

Submission  
No 97

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

**Organisation:** Lachlandcare Inc  
**Date Received:** 22 September 2020

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Submission to the Inquiry into the rationale for, and or impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW. On behalf of LachLandcare Incorporated.

LachLandcare was formed in 2009 when the Lachlan Catchment Management Authority was wound up with the purpose of continuing the good work of the LCMA and providing a support network and conduit of communication for all Landcare groups in the Lachlan Valley. An active board remains today and our purpose is to maintain resilient landscapes and communities across the whole Lachlan Valley.

Several of our member Landcare groups have expressed concern about various issues regarding the raising of the wall of Wyangala Dam. These concerns will be listed as brief dot points for consideration by your committee.

1. Many remnant trees that are valuable bird and reptile habitat will be lost due to inundation by the new dam. Has Water NSW made allowances to fund Landcare to start new and offset plantings to address this issue.
2. The proposal represents a step-change for the hydrology and ecosystem function of the whole Lachlan Valley. The public must see environmental impact assessment of changes in overland flows, flood events, recharge of downstream groundwater systems, these assessments are currently unavailable. Hydrological modelling of issues for groundwater dependent ecosystems, consumptive groundwater users including irrigators and critical town water supplies must be included.
3. The EPBC (Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999) referral is only limited to the immediate footprint of the project with no acknowledgement of potential downstream impacts (environmental, economic or social). If a larger dam means less flood events many wetland systems dependent on flooding will be impacted. Major bird breeding events in the Ramsar declared Great Cumbung Swamp, the Lachlan Swamp and the Booligal Wetlands in the lower Lachlan will be impacted.
4. A business case or cost/benefit analysis for the project is unavailable from Water NSW. The plan to spend \$650 million in public funds to secure an additional 21GL of water is \$31000/ML. Have alternate water efficiency measures, such as Total Channel Control, been investigated to provide similar benefits/water savings. Will part/all costs be passed on to consumptive users and valley communities?

5. Has climate modelling been done to analyse how often the dam will be full above the current 100% level with predicted lower rainfall and inflow patterns.
6. The project has been unnecessarily listed within the NSW Water Supply (Critical Needs) Act 2019 under Schedule 3. However, no towns on the Lachlan have been listed under Schedule 2 that require critical human needs to be addressed in the form of critical town or locality water supply development. The Lachlan did not enter level 4 drought measures during summer 2019/20.

Lachlandcare also wishes to go on the record as being in full support of the submissions of Hovells Creek Landcare, The Lachlan Floodplain and Wetlands Group and The Inland Rivers Network. All of whom we have networked with to ensure the issues relating to the raising of Wyangala Dam are properly assessed.

Yours faithfully

Chair - Lachlandcare