

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

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

The purpose of this submission is to provide supplementary information for the Senate Inquiry relating specifically to the yield, capacity, cost and impact of the Traveston Crossing dam proposal.

It is truly shocking that the Queensland State Government submission to the Australian Senate refers to the GHD desktop study “Desktop review of Identified Weir and Dam Sites” (June 2006) as the major technical justification underpinning the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal. The capacity, yield and cost of the dam called the “Mary River Traveston Dam” in this report are vastly different to the current proposal as outlined in the descriptions of the project referred to the Federal Government under the EPBC act and in the draft terms of reference for the EIS for the project. Even more worrying is that the Government has specifically focussed on the most misleading statistic in that report (the design yield of the dam) in recent press releases following the publication of their submission. (As published in the Gympie Times, 7/04/2007)

A comparison of the fundamental statistics used in these reports concerning the yield and cost of dam proposal is shown in table 1 below. These figures can be easily and independently verified in the sources quoted. It is clear that the GHD report was a preliminary desktop study only, based on an extremely limited set of pre-existing published information about the proposed damsite. The information contained in the EPBC referral and the Terms of Reference for the EIS are the most recent published data available from the State Government, based on all the work that has been done on the site since the announcement of the project. These are also the figures freely available in the public information sheets distributed by the proponent.

	Design yield (ML/year)	Capacity at full supply level (ML)	Estimated cost \$million	Unit cost (\$/ML/a)
GHD report ⁽¹⁾	215,340	1,130,000	1011	4,695
Traveston Stage 1 ⁽²⁾	70,000	153,000	1700 ⁽³⁾	24,286
Traveston/Borumba – full development ⁽²⁾	150,000	570,000(Trav.)	2750 ⁽³⁾	18,333

Source:

1. *GHD report “Desktop review of Identified Weir and Dam Sites”* Table 4.2, p685
2. *Traveston Crossing Dam Project - Draft terms of reference for EIS.* p1.
3. *Water for SE Qld – A long term solution.* section 6.2.5 p64.

It should be noted that the costs used in these reports explicitly exclude the costs of treating and pumping the water to its unspecified destination.

Using the more accurate current information in the same economic comparison which the Queensland government states it considered in choosing the Traveston Crossing site, the Traveston site ranks absolutely last, by an overwhelming margin. This is regardless of whether one considers stage 1 alone (as referred to the Federal Government), or with the largest possible development of the Borumba/Traveston combined system (as being planned for, but not being referred to the Federal Government under the EPBC act)

The GHD report also directly supports the following statements concerning the evaluation of the Traveston Crossing site in that study. (page numbers indicated)

- The yields were estimated without any consideration of environmental flows. (p628)
- The yield used in the economic analysis was based on extrapolation beyond available data (p635)
- The costings were conducted without reference to the Cooloola Shire Plan, under a terms of reference which prohibited consultation with local authorities. (p632)
- The geological information about the damsite was based solely on previous published studies dating back to 1976, the on-ground component of which consisted of 3 boreholes drilled during a preliminary study. (p629)
- The yield estimates were clearly being calculated and assessed during the preparation of the Mary Basin Water Resource Plan (November 2005), during the public consultation phase (p628) (The Community Reference Panel appointed to the Water Resource Plan was not consulted in any way with respect to the proposal)
- Even though the GHD report clearly acknowledged the WRP legislation was likely to limit the size of the total strategic reserve in the Mary Basin to 150,000ML/a, the summary comparison of options used by the government ignored this and used the misleading data presented in table 4.2. (p633)
- The yield estimates used in the study were based on modelled river flows from 1890 to 1999. As pointed out in our submission, actual measured mean annual flow in the river at the damsite over the last 10 years has been only 53% of the mean annual flow for the 1890-1999 simulation period, and is less than half the inflow figure stated in the opening paragraph of the GHD report (p626). Because the project is being promoted as a drought strategy in response to climate change, this point is highly relevant in evaluating the benefits relative to the certain environmental and social costs of the project

Based on the information above, for the State Government to continue to present the GHD report as evidence of a legitimate water planning process is either profoundly incompetent, or profoundly misleading. In terms of the interests of the Federal Government, this planning procedure is in breach of the intent of the National Water Initiative, and has significant implications as to how the project is assessed under the Federal EPBC Act.

I trust that all the issues which I have raised plus those raised by the Save the Mary Coordinating Group are considered by the Senate Inquiry. I request to be considered a representative for the Save the Mary River Group on matters relating to the GHD report and hydrological modelling, should the Senate inquiry Committee require more details. Finally, if any part of this submission is unclear, or if you require further information please contact the undersigned.

Yours Sincerely,

Steve Burgess

On behalf of the Research Section of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Inc.

