

**Submission
No 251**

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

Name: Mr Joel Robinson
Date Received: 10 September 2019

To whom it may concern,

When I was approached early in 2019 - in my capacity as a filmmaker and longterm Blue Mountains resident - to assist in the production of a video explaining the issues relating to the raising of Warragamba Dam wall, I didn't hesitate. After many years studying the history and environment of the Blue Mountains national park and World Heritage area, the country under threat, as well as its archaeological and cultural value for the Gundungurra and all Australians is quite well known to me. Perhaps you too are aware of some this history - the hunting grounds of a thousand generations of Indigenous inhabitants, including those who were among the first to meet and intermarry with European settlers. During the 1950s their descendants were finally moved out when the first dam wall went up. What little was left to them is now being considered for destruction.

These people can be easy to forget. After two centuries of upheaval and disinheritance there are so few of them. But they remain the custodians of a unique and ancient people and belief system, which is inseparable from the land itself.

However, it is not my place to speak for the Gundungurra - only to express my sadness and outrage that today we could consider displacing them any further than they already have been.

Of course there are numerous other reasons for concern, and each will no doubt be discussed in detail by many qualified individuals; issues with future water quality, with threatened species, and all under the pretence of water security, of which I have seen nothing to convince me.

In the first years of the 20th century conservationists began their campaigns to reserve these now threatened areas in earnest, realising that without them we are all diminished. Read the diaries and letters of people like Myles Dunphy, whose life and work was recently celebrated in an exhibition at the State Library of NSW, and it is clear that a hundred years ago Australians were keen to protect what was fast disappearing. Have we given up on that promise?

I want my children to see these places, to drink fresh water, and to discover the Australia of the Gundungurra.

Nothing I have learnt about this proposal convinces me that its benefits in any way outweighs the losses we face if it goes ahead. As a producer of the Give A Dam film, I encourage you to see it and please consider it a supplement to my submission.

Yours sincerely,

Joel Daniel Robinson.