

Dear Mr Paul Scully, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

16th October 2023

Re: Submission of Objection by Macleay Valley Aboriginal Community Controlled Forum to the Proposed Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro Storage Proposal: Application Number SSI-12422997, EPBC ID Number 2020/8850, Assessment Type; Critical State Significant Infrastructure. Exhibited as: (EXH-62250958)

I am writing on behalf of the Dunghutti Thunggutti Traditional Owners who are members of the Macleay Valley Aboriginal Community Controlled Forum. I am a great-grandson of both Thunggutti great-Grandparents Minnie Quinlan and Bubba John Quinlan who was born on Lower Creek and taught us all the significance of culture, ceremony and connection to country.

We are concerned about this project's Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment report as we have various objections to the way this project has engaged and consulted with our Dunghutti Thunggutti Traditional Owners thus far in relation to Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

From the outset the consultations seemed to be making ad hoc consultations with Dunghutti Thunggutti Traditional Owners like a tick and flick exercise. Moreover, we needed more entailed information in regards to this project, we needed more details about how our First Nations views were collated and recorded (via the Cultural Mapping Project). Furthermore, this added greater concerns for the management of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage such as Cultural Artefacts. As Traditional Owners we raised our concerns numerous times and also wrote a letter in writing requesting that all Aboriginal Cultural Artefacts found should remain on Country, not in a storage box and or in a building.

Unfortunately, we would have liked to have seen more detailed information about how the approach to this Project would develop processes to provide to the community about their methodology of engagement for example issues such as the management of Cultural Awareness of all staff on site.

Finally, we would like to make it clear that we have significant objections to this project. This proposed development site is a culturally significant area, which is part of our songlines including our cultural creation stories, ceremonial sites, and water systems. Our worldview is that all surrounding areas including the Carrai plateau, all nature, mountains, rivers, creeks and the proposed access routes to this site have cultural significance to our continued living connections to Country. This proposed development will impact our songlines and connections to Country dramatically and we say no to this proposed project site.

Our recommendation is to have all methodologies of how proponents approach First Nations communities via an intentional dialogue in a more collaborative approach that is co-designed for the betterment and management of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage on Country.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this Submission and we look forward to working with all involved.

Yours sincerely

*Warren Roberts*

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