

The Hon Rose Jackson MLC

Minister for Water, Minister for Housing,
Minister for Homelessness
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth
Minister for the North Coast



MINS-945678274-253

Mrs Annette Cam
President
Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc
PO Box 29
WENTWORTH FALLS NSW 2782

By email: bmcs@bluemountains.org.au

Dear Mrs Cam

Subject: Warragamba Dam wall raising and future protection of Greater Blue Mountains world heritage area

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2023 congratulating me on my appointment as Minister and for your concerns about the world heritage status of the Greater Blue Mountains Area. I note that you have provided a copy of your correspondence to the Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, Minister for Climate Change, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage.

As you have noted, the NSW Government will not be proceeding with the former Government's proposal to raise Warragamba Dam wall for flood mitigation purposes. WaterNSW has been directed to cease all work on the project.

The Government will instead implement its Western Sydney Flood Resilience Plan through the development of a Disaster Adaptation Plan for the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley. The implementation of the Plan will be led by the NSW Reconstruction Authority, which was established in response to the 2022 NSW Flood Inquiry. The Authority is a statutory corporation reporting to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon Paul Scully MP, and the Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Jihad Dib MP.

I appreciate the Society's desire to ensure the Greater Blue Mountains Area is protected from any future proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall for flood mitigation purposes. The 2018 amendments to the *Water NSW Act 2014* enacted under the previous NSW Government only authorised the temporary inundation of land upstream, in the event of approval being given under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* for the Warragamba Dam raising proposal. Those amendments have no effect now that the dam wall raising project is not proceeding.

Regarding your question about lowering the maximum capacity of Warragamba Dam, I am advised that WaterNSW, as manager of the dam, is authorised to hold the storage at around one metre below full supply level at the conclusion of a spill event for operational and maintenance reasons and makes releases accordingly.

During flood events, WaterNSW establishes a dedicated incident management team that works closely with the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) and the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) to monitor weather and inflows to dams. The SES is the lead combat agency in managing floods downstream of the dam.

Noting that climatic conditions vary and demand from a growing city like Sydney during extended dry periods can quickly contribute to the reduction of water storage levels, the Government is committed to implementing the Greater Sydney Water Strategy, which includes a focus on water conservation to save up to 49 gigalitres per year by 2040 and investing in new sources of rainfall-independent supply. You can find out more about the Strategy by visiting:

<https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/water/plans-and-programs/greater-sydney-water-strategy>.

In terms of notifying UNESCO's World Heritage Centre of the discontinuation of the Warragamba dam wall raising project, in May 2023 the NSW Government provided a State of Conservation Report update for the Greater Blue Mountains Area to the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to provide to the World Heritage Centre. The NSW Government understands this update report will be considered by the World Heritage Committee at its 46th session in September 2023. The update report confirmed the raising of the Warragamba Dam wall would not proceed.

Thank you for the Society's continued interest in this important matter.

Yours sincerely



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Thanks for contacting me - I'm glad we were able to stop the project to raise the Warragamba Dam wall. Your other suggestions are very welcome. RS.

Date: 27.6.23