



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

Dam the Mary River? Save the Mary River!

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Save the Mary River Coordinating Group

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Campaigners call for \$500,000 to fight Mary River dam

GYMPIE dam fighters consolidated support and moved into the second stage of their campaign on Wednesday night – the long haul – to achieve the all-time elimination of the proposal to dam the Mary River.

To do so they called for some \$500,000 in financial pledges from all residents prepared to put their money to the task to fight the Traveston Crossing dam proposal.

The support base is widening for the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group which is spearheading the campaign, with Federal member Senator Andrew Bartlett among speakers at the rally, which drew more than 500 people to the Pavilion in Gympie.

And Premier Peter Beattie may well go down in the history books for his notorious claim to push ahead “whether it is feasible or not”, in the same vein as former Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen’s oft-quoted “don’t you worry about that”.

Queensland Senator Andrew Bartlett urged people to support each other, no matter what decisions they were making in their personal lives.

“Your common focus must be the State Government,” Sen Bartlett said.

“You must ask Senator Ian Campbell (Federal Minister for the Environment) to insist on the most comprehensive investigation into this decision. Get the truth out there,” he said.

“This dam is politics at its worst, but politics at its best is about the people.

“This battle is about a lot of things – it is not just about reversing this decision on the dam.

“It is about sending a signal to politicians of all persuasions that they cannot treat people with contempt.

“Recycling would share the load of paying for water around South-East Queensland, instead of asking the Mary Valley to make the sacrifice.”

STMR executive team member Kevin Ingersole said the need to fundraise was driven by the upcoming legal challenges to the Beattie Government’s decision to build the dam.

“This is not a two-bob show – we need money to get stuck into the Government in a big way.

“Our objective is the same as it was the day the dam was announced – to cause the Government to overturn the decision to dam the Mary River now and any time in the future.”

The group’s strategies included raising awareness across South-East Queensland of the Government’s reasons for the proposal, and obtaining the reports which underpinned the Government’s decision.

“We want to see the documents given to Cabinet when they voted on this decision and we want to understand the Government’s evaluation of the alternatives to building this dam.”

He said Peter Beattie obviously worshipped the “God of Growth” and welcomed the population sprawl predicted to number 5 million by 2050 in the south-east, but Mr Ingersole was adamant that such unconstrained growth in the State was the real cause of the water crisis, not drought.

“He seems to have set himself up in a big cabin cruiser with a set heading, and is trying to steer around the obstacles as they come up.

“Has the Government asked its people if they want the impacts on their lifestyle that this population surge will bring? Does it assume people will welcome the crush on the roads, the fight for water, the queues to enjoy the leisure activities we all live here for?

“This unconstrained growth drives the need for more residential land, and the need for more water infrastructure.

“In the Mary Valley this bold need for more water has caused extreme stress levels in people, destroyed viable businesses, and will threaten highly productive rural land and cause irreparable environmental damage.

“That is why we have to take massive action against the Traveston Crossing dam.”

The committee’s own “mythbuster” and engineer Alan Sheridan threw Government reports on the floor and demanded to know why there was no mention of a mega-dam in the Mary Valley in any water infrastructure reporting prior to the snap announcement in April.

“What happened between the last report in March which never mentioned this proposal, and the Premier’s announcement in April?

“I will tell you: Wivenhoe and Somerset dams dropped to new levels and it didn’t rain in their catchments.

“Mr Beattie claims this is the State’s worst drought, but we know the worst drought was back in 1911-1928.”

Mr Sheridan claimed the proposed dollar value per megalitre for the Traveston Crossing dam was not around \$4000 as the Government predicted, but \$24,000/ML.

Speakers included Cooloola Shire Councillor and Mary Valley resident Jan Watt, who stepped in for Mayor Mick Venardos, Noosa Mayor Bob Abbott, Maroochy Mayor Joe Natoli, independent MP Peter Wellington, Noosa MP Cate Molloy, and deputy leader of the Opposition Jeff Seeney.

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