



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

ABN 38 686 119 087

PO Box 29 Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

E-Mail: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au Web Site: www.bluemountains.org.au

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

6 August 2025

Dr Rosemary Dillon
General Manager
Blue Mountains City Council
Locked Bag 1005
KATOMBA NSW 2780
Email: council@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Dear Dr Dillon

BMCC Destination Stewardship Alliance

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community volunteer organisation with over 900 members, which has been in existence for over 60 years. The Society's aims are to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

Council recently publicly exhibited the draft Destination Management Plan. The Society made a submission to the draft plan and the finalised plan was subsequently endorsed by Council. A key component of the final plan is the adoption of a Destination Stewardship Model. The final plan describes the Destination Stewardship Model as "*a process by which local communities, governmental agencies, non-government organisations and the tourism industry take a multi stakeholder approach to maintaining the cultural, environmental, economic and aesthetic integrity of their country, region or town. In other words to ensure that the destination retains and enhances the distinctive attributes that appeal to both residents and tourists.*" (p13). In our submission the Society was supportive of the Destination Stewardship Model, if it is adopted with integrity and transparency and with broad community and industry engagement which "extends beyond the silo of the tourism industry" (p13). However, we noted in our submission that the Destination Management Plan was developed with key cornerstone partners (p5) which did not include any local community environmental or sustainability organisations, or representatives from the broader community sector such as Neighbourhood Centres, youth organisations or resident associations. We highlighted in our submission that this limited representation of interests, apart from the inclusion of First Nations representation, was not consistent with the Destination Stewardship Model.

The final Plan identified the establishment of a Destination Stewardship Alliance as a priority (p4; 14 and 17) which would be a key driver in terms of effort and advocacy. In the final plan it is very unclear who will be part of the Alliance, how it will be funded, and what the terms of reference and objectives of the Alliance will be. The final Plan (p17)

states the Alliance will evolve to ensure it remains fit for purpose, with current Alliance members being Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Blue Mountain Tourism and First Nations representatives. The final plan states that Alliance partners maybe expanded with consensus to include additional parties (such as community and/or environmental organisations).

The Alliance, despite its important role, does not currently have any representatives from local environmental or sustainability community organisations, or representatives from the broader community sector such as Neighbourhood Centres. The limited representation of non-tourism interests, apart from the inclusion of First Nations representation, leads to a failure to seriously consider and take into account what 'sustainable tourism' actually means and looks like in a World Heritage area. The limited number of partners on the Alliance also seems totally contrary to the Destination Stewardship Model which seeks community engagement which "extends beyond the silo of the tourism industry" and which has "community buy in and stakeholder collaboration" (p17). An Alliance made up of tourism industry representatives and a government agency (NPWS) heavily involved in visitor and tourism development produces very one-sided outcomes which mainly reflect the economic interests of the tourism sector and displays a disregard and lack of understanding of the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development.

The Society urges Council and the current Alliance members to urgently consider inviting broader community representation onto the Destination Stewardship Alliance, including representatives from local community environmental or sustainability organisations, or representatives from the broader community sector such as bushwalking groups, Neighbourhood Centres, youth organisations or resident associations.

Consistent with the above, the Society, which is a volunteer community environmental organisation with over 900 members, would be keen to be a member of the Destination Stewardship Alliance. The Society would be keen to understand the role of the Alliance, including its Terms of Reference, how frequently the Alliance meets, whether it is a decision making or advisory body and what is the key objectives for the Alliance for the coming 12 months. The Society would be keen to discuss these issues with Council before joining the Alliance.

For further discussions please contact myself on president@bluemountains.org.au or on my mobile 0450215125

Yours sincerely



Annette Cam
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society