

31 March 2007

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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 Supplies for South East Queensland – Traveston Crossing Dam Information.

The purpose of this letter is to provide information for the Senate Inquiry. My occupation is a beef cattle producer in the Mary Valley and I make this submission to the Inquiry as a concerned citizen who has extensive local knowledge of the Mary Valley. May I also inform you that my home property and the properties I lease are not within the proposed inundation area.

When the State Government announced last year that they intended to build a dam at Traveston Crossing, I immediately held the belief that it would be a disaster socially, environmentally and economically. As a result I commenced research to find a better viable alternative that would have a limited impact on the land and the people. I have believed for a long time that Borumba Dam has not been utilized to its full potential and if it was it would provide a significant contribution to South East Queensland's water demand.

My proposal is to build a new dam wall approximately 300 metres in front of the existing dam wall at Borumba and make it as high as possible. My advice is that it would be able to go high enough to obtain or get very close to 2 million MLs with the inclusion of two small saddle dam walls. The second part of my plan is that one or two opening boom gate weirs be built on the Mary River at suitable locations ie. Coles Creek, Moy Pocket. If further water is required then these boom gates could be closed when the river is flowing in abundance and water be pumped from them to Borumba via a pipeline and pumping station. The third part is that a pipeline be built from Somerset dam and its partner Wivenhoe, to Borumba Dam. This line would have a dual function in that it would transfer water from Somerset and Wivenhoe to Borumba when there is an excess of water in those dams. This would again top up any shortfall from another catchment area if required. When there is a need to top up Wivenhoe the water could be pumped from Borumba to Jimna and from there on, gravity fed. The process would work in reverse when harvesting water from Wivenhoe and Somerset to Borumba. The water would then be pumped to Jimna and gravity fed utilising the same infrastructure. My final part is that a hydro electricity plant be built at Borumba Dam to supply power for the pumping stations. This would

be feasible with the new height of the proposed wall. All excess power could go into the grid when it is not required for pumping.

I would now like to draw your attention to comparisons between my Borumba proposal and that of Traveston. The points detailed below will be elaborated on in more detail during evidence at the Inquiry if required.

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| AREA: | Borumba: approximately 3,500ha and 4,000 ha depending on wall height. Traveston: Stages 1 and 2 - 7,135 ha |
| DEPTH: | Borumba: 80 – 90 meters average depth approximately depending on wall height. Traveston: 5 – 6 metres average depth. |
| EVAPORATION: | Borumba: Low. A deep dam with cold water. Traveston: High. A shallow dam with warm water. |
| SEEPAGE: | Borumba: Low. Hard rock granite valleys. Traveston: High. Alluvial plain. |
| RAINFALL: | Similar for both catchments. |
| RUNOFF: | Borumba: Good. Traveston: Poor. |
| SOCIAL IMPACT: | Borumba: Low. Traveston: High. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: | Borumba: Low. Traveston: High. |
| ECONOMICS: | Borumba: No land resumptions, the land required is owned by the State Government. No infrastructure replacement i.e.: roads, electricity, town infrastructure replacement and relocations etc. Lower construction costs. Some infrastructure and materials already onsite. When completed it would be a world-class major Eco Tourism asset for Queensland and Australia, a great waterway that would stretch approximately 26 kms through wilderness landscape. The agricultural loss would be low, as the land involved has limited agricultural value. Traveston: High land resumption costs. High infrastructure replacement costs. i.e.: roads, electricity, town infrastructure relocations etc. High construction costs of dam wall. The agricultural loss |

would be high as the Mary Valley is a rich alluvial plain comprising many and varied rural enterprises.

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Response from the Queensland State Government to the proposal.

When Premier Peter Beattie visited Gympie on the 14 September 2006 and addressed the public on the Traveston proposal at the Gympie Pavilion, I was given the opportunity of presenting my proposal for Borumba. The Premier said that my proposal would be assessed and he accepted my invitation to inspect the Borumba site.

Several weeks later the Premier in company with senior officials joined Mr. Lance Atthow, a grazier who has lived in the area for 62 years and myself, on an inspection of the site. Lance and I explained the benefits and possibilities of the proposal. From the outset we realised it was falling on deaf ears and was not really being considered as an alternative. In our opinion the only reason he did inspect the site was to waive off any political criticism. He had no intention of even considering the proposal.

On the 3 November 2006 I addressed the Deputy Premier Anna Bligh who had taken over the Infrastructure portfolio from the Premier. At that Gympie meeting in front of thousands of people she said to me, "I will give you a look you in the eye, iron clad guarantee that if your proposal stacks up we will do it." Since that meeting I have had no input into any investigation of my proposal. There have been numerous correspondences from the Deputy Premier and other officials, including two Terms of Reference for an investigation into Borumba. Both of those TOR's were flawed and designed to make my proposal fail and Traveston proceed. At no time have I been consulted about any TOR, I have simply been told what will be occurring with my idea. The Deputy Premier has refused my several requests to inspect the Borumba site, citing she is too busy.

I now believe all correspondence between myself and the State Government has ceased. I have received no reply or acknowledgement since my last letter to the Deputy Premier dated 15 February 2007. The Deputy Premier will not accept two conditions I require for me to sign off on a Terms of Reference for my proposal.

- (a) My proposal must be examined against Stage1 of the Traveston Crossing proposal, not the three stages. Queensland Water Infrastructure referral of only Stage 1 of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam to the Federal Government under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act states:

"At this stage it is not considered prudent to seek full approval for Stage 2 as the current planning horizon does not envisage construction for another 28 years. With rapid changes in technology, population projections, climate change and assessment requirements; a different course of action may be considered more appropriate at that time".

For those very reasons, using the Government's own logic, the Borumba proposal must be assessed against the yield from Stage 1 of the Traveston Crossing proposal, not the three stages they wish to compare it with.

(b) My second requirement is that my proposal be assessed by a truly independent consultancy firm with no connections to the State Government, an interstate firm would be ideal.

I do not believe that those two conditions are unreasonable for the sake of transparency. It is apparent the State Government is not agreeing them to as they know the Borumba proposal will out perform Traveston and they have too much at stake to let that occur. I would be happy to have my proposal assessed against Stages 1 and 2 of Traveston if the State Government would do likewise and refer all stages to the Federal Government under the EPBC Act.

From the outset I believe the State Government and it's Public Servants have treated me as a 'Dumb Cocky' who would hopefully just go away. Unfortunately for them I haven't. I personally have no tertiary qualifications in the associated fields but I do have experts within the State Governments own departments, consultancy firms and other independents that are advising me. They know that the Traveston proposal was chosen on political grounds. It was not the preferred location and would be a failure. They all believe that Borumba in conjunction with other non-rain dependant alternatives is a much better option and they cannot understand why the government will not accept it. Unfortunately, owing to the guarantee of confidentiality I have given those people, I cannot divulge their names to the Inquiry, as they fear for their careers and future contracts with the State Government.

I am prepared to present all correspondence between the State Government and myself to the Inquiry.

There is one other matter I wish to bring to the notice Inquiry as a Vietnam Veteran and member of the RSL. Citizens of the Mary Valley have fought in both world wars and every conflict in which Australia has been involved. Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are doing the same today. Many of these men and women are buried on foreign soil, some returned and are buried in their beautiful Mary Valley. They would be horrified to think that the land they fought for was now being ruined and taken away from their descendants by their own government when there are better alternatives available.

I am prepared to appear before the Inquiry to give evidence.

Yours sincerely

R.E.McMah

