



# **Attachment 4 to Item 214**

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## **Draft Submission**

Date of meeting: 13 December 2022  
Location: Council Chambers  
Time: 6:30 p.m.

Your Ref: Warragamba Dam EIS  
Our Ref: HCC Submission - Warragamba Dam EIS

13 December 2022

The Major Projects Team  
Department of Planning and Environment

E-mail: [Warragamba.DamEI@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Warragamba.DamEI@dpie.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Hawkesbury City Council Submission - Warragamba Dam Wall Raising – Preferred Infrastructure Report**

I refer to the public exhibition of the 'Critical State Significant Infrastructure - Preferred Infrastructure Report' and 'Response to Submissions' associated with the Warragamba Dam Raising Project. Council has formally considered the material on public exhibition and provides the following submission for consideration.

In January 2022, Council wrote to the Premier, the Minister for Western Sydney and the Minister for Hawkesbury to advise them that Council calls on the NSW Government to recognise that:

- a) *The Hawkesbury Valley has the largest unmitigated flood risk in New South Wales, if not Australia.*
- b) *Infrastructure NSW and Water NSW have considered a number of flood mitigation infrastructure options, and the Warragamba Dam Raising Project (by 14m for flood mitigation purpose only) was identified as the option with the best cost-benefit ratio.*
- c) *The risk to our community is significant and well documented, and that we need the Government to act urgently to address the risk.*
- d) *Further delays to the Warragamba Dam Raising Project will continue to put our community in danger.*

Following these representations, significant floods were experienced in March, April and July 2022 in the Hawkesbury. The combined cost of damage to infrastructure in the Hawkesbury resulting from these flood events is in excess of \$400 Million.

In July 2022 Council again wrote to the Minister for Water as well as the Mayors and Members of Parliament that represent areas within the Hawkesbury-Nepean Floodplain, to advocate for Warragamba Dam to be immediately used as a Flood Mitigation Dam.

It should be noted that Council's position remains unchanged, and it is in support of the Warragamba Dam Wall Raising project.

The Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley has one of the most significant flood risk exposures within Australia. There are up to 134,000 people that live and work on the floodplain and over 25,000 residential properties and two million square metres of commercial space currently subject to flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley; this number is forecast to double over the next 30 years (NSW's Flood Strategy Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities).

The extensive inundation experienced in the Hawkesbury during March and July of 2022 followed the two significant flood events that the area had endured in February 2020 and March 2021; a further flood event hit the region in October 2022. These flood events significantly affected private properties, businesses, agriculture, Council managed public infrastructure and assets, as well as the wellbeing of our community.



The flood levels reached 13.93m at Windsor in July 2022. Whilst this level of this inundation had a significant impact, this flood level represents a 1:20 year flood event in the Hawkesbury River, with the 1:100 flood level being 17.3m at Windsor (3.5 metres higher) and the 1867 highest recorded flood 19.7m at Windsor (5.9 metres higher).

The significant, heavy and intense rainfall across the region in the lead up to the flood events of 2022 led to extensive flash flooding and landslides. These conditions delayed the assessment and repair of infrastructure, rendering communities isolated for extended periods of time. The transition to recovery was particularly delayed following the July 2022 flood as there were additional investigations and slope stability assessments that needed to be undertaken before the commencement of restoration work, extending the response phase of operations and creating major issues related to resupply and restoration of power to isolated communities.

Council notes that the Taskforce Options Assessment Report (INSW 2019) found that the raising Warragamba Dam Wall would significantly reduce the risk to life through allowing more time for evacuations during critical flood events; this outcome will greatly reduce the current risk for residents that live in outlying regions and who are often isolated for long periods of time during large flood events.

The NSW Government's Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Flood Risk Management Strategy - Resilient Valley Resilient Communities states that *"Raising the Warragamba Dam Wall for Flood Mitigation purposes is the cornerstone of this Strategy"* (Key Outcome 2).

Since the release of this Strategy in May 2017, the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley has experienced six floods, the impact of which are only too evident. The combined cost of infrastructure damage resulting from the recent flood events in the Hawkesbury is in excess of \$400 Million and Council has needed to redirect staff resources during the response and recovery efforts following each flood event to address the impacts to infrastructure and importantly, to support our community to recover.

These recent flood events have highlighted the clear and present risks in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, the impact that the flood events have on residents of the Hawkesbury and heightened the need for immediate action.

Infrastructure NSW released the Hawkesbury-Nepean River March 2021 Flood Review Report. This Report modelled a number of Warragamba Dam flood mitigation scenarios to determine what difference these measures would have made to the height and timing of downstream flooding during the March 2021 event. The Report (in part) highlighted:

- Permanently lowering full supply level by 5m would have reduced the flood peak at Windsor by 0.6m. The number of impacted dwellings would have reduced by around 25%.
- The proposed raising of Warragamba Dam would have reduced the flood peak at Windsor by 3.4m, and delayed outflows from the Dam by three to four days.
- The number of impacted dwellings would have reduced by around 80%. These benefits would be achieved by temporarily capturing water in the approximately 1000-gigalitre Flood Mitigation zone made available by the Dam raising.

Council notes that the 'Critical State Significant Infrastructure - Preferred Infrastructure Report' reflects the modelling and associated risk reduction published in the Hawkesbury-Nepean River March 2021 Flood Review Report and is in favour of infrastructure that could deliver these benefits.

Council has implemented a suite of initiatives that aim to reduce the flood risk in Hawkesbury, including reviewing and renewing planning provisions within a (draft) amended Local Environmental Plan, development of a Flood Policy and delivery of community engagement and education initiatives related to flood preparedness, however it is acknowledged that these initiatives in isolation cannot adequately address the significant and well documented risk that exists in the Hawkesbury.

Council again confirms its support for the Warragamba Dam Wall Raising project and welcomes the opportunity for ongoing communication and collaboration with Water NSW, Infrastructure NSW, the



Department of Planning and Environment, and other key agencies to support floodplain management initiatives in the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley.

Should you have any enquiries in relation to this matter please contact 02 4560 4444

Yours faithfully

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