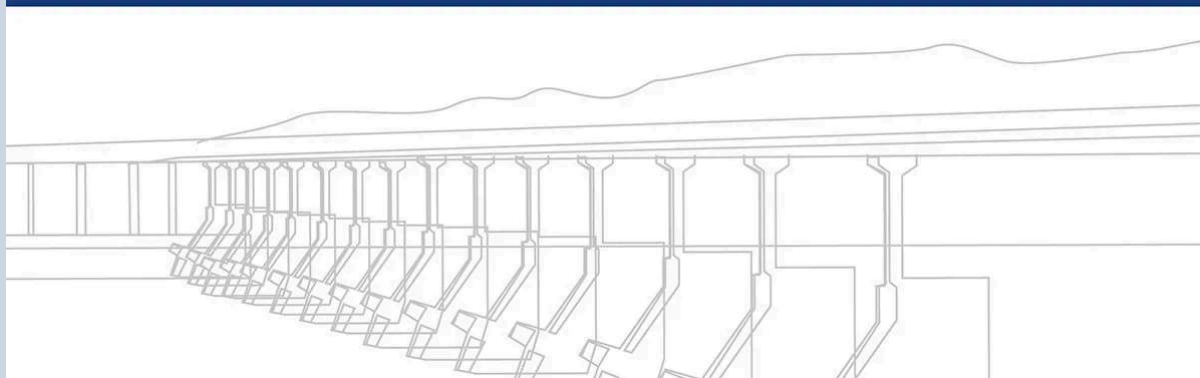




Dams Safety

Dams Safety Focus



20 June 2025



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.

A question we are often asked is "**How detailed should our Dam Safety Management System (DSMS) document be?**". Generally speaking, the answer is that it must include the content specified under clause 13 of the NSW Dams Safety Regulation 2019. But the document also needs to be practical. Make sure it is fit-for-purpose and aligns with the scale and complexity of your dam and operations. Prioritise usability over exhaustiveness, as overly detailed documents are less likely to be read. Consider who will use the document and the potential consequences if it is not followed correctly. Find out more about what to include in your DSMS from our online [Dam Safety Management Tool](#).

During July 2025, the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water will conduct public consultations to assess whether the policy objectives of the *Dams Safety Act 2015* remain valid, and if the terms of the Act are still appropriate for achieving those objectives. The consultation will begin on 30 June 2025 and will be open for 4 weeks. I encourage everyone to participate in this review. Diverse perspectives can highlight risks and opportunities, ultimately contributing to more comprehensive legislation. More information about this review can be found on the [Department's website](#).

Chris Salkovic
CEO, Dams Safety NSW



Dams safety levy commences on 1 July 2025

The dams safety levy will apply to all declared dams from 1 July 2025.

This is the first time that declared dam owners in NSW will be charged for the regulatory services that Dams Safety NSW provide.

The levy amounts for the 2025–2026 financial year have been calculated using the methodology proposed by the [Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal \(IPART\)](#).

FY25-26 levy amount per dam by consequence category

Very low/Low - \$7,829

Significant - \$10,834

High - \$12,914

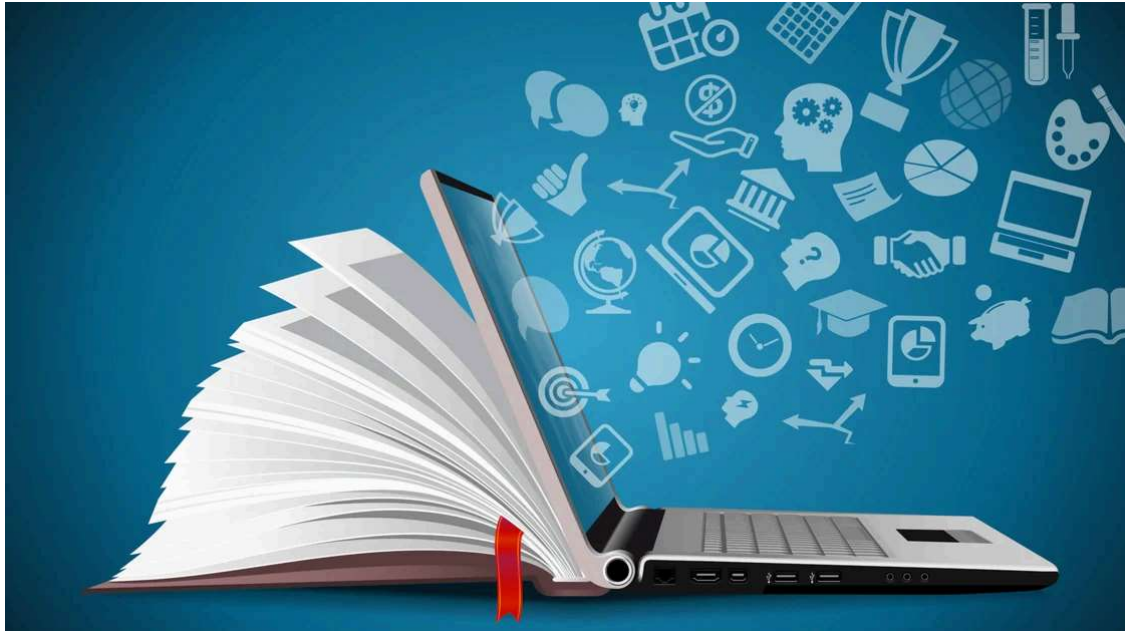
Extreme - \$15,624

Levy invoices will be issued from mid-July. Dam owners will have 30 days from the date the levy notice is issued to pay the amount in full. If the levy is not paid within this period, a late payment levy will apply, and new invoices will be issued.

Further information about the levy is available on the [Dams Safety NSW website](#).

Important notice to declared dam owners

If dam owners need purchase order details included on the levy notices, details must be sent to info@damsafety.nsw.gov.au by COB on 27 June 2025.



New resources on risk reports, incident reporting, asset management and climate change

Four new educational materials are now available in the [Resources](#) section of the website:

- [Risk report insights for declared dam owners](#) webinar. During this session, guest speakers Daniel Turnbull from Hunter Water and Josh Barnes from Orange City Council shared their experiences with the risk report process and what they did with the information from the reports to make their dams safer.
- [Climate change modelling using NARClIM2.0 – what does it mean for dam safety?](#) webinar. Jocelyn Dela-Cruz from the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water showcased the NARClIM2.0 climate models and explained how participants could use these to access free future projections for their locations, or use one of the regional snapshots available on the website.
- A new [Incident reporting](#) episode in the *Dam Safety Insights* podcast series. Alison Collaros, Compliance Manager, discusses incident reporting, including how, why and what should be reported.

- An [Asset management](#) episode in the *Dam Safety Insights* podcast series. DSNSW CEO Chris Salkovic introduces asset management and explains how the Dam Safety Management System relates to ISO 55001.
-

Results from Dam Safety Management System audit

Under the Dams Safety Act and Regulation, declared dam owners must establish and implement a Dam Safety Management System (DSMS) to ensure the ongoing safety of their dams.

DSNSW recently audited 10 dam owners against the requirement to implement a Dam Safety Management System (DSMS).

Compared with audits undertaken between 2021 and 2023, Dams Safety NSW was pleased to note an increasing level of compliance with DSMS requirements. But there is always room for improvement.

Seven out of 10 audits identified non-compliances, the most common relating to record keeping, as required by clause 27(1) of the Dams Safety Regulation 2019. Within this category, a common non-compliance related to the absence of records for internal audits and corrective actions.

A number of audits found non-compliances with clause 13 of the Dams Safety Regulation 2019, which specifies key information that must be included in the DSMS. Some systems were missing key information including name and contact details for the person responsible for ensuring compliance with the DSMS (clause 13(1A)) and procedures for notifying changes to the dam (clause 13(1)(g)).

Dam owners must provide evidence to DSNSW within 90 days to demonstrate that non-compliances have been rectified, or that a plan is in place to rectify them by a specified date. DSNSW will follow up with dam owners who have not provided evidence within the 90 days, and may consider further enforcement action if non-compliances remain outstanding.

For more information on Dam Safety Management Systems refer to the [DSMS Guideline](#).



Decommissioning south coast's Cambewarra Dam

In March 2025 Dams Safety NSW audited Shoalhaven City Council's decommissioning work on Cambewarra Dam. The purpose of the audit was to assess Council's management practices to ensure the decommissioning works were being conducted in a controlled environment under a quality assurance system. The team assessed the management of the project, design outputs and construction work, including quality assurance processes and procedures.

Decommissioning is a significant change to a dam and the Dams Safety Regulation 2019 (Clause 21) requires owners to notify DSNSW before undertaking decommissioning works.

Cambewarra Dam is a composite, concrete gravity and earth fill, embankment dam. It was originally commissioned in 1910 to supply water to the township of Nowra, on the NSW South Coast. In 1980 the Dam was removed from service following the introduction of the Northern Shoalhaven Water Supply Scheme, using water being drawn from the Shoalhaven River at Burrier. With the dam continuing to incur annual operational and maintenance costs for ongoing safety regulations, in 2020 Council elected to explore options for its decommissioning.

The approximately \$1.5 million decommissioning works involved demolishing the 8.4m high and 40m long concrete dam wall and removing the top 6.65m of the dam wall.

Decommissioning must be done with reference to the dam's Dam Safety Management System. The [decommissioning process](#) must be managed to ensure it

does not temporarily endanger life or increase any infrastructure, environmental, health, or social impacts. Emergency plans and Operations and maintenance plans may need to be amended to account for temporary and permanent changes during and after the decommissioning process.

Watch Shoalhaven Water's video of the decommissioning work



ENROL NOW: online embankment and concrete dam surveillance courses

Dams Safety NSW has collaborated with TAFE NSW to deliver 2 three-hour online courses. They are both available on TAFE NSW's online learning platform.

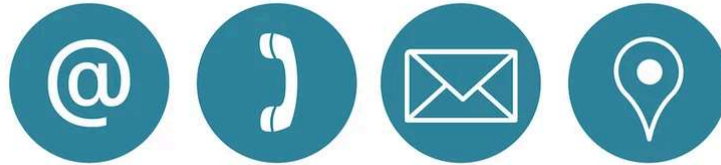
[Surveillance of EMBANKMENT dams - routine inspections](#) The course will help NSW dam owners understand the activities involved in conducting routine visual inspections of embankment dams.

[Surveillance of CONCRETE dams - routine inspections](#) This course will help NSW dam owners understand the activities involved in conducting routine visual inspections of concrete dams.

It is recommended that participants have at least 6 months' experience inspecting dams before attempting the courses.

PLEASE NOTE: successfully completing these courses does not mean you are a 'competent person'. 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'** or **NWPCAD010 – Inspect and report on concrete 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.



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.



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.

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](#)