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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

3 October 2018

The Hon. Martin Taylor,
MLC Chair Standing Committee on State Development Legislative Council
NSW Parliament House
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000
state.development@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Taylor,

Inquiry into the Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society is a community organisation working to achieve the preservation and regeneration of the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains area. The Society has a membership of over 800 people.

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society objects to the *Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018* because it seeks to overturn provisions in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974* that currently protect the Blue Mountains and Nattai National Parks from artificial flood inundation. This bill is to ensure that the proposal to raise the wall of Warragamba Dam is not unlawful and therefore able to be assessed. However, it also prejudices the assessment of that proposal.

The Society is concerned that the very short timeframe for the Upper House Inquiry will not allow for a full and public consideration of the impacts which this Bill facilitates. It also undermines the appropriately strong legal protections for the creation of national parks.

The proposed raising of Warragamba Dam's wall by 14 metres will periodically flood 4,700 hectares of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage national parks and 65 kilometres of wilderness streams upstream of the raised dam wall. This flooding will have serious and lasting impacts on the incredible biodiversity and many threatened species that contributes to the parks' world heritage listing. These include the loss of

habitat for the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater and of the nationally threatened Camden White Gum. The periodic flooding will also increase erosion and significantly impacts on water quality due to increased sedimentation and silt runoff.

The proposed dam raising will also destroy significant cultural heritage sites of the Gundungarra, including artwork, camps and ceremonial sites. These sites are so important that they have been proposed for recognition as an Aboriginal Place.

Another dimension of this proposal is the significant impact it will have on the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area (GBMWA) listing itself. This World Heritage listing recognises the international significance of the biodiversity in these parks and reserves. The GBMWA contains significant numbers of rare or threatened species - over 70 listed threatened animals and over 100 threatened plants. And yet the NSW government is prepared to risk this precious area.

The Society is concerned that the dam raising proposal is motivated by providing more land for housing Sydney's ever-increasing population on what is a floodplain. It seems that the NSW government is putting the interests of housing developers ahead of the environment. Alternatives to manage and mitigate flood risks in Hawkesbury Nepean Valley have been identified and these should be seriously considered.

The Society urges the committee to reject the proposed amendments in the *Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018*.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madi Maclean'.

Madi Maclean
President
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