

MURWILLUMBAH RATEPAYERS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION INC.

06 June 2007

The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MHR
Parliament House,
Canberra, ACT

Dear Sir,

We, the members of the Murwillumbah Ratepayers and Residents Association wish to bring to your attention the depth of outrage and upset that has been provoked by the proposal to consider Rocky Cutting in the Tweed Valley as a proposed dam site

We beg you to look at the issue from our perspective. Bearing in mind that our small valley is experiencing its own population boom and that the Tweed is a relatively short river and almost 50% of its length is tidal and therefore brackish. It is particularly disturbing that water from this dam would be piped to the Gold Coast and Southern Queensland.

However our objections are not those of one community opposed to helping out another which is in the grip of a devastating drought. Rather they are based on the following factors-viz;

- Northern NSW and South East Queensland have similar climates and rainfall patterns
- In the weather forecasts on National Television the two areas are often lumped together.-in particular the Gold Coast and Tweed Coast
- So we have similar weather and similar rainfall and yet one area has an acute water shortage and the other has adequate water storage for future expansion
- Over recent decades South East Queensland has encouraged massive development and expansion but failed to plan or implement adequate infrastructure, in particular water supply and conservation
- Southern Queensland has ignored the issue of environmental protection of coastal and hinterland bushland, particularly in protecting catchments for future water harvesting.
- Successive Gold Coast Councils and Queensland State Governments are to blame for the situation which has now reached crisis point for them.
- This push for Tweed water is promoted by Queensland politicians and developers who have caused their critical situation in the first place. Why should we subsidise their greed, irresponsibility and stupidity?
- The Tweed Shire has avoided these extreme concentrations of population by banning high-rise living in the Shire with the exception of the Tweed Heads CBD.
- Damming Rocky Cutting will have severe social, environmental and economic costs to the residents of a Shire that has handled its water supply in a responsible manner.

- The dam is not a practical solution as it would be very slow to come online unless, of course you intend to bypass the assessment process normally required before such a project could begin
- If it is perceived that you intend to deviate from the normal assessment process and disregard public opinion, all talk of building the dam will cause an enormous political backlash in every North Coast electorate-something you cannot afford-three North Coast marginal seats
- In a recent letter to the Tweed Mail a disgruntled Gold Coast resident pointed out that even now Gold Coast Council is approving more high rises and shopping malls. This correspondent is threatening not to adhere to the new level 6 water restrictions if this farcical situation continues.
- The Gold Coast needs a solution that could come online almost immediately and effect a change within a very short time. The answer is water tanks for every household and compulsory reservoirs for high-rises. Even if the Commonwealth paid for, or at least heavily discounted the cost of supply and installation of a suitable tank to every household in Southern Queensland it would be cheaper than a dam and would become effective with the first summer rain.
- Another better way to assist southern Queensland is to provide assistance to the Gold Coast to further their investigations into overcoming the difficulties of converting urban runoff into a useable water source. We have discussed this with one of their staff. They have explored the possibilities, but at this stage have put it into the “too hard” basket. We enclose their brochure.

We hope that you have found this local perspective useful and we look forward to your reply.

Louise O'Shea (Chairperson)

Diana Eriksen (Secretary)

Inc. GCC Storm Water Harvesting

CC The Hon... Phil Koperberg MP
The Hon. Justine Elliot MP
The Hon. Thomas George MP
Colleen Davis Tweed Sun.