



10th November 2021

Re: Proposal to raise Warragamba Dam

The Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute has been engaged in research into the threats and conservation of the World Heritage Area since our founding in 2004. We are a member organisation of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and work closely with the UNESCO World Heritage office. In 2006 we also undertook an assessment of the Indigenous Heritage values of the area for the Commonwealth.

The Institute shares the concerns raised by both the IUCN and UNESCO regarding the potential impact on the Outstanding Universal Values (OUV) of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area that will result from the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall.

This is a matter of national concern following the downgrading of the status of the World Heritage Area to the second lowest category of 'Significant Concern' by the IUCN in their Outlook Report last year and following the catastrophic fires of 2019/20. The long-term recovery of the region's ecosystems from these fires is yet to be realised, especially the impact to the vegetation and wildlife in the region around the dam that was severely burnt. This represents the expected ongoing escalation of threats from climate change and related events on the natural and cultural heritage values of the site, and the site can ill afford the additional threat of spillage from the dam.

In addition, we are deeply concerned about the Aboriginal cultural impacts and the concerns expressed by the Gundungurra Traditional Owners that the dam expansion threatens over 1,200 culturally significant sites.

To put it bluntly, the impacts of the wall raising adds insults to injuries already incurred on the World Heritage Area both culturally and ecologically. Further, while it is outside our area of expertise, we have followed reports that the dam raising will not safely mitigate downstream flooding threats to residents. It therefore lacks any clear-thinking logic to proceed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Rosalie Chapple
Board Director, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute

We acknowledge the Darug, the Gundungurra, the Wanaruah, the Wiradjuri, the Darkinjung and the Tharawal Nations as the traditional custodians of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.