

**Submission  
No 141**

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

**Name:** Mr Ben Burdett  
**Date Received:** 5 September 2019

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Dear Parliamentary Inquiry,

RE: Raising of Warragamba Dam

I urge the Parliament to reject the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam.

I have followed this proposal for some time now, and the arguments for this project do not stack up.

Notwithstanding the lack of efficacy this project would have in addressing a major flooding event (i.e. about half effective), it has become quite evident that this proposal is mostly concerned with gifting land for development opportunities for political party donors. Land on the floodplain more than tripled in value overnight when this announcement was made, it was bought in 2014 for \$45 million, then sold in 2016 for \$138.8 million:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/raising-nsw-dam-wall-good-for-developers> On top of this, it has even been verbally stated by the Premier herself, that the raising of the Dam would climate change proof the city's water storage. This implies that the dam would be filled to the extended brim, negating its purported purpose!

The above reference to climate change seems to be almost the only time the Premier has mentioned the issue, which is a segue to my second point. NSW is a global deforestation hotspot. We are currently witnessing the distressing destruction of the Amazon rainforest, as well as fires in Africa and fires in the Arctic that are destroying globally important forests that may never recover. That same abhorrent destruction is also happening here, although it's rather more insidious, under this government's tenure. The loss of any more natural bushland, let alone 4700 plus hectares of WORLD HERITAGE LISTED bushland is not acceptable! We are a wealthy and educated country who should be setting an example for addressing the climate and ecological emergency. Instead we are one of the lead lemmings. We should emulate Norway on preserving what's left of the natural world; Norway has banned deforestation.

My third point to raise is indigenous heritage. We are watching VIC Roads push ahead with seeking to bulldoze 800 year old sacred birthing trees, all for a 2 minute time saving measure in Victoria. In QLD, the Labour Government has quietly dissolved native title on the proposed Adani mega mine site. Raising Warragamba Dam and destroying most of the remaining indigenous sites in the catchment is the same cruel and callous mindset that we are seeing in our neighbouring states, and indeed it's the same cruel and callous mindset that has fuelled genocide, displacement and incarceration of indigenous people for 231 years.

I do understand that the threat of a once in 50, and a once in 100 year flood upon Western Sydney is real, now made 30 times more likely due to climate change. It should be noted that the problem has probably not been helped by building up low lying land with the spoil from West Connex. Nevertheless, a solution needs to be found. For the billions that would be spent in raising the dam, could that money not be better spent on initiatives that capture, harness and recycle the water we already have? I.e. a scheme of water tanks for every building - in the Sydney metro where it invariably rains more reliably? Or mandating and retro fitting plumbing to use recycled water to flush toilets? Maybe even recycling all our water like most cities in the world do? If such initiatives were good enough, and the city held more of its own water, then the existing dam level could be deliberately suppressed in order to provide capacity for flood mitigation.

Thank you for considering my submission. I sincerely hope that the parliament sees sense.

Yours faithfully,

Ben Burdett