

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 16 June 2022 8:03:34 PM



Your details

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Submission details

I am making this submission as	A resident in a flood-affected area
Submission type	I am making a personal submission
Consent to make submission public	I give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story	<p>I am a resident and business owner living on the Hawkesbury River.</p> <p>Our property lies between the river and the township of Richmond. We are on a thirty acre farm but uniquely located on the edge of the township. Our home became an island between Richmond and North Richmond.</p>
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Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#)

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

I have an intimate understanding of the effects of the water release from the Warragamba Dam. The river is on one side of our house and the back flow from the lagoons and water ways on the other. First hand I have witnessed the change in volumes of water on both the river and the backflow waters when the Warragamba is released. I can visually see the effects of the release volumes from my home.

1.2 Preparation and planning

During the three recent floods my neighbour and I have gathered the sparse public flood information, used our own observations of the rising river and collated water release data to communicate to the broader community. I can unashamedly say that we organised and motivated the Richmond Lowlands to evacuate and used text, social media and word of mouth to motivate residents with animals and homes to start packing well before the government organisations did. If we had not done this there would have been many animals lost if not lives.

1.3 Response to floods

The communication and data released by government agencies was not good enough. For example Sydney Water stopped releasing the volume release amounts in the peak of the 2022 floods. This meant as residents on the river were unable to predict rises. A metre is a lot to miscalculate in a major flood, the consequences of not having accurate information are life threatening. We received no emergency evacuation texts in 2022. We did in 2021. Why? Local groups like 'Hawkesbury Floods Statistics Unit' were invaluable. No government agency, council or SES provide useful information. If they did it was old news. River height predictions insiduously rose each

day. At the start of the flood event the BOM warning were for 'minor flooding' in the Hawkesbury which was dangerously misleading. As a layperson I knew this was not going to be a minor flood as the Warragamba was full, the river swollen and the forecast for two weeks of heavy rain. Surely experts would know this?????

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Transition to recovery again was 100% community driven. Neighbours and friends managed the local clean up. As of the 16th of June I still have not had a waste collection as promised by Hawkesbury City Council. I have made two bookings through their portal. The river bank at Cornwallis has not been repaired since 2021 and I have no doubt it will not be restored before the next flood. HCC are USELESS and culpable. Robyn Preston the NSW Liberal State member is USELESS. Susan Templeman the Labour Federal Member has been very helpful but she needs support from the Liberal State Government.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Drains must be cleared and improved to allow water over the lowlands to drain away. It is three months since the flood and the water is still across the lowlands killing hundreds of established trees and sterilising land. Why have HCC not fixed the drainage and the hole at Cornwallis? Local Roads are dangerous. The pot holes at Pugh's Lagoon will kill someone. The Warragamba must be used for mitigation NOW. Change the legislation around the dam to 'flood mitigation' from 'water storage' for extreme rain events. This will be the most effective preventative measure you can undertake.

1.6 Any other matters

I have an intimate understanding of the effects of the water release from the Warragamba Dam. The river is on one side of our house and the back flow from the lagoons and water ways on the other. First hand I have witnessed the change in volumes of water on both the river and the backflow waters when the Warragamba is

released. I can notice the effects of the release volumes.

Both the river and local waterways coped quite well in the 2021 and 2022 flood UNTIL the water for the Warragamba was released. Once the Warragamba water starts to flow everything changes for the worse.

The already swollen river does not cope with the increase in volume of water from the Warragamba. The river banks wash away due to the increase in speed of the water and the increase in water volume. The local lagoons and creeks quickly back up and cover roads. Everything happens unnaturally fast and nature can not cope.

It is completely illogical to release water from a full dam into a swollen river. The legislation around the dam must be changed. It is irresponsible that the dam is allowed to reach 100% with a known wet period on the way.

I believe there will litigation undertaken at some point by communities in the form of a group action if this change is not undertaken.

Warragamba simply can not bear the burden of being Sydney's only water storage dam. The desalination plant or an alternative must be investigated to allow for the storage of water so water from the Warragamba can be released in order to mitigate flooding of the Hawkesbury basin.

The legislation around the Warragamba Dam must change. It must allow for early water release in extenuating circumstances such as we have experienced in the last two years.

The role and responsibility of the Warragamba can be twofold, both water storage and flood mitigation. We have been hoodwinked into

believing it can only be one. This is where the work needs to be done by government.

We do NOT require the dam wall to be raised.

The raising of the dam wall would be dangerous. Particularly with regards to the increase in water volume that would be released. It would cause irreversible EROSION of the river banks would undoubtedly wipe out huge tracks of land. I know this because I have witnessed the damage in the current scenario. It will also sterilise farm lands and sporting fields making low areas swamps. The data in the EIS states water will lie over the low areas for twice as long. This would destroy farming in the Hawkesbury.

The silver bullet for reducing the flood damage in Western Sydney is changing the legislation around the Warragamaba dam, allowing for it to be used for flood mitigation in extenuating wet periods.

Supporting documents or images
