



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

ABN 38 686 119 087

PO Box 29 Wentworth Falls NSW 2782

Phone: 0490 419 779

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

Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

17 April, 2023

The Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC
Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy,
Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Minister Sharpe,

Meeting Request regarding the Gardens of Stone SCA leases

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) congratulates you on your recent ministerial appointments. We are delighted with your policies to stop the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall, see koala habitat reserved in south-west Sydney and the forests of the north coast, as well as introduction of effective and humane removal of feral horses in national parks and repeal heritage horse legislation.

The Society is a community-based volunteer organization with around 900 members. Our mission is to protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains. Society representatives met with you in January this year.

Representatives of the Society seek an urgent meeting with you to discuss the main issues of concern for the greater Blue Mountains.

The replacement of the previous administration's over-development plans for the Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area with a more low-key approach is a pressing issue. As you are aware, the process for the proposed commercial lease was paused just before the State election. We appreciate the Minister's action in this regard. These proposed leases for a fun park, three commercial accommodation facilities and construction of 80km of mountain bike track would be excessive and divert funds from other priorities.

The Society would also like to hear your plans for advancing the cause of national parks and nature conservation in NSW. The Society for its part is keen to discuss:

- Delivery of low impact nature-focused tourism opportunities in the Gardens of Stone region as outlined in *Destination Pagoda, a conservation vision for Lithgow* [available at <http://bluemountains.org.au/destinationpagoda.pdf>];
- Reinstating legislation to prevent flooding of national parks as a matter of urgency. The previous government amended the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* to facilitate its Warragamba Dam Wall raising project;
- Strengthening the *Biodiversity Conservation Act (BCA)* through a major overhaul. This should include major programs to address the three 'most common' threats to biodiversity in NSW: clearing of native vegetation, invasive species and climate change (*NSW State of the Environment 2021*) and comprehensive reform of the failed Biodiversity Offsets Scheme which has been drastically weakened over time. Government should consider the current review of the native vegetation provisions of the *Local Land Services* and the *BDA* together to ensure the best conservation outcomes;
- Establishing a joint federal-state working group, including community representatives, to deliver additional areas and values to the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area as was used to achieve the original world heritage nomination in 2000. Also, writing a letter of support to the Federal Minister for Environment for the current national heritage assessment and subsequent progression to world heritage listing;
- Strengthening protection of our national parks; and
- Adding the former Katoomba airfield to Blue Mountains National Park.

The Society looks forward to working constructively with you and your new administration on advancing nature conservation in the Blue Mountains.

Yours sincerely,



Tara Cameron
Senior Vice President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

cc. Trish Doyle, MP, at bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au