

To: Warragamba Dam Assessment Team
Planning and Assessment
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

I strongly object to Warragamba Dam Raising Project – SSI-8441 - the proposed raising of the Warragamba Dam wall.

The amount of documentation and limited time frame for consultation is a major impediment to the proper public assessment of this significant project proposal. The prominent graphics and virtual engagement documents portray strong support for the proposal and do not fully address the negative impacts.

This is a very costly and expensive proposal which would fail to address the problem of flooding in the Hawkesbury Nepean River system across Western Sydney. It could only slow floodwaters coming from one of several rivers and sources that all contribute towards flooding in this area. There is a geographic certainty of flooding in the Hawkesbury Nepean system, this plan would not prevent floods from occurring in the accurately named flood plain. This is why the flood plain has not been developed in the past, and why much of this alluvial area has been prime agricultural land for Sydney.

There would be unacceptable impacts on World Heritage listed and other areas upstream of the dam including environmental damage to wild rivers, pristine wilderness, native vegetation and wildlife, particularly numerous threatened species, as well as the irreplaceable loss of local Indigenous heritage and traditional sites of significance.

This represents a double loss to the environment, if the proposal allows more clearing of the downstream bushland and vegetation, and more construction on flood prone cleared land and on open farmland. This magnifies the potential impact on the loss of wildlife and native vegetation, as well as decreasing air quality, and additional buildings would exacerbate the heat island effect. Perhaps it is time to stop the monotonous urban sprawl, particularly in the Western Sydney flood plains.

There are many Burraborang locals, including local indigenous people, that still deeply mourn the loss of their homes, traditional lands, history, and heritage which was destroyed when the dam was built, or which lies hidden and submerged under Lake Burraborang. It is insensitive to worsen the impact on these communities for a dubious perceived benefit.

Local Indigenous voices are loud and clear in their objections. There are many significant sites that would be lost by even temporary inundation. The consultation of local Gundungurra people should have been more thorough, and their views properly considered.

This proposal is said to be the result of a strategy which is *“the framework for the government, councils, businesses and communities to work together to reduce and manage flood risk in the valley.”* Why then do local councils including Wollondilly, scientists, the

National Parks Association, and many businesses, environmental, indigenous, and local community groups, all speak so strongly against the proposal? Even the local member for Wollondilly, a member of the government proposing this project, is deeply concerned, and is opposed to the raising of the dam wall. Have all relevant parties been adequately consulted, and have their concerns been properly heard and considered?

The impact of hundreds of construction vehicles every day on Wollondilly's rural road network is unacceptable, and the pollution and noise threaten the quality of life of rural communities, and native wildlife and vegetation will be endangered. Tourism and other local businesses and local residents would be negatively affected by this traffic and the impacts of construction.

Many people believe this dam wall raising project is for increased water supply. If it does go ahead, what guarantee is there that population pressure will not result in the affected upstream areas being permanently flooded to provide additional water supply? And have water quality issues from contamination due to the temporary inundation of vegetation been fully considered?

There is also a possibility that the added stress of building the additional height to the dam wall could cause unforeseen engineering issues that threaten the stability of the entire wall, and this could potentially result in a catastrophic outcome.

A better, more cost effective and sensible solution would be to not allow urban areas to be built below the PMF (Probable maximum flood) level, and to preserve this land for agriculture, food production, natural environments, and to protect biodiversity. Instead of raising the dam wall, suitable flood evacuation routes and raised road systems should be provided to allow movement from isolated areas.

If the Warragamba Dam wall is raised it will only slow the flood inundation from one area of the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment. It will not prevent major flooding. It is an extremely expensive option with many extensive and unacceptable negative impacts, but with little real benefit. It should not be further considered.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Jo O'Brien