

THE ALTERNATIVES

SECURE, AFFORDABLE WATER

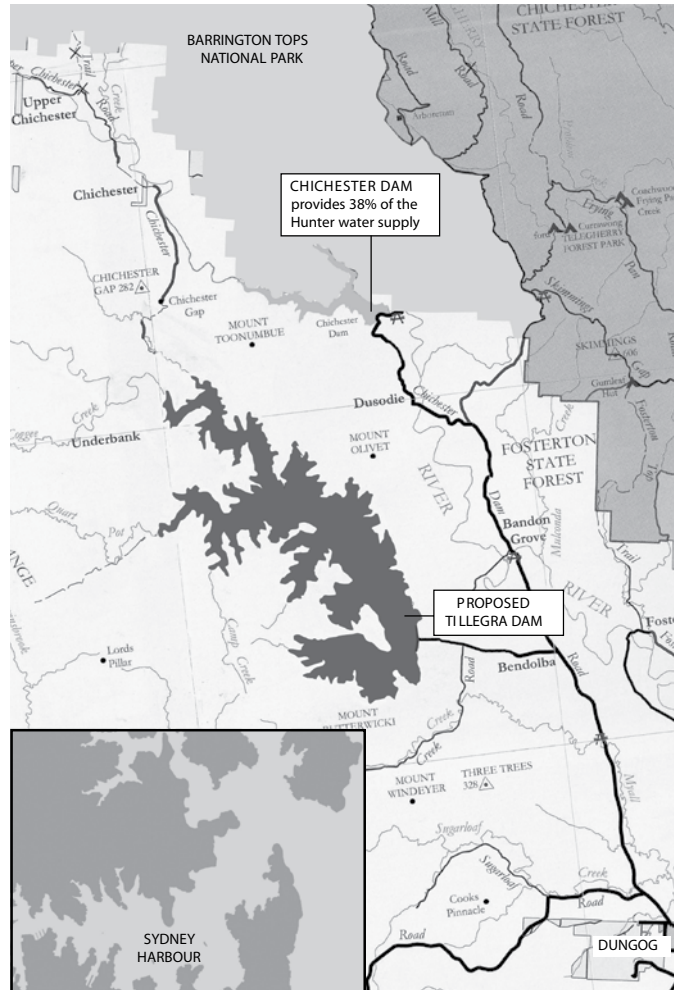
Water security in the Lower Hunter and Central Coast can be maintained without building new dams.

Hunter Water Corporation recognised this in 2003 when it stated: "...building a new dam at Tillegra would be far less cost effective than many demand management and water conservation initiatives...".

New regulations will require all new developments to reduce water consumption by 40%.

Providing recycled water for outdoor and other non-drinking purposes in new developments is cost effective and can reduce drinking water use in households by up to 70%. Demand management programs to install water efficiency fixtures in existing houses are highly cost effective.

Dept of Environment and Climate Change figures show domestic water mains usage can be reduced by 40-50% by installation of rainwater tanks.



Proposed site on the Williams river at Dungog



Proposed Tillegra Mega Dam A costly mistake

*"This is the dam that is not needed, to supply water we don't want, at a cost we don't need to bear – financially, socially or environmentally."
Dr Charles Essery, independent water expert.*

In 2006 NSW Government announced a proposed mega dam the size of Sydney Harbour would be built on the Williams River in the Hunter Valley. It is a costly decision based on bad information for an unnecessary project.



Save the Williams River Coalition
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A COSTLY DECISION

Water bills likely to rise from between 26% - 88%, the higher figure assuming a cost blow out for construction of \$1billion.

Water users of the lower Hunter and the Central Coast will have to foot the enormous bill for this unnecessary dam.

The current estimate of \$300 million is based on outdated geological data from the 1950s. Geological instability in the area could blow out the final cost to a billion dollars.

The proposed inundation area is known to be covered by unstable fault lines including along the entire eastern rim and in immediate proximity to the proposed dam wall.

This is an active earthquake area with recorded house damage as recent as 1989. There is a history of landslips along the eastern rim with the same slips moving again in the 2007 rains.

DEVASTATING THE COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Economic losses to Dungog Shire are estimated at \$10 million pa due to lost rates, loss of working farms, jobs, and impacts on local businesses.

3000+ hectares of irreplaceable agricultural land will be lost and 90 farming families will be displaced.

The proposed dam will inundate 21 kms of precious riverine environment and native species including platypus, a diversity of fish species including bass, mullet, eel and bullrout, five species of mussels, freshwater crayfish, long-necked turtles, and a rare stand of river oaks covering 2 hectares.

Large dams have been shown to produce massive emissions of greenhouse gases from rotting vegetation and inundated land.

POOR PROCESS

The Tillegra dam was announced without consultation or notice.

The justification for the project was provided by Hunter Water 9 months after the announcement.

Hunter Water's own documents released between 2003 and 2006 ranked Tillegra Dam as the second worst water supply option for the region.

THE DAM THAT IS NOT NEEDED

Despite the worst drought on record in NSW Hunter Water's supply levels have remained high. Even at the end of this drought Hunter Water customers had no water restrictions and there was excess water available to supply the Central Coast.

The initial justification for the Tillegra Dam was to supply the Central Coast and support growth in the Lower Hunter.

The Central Coast now has funds to create the missing link in its water infrastructure connecting Mardi Dam to Mangrove Creek Dam.

Shadow Minister for Water Utilities, Mr Chris Hartcher, has stated that the Central Coast has its own solutions in place to provide water security

"We do not need Tillegra Dam" he said.



FIDDLING THE BOOKS

Hunter Water's 2006 planning document did NOT identify Tillegra dam as necessary for increased population growth of 160,000 by 2031.

In 2007 the Hunter Water document "Why Tillegra Now" used the same population estimates to justify the construction of the proposed dam.

With no evidence of water shortage in the Lower Hunter, and after the dam was announced, Hunter Water downgraded the estimate of available water supply from the Hunter system from 20% more than current demand to 10% less than current demand. This new low figure of supply is now used as a reason to build the dam.

EXAGGERATED GROWTH FIGURES

It has been shown that the population growth figure of 160,000 by 2030 was inflated by developer pressure and is not accurate.

The NSW Dept of Planning estimated an increase of only 125,000.

