



CANBERRA BUSHWALKING CLUB INC.

P.O. Box 160, Canberra City, A.C.T. 2601

28 October 2021

NSW Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water

Submission: Warragamba Dam Raising Project.

I, Terrylea Reynolds, representing the Canberra Bushwalking Club, need to make a submission, objecting to the Warragamba Dam Raising Project.

Members of the Canberra Bushwalking Club regularly organize multi-day walks in the Greater Blue Mountains National Park. As frequent visitors, we have an active interest in promoting the Park's considerable environmental values, while ensuring that this is balanced with the needs of the nearby population.

Warragamba Dam is located adjacent to Sydney's untouched Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Raising Warragamba Dam for downstream flood mitigation would destroy large areas of Sydney's pristine water catchment at a cost of over \$700 million (\$400 per Sydney household). The dam wall raising is being pushed by developers wanting to spread urban sprawl across western Sydney floodplains.

The NSW Government has said the raising of Warragamba Dam would allow them to open 2,355 hectares of western Sydney floodplains to urban sprawl by creating flood mitigation capacity in the existing dam. This equates to an additional 94,000 houses squashed into western Sydney. This is a seriously dangerous idea.

Warragamba Dam has supplied clean drinking water to Sydney for the last 60 years. It was not designed as a flood mitigation dam. Raising the dam will put at risk Sydney's pristine water catchment and cause enormous environmental damage to the wild rivers and wilderness upstream of the dam. Erosion of sediment, dying organic matter and river bank slumping would input millions of tonnes of sediment into the Warragamba Dam.

The Warragamba River makes up only one half of the catchment area of the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. Flood waters originating from the south-eastern and northern half of the catchment would not be mitigated against and would still cause considerable flooding. Raising the dam would flood 65 kilometres of wild rivers and 4,700 hectares of national parks. The lower Kowmung, Coxs, Natti, Keduma, Wollondilly and Little Rivers would all be drowned underneath sediment-rich dam waters, killing hundreds of native plants and animals living in the world heritage valleys. There are 48 threatened plant and animal species that inhabit the area that would be submerged under the dam. Species such as the vulnerable Camden White Gum and the Kowmung Hakea are predominantly found in the proposed inundation area.

Governments should not allow building houses on floodplains. It is a dangerous pursuit that

will end in tragedy. For existing communities, there needs to be a multifaceted approach to flood management that protects human lives while ensuring that we don't ruin one of the most extensive World Heritage Areas in Australia.

If Warragamba Dam wall were to be raised by 14 metres, the dam would hold the equivalent of two additional Sydney Harbours. 4,700 hectares of World Heritage listed National Parks and 1,800 hectares of declared Wilderness Areas would be forever scarred from sedimentation, erosion and invasion of exotic plants in addition to inundating numerous indigenous cultural sites.

As an organization dedicated to bushwalking and conservation, we hold grave concerns regarding the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall. The areas that would be inundated would have an enormous detrimental impact on the biodiversity value of the Blue Mountains and this impact would last for generations to come.

Yours sincerely

Terrylea Reynolds
President
Canberra Bushwalking Club
GPO Box 160
Canberra ACT 2601