

Submission to The Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport.

Subject

Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland and the Rocky Cutting Dam/ Oxley River Option.

The Oxley River Dam proposal identified and studied in the recent SMEC Report into viable water supply options for South East Queensland must remain a shelved desk-top exercise. The proposal if adopted would have such a severe negative impact on a region of NSW renown for its spectacular scenic amenity, areas of cultural significance and a richness of biodiversity unequalled in the entire country.

The absence of consultation together with the limited timeframe and environmental considerations would indicate a costly and worthless Report. Upon examination the data regarding guaranteed inflows into a dam situated on the Oxley appears to be flawed with the dam never able to recharge sufficiently to deliver the assumed yield.

The Tweed Shire Council has spent a large amount of time and money over the past few years on raising and upgrading the Bray Park Weir and associated water treatment and pumping works.

It stands to reason that if a need was established for water to be pumped from the Tweed that the Bray Park Weir would be the obvious extraction point with the full flow of the Oxley and South Arm rivers converging upriver from the weir.

This action would dismiss the need for construction of any further dams but water could only be released when the Tweed River has sufficient environmental flows.

As my role in a nature conservation agency requires me to supervise and monitor Recovery Plans and other activities in rare and threatened ecological communities, the SMEC Report has failed to recognise the significance these isolated remnants.

The construction of a dam at Rocky Cutting would mean the inundation of significant stands of Subtropical Lowland Rainforest containing numerous rare and threatened species. The resultant diminished flows downstream would also have an extremely detrimental effect on communities found there.

I would urge the Federal Government to rethink this proposal and conduct studies that are allowed sufficient timeframes and consultation to identify the many detrimental impacts of proposals of this nature.

Yours sincerely,

Steve Foreman and Angela Keenan.