



# Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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**Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow**

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## **Re: Former Katoomba Golf Course Precinct Plan**

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) is a community-based volunteer organisation with over 900 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.

The Society has expressed its views on the future of the Katoomba Golf Course in previous submissions on the Katoomba Masterplan, so we are now pleased to have the opportunity to make some preliminary comments on the Former Katoomba Golf Course Precinct Plan.

The Society's position is that the Katoomba Golf Course:

- should be maintained and enhanced as a public open space recreational area for Blue Mountains residents and visitors;
- should be reclassified as 'community land' to provide better protection for the community's long-term interest in the land;
- can also become a site for research and education relating to restoring 'planetary health', specifically, targeted environmental restoration and sustainable resource management.

### ***The Katoomba Golf Course should be maintained and enhanced as a public open space recreational area for Blue Mountains residents and visitors***

The Katoomba Golf Course is a rare large public open space area and valuable community recreational asset. It is currently used by walkers, picnickers and birdwatchers. The Society believes this valuable recreational facility should be enhanced as part of the Precinct Plan.

However, as Council is well aware, a large-scale hotel/resort/conference centre on the golf course has been a focus of developer interest over many years. The Katoomba Golf Course has long been viewed as an ideal large 'greenfield' site for such a development or tourism development precinct. In a letter to the Editor of the *Blue Mountains Gazette* (13/3/2019,

p.22) Philip Hammon of Scenic World urged us to “think big, big, big” in promoting a conference centre on the site: “The old Katoomba golf course is sitting here begging for a conference centre/hotel to be built on it. We lost the opportunity on Peter Carrol Oval, let’s not make the same mistake again”.

The Society would strongly resist any moves to alienate public land and/or rezone the golf course to allow for a hotel/conference centre, a ‘tourism precinct’ featuring amusements or a housing development. A hospital is not an appropriate development on this site given the potential major environmental impacts. The Society’s position is that the golf course should remain an open space recreational area for Blue Mountains residents and visitors.

***Reclassify the golf course as ‘community land’***

The Society believes that the golf course should be classified as ‘community land’. This will provide better protection for the community’s long-term interest in the land.

***Some preliminary ideas for activities at the golf course which would complement the Council’s ‘planetary health’ initiative:***

In conjunction with Bushcare, the Council’s university and school partners and the local TAFE, the golf course can become:

- a demonstration site for targeted weed removal and regeneration/revegetation in environmentally sensitive areas and around the ponds where aquatic birdlife in particular is regularly observed;
- a nature park with trails and information boards;
- a site for World Heritage Area and environmentally-related research and educational activities for schools, the community and visitors;
- a site for education on local Indigenous history and culture.

The Society looks forward to ongoing discussions and the opportunity to respond to the draft Katoomba Golf Course Precinct Plan when it comes on public exhibition.

Yours sincerely,



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