

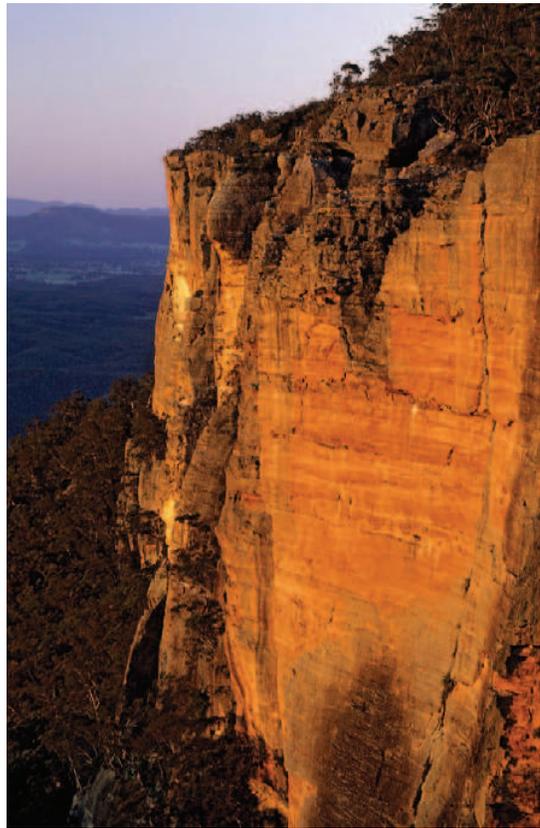
Genowlan Mountain and Mt Airly Reserved at last

After a 30 year campaign, which was particularly intensified over the past seven years due to the combined efforts of BMCS and Keith Muir of the Colong Foundation, two dramatic plateaus (Genowlan Mountain and Mount Airly) in the Capertee Valley have been reserved as the 3,600 hectare Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area. This scenic and biologically diverse area is a key part of the Gardens of Stone Stage 2 reserve proposal and was initially proposed for intensive coal mining that would have caused the ground to collapse 1.8 metres, but the mining intensity has been wound back. The area's outstanding sandstone features - its hundreds of pagodas, deep gorges, slot canyons and tall sheer cliffs will now be protected for all time.

The new Mugii Murum-ban State Conservation Area has the 'full kit' of heritage features packed into a relatively small area, there is really nothing else quite like it. Notable features of the new reserve include the stone dwellings of New Hartley oil shale ruins near Airly Gap, the amazing rock formations like the 'Citadel' and the 20 metre Brown Barrel eucalypt trees downstream of the 'Grotto'.

The area contains more than 340 different plant species, including the Federally listed and endangered Genowlan Point Dwarf Sheoak Heathland which is unique to this reserve and the only living examples of the critically endangered *Pultenaea sp. Genowlan Point*.

It has taken decades to get to this point. This is a wonderland of biodiversity and geodiversity, so it is simply fantastic it has finally been gazetted! The decision reflects a lot of hard work by the Western escarpment (Objective 3) subcommittee of the Society, the Colong Foundation and the Lithgow Environment Group.



The tall sheer cliffs of Point Hatteras. J Plaza ©

Join us to help protect the Gardens of Stone

12.30 pm

Saturday, 14 May

Ben Bullen State Forest

The unique scenic and biodiverse Gardens of Stone, NSW is at risk of exclusive occupation and destruction by open cut coal mining.

At 12:30pm on Saturday 14th May we will be holding a simple, 30 minute campaign action to help protect this precious piece of public land from destruction.

Supporters will be asked to join us on the mining proposal site, Ben Bullen State Forest to hold a banner for a photo opportunity and later explore the stunning pagodas and forests.

Justin McKee
Gardens of Stone Campaigner,
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Break up of department undermines environmental protection in NSW

The NSW government's move to break up the Environment Department and shift responsibility for key environmental decisions to Industry and Investment NSW puts the fox in charge of the henhouse, potentially compromising the protection of the state's environment, according to the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

"In coming years there are some significant environment policy decisions facing NSW, from the future of marine parks to regulation of the logging industry. Our community needs full confidence that these decisions will be taken free of undue influence from industry and with full management of corruption risks," CEO Pepe Clarke said today.

"Sound environmental governance demands that the department responsible for promoting industry is not also in charge of its regulation. Under the former Labor government we already had a taste of what happens when the close relationship between an agency and the industry it promotes undermines effective environmental regulation.

"To date, Industry and Investment NSW has comprehensively failed to keep in check the massive expansion of the coal seam gas industry across NSW, with serious impacts on local communities, the environment, water supplies and prime agricultural land.

"A healthy, resilient environment is a key responsibility of government. We need assurance from Premier Barry O'Farrell that our natural world, marine habitats and cities and towns will get the appropriate attention and oversight they need for a sustainable future," Mr Clarke said.