

“The Drip Gorge” Goulburn River National Park, Ulan

Land critical for the protection of the iconic Great Dripping Gorge at Ulan is still in the hands of Moolarben Coal Operations, six months after it was supposed to have been transferred to the state government, according to the Mudgee District Environment Group (MDEG).

MDEG is ramping up pressure on the government to deliver on a promise the Coalition made before the last election to have two parcels of land protected from mining and added to the National Parks and Wildlife Service’s (NPWS) estate.

“It is commendable the NSW Government has made a commitment to long-term public management, public access and preservation of The Drip Gorge and its Great Dripping Wall,” MDEG President Phyllis Setchell said.

“However, the members of MDEG are concerned over the delay in the transfers of land in and around the Great Dripping Wall.

“The deed of agreement signed by the mining company and the government gave them two years to complete the transfer to a State Conservation Area by March this year.

“It still has not happened and it appears that the process has stalled.

“Declaring these lands as part of the national parks estate would have been a great way to celebrate the NPWS’s 50th anniversary on October 8, but that now looks unlikely.”

Ms Setchell said MDEG was concerned about the status of two parcels of land:

Crown Land covering the visitor infrastructure area and walking track, currently managed under licence by NPWS. The status of this strip is still not finalised and needs to be achieved to secure security for its long-term management.

Land currently owned by Moolarben Coal Operations surrounding The Drip and on both sides of the river. The deed of agreement gave them two years to complete the transfer to a State Conservation Area by March 2017. This process has stalled.

“These areas of land are of critical importance for the protection and public access to The Drip Gorge and adjacent riparian corridor.

“To finalise the transfer of these lands would be one step towards securing The Great Dripping Wall for future generations to enjoy.”

Ms Setchell said MDEG was planning a gathering at The Drip to mark the 50th anniversary and to celebrate the completion of improvements to the visitor facilities at the car park, picnic area and to the walking tracks.

EVENT

What: Information displays, Guided walk by Julia Imrie at 11.00am
When: 10.30am to 3.30pm
Where: The Drip Picnic Area

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