

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

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Partially
Confidential

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 Inquiry into the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall Introduction I make this submission on the proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam Wall as an individual not a representative of an organisation. I live in the Inner West of Sydney. However for many years from my early 20s for over 35 years, I was a bushwalker and regular visitor to the Blue Mountains. I have lost count of the number of times I walked and camped along the Kowmung River, among others in the broader area. I have a long-standing respect for our natural environment in all its rugged beauty and complexity and have watched over the years how Australian “lifestyle” factors have increasingly impacted upon the Blue Mountains townships and the floodplain towns below. I also know how much voracious developers and anti-environmentalists (including some politicians) have over the years attempted to “tame” parts of our natural environment especially in the Blue Mountains and increasingly on the outer fringes of the Sydney basin in the quest for making large sums of money through opaque and often non-challengeable planning processes. I address the following Terms of Reference in this submission: 1. (b) plans for future property development on flood prone land on the Hawkesbury Nepean Floodplain, and (i) any other related matter. Issues Raising the Warragamba Dam wall will promote even more development on the Hawkesbury-Nepean flood plain. With plans to increase the population in this area to over 130,000 by 2030, the social fabric of this semi-rural region which has historically provided a significant amount of Sydney’s food will be severely compromised . Further, on current building trends, there would be no legal or regulatory requirement for developers and building owners to install climate mitigating features such as solar PV or hot water, or rainwater tanks, or to plant a requisite number of (appropriate for the area) trees and other green cover. Overall, this proposed increased population and increased building footprint will put massive pressure on western Sydney suburbs which will experience explosive expansion. The net effect will be fewer open areas and more emissions arising from the building of dwellings and roads and removal of trees and lower storey plants. I have become aware that one Mr [redacted] of Waratah Holdings reportedly made more than a threefold profit on land he had purchased in the proposed affected area in 2016, and that – perhaps coincidentally – he is a generous donor to the Liberal Party. How is it possible for a land parcel of this size to be purchased and sold on for such huge amounts of money if there is not a strong prospect of that money being redirected into property development windfalls? What information were [redacted] and his company aware of as far back as 2014 to 2016 that the wider population was not privy to particularly when “...the entire property is classified as flood-prone land with parts in the one-in-100-year flood zone...” (source: <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/nitv-news/article/2019/02/06/raising-nsw-dam-wall-good-floodplain-developers>)? Summary and conclusion Such ill-informed and wanton destruction of the Hawkesbury –Nepean flood plain must stop, particularly in the case of the raising of the Warragamba dam wall. At a time of rampant, destructive human-induced climate change where the world is fast heading to warming of 1.5 degrees, outer Sydney cannot afford to continue with its destructive, ill-conceived and ill-planned practices of overdevelopment with associated land-clearing particularly when at present there appear to be few legal/regulatory requirements to install renewable energy sources, and to replace lost canopy with massive re-planting. From my reading of the available information about this proposal, I do not accept there is a high chance of flooding on the Hawkesbury-Nepean plain. Rather, the argument for raising the Dam Wall by the Berejiklian Government and its supporters is a Trojan Horse – a most inappropriate form of development. I OPPOSE THE RAISING OF THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL. RECOMMENDATIONS 1. That [redacted], and possibly other Directors of this the Waratah Group be invited or compelled to give evidence to this Inquiry as to what information they obtained from the former Baird-led Liberal Government in the period leading up to and including 2014-16 regarding planned development of land at Marsden Park. 2. That [redacted] and/or co-directors be invited or compelled to provide information about their

donations to the NSW Division of the Liberal party totalling over half a million dollars. Adrienne Shilling