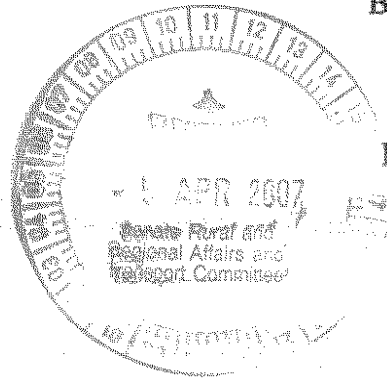


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Dear Senators,

Thank you for reading my words.

- A dam is only a bucket in the Earth. I watch the news on TV; many of these buckets are becoming empty. Dams use 'old' technology that has now been proven to have massive faults because of Global Warming.
- Global warming has changed where rain falls. Rain misses the old catchments' area. In the future, can we afford to keep building more new dams when old ones no longer catch water?
- When a farmer's dam is low or dry, they enlarge it. Have any bulldozers been working in the dams that we currently have?
- There are *no* benefits to building the Traveston Dam. There are intelligent alternatives that use modern technology.
- Australia is usually at the forefront of new technology. To many of our new inventions and technology go overseas for production because of a lack of foresight and funding. We then buy back and use that technology. We need to stay ahead of other countries to sell our new technology and not use 'old' technology.

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Recycling water is the mature way to resolve our current water shortage.

Recycling Water:

1. The same amount is reused indefinitely.
2. We are not at the whim of Mother Nature.
3. Quality control regulations apply.
4. Excess water and our superior technology could be exported.
5. Other nations have accepted and use it. We can learn from them.
6. Individual water users buy their *own* systems, opposed to Government paying for infrastructure.

Downsides:

1. Current population perceptions of drinking sewerage.
2. Corruption or ineptitude in Government or Privatised controlled recycling facilities by management and staff.
3. Government or Private Enterprise accepting the lowest Tender to build recycling plants; resulting in long term maintenance problems due to the use of cheap construction materials.
4. Water is our birth right and if recycling it came under the control of Government it would be expensive because Aussies rip the Government off. Privatised, it would become even more of a commodity. The rich and or, the unscrupulous would benefit, the poor would not. This has happened overseas.

Recycling Water: User Pays.

In a modern, technologically advanced society recycling water is the only option. User pays opposed to federal and state Government expenditure would be a better option.

The user pays system would make people who use water get their 'own' recycling systems.

Dams are old technology. Our current dams are not meeting our needs because they are - and you can not dispute this fact - low.

Scientific evidence shows that Australia will become drier. Less water will go into tanks and dams no matter how many we build.

If the federal and state Governments spent the money that *is* budgeted to be used on the Traveston, (and any other) dam/dams, and bought individual water recycling systems for water uses and sold it to users on an interest free program, (over whatever timeline would make it affordable), the Government and the councils would:

- recoup the money
- people would be responsible for their own water
- Government would not have the maintenance costs of huge recycling plants.

The Queensland system of the Ambulance Levy on electricity bills could be copied. It would be one way used by individual households and businesses to pay for those who can't afford their own system.

Currently on the market are systems that people can buy and install. The more that are bought, the cheaper the systems will become.

Government could buy them in bulk and save money.

- This would remove the huge cost to the Government of building dams.

On the news, (Friday 9.3.07) the Brisbane council said that water rates will rise by 150% due to the lack of Government planning and spending on infrastructure. The Chamber of Commerce said that this price increase will affect all businesses.

Level 5 and 6 water restrictions have dates set to be introduced. One Minister said on the new report that, 'That will be the end of gardens, they will just have to die'. People spend a fortune on their gardens. Jobs will be lost. Those who manufacture or sell anything to do with gardening will have unemployment looming when customers don't buy their products.

On level 5 restriction, one person may use 140 litres a day. Level 6 restrictions haven't mentioned the amount.

If water users had their own recycling systems and or use Grey Water effectively a lot of their 140 litres would be reused.

Our increasing population means that when it rains and the current shortage is over, it will reappear in the future, simply because more people equals - more water needs.

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I work in the tourist industry. Tourists are appalled that the water used to flush our toilets is of a drinkable quality.

One British lad told me that the shower water in his suburb is not suitable for drinking but is regulated to be fit for showering and washing clothes. Their showers run separate water pipes from drinking water.

Tourists already drink recycled water at home. They can't see why Aussies kick up such a fuss.

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The Toowoomba council's referendum on recycled water shows that Councils and Government should not let the uninformed and uneducated masses decide major decisions when the scientists and those specialists in their fields 'know' what they are talking about.

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Personally, if the thought of drinking recycling water offends the masses so much - let the recycled water be used in Industry and in non-drinking pipes in the home.

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Other Option:

Fresh water from Fraser Island.

Fraser Island filters salt water and pumps into the sea massive amounts of fresh water every day and will keep doing so.

A pipeline could pump this water anywhere it is needed.

Water is pumped from dams in pipes. A pipeline with pumps and using Fraser's fresh water means that you would not have the expense of building the dam.

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Water Tanks. Why They Are Not a Solution:

In school I learnt that Australia consists of mostly desert. I also learnt; rain falls from the sky. It goes into creeks, then to rivers and finally into the sea where it evaporates to forms clouds and then rain falls. If we catch rain in tanks, (and dams) this natural cycle is altered.

Here in our Cooloola Shire, new buildings are regulated to use water tanks for toilets, laundry etc. A Government rebate of \$1,000 is available, which costs the Federal Government money. The tanks are topped with the council's town water, (go figure???) and, the delay in waiting for them to be delivered is three months.

I did hear talk that cities could harvest the water from sky scrapers in tanks.

Tanks do not recycle water that has already been used by the household - business/industry. They need filling.

Tanks are dependant on Mother Nature. Currently people on tank water are buying water and having it shipped to their properties. This causes large water trucks onto our roads and they emit pollution that has been proven to contribute to Global Warming.

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History:

The word Senate reminds me of the Roman Empire. The Romans built amazing water infrastructure, which can still be seen and some is still used today.

I have read that the Mayan empire fell due to a drought and then conflict over shrinking resources.

Both empires have left only ruins to show their existence. We could learn a lot from history.

I have also read that the recent troubles in Darfur started when the land of Arab farmers was slowly swallowed by creeping sand dunes. The Arabs, they moved onto the land of other people. Conflict over resources.

I'm sure that you are old enough to remember the scene on the news of Ethiopia's starving children. Drought and conflict.

Australians think that none of this can happen to us. We are invincible. The lucky country. It can and will happen to us, perhaps not in this generation but for me, it is not 'if' it will happen but when, unless we do something now. This drought is *natural* part of Australia's weather patterns and, it will be repeated.

Past and current Australian Government responds 'after' calamities, I.E:

New Orleans:

Government spending on our Armed Forces was low. Then we get conflict and suddenly the Government purse opens.

Our medical system was (and still is) near collapse and only then something is done.

Education was under funded for far too long.

Congestion on our roads is let get to dangerous and fatal levels before work is done on infrastructure. The best way to have your dangerous road fixed is for young people to die in an accident and then after that, the Government purse strings open and they fix only that *particular* road.

Global Warming is upon us and still public transport is woeful - while billions are spent on roads to cope with the *more* cars to be used in the future.

Dams are planned when they fail now.

Here are some sad and stupid reasons why the dam *will* go ahead:

It is foregone conclusions that no matter what you, the Senate, do or say, the dam will be built at Traveston because your suggestions can be ignored.

If the research is bad, it can be hidden. You can see this is true. I can't access the information from the studies done in the past to bring water from rivers in the North to join the Murray River, can you? (Note: Water is not running down the Murrey, we altered it and now it is dying). Plus, how much did those old studies cost tax payers?

The Traveston Dam 'will' be built because of our Premier's knee jerk reaction to appease the masses. It will *embarrass* him if it is seen to be flawed solution.

The reports on the *poor* water holding abilities of the water in the area are being *ignored*. I heard Anna Bligh say on the news,

'Um, we'll just pour in more concrete to stop that'.

That costs money. It also shows that no matter what is shown to be a fault it will have a bandaid put on it.

The fact that money has already been spent buying properties:

Did you see the front page headlines in the newspapers about that? One place sold for \$700,000 and lo and behold another one sold for \$1.7 million dollars.

Oh, I see, one was just an Aussie Battler and the other one had a good job.

By golly the media can be stickybeaks can't they?

Building a dam is an old technology that is known. The unknown, like new technology, water recycling, is scary, people don't like change and will stick with what they know, dams, even when they do not work.

A small amount of dam construction people will benefit financially in the short term. They must be rubbing their hands together with glee.

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Yes, we can make individuals become more water wise however; we humans have a habit of breeding. We also bring new people to our land. It is a fact that currently our population keeps increasing. Plus, we develop new technology to manufacture new things and these use water.

Our Government needs to open its wallet and spend money on water infrastructure to protect Australians from a nasty future.

Forget about letting it be privatised.

Private enterprise was given a go to supply water in America. It failed. Prices skyrocketed. The government bought it all back and lost so much money, tax payer's money.

Who will construct the chosen infrastructure?

An elephant is a mouse built to Government specifications. Anyone who builds anything for the Government will financially screw the Government blind. No matter what site and or method is eventually chosen, those who build it will run over budget and get away with it. It is the Aussie way. Tax payers pay - eventually.

Those who use water - should pay for their own systems.

Here in Australia we live are living in La-La land. By the skin of our teeth we have survived without new water infrastructure because it rained, and our water needs were met. Our current problems can be seen in our history.

Australia is mostly desert:

Early settlers, who started huge farms out West arrived in the 'Good' weather years. This gave a false impression of their area's true weather patterns.

I have grown up watching stories on the news about farmer's shooting their sheep and cattle during drought. Then it rains, there are 'good' years and then, sadly, back to drought.

Drought is a natural part of Australia and needs to be prepared for.

Politics:

- Past and current Australian political parties were and are, too busy worrying about; winning the next election.
- Waiting for the latest scandal to die down.
- Focusing on the latest natural disaster here or overseas and Pig Barrelling to the masses with the budget surplus.

All of those things are done and more, when political parties *should* have been focussing their minds, and surplus money on the future of the nation and it's needs.

However, all of these things were and are useful to keep the public's mind off the lack of forethought that these past politicians showed. Malcolm Fraser said that he loved it when celebrities were the focus of the media because it kept the masses from looking at the Government.

We can still see it happening today - Opposing Parties scream - Kevin Rudd had dinner with a naughty Premier. The scientist say - 'The country is running out of water'. The media squeals, Daryl Hinch was a drunk. 'Our country is running out of water'. And what happens in the meantime? You can pray for rain and hope all of this goes away and the next Government Party can fix this mess or - have another costly committee meeting.

This senate committee could change our future for the better.

Unfortunately it is a human habit to form a committee when the mess hits the fan. Then, to research the problem to infinity and not actually 'do' anything. All the while hoping that the problem will go away.

I think that this committee is full of people with good intentions. That is a lie. The cynic in me sees that there is a huge possibility of personal and Party hidden agendas. Promises that 'I'll do this if you do that'.

I fret that even though you will actually work hard and, that the best outcome will be suggested in your report - that it will be ignored. IE: When John Howard went to see Barnaby Joyce about the sale of Telstra. This may happen again so that the Senator who isn't towing the Party line or whatever, will roll over for a few crumbs.

Your recommendations may be perfect, and then as they go down the line, people will try and make as much money as they can. Then the end result is far different to what you all suggested.

I think that this committee is actually just an expensive waste of time - it makes it look as if something 'is' being done when really the Traveston Dam will definitely be built no matter what the Senate recommends or what the research says.

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Summary on the above:

History shows that humans are stupid.

The Senate's good intentions will be outweighed by political games and constructors' greed.

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Waffle:

The area that the proposed (I love that word) dam will submerge is truly beautiful.

That this site was chosen seems to me as if two people on drugs drove around and said,

Bill:

'Let me see, where is a paradise that we can ruin?'

Harry:

"Hmm, you know what Bill, farmers are an annoying lot and we can import all that we need, so we don't need farmers or rural land".

Bill:

"And tourists with their full wallets, phew, they are probably terrorists, lets get rid of them".

Harry:

"Hey, I forgot, we need to submerge a lot of expensive highway. A couple of kilometres of bitumen costs millions - and then we can build what we already had - and make jobs".

Bill:

"We'll be heroes!"

Harry:

"And, and, when the next big drought comes and the dam is really, really low, I get to watch TV and see exposed all that was destroyed when it was all submerged. Hurrah! "

While this Senate Committee gets to work, true water guzzlers, like Industry are making token efforts about getting more water wise. Their lobby groups have big dollars, and they can squeal loudly behind closed doors in Parliament. They can shout louder than you, Senators, whereas the ordinary person can't.

The ordinary person is where there have been seen to be other solutions to the water shortage. Bring in water restrictions council's shouted, and throw the 'fault' of the problem back onto the masses. Charge them more! Let them eat cake! Whoops, I am getting carried away. Where was I?

We can make a better future for Australia. It can be done. Going by our history, I doubt it. Oh, I give up. Going by Australia's past history, you lot will:

- Be ignored.
- Others will make stupid mistakes that will impact those who are not even born yet.
- Massive debts will run Government budgets overboard.
- To keep their seat at the next election politicians will Namby-Pamby to their electorate.
- They will retire with huge Super payouts and then one day - die. Leaving the problems that they will cause to someone else to sort out.

- Nothing will have changed.
- Current and future ratepayers will wear the brute of all of this.
- The poor, they, like gardens, will die of thirst.

It could all be so different.

Recycled water - recycles what has already been used.

Bronwyn McDonald.