

Submission  
No 364

## INQUIRY INTO PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

**Name:** Professor Jamie Pittock

**Date Received:** 9 September 2019

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9<sup>th</sup> September 2019

The Director  
Select Committee on the Proposal to Raise the  
Warragamba Dam Wall  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

By email: [warragamba.dam@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:warragamba.dam@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

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Dear madam / sir,

I write with a submission to your inquiry on the NSW Government's proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. My submission be published in full on the website including my name.

I am a professor of environmental science and policy at the Fenner School of Environment and Society at The Australian National University. I have worked on issues of management of rivers, flood plains and water infrastructure since the early 1990s in Australia and internationally.

In September 2018 I reviewed Infrastructure NSW's 2017 "Resilient valley, resilient communities. Hawkesbury-Nepean valley flood risk management strategy", which sets out their argument for raising the Warragamba Dam wall. My assessment is published in the attached document: "Managing flood risk in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley - A report on the alternative flood management measures to raising Warragamba Dam wall."

Infrastructure NSW's case to raise the dam wall: a) is based on settling more people in harm's way on the flood plain; b) does not consider best international practice for reducing flood risk (e.g. by moving people out of harm's way); and c) is biased in not assessing all the costs of selected flood mitigation measures or co-benefits (which may change cost-benefit decisions).

The NSW Government should consider four alternative options to reduce flood risk, namely:

1. Provide alternative flood storage in Warragamba Dam by lowering the full storage level of Warragamba Dam by 12 metres to free 795 billion litres of airspace for flood control;
2. Stop putting people in harm's way in housing developments on the floodplain and instead promote flood resilient land uses like farming, recreation and conservation.
3. Improve evacuation routes and flood forecasting.
4. Relocate the most flood prone residents.

I would welcome an opportunity to elaborate on these points with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Jamie Pittock