

**Submission  
No 365**

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

**Name:** Mr James Scanlon  
**Date Received:** 10 September 2019

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Dear Committee,

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 and my name being published in full.

Anyone who claims to be able to control the flood cycle in the Hawkesbury - particularly if they claim to be able to do so using a higher dam at Warragamba - is either a liar or delusional.

Many of your submissions will discuss 'upriver' matters: the destruction of natural and cultural heritage in the proposed new inundation areas above the dam. I will talk about the water below the dam - the water which matters and is largely beyond human control.

The Nepean runs north undammed from near Bargo, 50km as the crow flies, collecting the run-off of innumerable, often nameless creeks, before passing BELOW the dam. The overflow or release from the dam is simply a tributary of the Nepean. As are the Erskine Creek system, Glenbrook Creek, Shaws, Lynchs, etc - all undammed.

There is the Grose River, which drains large parts of the Blue Mountains and does not run into the Coxs River/Warragamba catchment.

And what about rain falling in western Sydney, where South Creek runs north into the Hawkesbury?

All that water must go somewhere, and once upon a time it had somewhere to go: into the beautiful soil. Now it runs into gutters, concrete pipes, lifeless drainage canals, then into the river. That rapid run-off is a large part of the cause of today's floods.

In 1817 Governor Macquarie implored the people of the Hawkesbury to build their houses above the highest flood mark. There had been several major floods since the penal colony was founded, and the risks were well known. Did the people listen? NO! Stupidity reigned, as it did in Fukushima, where ancient stone markers warned of tsunamis, instructing future residents to never build their houses below this point. Did they listen? NO!

There should be devoted wetlands throughout the flood regions of the Hawkesbury, and the rest of the land cultivated for food or conserved as bushland.

I am unhappy with the way Aboriginal people have been treated in this process. The company running the assessment has not had good reviews.

For flood mitigation using a large dam, the trick is to run the thing at 70% capacity, releasing water according to rain forecasts. This can be done with the dam we have now; any large dam can be run at 70% capacity. Size does not matter. It's not the amount - it's how you manage it. It's actually hard to believe that some people in positions of responsibility claim to believe in this dam-raising stuff. It is snake oil for idiots who never mastered basic arithmetic.

I have studied conservation and land management, and I am a qualified expert on water and soil conservation. And I can tell you, as a true Sydneysider, the western Sydney bushland - what is left - needs to be preserved NOW. Too much has been lost.

The proponents of this dam-raising need to explain the logic of their position. It will be interesting to hear their arguments.

Again - floods from the south, the west and the east of the Hawkesbury cannot be controlled by Warragamba Dam; it only holds water from the Coxs/Burraborang catchment.

The size of the dam is irrelevant; it is about capacity management. Anyone who cannot understand this probably needs to have it explained again ... and again.

Just knock this stupid proposal on the head.

respectfully yours

James Scanlon

Katoomba

