



## ***Destination Pagoda* puts Lithgow on the tourist map**

***MEDIA RELEASE***

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ATTENTION: CHIEF OF STAFF, NEWS DESK, ENVIRONMENT WRITER

Tonight the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Colong Foundation and Lithgow Environment Group\* launch a visitor plan that positions Lithgow as the gateway to the Gardens of Stone area. Accompanying the report is a short documentary on the efforts of a growing community alliance to protect the area.

“Only the iconic sandstone pagodas can define the town as a major tourism attraction. *Destination Pagoda* the new visitor plan would significantly increase the number of visitors to Lithgow by creating new visitor opportunities in a state conservation area where underground mining is permissible,” said Keith Muir director of the Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

“The Gardens of Stone is the last unprotected region of Myles Dunphy’s 1932 Blue Mountains National Park scheme. Its reservation completes his visionary plan through the creation of visitor opportunities using existing road access to a select number of vantage points and sights that lie beside Lithgow,” Mr Muir said.

“Also tonight, Tom Zubrycki, an award winning Australian documentary filmmaker, will launch his new film *Gardens of Stone: Living landscape* that tells a story of the efforts of traditional owners, bushwalkers and scientists to save the area”, said Madi Maclean spokesperson for Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

“This world-class tourism and conservation reserve is right on Lithgow doorstep. Lithgow’s pagoda landscapes can deliver economic, community and environmental benefits to the town. The new reserve would be for families and bring people to Lithgow,” said Maclean.

“Diversity is the key to a healthy regional economy and with *Destination Pagoda*, the Gardens of Stone is now ready to play its part. This plan ties in with Lithgow’s unique heritage, and offers over 100 jobs in tourism and visitor management,” said Richard Stiles, President of Lithgow Environment Group.

“Pagodas, those striking sandstone towers, rise up through a diverse forest like ancient temples and they the pulling power Lithgow needs to bring its tourism economy to life,” Dr Stiles said.

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\*The Gardens of Stone Alliance consists of the Colong Foundation, Blue Mountains Conservation Society and Lithgow Environment Group.