



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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## Mary River system cannot cope with dam

THIS is the state of the Mary River Barrage just south of Maryborough.

The river system is so choked with noxious plants like Water Hyacinth and Salvinia that it is impossible to swim or canoe there, and it is blocking the flow in the river.

These aquatic weeds are currently found back upstream to as far as Imbil weir and would be a serious risk to water quality, management and ecological health of the proposed Traveston Crossing dam, according to researchers for the Save the Mary River Coordinating Group.

Glenda Pickersgill said Salvinia was a fast-spreading weed capable of choking wetlands, killing fish, reducing water quality and harbouring disease-bearing vectors.

She said Water Hyacinth similarly could multiply rapidly, also reducing fish populations, limiting food sources for waterfowl, and creating mass build up at bridges endangering the structures.

"The weeds can be controlled by the application of approved herbicides but the Department of Natural Resources to date has been unable to control the weeds in the Mary River Catchment," Ms Pickersgill said.

"If they cannot even maintain the barrage, how can they propose to ensure the health of this river with a new dam at Traveston Crossing," she asked.

Resident Robyn Harcourt, whose property borders the barrage, fears the river will die if the Traveston Crossing dam goes ahead.

She told reporter Tom Chamberlin of the Fraser Coast Chronicle that the State Government used to spray the weed but has reneged - and farmers have indicated they don't have the time or the money to spray themselves.

"It's just sick - it will kill the river," Ms Harcourt said.

"The hyacinth has been sitting here for three weeks - when they put that dam in there will be non-existent flow.

"We'll end up with virtually nothing flowing here.

"And this is supplying the livelihood of the entire community," she said.

"People that don't live on the Mary don't know how bad this problem is – it looks like a green playing field," Ms Harcourt said.

"All the water that comes out for the irrigation will ruin all the soil, because the Ph levels of the water will be ruined.

"If the dam gets built and it doesn't rain, the hyacinths will never go over the barrage.

"And when the dam is here the cane farmers won't be able to get any water."

Ms Harcourt said hyacinth had grown around the river before, but this was one of the worst outbreaks she had seen.

"It will stagnate the river – imagine what it's going to look like after the dam," she said.

"It'll be that thick you'll be able to walk across it.

"But worse off – it will kill every living thing that survives off oxygen," she said.

A spokesperson for Sunwater, a government owned corporation that administers water storage, yesterday said it was not responsible for the weed control. The spokesperson said Sunwater was available for discussions with residents.

End

Photos:

- Robyn Harcourt's dogs struggling through the weeds near her boat ramp.
- shows the fresh/salt contrast
- is it a river? or a field?
- weeds clog along the barrage wall
- Robyn looks solemnly over the choked river
- and points towards Gympie, where rain is needed to flush the weeds away
- you can see the salt water section of the river in the back ground has no weeds

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