



E NEWS

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PO Box
Dungog 2420

Save the Williams River Coalition

NTDG has been endeavouring to bring as many people and interested groups on board to assist with our campaign. The *Save the Williams River Coalition*, which consists of groups such as the Total Environment Centre, Nature Conservation Centre, Central Coast Environmental Network, Gosford/Wyong Ratepayers Association, NTDG as well as key expert supporters, is helping us incorporate a wider field of players into our fight. NTDG was invited to make a presentation to the Catchment Management Authority on our concerns if the proposed Tillegra Dam goes ahead. These and other contacts will assist us in our fight. The need to bring more people & groups on board is vital to our fight; strength in numbers is the only way to ensure our voice is heard. We need to hear from people who may have contacts with other users of the Williams River—fisherman, farmers, Landcare groups, people who will be affected if this proposal is allowed to occur.

Another group who would be beneficial to our cause is the GetUp organisation. GetUp is an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation giving everyday Australians opportunities to get involved and hold politicians accountable on important issues. GetUp can assist us by having emails sent to politicians, engaging with the media, getting our ads on air and helping our campaign become more nationally recognised. GetUp is a not-for-profit org. and receives no money from any political party or the government. They rely solely on funds and in-kind donations from the Australian public. We urge all members & friends of NTDG to contact GetUp either by going to their website www.getup.org.au—click on About & then campaign & send in our campaign. Alternatively you can email

them: campaigns@getup.org.au. The more people that contact them the more chance we have of gaining their assistance in our fight.

Film of the river

We have currently been filming short info ads with Nigel Williams to get our message out there. These will be shown on the Internet and hopefully at the local theatre. Nigel has also participated in the recent Newcastle Shootout competition. His story line involves the Williams River & the proposed dam, so we wish him lots of luck in his endeavour and thank him for helping us make more people aware of our campaign.



Nigel competed in the Newcastle Herald 2 Minute Show Down where he took out second place.

Did you know this about dams?

The world's more than 54,000 existing large dams have not been built to allow for the erratic hydrological patterns that climate change is bringing. In this sense, all dams should now be considered unsafe. More extreme storms and increasingly severe floods will have major implications for dam safety.

The World Commission on Dams found that on average, large dams have been at best only marginally economically viable. The average cost overrun of dams is 56 percent. This means that when a dam is predicted to cost \$1 billion, it ends up costing \$1.56 billion. In too many cases the burden of

uneconomic dams is shouldered by a nation's citizens, while the project builders walk away with a tidy profit and another project to add to their portfolio. Given that most of the world's large dams are now being built in the world's poorest nations, this is a burden they can ill afford.

In addition to huge social impacts, large dams directly impact rivers in a variety of physical and biological ways. The most significant is the alteration of a river's flow, affecting downstream ecosystems and the landscape through which the river flows. A dam also holds back sediments that would naturally replenish downstream ecosystems. Riverbeds downstream of dams are typically eroded by several meters within the decade of first closing a dam—the damage can extend for tens or even hundreds of kilometres below a dam.

Riverbed deepening will also lower groundwater tables along a river, threatening vegetation and local wells in the floodplain and requiring crop irrigation in places where there was previously no need. Altering the riverbed reduces habitat for fish that spawn in river bottoms, and for invertebrates.

Large dams have led to the extinction of many fish and other aquatic species, the disappearance of birds in floodplains, huge losses of forest, wetland and farmland, erosion of coastal deltas, and many other unmitigable impacts. And contrary to the dam industry's claims that dams offer "green" energy, **most reservoirs emit greenhouse gases**, some in fairly high quantities.

In view of large-scale problems and risks, associated with large dams, **the current trend is towards the decommissioning of large dams**. According to the World Commission on Dams, momentum for river restoration is accelerating in many countries, especially in United States, where nearly 500 dams, mainly old small dams have been decommissioned. Since 1998, the decommissioning rate for large

dams has overtaken the rate of construction in the United States (links are on our website).

In the United States, whose 5,500 large dams, make it the second most dammed country in the world, **building of large dams has been stopped** and a huge amount is being spent on trying to fix the problems created by the existing dams.



Global river restoration movement

The good news coming from the restoration efforts now under way around the world is this: when given a chance, river systems often heal. Reconnect a river with its floodplain, and fish and riparian plant communities will rebound. Remove a dam, and species long gone will return upriver. Release a flood pulse from a reservoir, and key habitat improvements will materialize. The science supporting river restoration is now strong enough to warrant greater societal investment in rebalancing human and ecosystem water needs. Moreover, river health can often be improved with minimal social or economic disruption.

Information from the International Rivers Website, World Commission on Dams.

More info

Our website www.notillegradam.com is full of information including alternative means to harvest water, recycling information, an on line forum, photographs & maps. You can also sign our on line petition.

Our meetings are held each 3rd Thursday of the month in the Anglican Church Hall, Dowling St, Dungog. Everyone is welcome.