



# Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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**Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow**

06 August 2018

The Hon. Gladys Berejiklian  
Premier of NSW  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

By email: [wiloughby@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wiloughby@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

cc Ms Trish Doyle, Member for Blue Mountains

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Ms Penny Sharpe, Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage

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Mr Mark Greenhill, Mayor, Blue Mountains City Council

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Ms Rosemary Dillon, General Manager, Blue Mountains City Council

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Dear Premier

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with 800 members. Its mission is to help conserve the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains, and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

We are very concerned about budget and staff cuts imposed on the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS). The Society understands that in our local regional NPWS branch the following has occurred:

- long term staff with many years of experience have had to re-apply for their positions, with some being unsuccessful and therefore forced to take voluntary redundancies;
- some key positions have still not been filled while others have been filled only after being vacant for months; and
- some key positions have been downgraded in seniority and pay, despite the duties, skills, knowledge and experience required remaining unchanged

We believe that the NPWS is a vitally important entity protecting our precious natural environment. Additionally, NPWS plays an essential role in responding to fires within the Greater Blue Mountains area. Cuts to NPWS staffing, particularly those staff with years of fire experience, reduces the capacity to respond to wildfires within the National Parks. Strategic hazard reduction burning, conducted within the Park, can at times help reduce the threat to the Blue Mountains villages. With increased temperatures and lack of rain being experienced in the Blue Mountains over recent times, an experienced and knowledgeable fire fighting team within the NPWS is critical.

The control of feral animals is also critical for the protection of native fauna and flora. Once again staff cuts, particularly which impact on staff with extensive feral animal control experience, reduces effective management, with resulting increases of pigs, wild dogs, deer and other introduced animals. Deer numbers are currently increasing in the Blue Mountains National Park and will require a concentrated effort to control them. For this, experience staff will be essential.

The NPWS also plays a crucial role in providing high quality tourism. Basic visitor infrastructure cannot be provided if budgets are continually cut and staff are made redundant. The World Heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains National Park provides tourism dollars to the area and ensures employment opportunities exist within the adjoining villages.

Another complexity to NPWS role is that they are now being asked to manage flora reserves under the *Forestry Act* (areas with new management challenges including shooting and illegal logging). These reserves are a different type of conservation reserve reserved under an act with different objectives and practices to the *National Parks and Wildlife Act*. As these flora reserves deserve protection for their values, a better solution is to add them to national park or state conservation area with appropriate increased funding so they will be permanently protected. However, if that does not happen, NPWS needs to receive increased and sufficient funds to manage these new reserves.

We ask that the skill, knowledge and commitment of NPWS staff be recognised, that the resources needed to protect our Parks be reinstated and staff levels increased to ensure our National Parks are adequately managed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Madi Maclean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Madi Maclean  
President  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society  
mobile 0412 428 202 or email [president@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:president@bluemountains.org.au)