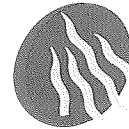




Hon Paul Lucas MP

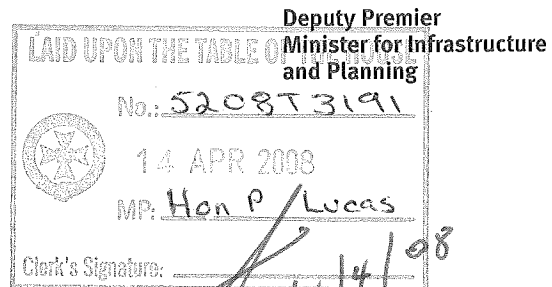


Queensland
Government

Our ref: TN123970

10 APR 2008

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
Brisbane QLD 4000



Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter about the Traveston Crossing Dam petitions 912-07 and 922-07.

The concerns raised in petitions 912-07 and 922-07 about the impacts of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam are noted and are reflective of a broad range of issues which have been investigated as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project.

The EIS process for this project is being conducted under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*. The EIS process is accredited under the bilateral agreement between the Australian Government and the State of Queensland and addresses matters on behalf of both the Australian and Queensland Governments.

I am advised that the EIS for the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam was completed by the Proponent, Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd (QWI) in October 2007 and released by the Coordinator-General for public review and comment on 18 October 2007.

I am further advised that the EIS presents a comprehensive assessment of environmental, social and economic issues, inclusive of the issues raised concerning impacts on agriculture, water quality, suitability for urban supply, impacts on endangered species, management of the catchment and potential impacts on fisheries.

I am advised that Chapter 5 of the EIS, identifies that the Project will impact less than 1% of the land used for agricultural purposes and 1.7% of productive agricultural land in the Mary River Catchment. The EIS does acknowledge that there is limited potential to bring additional land above the full supply level of the dam into productive use, so no direct mitigation measures are proposed. However, mitigation measures leading to increased productivity from the balance of Good Quality Agricultural Land have been recommended in Section 5.1 of the EIS.

I understand that Chapter 6 of the EIS deals with the Project's impact on water resources and water quality. Overall, the EIS demonstrates that negative impacts on water quality within and downstream of the dam site during construction and operation are likely to be minimal, as appropriate and well proven water quality control measures will be implemented during the construction and operational phases of the project.

Level 12 Executive Building
100 George Street Brisbane
PO Box 15009 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3224 4600
Facsimile +61 7 3224 4781
Email deputypremier@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

Advice I have received notes that Chapters 8 and 9 of the EIS show there will be no discernible impact on commercial or recreational fishing in the Mary River, its estuaries or the Great Sandy Strait.

In relation to catchment management, I am advised that the *Water Resource (Mary Basin) Plan 2006* (Mary Basin WRP), approved by the Governor-in-Council on 27 July 2006 and gazetted on 28 July 2006, was legislated to provide a sustainable framework for allocation and general water management within the Mary Basin. One of the purposes of the Mary Basin WRP is to provide a framework for sustainably managing water to achieve ecological outcomes for certain parts of the catchment. Environmental performance within the catchment is defined in the Mary Basin WRP as a series of Environmental Flow Objectives (EFOs) for defined nodes or locations with the basin.

I am further advised that at Chapter 6 of the EIS (Water Resources and Water Quality), conducts an assessment of the dam against the EFOs of the Mary Basin WRP. Findings of this assessment concluded that the operation of the dam will meet all mandatory EFOs. Advice received indicates that through detailed design and development of detailed operating rules, the dam can be operated such that the dam will both meet the Mary Basin WRP EFOs and provide for key ecological flows required by the Mary River Cod and the Queensland Lungfish.

I understand that Chapter 18 of the EIS contains a comprehensive suite of proposed impact mitigation measures for implementation, to ensure that identified impacts of the proposed dam can be adequately managed. The proponent has also outlined the provision of a \$35 million Freshwater Species Conservation Centre to ensure research is conducted to support ongoing survival of important aquatic species. The new research and education centre is being proposed by QWI as part of the Traveston Crossing Dam project and will be operated by the University of Queensland and overseen by the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific Industrial and Research Organisation).

The EIS identifies that a multi-faceted water supply and demand strategy is required to secure water supply for the growing population of South East Queensland (SEQ) to the year 2056, when the region's population is predicted to be over six million people. I understand that analysis conducted as part of the EIS found that the water supply portfolio, which includes the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam, provides the least cost portfolio when compared to alternative water supply portfolios that included replacing the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam component with either a desalination portfolio, a portfolio containing numerous small dams within the Mary River and Logan River catchments, or a portfolio which included dams in northern New South Wales with connecting infrastructure to SEQ.

I encourage all interested parties to review the EIS for the project, giving consideration to how the issues of particular interest have been addressed. The EIS is still available for download on the QWI's website: www.qldwi.com.au.


Further information on the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam and the EIS is available via the Department of Infrastructure and Planning website: www.dip.qld.gov.au/major_projects/traveston.shtm.

The submission period for the EIS has now closed and the Coordinator-General has recently advised that there were 11 261 submissions to the EIS, and that he has requested QWI to prepare a supplementary report to address matters raised in the submissions. The Coordinator-General will consider all submissions about the EIS in evaluating the document and any additional information which the proponent may need to supply in preparing the Coordinator-General's Report.

The Coordinator-General will then provide his assessment report to the Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts for assessment under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999(Cth)*.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Lucas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PAUL LUCAS MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Infrastructure and Planning