

April 4, 2007

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

As a resident of the Mary Valley and a Queenslander, over the last year my knowledge of additional water supplies for south east Queensland has received an extraordinary education. Since the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006 and Premier Beattie's shock announcement of a mega dam at Traveston Crossing, (coincidentally the same day my daughter Sydnee was born) I have responded to the request of my local community of Belli Park and became their representative on the Save the Mary Coordinating Group.

Now nearly twelve months on and having committed countless hours to researching the facts on the Traveston Crossing proposal and its alternatives and also having listened to the 'make-it-up-as-you-go' answers from a secession of Queensland labour politicians (most notably Premier Peter Beattie and Deputy Premier Anna Bligh) I am still unconvinced that any rational person could conclude that this proposal "stacks up" in its ability to provide additional water supplies for South Eastern Queensland or overcome a raft of other social and environmental consequences.

#### **Alternatives**

Basically the government of Queensland has been asleep, successive years of low rainfall have been ignored and knee-jerk solutions using archaic technology are being touted as the current and future solutions to these problems. Dams don't meet the criteria of what one could term safe long-term solutions. My Attachment A will clearly demonstrate this. This is the current dam levels of all dams in South Eastern Queensland from the Burnett River south to the NSW border. None of these impoundments hold any significant amount of water. Most notably the enormous supply capacity of the southeast's major dams Somerset, Wivenhoe and North Pine with their combined capacity sits at a dismal 20.5%. Yet the state government is advocating the construction of two other dams in the southeast and others around the state. These dams would come at an enormous social, environmental and financial cost (some 4 Billion dollars plus blow out) with little or no guarantee of water security. We need immediate solutions now and not wet-dreams into the future.

This dismal situation leaves us no time to debate. Immediate technological solutions are required to avert a potential catastrophe

and secure supplies into the future. No doubt the Federal Government will need to bail out the inept Queensland Labour Government. The immediate and long term solution is to fast-track the construction of a desalination plant on Bribe Island. This can be done within twelve months. Its capacity should be equal to stage one of Traveston crossing (70000 ml) then increased as demand grows to greater than stage two of the Traveston Crossing proposal. This can also be done at negligible social, environmental and financial cost than Traveston as highlighted by the sustainable futures report (Council of Mayors) and also in reports that were made for the Beattie Labour Government but have since been suppressed by tabling them in cabinet.

### Community treatment

Having given my opinion on how additional water supplies can be secured I would now like to turn your attention to how the people of the Mary valley have been treated to date. This reads like some Eastern European communist horror story, one I thought that was impossible in our society. People have been lied to, intimidated deprived of natural justice, coerced into selling and this only where land acquisitions are concerned. This does not even include the gross undervaluing by Queensland Water infrastructure of what in many cases is these good Australians primary asset. Neighbour has been pitted against neighbour by wide unjustifiable differences in valuations and offers to purchase or lease back conditions. In fact 18 properties were purchased that are no longer required. The inept community consultations and misinformation about all aspects of the project are inexcusable. Those who live on the fringes and within the catchment do not even receive any information.

The community futures taskforce headed by Major general Peter Arnison is nothing but a political smokescreen, it is ineffective and a waste of public monies in its current form. It should be a stand alone body with an independent budget to assist the community, and act in real time to community needs and wishes. It should also be able to criticize the failings of the other Government departments to protect the well being of the community. Because of the failings of this mechanism many of the directly affected and surrounding communities' small businesses have failed or have been forced to take the paltry buy out dollars for their home and the even more miserly dollars for their businesses and leave. Community concerns about theft and other criminal activity have not been addressed. Maintenance and other works associated with these properties were also given to businesses outside of the valley despite assurances from Arnison that all work would be offered to valley businesses. People in the Valley do not trust anyone who has anything to do with the Queensland Government and for good reason.

### Environment

Personally I also have great misgivings about the environmental aspects of the project. As we have seen with the Murray-Darling and more recently with the world heritage listed Macquarie Island, State Governments want the Kudos till there is a cost incurred. They then

look for the Commonwealth to bail them out. The environmental credentials of the Beattie Government are appalling, most poignantly with regard to Paradise Dam on the Burnett River. This is Premier Beattie's self declared award winning blueprint of environmental best practice. In reality it is an EPBC sanctioned extermination zone for Threatened Endangered and Protected Species. It is a classic example of where science and conservation are politically contrived. Scientists are intimidated for telling the truth, reports are altered to sanitize the results or hidden by tabling in cabinet thus denying access to what should be publicly available or Freedom of Information requests.

Can we afford to play Russian roulette with such a large number of significant species or habitats (65 species and numerous habitat this from the EPBC QWI referral) including world Heritage areas and RAMSAR wetlands? What are the future costs on top of the Dam costs to rectify the damage? And who will ultimately pay? Most recovery plans to date are poorly funded and have not achieved the recovery envisaged. This especially true for long lived species or slow growing habitats: which typically are most of those in the Mary basin.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion this project does not "stack up" on any level; it is a high risk high cost option that's social, environmental and financial costs are too great to gamble with. I'm sure this evidence will be presented to you in more detailed presentations and documents. Further more the resources being diverted to the Traveston Crossing Dam should in fact be being used to better projects for alternate water supply such as the Desalination plant I outlined above. I'm aware that you have said that the Senate committee cannot stop the Dam. However I believe your charge is to ensure that the full facts are presented and that the Australian public is aware of all of these facts, after all the areas of National concern are a legacy that we must protect for all. I thank you for hearing my concerns and am happy to be called to give evidence and have this letter published.

Sincerely,

David Kreutz

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