



Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc

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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

15 May 2023

The Hon Rose Jackson MLC
Minister for Water, Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health and Youth
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister,

Warragamba Dam and protecting the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) congratulates you on your recent ministerial appointments. We are delighted with the Government's policies to stop the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall and were very pleased with your recent announcement as Minister. The Society thanks you, Environment Minister, Penny Sharpe, and Premier Minns for your commitment to both the environmental and heritage values of the area and for recognising and respecting that World Heritage requires the highest level of protection. We are now seeking your urgent action to ensure that the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area is comprehensively protected from future proposals to raise the Warragamba dam wall.

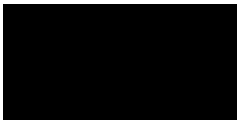
The Society is a community-based volunteer organisation with around 900 members. Our mission is to protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains. Society representatives met with you in May 2020 at the Parliamentary Friends of Nature's field trip to the spectacular Gardens of Stone area. We thank you for your advocacy on protecting that important environment.

Because of the controversial Dam raising proposal, there has been years of uncertainty about the protection of the Burratorang Valley with its World Heritage listed national park, declared wilderness, wild rivers, endangered species, aboriginal cultural heritage sites and cultural landscape. There has also been uncertainty about addressing flood plain management. Now the government has announced a way forward, it needs to take steps to ensure that the dam raising proposal cannot be reinstated in the future. To do this the Society believes that government needs to:

- Legislate to remove the 2018 amendments which overrode the *National Parks and Wildlife Act* and enabled the Dam raising to go ahead. Restoring legislation that prevents the flooding of national parks land is urgently needed;

- Direct NSW Water to withdraw the Development Application for the Warragamba Dam Raising (SSI-8441);
- Move quickly to implement the government's Western Sydney Flood Resilience Program and put in place environmentally sustainable alternatives for managing flooding and controlling flood plain development;
- Implement the NSW Government's proposal to lower the maximum capacity of Warragamba Dam while ensuring the replacement of any lost capacity in drinking water supply;
- Reform Water NSW, the main driver of the widely condemned dam raising efforts and the bungled EIS process;
- Both the NSW and Federal Governments must quickly enact a comprehensive recovery plan for the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area following the 2019-20 bushfires, which burnt over 70 percent of the Greater Blue Mountains. This will demonstrate how important areas that were to be flooded are for the recovery of wildlife and habitat;
- The NSW Government should also advise the World Heritage Committee of its decision not to raise the dam wall and commit to firmly oppose any future proposal to raise the dam. This position would minimise the serious damage to the prestige of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area's "Outstanding Universal Value".

Yours sincerely



Annette Cam
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society

Cc

Hon. Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage
Ms Trish Doyle MLA, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Member for Blue Mountains
Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP, Federal Minister for Environment and Water
Ms Susan Templeman MP, Federal Member for Macquarie and Special Envoy for the Arts