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2nd April 2007.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

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Re – WATER SUPPLIES FOR SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND- TRAVESTON DAM.

To whom it may concern.

I live in the Tiaro Shire, downstream from the proposed Traveston Dam site. Much thought has gone into my proposal, as more dams in Southeast Queensland will not alleviate the current water crisis. There are sufficient dams in Southeast Queensland to service the population, all that is necessary is the water!

Therefore, a variation of the Bradfield Scheme is envisaged, to alleviate not only future water crises in Southeast Queensland, but to assist in the regeneration of the Murray-Darling river system.

It is a huge undertaking, but viable. A pipeline down the Queensland coast was considered but the obstacles that would be encountered viz; population density and deep and wide rivers to cross, tended to negate that proposal.

Whereas an inland pipeline would not cause a great deal of disruption to the general population and is a more direct route, and will be there for many generations to come. Also as our population increases and spreads north and west from Southeast Queensland, as it must, the future water supply for those people will be assured.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION – The history of the Bradfield Scheme.

PLANNED PROPOSAL- Description of the variation of the Bradfield Scheme envisaged in this proposal to supplement the water in the dams of SE Queensland.

FURTHER BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL- including the regeneration of the Murray-Darling rivers system.

CONSTRUCTION- Means to construct the pipeline, with various teams employed on the project.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE – To be completed in five years.

COSTINGS – Rivalling the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

FUNDING – Taxpayer Involvement.

CONCLUSION – Including mention of "El Nino" effect, and advantages of the proposed scheme.

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THE BRADFIELD SCHEME REVISITED
But with a TWIST IN THE TALE

INTRODUCTION

In 1933 Dr. J.J. Bradfield officially submitted a plan to harness various rivers of North Queensland to direct their flow inland to create a climate change of inland Australia. The cost at that time was estimated at \$164 million. This was not the first time this proposal had been made. The Royal Geographical Society made a similar proposal in 1887, but the Bradfield Scheme as it became known was the most famous.

The idea was again visited in 1945 but to no avail, and again by a sub-committee of the Qld N.P.A. Water Resources in 1981. This report was favourable and the then Bjelke-Peterson government obtained a \$5 million grant from the Federal government, and commissioned another feasibility study, known as the Cameron McNamara Report. It stated that "The scheme was physically possible but details may have to be modified in the light of the greater information now available".

This report supported strongly by the then Qld government, and \$5 million was allocated as part of the \$640 million 5-Year Bicentennial Water Resources programme. This programme was axed after the Frazer government defeat in 1983, but the Bjelke-Peterson government organised its own study by some of Australia's best water engineers in 1984. Called the Bradfield Study consortium, its report was never released!

The Office of Northern Development was directed by Cabinet to provide a Cost Assessment of the Consortium Report, which was completed in late 1989. With the fall of the National Party government in Queensland, the Consortium Report and Assessment and the Feasibility Study, although a public document, was never published by the incoming Goss government.

Again in 1993 and 1995 further studies were done by various parties, but so far nothing has eventuated, which bring us to the present water crisis being experienced by the Murray- Darling river basin, and more particular South East Queensland.

Planned Proposal.

The proposal is a variation of the above scheme whereby a pipeline 2 metres in diameter be constructed from the upper reaches of the Burdekin River, inland of the Great dividing Range, and south to an area around the Dalby area in southern Queensland.

Providing the water in the pipeline is allowed to travel at 10 kph, it has the potential to deliver in excess of 300 mega litres per hour. In two and one half-hours enough water to service Southeast Queensland for a day. To take it further, during a usual wet season in North Queensland lasting three months, the proposed pipeline would deliver enough water to supply Southeast Queensland, at its present rate of consumption, for TWO YEARS. Should the water travel at, say 15 kph the above figures may be increased by 50%

Once the pipeline reaches the Dalby region, the plan is to build four auxiliary pipelines each 1 metre in diameter to service the four major dams in South East Queensland viz.: Somerset, Wivenhoe, Moogerah and the North Pine.

Being only 1 metre in diameter much of the auxiliary pipelines could be laid underground, so there would be minimal disruption to the large population of Southeast Queensland. Each would have the potential to deliver in excess of 70 megalitres of water per hour.

Alternatively the pipeline of 2 metres could be extended to a region nearer the coast, and then to service the aforementioned dams.

To avoid any environmental damage to the North Queensland river systems, only the excess water over and above the natural flow of the river(s) would be allowed into the pipeline. As, in the future, other rivers further north could assist in supplying water into a grid or network system.

Further Benefits of the Proposal.

(The twist in the Tale)

The reason for the proposed pipeline to be terminated in the Dalby region, are twofold. (1): It is virtually a direct route inland from North Queensland to the Dalby area, and construction of the pipeline would be through mainly unpopulated areas. (2): Dalby area is at the headwaters of the Condamine, Moonie and Weir Rivers, which flow eventually into the Darling River system and thence into the Murray basin. Further south is also the Mackintyre River, which may be thought of for future expansion of the scheme.

Once the water crisis is eased in Southeast Queensland and/or a couple of good wet seasons is experienced in that area, we then have the ability to supplement the supply of water to the Murray-Darling system. This could amount to over 7000 megalitres of water per day, being supplied to other Eastern States of Australia, during the normal wet season experienced by North Queensland. THAT IS 7 BILLION LITRES A DAY.

Construction

Once the route of the proposed pipeline is surveyed, it is envisaged that FIVE construction teams be employed building the pipeline west of the Great Divide. One located west of Mackay, another west of Rockhampton, another west of Bundaberg, and another west of Gympie. The fifth would concentrate on the Auxiliary pipelines from Dalby eastward to the coast. Each team would be working both north and south to meet up with the neighbouring teams, working in the opposite direction. GPS navigation would keep all teams on course throughout the construction. There would be a further two teams building the necessary infrastructure at each end of the pipeline, also they would be involved in building the pipeline to meet up with the other construction teams working towards them.

Construction Schedule

It is envisaged that each construction teams' progress be at the average speed of One kilometre per week. The length of the proposed pipeline being somewhere in the region of 1200 kilometres, it is estimated that the total

construction could be completed in about five years from the turning of the first sod.

This progress rate is calculated at 50 Km per year per team on average. Of course certain variables in the terrain will add or subtract from this figure, but it is not an unreachable target.

Pumping Stations

It will of course be necessary to install pumping stations powered by electricity at regular intervals along the proposed pipeline. The technology is available to install large solar panels and/or wind turbines to power the pumps, to make them a stand-alone feature. They will be environmental friendly and not interfere with the electricity grid now in place around Queensland.

Estimated Costing

The Cost of this scheme needs to be calculated by qualified engineers, but examination of previous studies of the Bradfield Scheme should provide a guide.

Over 50 years ago, the Snowy Mountains Authority was formed to evaluate and eventually build the greatest engineering feat in Australia's history, The Snowy Mountain Scheme! Could we accomplish that today? Would we attempt it today? Will we show political will, or political won't?

This project, rivals that scheme, it may even surpass it. But the benefits to be derived from this undertaking are immeasurable and the value to generations yet unborn cannot be calculated.

If we costed the Snowy Mountains Scheme in today's dollars we may have a guide.

Funding the Project

This is the difficult part. No matter where the money to finance the project is found, either Federal or State Government funding, the ordinary people of Australia will pay for it. The Governments of Australia have only the money that we allow them, through taxation and various excises and levies.

If this scheme were costed at \$50 Billion, that would be \$10 Billion per year. Perhaps if there was a levy on G.S.T. of 2 and one half percent bringing G.S.T. to 12 and one half percent for the life of the project, It could be financed.

According to the Federal Government Legislation Covering the G.S.T. The States Government of Australia would have to agree to the increase. The State Governments and Territories not benefiting from the project, would have this extra funding to spend on their own major infrastructures for the life of the levy. But the funding would have to be on projects of National Importance

It must be remembered that the gun buy-back scheme was funded by a levy on Medicare.

The levy collected on behalf of the States to benefit from this scheme viz.; Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, would be put into a special fund. Administered by the Federal Government, it would be spent on funding the pipeline project. To save any parochial arguments between the States, it may be best if *the Federal Government oversees the project*.

The States and Territories not to be seen benefiting from the scheme viz.; Tasmania, Northern Territory and possibly Australian Capital Territory, would benefit from the increased funding, but it may be best if the infrastructures that these Governments require to be built, be also overseen by a Federal Authority.

Last but not least this leaves Western Australia so far unmentioned. They also have a water supply problem. Could not a similar scheme of a pipeline from Lake Argyle to the southwest and west of Western Australia be envisaged? Although it will be around 2000kms, it would assist in opening up much of the State that only lacks water to make it viable. Once the project in the Eastern States is completed, a similar project could benefit West Australians, all funded by Australians, for Australians, through the levy funded by the G.S.T.

In Conclusion

There will be much opposition to this scheme, much of it from environmental groups, much from State Governments and also from ordinary people who cannot or will not see the advantages flowing from the scheme as proposed.

In this, the 21st century, we are only now realising the damage that climate change can inflict. We cannot change this overnight, nor can we change or reverse this, in 12 months or ten years, or even twenty years. It is something we will have to live with for the near, and possibly the far, future, until more understanding of the phenomenon is available.

The “El Nino” effect has only come into view in the last twenty or so years. But its’ affect on climate change is now well known. In fact the latest studies are pointing the finger at “El Nino” as controlling the weather patterns on the whole planet. Geological cores drilled and removed from around the world have indicated that the “El Nino” effect has been around for thousands of years, and in some instances has occurred consecutively over several years and created havoc to the world climate as we know it.

Again there is not a great deal we can do about “El Nino” but we can prepare to minimise the effects. We are now in a situation where a decision must be made, We can embrace a scheme as outlined above, or something similar, or we can bury our heads in the sand and hope things will get better without any preparation.

Here is a scenario: “El Nino” not only visits us this year but for the following five years. (Historically this happened about fifteen hundred years ago, only it lasted over thirty years when humans were unable to affect climate change). The East Coast of Australia will be in drought for over five years. The only rainfall will be in the tropics, in the north of Australia, during the monsoon season. This scenario will one day revisit us, but are we prepared? Are we? I truly hope so!

During the present wet season the Burdekin River was flowing 3metres over the Burdekin Dam, with billions and billions of litres of water flowing out to sea every hour. This scheme will only tap into a fraction of that total. It will not obstruct the natural flow of the river(s). By Federal legislation the only water to be diverted, will be over and above that, which is necessary for the health of the river, or rivers.

This scheme is possible and viable. Pipelines have been built throughout the world, for oil, gas, and water and for many other reasons. Early last century a water pipeline was built in Western Australia from the West Coast to service the gold towns of Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. That was somewhere in the region of 600 kms in length. Gas pipelines have been built from Siberia to service industry in Western Europe, of *OVER 6000 KMS*. So it not a case of can it be done, but do we want to do it. Can we afford not to embrace this proposal, or at least have an in depth study of the feasibility, of this, or something similar.

May I leave you with a quotation attributed to George Bernard Shaw in 1921 “You see things and you say “WHY?” but I dream things that never were; and I say, “WHY NOT?”

Thank you for taking the time to read this proposal.

Terence B Tomsett