

**Submission
No 8**

**INQUIRY INTO WATER NSW AMENDMENT
(WARRAGAMBA DAM) BILL 2018**

Name: Dr Jamie Pittock

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2nd October 2018

The Hon Taylor Martin MLC
State Development Committee
Parliament of New South Wales

By email: State.Development@parliament.nsw.gov.au

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CRICOS Provider No. 00120C

Dear Mr Taylor,

Submission to the inquiry into the Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018

I write with the following submission into the inquiry into the Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018.

My expertise is in better governance of the interlinked issues of water management, energy and food supply, responding to climate change and conserving biological diversity. I am a co-author of a number of peer reviewed research publications on flood management in Australia and abroad. While an Associate Professor at the Fenner School of Environment and Society at The Australian National University, I am also: Director of International Programs for the UNESCO Chair in Water at ANU; a member of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists; a member of the board of Water Stewardship Asia-Pacific, and chair of the WWF Australia Eminent Scientists Group.

Recently I reviewed the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy (Infrastructure NSW 2017). Attached is my detailed critique of Infrastructure NSW's argument to raise the Warragamba Dam wall for flood control purposes. Key points from my report are that the strategy:

- a) Does not appear to have been subject to independent expert review;
- b) Is predicated upon further development that will place more residents in harm's way on the floodplain – no flood recurrence interval safety standard is adopted comparable to those in other developed countries;
- c) Only assesses the capital cost of each flood risk management option against flood damage so that the cost-benefit analysis ignores other costs of the chosen strategy (such as flooding part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area) and other benefits to society (such as from better roads from improving evacuation routes);
- d) Ignores current practices in other countries for relocating homes and business at greatest risk;
- e) Does little to improve the safety of residents on the most flood prone lands, below the 1:100 and 1:500 flood recurrence intervals, who are at great risk of flooding from tributary rivers below Warragamba Dam.

Management of the existing storage of Warragamba Dam, improvements to flood evacuation routes, increased flood-forecasting capacity, adopting international best practice floodplain development controls, and relocating the residents at greatest risk from floods are all alternatives to raising the Warragamba Dam wall.

For these reasons I consider that the Water NSW Amendment (Warragamba Dam) Bill 2018 is premature, and the case for damaging the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area with the proposed flood control measure has not been adequately justified. Instead, I ask your committee to consider recommending that:

- a) The Bill be withdrawn; and
- b) There is an independent and public review of options for flood risk management in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley.

I would be pleased to provide any further information that your Committee may desire, but regrettably, work commitments in far western NSW will prevent me from giving evidence in person in your hearing on October 4th.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jamie Pittock
Associate Professor