

Ref CTS 08667/06

8 September 2006

Mr N J Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
Cnr Alice and George Streets  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 9 August 2006 enclosing a copy of Petition No. 664-06 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly.

The Petition requests that the House take all necessary action to protect the homes of the people of the Mary Valley who are threatened along with unique and endangered species of animals by the Queensland Government's proposal to dam the Mary at Traveston Crossing.

The Traveston Crossing Dam site has been identified as the only site in the region where a large capacity dam could be constructed. In the Mary Valley, at least four extra storages would need to be built to provide up to a similar annual quantity of water as the Traveston proposal.

Traveston Crossing is south east Queensland's largest undeveloped dam site. It is proposed to operate the Traveston Crossing Dam in three phases to progressively meet demand and to reduce immediate landholder and road relocation impacts:

- Phase 1 — 2011 Traveston Crossing Dam built with an operating capacity of 180,000 megalitres and a yield of 70,000 megalitres per annum;
- Phase 2 — 2025 raising of Borumba Dam by about 30 metres to a 350,000 megalitres capacity to deliver an extra 40,000 megalitres per annum; and
- Phase 3 — 2035 full operation of Traveston Crossing Dam with a total system yield of 150,000 megalitres per annum.

The phased process will more than halve the initial land area required for the Dam - from 7,600 hectares down to 2,900 hectares and will reduce the estimated number of properties that need to be acquired from approximately 1,000 down to less than 500 by 2011. This three phase process would ensure yield targets required to meet the water needs of population growth in south east Queensland by 2050 are met.

The Queensland Government is now continuing its consultation processes with local landholders to purchase properties required for the Dam. The Queensland Government will undertake a fair and reasonable compensation process.

In addition, once the sale process for these properties is completed, former landholders can remain on the property at heavily concessional rents until the Dam is completed. For landholders affected by Phase 1 of the process, this will involve leasing back the property at either a set rate of 3 percent of the unimproved capital value, or \$1,000 per annum, whichever is lower.

Landholders not affected until Phase 3 of the process will be able to remain on their properties for up to 20 years. They will be able to do so, once again on a discounted rental basis. The rent would be set at 25 percent of the assessed market rental/lease rate.

The Queensland Government has listened to the valid concerns of the community that were raised at meetings in Beaudesert, Gympie and elsewhere concerning job security and the impact of the dams on business and livelihoods. The Community Futures Taskforce, headed by former Governor Major General Peter Arnison, has been established to look at issues such as jobs, industry assistance and how to help local communities capitalise on the construction of the Dam. Specific initiatives to be undertaken by the Taskforce include:

- undertaking community needs assessment to identify social, economic and land use implications;
- providing shopfront access to provide advice and support for individuals and the community;
- generating a case management approach for affected individuals, business and communities;
- establishing community reference groups;
- identifying opportunities for regional employment and business continuity;
- developing industry adjustment initiatives;
- identifying longer term employment opportunities;
- identifying skills and training programs;
- identifying land use planning scheme options;
- identifying social infrastructure and lifestyle needs to rebuild communities;
- identifying issues relating to access to rural water use; and
- rural futures planning.

The Taskforce will consult widely with local Members of Parliament, local government, industry, community groups, organisations and individuals. It is intended to involve local tradespeople and industry in construction, as well as new employment and training opportunities.

Local residents and businesses will have the opportunity to benefit from the construction of the Dam where possible. The goal is to allow as many people as possible to remain in the region surrounding the Dam and to ensure that the local economy is strengthened to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by the Dam in the medium to long term. The hotline for the Community Futures Taskforce is freecall telephone 1800 133 258.

Traveston Crossing Dam on the Mary River is part of the solution for addressing the shrinking water supply caused by climate change and the fastest population growth in Australia. A range of detailed investigations on the Traveston Crossing Dam are currently underway. Although the Dam will create significant economic and social benefits for the south east Queensland region, it is recognised it will also affect people living in the area, the local economy and environment. Therefore, the decision to build major storage infrastructure is not taken lightly, and substantial resources are put in place to mitigate adverse impacts as much as possible.

The final go ahead is dependent on various Commonwealth and Queensland Government approvals which are still required. On-ground geotechnical assessments and other assessments all need to be completed before these approvals can be obtained. Further assessments following the preliminary feasibility study will include a rigorous environmental impact assessment, which will deal with issues such as endangered species and impact mitigation measures in accordance with Commonwealth and State environmental protection legislation.

An independent preliminary environmental assessment has been completed which focused on the potential development options for the Traveston Crossing Dam. The report indicated that the Traveston Crossing Dam would affect species including the Mary River Cod, lungfish, Mary River Turtle and endangered frogs. However, the total medium and high outflows for the Mary River will still continue to occur and the assessment indicated that the Traveston Crossing Dam would not significantly alter the ecological values of the estuary, the Great Sandy Straits or Fraser Island. Mitigation strategies such as fish passage devices will be the subject of detailed environmental impact studies as they were for the Burnett River Dam.

Further information is available on the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water's website at [www.nrm.qld.gov.au/water](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au/water). The Department has also established a freecall telephone hotline 1800 243 585, to address questions about the progress of the investigations and to take advice from the community concerning issues that need to be addressed.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

*Signed*

Henry Palaszcuk MP  
**Minister for Natural Resources and Mines  
and Minister Assisting the Premier on Water**