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Ms Sue Nicholas  
Hunter Water

**Submission by Residents Living Below the Proposed Tillegra Dam for  
the Hunter Water H2 50 Plan**

I write to you as the *Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group Representative for Residents Living Below the Dam* regarding the Hunter Water's Draft H2 50 Plan. Residents in this area have raised the following concerns regarding this proposal:

- The plan gives emphasis to the building of a dam the size of Sydney Harbour which will be overly expensive in its construction and unnecessary to secure regional water supplies
- Local and overseas research places an emphasis on alternative water management strategies rather than the outmoded concept of a dam
- The plan does not adequately examine all the options available for future water management, including recycling and demand management strategies
- The financial emphasis on the construction of the proposed Tillegra Dam (\$314 million) rather than the implementation of alternative demand management strategies (\$89 million) demonstrates poor and narrow forward thinking by Hunter Water executives
- The construction of the proposed Tillegra Dam is based on questionable population growth figures
- The projected figures for population and water need fail to take into consideration the potential of demand water management strategies
- It is anticipated that the construction of the dam will provide a surplus of water rather than meet demands for water
- Climate figures indicate that there is no need to construct a dam – as increasing rainfall and demand water management strategies are sufficient to provide an ongoing supply to Hunter residents
- According to 'water specialists,' it is unlikely that water from the Tillegra Dam won't be needed until around 2030 – if at all.
- Justification for the Tillegra Dam seems tenuous (originally based on the Central Coast's need for water and now population demand in the Hunter)
- Water storages are currently almost full, giving Hunter Water time to design an efficient water management strategy based more solidly on climate change data

- Other states/cities have implemented sound water management practices. There are currently no water restrictions in place in the Hunter region –the assumption would be, no restrictions, no problems with water
- Hunter Water has failed to promote the benefits of alternative water management strategies including water restrictions, as a means to managing droughts and water supply. These principles should be the basis for a sound, sustainable, drought management program
- It is difficult to justify the construction of a dam to ratepayers when water wastage is at a premium
- The construction of an unnecessary and expensive dam will create an environmental disaster for the Williams River and Dungog area
- Figures in the plan for increasing the uptake of water saving devices is disturbing and reflects the need for more emphasis on this area. Better rebates may be a way of improving these figures
- REFIT program figures are disappointing and demonstrate the lack of promotion in this area
- Water Savings plans similar to Sydney and the Central Coast should be explored before the construction of a major dam
- There is no incentive in the plan for Hunter residents to move towards more efficient water conservation measures
- Sustainable water strategies noted in the plan should be more vigorously pursued before the construction of a dam

In summary, the H2 50 Plan requires more emphasis and financial input into efficient and sustainable demand water management strategies, rather than constructing a dam, which will destroy the economy of Dungog and provide an environmental disaster for the area.

**Linda Bowden**  
**Representative for Residents Living Below the Dam**  
**Tillegra Dam Community Reference Group**