

Mr Ian English & Ms Jennifer Gorman
50 Clanwilliam St
Blackheath NSW 2785

1st of November 2021

NSW Department of Planning
Attention Mr Robert Gordon Stokes
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Ref No: SSI – 8441

Objection to Raising of Warragamba Dam

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you to express my absolute abhorrence at the NSW Governments proposal to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam and inundate some 5,700 hectares of National Parks and 1,300 hectares of Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

I do declare that I have not made any political donations and have no affiliations with the either NSW or Federal parties, nor do I have any involvement with groups like the Extinction rebellion. I have been a resident in the Blue Mountains for twenty years and moved up here to provide a healthy environment for my son. We have walked many of the tracks in the wilderness together. I strongly believe we are just custodians of this environment and have an obligation to future generations to preserve what is left. Over 40 years I have witnessed environmental degradation and species decline caused by mining, development and poor farm management and permanent damage it has caused to our environment.

At a time when the environment requires more focus on the conservation of pristine areas, the threat to the many endangered species of extinction and conservation of our carbon sinks is of primary importance, how the current and recently past ministers could consider such a violation of one of our most precious resources just defies any reasonable sense of morality or logic. Particularly when there are other options available and flooding such as the 1 in 50-year flood we had in February 2021 was predicted, some say serious flooding was avoidable, and very few lives were seriously threatened.

It is very clear the direction and where the interests of the NSW Government are, its all about profit for the companies like Lend Lease. Currently this company is destroying one of the last sustained Koala Habitats in the outer fringes of Southern Sydney. This is less than six months after the Hon John Barilaro was watering down SEPP 44 and the Protection of Koala habitat. One has to wonder the influence the lobbyists have on our elected members. Nothing to see here folks, we are all being “entirely transparent”.

So, at the present the NSW government is seeking to degrade one of our last wilderness and World Heritage areas and telling the public we are taking all necessary precautions, despite the fact they are in breach of our obligations under the World Heritage Convention.

The NSW Government engaged a company of ill repute, SMEC Engineering to undertake the EIS. A company with an extremely poor record when working with indigenous people, and banned by the World Bank in some third world countries. A company who can draw conclusions by assessing only 27% of the impact area and habitat, and spent 3.5 hours looking for Koalas. In my profession in the past, I have worked closely with Ecologists doing field work in Cumberland Plains Woodland, Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forests, to name but a few Endangered Ecologically Endangered Communities. I have worked within the guidelines of what was once considered responsible environmental management and practices.

The NSW Government ignored the calls of our indigenous people and propose to inundate an estimated 1,500 cultural heritage sites, contrary to its own regulations. I doubt any OECD country could boast such an unconscionable act.

To see to NSW Government sideline and dilute the Heritage Significance regulations, the SEPPS and Guidelines is cringeworthy and shameful. The absence of any morality and consideration of the environment for now and future generations is absent altogether. Unlike the Franklyn River where I was amongst the protesters in 1980, we do not have a government of on a Federal Level that is likely to intervene, particularly with the likes of the Hon Scott Morrison or Hon Angus Taylor who are influencing policies. Like SEPP's the title Honourable means little these days.

Many eminent people have come forward and declared this project not feasible and its expense unjustifiable, UNESCO have also raised serious concerns, why the NSW government persists defies logic even when its early original EIS recommended against it. It will be no doubt taxpayer's money that will fund the project and the big developers and the wealthy land holders that will profit from it. It seems to me that any sense of ethics, morality and environmental responsibility has left the NSW Houses of Parliament at least for the Liberal National Party.

I am not an extreme "greenie" I am an educated person that understands the necessity for achieving a balance between Environment and Community, but this proposal really tips the scales. I am confident that my views are shared by an overwhelming majority of residence in the Blue Mountains and many more concerned and educated people further afield.

Yours Sincerely
Ian English BSC Urban Hort, Dip 5 Arb

CC Hon Ms Trish Doyle
Colong Foundation for Wilderness