

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

The purpose of this letter is to provide information for the Senate Inquiry.

For the purpose of this inquiry, I would like to relate how the dam has affected me, my family and my community.

We moved to the Mary Valley in 1994 to raise our family in a clean, healthy environment and to become small-scale farmers. In a short time, we were welcomed into many facets of the wider Mary Valley community, and soon all felt at home – our children happy in their small school and pre-school and already forging friendships in the soccer club, my husband and I quickly initiated into the Rural Fire Brigade and signed on at the local produce co-op. So many people offered to help us adapt to our chosen rural lifestyle and made sure that we were coping with providing our own basic services (water, waste disposal).

We learnt so much in those early years, from people who had been in this area for a long time. A major feature of the Mary Valley is its stable population – families live where their parents/grandparents/great grandparents lived. If not on the same property, then at least in the same area. There are small pockets of ‘transients’ (those who stay for only a few years, and mainly clustered in just a couple of townships) but, by and large, when you move to the Mary Valley, you intend to stay forever.

Such a stable population then also builds its own support network. In the Mary Valley, this is clearly evidenced at present by the support everyone is unselfishly giving to everyone else as we try to cope with this dreadful destruction of our lives and our communities.

I am a farmer, but I only grow a small amount of varied crops, destined for the tables of nearby families. I am one of a group of farmers who do this – we chose to provide good quality, cleanly-grown food to our local communities. This is sustainable agriculture at its grassroots level – our customers are our neighbours, we are nurturing each other.

The dam proposal has almost completely destroyed this support network. In the initial shock phase, people didn’t look after themselves – they didn’t go out, they didn’t take part in their usual activities, they didn’t go to community functions, they didn’t work, they didn’t eat. This is still happening, but now the shock is being replaced with despair. The support networks are collapsing. Our communities are losing their ability to sustain their people, their work and their lifestyles. It is sickening to watch this happen.

Our farm is not in the dam footprint, but we live in the Mary Valley and we are part of its community. Like the other growers and our customers, we have come to an uncertain standstill as present.

The biggest thing, I believe, that has come out of this action is our loss of faith and trust in the present Queensland State Government. How can we place any credence in the actions of a Government that is prepared to sacrifice us for what can only be political gain, having seen many good, viable, sustainable alternatives from sources who really know what they are talking about.

Thank you for considering my submission.

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