

Submission
No 148

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

Organisation: Bathurst Community Climate Action Network

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Inquiry into the rationale for, and impacts of, new dams and other water infrastructure in NSW
We are writing to you on behalf of the Bathurst Community Climate Action Network (BCCAN), a local group of 270 people which seeks to create awareness of climate change, local environmental and natural heritage issues.

BCCAN has a number of concerns about the proposal to fast track the increase in the height of the Wyangala Dam wall.

We believe that no work should start until there is a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and, as taxpayers, we would like to see a full business case prior to any work on the project
The EIS should consider the impact on the local environment and the environment on those areas downstream. BCCAN supports the submission by the Inland Rivers Network which identifies potential impacts in further detail.

The drought of the last few years illustrated the vulnerability of the Murray Darling river system to water extraction and the dangers of removing water from natural flows. Any increase of water storage in the Basin risks repeating this disaster with grave implications for or downstream communities and ecological systems.

BCCAN values its relation to the Wiradjuri community. Part of the EIS should empower the Wiradjuri to identify and protect any significant sites which might otherwise be inundated by the extension of wall.

Climate forecasts by the Bureau of Meteorology need careful analysis before any investment in increasing the dam is considered. Recent trends suggest that increasing water storage might be futile if rainfall is insufficient to fill dams. Dams don't make it rain!

The business case should consider whether the proposal is contrary to the terms of the National Water Initiative to which NSW is a signatory. It should also address technical issues including the capacity of the existing wall to 'carry' a height extension.

The business case should also consider the relative costs of alternatives including demand management in urban water use through effluent recycling, storm water harvesting and water tanks for households will improve town water security.

Increasing the height of the dam wall would privilege water users in the vicinity of the dam and disadvantage users further downstream in the Murray Darling system. We also are concerned that the proposal would be a 'Trojan horse' that would benefit the political and economic interests of mining companies wanting subsidised water at the expense of the environment, downstream communities and agriculture. Mining is a voracious and profligate user of water and the mining lobby is a powerful one. It is unlikely that any assurances that the water would not be sold to mines would stand the test of time.

In conclusion, rushing into a project like increasing the Wyangala Dam wall without the scrutiny of a thorough, independent EIS and business case is foolish, reckless and would raise suspicions about the motivation of the instigators of the project.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Secretary, Bathurst Community Climate Action Network.
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