

Warragamba Dam raising EIS response

I wish to bring the following issues to your attention

I have deep cultural connection and responsibility to the first nation's country Aniuima through cultural ceremony. I am from the koowa lineage line in which includes the dharawal family group and covers the area in which you are proposing to construct a dam extension that will lead to the continuation of the destruction of our culture. I believe that cultural heritage assessment and environmental assessment that are put forward into the Warragamba dam raising EIS has been deliberately written in a way that does not include every aspect and underwrites what is really going to be effected. It does not truly represent the area in which it proposes to destroy.

I have been involved in the cultural heritage component from the beginning. I spent a large proportion of the time allocated to carry out the field assessment for the project and attended all of the meeting that included myself.

1. I am of the understanding of cultural consultation is consulting with all of first nations people in a project of this size not who a department, organisation, or contracted business choses to include. The country was never promised to one first nations person it was promised to us all. I ask the question is cultural consultation just informing the families of this country what you as an organisation are proposing to do on their country because that is what I have witnessed during this process. I have witnessed and been a part of organizations not taking into account the concerns of first nation's people. I believe that consultation has not been adequate for this project and is more just informing of intent and ticking the box.
2. The basis of the cultural heritage easement for the Warragamba dam raising EIS is rerecording of existing known cultural sites and recording of unknown sites for the assessment. I was on the ground recording all of these sites with the team for all of but 3 day. So I would consider myself to have a very high understanding of what each site was and how it was recorded in the field. I believe that what has been put forward into the cultural heritage component in the EIS from the basis of the information to provide an assessment is incorrect and is put in a way to underwrite the importance of the area from a cultural heritage prospective. For example across most of the sites a sample of a few of the hundreds of artefacts that were present at each site was taken and the site was recorded with a potential concentration within the site area. The potential extent of the concentration was mapped below existing high water line and above existing high water level to take into account of the landform that they were located. From knowing this what has been put forward as an average of artefacts on each site is not the truth and this number is clearly way above this. I believe the field notes and the detailed drawings and descriptions taken by the field archaeologist endeavoured to capture the potential concentrated area of each recorded site. The site recording that is present in this report does not represent these field notes and what we saw in the field. I believe that the exclusion of the field notes in this

report is to deliberately mislead the direction of this assessment and underwrite the cultural importance of the area. I have also experienced this in other projects that these contractors have been involved with. By underwriting these sites and not showing these notes they have then in turn downplayed the effected sites within the area by then adjusting their water levels to suit their desired outcome in which they wish to achieve.

3. Personally being a major part from a cultural person involved in this process from involvement through field work meetings etc. while contracted to Cubbitchbarta. Then leaving that organization and then trying to stay involved with this project I feel that I have been deliberately excluded from organizations, contracted businesses involved in the cultural heritage assessment. I believe this is deliberate due to the fact of myself not being a supporter of the destruction and removal of our culture and actively expressing this and trying to hold people accountable for the continuing destruction and colonisation of our culture and people. I believe these actions were debility done in the most critically part of the process when all the assessments and feedback were being put together I know this from a personal level and wonder how many other first nations' family, people are also deliberately excluded.
4. Through my life I have been told things about my culture in which I believed because they came from my parents, elders and people that I thought held cultural understanding and knowledge. I have been very fortunate through making a choice some years back to learn my true culture properly to start to put things into proper perspective and things to start to make sense. It was very hard for myself to comprehend at first the learning that I was receiving because it was so different to what I was told when I was younger. This intern made me curious into why things were so different and why I had been told that information. I looked into this further and found that a lot of the information about my culture was coming from recordings from a white perspective from the interference that the organisations and government have been placing on first nation's people. In which did not fit into our culture believes and values. I find it very difficult to understand how a person that has been raised in a western culture with what they perceive they know from a cultural perspective coming from western learning and generally the untruths that have been recorded in the past able to then put together a cultural heritage assessment, cultural vales assessment. Like any profession in the western culture you need to have learning and experience to class yourself as a professional. So please explain why is it you are able to put together these assessments without any cultural learnings and limited understanding. This was raised with Kate waters and also at a meeting at Warragamba dam that I was not officially invited to. But I did not see this included in the cultural vales assessment but rather comments like (no recognised knowledge holds chose to participate for other reasons). At this same meeting I shared from a cultural perspective how all things in and on country are culture and have cultural importance country, fauna, flora to try and give these people this understanding. Again these perspectives were left out of these assessments. I believe that all of country is my mother and the mother of us all which provides for us and in return we have responsibility to look after her and everything and to follow the lore of this country the first lore. Culture is country and everything and any interference of this is deliberately

removing the first culture of this country. In which the organizations and government have made commitments in there laws to protect is this really protecting culture.

5. We believe it is important to practice or culture and be on country the same as our ancestors were before being murdered, forcefully removed and tricked out of their rights. So white settlement could take the benefits from our country to create their wealth. There are claims in the cultural heritage Assessment and the cultural values assessment that to date the government and organizations have not restricted first nations people from accessing there land to carry out cultural activities. In which is total untrue and over the years and others that I have spoken to have tried to access their lands to carry out culture in these lands where we have been restricted to do so. I see this a deliberate action that interferes with our cultural responsibilities and a deliberate attempt to remove culture from the land. I would like to bring to your attention a recent attempt to carry out cultural connection to place the attached letter received from Water NSW demonstrates this.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and happy to discuss further given the opportunity. I have tried my best to capture my concerns with the process and the EIS but it is hard to place into words the disappointment with people, process and underwritten EIS when you have been given cultural responsibility that are not being heard or ignored. When are we as people really going to stand up and hold the oldest living culture in the world the first people of this world the respect that it deserves?