

**Submission
No 31**

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE
WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL**

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As the author of Nature Heals; an introduction to nature based therapy in Australia and New Zealand, I wrote of my experience working in clinical mental health, as a horticultural/ eco therapist. I saw first hand how many mental health conditions so prevalent in contemporary Australian community are eased, when working with and in nature. The evidence base is also clear how being in nature, particularly wilderness, lowers blood pressure heart rate and levels of stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol. The city of Sydney continues to expand and encroach on green spaces and corridors. The blue mountains is an essential buffer zone for the city of fresh air and beauty. It's world heritage status, fought hard for, ensures that this will remain into the future, despite the increasing population predicted for cities in Australia. It is also our drinking water supply and as such must be protected and treated with extreme care. Flooding the the valleys that flow into it is unthinkable and ill advised. Our wild places are essential and goes to the core of our humanity, our quality of life and wellbeing, and that of the delicate and amazing ecosystems on our cities doorstep.