

Submission
No 326

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

Name: Mr John Robens
Date Received: 10 September 2019

September 10 2019 Chair Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall
Legislative Council NSW Parliament House Macquarie st Sydney NSW 2000. Submission
opposing the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall ostensibly for flood mitigation. I am
writing to register my opposition to the proposal to raise Warragamba dam on the basis that it
will destroy significant natural landscape. World Heritage listed natural areas, protected as a
National Park and a wild river. The area proposed to be protected has 3 levels of protection
meaning that it is recognised as being some of the most important natural areas in the state of
New South Wales. I am a bushwalker and value natural scenery. The protected bushland around
Sydney and the natural beauty of the harbour are the two things that make Sydney an
outstanding global city in my view. It is important that this beauty is protected so that future
generations can enjoy it. This proposal will create a 'bath ring' that will be visible up to the three
sisters. International visitors who collectively spend billions of dollars of money as tourists will
witness a degraded landscape from some of our most iconic tourism vantage points. I
understand that there are a large number of threatened species present (48) in the threatened
area. Similarly to scenic natural areas once threatened species become extinct it is permanent.
One significant act of habitat destruction such as the raising of the dam wall has the effect of
taking away these species forever. I am afraid that the raising of the dam will result in a false
sense of security among those who live on the flood plain. I don't believe that raising the dam
wall will be an effective mitigation. We witnessed the floods in Brisbane in 2011 in areas that
were supposedly flood proofed by the Wivenhoe dam which has a similar flood mitigation
capacity as that proposed here. I understand that once the flood mitigation capacity of the dam is
exhausted the full effect of the flood waters would pass downstream. I also understand up to
half of the potential flood water does not flow through Warragamba Dam. The main cause of
the giant floods that are possible in the Nepean flood plain is the lack of ability for water to clear
the Sackville bends. The water backs up creating a 'bath tub' effect resulting in a large extent of
flood water and a high level - up to an amazing 27m. This level of flooding is frightening to me
and indicates that we should not implement placebo solutions We should ensure that people are
not living in dangerous areas. We should ensure those that are live in flood proof housing and
that there are appropriate escape routes. We should not encourage further risky development
and we should work to reduce the number of risky dwellings there are in the flood plain. I
understand that the proposed cost of the placebo flood mitigation plan is 3/4 of a billion dollars.
This is a large amount of money to spend on an ineffective solution that also degrades the
environment around Sydney. The environment with the Blue Mountains will be degraded and a
missed opportunity to improve the well being of people in Western Sydney will also result. 3/4
of a billion dollars could be used to provide safe exit routes, ensure that dwellings are not at risk
of flooding and improve the liability of the Cumberland plain. This money could be used to
improve the Western Sydney Parklands enhancing the ability of the high flood risk areas as open
green space. The lungs of Western Sydney. The area could also involve enhanced food
production or recreational benefits. These activities would result in the liveability of Western
Sydney improving and a greater overall built environment value. Aboriginal heritage is also
irreplaceable. Aboriginal artefacts and sacred places to be submerged intermittently are an
important link to our past as Australians. It is important to preserve these ties. In conclusion I
am horrified that the proposal to raise Warragamba Dam has been resurrected from the 1990s. I
cannot understand why the most valued and protected areas are to be destroyed with the end
result being that more people will be placed in danger and the general liveability of Western
Sydney reduced. If this plan goes through, future generations will look from our iconic vantage
points at the degradation that is going to be within the soap ring around Warragamba Dam and
wonder what broken processes resulted in this unnecessary destruction.