

**Submission
No 105**

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

Name: Cr Mark Rodda
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Background

The proposed new Dungowan dam will yield 22.5 gigalitres, 16.5 gigalitres more than the extant dam, with five gigalitres to be set aside for primary production and with the pipeline is proposed to cost \$484 million dollars, making it one of the most expensive dam proposals in the State of NSW. The proposal will impact 207 Ha of land including the proposed new pipeline.

Keypoints

I am cautious about supporting the proposed new Dungowan dam for the following reasons:

1. The National Party plan to attenuate for water mismanagement around the State by rushing new dam proposals that are both costly, may yield very little and deliver very little water security for the residents the dams are proposed to benefit.
2. No business case, cost benefit analysis or Environmental Impact Statement has yet been produced for the proposed Dungowan dam while the Government proposes to turn the first sod and fast-track the dam which is a grave mistake.
3. No community consultation on the investment of \$484 million of taxpayer's money on the Dungowan dam project.
4. No advice about ownership of the new dam – Tamworth Regional Council or WaterNSW. If the latter will that organisation simply sell surplus water to customers elsewhere without consideration of the water security needs of residents and business in Tamworth city, Kootingal or Moonbi.
5. The recent 2016 completion of the augmentation of Chaffey dam of an additional 38.5 gigalitres did not improve Tamworth's water security in the most recent drought because water allocation policy in the Peel valley is based on the drought of record prior to 2010. Many current National party politicians claimed that the augmentation of Chaffey dam would "Secure Tamworth's future". The current Minister for Water, Melinda Pavey claims that a new Dungowan dam would "secure Tamworth's longer-term water future". I believe this is false.
6. No alternative water security options or more beneficial regional investment projects have been considered, including a pipeline from Keepit dam or Split Rock dam or a pipeline closer to Gunnedah to tap into the Great Artesian Basin which may represent far more cost-effective alternatives.
7. The principles of full cost recovery will render Dungowan dam water the most expensive in the State. Peel Valley residents already pay significantly more than any other resident in the State for raw water. There has been no consultation about who will for the maintenance of the new dam or impacts on water charges and price for licence holders.
8. Water security for Tamworth City, Kootingal and Moonbi residents could be enhanced by water recycling (potable water reuse) and rainwater tanks for all households. State Government must progress water recycling for parched rural areas.
9. There is no justification for the project to be designated as Critical State Significant Development under the NSW Water Supply (Critical Needs) Act 2019 and to be fast-tracked particularly without exhausting cheaper alternatives and without proving that it would secure Tamworth's water future.
10. There is a lack of transparency and accountability surrounding the management of our precious water resources around the State and the people of NSW have a right to know how their resources are managed and who are the beneficiaries of water management decisions made by the

Government including the beneficiaries of the new Dungowan dam. Requests for information about water management to WaterNSW or Minister Pavey frequently fail.

11. Further loss of natural flows will impact the health of the Peel River, endangered fish species, such as Murray Cod and other river creatures, such as platypus and turtles. The enlarged inundation area may impact important Aboriginal cultural heritage sites, threatened bushland and threatened plants and animals.

12. Additional water capture in the Peel Valley will impact water security in the Namoi and connectivity with the Barwon-Darling system. Capture of more water in the Murray-Darling Basin will hinder the objectives of the current Basin Plan.

I would be available to appear at the Inquiry.

Mark Rodda