

3rd April 2007

Committee Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Submitted via: rrat.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland

I am writing to provide input into the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland – Traveston Crossing Dam. Growcom supports the Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) submission and will provide additional feedback on behalf of the Queensland horticulture industry.

Growcom is the peak representative body for the fruit and vegetable growing industry in Queensland, supporting fruit and vegetable growing enterprises in rural and regional areas of the state. The horticulture industry provides over 25,000 jobs and contributes more than \$1.5 billion to the state economy every year.

Industry groups and the rural community have expressed concerns in relation to the development of the Traveston Crossing Dam since the proposal's announcement in June 2006. As the peak representative body for the Queensland horticulture industry, Growcom has raised these concerns with the State Government. I will raise these same concerns with the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee.

Primary concerns remain around the disruption to the Mary Valley agricultural industry. Industry groups are adamant that the agriculture industry and community must not be any worse-off in the long term as a result of developing the Traveston Crossing Dam. Overall, industry demands a smooth transition for those wanting to maintain productive business operations in the future. Growers affected by any new water infrastructure developments must be fully compensated for any damage or loss to land, crop and business investments, water or earnings. In addition, the existing water supplies and reliability for growers outside the inundation area must not be impacted by the new dam.

It is important that the broader economic impacts of the development as well as the direct and indirect impacts on the local agriculture industry are addressed. Growcom, as well as other industry bodies and stakeholders, called for a joint government-industry taskforce to investigate industry's concerns regarding the critical mass of agriculture in the region in determining future viability. This issue is significant for a number of reasons; one being that the reduction in agricultural businesses can impact upon the industry's ability to access and influence components within the supply chain.

Growcom acknowledges that the *Lifestyle, Employment and Business Taskforce* was established to concentrate on the social and economic disruption caused by the dam project. However, this taskforce only included Queensland Government representatives. Although this taskforce is seen by Growcom as a step in the right direction, industry stakeholders including Queensland Farmers Federation (QFF) should have been involved to address issues relevant to the local primary industries.

Growcom appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback to the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland – Traveston Crossing Dam. I anticipate that the above comments will be taken into consideration in the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Ziebarth', with a stylized, flowing script.

Paul Ziebarth
Chairman