

Elizabeth Chase – Submission Against Raising Warragamba Dam Wall

October 15th, 2021

Dear Minister

I wish to lodge an objection to the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall. I am a Blue Mountains resident who goes walking regularly in the bush and I am concerned about significant negative environmental impacts that will be caused if the dam wall is raised.

Supposed benefits are not modelled / Alternatives are not explored

The supposed economic and flood benefits of raising the dam wall are not actually modelled in the EIS. Furthermore, alternatives to raising the wall have not been adequately canvassed – and since up to 45% of floodwaters come from areas outside of the Warragamba Dam catchment - a raised dam wall will not be able to prevent extreme flooding events in the Hawkesbury.

Flawed existing EIS / Lack of consultation / Limited assessments

I am concerned that the existing environmental assessment is flawed and limited for a number of reasons. SMEC Engineering does not have a good record with regard to assessing indigenous cultural and environmental impacts. They did not consult meaningfully with local Gundungurra Traditional Owners who claim that over 1541 identified cultural heritage sites would be flooded by the Dam proposal. This lack of consultation has been highlighted by the Australian Department of Environment and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). As one telling example, only 27% of the area has been assessed with regard to any potential impact on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. The threatened species surveys are inadequate and below guideline recommendations and, in addition, no post-bushfire surveys have been taken, which is a serious omission. The EIS is flawed and is no basis upon which to proceed.

World Heritage Convention / Loss of habitat / Threatened species

The Blue Mountains National Park is World Heritage listed and we have obligations to our children and grandchildren because of its outstanding universal value. It is disturbing that an estimated 65 kilometres of rivers and 5700 hectares of National Parks will be flooded if this Dam project proceeds. This wonderful place is home to the Kowmung River, the Camden White Gum, Grassy Box Woodland, the Regent Honeyeater and Sydney's last Emu population. Once lost, our landscape, indeed our country, is diminished in ways that cannot be quantified.

The EIS is flawed, there are numerous alternatives which could be pursued. Please ensure that this project does not proceed – let's treasure this unique place, for future generations.

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