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

Dear Sir/ Madam

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

**Purpose**

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

Please will you be kind enough to acknowledge receipt of this letter?

I am writing to make the inquiry aware of my views on the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam. We are privileged to live on the river and although we are well outside the area which is proposed to be flooded, it's clear the impact of the dam will affect an area many hundreds of times the area of the dam itself.

**The impact on wildlife**

We are a few kilometres north of Gympie and have noticed that for most of the year the river is between 30 and 45cms deep with a slow but steady flow, we have a favourite spot in the river where there is a large sandstone rock overlooking a large shallow pool, on which we often sit and watch the wonders of mother nature, almost without exception we are privileged to see Lungfish, Platypus, Turtles, numerous other fish, which recently included two of the largest Mary River Cod we have ever seen, one being approximately 600mm and the other 750mm in length and an abundance of birdlife.

The Queensland Government are going to destroy the natural environment which makes Australia unique. They have said that environmental flows may be maintained subject to sufficient water storage, they have also said that river flows will be an average across the year, what use is an average flow to anything living in the river? In essence this will mean that the river will dry up for 6 months of the year, have a negligible flow of 1 mega litre a day for another 3 months and

may only have good flows during the summer rains, which I hasten to add have not occurred for many years.

I would like to know how the Queensland Government can be allowed to create an environmental disaster to rival the Murray Darling? Doesn't anyone look at the mistakes of the past and try not to repeat them again, it's called continual improvement, not sticking your head in the sand and hoping no one will notice?

The wildlife which relies on the Mary River has no voice, they don't vote or pay taxes and as a result are considered expendable by the Queensland Government, I am trying to give a voice to the silent life in the river who deserve to be treated much better. However, I wonder whether anyone in a position to make a difference will give a damn? What right do we have to destroy the natural world which makes this country so wonderful and unique, bear in mind at least 2 species the Mary River Cod and the Mary River Turtle are endemic to this river, take away the river and these will die. The Mary River Turtle was only identified in the early 1990's so who knows what else is waiting to be discovered or exterminated should this dam be built. There are two species which live in the river that are listed as threatened and one as endangered, how can the Queensland Government be allowed to cause such human turmoil and environmental vandalism before any environmental impact study has been conducted let alone reviewed?

I should mention that Peter Beattie has said that this dam will proceed regardless, there is nothing that is going to stop it, makes you wonder when Queensland will have a democracy and not a dictatorship?

The effects of significantly reduced water flow in the Mary River will also have a knock on effect on the Great Sandy Straits Marine Park, a world heritage listed area. Am I to assume that World Heritage importance is swept aside when the demands of human population growth places demands on our existing resources which are woefully inadequate as a result of insufficient planning and investment?

The Queensland Government proudly hold up the Paradise dam as an example of environmental success. The world bank has ranked this dam as one of the top ten worst in the world, what sort of a track record is this on which to embark on a project of such magnitude?

The fish ladder which is less than a quarter of the size needed for the Traveston dam rarely works and has been a dismal failure in the movement of the lungfish, what hope is there for the lung fish of the Mary River?

This Paradise dam is currently less than 10% capacity, no matter how many dams we have unless there is rain they will be useless, benefiting only the companies which build them.

## **The impact on people**

The prospect of thousands of people and yes it is thousands that will be displaced, there may be only around 800 properties to be resumed but there are thousands of people who will lose their homes and in some cases their livelihood.

The people of the Mary Valley didn't ask for this and if that isn't bad enough, some are now faced with appalling treatment by the company set up by the Queensland Government to purchase properties. I know of two cases where offers have been made to purchase only to be told the following day that they have been withdrawn, one can only assume this is either incompetence or carefully structured emotional blackmail either way it's totally unacceptable and goes against Australian values and ethics.

The people of the Mary Valley deserve to be treated in a fair and ethical manner, their lives have been turned upside down, through no fault of their own, the least the Queensland Government can do is treat them with dignity and respect.

## **The impact on the land**

I'm sure that you will have received many submissions that will detail the impact of the dam on the land much more eloquently and more factual than I ever could. I would however, like to ask you consider the Queensland Governments policy on keeping as much of our valuable productive agricultural rural land in rural use. The land of the Mary Valley is some of the most fertile agricultural land in South East Queensland and produces 10% of the States milk production as well as fruit and vegetable production, how can they be allowed to flood such fertile land and create a huge shallow dam which many consider will quickly turn into a swamp inundated with numerous water borne weeds which will further increase the massive evaporation such a large shallow dam will have.

I do wonder why Peter Beattie is so hell bent on the Traveston Dam, it wasn't even the preferred option from the report his own Government commissioned, could it just be that he wants to appear to be doing something to appease the people of Brisbane on which he depends for his votes, regardless of whether it will ever provide a solution to their water needs? There are no votes for Peter Beattie here so what does he have to lose?

## **Alternative solutions**

There has to be a more structured and logical approach to proving sustainable water supply for the people of South East Queensland. We need an approach which will look at the big picture over a long period of time and not just concentrate on one particular issue over the length of time a Government may be in power.

A good example is power stations, whether they be coal or nuclear, you may well be asking at this stage how can I even begin to talk about power stations when this inquiry is about the Traveston Dam? Power stations consume a huge amount of water for cooling purposes, at the present time that water is coming from water storage, although a pipe line is currently being constructed to use recycled water from Brisbane for two power stations nearby.

Current coal fired power stations not only use huge amounts of our precious water but in addition they pump enormous amounts of carbon dioxide in to the atmosphere, which will further exacerbate the effects of global warming and probably result in even less rainfall over the long term. We need a federal government that will recognise the contribution Australia can make to the world and lead by example by using methods of power generation that will not only reduce water consumption but also eliminate or substantially reduce green house emissions.

We live in one of the sunniest countries in the world and have the potential not only to generate all the electricity we need using solar power and other green energy, but have the opportunity to lead the world in such technology and have a potential export market to rival our current coal exports. Just before you dismiss solar energy as not viable, it can and will produce base load power regardless of what John Howard would like us to believe. Technology as far back as 2003 proved that ammonia based thermochemical energy storage is viable to enable continuous 24hour production of electricity, this research was conducted by the Australian National University Canberra, I wonder why John Howard chooses to ignore such research, perhaps it's because the coal industry makes a large contribution to party funds?

I heard this week that if we do nothing about global warming 95% of the great barrier reef will be dead by 2050, just 43 years away! Regardless of whether it happens sooner or later what a legacy we are leaving for those who follow us! When will the federal government have the courage to make a stand for the people, plants and animals that make up the world we live in and not just buckle under to big business and personal greed.

I also wonder what the effect on our economy will be if the Great Barrier reef dies, how many billions of tourist dollars are earned by this natural wonder?

Only this week The Deadly Irukandji Jellyfish has been found off Fraser Island, it was previously thought to be confined to northern Australian waters and as far down the east coast to Galdstone. If it is now able to survive this far down the coast due to warmer sea water temperatures, which effect is this going to have on tourism. The effects if global warming extend far and wide and are not just confined to reduced rainfall.

Once we have exhausted all the possible methods of water conservation, recycling for both existing and new development, better use of our finite resources, reduction of water wastage, leaking pipes and single flush toilets being just two examples, then and only then should dams such as this be considered and only then if they are deemed to be the only viable solution, which I hasten to add I don't think the Traveston dam is. How can anyone consider a huge shallow dam as a suitable solution, which will not only cause environmental devastation on a massive scale, but also untold human misery and without any confidence whatsoever it will even do the job it's supposed to do.

A recent report concluded that had the dam been built to stage 2 before the 1999 flood, which was a huge flood, it would have run dry by late 2006.

### **Conclusion**

The answer to our water supply is not an easy simple single solution, it has to encompass all aspects of water usage and supply, then and only then can the people of Queensland be assured of a sustainable future which will provide jobs, wealth, prosperity for the people who live in this State.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my humble submission, I am just an ordinary person who cannot sit back and idly wait for the Queensland Government to wreak havoc and destruction, I would please ask that you the Senate Inquiry apply whatever influence you can to stop this disaster before it happens.

Yours faithfully

William Middleton