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'Risks ruining a spectacular environment': Open letter to Premier about housing reforms

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The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has coordinated an open letter to the NSW Premier, Chris Minns, in a bid to exempt the Blue Mountains from increased housing density proposals by the NSW Government.

The letter will be published in the Blue Mountains Gazette on May 15 and was published in the Sydney Morning Herald on May 13.

The open letter explains the impact that the 'one-size-fits-all' low- and mid-rise housing policy will have on the Blue Mountains and how it will override existing key environmental provisions in the Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP) that protect the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park and surrounding bushland.



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It calls on the Premier to remove the Blue Mountains from the plan which would threaten the environment and heritage towns, and thus the local visitor economy. The Blue Mountains is also one of the most bushfire prone areas in Australia and to house more people in bushfire prone areas could pose considerable risks.

Signatories to the letter include 26 community leaders and local and state-wide environmental groups.

"The coming together of such a considerable number of community groups and leaders is significant and demonstrates the widespread concern there is for the future of the Blue Mountains and the importance of protecting its globally regarded environment from degradation," said society president, Annette Cam.

"The community is very concerned about the devastating impact of inappropriate development, after working so hard for many years to develop a suitable place-based LEP that protects our environment.

"The Blue Mountains topography is unique, with considerable natural restraints limiting development, and therefore unsuitable for significant urban expansion. Any development needs to be appropriate to the area - not a 'one-size fits all' approach. Our existing LEP already allows for medium density development in areas deemed suitable, but with appropriate environmental controls."

"The NSW Government risks ruining a spectacular environment, putting lives at risk and threatening our local economy, while not addressing our housing needs appropriately."

"We are therefore calling on the Premier to remove the Blue Mountains from the proposed low- and mid-rise housing reforms or withdraw the proposal altogether and reconsider the approach taken," said Ms Cam.

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