

**Submission
No 57**

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

Name: Mr Grahame Edwards

Date Received: 30 August 2019

I am completely opposed to the proposal to raise the wall at Warragamba Dam.

Raising the wall of the dam by 14-17 metres will do little for flood mitigation. More than half of flood waters affecting the Hawkesbury region come from the Nepean River and the Grose River, so raising the dam to further control the waters of the Cocks River and Wollondilly River will not eliminate the risk of floods.

Alternative flood management options have additional benefits for western Sydney, including greater safety for the most flood prone residents, better transport, a more vibrant agricultural sector, a healthier environment and improved water security.

What this proposal will do is to drown thousands of hectares along around 65 kilometres of river valleys IN A NATIONAL PARK IN A WORLD HERITAGE LISTED AREA. (Why are we even having this discussion??!!)

It will endanger already vulnerable species and will destroy even more of the sites significant to the local Aboriginal people who have already lost so much due to the dam.

The Government has stated that inundation by sediment-laden flood waters would occur in the World Heritage Area for five weeks at a time [WaterNSW (2016), Warragamba Dam Raising Preliminary Environmental Assessment, page 24. Prepared by BMT WBM Pty Ltd, Sydney.]. Based on WaterNSW published flood levels, up to 4,700 hectares of the World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Parks and 65 kilometres of wilderness streams would be inundated by the 14-metre dam wall raising. [WaterNSW (2016), Warragamba Dam Raising Preliminary Environmental Assessment, page 26. Prepared by BMT WBM Pty Ltd, Sydney.

The wilderness rivers of the southern Blue Mountains form a landscape that has been largely untouched by modern society. The area is home to 48 threatened plant and animal species, ancient river valleys, rare dry rainforests and hundreds of Indigenous cultural sites. The significance of the southern Blue Mountains landscape led it to being included in the World Heritage List in 2000.

The Regent Honeyeater is currently listed as critically endangered. The Burratorang Valley floor, to be inundated by the proposed raising of Warragamba Dam wall, is the most fertile regional habitat and key breeding site for this species [Ross Crates et al. (2018) Submission to the New South Wales Legislative Council's inquiry into the Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba) Bill 2018, Inquiry into Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018.]. Impacts on one habitat (e.g. the Burratorang Valley) cannot be offset by improvements in another due to the rotational use of habitats by the species.

The lower Nattai Valley is home to one of Sydney's refuge koala populations. The valley will be inundated by the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall raising.

The southern Blue Mountains is an extensive and rich cultural landscape belonging to the Gundungurra People. The rivers, waterholes and mountains of the Blue Mountains landscape tell one of the most intact and documented dream-time stories in Australia - the epic battle of tiger cat (Mirrigan) and snake (Gurrangatch) which formed the southern Blue Mountains.

When Warragamba Dam was built in 1960 it resulted in the flooding of a large proportion of the cultural heritage and dreamtime stories of the Gundungurra people. If the dam wall is raised the

remaining sites of this story, including Indigenous archeological sites, creation waterholes and cave art, will be destroyed.

The dam raising is being driven by developer interests on the Hawkesbury-Nepean floodplain. The NSW Government has stated in its principle document advocating the dam proposal that it plans to allow an additional 134,000 people to reside on western Sydney floodplains after the dam is raised [Infrastructure NSW (2017), Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy, page 3.].

The proposal to raise the dam wall is nothing more than an attempt by those with vested interests in land development for profit to further their own commercial agendas. They show complete disregard for the environment and for the Aboriginal people who consider the southern Blue Mountains sacred and significant to their culture.

The dam wall should NOT be raised. The significance of the Blue Mountains National Park and of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area should be respected. the area should be protected and preserved, not destroyed piece by piece by money hungry developers and their supporters.