



# Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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## Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Date: 5 December, 2018

The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC  
Shadow Minister for the Environment and Heritage  
Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Via email: [penny.sharpe@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:penny.sharpe@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Sharpe

### **Radiata Plateau - a missing piece in the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area**

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community based volunteer organisation with over 800 members. It is the oldest continuing environmental organisation in the Blue Mountains. Our mission is to help conserve the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains region.

The Society is calling on the State Government to urgently recognise the ecological and heritage significance of Radiata (Elphinstone) Plateau and to acquire the Plateau for incorporation into the Blue Mountains National Park.

To demonstrate the community's commitment to the conservation of the Plateau, the Society has co-ordinated a full page Open Letter to you, as the NSW Minister for Environment, which is published today in the Blue Mountains Gazette.

A digital version of today's Blue Mountains Gazette can be found here <https://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/eedition/>. The Open Letter appears on page 6 (copy attached) and with an accompanying news article on page 9 <https://www.bluemountainsgazette.com.au/story/5787313/open-letter-calls-for-government-to-include-radiata-plateau-in-national-park/?cs=1432>

The Open Letter asks the NSW Government to commit to purchasing the Plateau for inclusion in the Blue Mountains National Park and, ultimately, incorporation into the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Almost 40 local environmental and heritage groups, local community leaders and state-wide environmental groups have signed the Open Letter. The coming together of such a diverse range of community groups and leaders is historic and unprecedented. It demonstrates the wide-spread and sustained community support for this valuable part of the Blue Mountains to be conserved and protected forever.

Radiata Plateau is accessed via Pulpit Hill Road, Katoomba and is part of the southern Blue Mountains escarpment. Its dramatic cliff lines can be enjoyed from many of the key tourism lookouts in the upper Mountains. The community, including the Society, has campaigned for

nearly 30 years for the Plateau to be protected and purchased by the State Government so that it becomes part of the Blue Mountains National Park.

As it is undeveloped and covered in natural bushland, many people believe that the Plateau is part of the National Park. In fact, the Plateau is privately currently owned by the transcendental mediation group, Maharishi's Global Administration Through Natural Law. Major developments, including a large resort and conference centre, have been proposed by the owner in the past (in the 1990s), but ultimately did not proceed.

In 2016 the owner lodged a number of development applications for three new buildings on the Plateau. The development went before the Land and Environment Court for approval. Residents and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society campaigned and appeared before the court, objecting to the developments. The court ultimately refused two out of the three buildings. One building was approved but, so far, construction has not commenced.

The Society has been liaising with the Board of the Maharishi's Global Administration Through Natural Law about their future intentions. The latest advice from Mr Tim Carr, Chair of the Board, is that they are "considering the options for this property".

The fate of the Plateau is now in the balance as the approved development threatens its future. Fragmentation and development of the Plateau will result in the loss of its high conservation value and are likely to prevent ongoing public access.

The Plateau has high conservation significance because it:

- is the last remaining parcel of undeveloped southern escarpment land in the Upper Blue Mountains, with spectacular views, both from to and from the Plateau;
- contains significant biodiversity values, including the presence of rare Blue Mountain Swamps, a threatened ecological community in NSW;
- is home to many threatened animals, such as the Spotted-tailed Quoll and Greater Glider. The Plateau is also one of only ten places globally where the critically endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine and the shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides* grow;
- includes an extensive network of walking tracks used by local residents, bushwalkers and birdwatchers, as well as internationally recognised rockclimbing crags and walls; and
- has significant Aboriginal heritage, including being a traditional pathway down into the Megalong Valley.

More information about the Plateau and the campaign including short videos highlighting its values can be found at <https://bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplateauwild>

The Society and community representatives request a meeting with you to discuss the Plateau and its future.

Yours sincerely,



Madi Maclean  
President  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society  
mobile 0412 428 202 or email [president@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:president@bluemountains.org.au)

## OPEN LETTER TO THE NSW MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT &amp; HERITAGE

# RADIATA PLATEAU

## A MISSING LINK IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS WORLD HERITAGE AREA

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton, MP  
NSW Minister for Environment and Heritage

Dear Minister

**Radiata Plateau – home to rare species and threatened ecological communities - is at risk.**

Towering high above the rolling Megalong Valley, Radiata Plateau (Elphinstone) is the last remaining undeveloped peninsula-plateau in the upper Blue Mountains, yet it remains unprotected.

Several ancient plant species inhabit the Plateau's complex and convoluted cliffs, heath, shrublands and swamps. It is one of only ten places globally where the highly-endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine and shrub *Leionema lachnaeoides* grow and it is home to many threatened animals, including the Spotted-tailed Quoll and Greater Glider.

An invaluable bushland and fauna corridor between Medlow Bath and Katoomba, the Plateau is a missing link in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It is the last remaining unprotected stretch of undisturbed southern escarpment.

Popular with local residents, bushwalkers and birdwatchers, the Plateau's extensive network of walking tracks and heritage passes are used daily. It is also the site of internationally recognised rock-climbing crags.

Distinctive and prominent, the Plateau holds significance to the local Aboriginal people, being a traditional pathway into the Megalong Valley.

The Plateau's future has been in the balance for over two decades. Held in private hands, major developments have been proposed in the past but did not proceed due to strong community opposition. However, just last year a development proposal was approved by the Land and Environment Court.

The integrity of the Plateau depends on it remaining untouched. While in private hands, future development threatens its ecological significance and will, most likely, curb public access.

Local residents and the Society have long argued that the Plateau should be purchased by the State and Commonwealth Governments for inclusion in the Blue Mountains National Park.

We find it incomprehensible that an area of such outstanding environmental importance remains unprotected. It deserves ongoing permanent protection. Incorporation into the Blue Mountains National Park will ensure this.

**We therefore ask you, Hon. Gabrielle Upton, Minister for the Environment, Local Government and Heritage, to urgently recognise the ecological and heritage significance of Radiata Plateau (Elphinstone) and its valuable place within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, by seeking to have the Plateau acquired by the NSW Government for incorporation into the Blue Mountains National Park.**



**WE CALL ON MEMBERS  
OF THE PUBLIC  
TO EMAIL MS UPTON**  
to email Ms Upton  
[info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au) and  
support us with our plea to protect this  
valuable area.  
Send copies of your email to the  
Society at  
[leaveradiataplatauwild@bluemountains.org.au](mailto:leaveradiataplatauwild@bluemountains.org.au)

Yours sincerely,

Aunty Sharyn Halls  
Blue Mountains Bird Observers Inc.  
Blue Mountains Bushcare Network  
Blue Mountains climbers: Simon Carter,  
Ben Cossey, Lee Cossey, Monique Forestier,  
Andrea Hah, Tom O'Halloran and Amanda Watts  
Blue Mountains Conservation Society  
Blue Mountains Historical Society  
Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute  
Colong Foundation for Wilderness  
Dr Haydn Washington

Blue Mountains City Council Mayor,  
Cr Mark Greenhill  
Cr Darryl Bowling  
Cr Kerry Brown  
Cr Mick Fell  
Cr Brent Hoare  
Cr Ramola Hollywood  
Cr Don McGregor  
Cr Daniel Myles  
Cr Shae Foerander  
Dr Peter Smith and Dr Judy Smith, ecologists

Emeritus Professor Dexter Dunphy  
Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Inc.  
National Parks Association (NSW)  
National Trust of Australia (NSW),  
Blue Mountains Branch  
Nature Conservation Council (NSW)  
Pulpit Hill Road residents: Rodney Mathew, Glenn  
Humphreys, Emil Mandyczewsky and Melissa White  
Springwood Bushwalking Group  
Total Environment Centre  
Wyn Jones



**LEAVE  
RADIATA  
PLATEAU  
WILD**

For more information go to the Leave Radiata Plateau Wild website  
at [www.bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplatauwild](http://www.bluemountains.org.au/leaveradiataplatauwild)

Sponsored by Blue Mountains Conservation Society [www.bluemountains.org.au](http://www.bluemountains.org.au)  
We also thank our campaign supporters Jules Booth, Kamil Sustiak Adventure  
Photography and Nathan Smith.

We recognise that the Darug and Gundungurra people are the traditional custodians  
of the Blue Mountains, and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

Photographs: © Kamil Sustiak Adventure Photography