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MEDIA RELEASE: Infrastructure NSW faces litmus test over dam wall cultural assessment

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Following a secretive release of the Warragamba Dam Raising Draft Indigenous Cultural Assessment, Infrastructure NSW is facing a litmus test over its plans to raise the Warragamba Dam wall from western Sydney councils.

The mayors of Blue Mountains (Mark Greenhill) and Wollondilly Shire (Matt Deeth) have invited the dam's project director, Maree Abood, to attend an urgent public meeting with Traditional Owners to hear about the cultural impacts of the dam project this Friday.

With over 300 cultural sites and 4,700 hectares of World Heritage National Parks within the impact area, Traditional Owners have been given only 5 weeks to review a 2000-page confidential Draft Cultural Assessment on the impacts of the project. They are now calling on NSW Government to listen to their concerns and provide more time so the document can be properly reviewed.

Gundungurra Traditional Owner Kazan Brown said:

"How are we meant to respond to 2000-page cultural assessment in a matter of weeks when the area they want to destroy covers over 5,000 hectares?"

"This meeting will be a litmus test for Infrastructure NSW. If the Government is genuine about consulting Traditional Owners and the community, they will take part and listen to our people's concerns.

"The simple fact is we need much more time to understand and respond to this hastily put together assessment that tries to excuse the destruction of our people's key cultural sites.

"It's time for the NSW Government to step-up and give us an explanation on why the Blue Mountains World Heritage Listing and our rich cultural heritage should be put at risk."

GIVE A DAM Campaigner Harry Burkitt said:

"It's time for Maree Abood to come out of witness protection and answer the hard questions from the public about this increasingly controversial dam.

"After last week's leak showing the raised dam would be ineffective at mitigating large flood events in western Sydney, these allegations yet again demonstrate the project just doesn't stack up."

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