

I am extremely surprised that this proposed dam enlargement is even being considered, for many reasons. This is not only set within a world heritage listed area that is possessed of breathtaking beauty, but also contains dozens of unique and endangered flora and fauna within the bounds of the proposed new inundation.

For some reason, governments and developers consider the environment to be a limitless resource, to be disposed of as and when convenient for profit or convenience. All too often we as people have been left rueing the passing of things that have gone that we one once enjoyed and took for granted; and more to the point that we thought would return one day. But they never did and never will. The passage of time allows us to let it pass, both before and afterwards. This to our great shame.

Just one urgent example of this is the plight of the Regent Honeyeater. This was and should still be a common, beautiful jewel of a bird, sometimes even seen in migratory flocks around Sydney and the NSW surrounds. But no more thanks to massive habitat loss mainly due to accelerating fires and other climate change impacts\*. The proposed inundation area encompasses at least 21 active nesting sites for this Critically Endangered bird\*\*. It is unacceptable and inconsistent with the National Recovery Plan for any avoidable loss or degradation of breeding habitat to occur\*\*\*.

Finally, I believe that the use of offsets as an option to allow this proposal to proceed is both lazy and inadequate. There is no evidence presented to show that other areas can be used as breeding offset areas for this Critically Endangered bird, and the risk is just too great that it will not work. That once again we will be left to rue that we have lost forever. Please do not allow this to happen again.

\* Modelling by BirdLife Australia suggested that up to 50% of contemporary Regent Honeyeater foraging and breeding habitat was burnt in the 2019/20 bushfires. Protecting remaining unburnt breeding habitat is of the highest conservation priority.

\*\* 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.

\*\*\* Any breeding habitat is considered habitat critical for 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 and degradation of breeding habitat for Regent Honeyeaters is incongruous with the time and money that the Federal and NSW Governments have invested into the recovery program, including the Regent Honeyeater Captive Breeding and Release program.