



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

9 July, 2014

The Hon Rob Stokes, MP
Minister for the Environment
Level 32, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

Re: The Greater Blue Mountains share of iconic walks in NSW

You will by now have received several inputs on “Iconic Walks” (meaning bushwalks lasting several days) on public lands in NSW. The Blue Mountains Conservation Society seeks through this correspondence to inform you of our position on iconic walks in our region.

A number of existing walking tracks, management trails and established camping sites lend themselves to being part of any iconic walking track promotion in the future. These include the “Six Foot Track” (from Jenolan Caves to Katoomba via Black Range and Bowtells Bridge). There are existing camping areas on both public and private land along the route of this walk that could be upgraded to meet a rise in demand for long distance walking.

There are also a number of existing walking tracks, management trails and camping areas along the fringes of the Newnes State Forest, Wollemi National Park and Gardens of Stone National Park as far north as Glen Davis. With greater attention to suitable passive recreation uses in these areas of public lands, these areas too could be included in iconic walk promotion.

Any routes on public land which could warrant significant funds spent upgrading them and promoting them as iconic walks should meet a number of criteria.

- All changes should be consistent with the NSW Wilderness Act, with the existing Plans of Management for the relevant area of public land, and with the general spirit of managing National Parks, Nature Reserves, etc. according to the purposes for which they are intended.

- Increases in walker numbers should only be encouraged in places where installation, maintenance and medical emergencies can usually be managed with land vehicles. While helicopters have played a major role in restoration of a small length of historic walking tracks in the Blue Mountains, we are not in favour of unnecessary use of aircraft for remote area management.
- The pitting of exceptionally healthy and fit adventurers against great physical challenges is not the role we foresee for iconic walks. We see family groups, beginner walkers of average fitness and senior citizens with some leisure as growth markets for long distance walking. It is already possible for the small number who develop their navigation skills sufficiently to do highly challenging walks in our region.

When possible locations for iconic walks in the Greater Blue Mountains are measured against such criteria, the above-mentioned options qualify. Some other frequently mentioned proposals, including those through the Kanangra Boyd Wilderness Area and the Grose Wilderness Area fail to meet these criteria for reasons including the unacceptable impacts on Wilderness, and their being less suitable for families, senior citizens and those of average fitness and relatively little bushwalking experience.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is keen to consult with officers working under your Ministry about the details of iconic walk promotion.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Page', written in a cursive style.

Alan Page
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society