

NPWS Strategic Additions Proposal

Kings Tableland Natural Areas, Wentworth Falls

(land surrounding Queen Victoria Hospital)

Kings Tableland natural areas are a mosaic of heath and woodland communities and a major feeding location for bird life from autumn to spring. The Glossy Black-Cockatoo is species-dependent, relying heavily on the *Allocasuarina distyla* (Scrub She-oak) growing here as a major food source. The annual Honeyeater migration regularly pauses here for food and rest in April & May, returning throughout Spring each year. Butterflies migrate in huge numbers during October & November, feeding on the many white-flowering species present.

1. **Location:** 215-229 Tableland Road, Wentworth Falls. The area under consideration surrounds a separate lot, including an access road, 231-233 Tableland Rd DP 109766 (150,049 m²). The Blue Mountains National Park completely surrounds the natural areas indicated, apart from the access road and a section of Crown Land under Blue Mountains City Council management. Under this proposal, the built areas and grounds of Queen Victoria Hospital would be excised and remain a smaller in-holding within the National Park area.
2. **LGA:** Blue Mountains City Council
3. **DP, Lot Nos and zoning:**
 - PTL 152, DP 751646 (2,515,021.32 m²)
Predominately E2 zoning with E3 covering the built area, and one other small section.
 - L 13, DP 751648 (1,290,597.29 m²)
Predominately E2 zoning with E3 covering the built area.
 - Note the built area and associated heritage-listed land is contiguous across both above lots.
4. **Size in hectares** 381 ha.
5. **Public or private land:** Private, owner details unknown.
6. **Connection to existing national parks:** This land is completely surrounded by World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park except for an access road and a section of Crown Reserve zoned E2 and partially adjoining the northern boundary. 214-228 Tableland Road, Wentworth Falls [L 7332 DP 1162853 comprising 265,507.12 m² (27ha approx.)]
7. **Natural Values:**

Landforms: The property is a section of the tableland plateau, situated between residential areas of Wentworth Falls township and the existing National Park. It includes sections of Blue Mountains escarpment and areas of Scenic Value under BMCC LEP2015.

Ecological Communities: These include regionally significant Scheduled Vegetation community types (Blue Mountains City Council LEP2015):

- 2E *Eucalyptus deanei* Tall Open-forest
- 2G *Eucalyptus oreades* Tall Open-forest
- 5A Blue Mountains Heath and Scrub
- 5B Blue Mountains Swamps (vulnerable ecological community)
- 6 Blue Mountains Riparian Complex
- 7 Blue Mountains Escarpment

Threatened Species under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act. The site is known to contain or host:

- *Persoonia acerosa* (Needle Geebung) –
NSW Conservation status: Vulnerable; and Vulnerable under Commonwealth legislation.

- *Pultenaea glabra* (Smooth Bush-Pea)
NSW Conservation status: Vulnerable; and Vulnerable under Commonwealth legislation.
- *Petalura gigantea* (Giant Dragonfly)
NSW Conservation status: Endangered; not listed under Commonwealth legislation.
- *Eulamprus leuraensis* (Blue Mountains Water Skink)
NSW Conservation status: Endangered; & Endangered under Commonwealth legislation.
- *Calyptorhynchus lathamii* (Glossy black-cockatoo): "Glossy black-cockatoos are one of the more threatened species of cockatoo in Australia and are listed as vulnerable in NSW" (NSW OEH webpage).
- There are other rare, though not listed species present on this site, including: *Pseudanthus divaricatissimus* and *Hakea constablei*.

8. Local catchment values: The headwaters of Queen Victoria Creek form in the Northern and Eastern sections of the property flowing into Bedford Creek and Erskine Creek, ultimately to Nepean River below Warragamba Dam. In Western sections, small tributaries and on the South, Waterfall Creek ultimately flow from the properties into Jamison Creek and Kedumba River, feeding Sydney drinking water storage in Lake Burragorang.

9. Wildlife Corridors: Migration of birds and butterflies are seen here. The annual Honeyeater migration regularly pauses here for food and rest in April & May, returning in Autumn while butterflies migrate in huge numbers during October & November, feeding on the many white-flowering species present.

10. Heritage and social values:

Aboriginal heritage: the status of Aboriginal heritage is still under investigation. However, it is highly likely there are similar cultural significance and artefact values as exist nearby.

Non-indigenous heritage and social values: The historical and heritage interest is centred on the personal life and social contributions of the original owner of the QVH buildings and the social & architectural values of the buildings themselves. The scenic escarpment areas on the target land would add to the opportunity to enjoy the view into the Kedumba Valley. Bushwalking, plant identification, fauna, butterfly and bird watching are currently popular activities in the area, for both local residents and visitors.

11. Current threats, including impacts on adjacent national parks: there are usual problems associated with "unused" land, such as dumping of rubbish & garden waste (weeds), Inappropriate recreational activities such as 4WD & trail bike riding, illegal track construction, illegal camping. Illegal clearing and intrusion from nearby private properties occur and there are environmental issues such as weeds and invasive fauna species such as foxes. Fire risks from campfires or arson are higher than might otherwise be the case.

To conclude: the addition of the Kings Tableland site to Blue Mountains National Park would:

- Significantly reduce the size of the present inholding, meaning the boundary length requiring maintenance would be reduced from current ~13.75 Km to under 4Km (1.8 + 1.6). The area of inholding would reduce from ~380 ha to under 40 ha (in two lots).
- Protect Aboriginal heritage likely existing here.
- Enhance the existing National Park through the large number of swamps present within this property.
- Better manage the water resources from the Queen Victoria Creek flowing from the property directly to the Nepean/Hawkesbury River system and the through the Jamieson Creek/Kedumba River system to Sydney drinking water supply.
- Normalise the current bushwalking activities, which can be seen as trespassing on private property.
- Allow vehicle access to be more easily regulated, reducing many of the threatening processes outlined above.