

**Submission
No 81**

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

Organisation: Turf Producers Australia Limited (trading as Turf Australia)

Date Received: 3 October 2018

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From: Jenny Zadro, Market Development Manager
Turf Producers Australia Limited, trading as Turf Australia

Turf Australia is a peak industry body representing Turf Growers across the country and I am writing to you on behalf of the Turf Growers in the Hawkesbury Area regarding the issue of the raising the wall of Warragamba Dam. The document is to provide an understanding of the implications of a serious flood to the turf production industry in the area.

A flood in the Hawkesbury Area has major implications to the turf industry and no doubt many other agricultural production farms in the area.

Experience in years past has shown that floods have a long-lasting effect on turf production businesses. Turf Australia would ask the Legislative Council to consider the information below and the impact it will have on the local community and turf industry in the event of serious floods.

Economic Impact:

- Turf Production is one of Hawkesbury's largest industries and employers, providing in excess of 400 jobs.
- Floods have the potential for up to 70% loss of stock on turf farms.
- Silt build up from the flood needs to be removed and turf has to be ploughed back into the ground as it would not be able to be harvested. The silt would cause the turf to crumble.
- The regrowth of crops can take 6-12 months to be ready for sale, not taking into account the time for farms to be cleaned up and replanted.
- Potential loss of building and infrastructure as well as machinery.
- Many employees would be put off during this period. It is anticipated that the average grower would cut 65% of their staff. It should be noted that the majority of staff employed in the turf industry are local to the Hawkesbury area.
- The loss of stock/income turnover to the average turf farmer in the Hawkesbury area would be in the vicinity of \$1.5m - \$3m. (not including specialized turf supply).
- The Hawkesbury turf growers are a vital source of turf production for specialized turf used for sportsfields, major stadiums and community greenspaces. The major stadiums in Sydney alone, have turf supply investments of between \$5-6 million per annum.
- The impact of loss of turf production would not only affect the local growers but have a flow on effect to local businesses selling equipment, machinery, fertilizers and farm supplies and services.

(2)

As the Hawkesbury area is the major supplier of turf for NSW, it should also be noted that the impact of a loss of turf supplies would have monumental repercussions for communities and greenspace. Lack of turf production and higher demand for turf in NSW would:

- Increase turf prices including transportation due to further distance to transport turf from other areas in NSW or interstate.

Environmental:

- Major implications for homes and communities, particularly in new developments.
- Heat island effects. In midsummer natural turfgrass absorbs heat having a cooling effect of 20°C less than asphalt and concrete and up to 40°C than synthetic grass.
- Natural turfgrass improves air quality and air pollution, generates oxygen and dust prevention.
- Land quality is improved through erosion control, reduction in nutrient and movement loss and soil improvement.
- Water quality is impacted by turf through water filtration and purification and water run-off reduction.
- Other benefits of turf grass include noise and glare reduction, fire prevention and biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Emotional:

- The flow on effect of the loss of turf production for any period of time will also be felt by the local families of the workers who no longer have employment, creating financial struggles and increasing the likelihood of mental health and wellness issues.
- The value of turf and greenspace has been widely studied and confirmed as a vital part of all communities for ongoing health and wellbeing.

As a major economical part of the Hawkesbury community, the turf industry requests that the Legislative Council consider the impact major floods have on the turf production industry and the community connected to the industry.

Thank you for your consideration and feel free to contact me if you require any further information.