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The Secretary
Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir

Re: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland – Traveston Crossing Dam Information

The purpose of this letter is to provide comment and information for the Senate Inquiry. I am deeply concerned with all aspects of the Traveston Crossing Dam Project.

During 2004/5, I represented the Noosa Parks Association Inc. on the Environmental panel of the Mary River Basin Water Resource Plan. At no time was the idea of a dam mentioned, in any form or concept, anywhere on the Mary River. In fact some, on the Environmental Panel, raised proposals involving the removal or lowering of the various river barrages, to ensure viable environmental flows.

I wish to raise the following points -

- *“As a general principle, water in a catchment, should be used within that catchment, but if used outside the catchment suitable compensation should be negotiated for the concession.”*
- *“Environmental flows are paramount to the health of the river and estuarine systems and surrounding lands. They should have a very high priority.”*
- *“Water speculation should not be tolerated. Communities should not be held to ransom in order to satisfy someone else’s greed.”*
- *“There can be no **them** and **us**; we need each other – Agriculture to produce food and fibre. Urban dwellers to purchase the products etc and Environmental Reserves of land and water to retain a healthy place to live.”*
- *“We must get the balance right and not succumb to narrow vested interests, greed and ignorance.”*

Mr. Harry Evans, Clerk to the Senate, stated in the essay, “**Ethics & the Public Service Governance**” – *“Some kind of due process is essential. Without due process, any project and its outcomes can be poisoned by an appearance of arbitrariness in decision-making. The public service by definition should operate on due process; it is inherent in the term “public”. Whenever a significant public activity is proposed, the first consideration should be: by what process will it be applied? The neglect of process in favour of outcomes has been responsible for many of the recent difficulties.”*

There has been a clear neglect of due process and recommendations on due process should be made to ensure this does not happen again.

All parties in this project have a right to have a say and be able to openly debate the merits of any project, based on the best evidence available, **before** the decision to proceed is made.

The decision to build this dam was made in a manner that has totally ignored the principles of accountability, shared responsibility and transparency. The views of the Mary Valley residents were not sought. The possibility of serious or irreversible environmental damage has been discounted, despite the existence of a considerable body of evidence.

- The dam will not deliver the quantities of water projected, due to climate instability, [Currently Mary Valley Primary Producers may apply for drought assistance]
- The economics of the dam and the resulting water supply will be unviable when compared with raising the Borumba Dam and with recycling or desalination.
- The shallowness of the dam will entail unacceptable losses due to evaporation and the certainty of weed infestation by Cabomba will make recreational activities extremely hazardous, with the distinct possibility of drowning occurring in the future.
- The flooding of prime agricultural land is an act of gross economic vandalism.
- There will be extinctions of the Lungfish, the Mary River Turtle, the Mary River Cod and other endangered species. [But not in the term of this administration.]
- The Great Sandy Straits will have reduced environmental flows, which in turn will alter the ecology of the area, further stressing endangered species such as the dugong, as well as damaging fish nurseries and consequently reducing stocks of economically significant fish.
- And finally, an earlier Queensland Government has already rejected this project.

I trust that your Inquiry can see the reasons why this dam should not proceed.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Robert Bell