

Labor on attack over plan to 'divide' Blue Mountains

By Brenda Cunningham-Lewis June 14, 2013, midnight



Labor representatives, including NSW leader John Robertson (centre) at Warrimoo. They want the NSW Government to reassess their draft plan that divides the Blue Mountains into two distinct planning zones: urban and rural.

Labor politicians gathered on the Allan Bewley bridge at Warrimoo over the Great Western Highway on Friday to protest a State Government proposal to define the Lower Blue Mountains as an urban area.

Blue Mountains Deputy Mayor Mark Greenhill joined with NSW Opposition Leader John Robertson, Labor spokesperson Trish Doyle, as well as federal candidate Susan Templeman, Duty MLC for the Blue Mountains Helen Westwood and other local councillors, in calling for the NSW Government to abandon plans to make the Lower Mountains "a second class area".

Councillor Greenhill said he was "horrified to see that the state plan puts forward the possibility that the Lower Mountains, from Faulconbridge down, receives an urban zoning. This creates two classes within the Blue Mountains, with the lower Mountains becoming the second class area".

The deputy mayor claims the plans would, if implemented, "see our beautiful world heritage-listed area "subjected to higher densities and the developers' proverbial wrecking ball".

"We would lose heritage values that currently maintain our world heritage-listing. More hard services leads to more run-off and this would pose a substantial risk to our local water ways," said.

Labor candidate for Macquarie, Susan Templeman said residents were "right to be concerned about the threat that the wrong development poses to the integrity of our world heritage listing which were "hard won and easily lost".

And duty MLC for the Blue Mountains Helen Westwood said it was a "huge disappointment that the O'Farrell Government has seemingly chosen to walk away from the joint Commonwealth and NSW Strategic Plan for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area [and that] the one person with a direct line to the Minister for Planning and the Premier — local MP Roza Sage — has decided to remain silent".

But Blue Mountains MP Roza Sage called it "political grandstanding and gross fear mongering and a "a poor attempt to shift the public focus off what everyone is talking about this morning, the musical chair fiasco of the Labor leadership."

She said none of the representatives had "bothered to make a submission to the metro strategy they know nothing of planning guidelines and process".

Mrs Sage said "the leader of the opposition should be constructive not destructive and desist from his juvenile attacks which are based on no understanding and frankly, rank stupidity".

But Blue Mountains Labor spokesperson Trish Doyle said the planning scheme would change the look and feel of the area.

"First amateur shooting in national parks and now an instrument to allow mass development in a heritage area — Roza really doesn't get our community," she said.

But Mrs Sage attacked the comments of Ms Doyle and others.

"It is obvious from the comments of the leader of the opposition, the duty MLC for the Blue Mountains and the unelected, non-preselected, so called Labor spokeswoman, they have not even bothered to look at the Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney," she said.

"The Minister for Planning Brad Hazzard has personally told me that no submission into the draft strategy has been received from any of them.

"Page 27 of the Draft Strategy identifies some of the priorities for Sydney's metropolitan rural area as: identify and protect high-value conservation lands, including national parks [and] capitalise on the opportunities of international tourism in the Greater Blue Mountains World heritage Area to attract visitors."

Mrs Sage said "any development will need to adhere to local council planning instruments".

Mr Robertson said the only area that had been quarantined from development was Ku-ring-gai council area where Premier Barry O'Farrell was MP.

Submissions on the draft plan can be made to the Department of Planning website or to metrostrategy@planning.nsw.org.au until June 28.

News Business



See your ad here (/advertise/)