



29 January 2023

Our ref – BMCC.CEO.LCPP.290123

Dr Rosemary Dillon
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Dear Dr Dillon

LEURA CASCADES PRECINCT PLAN

The **Leura Community Alliance** are broadly supportive of the work undertaken to date on the Leura Cascades Precinct Plan

The Leura Cascades precinct is historically significant as a recreational area for local residents, and visitors to the Blue Mountains. However, it is currently in a very degraded state, is poorly maintained, and has suffered badly through the extended closure of the Cliff Drive and the ravages of extreme climate events.

The **Leura Community Alliance** does have some detailed concerns and some suggestions that are listed below.

Connectivity

Leura and Katoomba are historically, socially, economically, and physically closely linked, and the Leura Cascades precinct is a key part of that connection. The Cliff Drive has for many years been the primary connection between the precinct and the two adjacent communities. It has worked well for vehicles, however the connections for cyclists and walkers are grossly inadequate.

Vehicles:

It is pleasing that this project is premised upon the reopening of the Cliff Drive, which is considered a very high priority for most Leura and Katoomba residents, the business community, and the tourism industry. This reopening is considered a matter of the highest urgency by the membership of the Leura Community Alliance.

Cyclists:

The precinct has long been a popular with cyclists of all levels, and this is being reinforced with the recent completion by the BMCC of two sections of the Great Blue Mountains Trail, a shared-use facility for cyclists and walkers. However, this has been a very poorly considered project, with the most recently constructed section discharging cyclists and

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Leura Village Association - Leura Gardens Festival Inc - Leura Home Gardening Club Inc - Leura Uniting Church
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Leura – Rotary Club of the Upper Blue Mountains Sunrise
National Trust (NSW) Blue Mountains Branch - North Leura 'Gateway' Network - Sublime Plateau Community
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walkers onto what is normally one of the most dangerous sections of the Cliff Drive. The first stage of the trail on the Leura side of the precinct, is poorly maintained, overgrown, and not currently in a satisfactory state for shared use by cyclists and walkers.

While the broad intention of this project is that it should connect through to the Three Sisters and beyond, there is currently no detailed plan for the route. The development of a coherent plan for the alignment of future stages of the Great Blue Mountains Trail through Leura is long overdue. Finalising the alignment of the trail through the precinct is considered critical to the success of the current planning process.

Pedestrians:

There are significant connectivity issues through this precinct for walkers.

This has long been a popular area for recreational strollers, dog-walkers, and bushwalkers. It has also long been promoted by local tourism authorities as a walking experience between Katoomba and Leura. Many local residents walk through the area to go shopping or visit friends. The imminent opening of the full Grand Clifftop Walk will greatly increase the amount of foot traffic in the precinct.

However, the walking connections from the Leura Cascades to both Leura and Katoomba are diffuse, generally in exceptionally poor condition, badly signposted, and in some areas very dangerous. Of particular concern is the safety of pedestrians who walk along the Cliff Drive to Leura.

Options that could be explored include improved links through to Leura Park, and upgrading of the walking track to Malvern Road, Leura.

If the long-overdue upgrading of this precinct is to be a success, it is essential that its connections to Leura and Katoomba for pedestrians and cyclists are better resolved, safe, better signposted, and better maintained.

Leura Cascades Environs

We support the suggested closure of Chelmsford Drive and Bridge to vehicular traffic, but only after the culvert on the Cliff Drive has been replaced and the road reopened to two-way traffic. However, until that has been achieved, we believe that the Council should use Chelmsford Drive to create a temporary vehicular corridor for lightweight vehicles using contra-flow traffic control.

We also support:

- the construction of new toilet facilities as a matter of high priority, preferably located to the parking area in the upper picnic area,
- the retention of the mock rock structures, hopefully with appropriate interpretive signage, (as there should be in relation to the former women's and men's baths.)
- the redevelopment of the parking area at the upper area,
- the redevelopment of the picnic areas in both the upper and lower portions of the site,
- the construction of new walkways connecting the two areas, with a focus on providing a compliant accessible route between them,
- the creation of appropriate traffic calming measures where the Great Blue Mountains trail crosses the Cliff Drive to join Chelmsford Drive.

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We consider that the east-bound and west-bound bus stops on the Cliff Drive should be co-located, and preferably at the western end of Chelmsford Drive, where the sightlines are safer. The current stop for east-bound buses requires pedestrians to cross the road in an area of exceptionally poor visibility.

We recommend that the crude surface drainage system in the area of the former men's baths, crossing under then alongside Chelmsford Drive be replaced with a more environmentally and aesthetically appropriate design.

We are concerned about the floodlighting of Chelmsford Bridge and the construction of a new night-lit walk because of potential adverse impacts on wildlife. Before this project proceeds, an appropriate first step would be the publication of an independent scientific study of the impacts on native fauna of the floodlit path at Katoomba Falls.

The western arm of Leura Falls Creek that runs through lower picnic area is partially contained in a concrete channel, and partially piped underground. An ambitious but welcome option could be to return the creek to a more natural state.

Solitary Restaurant Environs

The primary concern for Leura residents is the safety of cyclists and pedestrians using the Great Blue Mountains Trail. When the Cliff Drive reopens, the junction with this trail below Solitary Restaurant will be unacceptably dangerous. We recognise that there is no simple solution to this issue, but it is essential that a solution is identified as the precinct planning progresses.

Carrington Park Environs

The primary concern for Leura residents is the safety of people enjoying the popular and spectacular vantage point on the corner of Merriwa Street and the Cliff Drive. This location needs careful consideration to safely accommodate spectators, and better manage cyclists, cars, and coaches.

Yours sincerely

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