

PO Box 65
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Qld 4570
3rd April 2007
Phone 0427476488

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland - Traveston Crossing Dam Information

My association with the Mary Valley goes back 25 years. My submission will not cover the same facts and figures with which you will be supplied by authorities and by persons who are far more qualified to do so.

I write about the abuse. I write from the perspective of a 60 year old citizen who has been politically engaged all his life, who sees an abuse being perpetrated on one of Australia's most fertile valleys, and on a community of some three thousand residents from 900 properties, and further untold thousands who will be affected without compensation – some of whom who have lost valuable businesses and been told that they do not come under the compensation guidelines. Others have worked steadily over many years to build a business to provide themselves with a retirement income and found overnight that their business would be decimated – again not under the compensation guidelines.

Peter Beattie told us in Gympie that we would be making a sacrifice for the common good. Oh that this were so! The real point is that this is about making a sacrifice for no good at all.

There is NOT ONE expert outside the influence of the Qld Govt that gives support for this project. Those who have done even the most cursory examination of the proposal assert its unbelievable stupidity.

The source of the real abuse is that this valley will be destroyed in the exercise of politics.

As an example I tender the following. Following the farcical announcement of the conditions of Stages 1 and 2 at the Gympie Show Pavilion, I watched hundreds of people walk from the hall choking back tears of rage, and the common statement was "This is worse!".

Those outside the valley were duped but we were not.

All that had happened was that the environmental buffer zone had been removed, with arbitrary lines snipping off the useful water storage areas from our properties, and leaving our remaining residential areas high, very dry and very useless for everything but watching TV. As a result, we were told, we will be able to stay. But then on closer examination of the "new" construction we found that in fact the dam would still be built to stage 2 requirements immediately, meaning that a switch to stage 2 could therefore occur overnight – at another political whim.

So we would be asked to sit on our useless properties (our properties are our homes, not our houses), being unable to sell on an open market, being unable to proceed with any development plans that we have made, and being compelled to watch the beautiful Mary Valley landscape die before our very eyes, quite probably taking with it one of the most important creatures on the face of the planet – namely the single lung Qld lungfish that is the most important link to the times when we crawled from the water to become land dwellers. When I think of what is proposed here I wonder that the ancestors of some of us were able to get sufficient grip to crawl from that water.

The trauma for my family and the 900 families of the proposed dam footprint who will be forced either to shift elsewhere or to face unviable properties in a dying valley, pales into insignificance in comparison to the trauma we shall experience in watching this absurd project come into being *through the practice of politics.*

We cry tears of rage in this valley every day and every night for this proposed sacrilegious waste. I have seen them already in some of the published submissions you already have before you. When you drive through this valley, with the water coming only up to the door of your car for mile after mile at the full level – if it ever would fill - you too ought to be enraged. You won't even have to

read the facts tended by expert after expert to recognise that this is to be Australia's next disaster from Kenilworth to Hervey Bay and Fraser Island. It will rival the Aral Sea. All for politics. This is much more than the NIMBY syndrome.

The problems with the project are so simply revealed. The Mary River is a low flowing river with some spectacular events, around every ten years. It only ever floods when the cyclones come, and at those times Wivanhoe and Somerset will be full. You would not, as the Qld Govt has mischievously done, use a yearly average flow to assess the potential water supply from such a system.

When you consider that the average depth of this so called megadam (mega-area dam) will be 6m when full, not the 12m depth that the Government chooses in the middle of the Mary River stream, you can easily deduce that at an evaporation and seepage rate for hot shallow dams on an alluvial flood plain of 1.5m per year will mean that when the water is required elsewhere there will be none available from the proposed Traveston Crossing dam. Hydrological modelling recently done shows that the TC dam, had it been built before the floods of 1998-9 would have failed by 2003.

And then there are the 1 000 000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions that will be emitted by a dam of this nature. How does building such a dam relate to the now accepted problem of global warming?

The real abuse comes from the fact that there are better alternatives anyway as demonstrated by the ISF study. From a cost perspective, the cost per megalitre of this water far outstrips estimated costs from alternative sources. Dr. Stuart White's team calculate the figure at \$3/KL as opposed to \$1.15/KL from other sources that will supply 190ML per year against the TC dam of 150ML per year - using the Government's own figures. The dam does not make sense from any angle at all. The valley is bewildered, confused and absolutely dumbfounded that we seem unable to get this message out. All we can conclude is that the wider public and a media being itself bullied by an all powerful Government is so fearful of running out of water that it is afraid to even examine the argument.

Further, I am shocked that a Government in this country – one that would espouse to govern for all the people - could stoop to constructing its own bogus company QWI P/L to subvert the normal cross checks and balances that would have been set in train under a normal development process. Is this the sign of things to come from politicians of all persuasions? This is the totalitarian stuff that historically causes revolutions.

When it suited the Government to make this project seem large, Premier Beattie stated a figure of 900 properties involved. It was a classic mega structure solution to solve an election problem. Now Anna Bligh has reduced the figure to 78 homes in stage 1 and 128 further in stage 2 (CM Feb 16). Can you believe that? It is unbelievable because it is a bare faced lie.

The volume when full will be one-ninth the volume that the Wivanhoe can hold – yet it will cover 70% of the area that Wivanhoe takes – and much of it is the fertile alluvial plains of a very ancient valley. It's a mega-area dam - not a mega dam.

Unless you are the most cynical of political operators, you will begin to weigh up the human tragedy that is occurring at this very moment from what is arguably the biggest disruption of people outside wartime that this country has seen. You will speak to professionals organising suicide watches and you will be fearful that the scale of this human and environmental tragedy will only become fully evident long after this ridiculous project is complete – should political games and gains allow it to go that far.

It is most important that you view the area – from the ground. I am sure that you will shake your heads in disbelief that such a thing could be contemplated. I could never visit this beautiful valley again if Australia allows it to drown in a political sewer.

Yours faithfully,

John Porter

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