



FACT SHEET 1:

Don't raise the Dam The Better Alternative

The Infrastructure NSW proposal to raise the height of Warragamba Dam for flood mitigation overlooks cheaper and better alternatives.

Revised assessments of development on the Hawkesbury-Nepean River floodplain reveal that there are more buildings at risk than previously forecast.

The Infrastructure NSW proposal to mitigate flooding downstream is to raise the height of the Warragamba Dam wall.

Opponents of this plan point to the auxiliary spillway that ensures the safety of Warragamba Dam in times of extreme floods. They believe flood mitigation can be achieved cheaply, easily and with fewer detrimental effects on the environment than the Infrastructure NSW proposal.

The Don't Raise the Dam believes the better solution is to use the capacity of the existing dam for flood mitigation and rely on the auxiliary spillway on the eastern side of the dam wall to carry extreme floods past the dam with safety. The proposed design incorporates new gates to regulate flood flows and could take advantage of the five metres added to the existing dam wall in 1989.

Using the existing dam more effectively is a solution that can integrate a range of measures in response to flood risk.

One option is to lower the full supply level by five metres, so that the dam as it is now could have an enhanced flood mitigation capacity. The desalination plant reduces water storage requirements for drought and so additional water can be released for more environmental flows to provide more flood storage.

The Don't Raise the Dam Campaign solution would cost \$500 million less than Infrastructure NSW's proposal. Some of the money saved could be used for flood management, including progressive voluntary re-location or purchase and removal of properties in flood prone parts of the Hawkesbury Nepean valley.

In the future, land at the current planning flood level would be protected from floods up to the 1 in 100 year flood (see Fact Sheet 2 - the Impact of Floods).



Warragamba's auxiliary spillway under construction

Don't Raise the Dam's alternative has many advantages

Using the existing dam, with a second spillway, new gates and developing a comprehensive flood management plan is better than Infrastructure NSW's proposal. It would cost less and be technically straight forward.

The Don't Raise the Dam's alternative will:

- Be \$500 million dollars cheaper than the proposed raising of the dam wall;
- Mitigate the most frequently occurring floods and provide flood protection for residents below the Current Planning Level (see Fact Sheet 2 - the Impact of Floods);
- Eliminate any temptation to increase the full storage level of Lake Burrangorang;
- Avoid inundation of important wilderness areas in World Heritage listed national parks in the Blue Mountains;
- Avoid rapid sedimentation filling Lake Burrangorang as soil would be stripped from the extra 7,500 hectares subject to inundation under the dam raising option; and
- Encourage Sydney Water to promote practical water conservation practices and measures in order to control Sydney's excessive demand for water;
- Provide protection for Warragamba Dam by enabling floodwaters to pass over an auxiliary spillway.

In addition, the Don't Raise the Dam alternative would have much less

impact on the downstream environment. Although flood peaks would be higher than those in Infrastructure NSW's proposal, this would place necessary constraints on the future release of low-lying land for urban development (see Fact Sheet 4 - Environmental Impact).

What the Experts have said:

"The option favoured by Sydney Water is little other than an engineer's grand solution. It provides no greater dam safety and only marginally greater flood mitigation than the spillway option proposed by the Don't Raise the Dam campaign."

Jim Irish (engineer and risk expert who was involved in the original inter-departmental investigation of the plan to alter Warragamba Dam.)

"Sydney Water has known since 1963 that the existing dam could be operated as a flood mitigation dam. We gave them that information at that time, they have chosen to suppress it. With a second spillway, the dam can be operated to help mitigate floods without being at any risk of collapse."

Fred Bell (who investigated the flood mitigation potential of the existing dam).

For more Information, phone Don't Raise the Dam on (02) 9261 2400 or write to the Colong Foundation, Level 2, 322 Pitt St, Sydney, NSW, 2000

