

**Submission  
No 114**

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

**Name:** Ms Gina Richter  
**Date Received:** 3 September 2019

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Mr Justin Field MLC  
Chair  
Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall  
Legislative Council  
NSW Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Sir,

I am making this submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall, as a private citizen representing no one but myself. I would like to address the term of reference I d(iii), and express my concerns over the ecological impacts the project will have on the Blue Mountains National Park.

I grew up in Sydney, and like many Sydney-siders, have maintained my sanity and derived great pleasure from recreating in the greater Blue Mountains area. This is an amazing resource on the doorstep of our sprawling city. It has World Heritage status and brings millions of dollars in tourism revenue to NSW. Raising the dam wall will undermine the outstanding values that led to the Blue Mountains National Park being named as a World Heritage Site. It may result in the park being put on the 'at risk' list. The project threatens 48 endangered species in the 4,700 hectares identified to be inundated in the National Parks surrounding the dam. Raising the wall will destroy Sydney's only remaining wild river systems, including the Kowmung river, and will destroy irreplaceable sacred Aboriginal sites.

Sydney is experiencing almost unprecedented growth and the pressure on it's inhabitants, with increasing traffic congestion and endless building, with more and more medium- and high-density housing taking over our suburbs. We need the pristine areas of the Blue Mountains now more than ever, to offset pollution, and provide much needed open space.

Of course the growth of our city is the reason why the dam wall proposal arose. Raising the wall will supposedly mitigate flooding on the Hawkesbury-Nepean, making housing in the area more secure, allwoign for more development and allowing people better access to insurance. However, the science seems to cast doubt on whether a higher dam wall will actually mitigate flooding, with 45% of historical floods coming from other catchment areas. Raising the wall will promote more housing development in this area, with plans to increase the population in the floodplain by 134,000 by 2030. But the project may put those residents at risk of flooding anyway, worsening the dangers of the floodplain for housing development instead of improving it. I do not think it is worth destroying pristine wilderness unless we are absolutely SURE that raising the dam walls will have the desired effect.

I would just add one more point: since the earliest days of the Colony of NSW, the Hawkesbury-Nepean has been a food bowl for Sydney with market gardens and farms. The fertile soil is enriched by regular flooding in the plain. If these lands are rezoned for residential development, food will presumably have to be transported from further away, increasing the cost of food to consumers and the carbon foot-print of food production for Sydney.

I love living in Sydney and the proximity of the Blue Mountains, with their amazing wilderness areas, is a big part of that. I ask that you consider very carefully what will be destroyed so some more homes can be built on a floodplain.

Kind Regards,  
Gina Richter