

**Submission
No 79**

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

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NSW Dams Enquiry.

The construction of new dams and weirs, the increasing of the capacity in dams and the alterations in water storage arrangements, are all projects that have substantial and permanent effects.

Impacts are far reaching economically, socially and, critically, environmentally.

Water management in NSW is complex with impacts both within the State as well as downstream across the State border.

It is vital that all water infrastructure works receive comprehensive scrutiny. Not just in terms of the business case and social considerations but most importantly in terms of environmental impacts.

With the effects of climate change water is becoming even more vital across the landscape. River health, floodplain complexity, our responsibilities for Ramsar Wetlands, that support critical ecosystems and migratory bird habitat, must be met.

With adequate water the environmental health of the landscape is ultimately of comprehensive benefit, socially and economically.

More efficient use of water should be a prime objective.

It is, therefore, absolutely essential that a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment is undertaken for every project prior to any decision making.....which has not been the case in this instance.

Decisions are being made - and, indeed, have been made - regarding dams and water infrastructure without business cases, without Environmental Impact Assessments, without proper public consultation processes and, thus, proper consideration of the full social and environmental impacts.

This is economically and socially irresponsible, it is potentially environmentally disastrous.

It is of paramount importance that full and complete assessment procedures are undertaken and heeded before any further decisions or work proceeds on these water infrastructure projects.

Rosie White
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