



Hon Paul Lucas MP



Queensland
Government

Deputy Premier
Minister for Infrastructure
and Planning

Our ref: TN130450

28 OCT 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 petition 1035-08.

The concerns raised in petition 1035-08 about the impacts of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam are reflective of many issues which have been investigated as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam is being conducted under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*. This highly rigorous EIA 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 of the project, Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd (QWI) in October 2007. The Coordinator-General released the EIS for public review and comment from 22 October 2007 to 14 January 2008.

I understand that the EIS presents a comprehensive assessment of environmental, social and economic issues, inclusive of the issues raised concerning impacts on agriculture, water quality, impacts on endangered species, management of the catchment, potential impacts on fisheries and the impact on the social fabric of the region.

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I am advised that Chapter 5 of the EIS, identifies that the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam will impact less than 1.7 percent 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, I understand that mitigation measures leading to increased productivity from the balance of Good Quality Agricultural Land have been recommended for implementation in Section 5.1 of the EIS, should the project be approved.

I understand that Chapter 6 of the EIS deals with the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam 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.

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, should the project be approved, 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 proposed by QWI as part of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam project, 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 analysis of alternatives conducted in the EIS, backed by economists from Monash University and Marsden Jacobs, found the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam project to be the most cost effective and beneficial water storage option for SEQ.

I understand that alternatives that were assessed as part of the EIS included demand management, rainwater tanks and groundwater, recycling and desalination as well as other surface water site locations, with the EIS conclusively finding that the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam is the preferred option ahead of all other alternatives.

The public review and submission period for the project's EIS has closed and the Coordinator-General received in excess of 11 000 submissions to the EIS.

As required under section 35(1) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*, the Coordinator-General must consider the EIS, all submissions about the EIS and any other material the Coordinator-General considers is relevant in evaluating the project, and any additional information which the proponent may need to supply during the preparation of his evaluation report. This will include the consideration of the issues raised in the submissions received on the EIS.

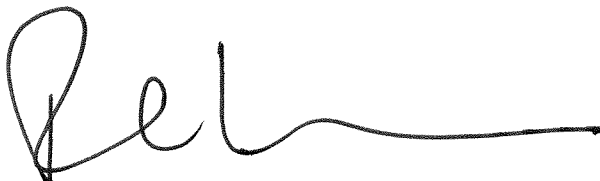
Further, the Coordinator-General must prepare a report evaluating the EIS.

As required under section 35(5) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971*, the evaluation report will be given to the proponent and publicly notified.

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