

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 8 September 2019

Partially
Confidential

Inquiry into the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall

I , would like to make a submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall.

As a person who is deeply concerned for our future and our current environment, and as a person with a strong belief in open and democratic process where a government is responsible for its people and does not favour a select few I hold grave concerns regarding the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. In my view the proposal to raise the dam wall has been deeply flawed. A meeting with traditional owners and concerned citizens were organised and despite being invited by two majors(1) and several people, the NSW government did not attend the meeting. This is not how a democracy should function. Further they have “refused to release any internal documents concerning the impact of the legislation on the National Park” (2a). This shows a distinct disdain and disrespect for an open democratic government and indicates that there are most likely other than stated interests at play. I urge a thorough inquiry into the reasoning behind the proposal and why documents are not made open to scrutiny.

The rising of the dam level risks many unique and valuable natural assets and significant historical sites. The damage done would be irreversible. “For the wall to be raised, the area will be flooded through a “controlled release” of water – which the committee says will cause rivers to become blocked beyond repair.” (5)

Further the government hired SMEC to do the cultural assessment. This is an organisation that has been BANNED by the world bank (3) and the report is of appalling quality and greatly minimises the impact a rising of the dam wall would have on non-white, non-christian sites. These sites form an important part of cultures that predate *any other culture on the planet*. They are of immense significance and yet they barely score a mention in the report (4). It seems that the cultural assessment was written with a predefined goal rather than an actual assessment. Again this shows a strong disdain and disrespect for the democratic process and the people of the state. Further the report is over 2000 pages long and traditional owners were given 40 days to respond (6). That is a very short time to given the complexity of the issue, and totally unacceptable in a democracy.

As detailed above there is a continuing blatant disregard for any advice against rising the wall, which seems to indicate that there are other interests at play. I really urge the inquiry to look specifically at interests not stated and how they may be the real drivers. There seems to be evidence that this is, in part, driven by a need to satisfy large political donors. (7)

1. <https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/media-centre/public-meeting-traditional-owners-call-to-extend-consultation-period-for-dam-proposal>

2. <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/significant-impacts-federal-government-issues-warragamba-wall-alert-20181112-p50fic.html>

2a. Quote from bottom of article 2.

3. <https://www.smh.com.au/business/world-bank-bans-iconic-australian-firm-over-inappropriate-payments-20170929-gyraf8.html>

4. https://www.giveadam.org.au/help_racist_consultants

5. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/nov/15/warragamba-dam-nsw-government-urged-by-own-advisory-panel-to-reconsider-plan>

6. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/aug/14/warragamba-dam-level-report-deadline-too-short-traditional-owners-say>

7. <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/nitv-news/article/2019/02/06/raising-nsw-dam-wall-good-floodplain-developers>