

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

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 5 September 2019

Partially
Confidential

We are living in a time when our every impact on the environment will have major ramifications for our future generations. Climate change is blatantly supported by science and we are already witnessing the effects of climate change around the world. Raising the dam wall would destroy 65 kilometres of wilderness rivers and inundate 4,700 hectares of the world heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park. Is the legacy of the Liberal Government going to be the destruction of our world heritage sites for the sake of short-term developer interest? Is this how the Liberal Government will want future Australians to remember them by - that in addition to doing nothing to slow down climate change, that the Government is actively adding fuel to the fire?

While flood-risk is an important issue facing western Sydney, raising Warragamba Dam will not prevent flooding in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley and is an inadequate solution to managing flood risk. This means that even if Warragamba Dam wall is raised, other catchments 1 would still cause significant flooding in western Sydney. Housing more people on the floodplain will put thousands more lives at risk when floods occur and will only add to the serious congestion problems facing western Sydney.

I understand that the flood risk needs to be addressed in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley so existing communities are safe from floods. Australian National University has identified four alternatives:

1. Stop putting people in harm's way

- Ensuring people don't live on flood-prone lands will save lives and property damage when floods occur. As no dam can stop all floods, placing people in flood-prone areas is dangerous. NSW planning regulations still allow people to be housed in extremely floodprone areas below the 1:500 year flood limit. This is far from international best-practice, with the Netherlands adopting a 1:1250 year flood planning limit, and the USA a 1:500 year limit.

2. Improve Evacuation Routes and Flood Forecasting

- Effective evacuation is the only measure which guarantees reduced risk to life in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley during flood events. Flood evacuation roads would also solve congestion problems in western Sydney during dry times.

3. Relocate the most flood prone residents

- Engaging in a buyback program of the 5000 houses which lie under the 1:100 year flood level is important option. The government's \$3.3 billion price-tag for relocation is a misleading figure, as it does not properly consider the potential figure saved in flood events, as well as economic benefits that 'freeing up' the floodplain can bring.

4. Alternative flood storage in Warragamba dam

- Lowering the full storage level by 12m would free 795 billion litres of airspace for flood control. Combined with flood forecasting to manage the level of the dam, this would have no upstream environmental impacts, and would increase Sydney's water security when consolidated with operating desalination plants and water recycling. UTS research shows this would likely be a cheaper option than raising the dam wall.

So please be the leader that the world needs the Liberal Government to be and protect the environment from further destruction.