

2 February 2012

Mr Alan McCormack
Acting General Manager
Oberon Council
PO Box 84
Oberon NSW 2787



Dear Mr McCormack

The Oberon Plateau Tourism Association (OPTA) is a dynamic tourism association with 120 members representing a very broad section of the Oberon district community and fulfils the role of the local tourism organisation within the region of Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon Tourism.

PO Box 37
Oberon NSW 2787
ABN 37 582 103 084

We are writing in support of Oberon Councils concern for the future of Jenolan Caves as an essential and integral tourism icon and attraction, bringing important economic benefit, not only for Oberon and the Blue Mountains Lithgow and Oberon region but also for New South Wales and indeed Australia.

Jenolan Caves, later including Jenolan Caves House, was one of the earliest tourism attractions of this continent and still continues to offer innovative experiences to generations of Australian families and international visitors alike. With over 250,000 annual visitors, the Caves contribute \$20 million to our region each year.

OPTA is aware of the grave concern that this iconic attraction, including Caves House, may, because of financial pressures, be given to the private sector and consequently fall out of the realm of appropriate and professional management and subsequently, proper control of the communities mentioned above.

We believe Jenolan Caves and specifically Caves House must remain in full public control, with immediate financial certainty by way of an annual operating budget, until such time as a proper public/private partnership model is formulated and implemented. The development of such a model should be made by a skills based group representing the stakeholder communities and supported by private expertise.

We also believe significant public infrastructure support is needed for urgent priority for the process of planning to transition Caves House up to the standard that is attractive to the 'right' private partner with the expertise required for such a facility and return significant dividends to the venture to ensure adequate maintenance of this asset for future generations.

Our organisation is very motivated and willing to be involved in the vital planning and future management of this natural attraction, which is part of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Region.

Wayne Cooper
Chairman, OPTA
Copies: Paul Toole MLC, John Cobb MP, Randall Walker.

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