



Media Release

Susan Templeman's comments show ignorance on the issues surrounding flood mitigation.

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Liberal Hawkesbury City Councillor Nathan Zamprogno has expressed disappointment in the recent comments by Federal MP for Macquarie, Susan Templeman on the subject of flood mitigation in the Hawkesbury Nepean catchment.

“Ms Templeman has repeated the claim that raising Warragamba Dam wall is for ‘The Liberal’s Developer Mates’, but far from there being a shred of evidence for this claim, it has been refuted over and over”, says Councillor Zamprogno.

“The ‘*Resilient Valley, Resilient Communities*’ plan was released in 2017 and made it clear that flood height building controls would remain unchanged – meaning no new development on the floodplain in any area that is currently forbidden by the 1:100 limit.”

“Further, public officials testified under oath before the NSW Upper House inquiry into the dam raising and specifically refuted these claims. Simon Draper, CEO of Infrastructure NSW declared there would be no changes to flood height building limits. Andrew George, the CEO of WaterNSW declared the raised dam would not be used to store more water for Sydney’s drinking needs.”

“Ms Templeman should be defending the Hawkesbury, whose families bear the greatest risk of loss to life and property caused by floods in the nation. Instead, she is captive to environmentalists whose criticism for flood mitigation comes from places of personal safety –

high and dry and out of harms way. It is clear that Ms Templeman is playing to her political base in the Blue Mountains and has effectively abandoned the Hawkesbury community to the risk of floods.”

Councillor Zamprogno commented on recent media reports that a single insurer, IAG, has withdrawn their support for the dam raising proposal.

“IAG are well aware that the estimates of property damage in the event of a bad flood run to tens of billions of dollars – a risk that mitigation measures would reduce. Landowners experiencing huge premium hikes for flood insurance caused by the recognition of increased risk should be angry that any insurer would oppose a measure that would make them safer and lower their premiums.”

Other insurers have not changed their position, and nor have any insurance industry umbrella groups who speak for the industry as a whole, such as the Insurance Council of Australia.

The NSW Government supported the conclusions of the Upper House Inquiry which recommended comprehensive assessment and consultation processes in relation to environment and Aboriginal heritage – and Councillor Zamprogno pointed out that the preliminary report shows that only 0.05% of the World Heritage Area would be affected, and only temporarily, if the dam was raised and a large rain event filled it. “How much Aboriginal heritage or environmental damage would be lost downstream of the dam if a flood like 1867 came again? No one talks about that.”

“The missing voice from this debate are the 134,000 people who live and trade on the Hawkesbury Nepean floodplain – they are the people whose lives, livelihoods, and properties are at risk,” concluded Councillor Zamprogno.

“I suspect that the morally righteous who wag their fingers and who oppose this project aren’t in any personal danger like floodplain residents are. Those opponents have no personal stake in the outcome – but we do.”

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