



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

ABN 38 686 119 087

PO Box 29 Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

Phone: (02) 4757 1872

E-Mail: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au Web Site: www.bluemountains.org.au

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP
Minister for the Environment and Water
PO Box 6022
Canberra ACT 2600

31 October 2022

by email: Minister.Plibersek@dcceew.gov.au

Dear Minister,

RE: GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY UPGRADE – KATOOMBA TO BLACKHEATH

We are writing in relation to the proposed upgrade of the Great Western Highway Eastern Section (Katoomba to Blackheath) that is currently being finalised by Transport for NSW (TfNSW). We are particularly concerned by the lack of environmental assessment that has been done and the impact the upgrade will have on the endangered and threatened species that align with this route.

There are populations of the nationally endangered *Pherosphaera fitzgeraldii* (Dwarf Mountain Pine) at Nellies Glen, Katoomba which are potentially threatened by stormwater runoff associated with the upgrade. These populations were not identified by TfNSW in the list of potentially threatened species along the corridor. As it is an *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC Act)* listed endangered species and an evolutionary significant one, it is critical that it is protected.

Additionally, *Petalura gigantea* (Giant Dragonfly) and *Eulamprus leuraensis* (Blue Mountains Water Skink) are both endangered groundwater dependant species recorded in the peat swamps that align the highway. *Eulamprus leuraensis* is also nationally endangered under the EPBC Act. All of these swamps are Commonwealth-listed Temperate Highland Peat Swamps on Sandstone, listed as endangered ecological communities (THPSS EEC). They are all vulnerable to stormwater impacts from the highway upgrade, with the swamps of the Adam's Creek system the most critical.

We are pleased to see your recent announcement on the Federal Threatened Species Plan and its target of no new extinctions. We ask you to intervene to ensure that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is commissioned for the whole Great Western Highway upgrade project and that matters of national environmental significance are addressed.

Yours sincerely

Madi Maclean
President

president@bluemountains.org.au

cc: Susan Templeman MP, MHR: susan.templeman.mp@aph.gov.au