

Submission
No 221

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

Organisation: Canberra Bushwalking Club

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CANBERRA BUSHWALKING CLUB INC.

P.O. Box 160, Canberra City, A.C.T. 2601

8 September 2019

Mr Justin Field, MLC

Chair, Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall

Legislative Council, NSW Parliament House

Macquarie Street, SYDNEY, NSW, 2000

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

The Canberra Bushwalking Club would like to make a submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. Members of the Canberra Bushwalking Club regularly organise bushwalks in the greater Blue Mountains National Park. As frequent visitors, we have an active interest in promoting the Park's considerable environmental values, while ensuring that this is balanced with the needs of the population.

Warragamba Dam is located adjacent to Sydney's untouched Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. It has been reported that this development has an estimated cost of over \$700 million to be funded by taxpayers. However, we feel that the dam wall raising is being promoted by parties wishing to benefit financially through housing development. The NSW Government has said the raising of Warragamba Dam would allow the opening 2,355 hectares of floodplains to housing. This has been estimated to allow an additional 94,000 houses. Even with greater flood mitigation created by the raising of the dam wall, it seems dangerous to open land to development that may be affected by flooding, particularly when we anticipate increasingly extreme weather events. Adding housing below the dam would also create additional pressure on the natural environment in this delicate area.

Warragamba dam has supplied clean drinking water to Sydney for the last 60 years. It was not designed as a flood mitigation dam. Raising the dam will put Sydney's pristine water catchment at risk by causing environmental damage to upstream rivers. Erosion,

dying organic matter and riverbank slumping would add millions of tonnes of sediment into the Warragamba Dam.

Raising Warragamba Dam for would endanger large areas of native bushland. Estimates show that raising the dam would flood 65 kilometres of wild rivers and 4,700 hectares of national parks. The lower Kowmung, Coxs, Natti, Keduma, Wollondilly and Little Rivers would all be drowned underneath sediment-rich dam waters, killing native plants and animals living in these World Heritage valleys. There are 48 threatened plant and animal species that inhabit the area that would be impacted. Species such as the vulnerable Camden White Gum and the Kowmung Hakea are predominantly found in the proposed inundation area. The recreational use of these areas would also be reduced by covering some areas and making other areas less accessible.

As an organisation dedicated to bushwalking and conservation, we hold grave concerns regarding the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall. We see this action as having an enormous detrimental impact on the value of the Blue Mountains.

Yours sincerely

Michael de Raadt

President

Canberra Bushwalking Club