



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

16 April 2014

Mr Robert Greenwood
General Manager
Blue Mountains City Council
Locked Bag 1005
Katoomba NSW 2780

Dear Mr Greenwood

Environmental Levy

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with nearly 900 members whose goal is to promote the conservation of the environment in the Greater Blue Mountains area. I am writing to you in regards to the future of the current Blue Mountains City Council Environment Levy.

As you know, the Environment Levy was introduced in 2005 by Council, after community consultation, to fund projects which restore, protect and improve our local environment. The levy is an additional charge of \$43 per property and raises approximately \$1.5 million a year. In 2012/13 a total of \$1,247,545 was spent on wide variety of projects including Aquatic Monitoring and Catchment Health, Noxious and Environmental Weed Control, Bushland & Endangered Ecological Community Management, Natural Area Facilities, Aboriginal Land Management & Heritage and Environmental Advocacy, Education, Engagement & Extension.

The Society believes that the Environment Levy provides a significant pool of funds for vital environmental management and protection works within the Blue Mountains. Funds raised by the Levy are effectively quarantined and can only be spent on identified environmental programs. Importantly, the Environment Levy also enables Council to successfully leverage significant additional grant funding from State and federal governments (in 2013/13 this amounted to \$612,000 of additional funds).

The Society, however, is very concerned that the Environmental Levy is due to cease in approximately 15 months time on June 2015. We believe the continuation of the Levy is an important issue for residents and the broader community.

The Society is therefore keen to discuss with Council the following:

- whether Council is intending to pursue the extension of the Environment Levy for another set period;

- if Council is intending to extend the Levy, what steps has Council taken, or will take, to get approval to extend the Levy, including what community consultation Council intends to undertake;
- if an extension of the Environmental Levy is not being pursued, how does Council intend to continue to fund the important environmental projects currently funded by the Environment Levy.

To arrange a meeting, can you please contact myself, Alan Page, President on ph 4784 1704 or email president@bluemountains.org.au.

We look forward to an early response on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AP', written in a cursive style.

Alan Page
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

cc Mayor, Mr Mark Greenhill
All Councillors