

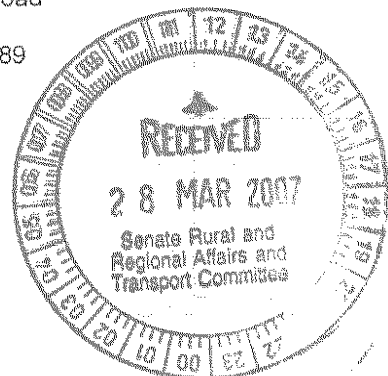
MARY RIVER RIPARIAN LANDHOLDERS GROUP
(LOWER CATCHMENT)

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25th March 2007

The Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Dear Sir/ Madam

Re: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland – Traveston Crossing Dam Information.

The purpose of this letter is to provide information for the Senate Inquiry.

Our group is very concerned with the proposed construction of the Traveston Dam and submits the following facts for your information.

The Mary River System presently has 16 weirs, dams and barrages that impede its flow. They are – Showground Weir at Maleny, Maleny Weir, Baroon Pocket Dam, Jimna Weir, Borumba Dam, Imbil Weir, Kandanga Weir, Lake MacDonald, Six Mile Creek Dam, Cedar Pocket Dam, Gympie Control Weir, Goomeri Weir, Tallegalla Weir, Teddington Weir, Mary River Barrage, and Tinana Creek Barrage.

At this stage there is one major Dam wall constructed across the Mary River. This wall was originally proposed as a barrage. A barrage is generally built to a height just above mean springs high tide, to stop the flow of the tide further up stream. However when construction took place the wall was built a further 1 metre higher, thus turning this proposed barrage into a Dam. The Mary River Barrage, as it is known, is located approximately 59km upstream from the mouth of the Mary River.

To understand what environmental and social impacts will be inflicted on the proposed inundated area of the Traveston Dam and the associated Communities, we believe that the impact the Mary River Barrage has had on the lower Mary River and the surrounding areas of Maryborough and Hervey Bay should be studied.

The Mary River Barrage has been in place now for some 24yrs, we believe there are significant environmental impacts already inflicted on the ponded reach of the Mary River Barrage. Twenty four years on, one area of concern is impacts the ponded water has had on river banks. Sodic concentrations in river bank soils appear to have caused excessive river bank undercutting and slumping and consequent water quality issues. Also the reasons for the apparent decline of the Mary River Turtle and Mary River Cod and Lung Fish as well as other inhabitants including the once prolific Barramundi need to be studied.

Prior to the construction of the Mary River Barrage, Maryborough had a thriving Fish Board. What caused its demise? Was it the construction of the barrage wall across the river? Will the Traveston proposal exacerbate the apparent already depleted stocks of Barramundi and other table fish? Many jobs have been lost, will any more go? Will the Traveston proposal adversely affect the popularity and economy of the

recreational fishery of the Great Sandy Straits Marine Park? These issues are significant and require close scrutiny.

Further we believe the Mary River Turtle and Mary River Cod and Lung Fish have been unable to cope successfully with the changed river conditions of the Mary River Barrage. Only a study into these inhabitants and others of the ponded waters of the Mary River Barrage is capable of giving projected likely outcomes for their future survival, should the Traveston proposal proceed.

Presently the Mary River Barrage is experiencing considerable infestations of the water weeds Hyacinth and salvinia. An attempt at controlling these weeds is proving almost impossible. Traveston proposal is 1000 times larger. What is proposed by way of control of these and other weeds? Huge infestations of these weeds and the resultant depleted oxygen will cause fish kills as well as accelerate the on set of Blue Green Algae. Water Quality will be adversely affected.

We are very concerned about the likely social impacts on down stream communities as well as communities directly affected upstream of the Traveston Dam.

Everybody from the Professional fisherman in the Great Sandy Straits to the Tourist on Fraser Island, to the Whale Watcher, to the Holiday Maker at Hervey Bay, to the Cane Farmer, to Riparian landholders who provide water to their families and stock, through their own infrastructure, every animal, every organism, every Community reliant on The Mary River for survival will be catastrophically affected by the building of this Dam.

The reason for this is that small flows coming down the river will cease.

These flows are the life blood of all. The time span from construction to a major rainfall event and resultant flood will almost certainly cause the demise of those plants and animals directly reliant on the river for their survival.

We believe socially, the loss of these flows will be seen in the Sugar Cane, Horticulture, Dairy, Beef Cattle industries, through lack of water for irrigation.

Further, we believe the environmental fallout from such an event will be virtually irreversible.

It is also important to understand that the majority of the water that is proposed to be stored behind the Traveston Dam wall will not flow down the river system, as it will be pumped away, never to see the mouth of the river.

How can the Mary River possibly survive this?

As you would be aware Wivenhoe is constructed on the Brisbane River System and the water from this dam flows down its own system.

Our group firmly believes these issues must be addressed.

We look forward to receiving a reply from you notifying of a time that our group will be able to address your inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Ron Black
Chairperson