



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

15 March 2013

Mrs Roza Sage MP
132 Macquarie Road
Springwood NSW 2777

Dear Mrs Sage

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 (copy 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.

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. The Society therefore asks you as the local member to directly advocate to the Premier and the Minister of Planning that the NSW Government commit to:

- a minimum six month 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 ask that this includes at least one community information session in the Blue Mountains, organised by the Department of Planning in conjunction with Blue Mountains City Council.

We have also written to your colleague Mr Stuart Ayres, Member for Penrith, on this issue, as well as the Mayor of Blue Mountains City Council. We have also asked Council (copy attached), in addition to the above, to organise a separate community workshop on the White Paper in partnership with the Society.

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

Yours sincerely

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