

27 Farnells Road
Katoomba
NSW 2780

To the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

I am writing to object to the proposed development at 142-150 Narrow Neck Road, Application no SSD-86456706, which is a poorly considered, and indeed a preposterous submission.

We have been given less than 2 weeks to write this submission, which is unjustifiably short for an exhibition that is so complex and is also incomplete in its own State Government required assessments. So, I will just cover a few points and try to keep this succinct.

Firstly, I am disappointed that no consultation or information has been provided to us by the developer, even though we live nearby, just off Narrow Neck Road. No meaningful community consultation about this proposal has been entered into.

The scale of development for this area is inappropriate in both height and density:

The proposed development is inconsistent with the current residential development requirements as required by The Blue Mountain LEP and DCP 2015 controls. Dwellings in the area can only be developed as 2-3 storeys (up to 8 meters) And confusingly, the footprint of the development has been located over a covenant that has council constraints due to the slopes being too steep. The plans show totally inappropriate density with very little separation between the proposed buildings which is not in line with the governments Apartment Design Guide. And with this build there will be inadequate retention of vegetation; only 2 trees are flagged to remain on the site. The other trees 'to remain' are not on the site, but nearby on council land and should never be counted as part of this proposal.

I understand this development has been proposed to address the current NSW housing crisis, which requires - 'the development of low to mid-scale housing, focusing on gentle density housing, near transport hubs.'

Katoomba town centre and the nearest train station is a good 3km or at least a 30-minute undulating walk from the site, on roads with no footpaths. Sydney is a further 2.5-hour train trip or at least a 1.5-hour drive to the CBD. This is not an appropriate site to address the government housing requirements.

Bushfire Prone Area :

Katoomba, within the upper Blue Mountains has proven to be in 'the most bushfire prone area in the world'. This site is on the edge of an escarpment that has been impacted by significant bush fires in the past. With climate change the bush fire risk is only getting higher. It is only a matter of time before severe bush fires may impact this area again. With only one single lane road through, and already many residents in the area, this will make evacuation routes untenable and dangerous for the density of residents.

It is also a fact that the Katoomba Fire Responders have flagged that they do not have the equipment to reach 5 or 6 stories as there are no mid to high rise buildings in our area, and no desire to change zoning conditions to build any.

In fact, in 2023 BMCC were granted an exemption from mid to high rise housing reforms due to extreme bushfire threat across the LGA. I have to say that it seems somewhat nefarious to me that the site had been officially and properly assessed as a 'proven bushfire prone site' for many years. The build site quite suddenly became a 'non bushfire prone site' during the plans development. It is very interesting that this change went through.

Inadequate roads and services :

Both during construction, and for residents moving to this area post development, there are inadequate roads to service the development no footpaths in the area, and there is inadequate space for road development). It is not sensitive in any way to the location and local amenity.

Gross overdevelopment :

For this to go ahead, a new EIS would need to be completed, and the area would have to be rezoned to address the new height and density requirements. The allowed height difference between the dwellings already on Narrow Neck Road would then be completely unreasonable. 5.5m vs 15.5m in height.

As nearby residents this would impact us unfavourably in many ways. We did not move to this area to be overshadowed by apartment's more appropriate for city dwellings. Our blind driveway is on Farnells Road which is the main transport route to the town centre and other amenities. It is a road (like all others in the area) with no pavements and so we must walk with our children and dogs along the side of the road. Kids walk to the bus stops, or the whole 40-minute trip to the High school, along this route. This amount of new traffic would have a massive and dangerous impact on our streets.

The Blue Mountains is on track to meet its 5-year housing target of 600 dwellings already... and has met previous targets. This development would be better in a Sydney suburb where targets have not been met. The Katoomba site could be developed sympathetically, within regulatory constraints without rezoning, and would still overachieve on housing targets. A possible 20% of this applications density would be far more appropriate on this site; This is in no way the correct use of this site,

Truly Unique area:

The Blue Mountains is highly unique; this area is one of only TWO locations in the world where people live within a World Heritage National Park; Blue Mountains and Banff (Canada.) Truly unique! Residents and council work hard to maintain our prized unique World Heritage status. Tourism is a huge part of our economy and keeping buildings minimal, so they do not impact the amazing views has always been a high priority in council planning.

In summary.

The proposed development at 142-150 Narrow Neck Road is not an appropriate use of the site and my husband and I strongly oppose this development and urge you to reject this obviously ludicrous plan.

Deanne Palmer and Ian Wallace