



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

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Submission: Active Transport Links - Great Blue Mountains Trail - Upper Mountains

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 aim is to help conserve the natural environment of the Blue Mountains and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general. The Blue Mountains Conservation Society would like to make a submission in relation to *Active Transport Links - Great Blue Mountains Trail - Upper Mountains* currently on Public Exhibition.

General comments on pedestrian and cyclist improvements proposed for Cliff Drive between Kiah Lookout, Katoomba, and Narrow Neck Road (northern intersection with Cliff Drive)

Recommendation 1:

That council proceed with staged implementation of pedestrian and cyclist improvements in the above section, but only after council's proposals are altered to achieve greater protection of vegetation downslope of the relevant sites and after funding has been allocated to implement better controls of motor traffic in the Cliff Drive corridor and relevant adjoining streets.

Explanation:

The total of council's proposals will involve multiple grant applications and permission seeking from state authorities. It would be counter-productive to

implement the components of the plans in an inappropriate order. The plan to introduce pedestrian paths in sections of Cliff Drive could greatly improve the safety of those seeking to appreciate the natural environment and would particularly benefit older and/or mobility restricted visitors to the Southern Scenic Escarpment who can best appreciate the Grand Clifftop Walk if they intersperse sections of that walk's main route with easier, flatter portions of path that still allow a natural area experience.

Kiah Lookout to Raymond Road:

Recommendations 2, 3 and 4:

- That council reconfigure the carriageway of Cliff Drive as in its proposal between Carrington Park and Raymond Road.
- That the reconfiguration include a pedestrian only pathway of no more than 1.5 metre width on the Drive's eastern side, not a 2.5 metre width share path as in the current proposal.
- That construction not proceed in this section until permission has been gained to lower the speed limit of the entire Drive section from Kiah Lookout to Echo Point Road to no greater than 30kmh.

Explanation:

Council is already proposing to lower the speed limit to 30kmh from Kiah Lookout to near Carrington Park and from Raymond Road to Echo Point Road. Multiple changes of speed limit are confusing to drivers and the travel time increase from making this entire section 30kmh would be minimal. It would significantly increase the value of the natural area experience to pedestrians. There are three sensitive swamps downslope from this section (the Society's threatened species officer has offered a sketch of their locations). While some council officers believe the impacts of water quality and disruption to hydrological patterns can be addressed with a 2.5 metre wide path, it should be possible to achieve a better still result with a narrower path and smaller total area of new paving. The amount of natural vegetation lost in construction would also be less with a narrower path.

Echo Point Road to Violet Street

Recommendation 5:

- That council consider managing the Cliff Drive from Birdwood Avenue to Katoomba Falls Road for pedestrians and buses only, diverting private vehicle traffic and two-wheel traffic via Katoomba Street and Katoomba Falls Road.

Explanation:

Council's proposals for this section of Cliff Drive involve the loss of a number of high value trees. The exact number would depend on which of the options

council is still considering would be adopted. This section is dominated by the movement of coaches in and out of the eastern terminal area of the Scenic Skyway. It is steep and no means of managing the conflict points for private cars, bicycles and coaches are likely to be entirely satisfactory. The restriction of general traffic would make it a particularly pleasant route for pedestrians with pedestrian links available to the Grand Clifftop Walk. Any benefits from continuing with private cars and bicycles in this section would not be commensurate with the loss of high value trees and the cost of new infrastructure council anticipates.

Glenraphael Drive to Acacia Street and Acacia Street to Narrow Neck Road.

Recommendation 6:

- That council make further enquiries into the environmental effects of constructing a shared path close to the steep bushland slopes along these sections and the costs of slowing motor traffic to a speed compatible with the safe operation of the proposed shared path.

Explanation:

The existing speed limit in these sections is 50kmh. Council officers have reported problems with that being exceeded. The proposed shared path would be relatively unprotected, 50kmh is likely to be too high to be appropriate. Council needs to look further to complementary measures that would be necessary to make these proposals worthwhile.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. If you have any queries in regard to this submission, please contact me on president@bluemountains.org.au.

Yours sincerely



Annette Sartor
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society