

Submission Number: NND.001.01181

Submission Of: Jack Wellings

Your Details

Email address:
Phone:
Preferred means of contact: Email
What is your submission based on? I am making this submission based on my personal situation
What was your personal situation in relation to the 2019-20 Bushfires?
Where do you live? Hawkesbury (C)

Your Submission

In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response worked well?
All
In your experience, what areas of the bushfire emergency response didn't work well?
No comment
In your experience, what needs to change to improve arrangements for preparation, mitigation, response and recovery coordination for national natural disaster arrangements in Australia?
As a resident of Pitt Town, I am supportive of the proposal to raise the present level of Warragamba Dam wall, for the following reasons:
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I believe that raising the Warragamba Dam wall by 14 Meters will enable a more consistent control of flood waters into the Hawkesbury Nepean River system and will reduce the potentially devastating effects on life and property in the event of a major flood.
• Construction of Warragamba Dam commenced in 1948 and the new dam was opened in October 1960. The objective of this construction was to guarantee fresh water supply into the greater Sydney by providing the equivalent of 4 times the volume of Sydney Harbour in fresh water. Warragamba Dam was never designed as a flood mitigation dam.
• The proposal to raise the height of the dam wall to provide an air space for flood mitigation is strongly supported by the Pitt Town Progress Association and the wider Pitt Town community.
• In 1961 the first major flood occurred, post dam construction, with the Hawkesbury River rising to a level of 15.1 Meters above sea level creating an island effect around the high ground levels in Pitt Town.
• Local community gathered on high ground in storage farm sheds in Pitt Town until the flood waters subsided. If or when the same flood level occurs again that SES has determined that Pitt Town residents will be compulsorily evacuated.
• The estimated population in Pitt Town in 1960 was approximately 500 residents. The government Census conducted in Pitt Town in 2016 indicated a population of over 3,000. The NSW Government has allowed and indeed, promoted residential development in the area; and now has a duty of care to minimise the effects of future floods and to provide adequate time to evacuate in the event of a major flood.
• In a major flood event, Pitt Town becomes a "flood island" and a forced evacuation would be implemented by the SES. The need for evacuation, and the impact on local dwellings and infrastructure will be significantly reduced by the reduction in frequency and severity of flooding, by raising the dam wall.
• Raising the Warragamba Dam wall would assist in mitigating flood levels in Pitt Town such as occurred in 1960 , however should the water go over the Dam wall it will give Pitt Town residents additional time to evacuate and also move to higher ground if practical, or if required to do so.
• Raising the Dam wall will significantly reduce the frequency and severity of floods in the Hawkesbury Nepean Valley; as well as increasing the time to facilitate evacuation when necessary.
Is there anything else you would like to tell the Royal Commission?
Do you agree to your submission being published? Yes I agree to my submission being published in my name