

WATER SUBMISSION

Rural and regional industries, tourism and one's everyday life depend on *Water*.

With industries moving to richer soils for greater yields, there is more demand on our water supply. Water needed for these crops will become more expensive.

*Cairns Post 24.3.99 Hon Bob Katter MP*

Australians should have worn black armbands on World Water Day on Monday to acknowledge the nation's shameful under-utilisation of water resources, Member for Kennedy, Bob Katter says. He said it was a national disgrace that Australian was the only country on earth with 90 per cent of its water allowed to run unimpeded to the sea.

*"The Gulf Country has two, arguably three times more arable land than the Murray-Darling system has. It has six times more water, it has a more reliable water supply and it has brilliant sunshine for nine months of the year."* Hansard 19.3.02 Hon Bob Katter MP.

In the wet season months excess water from the waterlogged coastal areas of the Kennedy Electorate could be diverted inland to the parched plains that experience nine months of hot, dry weather. This would:-

- create employment
- production of crops
- enable infrastructure
- draw people from the cities to the more open spaces
- allow more immigration
- hydro electric generating capacity

Australia is not, in any sense, in occupation of most of its continental land mass. The vast bulk of the Australian land mass has, in the main, adequate rainfall and fair to good soil types. (*Revised Bradfield Scheme*)

Many projects ideally suited for country areas suffering from population drainage cannot get off the ground because of lack of infrastructure. (*Revised Bradfield Scheme*)

Secretary: ..... <i>Albee</i> .....
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY

## Bradfield Scheme

Purpose - the filling of the dry bed of Lake Eyre in the north east of South Australia in the hope that evaporation from the water surface would increase rainfall in the vicinity and the diversion of Queensland's coastal rivers to feed the water courses of the inland system.

The Lake Eyre Basin has a total catchment of approximately 1.17 million square kilometres, with an average annual rainfall of no more than 230 millimetres.

On the other hand, the tropical north eastern section of Queensland is a land of many rivers draining an area of 970,000 square kilometres with an average rainfall of 790 millimetres. It contains some of the highest rainfall areas in Australia (Tully to the south and Babinda to the north of my electorate office in Innisfail, North Queensland).

The Bradfield Study Consortium Report (B.S.C.R.) proved Dr Bradfield was right.....

it is possible to bring water to the arid heart of Australia. The proposals are:-

- damming of the Tully River (near where the Koombooloomba Hydro Dam now stands);
- diverting the Tully River (above this dam) into the Herbert River;
- damming the Herbert River at the Kooragwyn Dam site (two miles upstream from junction with Cameron Creek);
- diverting the Herbert River (above the Falls) into the Burdekin River;
- damming the Burdekin and diverting it into the Flinders; and diverting the Flinders by way of a small channel into the Thompson, from where it would fill up Lake Eyre, thus increasing the moisture content of Australia's dry interior rain would thereby precipitate and the desert, it was hoped, would bloom.

*"The United States had this magnificent series of projects which delivered water to the farm gate throughout the Tennessee Valley Authority areas. These projects produced a huge amount of hydro-electricity and controlled the enormous flood damage that had occurred regularly throughout that area. In addition, the United States government built the biggest dam in the world, the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, and planted some 2,000 square miles of trees to revitalise the mid-western plains area, which had been damaged by land degradation in early United States history. All of those wonderful things done during the Depression in the United States."* Hansard 29.9.93 Hon Bob Katter MP

*"The Snowy Mountains Scheme enables us to drought-proof one-tenth - maybe as much as one-fifth - of the entire arable area of our nation, so that part of the continent which is not desert can be used productively. It is a disgrace to each and every Australian that almost one-fifth of the surface area of Queensland - this rich black soil varying in depth from 18 to 35 inches over this vast area of land - is presently producing virtually nothing of value."* Hansard 29.9.93 Hon Bob Katter MP

*"Hell's Gates in the Burdekin River has a full supply level of 1,279 feet whereas the water is delivered onto the western plains below Hughenden at 1,079 feet. That is sufficient head to give a flow of water from one point to the other, over 500 or 600 kilometres of canal."* Hansard 29.9.93 Hon Bob Katter MP.

### **Hell's Gate Dam Irrigation Project – February 1998**

The Burdekin River catchment covers one fifth of the surface of Queensland and currently has only one major dam, Burdekin Falls, and one minor dam, Eungella, with yields of 1.1 million mega litres and .04 million mega litres respectively.

Queensland, except for a very narrow coastal strip, has only one irrigation dam north of Brisbane. (Parliamentary Information Service indicates that some of the irrigation dams on a selection of coastal rivers north of Brisbane as at 29 August 2002 are Tinaroo Falls Dam, Burdekin Falls Dam, Bundaberg Irrigation area on the lower Burnett, Fairburn Dam, Borumba Dam and Koombooloomba Dam.) Yet the vast area, comprising 90% of Queensland, accounts for almost one third of Australia's entire water run-off - 126 million mega litres of the 440 million mega litres total flow nationally through all systems and most of Australia's prime soil.

The proposed Hell's Gates Dam and irrigation development is west of the demographic centre of the high-growth region.

West of the coastal ranges is a vast landmass of the Australian continent that is being stripped of its population.

Hell's Gates will open up new areas, which will be less costly to irrigate.

Extra water supply to Townsville-Thuringowa, which will be needed by the year 2015. Hell's Gates Dam could deliver water to Townsville through hydro-electricity generators.

Because of its remoteness from coastal conditions and its high elevation, crops can be grown in this area that cannot be grown on the coastal belt.

Dams have been built as a result of pressure from existing farmers not out of a desire to create new farms, therefore this project will reposition the Australian population into new areas and renew again the development and populate the vast Australian wasteland, the 84% of this continental land mass that is at present effectively uninhabited and unused. It will:-

- increase Australia's national income
- create employment opportunities
- promote horticulture expansion
- produce with short shelf life (most fruit and vegetables) will be able to access the Asian market without high air freight costs
- rescue communities who are experiencing economic and social decline
- create inland towns
- provide water to normally drought stricken areas

## **Nullinga Dam**

For some years now there has been a push for the construction of the Nullinga Dam on the Walsh River, in fact in the last term of the Borbidge Coalition Queensland Government, this dam was a re-election promise. Since Labor was elected to power in Queensland this has not eventuated.

The Queensland Natural Resources and Mines Minister, Stephen Robertson, has recently stated that water users in the Mareeba-Dimbulah water supply scheme have never used more than approximately 60% of their existing allocation from the Tinaroo Falls Dam.

I am advised that 100% has been allocated and if the growers don't want to use it for insurance purposes or because there has been a downturn in industries, the allocation is still taken up and kept by the farmer for *a rainy day*. This coupled with further depleting the Tinaroo Falls Dam when the area has not had a decent wet season does appear to be a sensible decision.

With the expansion of Cairns City, it is anticipated that this city will eventually run short of water and want to draw their supplies from the Tinaroo Falls Dam. The Tinaroo Falls Dam would not have the capacity to supply Cairns City as well.

With the Sugar Industry now present on the Atherton Tablelands, irrigating this crop has placed a further demand on our water and although in a depressed state now, we have to prepare for the future.

### *Financial Review – May 2002 – Hon Bob Katter MP*

Most of Australian's rain falls where there are no mountains at all – in North Queensland' Gulf country – caused by the water laden NW monsoons, and unimpeded by mountains, colliding with the similarly water laden SE Trades. Whilst water tables in the Murray Darling are about 100 ft deep, western Queensland's are around 1500 feet.

The Murray Darling produces 41% of Australia's agricultural production (nearly 50% of our agricultural production is consumed in Australia). It therefore supports a population of almost 20 million – with only a diminutive 22 million mgltrs of annual rainfall run off.

NQ's Gulf Country – and periphery – has a rainfall run off of over 120 million mgltrs – enough water every year to cover an area the size of Victoria to a depth of 2 ft.

Northern Australia has rainfall for only 3 months – 'the wet'. At the end of the 9-month dry the land bereft of any grass cover becomes in the first monsoonal downpour – invariably driven by a cyclonic influence – a miasma of ripping and tearing torrents of erosion.

*"The Great Boomerang" by Ion L Idriess - circa 1941*

The Dead Heart – It exists, but it is not the heart, not in the centre of Australia where it is vaguely supposed to be. This disputed country lies a little to the south-east of the real centre.

Whether or no, as the mileposts of the years went by a mad scheme slowly developed in me to bring this Dead Heart to life again, to lay the Ghost and make this land blossom always, not once in every ten or fifteen years; not only the Dead Heart itself but those great areas of arid lands surrounding it. For to the north-east, east and south of the Heart particularly are lands crying only for water to support millions of men.

Inland

In the far west they dig deep into the earth for water.

Coast

But in the east it flows away into the sea.

North West Star 13.11.00

There is merit in some of the plans to turn back North Queensland rivers to feed inland areas, an environmental scientist has said. Dingle Smith, a visiting fellow to the Australian National University's centre for resource and environmental studies, said the nation's water resources were poorly spread. Dr Smith said Australia was in an unusual position because there were many dry areas but the country's North, especially in Queensland, had an excess of rain. Finding a way to move that water to more productive uses, subject to environmental and political concerns, was a step that had to be considered. "There is a feeling that all this water is going to waste. There is plenty of scope (to move water) and there aren't that many countries in the world who have got this enormous slab of water up here that isn't really used. I guess there is scope with it, in terms of moving water inland."

North West Star 5.8.02 - Mayor Keith Douglas

*"Council has been actively involved in trying to find an answer to major problems to the growth and development of Cloncurry having an adequate water supply for the present and future."*

*"The majority of the town water supply is intended to come from Chinaman Creek Dam but the yield is insufficient to provide supply for 12 months of the year."*

*"With the lack of rain, the town is currently reliant on harvesting of water stored in the sand of the Cloncurry River which has struggled in latter years due to a number of factors:*

- *lack of capacity to meet the increased community demand;*
- *reducing capacity due to the deterioration of the river well system (in excess of 30 years) and*
- *major damage to the river well system following the 1997 flood and not repaired or replaced."*

Water restrictions and sprinkler bans have been enforced so that the Council do not have to resort to using bore water in their reticulation system.

McKinlay Shire Community Needs Assessment – December 2001)

The residents of Kynuna expressed strong concerns regarding the adequacy (quality and quantity) of the current water supply.

The Council is applying for funding under the Smaller Communities Assistance Program (SCAP) to upgrade the Kynuna reticulation, which is considered as the main problem. Provided this funding is obtained, then this priority need for Kynuna should be addressed.

Water storage was raised as an issue for McKinlay township.

Environment - With local shires supporting wetlands, ground water is essential to support wetlands where birds breed. Utilisation of sugar mill water waste has been used to create wetlands and this has been a successful project. Clean, healthy environments attract tourists and create recreational past times such as bird watching to rural communities, which has an economic flow-on to the community. The management of water in an environmentally sensitive way gains public support and is beneficial to the wider community, inter state and international tourists.

Water charges and the *user-pay system* generates funds to restore and maintain services, infrastructure etc.

Freshwater ecology, the science of understanding how rivers, lakes and wetlands are shaped and function, is now accepted as a key part of the knowledge needed to sustainably manage Australia's water resources. *Watershed – August 2002.*

We have vast areas of land in Australia that with water and infrastructure could become productive and support population. The above comments are submitted for your consideration by *The Honourable Bob Katter, Federal Member for Kennedy.*

**29 August 2002**