

Submission Opposing raising of Warragamba Dam

I am extremely concerned about this proposal and strongly object to it for the following reasons.

1. The Gundungurra Traditional Owners have not given their consent for this project. The Commonwealth Department of Environment and the International Council on Monuments and Sites have both pointed out very serious failings in the assessment of the impact on the cultural heritage of the Gundungurra traditional owners.
2. The Blue Mountains National Parks have been given World Heritage listing which means the state government must ensure it receives the highest status and protection in recognition of its extraordinary biodiversity and integrity and should not be destroyed because of floodplain development. If the EIS is approved, it will confirm Australia's reputation as an environmental vandal.
3. The current environmental and cultural surveys are inadequate and out-of-date because they were done before the wildfires of 2019/20. A new survey must be done to ascertain the impact the fires have had on flora and fauna species.
4. Raising the dam wall will decimate 5,700 hectares of National Parks, 1,300 hectares of World Heritage Area, more than 60 kilometres of wilderness rivers and thousands of Aboriginal sites and places of cultural significance. The area that will be destroyed contains some of the best remaining grassy woodland ecosystem in NSW, complete with healthy populations of dingo, quoll, woodland birds and many other native species and will drive threatened species, such as the Regent Honeyeater into extinction.
5. I don't believe biodiversity offsets should be allowed to justify the destruction in the National Parks. This proposal relies on the payment of biodiversity offsets to mitigate the environmental damage that will be done. The NSW government's own calculations suggest the total cost of offsets will amount to approximately \$2billion which should be much better spent on protecting biodiversity. The EIS has not calculated the true cost of the offsets nor disclosed this to the public.
6. The justification for raising the wall that it will reduce the risk of future flooding is flawed because nearly half the floodwaters that have historically affected the floodplain come from rivers outside the Warragamba catchment. Development should not be allowed in areas subject to flooding.

In conclusion, I believe this is a totally inappropriate and unnecessary development, particularly considering that this area was decimated by the fires of 2019/20. In addition, the NSW government continues to allow record levels of land clearing leading to the possibility of widescale species extinction.

We should be concentrating on protecting these environmentally important areas, not allowing environmentally destructive projects. If this project is allowed to proceed, it will confirm to the world that Australia does not value its flora and fauna.