



# Dam the Mary River? Save the Mary River!

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### Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

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## **What the Government is NOT telling you about the proposed mega dam on the Mary River**

NATURAL Resources Minister Henry Palaszczuk stated in Parliament this week that the Coalition's water strategy would not supply water to Brisbane, but the Mary Valley anti-dam action group has claimed it is a significant improvement over the mega-dam options put forward by the Beattie Government.

Secretary of the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group Alan Sheridan said the Minister failed to tell his constituents that the State Government already had a plan for providing water to South-East Queensland before making its announcement to construct a mega dam on the Mary River.

"The plan was documented in their own report "South East Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy Stage 2 Interim Report, January 2006"," Mr Sheridan said.

"What has happened between January and now? It has not rained.

"The Government is using this unfortunate situation to announce a previously unsupported dam proposal on the Mary River which will have a huge an irreversible impact on that river.

"The Mary River contains critically endangered species and flows into the Great Sandy Straits Ramsar wetlands which are the home to a number of rare and endangered species and which provide staging and roosting areas for migratory waterbirds.

"These wetlands are internationally recognised and are protected under international law."

Mr Sheridan said there was an alternative for the Government – to implement the plan already developed in January, along with other "smart" initiatives, instead of building a mega-dam.

The Government's own plan in January 2006 was to:

- Recommission Lake Manchester and Enoggera dams;
- Recycle water for industry;
- Construct Cedar Grove Weir;
- Construct Wyaralong Dam;
- Construct Glendower Dam;
- Recommission Ewan Maddock Dam;
- Find new groundwater supplies;
- Raise Hinze Dam;

- Raise Wivenhoe Dam;
- Investigate desalination;
- Construct a weir on the Mary River Weir (as a regulating structure for Borumba Dam); and
- Implement demand reductions to achieve a target demand of 230 litres per person per day in 2020.

“We already know that it is feasible to reduce usage - Perth is down to 155 litres per person per day, which is half of Brisbane’s current per capita consumption,” Mr Sheridan said.

The following additional measures are also recommended by the anti-dam action group:

- Raise Borumba Dam;
- Water loss reduction target of 5% (down from 11%);
- Broader use of recycled water – 50% of total water supply needs could be met through recycled water (Source - AWA August 2005 report);
- Mandatory on-site treatment and recycling of wastewater for industry (to be phased in with Government incentives);
- Subsidies for retro-fitting rainwater tanks and water saving appliances/fittings in existing houses;
- Mandatory rainwater tanks in new developments;
- Mandatory water sensitive urban design for all new developments including harvesting and use of stormwater runoff;
- Active encouragement of no-net water impact developments through local planning schemes and Government incentives; and
- Water harvesting to supplement existing storages.

“This is smart-state thinking Mr Beattie, but a mega dam is a dumb idea for the smart State,” Mr Sheridan said.

“These strategies combined would provide more than enough water for South-East Queensland’s future needs.”

Group member Steve Dennis added that the “ill conceived, hastily proposed Traveston dam” would take years to fill and would flood several hundred arsenic dips, carrying their contents to the drinking taps of Brisbane homes.

“Simply building a dam will not encourage sensible water usage in industry or stop the 10 to 15 per cent leakage of treated water disappearing from burst water mains.

“Nor will it solve the Los Angelisation of South-East Queensland as developers move in.

“Queensland, don’t be dammed – get tanked,” Mr Dennis said.

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