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Warragamba Dam Assessment Team

Planning and Assessment

Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

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Dear Warragamba Assessment Team

Submission: Warragamba Dam Raising Project – SS1-8441-

David B Nethercote

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I have not donated to a political party in the past two years.

I am writing to strongly oppose the above Project

Given the amount of controversy the proposed raising of the wall of Warragamba has produced, it is certainly time to halt the project, if not scrap it all together, and pursue the range of alternatives that have been suggested.

The most important of these is re-considering the proposed urbanisation of the plain. Amongst the many losses to habitat and artefacts, the major beneficiary of this project will only be developers, as land currently deemed too dangerous for human habitation due to flooding will magically be rebadged as 'safe'. And they say that no-one's making land anymore!

So far the proposal seems to be based on the following fallacy: there is a whole area of unimproved (that is: undeveloped, i.e., natural) land that could make large sums of money if floods can be prevented, and the way to do that is to build a wall, at tax-payer's expense, and thereby provide a boon to the development class. This is a one-way street. The alternative is to build on land that is habitable, i.e., safe. This would not require a four year *in-the-making* Environmental Impact Study (EIS), even one of such dubious quality as the current EIS, filled as it is with questionable assertions and many factual errors, including misnomers referring, to the area as *Wallacia* instead of *Warragamba*. This comment was reported in the local newspaper by a spokeswoman for the Gundungurra community, Kazan Brown. Her comments were scathing about the whole EIS which she described as a 'white-washed piece of garbage', (Camden Advertiser November 23 2021).

This comment brings us to another alarming effect of the wall raising: Indigenous sites. In a manner that offers little surprise, Indigenous groups with strong links to this area have had little or no effective consultation. Following Rio's disastrous destruction of Sacred Sites and the international

condemnation that ensued, one might have thought that effective consultation would have been the first priority. Not so, is the report from community members. Nor does the EIS make more than a perfunctory acknowledgement of the impact on these sites, looking at only 27% of the area..

This proposal has provoked major local concerns, but the concerns go even wider. UNESCO have raised the possibility of withdrawing the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), given the impact the wall will have on the Blue Mountains World Heritage Listed Area.

Apart from the certain damage to the environment and the indifference to cultural sites of great significance the aims of the project itself have been called into question. The hope that a wall will be sufficient to control flooding, overlooks the fact that an extreme rain event may well cause floods from sources other than Warragamba; and whether alternatives to a wall have been explored. These include better roads, effective disaster plans developed, and educating the current communities about measures they can take. Further, the radical suggestion has been made that rather than allowing more development, the government should buy back land considered in potential danger.

This is the view of the Insurance Council of Australia and follows their argument that land already sold was the biggest example of historically poor planning, encouraging many thousands of people to build homes on one of Australia's most effective flood plains

The proposal to allow a flood not of water but of people to inhabit the area and build apparently safe from the inconvenience of a deluge is ill-judged. It benefits only one group and is catastrophic for many others. Developers will build and depart, leaving a damaged and down-graded site, and communities to fend for themselves with nothing between them and a flood other than a government promise and a wall of dubious value.

Thank you

David B Nethercote