

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

Name: Ms Margot Turner

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Submission for Your Consideration

Inquiry into the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall

Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission

Justin Field (IND, LC Member), Rod Roberts (PHON, LC Member), Trevor Khan (NAT, LC Member), Shayne Mallard (LIB, LC Member), Taylor Martin (LIB, LC Member), Adam Searle (ALP, LC Member), Penny Sharpe, ALP, LC Member)

From Margot Turner

9 September 2019

I have been a resident of the Blue Mountains for over thirty years and I have put together this submission because I am deeply concerned about the significant impact the raising of the Warragamba dam wall would have on the environmental and cultural heritage of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

I have been a participant in the Bunburang walk run by the Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Incorporated (GAHAI) across the Blue Mountains along ancestral pathways three times. The experience of the walk moved me so much that I collaborated with GAHAI on an exhibition about the walk. I shared the excitement of the first group to walk from the Megalong Valley to the Nepean River along the ancestral pathways in 2013. These pathways are rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage and encourage us to slow down and connect with where we live. It would be a tragic loss to see these songlines damaged and disrespected.

Three key activities which have taken me into the area which will be affected by the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall:

- Working as a volunteer in 2013 to document the effects of feral pigs on the endangered *Eucalyptus benthami* in the Kedumba Valley
- Participating in Bunburang walks across the Blue Mountains along ancestral pathways
- Curating the *Gundungurra Ancestral Pathways: Bunburang Mandoorang Exhibition* 2015 in partnership with the Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Inc (GAHAI) (see below)

MY CONCERNS relate to your TERMS OF REFERENCE (c) and (d)

(c) engagement between the NSW Government and the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in relation to the project,

It is my understanding that the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam Wall already threatens the legal status of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area itself

- in July 2019 the World Heritage Committee requested that Australia submit the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed wall raising to it for review before any final approvals be made

I support the request of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to review the EIS for the proposed wall raising before any final approvals be made

(d) the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Assessment process to date, including the assessment of impacts on:

(i) World Heritage,

as previously stated I am concerned that the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage status itself is threatened by the proposed raising of the dam wall

(ii) Aboriginal Cultural Heritage,

- I am concerned that Aboriginal custodians of the land be involved at all stages of EIS, to date this does not appear to have happened
- I am aware that the proposed raising of the dam wall will severely impact Gundungurra rock art sites, ceremonial sites and scar trees, deeply affecting the whole area which is covered by a creation story. I am also aware that these sites are so important that they have been proposed for recognition as an Aboriginal Place.
- The Blue Mountains Conservation Society has recently written to the Federal Minister for the Environment requesting that the Commonwealth seek inclusion in the world heritage listing for the additional criteria of Aboriginal heritage that these sites possess.
- Please refer to Attachment to final report to the *Community Heritage and Icons Grant* from the recipient Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association Incorporated for evidence of Cultural Heritage which would be affected by the raising of the Warragamba dam wall and was displayed in the exhibition

I support the involvement of Aboriginal custodians of lands affected at all stages of the decision-making process

I do not support the raising of the dam wall as I believe it will have a significant impact on significant Aboriginal sites and creation story

(iii) ecological values of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park,

- I am aware that the vulnerable Eucalyptus Benthami (Camden White Gum) and the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater are among species which will be threatened by the proposed raising of the dam wall.
- I believe that the biodiversity of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage needs to be conserved in situ.

I do not support the raising of the dam wall as I believe it will have a significant impact on the biodiversity of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

Supporting evidence

[Walking Along Gundungurra Ancestral Pathways:
Bunburang Maroodang exhibition 2015](#)

The Exhibition, a multi-media installation, was held at the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Centre in November 2015. It was part of a broader celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. The installation included 3 large and 2 small video installations, 25 professionally framed and printed A2 photographic images, a selection of journal writings from the 2013 walk, poetry, paintings and carvings/sculptures created by walkers and crew in response to the walk. It gave over 1000 visitors a taste of the Bunburang walkers' experience walking ancestral pathways in Gundungurra country.

Skills and knowledge passed on through the exhibition included:

- the Bunburang and Gurrangatch dreamtime stories (words, indigenous carving/sculpture)
- traditional fire lighting techniques (tools and video)
- traditional canoe building techniques (canoe on display)

Feedback from visitors included: "Fascinating exhibit". "Absolutely wonderful." "Breathtaking in every sense of the word." "Thank you so much for sharing beautiful connection." "Thanks for taking us on part of your journey in country through this exhibition" and "Beautifully done - an impressive and thoughtful display" and "Makes you appreciate how lucky we are to live in this part of the world."

"The Bunburang Maroodang exhibition reminds us how important quiet, peaceful reflection and presence is to the heirs of the Gundungarra tradition and all of us who sense our affinity with them, even in the natural areas closest to the populated parts of the mountains."

What we learn from the Bunburang Maroodang exhibition, Don Morison, Hut News, Blue Mountains Conservation Society # 332, December 2015/January 2016.

Please take time to peruse the exhibition overview on the following pages.

Bunburang Maroodang

Mountain dragon walking along the track

an exhibition about walking across the Blue Mountains along Gundungurra Ancestral Pathways as told through the images, words and creative responses of Bunburang walkers and crew

Come in, look around, feel free to talk to us about the exhibition

Thank you for visiting



Bark wall, Bryden Williams; *White pipe clay hand stencils*, Daniel Chalker and Michael Jackson (Photo Bryden Williams 2015)



1 *Bunburang – rankinia dimensis* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2013

beginnings

1 *Ancestors watching – can you see them?* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2013



2 *Rock drawing I& III* Photos, giclée print on cotton rag, Wyn Jones 2013: *Rock drawing II*

Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Bryden Williams 2015



3 *Cleansing smoke*, Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Jacqueline Reid 2015



4 *Stone Axe* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2014



5 *Man in Country* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2013

crossings



6 *Climbing Mun-mee (Mt Solitary)* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2013



7 *Creek Crossing* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2013



8 *Rocky Outcrop* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2014



9 *Biroogooroo (Reedy Creek)* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Wyn Jones 2013

reflection



10 *Xanthorea Pause* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2014

gunyung-ga-lung - far past times

Bunburang – bringing fire to the hearth

Bunburang didgeridoo grey box, pyrography, 2013;



Dyirrawity (black snake) tree root, ochre 2015;

Munggadang (Blue tongue lizard ancestor) blue gum and pyrography, 2015

All by Steve McCarthy (Photos Margot Turner 2015)



Bunburang Scar Tree bark from various trees; Daniel Chalker, Bunburang walkers & crew, 2015 (Photo Bryden Williams 2015)

Long ago, Bunburang stole fire

from Dyirrawity (black snake ancestor) & Munggadang (Blue tongue lizard ancestor), spreading fire across the land, bringing a share of it to all. Source: RH Mathews, 1908



Kedumba waters Video compilation, 7.42 minutes; Bryden Williams 2015

Gurrangatch Read the creation story here in *Sacred Waters* (book on lectern)

Gurrangatch Carving, Den Barber, after hearing Auntie Sharyn tell the story of Gurrangatch at Battleship Tops 2009

Bark canoe, Stringy bark, GAHAI project 2013



(Photos Bryden Williams 2015)

reflection (cont)



11 *Kedumba Reflections* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2015



12 *Karrikatti Pause* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Bryden Williams 2015

celebrating culture



13 *Gumbee Warroo (around the campfire)* I Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser- Glass 2014



14 *Gumbee Warroo (around the campfire)* II Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser- Glass 2014

Gumbee Warroo Kedumba Video, 5:16 minutes, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2014



Clapsticks Made from sustainably harvested timbers during each walk 2013, 2014, 2015, all walkers – led by Daniel Chalker (Photo Bryden Williams 2015)

sharing



15 *Respectful harvest* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Jacqueline Reid 2015



16 *Man of the Blue Gums* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2013



17 Archaeologist sharing pathways Photo, giclee print on cotton rag, Wyn Jones 2014



18 Bunburang Custodian Sharyn Halls Photo Michael Jackson, 2013

Not pictured

Stone Tools Pebbles from Coxes River Cutting tools made from similar stone, Courtesy GAHAI



Fire Tools Hakea, woody pear, pounded stringy bark, xanthorea stalk, paper bark, video, Steve McCarthy 2014, 2015



Bushwalking urn Turned wood, used to collect ash from celebratory bushwalks in the greater blue mountains world heritage area, including Bunburang trail ashes in 2014, Wyn Jones

connecting with community



19 *Erskine Dance* Photos, giclée print on cotton rag, Wyn Jones 2013



20 *Generations* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2014



21 *We Did It!* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Jacqueline Reid 2015

connecting to country



22 *Cave Dream* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Yvonne Kaiser-Glass 2014



23 *Becoming country* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Michael Jackson 2014



24 *Big Tree* Photo, giclée print on cotton rag, Wyn Jones 2014



Kedumba Dawn Video, 5:06 minutes, Bryden Williams 2015

creative response

painting, writing, music and spoken word



Bunburang Journal Entries Bunburang walkers and crew 2013 *Bunburang I* Ochre and acrylic on canvas, Wayne Brennan 2013 *Bunburang II* Ochre and acrylic on canvas, Wayne Brennan 2013 *Six languages* Ochre and acrylic on canvas, Wayne Brennan 2013 *Dingo* Found objects, ochre and acrylic on canvas, Steve McCarthy 2014

Who were we? poem written after Bunburang Trail, Wyn Jones 2014

Ah whiteman Audio recording of Wyn Jones reciting Denis Kevans' poem, as recited on Trail in 2013



Bunburang Medley - Totems Video recording, 00:49 , Wyn Jones, on Bunburang Trail 2015

carving, sculpture



Kedumba Treasures Found objects, Sharyn Halls 2013



Bunburang Message stick Coachwood, Daniel Chalker & Bunburang team, 2014

Thank you again for considering my submission.

Margot Turner September 8 2019