Submission: Warragamba Dam Raising
SSI – 8441

I Object to the proposal because the proposed raising will not stop flooding downstream of the dam. It may mitigate, but all the dams carry out this function when low due to droughts. This proposal does not include any suggestion from other water entering the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley from the Upper Nepean Dams and other rivers and streams nearby and rivers such as the Grose, Colo, McDonald and other major creeks and streams.
Some historical flood information is lacking.

I do not contribute donations to any political party.

Chapter 15 Flooding and Hydrology

15.4.1 Historical flooding in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley.

While it is true that the flood of March 1867 is the recorded highest flood of the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley it is not correct that it is the highest flood from the area above Warragamba Dam (Burragorang Valley and its catchments).

The highest flood in Burragorang Valley was in fact April 1870, three years after the 1867 flood of the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley.

This flood of 1870 in Burragorang Valley was reported as “the highest known by the oldest residents, black or white”.

This flood was very significant as it dramatically changed the course of the Wollondilly River and presented problems for Water Board surveyors during the 1940’s & 1950’s when they were surveying the private lands for their purchase for the inundation area of the future Warragamba Dam (check old Water Board / Water NSW files).

Like many periods over the years, there were several floods in as many months in 1870 and four recorded for 1870 at Windsor Bridge, March, April, May, and November, with the April flood being the highest, known to have come from Burragorang Valley (and perhaps other areas).

The recent spate of several floods’ months apart or several within the one year is not unusual for the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley (check information Hawkesbury Flood levels 1799 – 1992 Hawkesbury City Council July 2016).

Another main river system that has major influence on flooding in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley is of course from the Nepean River with four of its major tributaries having water supply dams on them, Cataract, Cordeaux, Avon, and Nepean dams with another major tributary running in further upstream being the Bargo River with two weirs located on it.

The highest flood of the Nepean River, at Camden, was in 1873, again 6 years after the 1867 flood of the Hawkesbury - Nepean Valley (the Water Board must have thought this flood was important and included its height on its Fire Road maps in the 1970's and 80's along the river course to Camden and beyond).

The large flood of 1867 must have had very high flows from all the rivers leading into it rather that all coming from the area above what is now above Warragamba Dam.

It should be remembered, as historic flood events over a long period of time (at least recorded in European times), can and do occur in successive periods within following months and separated months in any given year.

It is NOT a new phenomenon as recent flooding experiences have suggested.

The point of this is when dams fill, they must spill, so if this project were to go ahead and the modified Warragamba Dam filled and held back flood waters and another flood occurred within successive months, as history has demonstrated, many times on the Hawkesbury – Nepean River, water would have to be released just the same.

This will be an extremely expensive project that will not have the desired effect.

Flooding will still occur from downstream of the dam, as can and does occur now.

This project gives false hope and expectations for those living along the river system, at best it may mitigate flood relief for those higher above the flood plain.

The money, our taxpayers' dollars could be better spent with flood mitigation infrastructure along the flood plain and come up with or contribute to a better insurance scheme.

What is being planned for other flood effected communities within the rest of the state?

Warragamba Dam has been upgraded since its construction during the 1950's and opening in 1960, at great cost to the taxpayers of NSW, it is a very safe structure able to withstand the greatest flood now and into the future.

If this project goes ahead, this great cost will amount to nothing, a complete waste of our money.

The other problem of storing and holding back major flood waters, is it will affect the water quality of the dam and add, significantly to sedimentation, thus lessening the storage capacity over time.