

Save the Mary River Co-ordination Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 16th October 2006
Location: Imbil Public Hall
Members: Kevin Ingersole (Speaker), Glenda Pickersgill, Allan Sheridan, Lars Hedberg, Lyndal Ensbey
Agenda: Agenda not available. Purpose was to inform members of the community of the *Save the Mary River Co-ordination Committee's* current activities and knowledge as well as to receive suggestions from the general public for fundraising and information spreading events.

Glossary of Terms:

Committee An individual member or all members of the *Save the Mary River Co-ordination Committee*
Speaker Committee member acting as Meeting Chairperson
Floor An individual attendee or collective group of attendees of the Meeting
Guest/s Meeting attendees also referred to as "Floor"

OPENING OF MEETING

Meeting was called to order by the Speaker at 7.00pm. Speaker welcomed guests to the *Save the Mary River Co-ordination Committee* Open Public Forum and explained the purpose of the forum.

OPEN PUBLIC FORUMS

Speaker informed the Floor that there have been a series of Open Public Forum's held and it is the Committee's intention to hold further forums however, information for future forums have not yet been finalized.

INFORMATION FROM QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

Speaker also informed the Floor that they have been unable to ascertain from the Queensland Government specific details regarding the proposed Traveston Dam despite persistent contact and questioning from Committee. The Speaker advised the Floor that the Queensland Government have said that there will be a new boundary map released in December this year that will show more precisely the properties that will be effected.

The Committee also advised that the Queensland Government has conducted no thorough environmental studies as yet and as far as they are aware the Queensland Government is just beginning baseline environment studies at the moment.

CURRENT COMMITTEE ACTION PLANS

The Committee advised the Floor that the Mayors of the Mary River Shires have committed funding to a trust account held by Noosa Council to conduct a study called a "Least Cost Study" to determine cost-effective alternatives for bulk water storage. A consultant with extensive knowledge in dam modeling and desalination has also been engaged by the Committee to assist in the technical study of the impact of the Traveston Dam. Members of the Committee will be meeting with the consultant on Thursday and it is hoped that a report will be provided within 3 months. It was added that the Committee was aware that the Queensland Government had funded a study into desalination however, they will not release the results.

The Committee added that they were in the process of organizing a group to visit Mr Malcolm Turnbull in Canberra. Cooloola Shire Mayor, Mick Vernardos, has already visited Mr Turnbull and the feedback from the meeting was positive. The Committee also stated that there have been several arrangements made to meet with Government Senators to discuss the issue.

AFFECTED RESIDENTS

Floor questioned the Committee regarding confirmation of the number of affected residents. Speaker advised

the Floor that the exact number of affected residents couldn't be confirmed at this time as detailed information has not yet been received from the Queensland Government. Speaker added that once the Queensland Government released the new boundary map they would know more.

FLOOD MODELLING

Floor questioned the Committee as to how the Queensland Government conducts "Flood Modeling". The Floor also added that it appears that the information, pictures and other evidence they have provided to the Queensland Government at the Government Public Forums has not been used in any flood analysis produced so far. Speaker was unable to comment on this however, the Speaker mentioned that the official response to this question from project organizers is that it is very complex and requires a great deal of skill.

EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

The Committee advised the Floor that there are a number of upcoming fundraising events being organized. There will be a Save the Mary River float participating in the Gold Rush Festival parade on the 21st October. The "Sisters of Mary" group is also organizing a River Appreciation Day on the 22nd October. Christmas Cards are now being created for sale and postcards have been added as a suggestion. The Committee added that there is to be a Monster Auction held on the 26th November in which people can donate or sell on commission quality goods with the proceeds of the auction to go to the Committee's fighting fund. Tom Grady has kindly donated his services as auctioneer for this event.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Committee advised that there has been a good deal of media coverage regarding the Traveston Dam and their aim is to continue to ensure that this issue is widely covered in the media. Gympie Times have previously and are continuing to run features on the story as well as a Melbourne newspaper that released a feature article about the Traveston Dam. The Floor added that this issue has also been covered broadly by ABC radio, in particular, and all residents should try to contact talk back radio wherever possible. Speaker advised that some media outlets have also contacted them for updates without having been prompted.

ASSISTANCE FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Floor expressed concern that despite offers of assistance from community members there does not appear to have been much acceptance from the Committee. The Floor asked the Committee what they could do to help. Speaker explained to the floor that the Committee has not had a lot of time to delegate or organize requests for help and therefore have not responded to offers. Speaker added that when they are more prepared they would accept those offers of assistance where possible. Speaker also advised that the best way to assist the cause is to attend events organized by the Committee as not only does it assist with fundraising, it also attracts media attention which helps to promote the issue. The Floor added that another way to assist in the fight against this project is to write letters to as many politicians and people of influence that residents can think of to bring more awareness to the issue.

SALE OF PROPERTIES

The Speaker advised the Floor that it has been reported that there are 46 confirmed sold properties relating to the Traveston Dam project. The Floor encouraged residents to try to resist selling their properties to the Queensland Government if not necessary.

MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY OF SOLD PROPERTIES

The Floor asked the Committee if already sold properties were being maintained. A member of the Floor confirmed that the properties were being maintained and added that despite the concerns over looting and security of vacant properties that many instances were suspected to have been conducted by the vacating owners and the Fraud squad was now being involved.

SAVE THE MARY VALLEY COMMITTEE MANIFESTO

The Floor questioned the Committee regarding a manifesto of "Committee Targets". The Speaker advised the Floor that they do not have a "manifesto" as such. The Committee's aim however, is to have the Traveston Dam proposal overturned and for affected residents to receive fair compensation.

POLITICAL VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Floor expressed concerns over the Committee implying political views. The Speaker advised that the Committee does not intend to express political views to residents of the Mary Valley and reiterated that their focus was simply to have the dam proposal overturned.

NEWSLETTERS AND COMMUNICATION

The Floor expressed concerns regarding the lack of communication from the Committee. The Committee advised that they were doing their best to communicate with the community. The Floor suggested that leaflet and newsletter volunteer distributors be organized in different areas so that communication is dispersed quickly and efficiently throughout the community. It was also suggested that to assist in the cost of newsletter production that local business be allowed to advertise in the newsletter for a fee. This would also assist the local businesses that have been affected.

DISTRIBUTING INFORMATION TO NON-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

The Floor suggested other methods for distributing information on alternatives to the Traveston Dam to residents outside of the effected areas be considered by the Committee and local community. One suggestion made was that individuals or small groups go to Brisbane and conduct leaflet drops to letterboxes or in prominent places such as shopping centers. It was also suggested that information stands in shopping centers is a good way to reach large groups of people. The Floor explained that they feel more emphasis should be placed on promoting alternatives to other communities. The Committee agreed and stated that this issue was currently being worked on. The Floor also suggested that community members need to participate actively in distributing information to friends and family through the use of emails, for example. Alternatively, it was suggested that community members could arrange to leave newsletters at businesses they deal with to assist in informing the wider community.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

The Floor raised the question of the Committee conducting an official AGM in which community members could vote for official office bearers and attempted to move a motion for an official AGM to be conducted. The Floor also questioned what official office positions had been organized so far sating that it is necessary for a certain number of office positions to be included for the committee to be incorporated. The Committee advised that they have had legal advice regarding the setup of the Committee and they complied with all of the regulations specified by the Government and applicable Departments. The Speaker asked the Floor for feedback regarding an official AGM for office bearers and the general consensus from the Floor appeared to be that they feel an official AGM was not necessary.

EFFECT ON ELDERLY RESIDENTS

The Floor raised the issue of the effect of this proposal on elderly residents in the area. The Floor advised the Committee that they have seen many elderly residents affected severely by this proposal and feel that more should be done to help alleviate this situation. The Committee advised that they have been aware of this issue since the beginning and have been working actively to persuade the Queensland Government to do more about this issue. The Committee also added that they have considered organizing another committee to work alongside them who would specifically assist in the human issues involved in this proposal to help alleviate some of the concern in the community.

COUNSELLING

The Floor expressed concern over the access to counseling services being provided. It advised that many residents did not feel comfortable visiting the counselors in the Government building setup at Kandanga. It was advised, however, that if requested, counselors would visit you at home. It was added that an offer had been put forward to the counselors to use the space in the back of the new Raine and Horne, Mary Valley office in the hope that residents would feel more comfortable attending the office but no response had been given as yet.

ISSUES RAISED BY ATTENDEES

The Speaker requested the Floor advise the Committee of any issues they feel need to be addressed. The Floor advised the Committee that they think communication and distribution of information is a serious issue.

The Floor questioned the Committee regarding how they are reaching out to tourists who visit the Mary Valley and suggested that they target the Mary Valley Rattler and any tourist buses that visit the area. The Committee advised the Floor that they had approached the Mary Valley Rattler and they are not prepared to hand out information on their tours. The Committee added that they have instead setup information stands at the Rattler stops to inform tourists of the issue. The Committee also agreed that targeting tourist buses is a good idea and that they will look into the suggestion. Information Billboards was also suggested by the Floor as well as the idea of promoting the future cost of water to urban users to inform them of the implications of this success of this proposal.

COMMITTEE SPENDING

The Floor questioned how the Committee was spending donation and fundraising monies. The Committee advised that up to the Queensland Election they had spent \$49,000 on media advertising to inform voters of the issue.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The Speaker thanked guests for attending the Open Public Forum and closed the meeting at 9.00pm.