



August 12, 1996

1. The Friends of Katoomba Falls Creek Valley was formed at a public meeting on December 10, 1989. Eleven residents had got together three months earlier to talk about their concerns for the Valley. They letter-boxed all residents in the Valley to come to a meeting if they shared the same concerns. About 60 or 70 residents came to this meeting. This meeting of residents then decided to call a public meeting. The founding residents reckoned that the natural amenity of the valley was under extreme threat from development.
2. Just now about 50 people are members of the group.
3. The main work which has been done by the Friends, and which continues to be done, is to achieve the political goal of having the public lands in the Valley set aside by Zoning for only those uses compatible with conserving the natural bushland and with protecting the catchment of Katoomba Falls Creek Valley - this involves a lot of community politics. Also, the Friends have cleaned up parts of the valley and carried out bush regeneration in parts of the Valley. Also the Friends initiated and helped carry out an Environmental Study of the Valley. Recently, the Friends have opposed the proposed development of Katoomba Golf Course.
4. It's hard to say whether water quality has improved. Probably it's got a bit worse because of the run-off from streets and new developments. And the water flow has probably decreased.
5. The draft Management Plan puts forward plans for managing the Valley which we mostly agree with - or maybe the Management Plan sets out plans for managing the Valley which agree with our ideas, since we have argued long and forcefully for our viewpoint. However, there is nothing in the Management Plan which guarantees that the uses and management proposed are long-term. In other words, what is planned could be changed by Council administration or by Council itself very easily at any time. And the changes could be towards uses not compatible with the conservation of the Valley, since the focus of the Management Plan is on the Valley as a recreation resource, rather than as a catchment and environmentally sensitive lands.
6. The main threat comes from the valley not being valued as a catchment, not being valued as environmentally sensitive lands, not being managed as an ecological whole, and from not being set apart by protective zoning.

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7. I think the community is too complacent. Too many people think it's someone else's responsibility. Maybe some people think nothing can be done - things have gone too far already. Some people argue that (as a community or society) we can just keep pushing the limits of development.

8. We haven't done any work on the part of the Creek at the bottom of the Valleym close to the Falls. But development on the steep slope on the eastern side of the Valley at the bottom of Neale St. has compromised that section of the Creek. I believe that section of the Creek is in danger of being turned into an enclosed concrete watercourse.

9. I believe we have to care for our part of the world, wherever that is. Katoomba Falls Creek Valley is my Valley - it's where I live. What happens in my backyard affects the Creek. The native plants I have grown in my place are part of the ecology of the Valley. I believe also the Australian bush, the plants, insects, birds, animals is very lovely

10. We don't yet know the outcome of the court case in the Supreme Court, sitting as a court of appeal. We had won the court case in which we argued that the rezoning of Katoomba Golf Course was invalid. The developer appealed against that judgment in the Supreme Court.

11. Yes, Katoomba Falls Creek is polluted. The water is not drinkable. However, the Creek is not so polluted that it doesn't support aquatic life, including amphibians. Reducing pollutants is an important goal. So also is the goal of maintaining stream flow.

Yes, I believe we have been effective. I believe that if we hadn't been around, doing what we've been doing for the last 7 years, then Katoomba Falls Creek Valley would be in a very sorry state.

Neil Stuart,
Chairperson.

(information leaflet attached)