

I Object to the Raising of Warragamba Dam Wall

My connection:

I am a resident in the Wollondilly Shire LGA and a property owner. My connection extends back to settlement of the area c 1830 when my ancestors, both free and convict settled in this area, made it their home and made significant contributions to developing the community they and their descendants became part of. My grandparents lived and worked in Burragorang Valley, raising 12 children, they were very much a part of the Valley Community. Family members were also affected by the creation of Warragamba Dam and the clearing of Burragorang Valley that created the catchment for Warragamba Dam when the then MWSDB acquired all of the properties and moved everyone out.

In Burragorang, my ancestors lived and worked alongside Indigenous Gundungurra people who had been there well before European settlement. The Indigenous/European relationship was a harmonious one despite the fact that the Gundungurra people lost their land as settlement developed. Finally in the 1950's everyone lost out as the land was acquired for water storage.

Importance then and now:

Lake Burragorang is the water storage basin for Warragamba Dam, built to ensure a plentiful water supply for a then growing Sydney which had been under pressure from severe droughts and an extended one, at the time of its construction. So Warragamba Dam's predominant and core use is as a water supply dam.

On completion, an exclusion zone was created that would safeguard the water quality and it was managed very effectively to that outcome over the next sixty years. Moving on more than half a century the Burragorang has become a pristine part of the Blue Mountains National Park, protects an abundance of threatened wildlife and vegetation and provides Sydney with a reliable water source. For those families who were removed it still grieves us and remains close to our hearts as our ancestral home.

So, did all of those important management practises, exclusion zones, creation of National Park areas and water quality importance issues mean nothing now plans are to inundate large areas and create turbidity, create large tracts of flotsam and jetsam for extended periods?

The stored water quality will be severely compromised during these periods of 'short term inundation' and perhaps the dam wall itself may be impacted.

The effects of Raising Warragamba Dam Wall will primarily affect the Wollondilly LGA and its residents. So to say I am passionate about the Burragorang is an understatement.

History:

In the 1950's Burragorang Communities (and Yerranderie and surrounds) were sacrificed for a water storage dam that was to provide this reliable drinking water supply for Sydney.

In Burragorang there is an abundance of European historical sites as well as Indigenous sites. Creating Lake Burragorang drowned much of the history but above the full water level there is still a wealth of historical sites evidenced and I have included several images of some of these sites at the end of the document. So as part of this EIS it should fully encapsulate all of the historical information that is still evidenced. I have seen no reference to any European history documentation and I support my fellow Gundungurra First Nation people because their history has only been partially documented and as well as sites, they stand to lose a significant proportion of their creation story if this project proceeds. Many archaeological sites are evident and can be found along the edges of the stored water in the Catchment. These include grave sites, building remains, road and bridge remains and many other too numerous to note. Initially when the team 'selling' the Dam Raising Project process approached us they were ill informed and had no idea of the extent of the raised inundation levels in the upper end of the catchment which is still very questionable.

Alternatives:

Raising the Dam wall and expecting the Warragamba System will reduce the flood impact is again questionable. Developers will facilitate further housing development on the Penrith Plains, another snarling urban nightmare!

Extensive development on the on Penrith Plains is the issue and the Warragamba system only a very small part of contributing flood water to the area. Flood evacuation routes need upgrades and education on flood risks and management of impacts need addressing.

How do the politicians think they can prevent a natural phenomenon by raising one dam wall?

Finally:

We need to protect what is important and prevent the decimation of our Indigenous and European heritage and native flora and fauna that, once destroyed, can never be replaced.

It is very concerning that only a small percentage of the impacted area was looked at in the EIS, and the investigation was very limited, so we don't even know the full extent of what will be lost.

I don't want Warragamba Dam Wall raised! This is of major importance to me personally, as a resident of Wollondilly and as a part of the Burratorang Community that sacrificed all in the 1950's. This is a water storage dam and other alternatives need to be investigated.

And I'm hearing the Dam could be privatised!!

Thank you for the opportunity to have input.

Kind regards

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Photo Left (c1912) and below (c2016) -One of the most isolated graves in New South Wales is beside the lower Nattai River. It is within the 'Schedule 1' zone around Lake Burragorang. It reads: In affectionate

remembrance of James S. Taylor

who was drowned 18 December 1870 Aged eight years

Thy will be done

There is also a sibling Taylor infant buried there at the same site but without a headstone.

It is believed the Kurrajong Tree behind the grave was planted at the time of burial in 1870.

Images Courtesy of TOHS Newsletter July 2016.





Pictured top is the ruins of a Buick Tractor used for Cedar getting in the Coks River region.

Pictured bottom is the ruins of Steve Carlon's Chrysler.



Above pictured is the **Tonalli Shale Oil Mine Ruins**