



Level 2, 332 Pitt Street
Sydney NSW 2000
+61 490 010 909
www.giveadam.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE: NSW Government no-show at dam consultation meeting

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The NSW Government has refused to attend a Local Government community consultation with Traditional Owners about the impacts of raising Warragamba Dam wall in the Blue Mountains tonight. Over 100 community members came to listen to Traditional Owners about the NSW Government's inadequate and rushed cultural heritage assessment on the project, and resolved that the NSW Government must give Traditional Owners more time to understand and respond to the report.

It comes after Blue Mountains and Wollondilly Council Mayors invited the department in charge of the dam project, Infrastructure NSW, to attend the event and hear from Traditional Owners face-to-face. Over 600 community members also sent emails to the dam's Project Director, Maree Abood, requesting she come and hear the concerns of Traditional Owners.

At the commencement of the dam project, Minister for Western Sydney, Stuart Ayres, committed to **"a comprehensive environmental assessment process that will include robust community and stakeholder consultation."**

Gundungurra Traditional Owner Kazan Brown said that the consultation to date was the furthest thing from "robust community consultation" she had ever experienced.

"Frankly it's gobsmacking. The only people who aren't consulting us properly about this are the ones that want to raise the dam. They didn't even bother turning up to listen to us.

"The NSW Government want to destroy the most important part of our dreaming story, and they are standing there with fingers in their ears. The consultation to date has been highly secretive and completely inadequate. We deserve so much better as the traditional custodians of this land."

GIVE A DAM Campaign Manager Harry Burkitt said:

"The buck stops with Stuart Ayres. His department is clearly not undertaking his publicly stated commitment to ensure robust community consultation. Stuart Ayres needs to provide Traditional Owners with proper time to respond to this bogus assessment, and conduct a transparent independent review of the cultural assessment before it's put into the final EIS.

"For him not to do anything else would mean he has misled the people of NSW."

Contact: Harry Burkitt - 0490 010 909

