

**Submission
No 63**

**INQUIRY INTO RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF,
NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN
NSW**

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As a NSW resident for all my 54 years, working in cities and rural and regional areas, I am very concerned that the NSW government is fast tracking water infrastructure in NSW without due or proper process.

I lived and worked on properties near Boorowa and Cowra and have heard that local communities have not been properly informed about why or how the works are necessary nor how it will benefit them. Many believe the raising of Wyangala Dam wall will benefit few in the community, namely large irrigators and negatively impact on water supplies for graziers, small irrigators and tourism operators.

There has been no proper EIS or other assessment of effects downstream of Wyangals Dam. There has to be a more complete assessment including water quality from flooding upstream vegetation and inputs of organic matter, effects on aboriginal cultural or heritage sites. A full and current survey needs to be undertaken before any works proceed on this or any of the other infrastructure projects to avoid destruction of these important and irreplaceable NSW assets and/or compensation and remediation costs that will Make these projects even more expensive.

Local communities are worried that the costs of these infrastructure projects far outweigh the benefits or the price of the water delivered. I was in Cowra in the 1990s drought and a higher dam wall would have made no difference to the water availability to local farmers and graziers. Local wetlands, including internationally recognised RAMSAR Wetlands play an important role in water purification, sediment filtering, amenity and climate cooling in our regional areas, along with protection of native plants and wildlife. Dams and weirs will deprive wetlands of water leading to degradation and putrefaction resulting in fish and other animal deaths like we saw in the last drought. Wetland plants need water to maintain stream bank stability, avoiding erosion and sedimentation that is very costly to remedy. Flooding upstream due to dams and weirs will kill centuries old river red gums, and other important vegetation causing further erosion and water quality decline.

The Darling River Western Weirs project has no EIS at all. This is unacceptable at a time when our water resources are at crisis point.

The business cases and hydrological modelling reports for Wyangala and Dungowan Dams need to be made public immediately and before any works commence. Is there feasibility studies for these dams as I cannot find any?

Construction on all these projects should not begin until proper and comprehensive public consultation has been carried out, information compiled and assessed and local and independent scientific feedback taken into consideration and acted upon.

If more work was done by the NSW government on credit allocation, there would not be any need for these expensive infrastructure projects. There's a reason why NSW has not had any significant water infrastructure projects since the 1980s, they do not deliver the promised outcomes and are not cost effective.