

To 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 clarify my comments made in the hearing in Brisbane on Wednesday the 18 April 2007. I was asked to clarify a number of points that I raised in the conversation with a number of senators in the hearing.

My points of clarification are as follows:

1. What are the timelines for public consultation with affected residents of other dam projects in QLD history?
2. How has the Qld Gov "bent the truth" about the benefits of the dam by only partially quoting the conclusions of the ACIL report?

1) Timelines for public consultation with affected residents of other dam projects in QLD history

There are important stages for social impact management and public consultation in the process of building large dams. These stages are:

Feasibility stage: This stage refers to the period of time in which documents that assess the feasibility were made public by relevant government departments and authorities.

Stage 1: This is the period of time where project details are finalised so that an accurate estimate of area needed for land acquisition can be made. It is also an important stage for social impact management.

Stage 2: The land acquisition stage in its early stage is characterised by affected residents voluntarily accepting to relocate.

Table 1 below shows the relative timelines for the stages of consultation and land acquisition for certain dams in QLD.

Table 1: Timelines of consultation and construction selected dams in SEQ.

Dam	Feasibility stage (pre dam announcement)	Stage 1 (decision to dam to land acquisition)	Stage 2 (Land acquisition stage)	Total Time (Announcement to completion)
Wivenhoe	7 years	1.25 years	> 6 years	14 years
North Pine Dam	> 4 years	5 years ¹	12 years	22 years
Burdekin Falls Dam	> 3 years	4 years ¹	3 years	7 years
Paradise Dam	1 year approx ²	1.5 years	3 years	5 years
Traveston Crossing	0³	11 days⁴	Current (44% properties resumed in 11months)	(6 years?)

Sources: State government press releases; DNRW; Sunwater and ABC media articles

¹ Some inferences were made in the calculation of these figures in that land acquisition proceeded after a formal decision was made to commence the project.

² This refers to the process of Burnett River Water Allocation Management Plan which recommended a much smaller amount be allocated for a dam compared to the present Paradise Dam capacity.

³ The strategic reserve in the MRWRP is not included in the feasibility stage as this consultation did not acknowledge potential dams

⁴ It is acknowledged that there have been modifications to project design. However, acquisitions for the whole project started on the 8/5/06.

The major conclusion that can be made from these findings is that the process of damming the Mary River at Traveston Crossing is vastly different to other dam approval processes in Queensland. Of particular note are the implications and ramifications of stage 1 in the Traveston Crossing.

It is vitally important that stage 1 is a minimum of 2 years to allow adequate public participation in the process of decision making and to implement effective social impacts management strategies (Scudder 2006). This period of decision making should involve assessment of the impacts of the project and negotiating the processes and desired outcomes for resettlement if the dam is to proceed as originally planned. If this period is too small it is highly likely that significant adverse impacts will occur because of inadequate time for consultation and assessment to occur. An adequate time is also needed for affected residents to

adjust from a psychological and social perspective. The world history of public consultation and managing social impacts in the process of building dams is poor. If present processes continue the Traveston Crossing dam will also rate very poorly in terms of social impact management and public participation. It is extremely unfortunate that I am already using the Traveston Crossing Dam proposal as an example of 'how not to build dams' in the lectures I give to students at Griffith University.

2) How has the Qld Gov "bent the truth" about the benefits of the dam by only partially quoting the conclusions of the ACIL report?

The Queensland Government through media statements and through the QLD Government submission to the Senate Inquiry have promoted the idea that the Traveston Crossing will benefit the regional economy. This is based on the ACIL Tasman Report (2007). The report concluded that

In the context of the Traveston Region economy, the \$1.7 billion Traveston Crossing dam project is a major opportunity to reinvigorate existing agricultural production, introduce a new workforce to the area and to hold them. (ACIL 2007 p46)

This statement was the concluding text of the section on Credible Futures. However, the overwhelming assessment of ACIL in the same section was that to realise any benefits from the dam, significant constraints would need to be addressed. The theme of the ACIL report was that benefits from the dam could only be realised if the constraints were overcome. In addition, the future of the region is determined by other factors.

It is likely that the future of the Traveston Crossing region will be determined by a combination of very large forces, such as population growth and settlement patterns, the obligations of government to provide services to their constituents, the opportunities that the private sector is willing to finance and the change wrought by other markets, and technological progress, including transport costs. (ACIL Tasman 2007 p41)

As admitted by the ACIL Tasman Report the dam may play a part in contributing to this future. However, even if the constraints outlined in the ACIL Tasman report are addressed, the contribution of the dam construction to the future prosperity of the region is not as large as other forces external to dam construction. Additionally, the report was not a cost benefit analysis

In relation to my comment on the Queensland Government bending the truth I refer to the quoting of selected statements to promote a discourse of “positive benefits created by the dam” whereas the theme of the ACIL report did not overtly advocate such a position. Their brief was to examine how the dam could be used as a catalyst and to that end they achieved that purpose. The ACIL Tasman report should be used to further plan for potential benefits. It should not be used as a comprehensive cost benefit analysis that concludes the dam will economically benefit the region.

References

ACIL Tasman (February 2007) Scoping Economic Futures – Traveston Crossing Region – Future Economic and Business Development Scenarios

Scudder T (2006) The Future of Large Dams: Dealing with Social, Environmental, Institutional and Political Costs. Earth Scan, London

I hope I have sufficiently clarified my two statements.

Yours Sincerely

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