



HAWKESBURY-NEPEAN FLOOD MITIGATION ACTION COMMITTEE !

2nd June, 2014

Natural Disaster Funding

Productivity Commission

LB2 Collins Street East

Melbourne Vic 8003

Dear Commissioners,

RE; Productivity Commission inquiry into natural disaster funding
arrangements.

Please find attached our submission documents for your inquiry.

We hope you find them satisfactory. Please contact us if you need any more information as we look forward to a satisfactory resolution to our urgent need for a flood mitigation project to be implemented to protect our community'

Yours sincerely,

John Miller

Communications Officer',

Hawkesbury –Nepean Flood Mitigation Action
Committee.

P0 BOX 495 ,Windsor ,NSW 2756

Submission To The Productivity Commission.

2nd June, 2014.

Dear Commissioners,

RE:Natural Disaster Funding.

We wish to make a submission on behalf of the
community of Western Sydney to your Productivity
Commission Inquiry.

Our Committee represents the community of
Western Sydney from Penrith to Wiseman's Ferry.

According to the NSW Office of Water Summary
Report of March, 2014, "Hawkesbury –Nepean
Valley Flood Management Review ",[Page 5]states
that 73,000 people are currently living in areas
prone to flooding from the Hawkesbury –Nepean
River.

The floodplain is also in the heart of the Western
Sydney region, one of Australia's largest and most
diverse economies with an annual gross regional
product of about \$95.6 billion in 2010-11.

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Large flood events could impact the entire NSW economy by affecting transportation routes and utilities outside the flooded area.

In 1995 the New South Wales Coalition Government spent \$10 million on an EIS to investigate the possibility of Warragamba Dam being used as a flood mitigation dam. A report was prepared by Sydney Water together with Australian water technologies and consultants ERM Mitchell McCotter.

There were 20 different ways of mitigating flood damages that were investigated. It was found that the most practical and cost + effective means of mitigating flood damage would be to increase the airspace above Lake Burragorang behind the Warragamba dam wall. This would also have less environmental impact than any other options.

It was considered that the project was justified because.:

[1] social, economic and biophysical benefits exceed the social, economic and biophysical costs, and

[2] the proposed project would provide the best ratio of benefits to costs of more than 20 options investigated.

When Bob Carr MP and the Labor Party defeated the coalition government he was influenced by environmentalists to not raise Warragamba dam wall as it would destroy rare species of flora and fauna upstream of the dam wall.

There was no consideration given to the over 73,000 people, their property, businesses, infrastructure, natural environment, and rare species of flora and fauna downstream of Warragamba dam wall.

There are about 35 sewerage treatment plants below the dam wall that have the possibility of being inundated, and raw sewage flowing into the river system. This combined with inundation of our electricity substations would mean complete evacuation of over 73,000 people who would not be able to return to their homes or businesses for a few months, according to NSW/ SES.

The economic and social hardship that would be experienced by residents and businesses would have a devastating effect for many years.

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In 1995 the cost of implementing the recommendations of the E I S was just under \$300 million. The cost to the Australian Government of not providing a flood mitigation dam on the Hawkesbury Nepean rivers was estimated to be \$1.8 billion.

I believe that these figures on today's dollar value would be about \$4 billion according to estimates by Infrastructure NSW in their report to the NSW Government in October 3rd 2012. This is the most floodprone Valley in Australia. The devastation would be worse than cyclone "Tracy" and the recent Queensland floods which we believe cost about \$5 billion.

There has been an enormous increase in housing development in Western Sydney with the population explosion. Many of these people have not experienced floods and would refuse to evacuate their homes resulting in an enormous loss of life, not only of residents, but of rescue teams sent into evacuate them at the maximum height of the flood.

Our largest floods historically recorded in June 1867, was 19.7 m high [63 feet] and came after a long drought.

The historic flood went within 200 m of Penrith railway station and almost demolished the Victoria bridge over the Nepean River, carrying the main Great Western Highway and railway line to the farming community in Western New South Wales. Imagine the devastation of Western Sydney from Penrith, through St Mary's, Richmond, Windsor and Wiseman's Ferry in a repeat of this flood.

We have had over 120 major floods in the last 200 years.

The Historically recorded 1867 flood would inundate the RAAF base at Richmond. The flood water in the hanger our Prime Minister's plane is usually kept, would be about 2 m underwater. The base would not be operational for evacuations or defence purposes.

According to the E I S of 1995 the raising of Warragamba dam wall by 23 m as a flood mitigation dam would have reduced the height of the 1867 flood by 4.4 m.

We hereby respectfully seek support from the Productivity Commission and the Australian Government, with the newly elected NSW Coalition Government, for joint funding under the Natural Disaster Resilience Programme[NDRP], or

any other available funding mechanism to have a review carried out of the previous E I S reports prepared for Sydney Water by respected consultants ER M Mitchell McCotter:

[1] July 1995" Proposed Warragamba Flood Mitigation Dam "environmental impact statement.

[3 volumes] and:

[2]Infrastructure NSW Report to the NSW Government 3rd October ,2012."First things first.Our 20 year State Infrastructure Strategy."

Our reason being to assess the most economically viable large – scale flood mitigation works and measures, to reduce the height of major floods in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley and reduce the need for an enormous evacuation of our residents and damage to their property, having already experienced over 120 major floods in the last 200 years.

We realise that we can never totally eliminate flooding in the Hawkesbury – Nepean Valley however, a reduction of 4.4 m in a major flood would be of great benefit to our community.

The cost benefits to the Australian and NSW State Governments of achieving a positive result

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are enormous, as the Queensland government have recently found out.

There is a duty of care issue to be considered here.

We sincerely hope that your Productivity Commission will give favourable consideration for financial assistance to our request.

Yours sincerely,

John Miller,

Communications Officer,

Attachments:

[1] References

[2] DVD Disc Copy /EIS Sydney Water .July 1995.