



25 October 2021

Warragamba Dam Assessment Team
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Correspondence via email: Warragamba.DamEIS@dpie.nsw.gov.au

Re: Submission – Warragamba Dam Raising Project – SSI-8441

Dear Warragamba Dam Assessment Team,

The Society is strongly opposed to raising Warragamba Dam due to the project's unacceptable potential impacts on the environment, including the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and threatened species that inhabit the impact area. The draft Environmental Impact Statement concludes that the project poses potential significant implications to contemporary breeding habitat for the regent honeyeater (*Anthochaera Phrygia*) that "cannot be avoided or minimised." The regent honeyeater is listed as Critically Endangered at both a state and federal level, with as few as 350 individuals remaining in the wild.

Modelling by BirdLife Australia suggested that up to fifty percent of regent honeyeater foraging and breeding habitat was burnt in the 2019-2020 bushfires. Protecting the remaining unburnt breeding habitat is of the highest conservation priority. There are only a handful of contemporary breeding sites for the regent honeyeater, and during the assessment of the project, a total of twenty-one regent honeyeaters, including active nests, were recorded within the impact area.

Any breeding habitat is considered habitat critical for the survival of the species under the National Recovery Plan for Regent Honeyeater, and it states, "It is essential that the highest level of protection is provided to these areas and that enhancement and protection measures target these productive sites". The destruction of breeding sites for regent honeyeaters would have dire consequences for the species and is inconsistent with the federal and New South Wales governments' time and money into the recovery program, including the Regent Honeyeater Captive Breeding and Release program.

The Society strongly opposes the project's offset strategy for the regent honeyeater. Offsets are rarely an appropriate response to proposed biodiversity loss, especially for critical habitat for the survival of a species, in this case, the breeding habitat for the Critically Endangered regent honeyeater. There is no scientific evidence to suggest that the breeding habitat for regent honeyeaters can be successfully offset, and any offsets would be unlikely to provide direct benefits for both the affected local population and the species.

Australian Wildlife Society, founded in 1909, is a national not-for-profit wildlife conservation organisation. We are dedicated to conserving Australian wildlife through national environmental



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education, public awareness, advocacy, hands-on wildlife conservation work, and community involvement. The Society encourages your strong support for this action and an acknowledgement of the receipt of this letter, please.

Yours sincerely
Patrick W Medway AM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

