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Public meeting in fight to save planning powers

The Blue Mountains unique character is in jeopardy, according to Blue Mountains Conservation Society president Peter Ridgeway.

"The Blue Mountains City Council has confirmed that our current Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) 1991 and 2005 will no longer exist [and] the NSW government is requiring council to prepare a new single LEP for the Blue Mountains in the format of the 'one size fits all' NSW Government mandated standard LEP," he said.

It's a move Mr Ridgeway believes will undermine the character of the Mountains villages.

"The Blue Mountains Conservation Society believes a robust and stringent LEP is essential, as it determines the character of our villages, protects against over development and ensures our bushland is conserved," Mr Ridgeway said.

The society has organised a public meeting so residents can find out more about what the new LEP will mean for them.

The Hands off our LEPs public meeting will be held this Sunday, May 5 from 2 to 4pm at the Mid-Mountains Community Centre in Lawson with presentations from the mayor and senior council staff, as well as representatives from the Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute and the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

"We believe few residents of the Blue Mountains are aware that the planning and development rules governing the Mountains are undergoing a major review right now," Mr Ridgeway said.

Council has confirmed they have commenced the process of preparing a new standard LEP, with public exhibition of the plan expected to occur at the end of 2013.

"The NSW Government has imposed a very tight timetable on council to prepare the new LEP, which means there will be very little opportunity to have community input or comment...we think this is wrong," Mr Ridgeway said.

"We are also very concerned that, in the adoption of a standard LEP, vital provisions in our existing LEPs will be lost.

"This includes provisions relating to the protection of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, whose international significance underpins our tourism economy," he said.

"We are also worried that residential areas will be vulnerable to inappropriate development."