

Submission
No 358

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 10 September 2019

Partially
Confidential

September 10th 2019

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

Please accept this submission to the Legislative Council's Select Committee Inquiry into the Proposal to Raise the Warragamba Dam Wall. I consent to this submission being published in full.

I object to the raising of the dam wall on the following grounds:

UNESCO World Heritage, Wilderness Values and Biodiversity

The UNESCO World Heritage, wilderness values and biodiversity are all interrelated aspects of this proposal and will all be adversely impacted by this project.

The rivers of the southern Blue Mountains remain relatively untouched and represent a scarce wild space on a human dominated planet. There are numerous threatened species here along with rare dry rain forests and hundreds of indigenous sites. Raising of the dam wall will cause grievous harm to these places and risk losing the UNESCO world heritage status. Along with Australia's lack of commitment to protecting the great barrier reef, destroying a protected world heritage site would further damage Australia's reputation. This representational damage will significantly impact other industries such as tourism and degrade Australia's image as a leader on the world stage.

SMEC Engineering

I urge the committee to also summon the CEO of SMEC Engineering, James Phyliss, to give evidence as to why his company has been ignoring the concerns of Blue Mountains Indigenous people and not following UNESCO World Heritage (IUCN & ICOMOS) Assessment Guidelines.

To get to the bottom of how this happened, all documents and correspondence relating the cultural and environmental assessment should be summoned to the Parliamentary inquiry so there can be full transparency surrounding the project.

Alternatives

Several alternatives have been identified that will not cause destruction to Aboriginal sites, the wilderness area, nor threaten bio diversity nor and would cost significantly less than raising the wall.

1. 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 flood prone 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.

3. 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 .

Yours Sincerely,