

From: Judith Melville [aros@dodo.com.au]

Sent: Wednesday, 30 May 2007 3:41 AM

To: RRAT, Committee (SEN)

Cc: judith.melville@gmail.com

Subject: Submission: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland - Traveston Crossing Dam

The Secretary

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

Parliament House

Canberra ACT

30 May 2007

SUBMISSION: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland -Traveston Crossing Dam, incorporating consideration of proposals to divert water from Northern New South Wales

The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee failed to advertise its current Inquiry in any of the three (3) local newspapers located within the Clarence Valley; *The Daily Examiner*, established 1859, *The Clarence Valley Review* and *Coastal Views*.

This failure to inform Clarence Valley communities potentially affected by certain water diversion proposals has meant that residents did not generally become aware of the existence of the Inquiry until it was reported in *The Daily Examiner* on Tuesday, 29 May 2007 [*The Daily Examiner*, Grafton NSW, "Senate Inquiry Shuns Valley", 29.05.07, p.1].

Because any submission would need to be lodged with the committee within an identified deadline period to ensure that it would be considered before the preparation of a report, there is insufficient time in which to create a conventional and comprehensive submission.

Therefore, the text of this submission includes copies of seven (7) e-mails sent to various Ministers, Shadow Ministers and Members of Parliament, at both Federal and State level.

These e-mails demonstrate that, as a Clarence Valley resident, I have been actively pursuing a resolution of proposals to divert Clarence catchment area water and firmly oppose such proposals with good reason.

The following e-mails are not an exhaustive list of my concerns and, are only representative of the many approaches I have made with regard to diversion proposals:

1.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <malcolm.turnbull.mp@aph.gov.au>

Cc: "Mayor, Clarence Valley Council" <Mayor@clarence.nsw.gov.au>; "Hon. Morris iemma" <ThePremier@www.nsw.gov.au>; <lan.Causley.MP@aph.gov.au>; <Luke.Hartsuyker.MP@aph.gov.au>; "Kevin Rudd, MP" <Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au>; <Senator.Bob.Brown@aph.gov.au>; <senator.stottdespoja@aph.gov.au>; "North Coast Environment Council" <ncecsecr@optusnet.com.au>; <stateline-nsw@your.abc.net.au>
Subject: Open Letter to the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP - it's war!
Date: Friday, 13 April 2007 9:18 AM

Open Letter to the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, Minister for Environment and Water Resources, concerning the proposal to divert water from the Clarence Catchment Area river systems - 13th April 2007

Dear Sir,

Many river systems flowing within New South Wales borders, including the Murray-Darling, Murrumbidgee, Lachlan and Snowy, are significantly compromised by existing water storage, diversion and extraction schemes in this state and elsewhere.

The Clarence catchment area river systems are as yet relatively untouched by such water schemes.

This is not just the result of historical accident which has seen low levels of agricultural irrigation, little heavy industry and a long lead-in time to sustained high population growth.

It is also due to a conscious effort, on the part of Clarence catchment area communities and local government, to responsibly manage these river systems over time.

Nevertheless, these river systems remain variable and under stress particularly within the Clarence River delta and, some bodies of water such as Lake Wooloweyah teeter on a fragile balance.

Your announcement on 12 April 2007 of a proposal to divert Clarence catchment area water to south-east Queensland clearly demonstrates that you do not act in the best interests of your portfolio.

You appear to be acting from the world view of the investment banker you were until your election as the Liberal Party Member for Wentworth.

Water diversion will not benefit either the Clarence catchment area environment or the communities which live within it and draw communal prosperity from it.

Benefits for south-east Queensland are likely to be transitory and will do nothing to discourage continued unsustainable growth and development in that region.

There can be no guarantee sought or given, which will limit any water diversion to water dedicated for drinking only, once such water enters large dams and/or town water reticulation systems.

The only guaranteed benefits from this water diversion proposal will flow to major international water

traders, multinational construction companies and, the commercial entities which fund and/or facilitate their operations.

Entities such as Goldman Sachs Australia, in which you were Chairman, Managing Director and Partner until 2001.

Your announcement demonstrates the Howard Government's hostile intent towards the Clarence Valley.

Such hostile intent is likely to elicit an equally aggressive response. Civil wars are started this way.

If, in a century likely to be dominated by the effects of global warming, the Clarence catchment area becomes a focus of the first modern Australian water war then so be it.

I for one will support and/or participate in resistance to your flawed policy. Including any legal challenges, mass demonstrations or physical obstruction of construction work.

To this end, I will donate part of my modest income to those community and industry groups which resist.

Water in the Clarence catchment area river systems does not belong to Australia as you assert and, only nominally belongs to New South Wales.

It more truly belongs to the land through which it flows and, is held in trust by local communities for future generations.

Mr. Turnbull, I emphatically say to you: Not one drop from the mighty Clarence.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464
PH: (02) 6646.8051
E-mail: judith.melville@gmail.com

2.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <Mark.Vaile.MP@aph.gov.au>

Subject: Proposal to divert Northern Rivers water to south-east Queensland

Date: Thursday, 19 April 2007 9:03 PM

Hon. Mark Vaile MP
Deputy Prime Minister

19 April 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Howard Government proposal to divert water from northern New South Wales to south-east Queensland

In the week since the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, C'wealth Minister for Environment and Water Resources, made his April 12 announcement of a proposal to dam and/or divert Northern Rivers water and pipe it into south-east Queensland, The Daily Examiner, Grafton NSW, has received an unusually high number of letters opposing this blatant water grab.

The Clarence Valley Council, Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition and Clarence River Professional Fishermen's Association have also publicly expressed their concern and opposition to the Howard-Turnbull proposal.

Two of the three sitting Nationals MPs whose electorates take in the Clarence Valley publicly oppose diverting Clarence catchment area water ie., Luke Hartsuyker, Federal MP for Cowper and Steve Cansdell, NSW MP for Clarence.

Many in the Clarence Valley view this proposal as flawed policy.

I draw your attention to the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation desktop study, released in April 2007, titled "Integrated Water Supply Options for North East New South Wales and South East Queensland".

The report does not fully cost any of the water diversion options and, fails to even attempt to cost some of the most expensive elements. It admits to basing its financial analysis on a number of sweeping assumptions.

Many of the data compilations used are incomplete with some of the data being unverified and, in some cases the margin for error runs at 20 per cent and higher.

There are no in-depth environmental impact assessments. Though the study does briefly mention having to pass through areas containing old growth forest and/or high aesthetic value and wild terrain and, that the broadly preferred options would significantly impact on the environment and some potentially impact on the Clarence River delta.

No detailed proposed pipeline route inspections, dam site investigations, geological assessments, theodic surveys, or engineering investigations were undertaken and, topographic assessment relied only on perusal of military maps.

Sustainable levels of water extraction are not sufficiently identified and are just presumed to exist.

No mathematical models of the Northern Rivers systems were created and no detailed computer modelling was run.

Further, it is presumed that the Clarence Valley will have no significant water demand shortfalls into the future.

There are no in-depth economic impact assessments.

Social impacts and indigenous cultural values are virtually ignored.

No real attempt has been made to quantify any yield impacts of proposed additional water entering the Queensland system.

The Gold Coast mayor, Ron Clarke, has recently stated that the identified Logan and Nerang rivers in south-east Queensland have plenty of water and do not require Clarence or Tweed water to be piped directly into them, that such piped water would cause environmental damage, achieve little and, that these Queensland rivers flow out into the ocean anyway [ABC Online, 16 April 2007, "Gold Coast Mayor pours cold water on pipe plan"].

A great deal of the information this report relies on has been Googled from the world-wide web and, in one instance it brazenly seeks to rely on a brochure.

Even as a preliminary document this desktop study is manifestly inadequate.

I ask that you give serious consideration to supporting the Northern Rivers region and, the Clarence Valley in particular, in its demonstrated opposition to this hasty, ill-conceived scheme.

Further, I ask that you raise the issue with the Prime Minister.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464
judith.melville@gmail.com
Ph: (02) 6646.8051

3.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <Peter.McGauran.MP@aph.gov.au>

Cc: <Mark.Vaile.MP@aph.gov.au>; "Kevin Rudd, MP" <Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au>; <A.Albanese.

MP@aph.gov.au; "Hon. Morris iemma" <ThePremier@www.nsw.gov.au>; <office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au>; <Luke.Hartsuyker.MP@aph.gov.au>; "Mayor, Clarence Valley Council" <Mayor@clarence.nsw.gov.au>; <Steve.Cansdell@parliament.nsw.gov.au>; <Senator.Bob.Brown@aph.gov.au>; "John Mcguren" <jmcguren@crfc.com.au>

Subject: A profile of proposal to divert Northern Rivers water to south-east Queensland

Date: Wednesday, 25 April 2007 8:20 AM

Hon. Peter McGauran MP
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Deputy Leader of the House

25 April 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Howard Government proposal to divert water from northern New South Wales to south-east Queensland

On 12 April 2007 the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, Federal Minister for Environment and Water Resources, released the National Water Commission's contracted desktop study outlining proposals to divert water from the NSW Northern Rivers, with a focus on the Clarence River catchment area, to supply the south-east Queensland water grid.

I note that the Clarence catchment area currently supplies water to two local government areas experiencing sustained population growth, the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour. The current combined population of both these areas is estimated at 113,000 residents.

I draw your attention to the following facts:

- * The bulk of the Clarence catchment area falls within the 100km wide New South Wales coastal strip, which historically supplies approximately 20 per cent of the state's agricultural product. This coastal strip is likely to increase in importance, due to long-term difficulties experienced in the Murray-Darling basin with regard to water supply for food production.
- * The Clarence Valley economy is heavily underpinned by agriculture, commercial fishing, forestry and tourism.
- * Clarence agricultural commodities have an estimated annual value of \$69.6M and, commercial fishing catches from the Clarence River estuary and North Coast ocean zones have estimated annual values of \$47M and \$27.6M respectively.
- * Total agricultural value remains fairly consistent over time and the lucrative annual prawn catch in the Clarence River estuary is from one of only four NSW authorised estuary sites.
- * Commercial ocean fish and crustacean species both breed and feed in the Clarence River estuary system.

- * Bulk product transport for forestry-based industry is partly dependent on coastal shipping loading timber from Clarence River docks.
- * Island traders servicing Lord Howe and Norfolk islands and, trading as far as Auckland, also depend on berthing in the Clarence River at Yamba, Harwood and Goodwin.
- * Commercial fishing fleets are sited at Iluka and Yamba on the Clarence River.
- * North Coast tourism, in which the Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour are integral parts, has an estimated annual value in excess of \$57.4M.

The dollar values stated cover various periods from 2000-2004 and can be verified in the Commonwealth's own study of April 2005, "Northern Rivers and North Coast NSW Region: a regional profile" [C'wealth Dept. of Transport and Regional Services].

It is my understanding that, when initially approached by the National Water Commission, the NSW Dept. of Natural Resources advised that there was no unallocated water available for export to south-east Queensland. All flow being apportioned to the environment, basic land-holder rights, stock, irrigators, industry or town water supply needs.
[The Daily Examiner, 24 April 2007, "Federal Govt ignored advice about lack of Clarence water", p.5]

It is apparent from the wealth of publicly available New South Wales data, that any damming of or water extraction from the Clarence River or its tributaries carries potential risk of damage to the general environment, riparian zones, river bed stability and river ecosystems, as well as increasing existing river siltation and sand build-up in the sea approach to and bar at the Clarence river mouth.

All of these possible outcomes of additional hydrological stress and decreased inflow to the river tidal zone will impact on the viability of Clarence Valley agriculture, commercial fishing, forest industry and tourism.

Yet despite the aforementioned circumstances being widely known to the Commonwealth, the Prime Minister is reported in the media as stating that piping water from the Clarence River "is still very much on the agenda" [ABC Online, Local Radio, 21 April 2007, "The World today", transcript].

In the week following the 12 April announcement of the desktop study findings, The Daily Examiner, Grafton NSW, received an unusually high number of letters opposing this blatant water grab.

The Clarence Valley Council, Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition and Clarence River Professional Fishermen's Association have also publicly expressed their concern and opposition to the Howard-Turnbull proposal.

Two of the three sitting Nationals MPs whose electorates take in the Clarence Valley publicly oppose diverting Clarence catchment area water ie., Luke Hartsuyker, Federal MP for Cowper and Steve Cansdell, NSW MP for Clarence.

Many in the Clarence Valley view this proposal as flawed policy.

Further to this, I draw your attention to the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation desktop study, released in April 2007, titled "Integrated Water Supply Options for North East New South Wales and South East Queensland".

The report does not fully cost any of the water diversion options and, fails to even attempt to cost some of the most expensive elements. It admits to basing its financial analysis on a number of sweeping assumptions.

Many of the data compilations used are incomplete with some of the data being unverified and, in some cases the margin for error runs at 20 per cent and higher.

There are no in-depth environmental impact assessments. Though the study does briefly mention having to pass through areas containing old growth forest and/or high aesthetic value and wild terrain and, that the broadly preferred options would significantly impact on the environment and some potentially impact on the Clarence River delta.

No detailed proposed pipeline route inspections, dam site investigations, geological assessments, theodic surveys, or engineering investigations were undertaken and, topographic assessment relied only on perusal of military maps.

Sustainable levels of water extraction are not sufficiently identified and are just presumed to exist. No mathematical models of the Northern Rivers systems were created and no detailed computer modelling was run.

It is presumed that the Clarence Valley will have no significant water demand shortfalls into the future.

There are no in-depth economic impact assessments.

Social impacts and indigenous cultural values are virtually ignored.

No real attempt has been made to quantify any yield impacts of proposed additional water entering the Queensland system.

The Gold Coast mayor, Ron Clarke, has recently stated that the identified Logan and Nerang rivers in south-east Queensland have plenty of water and do not require Clarence or Tweed water to be piped directly into them, that such piped water would cause environmental damage, achieve little and, that these Queensland rivers flow out into the ocean anyway [ABC Online, 16 April 2007, "Gold Coast Mayor pours cold water on pipe plan"].

A great deal of the information this study relies on has been Googled from the world-wide web and, in one instance it brazenly seeks to rely on a brochure.

Even as a preliminary document this desktop study is manifestly inadequate.

I ask that you give serious consideration to supporting the Northern Rivers region and, the Clarence Valley in particular, in its demonstrated opposition to this hasty, ill-conceived scheme.

Further, I ask that you discuss these matters with the Hon. Mark Vaile and raise the issue with the Prime Minister.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464
judith.melville@gmail.com
Ph: (02) 6646.8051

4.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: <ThePremier@www.nsw.gov.au>; "Mayor, Clarence Valley Council" <Mayor@clarence.nsw.gov.au>; <A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au>; <Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au>; <Senator.Bob.Brown@aph.gov.au>; "John Mcguren" <jmcguren@crfc.com.au>; "Lee Rhiannon MLC" <lee.rhiannon@parliament.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Clarence catchment water diversion and north-west NSW proposal

Date: Wednesday, 16 May 2007 10:34 PM

Hon. P. C. Koperberg MP
Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water

16 May 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Clarence catchment water diversion proposal and Bourke Shire Council motion to be considered by the Local Government Shires Association [LGSA] conference in June 2007

Bourke Shire Council has lodged a motion, to be debated at the forthcoming LGSA conference, calling for the Howard Government to further pursue the Clarence catchment water diversion proposal with the aim of diverting water to north-west New South Wales.

The motion includes reference to a Clarence water diversion scheme designed by Geoff White.

In the minutes of its ordinary monthly meeting held on 23 October 2006, Bourke Shire Council indicated that it was actively investigating funding of a Clarence water diversion scheme.

In the same minutes, Bourke Shire Council resolved to send a delegation to Malcolm Turnbull, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with responsibility for water policy, and also to Geoff White of White Industries, a construction and mining group.

In a published interview on 19 February 2007, Geoff White stated that he had made a submission in favour of Clarence water diversion and that John Howard was aware of his submission [The Sydney Morning Herald, "The White Stuff", 19.02.07].

I note that both Bourke Shire Council and Mr. White appear to have made formal approaches to the Howard Government ahead of its 12 April 2007 announcement of the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation [SMEC] desktop study of proposed NSW Northern Rivers water diversion to south-east Queensland.

There is a strong suggestion that Bourke Shire Council and certain other councils in "J" Division are now seeking to make Clarence water diversion an issue in this year's federal election, to the detriment of the populations and industries within Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour local government areas.

As Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water, you have strongly opposed any Clarence River water diversion option as set out in the SMEC desktop study, on the basis of potential significant negative environmental, economic and social impacts.

These same negative impacts would apply to any new proposal for water diversion, from the Clarence River or its tributaries, to either north-west New South Wales or the Border Rivers.

I ask for a clearly worded and prompt assurance, from both yourself as Minister and the New South Wales Government, that there will be no government support, in any manner, for a proposal or proposals to divert Clarence catchment water to north-west New South Wales or the Border Rivers.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464
PH: (02) 6646.8081
judith.melville@gmail.com

5.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <oxley@parliament.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: "Hon. Barry O'Farrell MLA" <LOP@parliament.nsw.gov.au>; <Steve.Cansdell@parliament.nsw.gov.au>; "Mayor, Clarence Valley Council" <Mayor@clarence.nsw.gov.au>; <Mark.Vaile.MP@aph.gov.au>; "John Mcguren" <jmcguren@crfc.com.au>; <office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Proposal to divert Clarence water to north-west NSW and Border Rivers

Date: Friday, 18 May 2007 4:24 AM

Andrew Stoner MLA
NSW Leader of the Nationals
Parliament House
Sydney NSW

18 May 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Clarence catchment water diversion proposal and Bourke Shire Council motion to be considered by the Local Government Shires Association [LGSA] conference in June 2007

Bourke Shire Council has lodged a motion, to be debated at the forthcoming LGSA conference, calling for the Howard Government to further pursue the Clarence catchment water diversion proposal with the aim of diverting water to north-west New South Wales.

The motion includes reference to a Clarence water diversion scheme designed by Geoff White.

In the minutes of its ordinary monthly meeting held on 23 October 2006, Bourke Shire Council indicated that it was actively investigating funding of a Clarence water diversion scheme.

In the same minutes, Bourke Shire Council resolved to send a delegation to Malcolm Turnbull, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with responsibility for water policy, and also to Geoff White of White Industries, a construction and mining group.

In a published interview on 19 February 2007, Geoff White reportedly stated that he had made a submission in favour of Clarence water diversion and that John Howard was aware of his submission [The Sydney Morning Herald, "The White Stuff", 19.02.07].

I note that both Bourke Shire Council and Mr. White appear to have made formal approaches to the Howard Government ahead of its 12 April 2007 announcement of the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation [SMEC] desktop study of proposed NSW Northern Rivers water diversion to south-east Queensland.

There is a strong suggestion that Bourke Shire Council and certain other councils in "J" Division are now seeking to make Clarence water diversion an issue in this year's federal election, to the detriment of the populations and industries within Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour local government areas which depend on the continued health and productivity of the Clarence River and its tributaries.

Bourke Shire Council's proposal for water diversion, from the Clarence River or its tributaries to north-west New South Wales, would have potential negative environmental, economic and social impacts identical to impacts which may result from diversion options identified in the SMEC desktop study.

Although Bourke Shire Council has not fully outlined its favoured Clarence water diversion scheme, on 17 May 2007 Geoff White is quoted as stating: "That the most practical solution would be to pump the water through the Great Dividing Range into the Upper Mole River dam, he said. It flows into the Dumaresq, the Dumaresq runs into the MacIntyre, the MacIntyre runs into the Barwon and the Barwon runs into the Darling. One million megalitres is a lot of water" [ABC Rural,news,transcript,17.05.07].

This scheme is similar to some past Clarence diversion schemes, of which Dr. Blackmore has commented: "Not worth a candle....You could not get it there on the back of a flood because of the diversion capacity across....If I am going to run 1,000 megalitres down the bottom of the Darling, half of it is going to evaporate, and 500 megalitres down the bottom of the Darling - you may as well be whistling in the dark, basically." [Blackmore,Dr. D.J.,Chief Executive,Murray Darling Basin Commission, in Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and The Arts References Committee,sub-committee,23.05.02].

I note that the Nationals Member for Clarence has begun to qualify his opposition, to Clarence water diversion, to those proposals which would send water "To Queensland or Western Australia." [NSW Hansard,Legislative Assembly full day transcript,09.05.07]. This does nothing to reassure concerning the NSW Nationals position on the Bourke aspect of Clarence water diversion options.

I ask for a clearly worded and prompt assurance, from both yourself as Leader and the New South Wales Nationals, that there will be no support, in any manner, for a proposal or proposals to divert Clarence catchment water to north-west New South Wales or the Border Rivers.

Additionally, I ask that you raise this matter with your parliamentary colleague, Hon. Barry O'Farrell MLA, NSW Liberal Leader.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464
PH: (02) 6646.8081
judith.melville@gmail.com

6.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <John.Cobb.MP@aph.gov.au>

Cc: <John.Anderson.MP@aph.gov.au>; "Mayor, Clarence Valley Council" <Mayor@clarence.nsw.gov.au>; "John McGuren" <jmcguren@crfc.com.au>; <A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au>; <Senator.Bob.Brown@aph.gov.au>; <office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Diversion of Clarence catchment water to north-west NSW and Border Rivers: Bourke/Cobar proposals

Date: Saturday, 19 May 2007 4:44 PM

Hon. John Cobb MP
Assistant Minister for the Environment and Water Resources
Member for Parkes

19 May 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Clarence catchment water diversion proposal: Bourke Shire Council and Cobar Shire Council motions to be considered by the Local Government Shires Association [LGSA] conference in June 2007

Bourke Shire Council has lodged a motion, to be debated at the forthcoming LGSA conference, calling for the Howard Government to further pursue the Clarence catchment water diversion proposal with the aim of diverting water to north-west New South Wales.

The motion includes reference to a Clarence water diversion scheme designed by Geoff White.

In the minutes of its ordinary monthly meeting held on 23 October 2006, Bourke Shire Council indicated that it was actively investigating funding of a Clarence water diversion scheme.

In the same minutes, Bourke Shire Council resolved to send a delegation to Malcolm Turnbull, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with responsibility for water policy, and also to Geoff White of White Industries, a construction and mining group.

In a published interview on 19 February 2007, Geoff White reportedly stated that he had made a submission in favour of Clarence water diversion and that John Howard was aware of his submission [The Sydney Morning Herald, "The White Stuff", 19.02.07].

I note that both Bourke Shire Council and Mr. White appear to have made formal approaches to the Howard Government ahead of its 12 April 2007 announcement of the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation [SMEC] desktop study of proposed NSW Northern Rivers water diversion to south-east Queensland.

There is a strong suggestion that Bourke Shire Council and certain other councils in "J" Division are now seeking to make Clarence water diversion an issue in this year's federal election, to the detriment of the populations and industries within Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour local government areas which depend on the continued health and productivity of the Clarence River and its tributaries.

Bourke Shire Council's proposal for water diversion, from the Clarence River or its tributaries to north-west New South Wales, would have potential negative environmental, economic and social impacts identical to impacts which may result from diversion options identified in the SMEC desktop study.

Although Bourke Shire Council has not fully outlined its favoured Clarence water diversion scheme, on

17 May 2007 Geoff White is quoted as stating: "That the most practical solution would be to pump the water through the Great Dividing Range into the Upper Mole River dam, he said. It flows into the Dumaresq, the Dumaresq runs into the MacIntyre, the MacIntyre runs into the Barwon and the Barwon runs into the Darling. One million megalitres is a lot of water" [ABC Rural,news,transcript,17.05.07].

This scheme is similar to some past Clarence diversion schemes, of which Dr. Blackmore has commented: "Not worth a candle....You could not get it there on the back of a flood because of the diversion capacity across....If I am going to run 1,000 megalitres down the bottom of the Darling, half of it is going to evaporate, and 500 megalitres down the bottom of the Darling - you may as well be whistling in the dark, basically." [Blackmore,Dr. D.J.,Chief Executive,Murray Darling Basin Commission, in Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and The Arts References Committee,sub-committee,23.05.02].

I note that Cobar Shire Council has also lodged a motion with the LGSA conference. This motion has a more generalised wording but similar intent to the Bourke Shire Council motion.

The Bourke mayor, being a grazier reportedly holding approximately 27,000 hectares, and the Cobar mayor, being a former employee of CSA Mines, might naturally hold perspectives which favour securing water for agriculture and mining in their respective local government areas.

However, this does not mitigate the reckless nature of their proposals, which are predicated on water diversion from flood flows and seek volume extraction of between 10 to 20 per cent possibly from the Mann River, a tributary of the Clarence River.

Clarence catchment river systems are variable and subject to environmental stress during periods of both high and low flow regimes.

Major and moderate flooding in the Clarence Valley has only occurred 71 times in the last 166 years [Clarence Valley Council,19.05.07] and, a 1-in-100 year flood has not occurred in living memory.

Consequently, the Clarence River and its tributaries remain vulnerable to high concentrations of nutrient runoff from urban/agriculture land, treated effluent discharge and sediment/sand build-up in river channels/estuaries with associated raised levels of turbidity [NSW Healthy Rivers Commission, November 1999,Independent Inquiry into the Clarence River System:Final Report].

Any weakening of river flows would exacerbate this situation and, increase risk for the continued viability of local fishing and tourism industries.

The commercial islander traders and timber boats could also be affected by weakened river flows further compromising the main Clarence shipping channel and river bar over time.

I ask that you, as Assistant Minister and Member for Parkes, seriously consider withholding support for any proposal to divert water from the Clarence River or its tributaries

Additionally, I ask that you raise this issue with the Member for Gwydir.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464
PH: (02) 6646.8081
judith.melville@gmail.com

7.

From: "Judith Melville" <aros@dodo.com.au>

To: <bourkeshire@bourke.nsw.gov.au>

Cc: "Mayor, Clarence Valley Council" <Mayor@clarence.nsw.gov.au>; "John Mcguren" <jmcguren@crfc.com.au>; <ThePremier@www.nsw.gov.au>; <office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Bourke Shire Council and the Clarence catchment water diversion proposal

Date: Thursday, 17 May 2007 12:10 AM

The General Manager
Bourke Shire Council

16 May 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Clarence catchment water diversion proposal and Bourke Shire Council motion to be considered by the Local Government Shires Association [LGSA] conference in June 2007

Bourke Shire Council has lodged a motion, to be debated at the forthcoming LGSA conference, calling for the Howard Government to further pursue the Clarence catchment water diversion proposal with the aim of diverting water to north-west New South Wales.

The motion includes reference to a Clarence water diversion scheme designed by Geoff White.

In the minutes of its ordinary monthly meeting held on 23 October 2006, Bourke Shire Council indicated that it was actively investigating funding of a Clarence water diversion scheme.

In the same minutes, Bourke Shire Council resolved to send a delegation to Malcolm Turnbull, then Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with responsibility for water policy, and also to Geoff White of White Industries, a construction and mining group.

In a published interview on 19 February 2007, Geoff White stated that he had made a submission in favour of Clarence water diversion and that John Howard was aware of his submission [The Sydney Morning Herald, "The White Stuff", 19.02.07].

I note that both Bourke Shire Council and Mr. White appear to have made formal approaches to the Howard Government ahead of its 12 April 2007 announcement of the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation [SMEC] desktop study of proposed NSW Northern Rivers water diversion to south-east Queensland.

I know of no attempts by Bourke Shire Council to consult with local government or communities in the lower Clarence catchment area. This apparent omission speaks to a pronounced lack good faith on the part of Council.

There is a strong suggestion that Bourke Shire Council and certain other councils in "J" Division are now seeking to make Clarence water diversion an issue in this year's federal election, to the detriment of the populations and industries within Clarence Valley and Coffs Harbour local government areas which depend on the continued health and productivity of the Clarence River and its tributaries.

The NSW Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Water has made public statements which strongly oppose any Clarence River water diversion option as set out in the SMEC desktop study, on the basis of potential significant negative environmental, economic and social impacts.

These same negative impacts would apply to any new proposal for water diversion, from the Clarence River or its tributaries, to either north-west New South Wales or the Border Rivers.

Similarly, Clarence Valley Council, Clarence River Professional Fishermen's Association, Clarence Valley Conservation Coalition, Federal Nationals MP for Cowper, NSW Nationals MP for Clarence, Federal Nationals candidate for Page and many local residents have publicly expressed their firm opposition to any Clarence water diversion proposal.

I draw Council's attention to this demonstrated opposition to Clarence catchment water diversion and, ask that it reconsider this reckless push to solve its own water supply problems at the expense of others.

I ask that this letter, as a matter of urgency, be included as an attachment to the next Bourke Shire Council business paper.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464

Subsequent to my correspondence, the Leader of the NSW Nationals, Hon. Andrew Stoner and Shadow Minister for Water, Adrian Piccoli, have both expressed concern and opposition to Clarence catchment water diversion proposals [Stoner,A,e-mail,18.05.07 & Piccoli,A,e-mail,24.05.07].

I note that the Inquiry has received over two hundred submissions thus far, from areas other than the Clarence Valley.

I trust that those submissions received from the Clarence Valley will be given due consideration, despite the Inquiry's failure to adequately notify the electorate.

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

**2/20 The Halyard
Yamba NSW 2464**

From: Judith Melville [aros@dodo.com.au]
Sent: Tuesday, 29 May 2007 2:43 PM
To: RRAT, Committee (SEN)
Subject: Fw: RRA&T Senate Committee:submissions

----- Original Message -----

From: [Judith Melville](#)
To: Luke.Hartsuyker.MP@aph.gov.au
Cc: A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au ; Steve.Cansdell@parliament.nsw.gov.au ; Andrew.Stoner@parliament.nsw.gov.au ; rrat.senate@aph.gov.au ; office@koperberg.minister.nsw.gov.au ; [Chief of Staff, The Daily Examiner](#) ; [John McGuren](#) ; Senator.Bob.Brown@aph.gov.au ; [Leonie Blain](#) ; [North Coast Environment Council](#) ; [Mayor, Clarence Valley Council](#)
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2007 2:20 PM
Subject: RRA&T Senate Committee:submissions

Luke Hartsuyker MP
Nationals Member for Cowper

29 May 2007

Dear Sir,

Re: Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Senate Committee: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland - Traveston Crossing Dam

Today I, like the majority of Clarence Valley residents, became aware for the first time that a Senate committee is currently considering Clarence catchment area water diversion proposals as part of its brief.

I became aware because the Senate committee was the subject of a front page article in *The Daily Examiner*, Grafton, the only major local newspaper and one which was established in 1859.

The deadline for submissions to this committee does not leave me time to prepare a considered written submission which could be presented before the committee's hearings are completed and, possibly its report prepared and tabled.

Like many other Clarence Valley residents, I have commitments which do not allow me to drop everything in order to prepare a submission which could arrive in a timely manner given such late and informal notice.

I note that, in *The Daily Examiner* article, you were quoted as stating that you would be prepared to write to the Senate committee if the community felt it had not had time to adequately respond.

I ask that you do write and, request that:

- (i) the submission deadline be extended to 20 June 2007;
- (ii) the committee report not be prepared or tabled before that date; and
- (iii) the committee re-advertise its details in *The Daily Examiner* before 4 June 2007.

I note that the committee in question appears to have been receiving submissions since early April and, its hearings have been relevant to the Clarence Valley since at least early May.

The matter of a lack of suitable advertising goes to the heart of parliamentary procedural transparency, as well as access and equity for the electorates involved.

In anticipation and appreciation of your assistance with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

JUDITH M. MELVILLE

2/20 The Halyard

Yamba NSW 2464

judith.melville@gmail.com