

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

**Name:** Name suppressed  
**Date Received:** 10 September 2019

---

Partially  
Confidential

10 September 2019

Mr Justin Field, MLC

Chair

Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall

Legislative Council

NSW Parliament House

Macquarie St

SYDNEY NSW 2000

### **Inquiry into the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall**

Please find below my submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. I am writing this as a concerned citizen, who lives in the Blue Mountains due to its World Heritage natural and cultural heritage. I feel that raising the Warragamba Dam wall would be grossly compounding the planning errors of the past rather than looking for a sustainable planning and policy approach based on a genuine understanding of the values of this region.

I am an environmental scientist and planner, close to 20 years ago I worked with the (now defunct) Upper Parramatta River Catchment Trust and Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Trust. Even at the time we were highly concerned at the lack of foresight and planning in decision-making regarding development within the river floodplains. Greed, political expediency and wilful ignorance meant clear scientific advice and legislative guidelines were ignored.

Raising the dam wall will not reduce significant risk to people and property that are currently residing in vulnerable areas. Indeed, it is likely to greatly increase risks as property developers see this project as an opportunity for a further land grab. It is dangerous and short-sighted.

This is however only one of the many reasons I am against the prospect of raising the Warragamba Dam wall. Probably my greatest concern is the impact of inundation on significant threatened vegetation communities, flora and faunal habitat as well as on known (and unknown) sites of indigenous cultural significance. I share the concern of the Colong Foundation regarding (term of reference 1d(iii)) regarding the ecological impacts of this project will have on the Greater Blue Mountains National Park and how it has been assessed to date.

UNESCO has stated about that "*such inundation of any areas within the [Blue Mountains] property is likely to impact on its outstanding universal value (OUV).*" Given the state of our environment and increasing threats to our ecological support systems, it is essential that we stop the further destruction of key natural sites. The dam wall raising would inundate

65 kilometres of local streams and impact 4,7000 hectares of the Blue Mountains National Park. This result for a solution that will be ineffective in protecting property and people – look at the alternatives and protect our environment for future generations.

I am equally concerned about the disrespect shown to the First Australians through the EIS process. One of the joys of living in the Blue Mountains is the level of intersection with Gundungarra Traditional Owners and their culture. It is a rich and sacred history which they share with the local community.

The level of consultation with indigenous Australians was manifestly inadequate and the options put forward to protect their cultural heritage insulting, particularly given their personal mandate to 'care for country'. Raising the dam wall will destroy Indigenous archaeological sites, creation waterholes and cave art, blotting out their Dreamtime landscape canvas.

I call on the Inquiry to recommend that no further development is permitted on the Hawkesbury-Nepean floodplain and to implement international best-practice flood management practices, as put forward by the Australian National University, to ensure the safety of existing communities.

Yours Sincerely,