Submission No 226

INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

Organisation: Hawksbury Nepean Community Action Committee

Date Received: 10 September 2019

The Director,

Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall,

Parliament House,

Macquarie Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

RAISE THE WALL AND SAVE US ALL

Submission to The Independent Pannell of Review into the proposed raising of Warragamba Dam Wall be 14 meters.

By Hawkesbury – Nepean Flood Mitigation Action Committee September 9th 2019.

(a) A Bill introduced into and passed through the NSW Upper House of Parliament allowing the controlling Authority over Warragamba Dam, Water NSW, the legislative authority to operate Warragamba Dam for Flood Mitigating and temporary inundation of the fore shores of the maximum water storage level within

National Park, as the current legislation only allows for Water Storage. This was a necessary step forward to allow for the EIS to progress and the Business case to be completed?

Under the old legislation even if the dam wall was raised and completed it could not be used FOR FLOOD MITTIGATION without permission from Authorities outside Water NSW.

(b) Throughout the documents relating to the Proposal it is reassured that the Raising of the dam wall is to create an air space for temporary water storage and slow controlled release for flood mitigation purposes.

(c) The previous proposal to raise the Dam wall by 22 meters had passed through the EIS process and approval from The World Heritage.

(d) Examples of alternatives offered.

(e) Associate Professor Jamie Pittock makes the point that in the past development was carried out in the valley at levels much lower than the current permitted building heights. During large flood events due to the typography of the valley flood waters back up and flood low lying roads and developments.

These facts, well documented, studied and the basis for the need for mitigation of the flood waters that flow into the valley during major rain events and strategic and integrated land use and road planning as described in actions taken points 3 respectively within the document HNFRMS RVRC.

The statement that the events will be more frequent due to climate change, if this is so, even more reason to mitigate the effect of these flood

events.

Since development undertaken by Governor Macquarie the level at which housing and commercial buildings have been permitted have been under constant review and raising.

Example “Toll House” on the first tollway in Australia, Windsor Rd.

The issue is the existing development and not the new developments.

The NSW Governments response for the second time after review of all the facts is to propose again to mitigate the effects of a Major flood event is to:

1. Upgrade low-lying flood evacuation roads identified by SES
2. Community education programs
3. Development Controls.
4. Reduce the flood risk to the valley by raising Warragamba dam wall.
5. Flood evacuation signage.

The flood risk reduction options were investigated at length.

None had the potential to reduce the flood risk as much as raising the dam wall.

It is true that no configuration of Warragamba dam will prevent flooding in the HNV During a flood of PMF proportions however the raising of the Dam wall will greatly reduce the flood height of major floods and increase the evacuation time.

Whilst Associate Professor Jamie Pittock is UNSURE if the holding back of up to 74% of the water flowing into a flooded river will have any effect on the flood height and severity e.g. speed, erosion, etc. I doubt you need a degree to understand the principal that if you turn of the tap filling the bucket the level in the bucket will not rise. The statement that it MAY reduce the flood peak, seems unfounded.

As for the slow release of the restrained flood water after the downstream

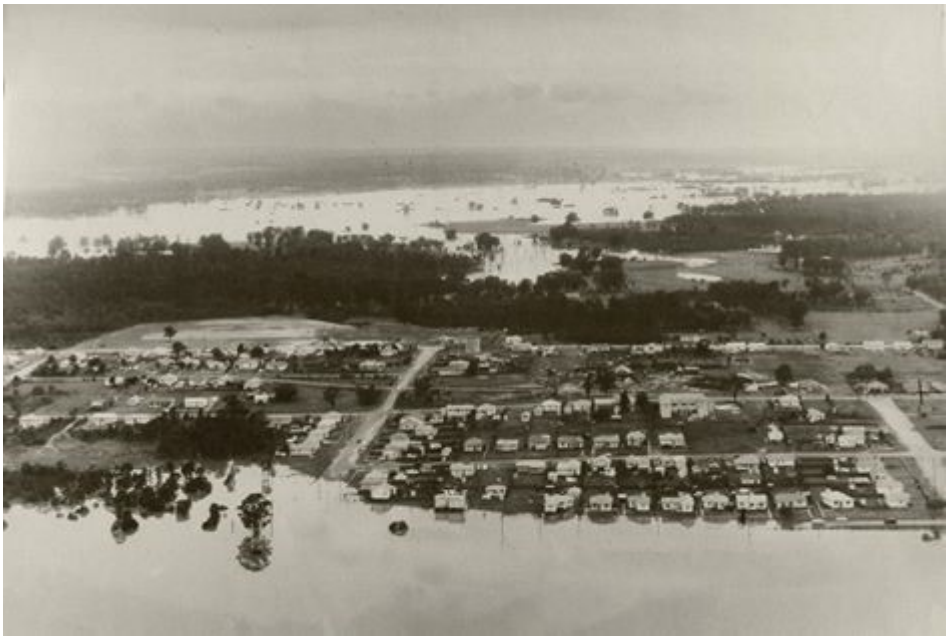
flooding is abating this also has been considered and will form part of the EIS.

1. Alternative offered by Associate Professor Jamie Pittock of Lowering the permanent storage level by 12 meters or 795 billion litres. This will require potentially the release of 795 billion litres of captured fresh drinking water via the Nepean – Hawkesbury river systems to the Pacific Ocean north of Sydney, then pump the ocean water to Desalination plants using carbon expensive motors and desalinate the Ocean water using vast amounts of electricity. Pump the desalinated water again using carbon expensive motors to Sydney's reservoirs, previously gravity feed from Warragamba dam. Then pump the heavily salt laden wastewater from the desalination plant back out into the Pacific Ocean. This would appear to be a very expensive option both to the environment and the customers of Water NSW.

2. It is true that there is large tracks of land as described in the report from Molino Stewart 2012 which do not fit into the NSW Governments current Model for developable lands and there for will not be considered for development (ref Release Marsden park and refusal to redevelop Riverstone meat work industrial site.) not only no development but no fill below 1/ 100 flood line.

3. Evacuation routes have been identified and are under upgrades and funded. As previously identified by the writer the topography of the HNV is such that creation of evacuation route absolutely flood free is restricted this reinforces the need for mitigation.

4. Relocation of 5000 homes. How do we start? Odd street numbers first or should it be evens. Where will they go. What effect will it have on the family orientated community. As most Heritage sites and buildings are in early development areas what do we do with these. Who is going to assess the level of redevelopment? An example is Gundagai already relocated twice.



Flood 15.1 meters 1961


Flood 15.1 meters 1961

Over the past decades it has been established that the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley is at risk of major flooding causing up to ***7,000 existing homes and many businesses to be inundated with displacement / evacuation of 50,000 thousand residents.***

The bulk of these homes were approved at a much lower planning levels than the current development levels which ***will not be lowered contrary to claims.*** Ref Molino Stewart Environmental and Natural Disasters Final Report.

The EIS for this project is underway as is the rigorous approval process for the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall by around 14 meters to create an air space for temporary storage of inflow during extreme rain events over the catchment area.

This will cause some temporary inundation for short periods around 2 weeks of the upstream areas of the catchment area above Warragamba Dam adjacent to existing storage levels ***not the entire Blue Mountains National Park.***

The NSW Government and its agencies is in consultation with all the stake holders involved.

The raising of Warragamba Dam is an integral part of the NSW Government's Flood strategy for the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley released this year.

[redacted]

Managing the flood risk FAQ 1.pdf

Infrastructure-NSW-Resilient-Valley,-Reury-Nepean Commu

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Land use planning P&E.pdf

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