

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

Name: Name suppressed
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Partially
Confidential

This submission is in regard to the Wambuul-Macquarie River Reregulating Storage project. I live on Tubbagah land at Dubbo, and these are some of my objections to the project:

- Reducing the amount of water for the environment: Inflows from the Talbragar, Bell and Little Rivers, could be captured by this project, taking water currently allocated to the environment and giving it to a small number of irrigators. There needs to be consistent rules across the Murray Darling Basin that protect all types of environmental water from extraction. Even though there will be small increase in water available to the general security environment account, the environment will have much less water due to capturing these tributary flows.
- “Rainfall rejection” is the supposed rationale for this project; if WaterNSW deducted the volume of water a customer ordered, and not want they pumped, the project wouldn’t be needed.
- Cost to the public: The public need to be told the cost of the project. This has not been revealed to date. The structure will only benefit a small minority (general security license holders) of the public.
- Transparency: The final business case will not be made public, despite a public promise from the Member for Dubbo Dugald Saunders MP.
- Cultural desecration: A registered Aboriginal heritage site will be destroyed.
- A fishway is needed, but not a regulating structure: WaterNSW have had a legal obligation to construct a fishway at Gin Gin since 2011. The design has been done. WaterNSW should just install a fishway and reinforce the current Gin Gin weir instead of constructing a very large expensive new dam
- Town water security: Towns like Warren and Carinda will be at an increased risk of the river running dry again
- Losses of native fish populations: The habitat of native fish listed as endangered and critically endangered under the NSW Fisheries Management Act and the Federal EPBC Act will be significantly impacted. One of the last remaining significant Murray Cod breeding sites on the Macquarie is immediately downstream of the proposed dam. Upstream of the proposed dam, the 30km weir pool would mean a loss of riffle zones, snag habitat, and the inundation of spawning and recruitment sites. The still water of the weir pool will also cause Murray Cod eggs to sink and die. Native Fish in the Macquarie River are already listed as an Endangered Ecological Community. Meanwhile, transforming a moving part of the river to a still pool will suit carp and mosquito fish.
- Impact on the Macquarie Marshes: There will be drier conditions downstream, including the Macquarie Marshes. The Marshes are internationally significant and have Ramsar listed wetlands which Australia has a legal obligation to protect. A notice of “change of ecological character” was issued in 2010 because the condition of the Macquarie Marshes had deteriorated so much. The main reason for the notice was a change in flow regimes.