

**Submission
No 124**

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

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My wife and I are the owners of _____, a farm with about 1km of river frontage on the upper reaches of Wyangala Dam on the Lachlan River. We have been there for 20 years.

We have grave concerns about the project:

1. the incredibly tight timetable detailing the construction process. If this sets the standard for future consultation and assessment I have very serious doubts about stakeholders being given anything remotely resembling a fair hearing. In short it seems it is a done deal and we, who have devoted much of our lives and resources to our properties, will simply be collateral damage.

2. the timeline and processes to present a Business Case Study and the EIS are vague and according to presentations made last week to meetings of local land owners will be run in conjunction with preliminary construction works. At the moment the height of the wall addition has not even been determined enyet preliminary construction works are proceeding. Surely the entire process lacks direction, determination and cohesion.

3. Fogg's Crossing Road provides the only access for many farms on the southern side of the dam/river. The stated increase in capacity will destroy large sections of the road rendering it unusable. How will landholders with farms on Fogg's Crossing Road access what is left of their properties.

4. If the dam wall is raised by 10m (an additional 1.5 Sydney Harbour's in volume) and the dam is full what happens when we then receive a 1 in 100 rain event (and make no mistake we will!)? Villages and infrastructure upstream of the dam would be utterly destroyed. More concerning is what would happen to major regional centres down-stream including Cowra, Canowindra and Forbes. There is potential for an event of similar scale to the Wivenhoe Dam catastrophe in the Lockyer Valley. Lives, livelihoods, houses, stock and infrastructure would be lost. The 1 in 10 event in 2010 saw residents of Reid's Flat evacuated from their roof tops by rescue helicopter.

5. Does the project cost of \$650m include the purchase of reclaimed properties and the provision of a new access road to replace Fogg's Crossing Road as well as the loss of any future earning capacity as a result of property loss? If the road is to be re-routed how does it affect the value of landholders' properties? Where will the re-routed road run?

6. The Dam has only been full twice in the 40 years since the last wall raising. The catchment area will not change. Where is the economic logic of the project?

7. Has a study of the long term weather patterns generated by climate change been incorporated into the feasibility study on the viability of the project?

8. The loss of biodiversity if the project goes ahead is my major concern. Many land holders have invested a great deal of time and money in conserving the predominant Box Gum Grassy Woodlands habitat. In 2017 we spent over \$4000 on fencing for habitat protection. We have just spent \$8,000 constructing a kilometre of fencing to preserve remnant BBGW on a third of our property. We are about to spend a further \$2000 replacing trees. This ecosystem only last month had it's status elevated to CRITICALLY ENDANGERED from Endangered. This determination has come from the NSW Dept of Planning Industry and Environment. (See the link below for the full determination). The raising of the wall will destroy a large and irreplaceable tract of BBGW with no viable offset. It is habitat for a huge range of endangered bird and animal species.

9. Any EIS should be carried out by an independent organisation that is arms length of Government.

10. What role did lobbyists of the almond and cotton industries as well as water traders play in the decision to raise the wall?

Determination of status of BGGW as Critically Endangered.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/threatened-species/nsw-threatened-species-scientific-committee/determinations/final-determinations/2020/white-box-yellow-box-critically-endangered-ecological-community-listing>