

**Submission  
No 111**

**INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE  
WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL**

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**Legislative Council Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall**

Dear Legislative Council Select Committee,

I wish to make the following submission on the state government proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Gregory Buckman

## SUBMISSION

### *The proposal won't stop Nepean River flooding*

The raison d'être of the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall is to control flooding of the Nepean River. This is a folly, the wall raising will not achieve this aim. This is because about half of the water that enters the Hawkesbury-Nepean system does so downstream of Warragamba Dam via the Nepean, Grose, Colo and Macdonald rivers. The total catchment of these rivers is 8,340 square kilometres compared to 9,050 square kilometres for the catchment of the Warragamba Dam and upstream rivers. Because of this, the 1995 flood mitigation dam Environmental Impact Statement by ERM Mitchell McCotter said that, even with the lowering of the downstream river level below which construction is prohibited to the 1:100 year flood line, over 100 properties will still be flooded every time there is a major flood with over 1,300 properties affected by a 1:200 year flood. Australia's flood zoning regulation of 1:100 years is well below other international benchmarks: by comparison, the USA works to 1: 500 years the Netherlands works to 1: 1,250 years.

### *The wall raising will have an enormous environmental impact*

The increase in the dam wall will, above the wall, result in the periodic flooding of the iconic Kowmung, Coxs and Nattai rivers that all flow through the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage wilderness area. The stilled waters from the flooding will deposit sediment on to the flooded areas that will destroy vegetation such as the endangered Camden White Gum, the Kowmung Hakea tree and the endangered Regent Honeyeater (Australia's rarest bird). Bank erosion and slippage is also likely to be widespread. Below the wall, the increase will draw out the time over which flood waters are released. This will cause major river bank erosion resulting in a wider, shallower river. Riverside forests will fall down as banks collapse creating major navigation hazards. Wetlands, such as Bakers Lagoon, that depend on natural flood inundation for replenishment, will degrade. Prolonged freshwater flows in the Nepean will also decrease the river's salinity levels that will endanger many types of aquatic life in the river such as the Australian Bass fish.

### *The wall raising will lead to intense development along the Nepean River*

Increasing the Warragamba Dam wall will lead to over 100,000 new homes being built in areas such as Londonderry, Castlereagh, the ADI site, Penrith Lakes, Riverstone, Berkshire Park and Windsor Downs. This will fundamentally change the social fabric of these currently semi-rural areas that have traditionally provided a large amount of Sydney's food. It will put enormous population pressure on Western Sydney which lacks the infrastructure to service even its existing population levels.

In short, I recommend that the wall raising not go ahead.