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April 3, 2007
The Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing regarding the proposed dam on the Mary River at Traveston Crossing. I would like to have my thoughts known on this matter and let you know the impact of this announcement on my life. I grew up on the Mary River on a property that my father managed, I chose to live in the valley after my marriage and raise my children here. I have a sign writing and sculpture business. I have created numerous artworks throughout the valley celebrating our heritage and our wildlife.

The best way I can describe the initial impact of the announcement is to quote you the words to a song that I wrote a few days after the announcement of this fiasco.

“The want to build a dam in our valley, block it up, and fill it up, and wreck it for us all
A thousand farms, ten thousand lives all wiped out in one swipe, if they go ahead and build a silly wall”

Eleven months later I still feel the same way. The lies and propaganda from the government promoting this project have contrasted sharply with the information and research done by many professionals in this field and my own knowledge of the valley where I live. Why would anyone want to flood valuable, producing agricultural land and threaten not only the livelihoods of people in the valley but the ecological diversity that characterizes the region?

It is my hope that the Senate inquiry will be able to get the truth about the Queensland government's plans. It is apparent that the dam will not solve the “water crisis” in southeast Queensland and that lots of tax payers money is being wasted on a proposal that will threaten more endangered species than any other infrastructure project in Australia.

I am concerned that the government is hiding the truth about this project and not investigating information that they should be investigating. Growing up in the valley I was aware of numerous cattle dips throughout the area. The chemical used in those days must still be in the soil. Dipping cows in arsenic was a standard way of repelling cattle ticks. If the valley is flooded the residue of these chemicals will be in the dam and infect the water that will be drunk by people in Brisbane. This does not seem

right.

I was also aware growing up that a thriving aboriginal culture once inhabited this valley. I found artifacts including an aboriginal axehead . I remember being taken to a bora ring and told stories of the people who originally inhabited the valley. I live in the Tuchekoi area and know that Mount Tuchekoi is a sacred site. This land will be inundated and the records and artifacts of this part of the Mary's history will be lost forever.

I have spent many hours on the river –I have seen an abundance of creatures that inhabit the river – turtles, platypus, lungfish- I know that they will be wiped out by this proposal. I have also spent lots of time at Fraser Island and on the coast near Inskip Point. The dam will impact all of the communities downstream and threaten the wetlands and creatures who depend upon the ecology of the river mouth for their survival. This is my children's legacy and the legacy of all Australians and it will be a travesty if it is allowed to be destroyed by a foolish political decision.

This is what is at stake- beautiful prime productive agricultural land, farms, businesses, schools, shops, buildings, a cemetery, people, thriving communities, ocean life, rare and endangered species, protected wetlands, World Heritage sites, a living fossil unchanged for over 100 million years, a sacred river that is the life blood of my community and many others.

This senate inquiry is important to the communities of the southeast Queensland, the environment and heritage of Australia and the international community. I am asking each of you in assessing the information from this inquiry to make decisions and take actions that will make your parents, your children and your families be proud of you,

Thank you for undertaking this effort on my behalf and I am confident that the truth will set Mary free.

Sincerely,

Keith Gall

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