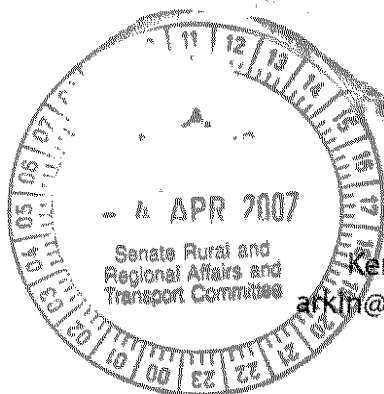


The Secretary
Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Arkin Mackay
PO Box 115
Kenilworth Qld 4574
arkin@stoppress.com.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re. Inquiry into additional water supplies for South East Queensland - Traveston Crossing Dam information

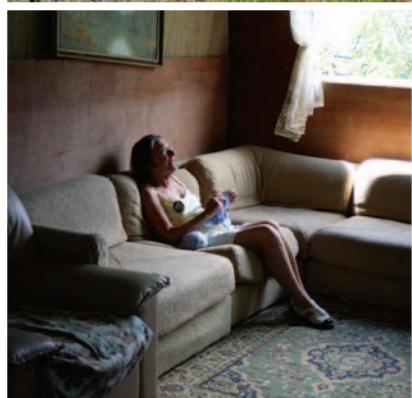
The purpose of this letter is to provide background information for the Senate Inquiry. Please find enclosed a hard copy document 'Snapshots in the Valley of The Dammed' - being a photo essay on many aspects of the Traveston Dam proposal. Also included is the same document on disc in PDF format.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Senate Inquiry. I hope that you come to the same conclusion that I have - that the proposed Traveston Dam is NOT the most appropriate solution to the water issues of South-East Queensland, and I hope your findings will prompt the State Government to establish a more sensible approach.

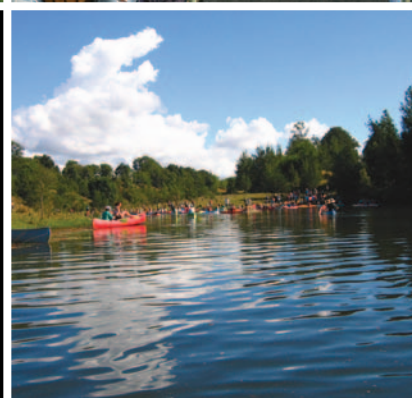
Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Arkin Mackay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Arkin Mackay



**Snapshots
in the
Valley
of The
Dammed**



A submission to the Senate Inquiry into Traveston Dam



activism in pictures...

Snapshots in the Valley of The Dammed

A submission to the Senate Inquiry into Traveston Dam

based on a photo essay which appears on www.stoppress.com.au

March 30, 2007

© 2007 Arkin Mackay. All rights reserved.

Photos & text by Arkin Mackay STOP PRESS Visual Media unless otherwise acknowledged.

More information available at www.stoppress.com.au

PO Box 115, Kenilworth, Qld 4574

This document may, in entirety, be freely reproduced for use within the Senate Inquiry, but the images within remain the property of Arkin Mackay.

Terms of use outside the Senate Inquiry may be obtained by emailing arkin@stoppress.com.au

The more that is known about the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal on the Mary River, the worse it looks! Queensland Premier Peter Beattie announced on Thursday, April 27, 2006 that the Queensland Government proposes to build a mega-dam (more than 1.3 times the area of Sydney Harbour) on the Mary River at Traveston Crossing that will inundate the central Mary Valley in Queensland's Sunshine Coast hinterland and re-direct the water of the Mary into Brisbane. Scientific evidence now indicates that this will seriously degrade the 200km of river downstream of the proposal and greatly effect the Great Sandy Straits by stopping all fresh water flow to the sea from the river for a significant proportion of the time. Until the announcement, no information had been made public about ANY planning procedures or studies to justify the decision. There had been absolutely NO public consultation with any of the local stakeholders regarding this decision before the announcement.

Following the Premier's June 2006 announcement of his formation of a company to proceed with the dam project - 'Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd' and the release of the Water Resource Plan legislation for the Mary Basin in July, there has been the opportunity to investigate the limited scientific, engineering and financial information that has become available.

It still looks as if the decision to spend billions of dollars of public money on a potential environmental and social disaster has been made on the basis of political expediency rather than good science, engineering and planning. This is surely not appropriate behaviour for a "smart state".

The matter has now moved into the realm of Federal politics, requiring the assessment of a limited range of some of the environmental impacts of the project under the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. However, a full federal enquiry into all aspects of the actions of the State Government to date with respect to the proposal is required to bring out the true facts underlying the proposal and allow some justice to the people of Queensland.

This information is from www.savethemaryriver.com - the website of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group, a local community support organization formed in response to the proposal. Their site collates information about the proposal and assists in the public debate on the issue of dams on the Mary River and water and planning procedures in Queensland in general.

This photo album addresses some of the aspects to the proposal. It is far from comprehensive, just a small snapshot of parts of the valley, events, projects, campaigns, concerns and is a tribute to all those working so hard to stop this flawed project before any more damage is done.



Premier Beattie's announcement to build the dam 'whether feasible or not', the continued government propaganda that misleads public perception, the land grabs and heavy-handed tactics are causing much anger and distress within the community. The reality (and law) is that many studies still need to be conducted, and federal approval sought before the dam can officially proceed.



Public meetings between the government and locals have been incredibly well attended despite usually occurring at very short notice, and at awkward times for those in full time work. The entire dam opposition movement is maintained by people in what spare time they have - an impressive feat when you consider they're working against entire government departments.



3 schools would be impacted if the dam were to proceed... and thus far the government has released no alternative proposals for counter-balancing this shortfall. Public school staff in the region have been forcefully instructed to keep 'the dam issue' out of the classroom, and so are unable to provide much of the necessary support and counselling that their confused pupils require. Teachers have noted serious changes in student's work quality, behaviour and development since the proposal a year ago.



Anna Bligh, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure addresses a public meeting in Gympie about the proposed Traveston Dam. Thus far, public rallies and meetings have been peaceful, and unmarred by violence - a remarkable achievement considering the ongoing emotional strain the community is living with.

Angry residents from the Mary Valley and Rathdowney (site of another SEQ dam proposal) take their message to the streets of Brisbane during the State ALP Conference. The government has touted these dams as the solution to Brisbane's 'water crisis', an effective pre-election stunt to convince Brisbane voters that action was being taken. The reality, and the message being spread by action groups is that neither dam will be any use in 2008 when Brisbane may well run out of water.





No Dam merchandise is sold through the Kandanga Info Centre, and is the main source of revenue to fund the fight against the State Government.

The Kandanga Info Centre - the hub of the NO DAM movement. The centre has dual roles of providing information about the flaws in the dam proposal, and acting as a support centre for affected residents. It is situated beside the historic railway station in the township of Kandanga which would be largely drowned if the dam proceeded. Opening hours are 10am to 4pm, 7 days a week. Phone (07) 5488 4800.

Senator Bob Brown (Australian Greens) led the Floatilla of Hope - a rally and guided tour in canoes through part of the river that would be drowned by the dam. The Floatilla ended at Traveston Crossing, site of the proposed dam wall. Apart from being visually impressive, it was an important gesture of solidarity and river appreciation.





Brisbane's Catholic Bishop Brian Finnegan (left) met with affected landholders on a hill overlooking the town of Kandanga. His concerns, along with many other religious leaders, are for the welfare of the communities.



Knit For Mary is a project which combines activism, public awareness and a good dose of therapy. A huge scarf is being knitted and will be draped along the site of the proposed dam wall. Project organiser Dawn Gill says that it gives people the chance to physically do something for the fight, and is a great way to work off frustrations and anger, and gain a bit of hope.



Protesters picket the 2006 State ALP Conference in Brisbane... public protests have only been a small part of the overall opposition, but an important way for affected residents and supporters to give voice to their frustrations. Behind the scenes it seems the government was not expecting such an organised, vocal and factual response to the proposal.



In numerous independent studies conducted so far on social/health issues arising from the proposal, loneliness and despair are strong recurring themes. While valley residents are doing a wonderful job of supporting and helping each other, the pressure of their situation is taking a toll.



The government has already begun a determined push to buy land, despite not having any approvals to proceed with dam construction. The impact of people leaving the area is already being felt by local businesses. Many development plans, from house renovations to farm expansions are now on hold due to future uncertainty, and this is also impacting local service



It is rumoured that some of the houses already sold to the government are being used as Housing Commission accommodation, and in some cases adding further trouble and stress to already pressured neighbourhoods. Other houses sit vacant, a tragic reminder of those who bowed under pressure.

The Mary River is an important part of the local community - the location of annual public events, focus of research groups, site of many Landcare and other revegetation projects, and ideal location for camping and eco-style, low impact tourism. Queensland dams are failing, and Traveston Dam will be no different - the anticipated impact of a dam in this area will bring none of the benefits that a free-flowing river already provides.





Stress and illness has increased alarmingly since the dam proposal, resulting in numerous research projects by independent bodies into social, medical and mental health impacts on the community. Unfortunately, this awareness has not been adequately matched by government support, and is a case of 'too little, too late' for some people.

The proposed dam will flood this historic cemetery in Kandanga. Although the site is still used today, it is the resting place of many early settlers, and an important part of local history. The Government's plan is to raise the ground to above water-level, and reposition the headstones using GPS. Many residents have generations of family buried here, including drowned children, and the callous indifference shown by the government thus far has caused deep grief within the community.



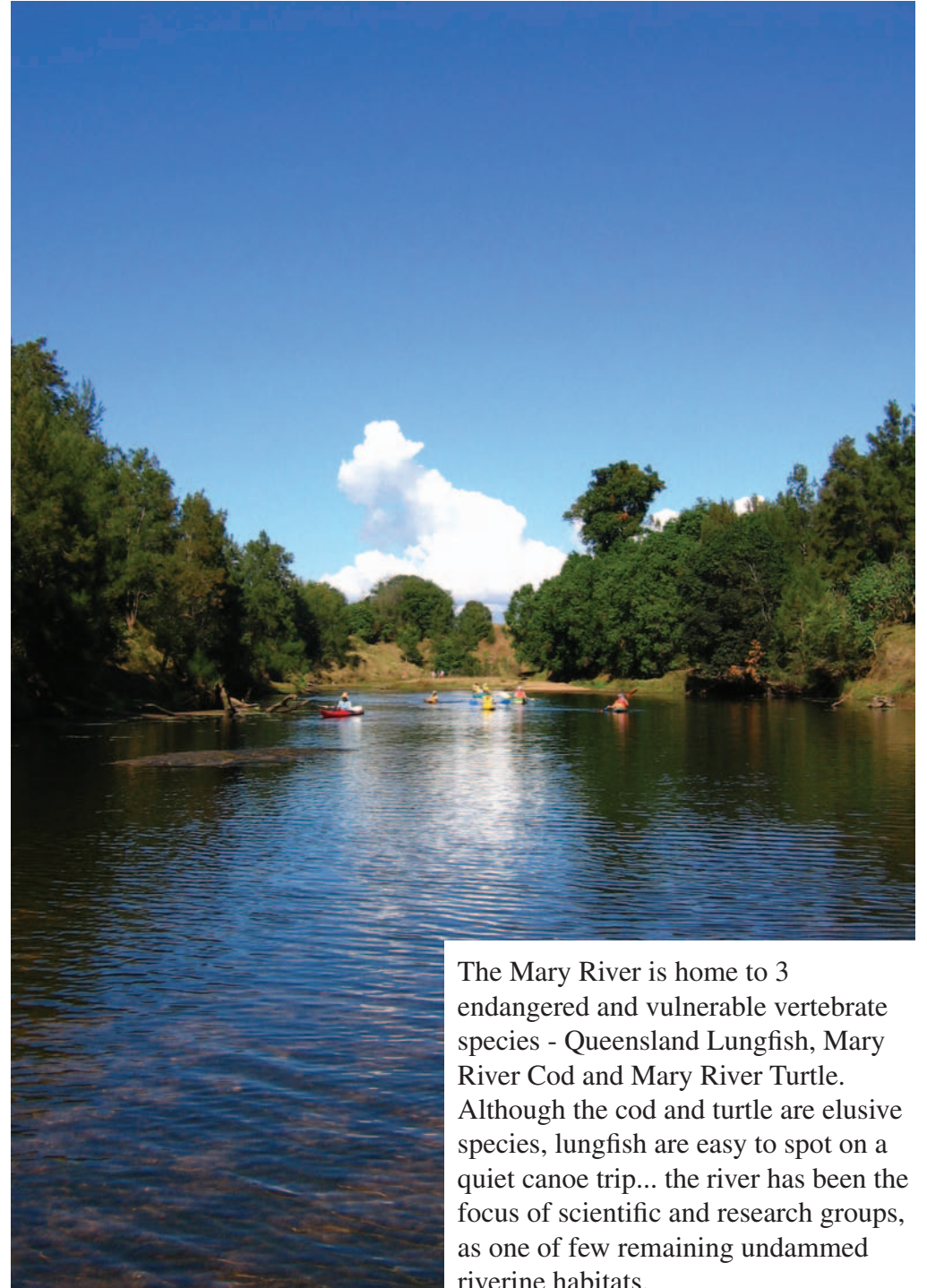
The next generation of Mary Valley residents face an uncertain future... properties situated in the Stage 2 area of the dam footprint may not be required until 2035, yet would be subject to stringent land use conditions and loss in sale value in the meantime.



Anger at state government lies and misinformation was directed at Deputy Premier Anna Bligh during a public meeting in Gympie. She faced a hostile crowd, with many holding an image of her emblazoned with the words 'DAM LIAR'. Public consultation has been infrequent, lacking in content and often proven to be untrue.



A Mary Valley resident, on a fact finding trip to Paradise Dam, pauses to contemplate the bleak setting and ponder the fate of the Mary River. Paradise Dam is the model on which the government will base Traveston Dam, despite it having proven to be a failure, and being ranked 6th in a worldwide list of failed dams.



The Mary River is home to 3 endangered and vulnerable vertebrate species - Queensland Lungfish, Mary River Cod and Mary River Turtle. Although the cod and turtle are elusive species, lungfish are easy to spot on a quiet canoe trip... the river has been the focus of scientific and research groups, as one of few remaining undammed riverine habitats.



In most cases, dam opposition has invaded every aspect of life in the Mary Valley - this poignant black bean pod boat is an entry in the Moy Pocket Brown Water Classic, an annual 'boat' race held on the river and enjoyed by children and adults from far afield.



The Kandanga 1000, a novel mounted protest drew support from riders across Queensland, who hitched up their floats and came to spend the weekend in the heart of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland. Although their diversity was obvious, their unity of purpose was clear - 'No Dam' messages on horses and riders alike said it all.



In an overwhelming show of solidarity, hundreds of horseriders converged on the tiny township of Kandanga to add their support in opposition to the building of Traveston Dam in the Mary Valley, South East Queensland. The horseback protest beat a path through one small section of the proposed dam area, through fertile agricultural land, across lofty ridges, and into pockets of virgin rainforest - all at risk of inundation.

In the aftermath of the state election [which Premier Beattie has claimed as a mandate to build this dam], the ride was a powerful and moving statement that opposition to damming the Mary River is widespread, unwavering, and constantly gaining momentum.

Environmental students and activists share ideas with Jenifer Simpson (seated, right), a strong lobbyist for sensible water management and water recycling. The dam issue has resulted in increased communication between many levels of researchers, activists, scientists and the public. It has increased focus on current water use policies, and drawn river management and conservation into the spotlight of public importance.





Wider public opposition will play a significant part in embarrassing the state government and stopping Traveston Dam, and no opportunity is lost in promoting that.



The Sisters of Mary appear at public events preach about the folly of dam building, and the virtues of the Mary River. Humour and theatre play a huge part in public education.



Cate Molloy (centre back), resigned as the ALP Member for Noosa over the way in which the dam proposal had been implemented. Here she joins local musicians at a public information day to perform one of the many anti-dam songs written since the announcement.



A tiny protester fronts police at a demonstration during the State ALP Conference of 2006. The mental stress on children is a growing concern amongst health workers and parents in the community - unable to understand the full ramifications of the proposal, many children are terrified that they, or their pets or family, will suddenly be drowned overnight.



'Rest In Peace' is a token saying when the cemetery is at risk of inundation. There will be no rest or closure for families with relatives buried here until the dam proposal is withdrawn, and life in the Mary Valley returns to normal.



For nearly a year, residents have been dealing with misinformation, conflicting governmental advice, uncertainty and stress. The human toll has been significant, with a noted rise in illness, mental health issues, suicide attempts and relationship breakdowns.



The second public rally after the dam proposal announcement drew a crowd of thousands. It was widely held that the proposal was purely an election stunt by Premier Beattie and would soon be withdrawn. Premier Beattie was re-elected and now, almost a year later, shows no signs of backing down. Despite increasing international focus, and growing evidence of flaws with the plan, the Premier has vowed in parliament to build the dam 'whether it is feasible or not'.

Independent studies, and modelling from the government's own technical data has shown that the dam fails in a number of major ways - most importantly, it will not solve Brisbane's perceived 'water crisis', the earliest possible date of completion is 2012 (dependent on a significant flood event), and Brisbane is set to run out of potable water in 2008. Residents of the Mary Valley struggle with the idea that they may lose their homes and incomes over a proposal that doesn't add up.



Residents object to the heavy-handed way that this proposal has been implemented - no significant public consultation, limited information, a series of bureaucratic bungles and outright lies have weakened faith in the democratic system.



The region has a long history of farming and agriculture, and there are grave concerns about arsenic dips and other chemicals contaminating the dam water. It's believed that there are many unmapped dip sites which would not be found and decontaminated.

A clear indication of one of the major flaws with this dam proposal - the dam footprint floods 77 km² (a similar area to that of Sydney Harbour) of fertile, irrigated farmland, which is a far more important resource for future generations than fresh water alone. If constructed, at stage one it will have an average depth of only approximately 6m, and at stage two an average depth of about 8m. Much of the dam would be less than 2m deep, prone to weed infestations, increased risk of water-borne disease and a large source of greenhouse gas emissions. Valley residents are clearly struggling to come to terms with an idea that is so fundamentally wrong, and destined to fail as a water source.



Exploratory drilling led to the mysterious deaths of five cows on one property last year. The State Government and QWI hushed up this fact, and it has only just become public knowledge. As yet, no satisfactory explanation for the deaths or reasonable assurances of public safety have been given.



The Mary Valley is often referred to as part of Brisbane's 'salad bowl' and 'milk bottle'. A major agricultural area providing food supplies to a booming region. To inundate this fertile valley would truly be a case of 'biting the hand that feeds'.



Wivenhoe Dam



Atkinson Dam



Bjelke Petersen Dam



Moogerah Dam

The most difficult logic to understand in this flawed proposal is how, when South East Queensland dam are at alarmingly low levels, building another one will make any difference to the 'water crisis'. The government needs to seriously address water issues in ways which are sustainable, practical and environmentally sensible, in both the long and short term.



North Pine Dam



Paradise Dam

"building another dam is the equivalent of a poor man thinking the solution to his financial troubles is to buy more wallets..."



Somerset Dam



And now, in what is possibly the most ridiculous turn of events yet in the saga of Traveston Dam, the region has just been declared 'drought affected'.

Despite this, Deputy Premier and Infrastructure Minister, Anna Bligh, is refusing to back down on the project. "If the dam had been built two to three years ago it would be close to full now" she says.

Her argument just doesn't hold water...

Other photo collections at www.stoppress.com.au



Getting to the bottom of dry dams

The Great SEQ Dam Tour

3 people, 4 days, 7 S.E.Q. dams, 1800 kilometres, 100's of photos, and undeniable evidence of dams not working.



Exploring the real YUK FACTOR

Something In The Water

WARNING: This gallery contains graphic images.



Riding for Mary

The Kandanga 1000 Horse Ride

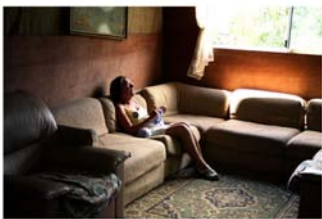
Hundreds of horseriders gathered in the tiny township of Kandanga to voice opposition to the building of Traveston Dam on the Mary River.



When an election promise holds little water...

Trouble in Paradise

According to Team Beattie this dam raises the bar for environmental excellence... according to others it's an embarrassing white elephant & a subsidisation black hole.



The human cost of building dams

Snapshots in the Valley Of The Dammed

77 square kms, over 1000 properties, fertile farmland, viable industry, 2 townships, 3 schools, fragile ecosystems all threatened by the proposed Traveston Dam on the Mary River.



activism in pictures...

