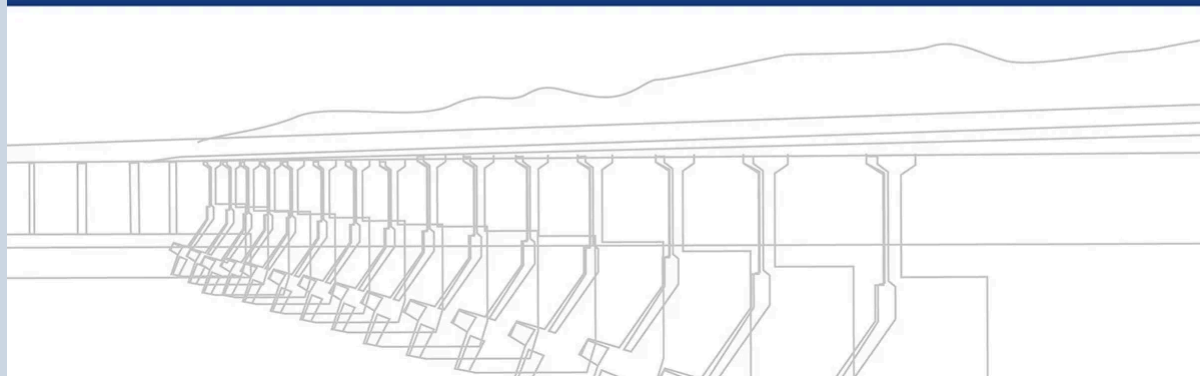




Dams Safety Focus



23 February 2026



Message from the CEO

Welcome to the latest issue of *Dams Safety Focus*, our eNewsletter providing up-to-date information to help declared dam owners, and their consultants and contractors, manage their dams' safety.

As the CEO of a safety regulator, I have learned effective regulation goes beyond legislation, audits or enforcement. It starts with leadership. The decisions that most influence risk are made in boardrooms and executive meetings, well before they are visible on the ground. That is why engaging directly with senior leaders of regulated entities is essential.

Over the past months I have engaged with, and will continue to engage with, chief executives, board chairs and senior executives across our regulated dam owners, sometimes alongside our Chair, focusing on those responsible for dams with risks above the statutory safety threshold. These discussions are not about compliance

checklists, but about accountability and risk ownership. When leaders see safety as a governance responsibility rather than a technical function, organisations respond differently. They invest differently. They prioritise differently.

This engagement strengthens awareness of emerging risks and builds trust. It also reinforces a simple principle: while we regulate, responsibility for safe operations rests with the owner. By maintaining open dialogue with those ultimately accountable, we strengthen regulatory outcomes and public confidence.

Chris Salkovic
CEO, Dams Safety NSW



Have you submitted your dam's Annual Safety Standards Report?

Under dams safety legislation, declared dam owners must lodge a separate Annual Dams Safety Standards Report for each of their declared dams with Dams Safety NSW by **31 March** every year. The report covers the period 1 January to 31 December of the previous calendar year. Find out more information about Annual Dams Safety Standards Reports [here](#).

How to submit your report to Dams Safety NSW:

1. The report must be completed using the [online form](#).
2. Once completed and submitted, you will receive an email with an unsigned pdf copy of your Annual Dams Safety Standards Report.
3. The pdf report must then be signed by the dam owner office holder(s). A digital signature can be used. Email the signed report to info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au.

Dam owners must also keep a copy of the report/s at their office and publish the report/s on their website (if available) for members of the public to view.



New checklists for Risk Reports and Consequence Category Assessments

Dams Safety NSW has developed two new checklists to help dam owners produce compliant [Risk Reports](#) and [Consequence Category Assessments](#). These checklists are not intended to limit the contents of a report provided by a competent person.

Please tick off each item on the checklist to indicate that you have completed it, then enclose a copy of the completed checklist with your report or assessment.

Completing a checklist is not mandatory, but will be a helpful tool for dam owners and DSNSW team members assessing the reports.

Dams safety levy: Submit your dam's consequence category assessment before 20 April 2026

The [dams safety levy](#) was introduced in the 2025-2026 financial year and is applied annually to each declared dam. The levy prices vary based on a dam's consequence category.

If you would like your dam's consequence category or declaration status considered before the next levy is due, submit your compliant report, and other supporting documentation to info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au **before 20 April 2026**.

The levy amounts for the 2026-2027 financial year will be calculated by May 2026 and will be published on our website.

Dams Safety NSW welcomes new Board members

Dams Safety NSW is pleased to welcome to two new members to our Board, Dr Amit Chanan and Neil Brennan.



Dr Amit Chanan is an executive engineer with more than 20 years' leadership experience in the water and infrastructure delivery sectors, including Chief Operating Officer for the NSW State Water Corporation.

Dr Chanan has also served as the Chief Executive Officer for the Water Authority of Fiji, a state-owned enterprise responsible for the national water supply and wastewater management.

He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Engineers and a Fellow of the Australia-New Zealand School of Government and is currently Professor in Practice (Engineering) at the University of New South Wales. He chairs the International Water Association's Specialist Group on Water Security and Safety Management.



Neil Brennan is an accomplished CEO and Managing Director with over 30 years' board and executive leadership experience in the Australian water sector. His recent roles include Chair of the South East Queensland Water Industry Partnership and a director on the national board of the Water Services Association of Australia.

Neil holds a Master's in Business Leadership, an Oxford University Management Certificate, and a Graduate Diploma of Business Management. He is currently the



Above: Dargues Reef Gold Project Tailings Dam, near Braidwood, Credit: DSNSW

REGISTER NOW for our FREE live online forum: Information for owners of declared dams in the mining industry

WHEN: Tuesday 17 March 2026 - 10am-11.15am

Join Dams Safety NSW's FREE online webinar for declared dam owners in the mining industry. The forum will cover:

- Tailings dam failures – causes and case studies
- Emergency exercises
- Audit findings, with a focus on Operations and Maintenance Plans

Submit your questions for the panel when you register, or ask them on the day.

For more information, email Dams Safety NSW at info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Our panellists



Heather Middleton, Manager Mining Impacts, Dams Safety NSW

Heather is the Manager of Mining Impacts at Dams Safety NSW and has more than 10 years' experience examining the impact of mining on dams and reservoirs. Before joining Dams Safety NSW, Heather was a consultant hydrogeochemist with mining exploration and the oil and gas industry.



John Stacpoole, Inspector of Mines – Metals and Extractives, Resources Regulator

John is a Chartered Practising Geotechnical Engineer and holds a practicing certificate as an NSW Mining Engineering Manager. With over 23 years' mining experience, John has held roles as a Responsible Tailings Facility Engineer, Geotechnical Engineering Superintendent, Quarry Manager and Mine Manager.

John has previously been a board member of NSW Dam Safety, the NSW Board of Survey and Spatial Services and a previous councillor on the NSW Radiation Council.



Craig Ronan, Acting Superintendent, NSW State Emergency Service

Craig has been a member of the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) for over 35 years. Currently a Coordinator of Emergency Planning with the NSW SES, he has broad experience in writing response plans for flooding including reviewing and contributing to Dam Emergency Plans, and in collecting and analysing flood intelligence.

Craig was awarded the Australian Emergency Services Medal in the 2007 Australia Day Honours List for distinguished service to the NSW SES and the community, and the Centenary Medal in 2001 for his service to the community.



Aerial view of Eurobodalla Southern Storage Dam taken in March 2025. Credit: Eurobodalla Council

South coast's Eurobodalla Southern Storage Dam nearing completion

The Eurobodalla Southern Storage Dam, a 3,000 megalitre off-river storage by the Tuross River, south of Batemans Bay, is approaching completion. It is one of the largest dam construction projects in NSW in many years.

The dam's 370m long, 39m high embankment wall, is now complete and Eurobodalla Council is testing the electrical and mechanical systems and revegetating the site. Once testing is complete, Council needs the right conditions – with good flow in the Tuross, before they can begin pumping water into storage. It will most likely take another six months to fill and fully commission the facility.

Dams Safety NSW has completed three audits at regular intervals on the new dam, to ensure compliance with the dams safety legislation and the integrity of the structure. A further audit and site inspection will be conducted during the dam filling phase, to ensure the dam continues to meet safety standards.

Further information on the Eurobodalla Southern Water Supply Storage is available on council's website at [Southern Water Supply Storage | Eurobodalla Council](#)

How does Dams Safety NSW make regulatory decisions?

At Dams Safety NSW, our job is to make sure declared dams across the state are being managed safely and responsibly. Dams Safety NSW “declares” a dam when it has the potential to cause serious harm - whether that's risk to life, major damage to infrastructure, environmental impacts or broader community issues including culture and heritage.

Dams Safety NSW identifies non-compliance of declared dams through audits or other information sources. We take a graduated and proportionate approach to non-compliance, based on the severity and potential harm to people, the environment or property. Our approach to serious non-compliance also considers the declared dam owner's culpability, co-operation and approach to the non-compliance, and the public interest.

Dams Safety NSW's risk-based approach to regulation:

- Uses information to focus Dams Safety NSW resources where the consequences of non-compliance are greatest and where the likelihood of non-compliance is highest
- Deploys Dams Safety NSW's resources to the greatest effect
- Promotes flexible and innovative responses to non-compliance

You can find more information about our compliance audits and enforcement activities on our [website](#).



Report an incident

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.](#)**

Examples of the types of incidents you should report to DSNSW include:

- Risk of or actual failure of the dam
- Death or serious injury of persons related to the dam and its operations
- A security incident that has or may affect the safety of the dam
- An incident related to dam safety that is reasonably likely to cause concern to members of the public

If you are not sure if an incident meets the reporting requirements in clause 19 of the Dams Safety Regulation, it is recommended that declared dam owners report the incident.

Even if you have already made an oral report, email any additional information to **incident@damsafety.nsw.gov.au**

Reporting incidents to DSNSW is required by law. The information helps us monitor action taken by dam owners to resolve issues at dams. It also helps us track issues related to dam safety to inform our policies and programs.



Do you have a new contact person for your dam?

Notify DSNSW - it's the law

If you have a new contact person for your declared dam, or their details have changed, you are legally required to notify Dams Safety NSW within 14 days.

Maintaining up-to-date details for a contact person for DSNSW ensures that the Dams Safety Act and regulation can be administered efficiently and safely.

Dam owners need to notify Dams Safety NSW of changes to contact details within 14 days by completing this [online form](#), emailing us at info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au, or calling **(02) 9842 8073**.

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: info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au

[Visit our website - Dams Safety NSW](#)

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

[Unsubscribe](#)