

Proforma A – 676 responses received

Dear Committee,

Please accept this submission to the Legislative Council's Select Committee Inquiry into the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall. I consent to this submission and my name being published in full.

I am opposed to the NSW Government's plan to raise the Warragamba Dam wall by at least 14 metres is unnecessary, destructive and an expensive gift to property developers. It would be cheaper and less destructive to invest in international best practice flood management for Western Sydney.

I urge the committee to recommend the NSW Government abandon this short-sighted proposal.

If this project goes ahead it will flood 4,700 hectares of World Heritage listed National Parks in the Blue Mountains, causing irreversible damage to the Kowmung, Coxs, Nattai, Kedumba and Wollondilly Rivers. At least 48 threatened species that inhabit the area will be put at risk, including the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater (one of Australia's rarest birds) and the Camden White Gums. In July 2019, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee found that raising the dam wall would significantly impact the 'Outstanding Universal Values' of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

The project will also result in the loss of over 300 sacred Aboriginal sites in the Burratorang Valley, including the last remaining waterholes of the Gundungurra peoples dreaming stories and grave sites. It is unacceptable that the draft cultural assessment undertaken by SMEC Engineering only covered 26% of the entire area that will be submerged by the raised dam.

The real driver behind the proposal is clearly a push to increase housing development across the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley floodplain. The Government should abandon plans to double housing on the floodplain, adding at least another 134,000 homes to an area which has a known flood risk.

We should not be putting the interests of property developers ahead of the environment and communities.

Alternative options for flood mitigation for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley have been identified which are cheaper, less destructive and should be adopted instead of raising the dam wall. These include:

- Investing in evacuation infrastructure in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley;
- Adopting international best practice floodplain development controls;

- Using flood levees and diversion structures; and

- Managing the existing capacity of Warragamba Dam by lowering its current full storage level to provide additional airspace for floods and investing in water recycling and desalination infrastructure.

Kind regards,