



10 June 2021

Blue Mountains City Council
Locked Bag 1005
Katoomba NSW 2780

Attention: Mr Soren Mortensen & Mr Andrew Johnson

RE: Blue Mountains City Council - Southern Escarpment Masterplan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to assist in Council's preparation of a Masterplan for the Southern Escarpment. Our association, ACANSW advocates for maintained and improved access and amenities on behalf of rock climbers.

Many of the precincts and localities in this proposed new Masterplan are located at the "trailhead" for access and egress to established rock climbing areas. The online survey does not make it easy to focus on climbing related issues and recommendations and therefore we are providing this summary as a key stakeholder group. Members of the Blue Mountains Regional Climbing Coalition would be happy to participate further in the planning process, and can be directly contacted at aca.bluemountains@climb.org.au

General comments:

- The Blue Mountains Southern Escarpment contains highly significant rock-climbing destinations that attract international, interstate and local visitors to the region. These visitors not only bring in valuable tourist dollars but many visitors also end up moving permanently to the region - injecting skills and money into the community as residents. Proposed management plans regarding these areas should give consideration to rock climbers, as local residents and visitors, as an important and unique user group in all decision-making processes. Many local climbers live and work in the Blue Mountains, running important local businesses that support and strengthen our community. Our rock-climbing community are highly engaged locals with a strong affinity to the natural environment.
- Car-parking at lookouts and trail head areas should remain untimed (and free) as rock climbers usually stay at a particular rock-climbing area all day. This is quite different to the majority of tourists who spend less than 30 minutes taking in the view before moving on elsewhere. Timed car-parking will force climbers to go elsewhere or park on local residential streets. The ACA would be pleased to meet with Council to discuss any ways climbers can adjust their parking behaviours and communicate that with the climbing community.
- Toilet facilities are absent at many lookout locations, particularly at Sublime Point and Cahills Lookout for the use of climbers and regular tourists alike. The amount of toilet waste just off established walking tracks in these areas is readily apparent and presents a health hazard as well as an embarrassing image for tourism in the region.
- Improved signage is required where climbing access tracks diverge from regular tourist tracks. This would stop tourists accidentally entering climbing areas without the correct equipment and experience. Simple signs that indicate the presence of vertical cliff edges just off main walking tracks. Climbers utilised existing walking tracks where ever possible.
- Improved signage and security patrols to stop tourists throwing rubbish from lookouts which can endanger rock climbers below (Echo Point in particular is notorious for heavy items being thrown into the forest below)



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Site specific comments:

Sublime Point

The provision of a toilet block for tourists and climbers is requested. The nearest public toilet facility is 4km away at Leura Mall where car-parking is limited and almost impossible to obtain on a weekend. Sublime Point is a busy lookout and climbing area that deserves a dedicated toilet. Currently the bushland surrounding the carpark is being used as the toilet - with substantial evidence of paper and tissues along the tourist track edges. Climbers are being encouraged by ACANSW to use waste bag systems (carrying out waste) but the majority of users to Sublime Point require a dedicated toilet facility.

- Erosion stabilizing track work on the start of the Copeland Pass trail leading down below the bridge to the lookout. This track is used by rock climbers to access the Sublime Point climbing areas and has deteriorated greatly in the last decade as visitor numbers increase. This track eventually crosses into the National Park land - but there is a substantial section that is on Council land. ACANSW is willing to help work with the Council to improve this track.
- Car parking should remain free and untimed at Sublime Point as climbers will spend most of the day out climbing.
- Car Park spaces could be better defined to optimise parking spots- at present there are no car space markings.
- CCTV and better lighting could be installed at the carpark to discourage anti-social behaviour, rubbish dumping and overnight campervans.
- Tourist buses should be discouraged, or provided with an alternative drop off zone, as they disrupt availability, especially on busy weekends.
- Signage could be installed warning tourists of the presence of climbers underneath the lookout and advising not to throw things off the cliff top.

Cahills Lookout & Boars Head

- The provision of a toilet block for tourists and climbers is requested. The nearest public toilet facility is 2.5km away at Katoomba Falls Reserve where car-parking is limited and almost impossible to obtain on a weekend. Cahills Lookout is a busy lookout and climbing area that deserves a dedicated toilet. Currently the bushland surrounding the carpark is being used as the toilet - with substantial evidence of paper and tissues along the tourist track edges. It should be noted that most of the toilet waste is from tourists.
- Car parking should remain free and untimed at Cahills Lookout as climbers will spend most of the day out climbing.
- The track out to Boars Head climbing area and the “mushroom rock” could be hardened to prevent further erosion from increasing visitor numbers.
- Signage could be installed warning tourists of the presence of climbers underneath the lookouts and advising not to throw things off the cliff top.

Echo Point

Echo point is the completion point for many important and historic rock climbs. Discrete informal climber tracks do exist, and have been routed so that climbers maintain a low profile. Access to the start of these tracks must be continued. If BMCC needs further information about these tracks ACANSW would be happy to give a first-hand tour.

- The widespread timed parking at this location makes the approach to climbs more involved than other areas in the Blue Mountains due to the need to park well out of



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the area. Extension of timed parking areas beyond that which already exists would complicate climbing access further.

- Signage could be installed warning tourists of the presence of climbers underneath the lookouts and advising not to throw things off the cliff top. Items such as wheelie bins, beer kegs and chairs have been found at the base of Echo Point by clean-up crews.

Landslide Lookout

- Continued access for climbers to “Dogface” should be allowed for rock climbers via informal tracks next to the lookout.
- Car parking should remain free and untimed at Landslide Lookout as climbers will spend most of the day out climbing.

For and on behalf of

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Reference links

<https://yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/southern-escarpment-masterplan>

[Southern Escarpment Masterplan Frequently Asked Questions](#)

<https://yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/64971/widgets/336016/documents/202090>

[Southern Escarpment Masterplan SITES -](#)

<https://yoursay.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/64971/widgets/336016/documents/202091>