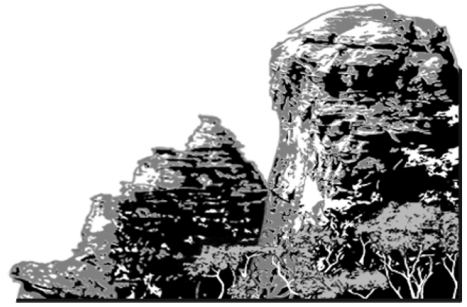




Protect the Gardens of Stone

“Say NO to open cut mining!”



Tuesday 22nd November 2011

MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release

“Report calls for protection of iconic Gardens of Stone”

Environment groups today launch the *‘Icons under threat: Natural areas and threatened species at risk from mining and gas in NSW’* report at NSW Parliament House. The report calls for protection of seven natural areas of NSW, including the Gardens of Stone.

The Nature Conservation Council of NSW, Hunter Community Environment Centre and the Wilderness Society worked with other groups, including the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, to formulate the report.

“This important report brings to life the beauty and significance of the Gardens of Stone area located in the western Blue Mountains, and looks closely at the threat from the ‘Coalpac Consolidation Project’ proposal” says Justin McKee, Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

The Society has been campaigning to see 40,000 hectares identified in the *‘Gardens of Stone Stage 2’* proposal is protected within the state’s conservation reserve system.

“The beautiful landscape is home to literally, hundreds of native plants and animals – it is a biodiversity hotspot. In May 2011, a scientific paper reported the ‘platy’ pagodas within the Gardens of Stone proposal area are of international significance,” commented Mr McKee.

‘Icons under threat’ echoes our call to protect this area of outstanding natural values from further damage from coal mining and other high impact activities.”

The NSW Coalition government’s Strategic Regional Land Use Policy states they *“believe that agricultural land and other sensitive areas exist in NSW where mining and coal seam gas extraction should not occur”*.

“We do have to make serious choices about better protecting our state’s natural assets. Our work to protect the Gardens of Stone promotes that both responsible, underground mining and recreational tourism can co-exist quite successfully while conserving nature,” says Justin.

Media Contact: Justin McKee, Blue Mountains Conservation Society - 0404 824 020
For Nature Conservation Council of NSW comment, contact Jane Garcia - 0402 757 342

> *Icons Under Threat* [21MB]: <http://www.yousendit.com/download/T2dkSXR3T010TW5tcXNUQw>
> *Gardens of Stone Stage 2* proposal: <http://bit.ly/tMTDQ1>