

Submission re DA 142-150 Narrow Neck Road Katoomba

The proposed development is so grossly inappropriate for a small township in a world heritage listed area that the mere fact of its application for planning approval is astonishing.

The Blue Mountains is extremely bushfire prone. To assert the (apparent) absence of a bushfire overlay of the specific site is an inadequate response to a development of such unprecedented local scale, serviced by only one narrow road in and out.

Visually, it is entirely out of keeping with both the magnificent natural environment and the kind of housing that typifies the character and history of the Blue Mountains. Further, according to the EIS, 134 trees will be removed, including 75 of medium significance and 14 of high significance.

Residents already routinely battle a major lack of appropriate infrastructure, particularly roads and township parking. This is my lived experience as a resident of the upper Blue Mountains for 17 years and, during an earlier period, of the lower Blue Mountains for eight years. The current problems are exacerbated by the very considerable tourist traffic during weekends and holiday periods. As the proposed development is nowhere near shops, schools or other facilities, it would aggravate existing difficulties, a fact not addressed by the inclusion of a few on-site commercial operations. Nor is it an answer to the major traffic and parking issues in Katoomba and Leura to point to an absence of parking demand and low volume of traffic in the vicinity of the proposed site, as stated in the Traffic Impact Report.

The Blue Mountains needs more housing for residents, especially of the affordable kind. This development is not the answer. Given the strongly negative impact of the development if it should proceed, the inclusion of a 'wellness' centre is risible. Even with conditions or in amended form, it will do nothing for social cohesion; rather, it will only increase community cynicism about where power lies in our society.

Elizabeth Ellis