

Drama on dam bid mounting

EXPERT advisers on the World Heritage Committee have told a former NSW government minister they are concerned about how the plan to raise Warragamba Dam will impact the Blue Mountains.

The NSW government plan, which hopes to reduce and manage flood risk in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley, would raise it by 14m.

The dam is surrounded by the Greater Blue Mountains heritage area. The floodwater would be temporarily stored in the dam before a controlled release.

Environmentalists warn the proposal causes an "unprecedented threat", saying the largest flood events could inundate 4700ha of wilderness and 65km of streams.

Former NSW environment minister Bob Debus has taken the concerns of several conservation groups to the annual meeting of the WHC in the Middle East this week.

Mr Debus says there had been "some amazement"



Marshal Keen with dog Jack in Bondi.
Picture: Justin Lloyd

BLIND FAITH AS TRADIE SETS SITES ON SWITCH

ALISON STEPHENSON

WHEN the first promo for Nine's *Buying Blind* aired on TV, Bondi builder Marshal Keen's phone lit up. The affable tradie — who made his television debut in the reno show — hadn't told anyone he'd made the switch from building site to small screen.

"I actually kept it really quiet," he said. "I managed to keep it under wraps until one night when I was watching *The Voice* and the first promo came on and I got a few surprised texts like 'Did I just see you on TV with a hard hat and a sledgehammer?'"

Keen was virtually plucked off a building site by an agent friend to star alongside *The Block*'s Shaynna Blaze and buyer's agent Rich Harvey. The trio are tasked with using the life savings of six families to buy and renovate a house the buyers had never seen. Keen said his surprise new career as a hot-shot TV star won't change him.

"I'm just a bulder," he said. "I'm still just one of the boys on site."