

**Submission  
No 118**

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

**Name:** Dr John Bardsley  
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Dear Inquiry Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission re proposed new dams in the Murray Darling Basin in N.S.W.

For 45 years my family and I have been regular visitors on camping trips to the Darling, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan, Murray and Macquarie Rivers. When we first started our explorations in the 1970s the Darling was a healthy, beautiful, flowing river. Fine for summer swimming and productive fishing. We camped at Pooncarie, Menindee, Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett, Collarenabri, Mungindi, and Goondawindee.

It is appalling to observe the destruction of this magnificent river over the last few decades caused by the lack of water flowing through the system, causing ecosystem collapse.

The tip of this iceberg has been dramatically shown by the massive summer fish kills, diminished or absent flows in the Darling, and severe blue-green algal blooms. Diminished flows are caused by diminished inflows into the system predicated mainly by climate change and excessive extraction by big irrigators.

New dams will not create one extra ml. of new water, and if allowed to proceed will create a swathe of new environmental and societal problems.

The expansion of the Wyangala Dam on the Lachlan River is estimated to cost \$650 million for an estimated long term yield of 21 gigalitres, which is up to 30 times the price of water on the open water market. It is unreasonable to expect the tax payers of Australia to bank roll the irrigators to this extent.

If the Macquarie re-regulating weir downstream of the Burrendung Dam were to proceed the water would back up for 30 kilometres flooding ancient riparian red gums, sacred aboriginal sites, altering the ecosystem of the river, interfering with native fish breeding, and creating an ideal habitat for carp. The unrestricted inflows from those tributaries upstream from the Macquarie re-regulating weir to the Burrendung Dam would be entrapped and diminish natural flows into the RAMSAR listed Macquarie Marshes downstream. The negative impact on tourism that this would cause is obvious, as would be the impact on the marshes for the 100's of 1000's of birds that use them for breeding.

Each of the proposed dams would, if built, have a deleterious impact on indigenous 'country' which has never been ceded. Without consent of the Traditional Owners further damming would be just another step in cultural genocide.

The problem with the Murray Darling Basin is not how to store more water for big irrigators but how to achieve environmental flows in a man made climate producing less water.

Yours sincerely,

John Bardsley