

**Submission
No 155**

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

Organisation: Belubula Headwaters Protection Group (Inc)

Date Received: 22 September 2020

Statement from the Belubula Headwaters Protection Group Inc (BHPG) to the NSW Parliamentary Committee concerned with the Raising of the Wyangala Dam Wall

The BHPG objects to the proposal to raise the Wyangala Dam wall. Amongst reasons for our objection are the following:

1. Added disruption to natural flows in the Lachlan River that will inevitably further impact on the health of the river system downstream of the dam, including significant wetlands of which the Booligal, Cumbung and Lachlan wetlands/swamps are key environmental assets of the Murray-Darling Basin. The wetlands are critical components for the survival of migratory waterbirds that have international protection, as well for the biodiversity in the river system including endangered fish species.
2. While the proposal provides additional water for license holders on the Lachlan it does not add any water to the system and benefits the comparatively few at the expense of Australian taxpayers and the detriment of water users at the end of the system. No business case has been forthcoming for the expenditure of \$650 million of public money, nor has there been any consultation about water charges, dam upkeep costs, nor compensation for owners of the almost 2 000 hectares of flooded land upstream of the dam.
3. Disruption to the recreational amenity afforded by the dam seems to have been largely ignored as has the social disruption brought about by community isolation and significantly added travel times because of the loss of the roadway across the dam wall and due to inundation of roads upstream.
4. Water level rise will drown First Nation burial sites and other areas of cultural importance to Aboriginal people. Critically endangered bushland will be flooded as will parts of the Mount Davies Nature Reserve. Fast tracked approval and the absence of an EIS means many adverse effects of the proposed development will be ignored. While economic recovery from Covid -19 may be cited as a reason for designating the project as of critical state significance, far more socially beneficial and far less environmentally destructive projects would better serve the people of NSW.

Evan Leitch

Past Secretary, BHPG

Emeritus Professor UTS.