

**A Discussion Paper on the QLD Government's Assessment
and Management of the Social Impacts of the
Proposed Dam on the Mary River**

For the period April 27th to the end of December 2006

*"If SIA is to be a guiding process of steering development, then
the 'quality' of SIA should be judged not by its products, but by
the effectiveness of its process."*

(Source: International Association of Impact Assessment 2003)

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Mary River Valley. May their history in this country inspire us to live more sustainably. I would also like to acknowledge the large number of people who have offered to tell their personal stories to me. I hope I can do their cause justice.

Many thanks also to the organisations that have contributed important knowledge that gives weight to this report. I will not list these organisations to respect their concerns about publicity.

Truth and Position of the Author

The aim of this document is foster debate surrounding the issues presented. As such this document claims to be truthful to the research questions and methods employed in the study. I believe the information I have presented here is sufficient to validate the claims made in this document. I also believe that if another researcher were to ask the same questions and employ the same techniques the findings and conclusions would be similar to the ones presented in this report.

I have undertaken this research as part of my PhD research at Griffith University. I was motivated to research the issue because of the apparent significant social justice and environmental issues that have resulted from lack of process.

Corrections and Contributions

Further contributions to research into the civic engagement and social impacts of the project will gladly be accepted. Any corrections to information presented in this document can be forwarded to the contact details below.

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1.0 Executive Summary

A study of the social impact assessment and management of the Mega Dam project on the Mary River was conducted to evaluate the how the processes and actions of the Queensland Government have affected the people in the region. A report card approach was used to evaluate the processes and outcomes of social impact assessment and management. The report card indicates an overwhelming failure of the Queensland Government to implement internationally recognised principles and strategies that are essential in the planning, assessment and management of social impacts of large dams. The Queensland Government passed 2 out of 34 internationally recognised criteria of social impact assessment and management.

This failure can best summarised in the following way. Firstly, the Queensland Government has failed to acknowledge accepted goals of social impact assessment and management. The goal for any social impact assessment and management is to ensure that not only are the living standards of the people affected maintained but the well being of the people affected should be improved through project implementation. The Queensland Government's actions so far have not achieved this goal. It appears it has limited strategies to achieve this goal in the longer term.

Secondly, the report card demonstrates that the Queensland State Government has failed to adequately recognise the scale and depth of social impact resulting from a proposed Mega dam on the Mary River. It was only public outrage expressed during Premier Beattie's visit to Gympie on the 5th of July, two months after the announcement that brought about a realisation that the social impacts were significant. Additionally, a social impact response modelled on cyclone disaster relief has failed to account for the impacts caused by the way in which the Queensland Governments has managed the project.

Thirdly, the Queensland Government actions have contributed to excessive adverse impacts through failing to adhere to acceptable democratic and administrative processes. The construction of large dams will always have an adverse impact if there is a large population in the impacted area. However, the affected people in the Mary River Valley have experienced impacts in excess of what would normally be expected if robust democratic and administrative processes had been implemented. The key factor in this conclusion is the uncertainty experienced by almost all people in the impacted area. Many people in the Mary River Valley say that the Government has managed this aspect to achieve strategic advantage in implementation of the project.

Two examples illustrate this point. Firstly, Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd (a 100% owned government corporation) has a direct conflict of interest between managing dam construction and assessing social impact. It would be more appropriate for the organisation that offers compensation to affected residents to be different to the construction company that is looking to save costs in project implementation. Secondly, the terms of reference for the Communities Futures Task Force and the draft terms of reference for the EIS make little or no reference to the procedural aspects of consultation that is fundamental to social impact assessment and management. It would appear that it is not in the interests of the Queensland Government to adequately and appropriately address the processes of social impacts assessment of the Mega dam on the Mary River as this may lead to complications in their chosen approval path.

Some community development work is now being initiated by various Government Departments and the Communities Futures Task Force. However, their responses to social impacts assessment and management have been limited primarily by the nature of the project approval process. This limitation has resulted from inadequacy of directives and problematic frameworks set up by the Government. The result is the creation of a problematic climate for effective community consultation.

This report card aims to contribute to improving the processes through which social impacts can be assessed and managed. As explained below it is not a critique of the government departments or the people working in the positions as public servants. Their actions and inactions are the result of political decisions made by the present government.

Unless the Government makes changes to the process of social impact assessment and management, adverse excessive impacts will become more prevalent. Key recommendations are given to facilitate discussion over the social impact assessment and management processes of the 'proposed' Mega dam on the Mary River.

2.0 Introduction

During the course of my research into the public involvement and democratic processes of the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam I have documented the social impacts and management processes of the Queensland Government. It has not been difficult to observe and document adverse social impacts caused by the Queensland Government's proposal. All major infrastructure projects including large dams have adverse social impacts. However, the question that I explore in this discussion paper is whether the social impacts associated with such a 'mega' project have been above and beyond the impacts that one would expect to find if the government had adopted internationally accepted principles and practice.

To effectively answer this question I have used a number of information sources. The accepted principles and expectation of good governance have been derived from the Queensland Governments own principles of community engagement and democratic processes. The social impact principles used to evaluate the governments performance has been synthesised documents from the World Commission on Dams and leading experts in the field. Most importantly I have used the information gathered from a large number of interviews with people from the Mary River Valley. Participant observation and media analysis also have been important sources of information.

The discussion paper is in two parts. Part 1 is background information outlining the basis from which the report card has been constructed. Part two is the report card and a discussion of the issues presented.

Part one starts with examples of the Queensland Governments own dictums of good governance. This demonstrates the contradictions between the Government's espoused principles and their practices of democracy. After this the principles of social impact assessment and management from the International Association of Impact Analysis will be outlined. This will set the standards from which the performance of the government will be evaluated. The next section identifies that the social impact issues are similar if not worse than other Mega dam issues identified in other parts of the world.

In part 2 the findings of the report card are presented. First, a summary of human cost of the project is presented. Next the report card outlines the performance of the Government's handling of social impact assessment and management. The rational for each of the scores is explained in attachment one. The social impact assessment and management issues facing the people of the Mary River Valley and the government are then discussed. Lastly

conclusions and recommendations are listed to assist in improving social impact assessment and management processes and outcomes in the future.

3.0 Purpose, Scope and Limitations

This report aims to evaluate the social impact assessment and management processes of the Queensland Governments handling of the proposed Mega dam on the Mary River at Traveston Crossing. It specifically targets the political decisions behind public sector management. Although I have documented some of the public's perception of the failure of public sector officials to carry out their duties in acceptable manner, this report is not a critique of members of the public service. In this report it is assumed that any failings in the actions or inactions that public sector officials are predominantly the direct result of the political decisions that fail to adequately give appropriate administrative direction and resources to these officials. Thus, the actions of individuals within the Community Futures Task Force for instance, are not directly evaluated in this report. This report finds their actions and inactions are limited by the politically driven framework from which they operate. I also do not criticise the Lifeline counselling service based in Kandanga to help the people of the Mary River Valley. The staff have provided invaluable support for the people of the Mary River Valley, despite encountering problems associated with acceptance in the community because they were perceived to be part of institution that was damming the valley,.

For the purposes of this report Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty Ltd (QWI Pty Ltd) is not considered part of the public service. Therefore, their actions and inactions are evaluated in this report. The reason for including QWI Pty Ltd within the scope of this report is that because the Queensland Government owns this company the transparency and accountability normally associated with a government department is lacking. As a result it falls into the scope of the political realm and thus needs to be considered within this evaluation. ⁱ

The findings presented here are preliminary findings of research that forms the basis of my PhD into the people's civic responses to the proposed dam on the Mary River. I am bound by my ethics not to reveal the identity of the people involved. Data presented and conclusions made in this report are based on my interpretations of the people's spoken words. Full research findings on how people have engaged with the democratic process of opposing the proposed dam will be presented in the PHD thesis due at the end of 2008. I felt compelled to write about this issue before the completion of my PhD because of the scale and depth of the social justice and environmental issues that has been exacerbated by the lack of process in project implementation.

4.0 Draft Terms of Reference – Social Impacts

The social impact sections of the Draft Terms of Reference have been used in the evaluation of the report card. Changes to the Draft Terms of Reference are needed if the document is to reach an acceptable standard. These aspects will be dealt with in a latter submission to the Queensland Government's Coordinator General.

Some of the issues that will be addressed in that submission include:

- Stage 1 and 2 need to be assessed in the scope of the EIS. At present only stage 1 will be assessed and thus social impacts in stage 2 will be treated as secondary impacts. However, because of the nature on project implementation the social impacts in stage 2 are not dissimilar to those in stage 1. Considering that the Community Futures Task Force was commissioned because of a significant adverse social impact occurring in stage 1 AND 2 means that the 'proponent' is avoiding responsibility. Additionally the proponent is already 'compensating' landholder in stage 2. There is an obvious contradiction here.
- The work of The Community Futures Task Force has been overemphasised. The Community Futures Task Force has not completed a baseline study before compensation was considered. To hand over responsibility of assessment to The Community Futures Task Force would mean an inadequate assessment process. This would lead to an incapacity for evaluating the SIA process and outcomes.
- There is no mention that QWI Pty Ltd has been undertaking 'social impact assessment and management' work in Stage 1. This work should be evaluated.
- Secondary impacts are not specifically addressed – particularly downstream impacts and impacts as well as the impacts occurring outside the dam footprint at present.
- Quantitative baseline studies are needed. At present there is only a 'description of values'. This is an inadequate strategy if an evaluation of the social impact management is to be undertaken. There is little mention of how an evaluation is to take place.
- The objectives and practical measures for protecting or enhancing social values need to be explicitly defined in the Terms of Reference. What standards will be used?
- The nature and extent of the community consultation program should be outlined in detail as this aspect is the cornerstone of the robust social impact assessment practices. There is little mention of the parameters and evaluation of consultation strategies
- Because of the unavoidable nature of impacts caused by dams, an analysis of alternates to the project should be undertaken to compare social impacts of the proposal with the impacts of other potential alternatives.

Part 1

Background

5.0 Good Governance and Social Impact Assessment and Management Processes

The following quote by Peter Beattie is the starting point for the standards used to critically evaluate the government's handling of the social impact assessment and management. It outlines the broad goal of the Queensland Government has towards democratic process in Queensland. This statement is important because it shows that there is a commitment to democratic ideals by the present government.

Peter Beattie has stated:

Listening to and working productively with Queenslanders are two of the hallmarks of my government. Greater involvement of citizens and communities in government processes is becoming a standard feature of many democratic systems nationally and internationally. It is one of the cornerstones of our drive to better communicate with Queenslanders and to enhance their involvement in the State's democratic processes.

Source: Engaging Queenslanders: Get Involved. Improving community engagement across the Queensland public sector.

http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/About_the_department/publications/policies/

This quote is important to the social impact assessment and management of the proposed Mega dam because it is the foundation from which this report card evaluates the performance of the Queensland State Governments. This quote clearly identifies that the Queensland Government values public involvement in democratic processes. It also highlights that public involvement in democratic processes are fundamental to good government practice. Many people from the Mary River Valley are of the opinion that the Premier is not practicing what he preaches. Especially after he told them that people power will not stop the dam.

This quote is also important from another perspective. It typifies the expectations that the people of the Mary River Valley have of what good governance means. An overwhelming majority of people in the valley cannot see (and have not been told) the rational reasons behind the decision to build a Mega dam on the Mary River. Many people have stated that if they could see logical reasons for the dam then they could accept it. The social impact

caused by the decision to dam the Mary River has been exacerbated by this feature because people just can't accept the decision.

There is further evidence of contradictions in the premier's understanding of democratic processes. The South East Queensland Regional Plan outlines the vision for growth management incorporating a regional statement that recognises the inextricable links between the country and city people of the South East Queensland. I have highlighted the statements that are important to the present discussion on the values of regional planning. These can be used to assess the performance of the Queensland Government within their planning frameworks.

South East Queensland Regional Plan - Part C: Regional Vision

The regional vision defines the community's long-term aspirations for the region. It describes the environment the community desires to live in now and the environment it wishes to protect for future generations. A future for SEQ which is sustainable, affordable, prosperous and liveable; where:

- ***communities are safe, healthy, accessible and inclusive;***
- *there are diverse employment opportunities, and quality infrastructure and services, including education and health;*
- ***urban and rural areas are mutually supportive and collaborative in creating wealth for the community;***
- ***development is sustainable, well-designed and the subtropical character of the region is recognised and reinforced;***
- ***ecological and culturally significant landscapes are valued, celebrated and protected; and***
- *the community has access to a range of quality open space and recreational opportunities.*

(source: <http://www.oum.qld.gov.au/?id=467>)

The statements in bold have been highlighted to point out the contradictions between the Queensland Government's own values of regional planning and the handling of social impact assessment and management in the Mary River region. I interpret the statement, 'Mutually supportive and collaborative in creating wealth for the community' to mean that the planning framework values cross regional relationships that are equitable and produce wealth for all stakeholders. Furthermore, the notion of development being sustainable means that the social and ecological aspects are valued under the regional planning framework. In the

case of the proposed Mega dam on the Mary River residents, NGO's and local governments from that region have overwhelmingly stated that these aspects need to be given more weight in the decision making process and the handling of social impacts. ⁱⁱ

These two contradictory statements from the Queensland Government highlight the lack of compliance to the standards people expect from government in the 21st century. Much of the public reaction of people of the Mary River has stemmed from people feeling that government has failed to adhere to contemporary standards of a modern democracy. Furthermore, the people in the Mary River Valley have expressed to me that they cannot understand how a modern government fails to act on the extensive literature detailing the lessons learnt from social impact assessment resulting from the construction and operation large dams. The internationally accepted principles of social impact assessment are detailed in the section below.

6.0 Principles of social impact assessment

The flowing (see Table 1) are the general principles of social impact assessment and management as drafted by the International Association of Impact Assessment (2003). These principles are important to this report card because they set the baseline from which to evaluate the Queensland Governments approach to social impact assessment and management. The Queensland Government needs to pay more attention to the highlighted aspects.

Table 1 Principles specific to SIA practice

1. Equity considerations should be a fundamental element of impact assessment and of development planning.
- 2. Many of the social impacts of planned interventions can be predicted.**
3. Planned interventions can be modified to reduce their negative social impacts and enhance their positive impacts.
- 4. SIA should be an integral part of the development process, involved in all stages from inception to follow-up audit.**
- 5. There should be a focus on socially sustainable development, with SIA contributing to the determination of best development alternative(s) – SIA (and EIA) have more to offer than just being an arbiter between economic benefit and social cost.**
- 6. In all planned interventions and their assessments, avenues should be developed to build the social and human capital of local communities and to strengthen democratic processes.**
- 7. In all planned interventions, but especially where there are unavoidable impacts, ways to turn impacted peoples into beneficiaries should be investigated.**
- 8. The SIA must give due consideration to the alternatives of any planned intervention, but especially**

in cases when there are likely to be unavoidable impacts.

9. Full consideration should be given to the potential mitigation measures of social and environmental impacts, even where impacted communities may approve the planned intervention and where they may be regarded as beneficiaries.
10. Local knowledge and experience and acknowledgment of different local cultural values should be incorporated in any assessment.
11. There should be no use of violence, harassment, intimidation or undue force in connection with the assessment or implementation of a planned intervention.
12. Developmental processes that infringe the human rights of any section of society should not be accepted.

(Source: International Association of Impact Assessment 2003 P.6)

The principles in bold type have become significant issues for the Mega dam project because the government has failed to consider these aspects in the decision to dam the Mary River at Traveston. Because Premier Peter Beattie has said 'the dam will go ahead feasible or not' means that feasibility studies and EIA studies (including social impacts assessment) have become procedural matters that are devalued in the decision making process. Social impact assessment and management is something to politically control in order to ensure the continued approval path. It is not part of an analysis that determines the viability of the project on economic, social and environmental grounds.

However, this has not been the case in the past when there was an assessment of dam sites on the Mary River. Previous assessment of the viability of a dam at Traveston Crossing conducted by the Government's own Department of Primary Industries in the early 1990's concluded the dam site was unsuitable because of social/economic and ecological reasons. This is not a document that is available on the Queensland Government website.

To understand more about why this type of decision-making is taking place and its relationship to social impacts lessons can be learnt from mega-projects from other parts of the world.

7.0 Mega-Projects and Social impacts: The Problem with the Process

This section on Mega-projects and social impacts examines how the features of mega projects and the efforts to minimise the associated risks have led to mega social and environmental problems. It will show that the political process associated with minimising the inherent high risks tend to treat social impacts as one of the risks to be managed. As such social impacts and other democratic processes do not feature in the decision making framework. In the case of the Mega dam on the Mary River the social impacts and democratic processes follow an almost identical path.

While the word 'mega project' may be new terminology for Queensland politics it describes a type of project that is not new. In Australia there have been many examples of large infrastructure projects ranging from the Snowy River Scheme to the Ord River scheme in Western Australia. Unlike the past, recent mega projects have come under greater scrutiny by critics. Bent Flyvbjerg in his analysis of Megaprojects and Risk: An anatomy of Ambition (2003) documents numerous examples of how the overwhelming majority of mega projects around the world have failed to deliver the espoused benefits because of cost overruns by the project proponent. This feature has implications for the type of political processes involved in initiating these projects. Additional to the errors in economic analysis, historically there has been a lack of accountability of social and environmental issues. Flyvbjerg's analysis is relevant to the Mega dam on the Mary River.

For environmental and social effects of projects, one similarly finds that such effects often have not been taken into account during project development, or they have been severely miscalculated... ..Moreover, positive regional development effects, typically much touted by project promoters to gain political acceptance for their projects, repeatedly turn out to be non-measurable, insignificant or even negative. (Flyvbjerg 2003 p. 4)

In consequence, the cost-benefit analyses, financial analyses and environmental and social impact statements that are routinely carried out as part of megaproject preparation are called into question, criticised and denounced more often and more dramatically than analyses in any other professional field we know. Megaproject development today is not a field of what has been called "honest numbers". (Flyvbjerg 2003 p.5)

In many respect the Mega Dam on the Mary River fits with the analysis of international megaprojects. Flyvbjerg's study of mega projects indicates the cost benefit analyses have usually underestimated the financial costs of projects and underestimated economic social and environmental costs. However, there is a significant difference that makes the Queensland case far worse than the international record of mega projects development. The difference is that the planning and analysis for the Mega dam on the Mary River has been limited in the extreme. For a modern government to plan on spending 1.7 billion dollars without an economic cost benefit analysis which includes alternate water supply and demand management alternatives (and factoring in climate change) is difficult to comprehend.

This makes the Mega dam on the Mary far worse than other projects world wide. The major justification for the dam is that it needs to be fast-tracked so that it can avert depletion of Brisbane's water supply. The fast tracking of the project has meant that 'normal' governmental processes have been bypassed. The irony is that the dam will not be capable of alleviating the immediate water shortage caused by the current drought because of the long lead-time in construction. The lack of government process has led to a greater adverse effect on the social and environmental aspects of this proposal compared to the case if there had been pre-planning prior to project approval.

The current social impact assessment and management problems are derived from the political processes in response to Queensland Government minimising risks associated with implementing a mega project. In situations elsewhere in the world the political nature of mega projects mean that there are significant negative impacts on democratic rights and social impacts.

Finally, project promoters often avoid and violate established practices of good governance, transparency and participation in political and administrative decision making, either out of ignorance or because they see such practices as counterproductive to getting projects started. Civil society does not have the same say in this arena of public life as it does in others; citizens are typically kept at a substantial distance from megaproject decision-making. In some countries this state of affairs may be slowly changing, but so far megaprojects often come draped in a politics of mistrust. People fear that the political inequality in access to decision making processes will lead to an unequal distribution of risks, burdens and benefits from projects. (Flyvbjerg 2003 p.5)

In the case of the mega project on the Mary River there is much evidence of Queensland Governments actions already follow the path of other mega projects described by Flyvbjerg. Many people in the Mary River Valley have said that the Queensland Government has violated established practices of good governance, transparency and participation in political and administrative decision-making. This is evidenced in the report card.

The Queensland Government through adopting of the political phenomenon of mega projects has the failed to adhere to principles of good governance and by the nature of their chosen path will find it almost impossible to adhere to the principles of social impact assessment and management. Therefore by choosing this path the actions of the Queensland government have led the social impacts in excess of what would be expected from a similar project with

good government process. The human cost of the lack of process in social impact assessment and management are outlined below.

8.0 The Human Cost

This section summarises the social impacts that I have observed in the region of the proposed dam. The psycho-social impacts of the people affected can be described in two ways. Firstly, the people are experiencing a cycle of grief and loss. Importantly to this discussion this cycle is caused by the changes (including mistakes) of the various project modifications that result in a climate of perpetual uncertainty. Thus people cannot recover or move on in the grief and loss cycle. Secondly, a large proportion of affected people show symptoms of acute or chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders 1996). Although there have been no base line studies conducted by the Queensland Government or myself, after talking with health workers in the area it would be fair to conclude that the extent and severity of the stress in the community has become chronic and is getting worse.

It is important to note here that it took 2 months for the Queensland Government to acknowledge there were adverse social impacts and more than three months for the Lifeline support team to start work. It only takes 3 months for acute post traumatic stress disorder to progress to the chronic stage.

Health workers have also said that the impact has been far worse in the Mary Valley compared to the situation after Cyclone Larry hit Far North Queensland. However, there is a difference between a cyclone and the Mega project on the Mary Valley. In the case of a cyclone after damage has been done the community can recover and rebuild. There is a definite end to the devastation. Whereas in the case of Mega dam on the Mary River the 'cyclone' does not go away and the uncertainty created by repeated government project proposals as well as a lack of information and misinformation means the situation fosters chronic impacts.ⁱⁱⁱ

As to the question that poor management has led to an unacceptable incidence of social impacts I base my conclusions on the interviews, observations and media releases I have collected and analysed during the course of my study. If the appropriate social impact principles and practices have been implemented these aspects would have been acknowledged by the affected people in the course of my research. As a general rule this has not occurred.^{iv} Thus, I can conclude that the impacts described below have been exacerbated through the actions and inactions of the Queensland government.

- Stress, anxiety and depression

Many people interviewed expressed that they were suffering from severe stress anxiety. Some people said that they were experiencing depression. The fact that many people became upset in the interviews indicates that the stress of reliving their personal and social situation through undertaking an interview was extremely high. Of particular note here to the discussion of exacerbation of social impact is that fact that not one person out of 30 interviewed said they felt that what the Queensland Government was doing was helping their personal and social situation. If the social impact assessment and management approach of the government were having a positive effect there would be some acknowledgement of that in the interviews.

- Leads to detachment and estrangement from others

Because many people suffer stress, anxiety and possibly depression these people avoid social situations that lead to reliving the feelings associated with the being "dammed". Thus people have avoided social gatherings that would in normal circumstances actually help overcome emotional hardship. One aspect I have noticed is that despite the limited response from the government to aid people in individually coping with the proposal dam many individuals have independently extended their care for people who they know are not coping. This feature has helped many individuals and created an inclusive ground-up community approach to alleviate the impacts of the proposal.

- Disintegration of social networks

As a result of the above features of the affected people's daily life the social capital of the valley is decreasing. With people leaving after taking compensation packages some communities have also decreased in social capital. Until only recently there has been little community development focus from the Community Futures Task Force. Much of this work is focussed on infrastructure but little on other community development aspects that would lead to maintaining and building social networks. The maintenance and building of social networks is not something that can be done through infrastructure planning alone.

There is one significant point of departure to this conclusion above. One aspect that I have observed is that people who have rallied against the Government have developed their social networks. This has had a positive effect on stress, anxiety and social capital aspects of the individuals involved. The flipside for these people is that

this situation can be problematic because many people felt that the situation was out of their control and this at times led to a different kind of stress and anxiety.

- Children seeking psychological help

There has been an adverse social impact on children. I have noted this through interviews with adults as well as anecdotal comments and media reports. School teachers have noted significant emotional changes to the students in their care. Children were reflecting the impacts occurring on adults. They also experienced stress resulting from increased relationship stresses on parents who were attempting to cope with the changes brought about by the project.

- Relationship stresses

Through anecdotal comments and media reports I have noted that there has been an adverse social impact on relationships. This stress is becoming more prevalent. There are significantly more couples visiting counsellors in the area than compared to the beginning of the project.

- Debilitating sleep problems

Many of the people I have interviewed expressed that they had problems with sleep. Either they could not sleep or felt that sleep was a way of avoiding the problems that they were experiencing.

- Incapacity of individuals to plan for the future

The people's psycho-social problems outlined above have a significant impact on their ability to plan for the future. This is a major feature of the affected people in terms of extent of the problem and the depth of the problem within individuals. Traumatic stress that leads to a chronic condition is often associated with the inability to plan for the future. The Queensland Government has exacerbated this social impact on three accounts. First, the climate of uncertainty associated with staged construction and errors in planning documents and maps have decreased people's capacity to plan. Secondly, the many reports of properties being undervalued by QWI Pty Ltd have created major stress. Additionally, the slowness of processing valuation claims has caused excessive stress. Thirdly, the Queensland Government has failed because of through limited and delayed social impact assessment and management strategy.

- Suicidal tendencies in number of people

Depression and suicide prevention courses have been held in the Mary River Valley in response to increased incidence of people reporting severe mental health problems. There is difficulty in assigning cause and effect so conclusions about whether the Queensland Governments actions have caused extra stress that has resulting in suicidal tendencies. However, the fact that more people are attending mental health public meetings and that the severe mental health issues are not dissipating mean that the Queensland Government is not addressing the causes of the problem adequately.

Part 2 The Mega Damming Report Card

9.0 Introduction

Based on the results from the report card tabled below the Queensland State Government has comprehensively failed in their efforts to adequately assess and manage social impact to date. They have failed to reach the standards one would expect of a democratically elected government in the developed world in the 21st century. Before detailing the findings it must be noted that even the best social impact assessment and management practice cannot mitigate all significant social impacts in the construction and operation of large dams. However, the Queensland Government has failed to implement key social impact assessment and managements principles. This should have been completed as a matter of course because of the fast-tracking and therefore bypassing government process. This has had significant impacts on the people of the region and these impacts have been exacerbated by the actions or lack of actions by the Government.

It is important to note here that because the Queensland Government has chosen to implement the project before social impacts are assessed through the EIS process means that there is a large failure rate in the report card. Many of the criteria will be assessed by the social impact assessment during the required EIS. The effectiveness of the social impact assessment will be determined through the formulation of the terms of reference of the EIS. The failure rate will most likely improve only slightly after the completion of the EIS. The reason for the predicted slight improvement is because the historical procedural issues (documented in the discussion paper) will have a cumulative and follow-on effect. Furthermore, social impact assessment section of the Draft Terms of Reference in sub standard. The social impact assessment section of the Draft Terms of Reference demonstrates the continued lack of attention to process. There is only one mention of the consultation process and the context of this statement indicates a low priority in the assessment procedure.

9.1 Report Card Methodology

In assessing the performance of the Queensland Government's management of the social impacts of the proposal I consulted three key reports on social impact assessment (Scudder 1997, Vanclay 1999, World Commission on Dams 2000). The report card criteria are a synthesis of the key principles from these reports. Assessment has been made on the basis of whether or not these processes and actions have actually occurred. I have cross checked the results with members of the local communities and also other relevant professionals working in the region. Their conclusions have been that I have been generous in my evaluation in that I have overestimated the actual performance of the government and QWI Pty Ltd.

The criteria used in the report card are as follows:

Pass	The processes and actions have been implemented.
Pass Conceded	The initiation of governmental functions are slowly responding
Limited Achievement	The process or actions are in place but it has failed to reach a standard one would expect from a democratic, developed country in the 21st century.
Fail	The government has not initiated the processes and or actions.
NA	This aspect is not evaluated because of a lack of information and or the process is yet to be established

9.2 The Report Card Results

The results of the report card are shown in table 2 below. Of the thirty four criteria only two received a pass and three criteria received a pass conceded. In terms of negative results there were ten limited achievements and nineteen fails.

Report Card Criteria	Grade
Planning for Social Impact	
1. Evidence of planning for social impact prior to proposal	Fail
2. Baseline demographic and socio-cultural studies	Fail
3. Strategy for assessing and compensating downstream impacts.	Fail
4. Strategy for assessing and compensating for the second order impacts	Fail
5. A strategy to assessing and compensating for impacts based on the quality of life (social wellbeing) of people and not their standard of living.	Fail
6. An effective relocation strategy that is evaluated by ensuring that the resettler's next generation benefits from the relocation (do the resettler's children incur a loss socially and economically because of the dam?)	Fail
7. Has the government considered impact equity – the differential distribution of impacts – and compensated accordingly?	Limited Achievement
Process of Social Impact Assessment and Management	
8. Be as open and transparent as possible.	Fail
9. Comprehensive and independent dispute management and mediation processes in place.	Limited Achievement
10. Provide multiple opportunities for local people to express their concerns and to interact with <u>project design</u> so that participation processes do not just become venting exercises where residents express their anger.	Limited Achievement

11. Realise the importance of true public participation and the consequences that might arise from a lack of participation.	Fail
12. Be prepared to negotiate with the local community over issues that might cause impacts.	Pass Conceded
13. Maximise the involvement of local people in: (a) assessment processes; (b) project design; (c) project implementation; and (d) operation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.	Limited Achievement
14. Ensure the adequacy of time and resources for a thorough social impact assessment.	Fail
15. Consider the role of local knowledge in the social impact assessment	Pass Conceded
16. Consideration has been given to the gendered nature of impacts.	Fail
17. Consideration has been given to the social impacts caused through loss of biophysical aspects (loss of place)	Fail
18. Consideration has been given to the existence of spiritual worldviews and the potential existence of sacred places.	Fail
19. Consider the needs of vulnerable, at risk, groups and/or ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples.	Limited Achievement
Removal of people and resettlement	
20. A resettlement package that restores living standards to compensate for loss of land and homes	Limited Achievement
21. A resettlement package that does more than restores living standards to compensate re-settlers for the negative health impacts and the socio-cultural trauma that the majority is suffering.	Fail
22. Government reneges on agreements.	Fail
23. Avoid relocation if at all possible	Fail
24. Ensure that participation is actively encouraged primarily by changing the manner of participation to suit the specific circumstances and the cultural context. This may require different participation strategies and different media.	Limited Achievement
Future Economic development and community formation	
25. Identify under-representation by people who are potentially affected and either seek to change participation processes so that they will not be under-represented or ensure that their interests are considered.	Limited Achievement
26. Promote active impact management and the ability of Social	Limited

Impact Assessment to assist in economic and community formation	Achievement
27. Provide training programs to allow locals to take on new employment	Pass
28. Develop enhancement programs that stimulate a range of activities in the community and encourage diversity of economic, cultural and social activity	Pass Conceded
29. Develop mechanisms for capacity development and use project planning as an opportunity to foster civil society.	Fail
30. Develop policy and strategies that ensures local people derive economic benefit from the project	Limited Achievement
31. Plan for life of the community after the project has been completed	Pass
Evaluation Strategies	
32. Ensure that people are not made worse off. (given current strategies)	Fail
33. Use appropriately qualified social scientists to conduct social impact assessment as necessary depending on the issues.	Fail
34. Ensure that there is 'arms length' independence between the proponent and the Social Impact Assessment other impact assessment consultants.	Fail
35. Start impact assessment processes early and integrate evaluation of the strategy within project design processes.	Fail

9.3 Discussion of Report Card Results

The high failure rate in the report card indicates that the Queensland Government has failed to adequately assessment and management social impacts of the project. There are four keys aspects that helps explain the high failure rate seen in the report card above. Theses are:

1. A failure to recognise the scale and depth of social impact
2. A failure to ensure the maintenance of the living standard of the affected people let alone achieving the higher goal of improving well-being of the people over a longer time frame.
3. Differentiate how the impacts are felt by people with diverse cultural backgrounds and significant place attachment.

4. Failure to adhere to acceptable standards of public involvement in the assessment and management of the social impacts.

These aspects are now discussed below

The report card below demonstrates that **the Queensland state government has failed to adequately recognise the scale and depth of social impact** resulting from constructing such a large dam. Governments historically have underestimated the scale of the impact on the people affected by dam construction and the Queensland Government is no exception. The major source of evidence for this conclusion is the fact that the Community Futures Taskforce's commencement date was months after the initial proposal announcement and was a reaction to community protest. Premier Beattie admitted that he underestimated the impact of the decision on the people of the Mary River region after the public meeting in Gympie on July 5th.

The second key aspect of the failed report card is the way social impact and management has been defined. **The Queensland Government is failing to maintain living standard of the affected people let alone achieving the higher goal of improving well-being of the people over a longer time frame.** Presently there are three ways that the government assesses and manages social impact. Firstly, through the government's own company called Queensland Water Infrastructure Pty. Ltd. that compensates for loss of land and provides business assistance for people directly in the footprint of the dam. This company is also required to undertake a social impact assessment under the requirements of the EIS process. Secondly, the Community Futures Task Force that provides strategic advice to government and is the major link between the government and the affected communities. Lastly, there are government departments that are involved with redevelopment of infrastructure, business assistance and training for affected individuals. Some other assistance is offered through an independent counselling service. This service also provides some financial assistance for individuals who are experiencing short term hardship.

Whilst the actions that have taken place so far are commendable they fail to account for the significant socio-economic impact on individuals who need to relocate. Firstly, there is no policy document that guide the organisations listed above to ensure that the affected people's well being after the project construction and operation. Secondly, most social impact assessment and management strategies aim to ensure that the people in the affected area maintain current living standards. However this latter strategy is a substandard goal and should be considered as the minimal requirement. The Queensland government does not have either of these as outcomes of social impact assessment and management policy. The

draft terms of reference for social impact released for comment by QWI Pty Ltd do not include these aspects as objectives. These two aspects are now internationally recognised as important features of social impact assessment and management practices.

The third key feature of the report card **is the Queensland Government's failure to adhere to acceptable processes of public involvement in the assessment and management of the social impacts.** There are 3 aspects that demonstrate this failure. Firstly, the climate of uncertainty and many changes in the project plan has meant that people find it difficult to "move on" in the grief and loss process and as a result there is continual frustration and anger in the communities that surface whenever there is any form of consultation.

Secondly, the Government has responded to the addressing social impacts in ways similar to the disaster relief efforts after Cyclone Larry. This approach has serious a limitation in that it fails to acknowledge that the social impacts from dam construction and operation are fundamentally different to cyclone impacts. The major point of difference is that the cyclone in the Mary River Valley continues to wreak havoc because unlike a cyclone there is not point of recovery from a single traumatic event.

A failure of understanding the process is evident in the way in which support offered to affected communities. For example Lifeline has been given the mandate to help with the emotional hardship the people experience that has resulted from the decision to dam the valley. However, many people have not been forthcoming in taking up offers of support from counselling services. Because of the site of the counselling service (originally with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the One Stop Shop at Kandanga) people perceive this service to be part of the government. People appear to have been reluctant to be involved with the institution that is damming them. This situation is now changing because of the commitment of the Lifeline staff to assist the local communities. The departure of the DNR staff (and QQWI Pty Ltd) has also helped to create a more supportive and emotionally safe place for people to seek help.

Thirdly, the government has failed assess and manage the social impacts through an independent, publicly accountable organisation that is independent from the principal proponent of the construction and implementation of the project. Transparency and independence is vital to unsure higher levels of public participation in social impact assessment and management. There appears to be a failure of QWI Pty Ltd to differentiate the consultation process concerning social impacts from the democratic rights of opposing the

project. Because there is conflict of interest the company will find it difficult not to fail in its attempts involve the public in consultation over social impact assessment and management.

The last key feature of the report card is that **the Queensland Government has failed to differentiate how the impacts are felt by people with diverse cultural backgrounds and significant place attachment.** The government has been slow to recognise the vulnerable nature of rural people who are affected by the proposal. Therefore, the relocation of such people may have greater psychological and social impact on these people than on other groups in society. This can be attributable to the sociology rural life and people's strong ties to land. They also are reluctant to accept outside help.

10 Underlying Causes of Excessive Impacts

There are three causes of excessive social impacts of the Queensland Governments handling of the Mega project on the Mary River. These conclusions have been made in relation to the impacts as noted by the people of the Mary River Valley and an evaluation of the Governments process.

Firstly, significant adverse social impacts occurred immediately at the time of announcement of the Mega dam on the Mary River. Failure to act to assessment and mitigate these impacts has increased the severity of these impacts. Although in governments across Australia social impact assessment and management is seen as a way of decreasing social impacts during project construction and operation, the initial announcement of a project was an announcement to proceed with the project rather than an announcement of a proposal for public debate.

This has meant that the impacts have been higher than if it was an announcement of a project proposal. As a result the government is under a higher moral obligation to undertake social impact assessment and management prior to the project announcement. This became personally evident to Peter Beattie during his public meeting at Gympie on the 5th of July. It was only after this event that the government initiated a form of social impact assessment and management process. The Queensland Government did this to quell the potential political backlash from the massive social impact of the project and the timing of the project near a state election. The type of social impact assessment and management strategy has not worked to ease the adverse social impacts of the project. The strategy may have been successful from a public relations perspective but as outlined in this report card it has failed

to address fundamental issues of social impact. If the Government was serious about mitigating social impacts it would use internationally accepted principles and procedures.

Secondly, The Queensland Government and QWI Pty Ltd do not want public involvement in Mega project planning because it is seen by generally as counterproductive to getting the project started. The Queensland Government has used the argument that the critical water shortage in South East Queensland justifies the fast tracking of this project. Critical water shortage is also used as a justification for the significant economic risks associated with the dam construction, compensation and infrastructure redevelopment. This is despite the fact that the water from the Mega dam on the Mary River will not help the current water shortage crisis because the construction of the dam will take many years. The appeal to significant environmental risk has permitted the government to bypass 'normal' government processes that would see social impact assessment included earlier in the process and be more inclusive of the public.

Thirdly, the lack of planning prior to the announcement has led to a climate of uncertainty that has crippled local communities. The staged construction, changes to the infrastructure plans and the errors in the material presented has led to the majority of the affected people not trusting of the Queensland Government and QWI Pty Ltd. Coupled with the fragmented and reactive approach to social impact assessment and management has meant that the people are tending to be suspicious and disengage with any consultative process.

11 Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusions from this report are clear. The Queensland Government by choosing a fast-tracked project implementation process has caused undue social impacts on the people in the affected area. The Queensland government has not shown a commitment to address these issues in a way that matches the scale and depth of the problem. This report card is a wake up call for the Queensland State Government.

The government needs to rethink its approach to social impact assessment and management if it wants to alleviate the excessive social impacts occurring in the affected area.

Internationally recognised principles fundamental to social impact assessment and management have not been implemented seven months after the announcement to build a dam. There have been some steps taken to decrease social impacts but these have been hampered by political process (or lack thereof).

Furthermore the social impact assessment section of the Draft Terms of Reference for the social impacts of the Traveston Crossing Dam fail to acknowledge the standard to which the social impact assessment should be conducted and also fails to include an outline of the processes of public participation. Additionally, the lines of responsibility and the fragmented approach to social impact assessment and management are not addressed in the Draft terms of Reference. If the terms of reference do not radically change from their current form the current approach to social impact assessment and management will invariably continue. Correspondingly, the people in the affected area will suffer.

However, there is hope for the future. The way forward is predicated on adoption a different approach to mitigating the social impact caused from the Mega dam on the Mary River. The world commission on dams has this to say about the possibilities of social impact assessment.

“A positive outcome requires several enabling conditions such as low level of displacement, resettlement as development policy with supporting legislation, a combination of land and non-land based sustainable livelihood provisions, strong community participation and accountability and commitment from government and project developers.” (The World Commission on Dams 2000 p.109)

The critical ingredient lacking in a potential positive outcome is increasing the accountability and commitment from government and project developers to enable the space for strong community participation. To effectively achieve this new direction consulting the people of the Mary River Region is essential.

“Empowering people, particularly the economically and socially marginalised, by respecting their rights and ensuring that resettlement with development becomes a process governed by negotiated agreements is critical to positive resettlement and rehabilitation.” (The World Commission on Dams 2000 p.110)

To make this approach a reality there are a number of important actions that need to be taken by the Queensland Government.

Key aspects that lead to positive outcomes for people affected by dams include:

1. Capacity of the project staff to implement appropriate policies
2. Funding and political will
3. Implementation of accepted principles and strategies

4. Robust consultative public involvement
(Scudder 2006 p86)

These aspects have been taken into consideration in formulating the recommendation given below. The result of report card provide the impetus for better practice based on internationally recognised principles and practices of social impact assessment and management.

Recommendations

To improve the process and outcomes of social impact assessment and management the following recommendations are given:

1. QWI Pty Ltd should not be the arbiter of land purchases and the business interests of people affected by the dam footprint.^v The 'proponent company' engaged to construct the dam should not be compensating affected landholders.
2. The terms of reference of the Community Futures Task Force need to be reformulated to address the issues of process. The Community Futures Task Force should also be given more resources to ensure more effective 'ground up' public consultation and community development opportunities. They also need to employ external social science consultants^{vi}.
3. A comprehensive socio-economic baseline study needs to be conducted. The Draft Terms of Reference for the EIA and The Community Futures Task Force do not seek to determine comprehensive baseline data of the quality needed for adequate assessment, management and evaluation of the social impacts.
4. The Queensland Government needs to commit to implementing modern internationally acceptable social impact assessment and management principles. This will address the sub-standard procedural aspects evidenced in this discussion paper.

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Attachment 1 Justification and Supporting Evidence for Grades

All the following claims are based on comments made by residents, observations in the field and analysis of media reports conducted during the course of the research.

Planning for Social Impact

1 Evidence of planning for social impact prior to proposal - Fail

Prior to the 27th of April 2007 there is no evidence of social impact assessment planning for the proposed Mega dam at Traveston Crossing on the Mary River. To date there is one document, produced by the GHD consultants that outline the yield of a number potential dam sites across southeast Queensland. It does not consider cost benefit analysis of these sites let alone social impact information.

Interdepartmental planning has been lacking also. Main Roads had spent significant amount of money on community consultation of the Bruce Highway realignment. The dam has now meant that the process of consultation became redundant because it reduced the possible re-routing options. If forward planning existed these problems would not have occurred.

The only acknowledgement of social impacts of situating a dam at Traveston Crossing occurs in a Department of Primary Industries document that says that a dam at Traveston Crossing would be unsuitable because of large social and economic impacts.

2 Baseline demographic and socio-cultural studies - Fail

No baseline demographic and socio-cultural studies have been carried out. An evaluation of the Draft Terms of Reference of the EIS commissioned by QWI Pty Ltd indicates that the aspects covered in the 'Description of Environmental Values' do not adequately meet the requirements of a baseline demographic study.

3 Strategy for assessing and compensating downstream impacts. - Fail

The Community Futures Task Force is focussed on the immediate and direct impacts around the dam. In the Draft Terms of Reference of the EIS commissioned by QWI Pty Ltd there is no documentation that specifically states there will be a downstream assessment and management of social impacts. Given this is one of the key impacts of dams it is a failure not to include this aspect in the Draft Terms of Reference.

4 Strategy for assessing and compensating for the second order impacts

To my knowledge the social impact assessment and management has been focused on direct impacts. In due course it is expected that the EIS will identify secondary social impacts.

5 A strategy to assessing and compensating for impacts based on the quality of life (social wellbeing) of people and not their standard of living. - Fail

To date the focus of QWI Pty Ltd has been on compensation based on land values and business capital. There have been criticisms that the valuations by DNR and QWI Pty Ltd have consistently come under independent valuations. QWI Pty Ltd has been criticised by

residents because they have slow to resolve the settlements and this has led to excessive stress.

The Government's departmental responses for business assistance have only addressed significant adverse impacts on business. Minor impacts are not the concern of the Queensland Government. No publicly available report has been tabled to show that the cumulative size of the minor impact is not having a significant impact on the communities in the affected area.

6 An effective relocation strategy that is evaluated by ensuring that the resettler's next generation benefits from the relocation (do the resettler's children incur a loss socially and economically because of the dam?) - Fail

To understand how the dam will impact in the longer term baseline studies need to be conducted as soon as possible. From this position a strategic management of intergenerational impacts might be possible. A focus on 'replacement' land and business only in the resettlement is a major barrier in achieving this goal.

7 Has the government considered impact equity – the differential distribution of impacts – and compensated accordingly? - Limited Achievement

The evidence for a lack of assessment and management of differential impacts include:

- Elderly people missing out on key information because of lack of appropriate communication strategies of government department and the task force
- Rural people not trusting government (i.e. the organisation who is damming them) are not forthcoming to receive information and assistance.
- Children are not included in consultation strategies.
- Much of the information is available online and is difficult to obtain in the local areas

Process of Social Impact Assessment and Management

8 Be as open and transparent as possible. - Fail

Firstly, there was no public involvement in the development of the proposal prior to April 28th. Secondly, key documents have been withheld from public scrutiny even though there have been political promises to make these documents public.

Third, the appointment of a government owned and managed company to undertake construction means that this company is only answerable to its shareholder – the Queensland Government. (There is only one shareholder: the State government with a 1 dollar share.)

Having the company in charge of compensation and building the dam with no system of

accountability that people can directly access (apart from going through Anna Bligh) is a major issue.

There have been reports that employees of QWI Pty Ltd have been bullying or pressuring people to sell. To date there has been no formal complaints made to the government. However, government has not offered a transparent, independent method of hearing claims made about this company.

9 Comprehensive dispute management and mediation processes in place prior to project announcement. - Limited Achievement

Because of the lack of planning prior to the project announcement there is no comprehensive dispute management and mediation processes in place prior to project announcement. The Community Futures Task Force is supposed to be a form of dispute management and mediation however there are fundamental issues with the framework in which the task force operates. This is discussed elsewhere in this report.

Additionally, recent legislation has just been passed that nullifies people's rights to challenge the state resumption of land under the increased powers of the Coordinator General. Under the newly amended State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 if the Coordinator General passes judgement that certain infrastructure project is a prescribed decision or process a person may not appeal against the Coordinator-General's decision to resume that land. The Traveston Crossing Dam project will no doubt comes under the classification of a prescribed decision.

10 Provide multiple opportunities for local people to express their concerns and to interact with project design so that participation processes do not just become venting exercises where residents express their anger. - Limited Achievement.

Peter Beattie and Anna Bligh's visit to Gympie Pavilion were events where concerns and interaction with project design could occur were. During Peter Beattie's visit there was no record taken of the people's concerns. Anna Bligh did answer some of the questions via a Government website.

The DNR consultation meetings held for people directly and indirectly affected were judged by many of the people of the region as simply information sessions that had limited opportunities to document people's concerns. Many people have expressed that concerns

have been repeated at many consultative meetings. It seems that little progress on tabled issues between meetings.

Many people expressed that these session did not tell them much that they did not already know. The reason for this was that because the decision to dam the Mary River was a rushed decision and the proposal changed after the initial announcement has meant the exact information could not be presented at the consultation meetings. This produced much anger and resentment.

11 Realise the importance of true public participation and the consequences that might arise from a lack of participation. - Fail

The lack of attention to process in all matters of participation has had enormous consequences. This project has been driven from the top down. It was only through civic action that changes to the government's proposal occurred. No formal mechanism existed to interact with the project design and thus protest and excessive adverse social impact was inevitable.

12 Be prepared to negotiate with the local community over issues that might cause impacts. - Pass Conceded

This is starting to occur in the meetings that the Task Force is conducting. This is starting too late in the process.

13 Maximise the involvement of local people in: (a) assessment processes; (b) project design; (c) project implementation; and (d) operation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. - Limited Achievement

There are some local people who have been transferred internally within the government to help with assistance in minimising the impact of the proposal.

14 Ensure the adequacy of time and resources for a thorough social impact assessment. - Fail

The resources of the Community Futures Task Force and the Lifeline support unit are limited in comparison to the tasks they required to undertake. Social impact assessment should have started before the announcement on the 27th of April 2006. Fragmentation of the social impact assessment and management task between various organisations compound the issues of time and resources.

15 Consider the role of local knowledge in the social impact assessment. Pass Conceded

Through the meetings conducted by the Task Force there are more opportunities for input of local knowledge into community development. However, there are significant problems. Because of the lack of trust between the Queensland Government and the local communities people are reticent to attend consultation meetings. They see the meetings as redundant because questions raised in prior meetings have not been answered at a later date.

Another example surrounds the proposed rerouting of the local tourist railway. To avoid inundation by the dam the railway was planned to be rerouted. The proposal impacted on people residences and thus caused outrage from community members.

16 Consideration has been given to the gendered nature of impacts. - Fail

Despite the good work done by the Life Line counselling service initially there was only one male counsellor available. This situation has now changed. There is no mention of how gendered impact of the dam in any document published by the Queensland Government or QWI Pty Ltd.

17 Consideration has been given to the social impacts caused through loss of biophysical aspects (loss of place). - Fail

There is minimal documentation that acknowledges the links people have with the land and how that might impact in the social and economic realms. A farmer commented to me that how could a computer course help with his future when it has taken a lifetime to understand how to manage the land he currently lives on. The life line counselling service is aware of these issues

18 Consideration has been given to the existence of spiritual worldviews and the potential existence of sacred places. - Fail

In the EIS conducted by QWI P/L there will be consideration of impacts to indigenous people and the cultural landscape.

19 Consider the needs of vulnerable, at risk, groups and/or ethnic minorities and/or indigenous peoples. - Limited Achievement

- Until recently the elderly were excluded from consultation processes.
- Only compensation for adverse business loss in excess of \$5000 is being given by government departments. This would exclude a large number of people who come under \$5000 limit whose income is no less important if they are the second income in a family. This is most likely to apply to mothers who look after their own child care responsibilities.

- In the IES overseen by QWI pty ltd consideration will be given to the impacts on indigenous people.

Removal of people and resettlement

20 A resettlement package that restores living standards to compensate for loss of land and homes - Limited Achievement

At present the focus by the QWI pty ltd is on compensating loss of land and business interests. However because land values have increased around the dam impact zone fair market value (at the time of the initial announcement) is not sufficient to restore living standards if people wish to stay in the area. People have expressed that the business compensation packages are inadequate. The lease back arrangements do not suit all people. The arrangement is beneficial to some people

21 A resettlement package that does more than restores living standards to compensate re-settlers for the negative health impacts and the socio-cultural trauma that the majority is suffering. - Fail

This has not been considered as a goal of the Queensland Government

22 Government reneges on agreements. - Fail

There are two major issues here. First is the failure to deliver on promises of providing government documents to the people and local governments that have requested information. The second is that there are numerous properties and parts of properties that are now not needed for the construction and operation of the dam.

23 Avoid relocation if at all possible. - Fail

There are a number of examples of this not happening. Firstly, people have been asked to move from the inundation zone have not needed to leave. They have been offered their houses back. Second, a cost benefit analysis including alternative supply and demand water management options have not been presented to the people of the Mary Valley. The only government document presented to justify the dam is the GDH report on yield comparisons for potential dam sites in Southeast Queensland; and this was made available only after continuous complaints that the document should not be "secret". Thus, it cannot be said that avoidance of relocation has occurred.

24 Ensure that sufficient time and resources are available for participation, and ensure that participation is actively encouraged primarily by changing the manner of participation to suit the specific circumstances and the cultural context.

This may require different participation strategies and different media. - Limited Achievement

Much of the notification of potential events for participation is via the government web site. Because the rural area has slow internet connection speeds there is a difficulty for people to use this medium. Also many people in the area do not have the internet knowledge and facilities. Government departments have realised this and home visits are now being conducted to access people who have been overlooked by the previous strategies. This has meant the rapid pace of the project implementation has resulted in many people being disadvantaged.

Future Economic development and community formation

25 Identify under-representation by people who are potentially affected and either seek to change participation processes so that they will not be under-represented or ensure that their interests are considered. - Limited Achievement

The Community Futures Task force has identified senior citizens as an underrepresented group. There has been limited consultation with this group because the limited advertising resulted in low attendance. Women are highly likely to be under-represented group in terms of the assistance packages for affected people not in the dam footprint. Because of child care women tend to have less fulltime employment compared to men. Because the financial assistance offered by government department is only for adverse impacts, smaller but regionally significant contributions will be overlooked in the compensation strategies. An assessment of the smaller but no less significant minor impacts need to be carried out in the valley.

26 Promote active impact management and the ability of Social Impact Assessment to assist in economic and community formation. - Limited Achievement

This aspect is starting to appear. However because a comprehensive baseline analysis and effective consultation strategies has not been put in place early in the project life it cannot assess the full impact.

27 Provide training programs to allow locals to take on new employment. - Pass Conceded

Some work has occurred on this aspect. A computer training course was offered.

28 Develop enhancement programs that stimulate a range of activities in the community and encourage diversity of economic, cultural and social activity.

- Pass conceded

A consultation process is about to begin in 2007. Many people from the community say this is a too late and doubt the integrity of the process.

29 Develop mechanisms for capacity development and use project planning as an opportunity to foster civil society. - Fail

There seems to be a link between social impact assessment and management of the proposal and positive civic participation. The stress and uncertainty created by the Government's management of the proposal has decreased people's capacity to take democratic action to stop the dam. Whether this strategy is intentional or not, the outcome of this situation has strengthened the political position of the proposal. Thus, the government would find no reason to make major changes needed to overhaul the 'below standard' social impact assessment and management currently practiced. The only reason it has introduced social impact assessment and management processes at the appropriate stage is because of large scale protest. It has not been introduced because of the Queensland Government's policy positions on community engagement and democratic process.

30 Plan for life of the community after the project has been completed.

- Limited Achievement

There are indications that the various government departments are planning for this. It is yet to be seen if this will be an inclusive process. At this stage I cannot see how the present frameworks along with the climate of uncertainty and mistrust can ensure that the process will genuinely be inclusive.

Evaluation Strategies

31 Ensure that people are not made worse off. (given current strategies) - Fail

There is no system of evaluation that determines if people are made worse off as a result of the dam. The social impact assessment as part of the EIS will examine this issue but its capacity to adequately determine this aspect is called into question because of the lack of baseline demographic data collection methods included in the social impact section of the Draft Terms of Reference for the EIA.

32 Use appropriately qualified social scientists to conduct social impact assessment as necessary depending on the issues. - Fail

Given that key principles of social impact assessment have not been included in documents produced by QWI Pty. Ltd, the Community Futures Task Force and various government

departments it is highly likely that there are no social scientists that specialise in social impacts assessment and management engaged in the project.

33 Ensure that there is 'arms length' independence between the proponent and the Social Impact Assessment other impact assessment consultants. - Fail

This appears not to be the case. Because the government has set up a government owned and controlled company to construct the dam the company, the government has become the proponent. QWI Pty Ltd is the organisation in charge of compensating for loss of land. There is no arms length independence between the proponent and the social impact assessment and management. This is why there have been reports in the media that landholders have been bullied into selling their land. I know of people who have said that QWI Pty Ltd has placed verbal pressure on people to sell.

34 Start impact assessment processes early and integrate evaluation of the strategy within project design processes. - Fail

Failure in this criterion is self evident. Baseline studies are the starting point for this and these have not been implemented. The baseline reporting mechanisms proposed in the social impact section of the Draft Terms of Reference for the EIA are substandard.

End Notes

ⁱ The Government has a one dollar share in and the directors of the company are the director generals of government departments that have interests in the approval process of the proposed dam. Thus, the actions of the company are only accountable to its shareholder, the Queensland Government. This makes the company not accountable to the public and is therefore assumed to be a political strategic entity.

ⁱⁱ So far the government has revealed it has only used one document in its analysis of the decision to dam the Mary River. This report is the GHD report of suitable dam sites that allows a comparison of various water yields. It does not include financial cost benefit analyses let alone comparative economic, environmental or social analyses.

ⁱⁱⁱ There have been a number of errors in the project descriptions which also leads to uncertainty

^{iv} I have found one person who has been happy with the consultation process. Their business is not dependent on the valley for viability and they have sufficient skills and personal resources to move if need be.

^v There is a direct conflict of interest. The 'company' to maximise profit would tend to devalue land. Additionally, to speed up project implementation they are pressuring landholders to agree with valuations.

^{vi} The author expresses that I do not wish to be employed in this capacity. I would prefer to be independent of the project.