

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

Submission to the Inquiry into

**Additional Water Supplies for South
East Queensland - Traveston Crossing
Dam**

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Hon Committee Members

While I don't have the time or resources (and perhaps ability) for present a fully researched and referenced document I am presenting what I feel are some very important issues which have been largely un-investigated and hopefully some or all of these could be dealt with by your inquiry.

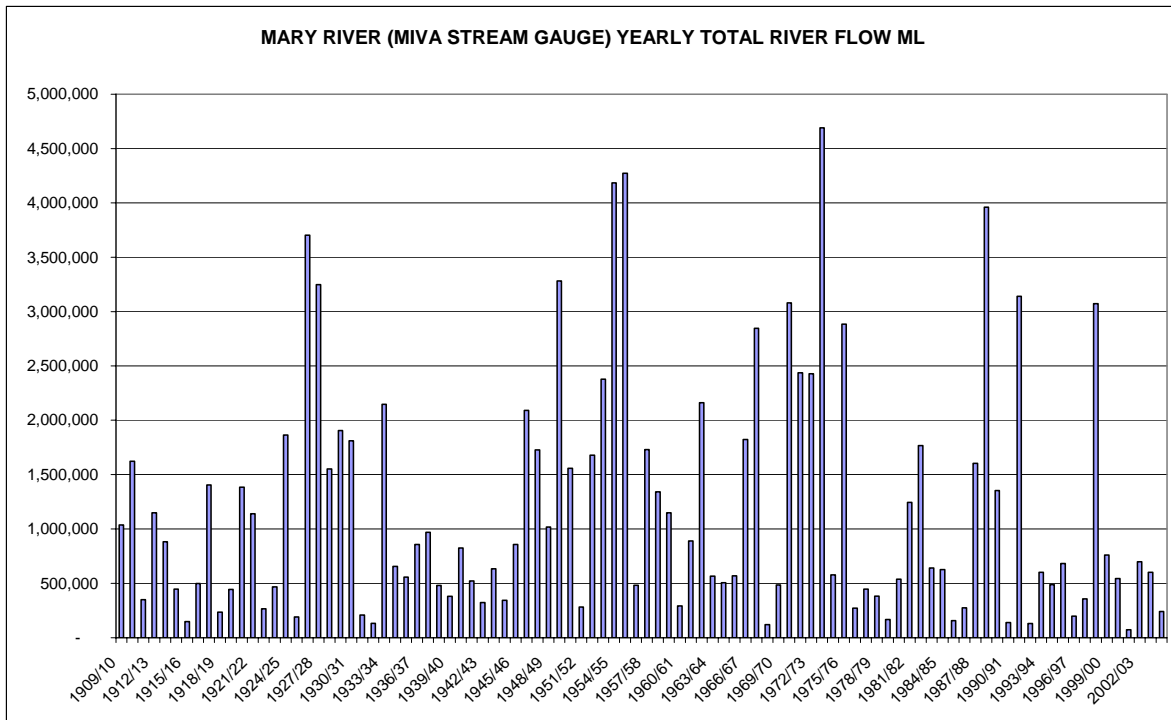
What information have we received?

Virtually nothing!!.

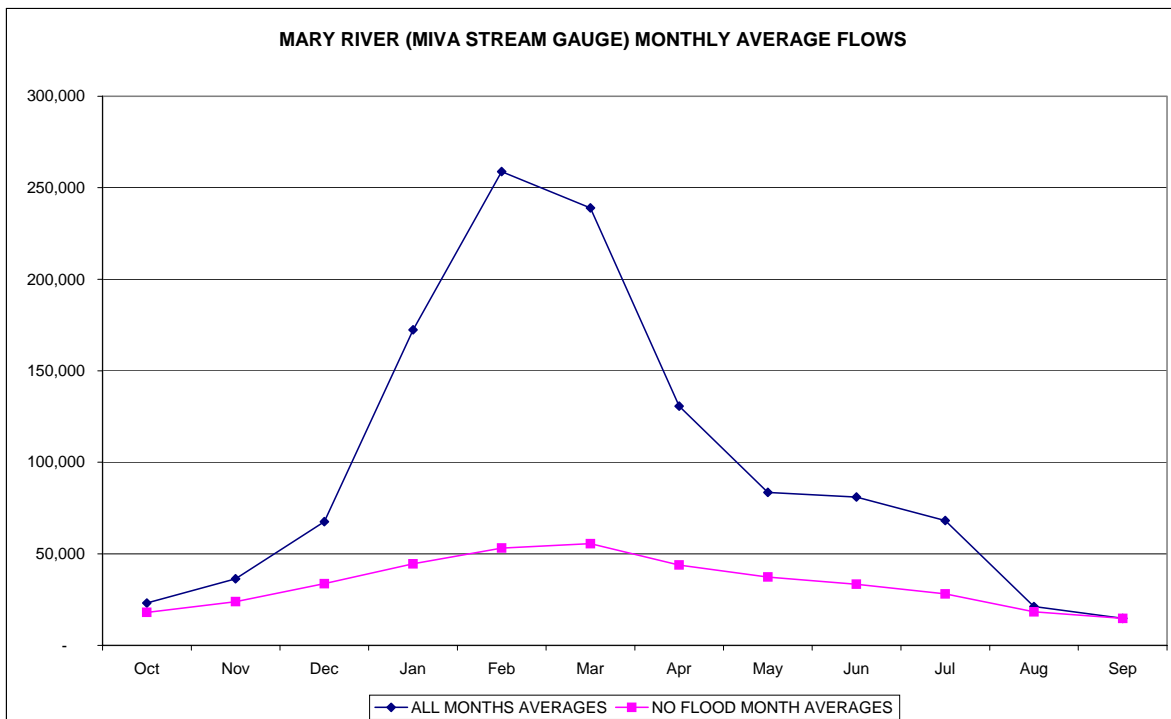
How can such a large project be a "done deal" without any sort of environmental impact statement being completed? It seems that Premier Beattie thinks that an EIS is just a necessary nuisance that you have to tend to sometime before the final opening ceremony. Whereas most reasonable people would see it as part of the preliminary project evaluation process – at the stage of "do we go ahead with it or not"

Water levels

1. The State Government fudging the figures
 - a. The state government has claimed that the dam will only take a small percentage of the flow of the Mary River. (varying percentages have been claimed).
2. What will really happen - The claims above are perhaps true strictly as stated but the reality is that;
 - a. Most of the total flow occurs in flood events so the so called "small percentages taken out each year amount to massive percentages in non major flood years. The chart below shows the large variation in annual flow. (These charts have been produced by analysis of the data from the Miva stream gauge, 1909-2003, in MS Excel spreadsheet.)



Another way of demonstrating this is by comparing the monthly average flows for flood and non flood months. It can be seen that in many flood months the dam would fill twice over so little can be left for the drier times.



3. Dam will take the flows originating in the higher rainfall areas
 - a. Anyone who drives the Bruce highway will probably notice a change in the vegetation somewhere near where the dam wall will be, it becomes gradually greener and more lush, because the rainfall is higher in the sunshine coast area(somewhere around 500mm).
 - b. This means that the above charts will be more affected by the dam because it is taking out the more regular small flows that come from the higher rainfall areas.

Bank Stability

Our experience

1. Any permanent raising of the water level in a stream results in loss of the basic riparian vegetation strata – certain vegetation at the waters edge and so on up the bank. This well documented strata loses its effect when water levels are raised as the higher strata do not cope with now being at the waters edge. How long does it take for this strata to re-establish if ever???
2. Our riparian zone has been assessed as one of the best areas of native vegetation in the Tiaro area and we have fenced the river bank to exclude stock yet our banks are continually subject to undermining, slumping and erosion. The artificially created water level is attacking an area not suited to withstand this onslaught
 - a. The vegetation near the waters edge even after ten plus years still is dominated by the higher strata species not those suited to the waters edge.
 - b. The soil is not of a type found on a stable bank at the waters edge

Primary industry and Lifestyle blocks in the inundated area

1. The state government is again guilty of manipulating the figures when they quote small percentages of farms lost, who knows what they are using as a total (or 100%)
 - a. The area to be covered by the dam has been predominantly a rich farming area since first settlement and too lose such a lot of such valuable country for a relatively small unstable amount of water is a strike at the heart of rural QLD.
2. Some of the farming land has been taken by the natural development process to provide lifestyle blocks for the increasing population.
 - a. The inundation area is part of a “lifestyle dormitory” area for the densely populated coastal and urban areas. Why would it not be popular being so close to the beaches of the sunshine coast and the facilities of Brisbane
 - b. A large portion of this will be lost and I suggest it cannot be replaced.

Lack of amenity in dam surrounds

1. Shallow water edges will occur around a large part of the dams circumference resulting in
 - a. Smelly useless water on edge
 - b. Bare and maybe dusty large areas as water recedes and stays low

Sugar industry

1. The Sugar Mill has indicated that it needs to process approximately 1,000,000 tonnes of cane per annum. The Mill has not yet met it's target despite the reliability of the irrigation from the Mary River (cane growers almost always have access to 100% of their allocation from the Mary River). Severely reduced access to irrigation water and the corresponding decline in productivity of the industry would place the continued operation of the Mill at risk. The whole sugar industry would be lost to Maryborough!
 - c.
 - d. Maryborough Sugar announced an interest in merging with Mulgrave Cental Mill Company in far north QLD. This merger could potentially increase the likelihood of closure as the business and shareholders would have another area to retreat to.

Tourist industry

1. What effect will lower flows have on
 - a. Silting of great Sandy Strait and Mary River
 - b. The whales in Hervey Bay
 - c. Boating and recreational fishing in Hervey Bay

Little or no research appears to have been done and no indication of any serious attempt to research these.

Fishing Industry

1. Fishermen frequently say “drought on land drought at sea” because the flows in the fresh streams are an integral part of maintaining the flow of fish and prawns to the saltwater fishery.
 - a. Massively reduced flows in most years must equivocate “drought” and have a disastrous effect on the fishing industry
 - b. Long term siltation and other ecological changes of the Mary River and Great Sandy Strait will have what effects??

Little or no research appears to have been done and no indication of any serious attempt to research these.

Ecology of great sandy straits

What effect will the Dam have on things such as

1. The seagrass beds which support the dugong
2. the internationally recognised Ramsar Wetland areas
3. the Breeding cycle of prawns and fish in the river and mangrove areas

Endangered/at risk species

1. We would support the many submissions you will doubtless receive on this issue as we are most concerned about the survival of the Lungfish, the Mary River Turtle and the Mary River Cod
2. We have lived on the Mary River Barrage for nearly four years now and in all the time we have spent on and in the river we have not been fortunate enough to see or hear a lungfish surface (they have to surface at regular intervals) so they cannot be very common in this impoundment

Have all the alternatives been looked at?

1. Combination of lowering consumption, tanks and recycling etc
2. Artesian and sub-artesian underground water
3. Encourage decentralisation
 - a. Most of these problems are caused by migrants from southern Australia.
 - b. Government incentives could encourage large numbers of these to settle in other areas other than SE QLD
 - i. Regional areas provide cheaper land and good lifestyle
 - ii. Populating areas north of SE QLD would aid in the decentralisation of QLD and result in economic development in areas affected by drought and rural recession
 - iii. Many migrants are retirees or semi retired so have less demand for jobs more for lifestyle.

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