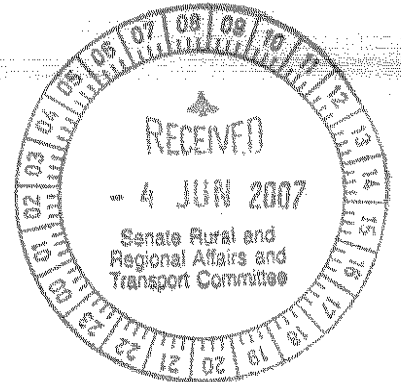


To the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport.
Parliament House
Canberra

Enquire into Water Supplies for SE Queensland—Traveston Crossing Dam

Delree Philp
RMB 275
Lower Kangaroo Greek Road
Via Grafton
2460
Wednesday, May 30, 2007



Dear Sir/madam,

I am writing in opposition to the proposal to the diversions of the Clarence River, all its tributaries and any water harvesting from this catchment other than what is already allocated to the Coff's Harbour region.

I also am concerned that there was no public notice was given in the Clarence valley about this Senate inquire in the local newspaper; The Daily Examiner, with 146 years of reporting to the Clarence population was not informed nor were any of your advertisements placed in this paper.

This was either to my mind a serious oversight which shows little knowledge of the Clarence valley or a cynical political maneuver to silence opposition.

My family is one of the first settlers in this area and have owned and run properties from the upper reaches of the Clarence to oyster farms at the mouth of the Clarence. Many still, including myself are involved in primary industry in this area.

It is astounding that the only photographs that are shown on the national media are usually shots of the Clarence River is from either Grafton or lower in the river. They all show a wide healthy river but none of them point out that this water is in a basin and the fact that it contains salt.

The Clarence River is tidal up to the first rapids at Copmanhurst, the longer there is no flush in the river the higher the salt concentrations.

As the salt increases the fishing industry experiences low catches as well as the recreational fishers. Both are important to the economic survival of this area.

Not only does the salt increase but so does the pollution level rise. The Healthy River Commission identified that over 70% of this pollution was due to sewerage treatment plants that discharge into the river.

The council has been working to address this problem but it still depends on the increased river flow after rain to keep the river healthy and productive.

During times of drought the salt water filters into the aquifers which underlay the farmland in the Clarence basin. The longer the drought the further this salt water incursion travels and the salt concentrations increase this has the potential to drastically reduce the productivity of the lower Clarence cane lands.

The cane industry is one of the mainstays of the economy within the Clarence.

When the Clarence does flood after a dry period acid sulfate is released into the river, the antidotal evidence is that the longer between such events the greater the release of acid sulfate.

This has an effect on the fishing industry with fish developing open sores on their bodies and gill damage. There have been numerous reports of fish kills after such events.

The upper reaches of the Clarence contains many endangered fauna and flora, these would be at greater risk if their habitat were changed.

The amount of water that is proposed to extract is unrealistic, there is not the water in the system in times of drought. To have some idea of the flow of fresh water in the Clarence River the easiest site to get to is the Lillydale Bridge; here you will see the total fresh water flow since it is below where all the main tributaries have joined the Clarence. It shows a vastly different picture than what are being shown in the media.

On the farm that I live on at the moment we have experienced the effects of water extraction from the Orara River for the Coramba dam to supply the Coffs Harbour area. The water level in the Kangaroo River at our property dropped by 1 meter, the platypus colony on the property vanished. Fish stocks dropped, you can no longer catch perch and cat fish breeding pools have silted up to such extent that there is no longer any left in this section of the river.

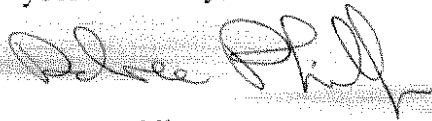
On the land the wet lands that had previously never been dry over a period dried up, taking with them a unique ecosystem and bird breeding area.

This also affected the viability of this farm, since we could not rely on these wet lands to sustain breeding stock during drought events. We no longer have the buffer that we had. The result of this meant that we have had to revise our management plan, breeding stock had to be reduced. Stock has to be moved off the farm or sold early if the weather projections are adverse.

This leads me to my last point, just as we had to change how we lived on the farm to reflect the changing conditions I do not see the same being applied to the current drought condition either on the southern Queensland or the Murray Darling rivers. Why destroy one river catchments just to prolong the changes needed in other areas for a few years?

I for one will be protesting and standing in front of bulldozers if this opportunist ill conceived water grap goes ahead.

yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Delree Philp". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Delree Philp