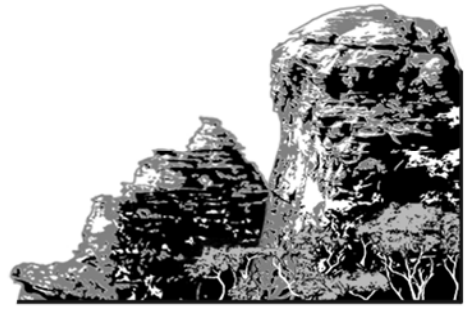




Protect the Gardens of Stone



“Say NO to open cut mining!”

Friday 26th August 2011

MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release

“Society supports decision to reject open-cut proposal”

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society supports Lithgow City Council’s decision to reject the ‘Coalpac Consolidation Project’. The Society represents the voice of hundreds who strongly oppose open-cut mining in the Gardens of Stone area and wish to see it protected in a State Conservation Area.

In a meeting of the Lithgow City Council Monday 22nd August 2011, Councillors rejected the ‘Coalpac Consolidation Project’ Cullen Bullen NSW. The Council does not support open-cut mining in the Cullen Bullen area.

“For the last 100 years, the vast majority of mining has been underground. Coalpac’s open-cut mining proposal seeks to literally carve-up and destroy 1088 hectares of the Ben Bullen State Forest. The forest straddles the Great Dividing Range and is a scenically and biologically diverse area of outstanding natural values,” says Justin McKee, Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

“Open-cut operations do not have a place in the Gardens of Stone region. Our proposal to protect the area allows a continuance of environmentally responsible, underground mining. We applaud the Council for its decision in this instance. There is long-term, economic benefit from sustainable recreation and tourist operations if the natural assets are kept in their pristine condition.

“Consulting adequately with communities is critical to ensure plans tabled are supported and welcomed. We’ve seen no evidence that the people of Cullen Bullen wish for their township to be placed within a quarry. We are thankful Lithgow City Council has called a public meeting for local residents and trust independent experts be available to answer residents’ questions.

“A lot of residents are miners themselves but don’t wish to live in a dust-pit worrying about the health of their children. The Government should be extending buffer zones around population areas such as this. It’s also unconscionable for Coalpac to propose to encircle a school with an open-cut mine.

“To date we have delivered over 1000 letters to the NSW Premier and Minister for Environment that directly oppose the Project. These also support the Department of Parks and Wildlife Services’ wish to have the Ben Bullen State Forest declared within the conservation reserve system as a matter of priority.

“We call on the NSW Government to reject this destructive proposal,” concludes Justin McKee.

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