

Submission regarding development proposal for 142 - 150 Narrow Neck Rd Katoomba

I am a resident of the Blue Mountains and have lived here for over 46 years. I have raised my family here, am highly active in my local community, am a regular bushwalker, and have encouraged friends and family to visit the Mountains frequently over the years. The enticement to come here is the appreciation of seeing unspoiled wilderness, extensive views across the National Park and to experience the peace and unique beauty of this World Heritage area.

I am extremely concerned about the proposed development for 142-150 Narrow Neck Rd Katoomba. This proposal bypasses the assessment processes of the BM City Council which up till now have aimed to protect this fragile environment in a responsible forward-thinking manner. This development is much larger than anything currently permitted in the Mountains and, if allowed, would set a precedent for development by State authorities who - ignorant of the impact of such high density development - would override well justified local planning controls. This would threaten the environment, the culture, and the character of the Blue Mountains, and would add to the ever present bushfire risks and greatly impact the traffic congestion issues which already exist in this area.

The Housing Development Authority (HAD) has apparently disregarded the impact on the National Park's ecosystems, and also the effects of such a development on both visitors and local residents in regards to their wishes, needs and access to amenities. The HDA should not be able to override the BMCC's well considered LEP, which has community and my support, for the more narrow and limited benefit of developers - at the very real cost to the environment, local community and future visitors.

I call for this Development Proposal to be rejected for the following reasons..

- **Scale of development**
The proposed development is very much larger than anything allowed in the Blue Mountains LGA. The area is currently zoned "medium density" for very valid reasons - to protect the views of the mountains, to limit congestion on already crowded narrow local roads, and to protect the environment. The developer should not be allowed to rezone the area to "high density" and override the many considerations that justify protection of this unique World Heritage National Park
- **Bushfire risk and Traffic issues**
The Blue Mountains are very susceptible to bushfire and this development is right within a bushfire prone area. There is limited access to and from this site and there is only one main evacuation route - the Great Western Highway. The bridge over the railway to the GW Highway is currently unfit for normal daily traffic, and on weekends it is severely congested with traffic that can be backed up for periods of 15 to 30 minutes. Adding hundreds of new residents to a high risk bushfire area without improving access infrastructure would be incredibly dangerous and life threatening. Someone from the HDA should be made to visit Katoomba and see the current chaos and then picture it in an emergency

- Environmental issues

The proposed development would degrade the World Heritage status of the BM National Park by having considerable impact on the Blue Mountains Swamps (a threatened ecology) which feed the Katoomba Falls Catchment - an area where the critically endangered Dwarf Mountain Pine grows. The Swamps would be affected by the change of water flow to them from increased hard services, stormwater speed increases, and additional pollution including the spread of infesting weeds

- Cultural and Heritage Value

This proposal absolutely ignores the heritage of Katoomba and the character of Blue Mountains villages. Visitors to the Mountains come for views and unique landscapes - not for urban style high density multi-storey developments. The proposal adversely affects the landscape and the cultural identity of the area

This proposed development would greatly suit the developers but not the landscape, the future or the identity of the Blue Mountains National Park. While more housing is needed it must not come at the cost of the environment and local communities.

Development must be subjected to Local Government Area (LGA) approval - if authority for change is given to the HDA then Council and community local knowledge and expertise is ignored and bypassed. This is highly irresponsible and a very dangerous precedent for the well being of the environment – a World Heritage Area - and all future community and cultural values.

Thank you for your consideration

Pam Staples