



Wheezer
the lungfish
says, "Save the
Mary River!"

Dam the Mary River? Save the Mary River!

MEDIA RELEASE

Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

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Dam protestors slam new waterways laws

MARY Valley residents are incensed that Environment Minister Desley Boyle has announced new laws protecting the quality of Queensland waterways when her own government plans to dam the Mary River which could seriously impact on the health of such waterways.

Anti-dam campaigner Rick Elliot yesterday asked how the Minister's statement stacked up against environmentalist concerns that the proposed Traveston Crossing dam near Gympie would have severe implications on river flow downstream of the city, degrading the fisheries of the Great Sandy World Heritage Area and impacting on the Great Sandy Straits Declared Ramsar wetland.

"These new laws set water quality targets to protect rivers, estuaries and coastal waterways in the State's most environmentally sensitive areas, including the Great Sandy Strait and Fraser Island," Mr Elliot said.

"The Minister even states that these waterways are vital to our way of life and prosperity and we have an obligation to look after them for future generations.

"Well, please explain to me how you can marry that law with the proposed damming of the Mary River to create a shallow inefficient water storage that will destroy the key primary habitat of the endangered Mary River Cod, Mary River Turtle and the Australian lungfish?

"The Ramsar declaration on the Great Sandy Straits is an international recognition of its worldwide significance and the construction of a dam on the Mary River would severely reduce flows into this area."

Mr Elliot pointed to the irony of the Government's press release which stated that it used feedback from the community to ascertain the water quality targets.

“The Minister consulted with the people on that issue, but here in the valley we are looking at the displacement of thousands of residents to make way for a mega-dam, and no-one wants to talk to us.

“On the one hand we have a flawed Mary River dam proposal and on the other we have the Government trying to protect our waterways to preserve the health, lifestyle and economy of our communities.

“Why do you think we are trying to save the Mary?”

In the three weeks since Premier Peter Beattie’s surprise announcement to build a dam in Cooloola Shire to cater for South-East Queensland’s burgeoning growth, Mr Elliot and the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group have attracted thousands of people to rallies protesting the proposal.

The group gained Federal backing this week from Member for Fairfax Alex Somlyay and are lobbying Greens Senator Bob Brown for his support.

Follow the campaign on www.savethemaryriver.com

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