

To whom it may concern,

Wollondilly Resilience Network (WReN) Inc, is a community association in the Wollondilly Shire. We, the members of WReN, strongly oppose the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam due to the project's unacceptable and irreversible potential impacts on the environment and our indigenous heritage. We support the submissions of Wollondilly Shire Council and Birdlife Australia to oppose the raising of the dam wall.

Environmental impacts include the important World Heritage Area status of the Blue Mountains National Park and impacts on threatened species. The draft EIS concludes that the project poses potential significant impacts to contemporary breeding habitat for the Regent Honeyeater that "cannot be avoided or minimised." 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. The destruction or degradation of a contemporary breeding site for Regent Honeyeaters would have dire consequences for the species as a whole. Wollondilly Resilience Network strongly believe that this an unacceptable consequence of the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall. It is unacceptable and inconsistent with the National Recovery Plan for any avoidable loss or degradation of breeding habitat to occur. We support Birdlife Australia's submission

The proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall also potentially impacts upon the indigenous heritage including sacred sites that are part of the creation story of the Gundungurra people of the local area. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment of the area have not been completed adequately to show the extent of potential damage to the site. As such, the full extent of the impact on indigenous heritage cannot be assessed. Damage done to this area will be total and irreversible.

The reasons underpinning the proposal include flood mitigation and water security. We propose that more conservative alternatives are available. These include stopping the continued development in the floodplain and building suitable evacuation routes for people living in the Penrith and Hawkesbury areas. We also support Wollondilly Shire Council's proposal of a program of compulsory acquisition of existing downstream flood affected properties over time to create floodplain open space corridors. We additionally support other flood mitigation strategies such as the reduction of hard surfaces and the planned planting of vegetation that would aid in absorption of rainwater and reduce runoff.

In terms of water security, we support Wollondilly Shire Council's proposal to increase the installation and use of systems for recycled water. We would also strongly support a roll-out of retro-fitted rainwater tanks on existing dwellings and commercial buildings across the Sydney Basin, and the mandatory installation of rainwater tanks on new buildings.

The members of Wollondilly Resilience Network (WReN) Inc.
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