

**Submission
No 336**

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

Name: Mr Andrew Macqueen

Date Received: 10 September 2019

The Hon Taylor Martin MLC

Committee Chair

Standing Committee of State Development

I object to the proposal to raise Warragamba dam. I have spent many years exploring the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area, both as a historian and a volunteer in remote-area conservation work, and I am familiar with the areas that will be impacted by the proposal. The proposal will impact negatively on both the cultural and natural values of the southern Blue Mountains.

As a former professional hydrologist I comprehend the science of flood mitigation, and I understand the arguments that are likely to be put in favour of the proposal, including the temporary and occasional nature of the upstream inundation that is likely to occur. However, I believe the impact of those inundations would be significant in terms of vegetation and wildlife habitat loss, siltation along the river and banks, and the proliferation of environmental weeds. Moreover, I am concerned that once the dam is raised there will in due course be an overwhelming temptation to use the additional storage space not for flood attenuation, but for water supply. This would involve more or less permanent flooding of the upstream areas, rather than temporary inundation.

Development in the Hawkesbury Nepean natural floodplain has already far exceeded what should have been allowed in the first place. Suburbia has encroached on fertile areas that should have been a major food-bowl for the city. The potential impact of future floods on life and property in those developed areas should be ameliorated by appropriate local infrastructure and emergency planning measures, not by forever increasing the height of a dam. Certainly, the dam should never be raised if, as many suspect, the real purpose is to provide for yet more inappropriate floodplain development.

When it was built, the existing dam impacted enormously on the natural and cultural values of the Burratorang and Coxs Valleys. People of both European and Aboriginal origins wept at their loss as it filled. Yet, the importance of natural values was not understood at all. If the original proposal was made today there would be huge outrage from many quarters.

What's done is done. However, the temptation to incrementally worsen the dam's impact, degrading our precious heritage assets, must be avoided.

Andy Macqueen OAM