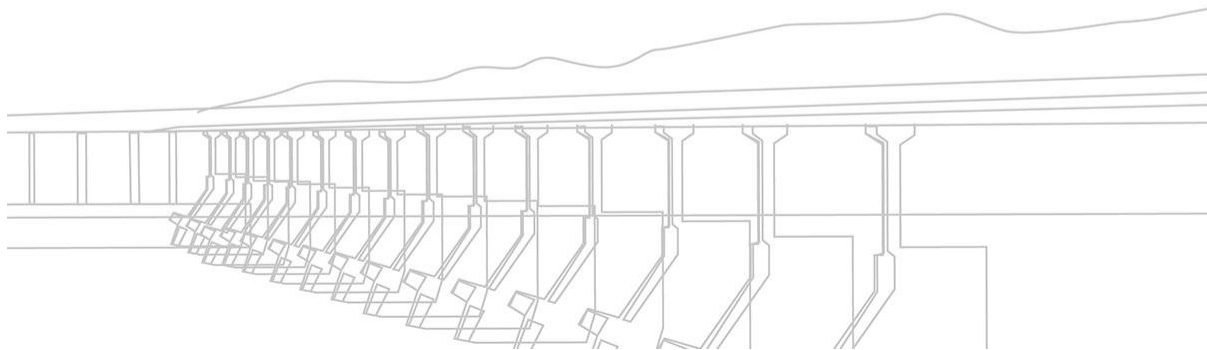




Dams Safety

Dams Safety Focus



16 June 2022



Message from the CEO

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous loss experienced by many in the community due to the widespread flooding events in February and March. Thank you to our colleagues in the NSW SES that worked tirelessly during this time. Thank you also to everyone that made a timely report to our incident hotline number, **0403 681 645**, while referring to their dam emergency plans. Such events really highlight the importance of having up to date emergency plans readily accessible.

Fortunately, no catastrophic dam failures occurred.

The first Annual Safety Standards Reports for declared dams were due on 31 March 2022. We have received around 85 per cent of those reports, Thank you to all dam owners who submitted them on time and in full. Outstanding reports are now being

followed up by the Dams Safety NSW team and necessary regulatory action is being taken to ensure this important information is received by us.

Over the past few months, we have been spending a great deal of time developing a new five-year Strategic Plan together with the Board of Dams Safety NSW. Unsurprisingly, our Vision of 'Safe dams for NSW' remains unchanged, however, there are many new goals to work on over the coming five years starting 1 July 2022.

One of the goals is to further identify potential dams for declaration. Some early estimates indicate there may be around 50 more dams that could be declared. Keep a lookout for our new Strategic Plan which will be published in the coming weeks.

Chris Salkovic
CEO, Dams Safety NSW



ENROL NOW: New online dam surveillance course to help NSW dam owners

Dams Safety NSW (DSNSW) is pleased to announce the launch of our new online training course, '[Surveillance of embankment dams - routine inspections](#)'. The course will help NSW dam owners understand the activities involved in conducting routine visual inspections of embankment dams.

DSNSW has collaborated with TAFE NSW to deliver the three-hour online course available now on [TAFE NSW's online learning platform](#).

CEO of Dams Safety NSW, Chris Salkovic, said the course has been developed as a direct result of feedback from a stakeholder engagement survey to find out how

the Regulator could improve its services.

“Many declared dam owners, and other stakeholders, raised the need for targeted training, particularly for small dam owners who don’t necessarily need to attend a long face-to-face training session that covers more than they require,” Mr Salkovic said.

“This non-accredited course is aimed at anyone responsible for inspecting embankment dams in NSW, but is particularly for those who inspect embankment dams declared by Dams Safety NSW.

“You’ll learn about embankment dams and how to inspect and assess them. You’ll find out about the equipment and records you need, and what to do in the unlikely event that you find signs of problems.”

It is recommended that participants have at least six months’ experience inspecting dams before attempting the course.

COURSE COST: \$210

Note: After successfully completing this course, and provided you work for an organisation with a declared dam in NSW, you can choose to be assessed for competency against the National Water Training Package unit of competency '**NWPCAD011 - inspect and report on embankment dam safety**', for an additional fee.

Contact Dams Safety NSW for more information about eligibility requirements for competency assessments by emailing us at info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au.

[CLICK HERE TO ENROL](#)

Does your dam emergency plan have the correct DSNSW contact details?

Please ensure your dam emergency plan has the correct, up-to-date contact details for Dams Safety NSW.

Flowcharts in your emergency plan (for Amber or Red Alerts) should refer to the **Dams Safety NSW Duty Officer**, and include the phone number **0403 681 645**.

Please remove references to the former "Dams Safety Committee (DSC)", "the Executive Engineer", "CEO" or "Chris Salkovic".

Calls to Dams Safety NSW to report an incident, or to notify us about a dam safety emergency, go to a call centre that is staffed 24/7, then to the Dams Safety NSW Duty Officer for action.



Why it's important for dam owners to engage with the community

All declared dam owners in NSW are legally required to implement a dam safety management system (DSMS) to ensure the ongoing safety of their dams and to comply with the Dams Safety Regulation 2019.

Engaging with the community about dam safety can help build awareness about the vital role dams play while improving community knowledge and understanding about dam safety management practices. Building awareness also creates the opportunity to proactively address important topics and issues, such as how dams operate during flood events.

Providing information about dam management practices will help to give the community more confidence about their safety.

The more you engage with your community and stakeholders about your dam safety management practices, the easier it will be to communicate with them if or when works need to take place. Stakeholder and community input can be valuable during the design and construction phases of dam upgrade projects.

Four reasons why

1. Duty of care

Dam owners have a legal obligation to comply with dam safety standards that reflect a duty of care to communities living near dams. Good relationships with the community will be critical in the event of a dam safety incident and may help to keep people safe.

2. Meeting community expectations

The current Australian Standard for Asset Management (ISO 55001) includes an expectation that communities are made aware of dam safety practices and risk management.

3. Legal requirement

Under the Dams Safety Regulation 2019, dam owners must implement a Dams Safety Management System that is compliant with the AS ISO 55001 standard. Under this standard, an owner needs to determine the 'requirements and expectations' of their stakeholders', (or communities). These should be documented within the DSMS document and communicated.

4. Being a good neighbour

Dam owners have a social responsibility to build community awareness about the risks posed by dams and how these risks are managed.

For emergency management

Why engage with the community?

Communities affected by dams, especially those downstream, have a significant stake in the responsible management of dams and the preparedness of dam owners and emergency agencies to respond to floods. An informed and prepared community can provide valuable input to dam owners and enhance the ability of emergency managers to reduce the impacts of flooding.

Through effective engagement the community should be supported to express their concerns, share experiences, influence solutions and, most importantly, have access to timely and relevant information. Dam owners should develop their emergency engagement strategies based on the principles of the [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Community Engagement Framework Handbook 6](#).

Dam safety engagement principles

Every dam owner should be able to simply and clearly explain their role and responsibility in managing their dam and provide an overview of their safety management program to the community.

Dam owners should be open to explaining the risk-based approach to dam safety management together with their decision making processes to the community. Engagement programs should be developed based on best practices set by the [International Association for Public Participation \(IAP2\)](#) and the [National Strategy for Disaster Resilience: Community Engagement Framework Handbook 6](#).

Compliance audits update

Dams Safety NSW's (DSNSW) compliance priorities for January 2022-June 2022 focussed on auditing:

- Extreme, High A, B, C consequence category dams
- Dams where there is active design, construction or major modification
- Dams with poor compliance history.

Our auditors provide declared dam owners, and those responsible for the safety of declared dams, with clear information about the dam safety rules, and how to ensure they are complying with dams safety legislation.

Key issues identified during audits include:

- Deficiencies in the content of emergency plans and operations and maintenance plans
- Deficiencies in dam owners' dam safety management systems
- Most new declared dam owners did not have effective change management processes in place
- Most dam owners don't have good awareness of their plans, relying heavily on consultants
- Most dam owners have not adopted a risk-based maintenance program, including routine visual inspections, which has been documented with appropriate frequencies.

DSNSW is actively following up on outstanding non-compliances as per our regulatory policy. DSNSW employs a graduated and proportionate approach to the

noncompliance to ensure that dam owners are taking appropriate corrective action to work towards compliance with the Act and associated Regulation.



George Samios (right) conducting safety checks at Winburndale Dam. Credit: Public Works NSW

Future-proofing Winburndale Dam: George Samios talks dam safety

Winburndale Dam has provided fresh drinking water to Bathurst, NSW, and surrounding areas for nearly 100 years. In partnership with Bathurst Regional Council, Public Works NSW is adding post-tension cables to the dam wall to ensure it stands strong for another 100 years. Gavin Priestley, Public Work's Regional Director of Riverina-Western, spoke with George Samios, a dam expert who has worked at Public Works for more than 40 years, to learn about this complex project and how Public Works can help local governments to upgrade their ageing dams.

Read the full story [here](#).

Did you miss our online Dam Safety Management System Q&A Forum?

If you didn't get the chance to join our 'Dams Safety Management System (DSMS) Q&A Forum' on 8 June 2022, you can find the link to the recorded session [here](#).

Dams Safety NSW's senior auditor and three declared dam owners provided insights into the approaches used to develop their DSMS, and the common issues encountered by Dams Safety NSW auditors.



Serious incidents or injuries that occur at, or in relation to, a declared dam must be reported to Dams Safety NSW as soon as possible after the incident by calling **0403 681 645 (24 hours/7 days a week)**.

A written report of an incident in a form approved by Dams Safety NSW must be given to Dams Safety NSW no later than 72 hours after the incident, even if an oral report of the incident has already been given. [Click here to complete the online incident report form.](#)

Contact us

Dams Safety Focus is our newsletter on dam safety in NSW. If you have any questions or feedback contact us at:

Dams Safety NSW

Phone: (02) 9842 8073

Email: communications@damsafety.nsw.gov.au

Visit our website - Dams Safety NSW

Dams Safety NSW, Locked Bag 5022, Parramatta, NSW 2124

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