

**Submission
No 240**

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

Organisation: Wollondilly Shire Council

Date Received: 10 September 2019

Our Reference: TRIM 9855#72 AS

The Chair of the Select Committee
Parliament House
6 Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

10 September 2019

Dear Mr Field MLC,

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

Wollondilly Shire Council advocates for our local community regarding the cultural significance of Aboriginal sites and European Heritage in the Burratorang Valley. Council is concerned that many Aboriginal sites as well as sites of early European heritage may be destroyed as a result of raising the Warragamba Dam. Council is also concerned for the long term biodiversity and ecological impacts, and as such provides the following submission.

The area of inundation as a consequence of proposed raising of the existing wall of Warragamba Dam is entirely located within the Wollondilly Local Government Area LGA). Council provided a submission in May 2017 outlining a range of requested issues to be included in the Standard Secretary Assessment Requirements (SSEAR's) for the proposed Warragamba Dam Raising (Attachment 1)

On behalf of the community and raise concerns of direct reference to Terms of Reference Item (d) for investigation by the Legislative Council Parliamentary Committee (the Committee):

The adequacy of the Environmental Impact Assessment process to date, including the assessment impacts on:

- *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.*
- *Ecological values of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park.*
- *The Warragamba community.*
- *Communities on the Hawkesbury Nepean Floodplain.*

The position and activities of Council in advocating for these concerns, defined by resolutions attached to this submission and summarised below, are requested to be considered by the Committee as part of its investigation into the above ToR item:

Assessment of Ecological values

Council and the community have concerns over the impacts of the proposed dam wall on the word heritage ecological values within the inundation area that includes a number of endangered species and ecological communities. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is noted to have raised similar concerns over the raising of the dam wall and associated extent and frequency of flooding on these values. As such, Council has

resolved at its meeting on 15th July 2019 that the EIS be submitted to this Committee for its consideration at its 2021 meeting.

Assessment of impacts to Aboriginal and European Heritage

Council has received representations from the community which have focused on the loss of Cultural heritage both Gundungurra and European, the impacts to biodiversity and the overall concerns about the impact on the Warragamba Community and the management of such a large project.

Council also respectfully requests that significantly more time and resources be allocated to Aboriginal and early European heritage surveys as part of the dam raising EIS. A comprehensive study should be conducted to identify any remaining Aboriginal and European sites, assess both their cultural significance, and assess any potential impacts from the raising of the dam wall. As such, Council resolved at its meeting on 16 July 2018 “to invite the NSW Premier, relevant Ministers, Gundungurra Representatives and other parties (as per the attached Council resolution) to conduct an inspection with Council of the known sites within the Burrangorang Valley”.

Assessment of impacts to the Warragamba community

Council has previously requested that an analysis and planning for the management of the social and impacts on the towns of Warragamba (and nearby Silverdale), associated with the proposed raising of the dam wall be undertaken during the preparation of the EIS. The major concerns that have been expressed to Council by the Warragamba community recently relate to impacts during the construction phase on the fabric of the village including implications of truck movement given the narrow roads. A Community Forum is in the process of being arranged in partnership with the Blue Mountains City Council in response to a resolution of Council at its meeting on 15th July 2019 to provide a further opportunity for the expressing of concerns by the local community.

It is understood that a Public Hearing is scheduled to be held on 20th November 2019 as part of the Inquiry. Council would appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Committee in support of issues raised in its resolutions attached to this submission.

Please contact Council’s Manager Environmental Outcomes,

regarding this submission

for any enquiries

Yours faithfully

Matthew Deeth
Mayor

ATTACHMENT 1**LIST OF COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS OF RELEVANCE TO THE INQUIRY****16 July 2018**

Notice of Motion No. 4 submitted by Cr Gould on 12 July 2018 regarding the threat to Indigenous sites from the raising of Warragamba Dam

151/2018 Resolved on the motion of Crs Gould and Hannan:

1. *That Council notes the majority of Gundungurra sites in and around Burragorang Valley were destroyed as a result of the construction of Warragamba Dam. Further that Council recognises the cultural and historical significance of the remaining Gundungurra sites in and around Burragorang Valley and notes that these sites are particularly precious given how much of Indigenous heritage in this area has already been destroyed.*

2. *That Council notes many of these indigenous sites, as well as sites of early European heritage in the Valley may be destroyed as a result of the raising of Warragamba Dam.*

3. *That Council write to the NSW Government calling for significantly more time and resources be allocated to the Indigenous heritage studies as part of the dam raising EIS to allow for a comprehensive study to identify remaining Gundungurra sites and assess both their cultural significance and any potential impacts from the dam raising.*

4. *That Council offer the opportunity to a Gundungurra representative to make a presentation at a special Community Forum and an invitation be made to all the candidates for the next State election.*

5. *That Council seek a meeting with the Hon Niall Blair regarding this matter.*

6. *That Council liaise with WaterNSW and Gundungurra representatives to seek an inspection of the known sites within the Valley that may be impacted by the dam raising and invite the following:*

- The Hon Gladys Berejiklian*
- The Hon Niall Blair*
- The Hon Gabrielle Upton*
- The Hon Sarah Mitchell*
- The Hon Luke Foley*
- The Hon Penny Sharpe*
- The Hon Chris Minns*
- The Hon Malcolm Turnbull*
- The Hon Nigel Scullion*
- The Hon Josh Frydenberg*

- The Hon Bill Shorten*
- The Hon Tony Burke*

- The Hon Rachel Siewert*
- The Hon Richard Di Natale*
- The Hon Angus Taylor*
- The Hon Jai Rowell*

On being put to the meeting the motion was declared CARRIED.

Vote: Crs Banasik, Briggs, Deeth, Gould, Hannan, Landow and Lowry

15 May 2017

NOM 1 Notice of Motion No. 4 submitted by Cr Gould on 12 May 2017 regarding the Warragamba Dam Wall

95/2017 Resolved on the Motion of Crs Gould and Hannan:

- 1. That Council seek to be an active participant in any plans or discussions relating to the raising of Warragamba Dam wall, and that we lobby on an ongoing basis to ensure there are no significant negative impacts on any of our communities if it proceeds.*
- 2. That councillors be given a briefing on the proposal and its possible impacts within Wollondilly Shire, including any socioeconomic, environmental and/or indigenous heritage concerns.*
- 3. That after the briefing Council seeks out an appointment with the Minister for Water to discuss their concerns including reopening the dam wall for tourism.*
- 4. That Council investigates any particular implications regarding access to Yerranderie.*

On being put to the meeting the motion was declared CARRIED.

Vote: Crs Banasik, Briggs, Khan, Deeth, Law, Lowry, Landow, Hannan and Gould

15 October 2018

16.1 NOTICE OF MOTION - RAISING WARRAGAMBA DAM

RESOLUTION 53/2018

Moved: Cr Simon Landow

Seconded: Cr Matthew Gould

- 1. That Council write to the NSW Premier condemning the recent National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 amendment to allow the World Heritage Listed Blue Mountains National Park to be flooded with the raising of Warragamba Dam.*
- 2. That Council consider allocating as an urgent priority at the next Council Meeting sufficient funding to launch a public education campaign about the Burratorang Valley, and the loss of hundreds of hectares of Sydney's Food Bowl and what will be lost.*
- 3. That Council writes to the NSW Labour opposition asking for support to assist the campaign and also that we seek support from our local Wollondilly State candidates for the upcoming State election.*
- 4. That Council write to adjoining/affected Councils seeking their support to assist with*

the campaign.

On being put to the meeting the motion was declared CARRIED. 7/0

In Favour: Crs Robert Khan, Michael Banasik, Blair Briggs, Matthew Deeth, Matthew Gould,

Simon Landow and Noel Lowry

Against: Nil

19 November 2018 MAYORAL MINUTE

The proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres is of significant concern to the local community due to the large scale detrimental cultural and biodiversity impacts. In July of this year a representative of the Gundungurra peoples approached Council concerning the threats to Aboriginal and early European sites posed by the raising of the dam water levels. After listening to the Gundungurra representatives and other Wollondilly residents, Council is concerned that many Aboriginal sites as well as sites of early European heritage will be severely impacted or destroyed by the increased inundation resulting from the raising of the Warragamba Dam. In July, Council invited the Premier & relevant Ministers, Gundungurra Representatives and other parties to inspect the area and to date no response has been received. Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes 19 November 2018 Page 13 The community's concern is that the current archaeological survey has covered only a fraction of known archaeological and historic sites. There should be a comprehensive study to identify any remaining Aboriginal and European sites, assess their cultural significance and assess any potential impacts from the dam raising. Council believes the filling of Lake Burragorang behind the Warragamba Dam caused the destruction of many Gundungurra sites in the Burragorang Valley and early European sites were also affected. This proposed new impact will result in the destruction of the Macarthur family's Jerrilands Homestead, an important historic location. Council also has concerns for the impacts on biodiversity within the Burragorang Valley and wider Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. These concerns include the inundation of an additional 1800 square kilometres within catchment lands, some of these areas are World Heritage listed National Parks. The impacts include sedimentation, erosion and invasion of exotic plants as well as the temporary destruction of habitat for both fauna and flora with unknown long term impacts. Over 65 kilometres of wilderness watercourses inundated and 48 Threatened Species effected temporarily or in the longer term by the retained waters. Council will continue to advocate that significantly more time and resources be allocated to both the Aboriginal and early European heritage survey as well as further investigation into the biodiversity impacts as part of the dam raising.

16 July 2018

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2. That Council notes many of these indigenous sites, as well as sites of early European heritage in the Valley may be destroyed as a result of the raising of Warragamba Dam.
3. That Council write to the NSW Government calling for significantly more time and resources be allocated to the Indigenous heritage studies as part of the dam raising EIS to allow for a comprehensive study to identify remaining Gundungurra sites and assess both their cultural significance and any potential impacts from the dam raising.
4. *That Council offer the opportunity to a Gundungurra representative to make a presentation at a special Community Forum and an invitation be made to all the candidates for the next State election.*
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