

This submission is to oppose the proposed development at 142-150 Narrow Neck Road, and to oppose the use of the Housing Development Authority (HDA) pathway in the Blue Mountains.

I note that we have an excellent Blue Mountains Local Environment Plan (LEP), which is based on expert advice and community consultation and addresses the requirements of our particular, tough though sensitive, environment.

Our family moved from Sydney to the Blue Mountains in the late 1970s. We wanted to leave behind a busy, noisy, crowded suburban life for a more spacious, quiet and peaceful village life in Katoomba. For the past 35 years I have lived in an area known as “The Gully”, which is adjacent to Narrow Neck and part of the Katoomba Falls catchment area. I am fortunate to have the Katoomba Falls Creek close to my home. I know Narrow Neck very well and go bushwalking there. It is a very beautiful place with houses appropriate to the bushland setting, not apartment blocks. A poignant memory for me is going to Narrow Neck a year after the devastating 2019-2020 bushfires, seeing the burnt and blackened banksias surrounded by big new patches of pink flannel flowers which only emerge after a fire creates particular and special conditions. See attached photos on second page.

I have many concerns about this proposed development but will focus on two that are very important to me.

Bushfires: Narrow Neck is highly bushfire prone, as is the adjacent area where I live, and indeed the Blue Mountains generally. The proposed development can only increase fire risk with 9 blocks, 266 apartments, restaurants, amenities and hundreds more residents, visitors and vehicles. Of great concern, especially in the case of fire, is the very limited entry and exit routes, to and from Narrow Neck. This exacerbates the problem of fire trucks getting in and out, and evacuation of residents. It would be a careless and dangerous development.

Environmental issues: I go bushwalking for the pleasure of seeing a beautiful landscape, plants and animals (some rare and unique to the area), hanging swamps and glorious vistas. I am concerned about a 1.6-hectare site removing many trees and plants, and displacing animal (and bird) life. Particularly worrying is the runoff from this site – waterflow, increased and polluted storm water, reduced groundwater from the lack of absorption through hard surfaces, and the damage this causes to sensitive ecosystems.

To end, I value the distinctive character of Katoomba, its Art Deco architecture on the main street; its old miners’ cottages (I live in one); its attractive modern houses fitting seamlessly into their bush setting and landscape; its narrow, winding roads unsuitable for increased and heavy traffic; and unimpeded views of the magnificent escarpment. I love living here, and high-density developments like the one proposed for Narrow Neck, would seriously diminish our family’s life here.

Thank you for your attention,

Brenda Linn

