government's Planning Review White Paper. The Society strongly advocated to the Minister that the public consultation period for the White Paper be, at a minimum, six months. In addition the Society also strongly advocated that the NSW Government, through the Department of Planning, organises an effective public consultation process for the White Paper, including an extensive round of community information briefings undertaken in partnership with local councils. In the Society's experience to date, there is little community knowledge or understanding in terms of the planning reforms the NSW government is proposing or their implications. In light of this, and the fact that the proposals are extensive and wide reaching and will impact on everybody, the NSW Government is beholden to ensure a thorough community information campaign is undertaken, including a legitimate public consultation period. Merely publishing the White Paper on a website and requesting formal written submissions is not enough.

The Society asked the local members to directly advocate to the Premier and the Minister of Planning that the NSW Government commit to:

- a minimum six months public consultation period for the Planning Review White Paper;
- a thorough community consultation process in terms of the White Paper, including community information sessions, undertaken in partnership with local councils. We asked that this includes at least one community information session in the Blue Mountains, organised by the Department in conjunction with Blue Mountains City Council.

I am sure you will agree that local communities need to be consulted in a timely and effective manner when major government reforms, which significantly impact on all of us, are proposed. To guarantee that our community is well informed, and to ensure that Council can feedback the community's views to government, the Society asks that Council organise a community workshop on the White Paper in partnership with the Society. This workshop would be in addition to the Department of Planning's information session, if it eventuates, as requested by the Society as outlined above.

The Society looks forward to an early reply to our concerns.

Yours sincerely

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