

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PLAN

To:	Emirates	From:	Parker & Partners
Re:	Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa Community consultation plan	Cc:	Clifton Coney Group
Date:	October 2006	Status:	Confidential

COMMENTS:

This document is submitted as part of condition #10 of the NSW Department of Planning Concept Plan approval for the Emirates Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa development.

On 22 June 2005 - Emirates Airline, announced Wolgan Valley as the site of its first conservation based luxury development resort outside Dubai. The announcement took place in the presence of NSW Minister for Tourism, the Hon Sandra Nori MP and local community stakeholders.

The launch attracted national and international media coverage, specifically:

- ❑ More than 30 media in attendance at the media launch in Sydney.
- ❑ Several hundred radio, newspaper and other media stories; and
- ❑ 120 MPs attended 'Friends of Tourism' luncheon in Parliament House, which included a briefing of the Wolgan Valley project.

The Wolgan Valley was chosen following extensive consideration of more than 60 possible locations of destinations across Australia.

The Wolgan Valley is an area that requires immediate protection and conservation management. As a depressed agricultural location, within close proximity to a World Heritage Site. It is a location that is in a naturally beautiful environment, and with careful management will be restored as a part of a continuous conservation area with the Blue Mountains World Heritage Site.

Since the announcement Emirates Wolgan Valley has to date had hundred of hours of community consultation and the active involvement of stakeholders, including environmental, conservation, heritage, indigenous people, local business, resident groups and government authorities. These include:

- ❑ 15 November 2005, consultation with local Aboriginal communities;
- ❑ 30 November 2005, consultation with environmental and conservation groups;
- ❑ 30 November 2005, consultation with local community representatives, Lithgow; and
- ❑ April 2006, consultation with Lithgow Business Association and local businesses;
- ❑ More than 10 separate community meetings at the Newnes Hotel, Wolgan.

In addition in December 2005, Emirates Wolgan Valley circulated a community consultation form, and responded to community feedback.

Since 2005, Emirates Wolgan Valley has set up and maintained a toll free community hotline (1800 102 660) to address community concerns regarding the project. Our objective is to ensure that all stakeholders - government, community, and tourism industry, have a strong level of understanding of the project prior to and during construction.

More than 300 inquiries have been received and responded to which have covered several issues including the Wolgan Road, tenders, commencement of construction, job opportunities, and environmental issues.

Emirates Wolgan Valley has regularly kept the community informed of developments, these include articles in the Lithgow Mercury, for example in 2006:

- ❑ Emirates project headlined strong growth pattern, 12 January 06.
- ❑ April start for our Emirates project, 17 January 2006.
- ❑ For Emirates' it's the Wolgan countdown, 28 February 2006.
- ❑ In the Emirates' Wolgan Gap plans Wolgan Gap remains: the stumbling block, 7 March 2006.
- ❑ Finally – approval for concept plan, 20 May 2006.
- ❑ Another stage for Emirates in protracted approval process, 20 May 2006.
- ❑ Delays impacting on Emirates' costs, 19 August 2006.
- ❑ Wolgan resort moves, 5 September 2006.

Contents:

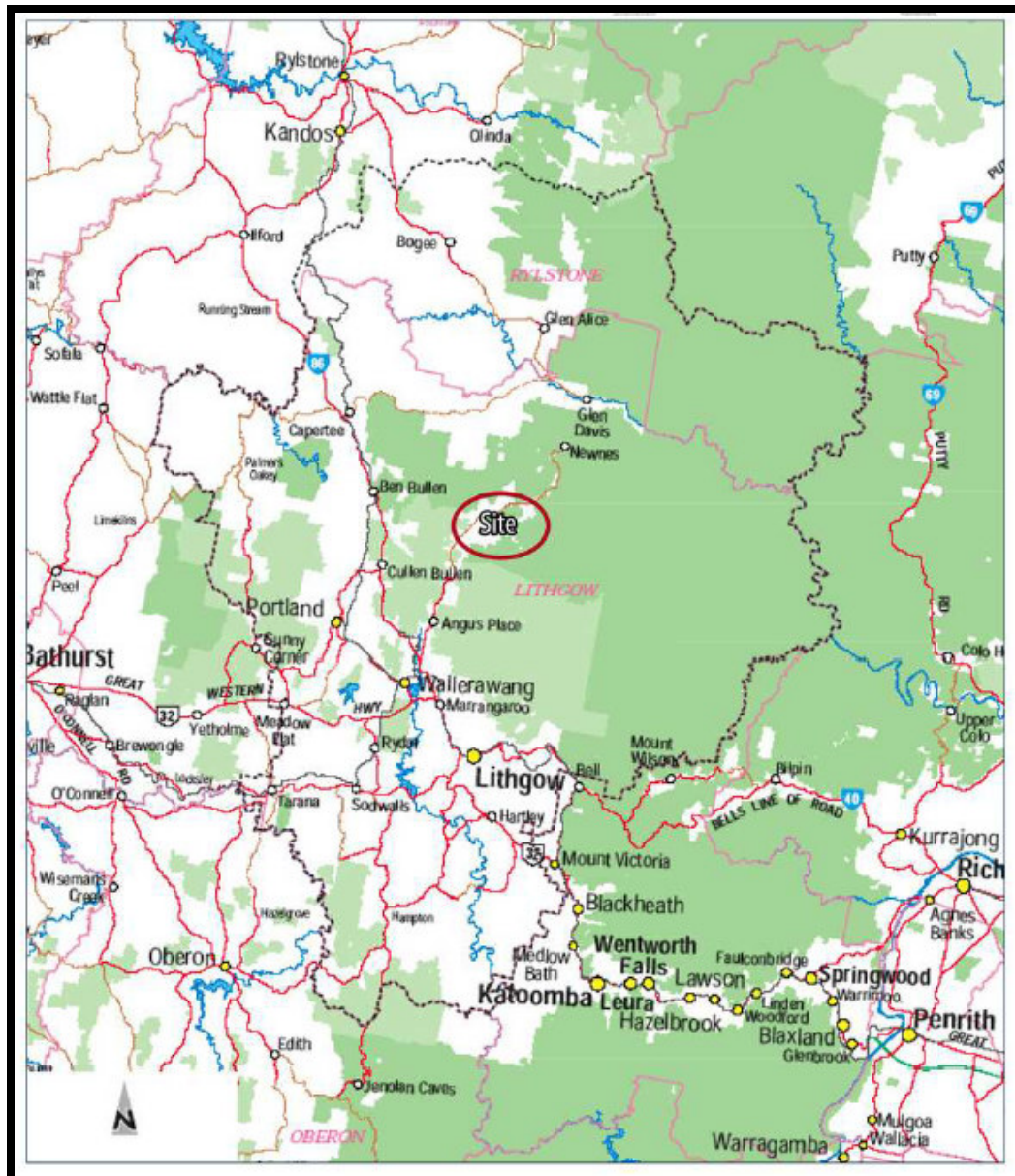
Introduction	4
Target stakeholders	5
Key messages	7
Issues management	8
Expression of Interest – September 2006 (as advertised in Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, Lithgow Mercury	11
Lithgow Mercury – 17 January 2006	12
Overview of local community stakeholders	14
Community consultation: prior to construction	16
Community consultation: during construction	17

Introduction:

The Acting Minister for Planning on 12 May 2006 approved the Concept Plan for the Emirates site in accordance with section 75O of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

The Wolgan Valley site is located approximately 190km or 3 hours drive north-west of Sydney airport and CBD, within the Lithgow Local Government Area. The site lies within a valley to the western escarpment of the Blue Mountains plateau within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

The aim of the project is to create a natural sanctuary where guests can enjoy absolute luxury, tranquility and connection with nature. The project has been designed to sit lightly within its environment in a manner that is sympathetic to the very special natural, cultural and scenic values of the Valley. The key environmental assessment issues related to: threatened plant and animal communities, bushfire hazard, vehicular access, cultural heritage, water quality (sewerage treatment and disposal), utility supply; and scenic quality and character.



Target stakeholders:

Emirates Wolgan Valley intends to keep the following stakeholders continually informed. Each organisation and individual has been consulted regarding the project.

❑ Lithgow City Council

- Clr Neville Castle, Mayor
- Clr Barbara Moran, Deputy Mayor
- Clr Margaret Collins
- Clr Howard Fisher
- Clr Wayne McAndrew
- Clr Brian Morrissey
- Clr Ann Thompson
- Clr Martin Ticehurst
- Clr Michael Wilson
- Paul Anderson, General Manager
- Andrew Muir, Group Manager, Regional Services.

❑ Local residents and organisations

- Lithgow Business Association
- Lithgow Tourism Information
- Blue Mountains Tourism
- Residents of the Wolgan Valley.

❑ Indigenous groups

- Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Wiradjuri nation
- Dharug nation
- Greater Lithgow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation
- Aboriginal Cultural and Resource Centre

❑ Government agencies

- NSW Department of State and Regional Development
- NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
- NSW Department of Environment and Conservation
- Tourism NSW
- Tourism Australia
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Department of Environment and Heritage

❑ Political stakeholders

- Premier of NSW, NSW Minister for State Development
- Federal Minister for Tourism
- Federal Minister for Roads
- Federal Minister for Environment and Heritage
- NSW Minister for Tourism & Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development
- NSW Minister for Planning
- NSW Minister for the Environment
- NSW Minister for Roads

- Shadow Minister for the Environment
- State Member for Blue Mountains
- State Member for Bathurst
- Federal Member for Macquarie
- Federal Member for Calare
- Ian Cohen, Member of the NSW Legislative Council.
- Ian Armstrong, Bells Line Express Group, Member for Lachlan.

❑ Environmental stakeholders

- The Colong Foundation for Wilderness
- Australian Wildlife Conservancy
- Blue Mountains Conservation Society
- National Parks Association of NSW
- The Wilderness Society
- Blue Mountains Rarer and Endangered Species Group
- Australian Ecosystems Foundation
- Friends of Colo
- Lithgow Environmental Group.

❑ Local and metropolitan media

- Lithgow Mercury
- Blue Mountains Gazette
- Blue Mountains Life
- The Western Advocate
- ABC Radio, Orange
- Metropolitan media.

Key messages:

- ❑ In 2003 Emirates Chairman Sheikh Ahmed announced a conservation tourism project with a similar philosophy to the award winning Al Maha conservation resort in Dubai. After an extensive selection process conducted with state tourism authorities, Emirates announced this resort would be located in the Wolgan Valley.
- ❑ The Dubai based Al Maha Desert Resort and Spa, on which Wolgan's environmental philosophy is based, has won dozens of global awards for environmental tourism, including the National Geographic's Legacy Award.
- ❑ Emirates is investing AU\$70 million in this luxury conservation resort, which will appeal to high yielding tourists who want to experience the wilderness in one of the most naturally beautiful parts of the world.
- ❑ Emirates has worked with conservation experts to ensure the project will be one of Australia's most environmentally sympathetic developments and aligned with the conservation aims of the Greater Blue Mountains and Wolgan Valley.
- ❑ Emirates' plan is to protect this site and enhance its environmental values, which will include the removal of invasive plants and feral fauna, over a period of time. Emirates' strong conservation plan ensures the Blue Mountains World Heritage site, which Wolgan valley borders is protected.
- ❑ Some of the benefits of the Emirates Wolgan Valley project include:
 - Injection of funds into regional NSW;
 - Creating local jobs, traineeships;
 - Educational programs with local schools including TAFE, Blue Mountains Hotel school;
 - Spending up to \$9 million a year in the local economy;
 - Increasing Blue Mountains as a destination to the international tourism market; and
 - Improving the offer of conservation based tourism.

Issues management

Attached is a series of issues which may be raised before and during the construction process.

1. Wolgan Road

Will Emirates be seeking an upgrade to the Wolgan Road to improve access to the Wolgan Valley?

Emirates' Wolgan Valley supports an upgrade of the road to improve safety, while maintaining the road for regional and local use.

Who will fund the upgrade of the Wolgan Rd?

Lithgow City Council has applied under the Federal Government's AusLink program for funding. Emirates' Wolgan Valley supports any form of government contribution for the improvement of the road, and is prepared to make a contribution towards the upgrade to improve safety.

2. Water management

How will local services for example police, ambulance, fire stations, water and electricity be able to cope with a major new development of this nature in Wolgan Valley?

The overall impact of this conservation resort project will be positive for the environment, local community and visitors to the area. Emirates will be contributing to the provision of services not just for the resort, but throughout the Valley. For example, Emirates will work with local authorities to provide such services as depots for local fire-prevention services, and NPWS assistance with local projects.

The impact of such low visitation is minimal on the surroundings and on the present infrastructure. With the systems put in place for such items as 100 percent water recycling and purification, and use of alternative energy, we do not anticipate any significant demand.

3. Feral fence

The Wolgan Valley is known for its wide-open space. What sort of fencing or demarcation will there be to keep this luxurious resort private?

The resort includes the addition of a feral proof fence which will be constructed in order to encourage native flora and fauna to return to the Wolgan Valley. The feral fence will span approximately 10 kms from Cape Pinnacle running north along Wolgan Rd to the eastern side of the site near the main entrance.

The fence will be made of galvanized steel posts and rabbit proof wire mesh. A mesh overhand will be supported by a curved pipe to the outside of the protection zone, for the purposes of stopping any feral animals from climbing over the fence. Emirates has consulted with local conservation groups and the NPWS regarding the feral fence.

4. Environment

What are the environmental benefits of this development?

Emirates' plan is to protect this site and enhance its environmental values, starting with the removal of invasive plants and feral fauna that has placed pressure on indigenous wildlife. We work closely with environmental and government agencies, and plan to eventually reintroduce some threatened species to this conservancy.

We want this project to gain the same recognition for Australia that we have received for Al Maha and the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve in Dubai, which was awarded the National Geographic and Conservation International World Legacy Award 2004.

The Blue Mountains is a highly sensitive area for Emirates to launch a development project – are you concerned about how the local community might react to this resort in their backyard?

We shall continue to work with Australian and local conservation groups regarding wildlife conservation, and with community groups to share views on improvements that can be made in the area to ensure that this area is restored from farmland into sanctuary that supports conservation values in the Blue Mountains.

How does this resort fit in with the environmental and social values of the Greater Blue Mountains?

Emirates has consulted widely within the Greater Blue Mountains community already and will continue to do so in the planning stages of this project.

The resort footprint itself will be approximately 2 percent of the whole property (or 4-5 acres of total 3,600 acre sanctuary). Given the very small number of visitors accommodated at the resort, it is a low impact project.

Furthermore, there will be minimal impact on the environment through 100 percent water recycling and alternative energy sources wherever possible. There will be active protection of local species through management of feral animals, replanting of supportive forests, and active restoration of erosion along riverbanks.

How much bushland will be sacrificed for the actual resort development?

No bushland will be sacrificed at all, since nearly all of it has been removed through farming. However we shall immediately put in place large scale re-forestation and river-bank erosion management in an effort to re-establish bushland, and encourage local wildlife species dependent on forested bushland.

The resort footprint itself will be approximately 2 percent of the whole property (or 4-5 acres of total 3,600 acre sanctuary) and it is currently distressed farming land. Refer to Australian Wildlife Conservancy partnership for further comment on the conservation benefits of this project.

Will the development be incorporating NPWS land?

The NPWS land that is being proposed for acquisition can be identified by overlaying the cadastral boundary (the existing boundary of the site is drawn following the cadastral boundary) and the boundary set by the natural environment. As a result, the land being proposed for acquisition is a small pocket of cleared grazing land.

Separate approval is currently being sought for the exchange of the cleared grazing NPWS land which has a total areas of 50.3ha in return of dedicated 114.5ha of forested private land back to the NPWS.

5. Helicopter flights

Will there be daily helicopter runs over their properties as Emirates transports it guests between the airport and resort?

There may be helicopter flights from time to time, they will go through the proper planning processes and have minimal impact on local residents and properties. In any event we will not have any over-

flying of the National Park. We want our guests and local residents to continue to enjoy the peaceful surroundings of the Wolgan Valley.

Where will the helipad be located?

It is proposed that the helipad will be relocated to the western side of the Wolgan River opposite the staff accommodation and maintenance areas.

There has been concerns from Carpertee residents regarding alleged illegal helicopter activity, is this related to the development?

No. These allegations are being undertaken over Carpertee and the Carpertee Valley. Lithgow City Council is investigating the matter. If there were a Heliport at Capertee, that would require a DA for Council approval.

6. Electricity

Will Emirates be required to install an electricity line and fibre optic cable?

Yes an electricity line and fibre optic cable will be installed the service the site.

7. Indigenous Heritage

How will Emirates preserve the indigenous heritage on the site?

Emirates has to date significant community consultation with local indigenous groups including Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council, Wiradjuri nation, Dharug nation, Greater Lithgow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation, and Aboriginal Cultural and Resource Centre.

Emirates has undertaken an Aboriginal heritage assessment of the site. The assessment identified 12 Aboriginal archaeological sites, eleven of these are stone artifacts. In addition, one rock-art shelter was found just outside the property boundaries on an access route leading up to the Gloworm Tunnel.

With careful use and management the archaeological sites will be conserved with the proposed development.



Emirates Wolgan Valley
RESORT & SPA



Clifton Coney
Group

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BUILDING WORKS CONTRACT

Clifton Coney Group on behalf of Emirates Hotels (Australia) Pty Ltd invites expressions of interest from best practice building works contractors for the construction of the Emirates Luxury Conservation Resort and Spa in the Wolgan Valley, NSW.

Emirates has received conditional approval from the Minister for Planning for the development of the Resort under Part 3A and Section 750 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.

Interested contractors should be able to provide a strategy which maximizes the use of local resources, value for money and experience in environmentally sensitive construction initiatives.

The EOI briefing document can be obtained from the Project Manager's website **www.cliftonconey.com**

Submissions must be received by

4pm, Monday 25 September 2006

at Clifton Coney Group Level 18, Citigroup Centre,
2 Park St, Sydney NSW 2000

**Enquiries should be directed to Tony Burg,
Project Director, Clifton Coney Group
(02) 9287 2100.**



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\$1.30

**Kangas
return to
town** — page 3



**Links to two
business robberies**
— page 3

**Hemmy to coach
Panthers again**
— back page



EVERYONE associated with the Emirates eco tourism development in the Wolgan Valley is keen to see the project under way and looking forward to a start pencilled in for April if all approvals are in place.

Significantly the Emirates' planning for a project sympathetic to the environment appears to have won general approval from environmental groups.

PICTURED during an on site briefing were, from left, Atticus Fleming (chief executive of Australian Wildlife Conservancy), Joost Heymeijer (Emirates project manager) and Trevor Evans (principal of Lithgow's Secret Creek sanctuary).

They are in front of the original 1874 homestead on the property that is to be restored as a focal point of the Australiana theme of the \$60 million resort.

Photo: LEN ASHWORTH



April start for our Emirates project

STORY PAGE TWO



THE grand panorama of the Wolgan Valley, widely regarded as one of the nation's most prized natural attractions and which had instant appeal for Emirates Airlines.

Natural assets key to Emirates' Wolgan plan

Story and photo: LEN ASHWORTH

Work on the upmarket Emirates Airlines resort in the Wolgan Valley could be under way as early as April as planning for the \$60 million project gets into top gear.

The estimate of the starting date was given this week when the Mercury was taken on the first inspection of the site in the picturesque valley.

Meeting on site with project manager Joost Heymeijer were Atticus Fleming, chief executive of Australian Wildlife Conservancy, and Trevor Evans, of the Secret Creek Sanctuary, who are acting in an advisory capacity on the eco tourism project.

Mr Heymeijer revealed that Wolgan will be a role model for other tourism investment in Australia by Emirates.

He said that at least four other sites are under consideration close to destinations serviced by the airline.

But at the moment all efforts are being concentrated on bringing the Wolgan Valley resort to reality and achieving the type of standards that have won international accolades for the company's eco tourism resort in Dubai.

The basic material is all there ready to be brought to an upmarket mix in the valley.

It's easy to see what attracted Emirates to announce 'the search is over' when their representatives saw the valley for the first time.

It is surely one of the most superb unspoiled natural sites in Australia — a fact known to a dedicated band of regular campers, rock climbers and bushwalkers for years.

The Wolgan River runs through the middle of the property which is flanked on all sides by rugged cliffs that add to the grandeur of the place — a fact perhaps not fully appreciated by local residents who have grown up in these surroundings and take them for granted.

A huge boulder is to have a waterfall flowing over it as part of the day spa feature.

The resort will be no 'Las Vegas' or 'Wallyworld' — it's attraction will be in its natural attractions and peace and quiet, designed for total relaxation.

Activities will hardly be more strenuous than 'mountain bike riding and stargazing', according to Mr Heymeijer.

Even the heating will be 'natural' to avoid interfering with the ambience — geo thermal rods sunk deep in the ground, similar to the system adopted at Lithgow Hospital for the first time in this district.

Emirates originally purchased the Webb family property located some 15 kilometres from the bottom of Wolgan Gap.

Since that time they have expanded their holding by purchasing the adjacent property of Dr Webber, giving them control of an area extending to the bottom of The Gap.

A massive stage in the project will be to fence the entire perimeter of the combined property to exclude feral animals so that native fauna can be allowed to breed without interference.

All internal fences will then be removed.

Another interesting stage of the development will be the total restoration of the original 1874 slab timber homestead, currently intact but in a dilapidated state.

This meticulous restoration alone is estimated to cost close to a million dollars.

The restored building will become a focal point for the resort as a heritage centre.

A staff village to accommodate 80 employees at any given time will be constructed a short distance from the main resort buildings.

There will be a total work force of

▷ Continued Page 3

Overview of local community stakeholders:

1. The Colong Foundation for Wilderness

The Colong Foundation is the longest serving community advocate for wilderness in Australia. They have headed campaigns that have secured over a million hectares of national parks, most of which is wilderness.

The Foundation played a leading role in realising Myles Dunphy's plan for a Greater Blue Mountains National Park, pushed for its World Heritage listing, as well as the reservation of a Border Ranges National Park and Kakadu National Park.

2. Blue Mountains Conservation Society

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a voluntary group of around 880 members, working to conserve the World Heritage Blue Mountains region. They are an active group in the community.

3. National Parks Association of NSW

NPA is a non-profit, non-Government conservation organisation interested in natural areas. NPA believes a system of national parks and nature reserves is the cornerstone to achieving long-term conservation.

4. The Wilderness Society

The Wilderness Society is Australia's largest national, community-based, conservation organisation working for the protection of Australia's wilderness and other high conservation value areas, and through this our unique ecosystems, plants and animals.

5. Blue Mountains Rare and Endangered Species group

The Blue Mountains Rare and Endangered Species Group was established in 1992. It operates as a non-government organisation assisting in the conservation of plants and animals and the management of conservation reserves in the Greater Blue Mountains.

6. Australian Ecosystems Foundation

The Australian Ecosystems Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation working to save endangered species, committed to building feral-proof exposure sanctuaries, and reintroducing and protecting native species. They have successfully operated an endangered species breeding facility for Eastern Quolls in Lithgow, which opened in March 2003.

The Australian Ecosystems Foundation is managing 2000 acres in the Wolgan Valley as a conservation area – Wollemi Nature Reserve.

7. Lithgow Chamber of Commerce

The Lithgow Chamber of Commerce was incorporated in 1996 as the Greater City of Lithgow Chamber of Commerce and Industry Incorporated.

The Lithgow Chamber of Commerce and Emirates Wolgan Valley held a joint consultation with more than 120 people in attendance at the Lithgow Workmen's Club regarding project opportunities for local business in both the construction phase and ongoing hospitality and service industries.

8. Indigenous groups

Emirates Wolgan Valley has been working closely with local indigenous groups. In consultation with indigenous groups a report has been developed identifying 12 Aboriginal archaeological sites. Eleven of these are stone artefacts; one of these sites contained hundreds of stone artefacts.

Among the recommendations of the report include: continuation of consultation with the Aboriginal community, and conserving the sites of high scientific and cultural significance by avoiding the placement of building works over these features and ensuring their ongoing protection.

9. Blue Mountains Tourism

Blue Mountains Tourism covers the Blue Mountains Heritage Area, adjoining the Great Dividing Range. The City of the Blue Mountains occupies some 1,436 square kilometres and its population is scattered across 110 kilometres of ridgeline in 26 towns and villages. Major suburbs include Glenbrook, Springwood, Lawson, Wentworth Falls, Leura, Katoomba, Blackheath, Mt Victoria, Oberon and Lithgow.

10. Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC)

AWC is a highly respected proponent of conservancy development and protection of species. The AWC has 8-10 large conservancies throughout the states, including one in NSW.

Community consultation - prior to construction:

Activity:	Oct 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Jan 07	Feb 07	Mar 07
Consultation with businesses groups						
Consultation with conservation groups						
Consultation with indigenous groups						
Briefings with local media						
Liaison with Government agencies and Council						
Write to local residents informing construction commencement						
Advertisements in Lithgow Mercury and local media concerning construction commencement (subject to approval)						

Community consultation - during construction:

Activity:	Mar 07	Apr 07	May 07	Jun 07	Jul 07	Aug 07	Sept 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08
Start of construction															
Consult businesses during construction															
Consult conservation groups during construction															
Consult indigenous groups during construction															
Briefings with local media															
Liaison with Government agencies and Council															
Updates in Lithgow Mercury and local media re: construction															
Consult community regarding staffing opportunities															
Advertise opening date															
Brief stakeholders of opening date of the resort															