

To whom it may concern,

I am against raising the Warragamba Dam wall for the reasons outlined below.

There is a lack of consideration in the Environmental Impact Statement to the possibility of using a combination of alternative options that do not require raising the Warragamba Dam wall. Although some alternate options are individually mentioned in the EIS, it does not adequately assess how these perform when used together. Alternative studies have shown that the storing of water at a lower level combined with the use of desalination plants, changes to flood plain planning limits to prevent houses being built in dangerous areas and improving current evacuation routes can achieve adequate flood mitigation. Given the permanent damage that will occur to fragile ecosystems and Indigenous sites upstream, further consideration to these alternative options must be given. Further, the EIS is broadly biased towards achieving the outcome of raising the Warragamba Dam wall. In just one example, the language used in Chapter 15 demonstrates this where it repeatedly discusses any negative impacts as “potential impacts” and positive impacts as “benefits” and not “potential benefits”. A neutral EIS needs to be commissioned to ensure that the overall benefits and costs are adequately considered.

If this project proceeds significant areas of wilderness will be permanently damaged. There are 48 threatened plant and animal species as well as rare and unique rainforest systems under threat from this project. Extinction rates of both flora and fauna in Australia are already at unacceptable levels. The EIS does not provide a value or give any weight to the impacts of these losses, but merely mentions that it may occur. In December 2022, governments from around the world, including Australia, are meeting at the COP15¹ Biodiversity Conference to agree on a new set of goals and targets that will guide global action on halting and reversing biodiversity loss. This is at a time that the planet is experiencing a dangerous decline in biodiversity with one million plant and animal species now threatened with extinction. The EIS confirms that through raising the Warragamba Dam wall, significant areas of wilderness will be permanently damaged, an outcome which achieves the exact opposite of what governments globally, and Australia, are trying to achieve.

There are hundreds of culturally significant Indigenous sites in the potential flood inundation zone identified by the EIS. All of these will be permanently damaged if flooded (EIS 18-56). These are just the sites identified in the EIS and there are undoubtedly many more. Proceeding with the project will be a deliberate destruction of these sites with the concerns of Traditional Owner's not sufficiently addressed.

There is a possibility the Blue Mountains National Park will lose its UNESCO World Heritage status if the Warragamba Dam wall is raised². This indicates there will be a significant reduction in the ecological value of the National Park as it fails to meet the criteria for World

¹ UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15), Montreal Canada 7-19 December 2022
<https://www.unep.org/un-biodiversity-conference-cop-15>

² 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (43 COM) 2019
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/7430/>

Heritage listing. The loss of this status will result in a reduction in tourism, funding and access to global resources for managing the site into the future.

By proceeding with the recommendations of the EIS to raise the Warragamba Dam wall we acknowledge an acceptance to undervalue biodiversity, an acceptance to ignore the input of Traditional Owners and an acceptance of the potential loss of the World Heritage status of the Blue Mountains National Park.

It is for these reasons that I do not support raising the Warragamba Dam wall.

Yours sincerely,

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