

Inquiry into the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall

Submission prepared by Kevin Roberts 5/11/2021

I have been requested to attend the inquiry by the Committee Chair due to my involvement in the EIS for the proposal. This request was received on 25th October 2021. I have not been given any specific details as to areas of inquiry or evidence regarding the project or my role and have not been able to consider any questions or prepare any responses in advance of the hearing.

To assist the committee, and with advice from the secretariat, I have prepared some background information on myself and the role I have played in the preparation of the EIS and supporting documentation.

I currently hold the position of Technical Director and Regional Senior Principal for Environmental Services for Cardno. In that a role, I manage a team of environmental professionals providing consulting services across Cardno's Asia Pacific Region. The discipline areas include aquatic and terrestrial ecology, environmental planning, assessment and management, contaminated land and sustainability services. I have been employed by Cardno since August 2014 and have prepared, managed and reviewed many projects for Government and Industry including ecological assessments, environmental impact assessments, environmental compliance and design, strategic and policy advice. I have not been employed by any other entity than Cardno over this period.

I hold a Bachelor of Science (hons), a Master of Environmental Studies, and an Executive Masters of Public Administration. I am currently an accredited person under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act and was accredited previously under the Threatened Species Conservation Act and have held that accreditation continuously since the system was established. I am a longstanding member of the EIANZ and currently serve as secretary of the NSW Branch. I am also a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and have completed their training into the principles of directorship.

I have over 34 years of work experience in the environmental and ecology profession commencing as a scientific officer with the Department of Water Resources, a principal policy officer with the Department of Land and Water Conservation, the Manager Conservation Planning with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Senior Biodiversity Specialist with Roads and Maritime Services. Through these roles I have played a major part in the development and implementation of conservation programs and of the biodiversity assessment and offsetting frameworks in NSW. I have advised on and reviewed environmental and ecological assessments for a full range of projects in either a statutory review role or a project support role.

To assist the committee further I can outline the main roles I have had in the preparation of the Warragamba EIS.

Cardno was contracted in August 2018 to provide peer review services to WaterNSW for Warragamba Dam Raising EIS. The tasks were to assist WaterNSW by reviewing the EIS assessments prepared by the EIS consultant and their consistency with the Secretary's environmental assessment requirements. My specific role was to review the biodiversity assessments.

Cardno was contracted in Jan 2019 until Oct 2019 to assist WaterNSW manage the development of the EIS while the existing WaterNSW officer was on leave. Under this contract, I assisted WaterNSW by coordinating the review of technical reports and EIS chapters, tracking and reporting progress of technical reports and chapters and coordinating meetings between WaterNSW, peer review specialists, stakeholders and the EIS consultants.

From Sep 2020 Cardno was contracted by SMEC (the EIS consultant) to finalise 2 technical reports- the Construction Biodiversity Assessment Report and the Upstream Biodiversity Assessment Reports -for submission to WaterNSW for inclusion in the EIS. As an accredited person under the BC Act who was familiar with the project and the assessment undertaken to date I was requested to take on the role of accredited person for these assessments following the resignation of the SMEC officer allocated to this task in SMEC's EIS team. This role involved reviewing and confirming work undertaken to date (eg field assessment), checking assessments and updating reports.