A unique landscape...
A must-see attraction

Photo Richard Green
Lithgow – Gateway to the Gardens of Stone

• Its unique opportunities can attract a proportion of those kinds of visitors that go to Blue Mountains National Park;
• Pagoda landscapes can be the iconic cachet that gives Lithgow’s tourism publicity and recognition;
• Lithgow-focused signage and good vehicle access from Lithgow are essential for Lithgow to attract visitors.
A 39,000 hectare Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area - proposed since 1994, is part of Myles Dunphy’s 1932 Blue Mountains vision.
Economic Benefits…

- *Destination Pagoda* will grow and diversify the city’s tourism economy:

  • accessibility to a major market;

  • presence of key attractors (iconic natural and cultural heritage attractions);

  • many potential activities available for visitors, especially for families.

[- no threat to underground coal mining]
Eco-tourism potential

- Lithgow is accessible from Sydney, but tourism employment has been smaller and slower growing than the NSW regional average;
- Based on visitation to existing reserves, visitation of 200,000 per year to the Gardens of Stone reserve is realistic;
- If Lithgow were to attract these numbers, tourism revenue jumps by half (another $28 million) and directly supports 117 FTE jobs.
Family-friendly experience of nature

- The Gardens of Stone region provides a different and diverse suite of bushland attractions and experiences;
- Lithgow’s Gardens of Stone region has great potential to attract visitors interested in experiencing nature;
- has extensive road access, mostly on gentle plateau terrain with distinctive pagoda rocks and potential sites for development of a variety of low-impact visitor facilities.

Facilities to support low-impact, family-oriented activities:
- camping
- bushwalking
- sight-seeing
- picnicking
- Aboriginal heritage viewing
- mountain bike touring
- education
- birdwatching
- nature study
- canyoning
- rock climbing
- photography
Lithgow Community Plan 2030:

“Turning Lithgow into a hub for visitors to the Blue Mountains region, bringing more people to the area that stay for longer periods of time.”
A new 39,000 hectare Gardens of Stone State Conservation Area can:

• provide attractive low-impact visitor facilities linked to upgraded touring roads out of Lithgow

• builds a vibrant local tourism economy

• conserve internationally significant pagoda landscapes, nationally rare upland swamps and Aboriginal heritage
A broad range of attractions -

views, pagodas, gorges, escarpments, rare wildflowers, upland swamps, tall forests, grassy forests, rare snowgum woodlands, Aboriginal rock art, montane heathlands, creeks, rainforest glades and wildlife offering enormous potential for families to discover nature.

Plus the Newnes oil shale railway and surrounding industrial heritage.
Aboriginal Country
Wiradjuri traditions are maintained at Maiyingu Marragu.
Access must be out and back to Lithgow
Developing *Destination Pagoda* needs moderate government investment of an estimated $31.6 million* over 10 years and $800,000 annually for ongoing management.

* $22.2 million present value, assuming a 7% discount rate

A 10-year investment will:
- establish professional conservation management
- improve access roads
- steadily develop visitor facilities
- restore degraded areas
- encourage visitors/signage
- support local enterprises
- protect important values
This reserve can be funded by -

• Specific programs, e.g. NSW Regional Growth and Destination NSW (for specific projects – a lookout);

• Swamp offset funds for appropriate conservation outcomes (compo money); and

• transfer of state forest expenditures to the NPWS (current operations money).
Swamp offsets -

THE MOST PRACTICAL ‘OFFSET’ FOR DAMAGED EEC SWAMPS IS CATCHMENT PROTECTION OF AS MANY INTACT SWAMPS AS POSSIBLE.
Our vision -

• Conservation management for internationally significant pagoda landscapes, its nationally rare upland swamps and many other important natural heritage values;
• Appropriate recreation facilities to build a vibrant tourist economy in Lithgow that utilises existing road access;
• People connected with nature;
• Continuation of responsible underground mining.

ENVIRONMENTAL, TOURISM AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED BY RESERVING THE WHOLE PROPOSAL AREA, AND COMMITTING TO THE REQUIRED LEVEL OF INVESTMENT AND MANAGEMENT AS A COHERENT PACKAGE.
Destination Pagoda can achieve Lithgow’s tourism ambitions in one hit.

Lithgow's iconic pagoda landscapes can define the town as a major tourist destination.
for more info. see – the Destination Pagoda report
www.gardensofstone.org.au