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

Email: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

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

Dear Sir / Madam,

We write this letter to provide comments, thoughts, and information for the Senate Inquiry into the Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland - in particular the Traveston Crossing Dam Proposal.

We realise you will receive many submissions from experts in many fields providing technical and well researched data on the many reasons this Traveston Dam proposal should be abandoned and suggesting viable alternatives to provide the required volume of water to South East Queensland.

Our submission is on a personal level – just giving you some information on what this proposal is doing to the whole community inside the Mary River Catchment area – if you like, the complete disregard for basic human rights.

As a background, we purchased land in the southern end of the Valley (Brooloo) in 1996 primarily to grow Australian native flowers as a cut product for the export market. Since then we have diversified slightly and now also grow cut flowers and foliage for the domestic market as well graze cattle. We experienced the flood of February / March 1999 and our lower paddocks were under water by about 600mm. We believe, should another flood occur, this level would rise because of backup of water behind the dam wall and it is an undisputable fact that water must seek its own level. You can move stock to higher ground, but not plants – they would die. It takes three years to produce a new crop and, by then, we would be out of business.

This Valley houses families who have owned properties through four generations – over 100 years - and it must be made very clear that the State Government is not just forcing people to find another house - the community is being forced to abandon heritage, livelihood, tradition, lifestyle, history, pride, knowledge and love of their land for a proposal that the “locals”, with over a century of observation and family history know is doomed to failure. We assume that your Inquiry has as one of its basic tasks the need to actually come to the Valley, travel the length of the Mary from head to its mouth and talk to those whose lives have been dependent on its flow for so many generations. This we believe, is crucial to your understanding for an informed, fair and transparent Inquiry process.

It is imperative that the Senate Inquiry takes into account the damaging effects the dam will have on the agricultural production of this area – one of Queensland's most fertile. Dairy products, beef, Macadamia nuts, fruit, (what does Australia do about pineapples if this dam goes ahead) vegetables, timber, sheep, goats, and the many industries that feed off this primary production, will cause a major economic impact on Queensland, Australia and our export markets.

As the dam wall is to be constructed to Stage 2 height in the advertised Stage 1 construction it is very difficult to assume that, should there indeed be a flood and water needs to be retained on the southern side of the wall, the full Stage 2 height will not come into use whatever year it is. Accordingly, the full impact of Stage 1 and Stage 2 must be assessed including all infrastructure that will be required for both stages. It is also imperative that a costing of this entire project is honestly undertaken and the actual cost per megalitre of water be publicly announced.

Another major concern is the loss of already endangered species whose habitat will not survive in the new conditions. We have a unique area of Australia here and to force it into extinction is nothing short of criminal. As a follow on to this, we believe you need to examine fully the health impacts and public health risks associated with a dam that has an average depth of only five metres. Mosquito borne diseases such as Ross River Fever, the growth of algae and associated toxins, and this being a gold bearing area, the grave likelihood of manganese and other metal toxicity all require research. Manganese already tends to be a problem in soil balancing for our plant growth and requires constant management. The near certainty of declared and noxious weed infestation in such a shallow body of water will become an economic nightmare as hundreds of thousands of dollars will need to be spent attempting to control the weed takeover without poisoning the water.

The Heritage listed Fraser Island and Great Sandy Straits downstream of the dam have hardly rated a mention by the State Government but there is absolutely no doubt these two fragile and world renowned areas will be adversely affected by the proposed damming of the Mary River.

On the topic of actually catching rain in the catchment area, we can only provide rainfall records for about seven years but in that time our annual rainfall has dropped from the 1100 – 1200 mils on record prior to our purchase of this property to an average of only 930mm over our record taking time.

In conclusion, we do believe the water situation in Brisbane is desperate. Education programmes on tanks, water recycling, responsible usage is urgently required. Future restrictions will result in many bankrupt businesses and lost jobs but I believe Brisbane City Council is not expecting a water recycling policy to be place for three to five years. Apparently the Gold Coast already has a recycling policy in place. Of course, rural dwellers have to devise our own water usage strategies in order to survive on the land. Even a completion date of 2011 for the dam does not in any way guarantee that it will fill, so existing catchment areas such as the millions of square metres of roof space in the south east corner will have to be harvested urgently to produce millions of litres of water.

We are living with a sense of foreboding over our futures – health impacts are evident throughout the community. We do not want to leave this beautiful place but we feel we are being driven out and our basic democratic rights are being violated. We are all directly affected.

If we can assist the Senate Inquiry in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

David Carson

Glenwyn Carson

