

**Australian National Committee
on Large Dams Incorporated**

ABN 52 627 050 014
www.ancold.org.au



Chairman
Neil Blaikie
Secretary
Angus Swindon

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Large Dams are vital to our community through storage of water for domestic, agricultural and industrial use and also for flood mitigation and flood protection.

Large dams have been invaluable throughout the recent drought conditions across most of Australia and are now playing a vital role in mitigating some of the severe flooding that is currently occurring throughout the nation.

Australia's dams are designed to withstand the most extreme events. Our large dams are very well engineered and are amongst the safest in the world.

The safety of the community is uppermost during the design, construction, operation and maintenance of large dams. The community should be re-assured that our large dams are generally designed to cope with floods that are far larger than those currently affecting Queensland and northern NSW.

Dams play a role but are not the total solution for mitigating the effect of floods. Dams can be built to lessen the effects of flooding but they cannot practically eliminate the effects of the most extreme floods. In extreme flood events, dams simply cannot hold back the massive volumes of water that flow into a reservoir over a short period of time. Dams must spill water once the capacity of the reservoir is reached. Dam Spillways are designed, however, to allow extreme floods to pass through the reservoir without compromising the dam structure itself, thereby reducing the impact on downstream communities.

In considering the investigation, design and operation of dams, particularly in relation to any flood mitigation benefit, governments, investors and dam owners need to carefully consider a range of economic, environmental and social issues.

Please contact the dam owner or responsible authority for any information on a particular dam or river system.

Background on The Australian National Committee on Large Dams (ANCOLD)

The Australian National Committee on Large Dams Inc. (ANCOLD) is an Australian based non-government, non-profit and voluntary association of organisations and individual professionals with a common technical interest in dams. ANCOLD currently has 53 member companies covering all aspects of the dams industry, and 153 individual associate members.

Individual members and associates are typically specialist professional civil, mechanical, electrical and environmental engineers working in the dam industry and corporate members comprise a range of public and private sector dam owners, consultants, contractors, government agencies and other organisations with a professional interest in dams. For further details about ANCOLD and its role and the role and importance of dams to society, please visit our website www.ancold.org.au

ANCOLD provides a forum for the sharing of information on all aspects of dam engineering through conferences, seminars and its association with the International Commission on Large Dams, ICOLD. ANCOLD is one of over 85 member countries of ICOLD.

ANCOLD has published a series of guidelines on current national and international practice in dam engineering that are used by experienced dam professionals in the industry. The activities of ANCOLD have contributed to major dams in Australia being some of the safest in the world.

ANCOLD is not an advocate for dams but strives to promote excellence in technical aspects of dam engineering. Each state and territory in Australia has government based oversight of the technical and governance aspects of dam operation and management.

As such, it is not appropriate for ANCOLD to comment on any physical or operational aspect of any particular dam as that is the role of the dam owner, or state jurisdiction under which it is managed. Similarly it is not a role for ANCOLD to speculate or to provide a comment on or an opinion on any particular water or dam management policy matter. Such matters are the domain of the various jurisdictions and individual dam owners.

ANCOLD recommends that interested parties contact the dam owner or responsible authority for any information or query on a particular dam or river system.

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Correspondence
ANCOLD Secretariat
113 Harrington Street
Hobart, TAS, 7000

Telephone: +61 3 6234 7844
Facsimile: +61 3 6234 5958
E-mail: ancold@leishman-associates.com.au