

RAISING THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

To Whom It May Concern

I have no direct personal connection to this issue. I don't live in the catchment area in question, but like most people in Sydney, I do use the water the dam stores. I am not affected directly by development in the catchment area, but I am very concerned about development in general.

Background:

The planets addiction to growth started after World War II, when economists got their consumerist and growthist ideas taken up by governments, who were convinced this was the way to improve people's lives and get re-elected at the same time. All of this is well underpinned by Capitalism and Democracy.

Economics has a concept known as "externalities". According to economics, externalities are apparently forever renewable, and, according to "market forces", if there is less of them then they are less affordable, and then the price goes up - which supposedly means less of them will be used (it doesn't). Externalities means NATURE – natural resources - and these are conveniently ignored by mainstream economics. None of the primary externalities are renewable – examples: oil, gas, coal - none are being made any more.

Here are some facts that you should consider when making this decision:

1. Developers must keep developing, regardless of whether it is sensible to do so or not. To do this they usually need more space allotted. This is mostly driven by the demands of an increasing population
2. In our current economies, ever more growth and debt is a requirement.
3. Growth is a mantra spoken about every day in the mainstream media. No one realises it is slowly killing us all
4. Economies that are driven by never-ending economic growth and debt are addicted to that growth and debt (and at any cost) because profits need to be made
5. Our current economies are essentially a Ponzi Scheme
6. To have endless economic growth, more consumers are needed to consume more, and go into more debt, for increasing profits to be realised
7. To get more consumers, you must have an increasing population
8. Business is the primary driver of population increase, and the largest increases are gained via immigration - since people can less and less afford to have babies and buy houses
9. The business drive for endless growth is well-supported by Councils and Developers
- 10. You cannot have endless exponential growth on a finite planet**

As a result of the above, cities will expand out into farmland, and eventually join up with each other. Cities will increase in population until most people are living in small high-rise boxes. Farmland will

decrease and what is left will be put under so much pressure environmentally that it will not be able to provide the needs of the population and will eventually be rendered unusable. People will then rely more on increasingly expensive imports than ever before.

In Australia's case, one of the driest continents on earth, and with only 6% arable land, we can see the beginnings of this simply by looking at the Murray Darling River System fiasco, where farmers are drawing so much water out of the system that the river will be completely dead within a few years – and yet still we squabble over this “resource”.

My position on the raising of the dam wall:

My position on this is we need to STOP all major “developments” such as this one.

Like the ever-expanding US debt ceiling, it is unsustainable and cannot grow forever, and one day it will all come back to bite us. Just growing forever for no reason other than growth itself (and profit) would be contributing to other like-minded civilisation-ending decisions.

On top of this, there are multiple existing issues with the planning and approval process, as follows:

Systematic failures of the EIS

- The engineering firm (SMEC Engineering) who undertook the environmental and cultural assessments for the project have an established history of abusing Indigenous rights, having recently being barred from the world bank.
- Severe fires during the summer of 2019/20 devastated 81% of Blue Mountains Heritage Area. No post-bushfire field surveys have been undertaken.
- Only 27% of the impact area was assessed for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.
- Threatened species surveys are substantially less than guideline requirements. Where field surveys were not adequately completed, expert reports were not obtained.
- No modelling of the stated flood and economic benefits of the dam wall raising are outlined in the EIS.
- The integrity of the environmental assessment is fundamentally flawed and cannot be accepted as a basis for further decision-making by the Minister for Planning.

World Heritage and cultural sites under attack

The Blue Mountains World Heritage area is not just a world class National Park, in 2000 it was inscribed on UNESCO's prestigious World Heritage list in recognition of the Blue Mountains Outstanding Universal value for the whole of mankind. Raising the Warragamba dam wall and consequent damage to natural and cultural values would be a clear breach of these undertakings and Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. An estimated 65 kilometres of wilderness rivers, and 5,700 hectares of National Parks, 1,300 hectares of which is within the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, would be inundated by the Dam project. This includes:

- The Komungo River - declared a 'Wild River', protected for its pristine condition under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974;
- Unique eucalyptus species diversity recognised as having Outstanding Universal Value under the area's World Heritage listing such as the Camden White Gum;
- A number of Threatened Ecological Communities, notably Grassy Box Woodland;

- Habitat for endangered and critically endangered species including the Critically Endangered Regent Honeyeater and Sydney's last Emu population.

Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention mean it is critical for the Blue Mountains World Heritage site to be managed to protect its ecological integrity and authenticity. Any damage within its boundaries is completely unacceptable and inconsistent with World Heritage management principles.

Mundingburra Traditional Owners have not given Free, Prior and Informed Consent for the Dam proposal to proceed.

- Over 1541 identified cultural heritage sites would be inundated by the Dam proposal.
- The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report has been severely and repeatedly criticised by both the Australian Department of Environment and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) for not appropriately assessing cultural heritage in meaningful consultation with Mundingburra community members.

Alternatives to raising Warragamba Dam wall

There are many alternative options to raising the Warragamba Dam wall that would protect existing floodplain communities. A combined approach of multiple options has been recommended as the most cost-effective means of flood risk mitigation.

Alternative options were not comprehensively assessed in the EIS. Any assessment of alternatives does not consider the economic benefits that would offset the initial cost of implementation.

On average, 45% of floodwaters are derived from areas outside of the upstream Warragamba Dam catchment. This means that no matter how high the dam wall is constructed, it will not be able to prevent flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley downstream.

The best alternative of course, would be to JUST STOP GROWTH.

In Conclusion

Please do NOT allow this "development" to proceed. It is an ill-thought-out project based on human greed and the never-ending ponzi-scheme-driven lust for growth. If you don't pay the environmental price for it and suffer the pain nature would inflict on us all, then your descendants certainly will.

YOURS SINCERELY

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