The Hon Matt Kean, MP

Minister for Energy and Environment

GPO Box 5341

SYDNEY NSW 2001

via [www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/ministers/minister-for-energy-and-environment/](http://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/ministers/minister-for-energy-and-environment/)

Dear Minister Kean

**Radiata Plateau – the missing piece in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area**

We suggest you open your letter with a sentence about your interest in the Blue Mountains environment. For instance

I live in the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains is important to me because….

I am a frequent visitor to the Blue Mountains and the areas is important to me because...

I have a keen interest in the Blue Mountains environment because….

Radiata Plateau is privately owned and is accessed via Pulpit Hill Road, Katoomba, and forms part of the southern Blue Mountains escarpment. It is approximately 300 ha in size, and is currently undeveloped.

I am calling on you Minister Kean to make a landmark conservation decision as newly appointed Minister for the Environment and purchase Radiata Plateau for inclusion in the national park system. The Plateau has just been recently listed for sale on the open market. Urgent action is required - the time to act is now before the opportunity to purchase the Plateau is lost forever. The Plateau needs to be in public ownership to safeguard its biodiversity and heritage values and ensure ongoing public access.

The Plateau is important to me because …

Here is an opportunity to make a personal statement about why the Plateau is important to you and why you want to see the Plateau conserved.

You may want to include some of the following points in your letter.

* It is the last remaining undeveloped peninsula Plateau in the Upper Blue Mountains, and provides important bushland and wildlife corridor linkages with existing parts of the Blue National Park to the east and Crown reserves in the Megalong Valley to the south.
* The Plateau has unprecedented scenic values. Its dramatic cliff lines can be enjoyed from many of the key tourism lookouts in the upper Mountains and from the Megalong Valley. Easily accessed lookouts on the Plateau itself enable visitors to enjoy stunning views towards Katoomba of the iconic Blue Mountains southern escarpment
* The Plateau contains nationally and state significant biodiversity values, including the presence of rare Blue Mountain Swamps, a nationally listed threatened ecological community.
* The area is also home to many threatened animals, such as the Spotted-tailed Quoll and Greater Glider.
* The Plateau is only one of ten places where the highly endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine and the shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides* grow, and is a stronghold for these critically endangered species.
* The Plateau includes an extensive network of walking tracks used by local residents, bushwalkers and birdwatchers. Unusually for the Blue Mountains the walking track network is relatively flat and accessible, as it is along the top of the escarpment.
* The area is also internationally recognised for its rockclimbing crags and walls, and is regularly use by climbers.
* The area has significant Aboriginal heritage values, including the State heritage listed “Blacks Ladder”, a traditional and historic pathway down into the Megalong Valley.

If you visit the Plateau currently you should include this as well. For instance do you bushwalk, birdwatch, rockclimb or mountain bike on the Plateau? Do you enjoy the scenic views to the Plateau from Cliff Drive or from the Plateau itself?

Or are you a local resident who maybe directly impacted by any future developments??

Or would your local business be impacted if the Plateau was inappropriately developed or if public access was disallowed?

The Plateau has been owned by the transcendental mediation group - Maharishi’s Global Administration Through Natural Law – since the early 1980s. Major developments, including a large conference centre (in the 1990s) and three residential buildings (in 2016), have been proposed by the current owner in the past.

None of these development proposals have proceeded and the Maharishi Board has now decided to sell the property on the open market. I am concerned that while the majority of the Plateau is zoned environment protection, which prohibits intensive development such as residential housing and tourism, some areas are zoned to allow these types of developments. I believe that any private development on the Plateau threatens its values, including loss and fragmentation of native bushland, and will limit ongoing public access. The Plateau remaining in private hands would also leave it vulnerable to re-zoning applications by speculative developers to allow more intensive development.

I understand that the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) have recently assessed the property for possible acquisition and inclusion in the national parks system. While the NPWS have been in contact with the current owners, unfortunately no firm offer to purchase has been forthcoming.

**I am making an urgent plea that you as Minister for the Environment use your discretion to prioritise the purchase of Radiata Plateau. The Plateau is available to purchase now, and there is a willing vendor whose preference is to sell to the NSW Government for the area to be reserved for conservation and public access. This maybe the last chance to acquire the Plateau – we urge you to make a defining and landmark conservation decision and leave a lasting legacy for the NSW community.**

Please add any additional points you wish to make here

Yours sincerely

Please include your name, address, signature and date