



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PG/366

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PROPOSED “NO” DECISION FOR TRAVESTON

Environment Minister Peter Garrett has made a proposed decision to reject the Traveston Crossing Dam project, after deciding the impacts on threatened species would be too great.

“After carefully considering all the information put before me and advice from my Department, it is very clear to me that the Traveston Crossing Dam cannot go ahead without unacceptable impacts on matters of national environmental significance,” Mr Garrett said.

“I have based my proposed decision on the science presented to me, and the science shows that this project would have serious and irreversible effects on nationally listed species such as the Australian lungfish, the Mary River turtle, and the Mary River cod.

“The area that would be flooded by this proposal is critical habitat for populations of these species. The evidence before me showed that flooding this habitat would have serious consequences for those species, including on their ability to breed and maintain population numbers.

“My department advised that the environmental impacts of this project would be so serious they would contribute to the further decline of these threatened species.

“As Environment Minister, my responsibility is to ensure that nationally listed species are protected, and I believe no conditions or mitigation measures that would adequately guarantee their protection could be imposed on this project. Several of the measures put forward in the proposal lacked scientific evidence as to their effectiveness.

“The assessment of this proposal has highlighted the serious plight of these species, and I believe that it is critical that all levels of government work together to tackle the threats to these species and secure their future.

“Throughout the assessment process a number of measures have been suggested to better protect the Mary River environment and the threatened species that rely upon it. Irrespective of my final decision for this proposal I believe that there are measures that should be implemented including; rehabilitation of riparian corridors; improved cattle fencing around sensitive habitat; and finalisation of recovery plans for the Australian lungfish.

“In making this proposed decision, I have also considered the social and economic impacts of this project. An independent expert review conducted by the Centre for International Economics creates serious doubt about the economic benefits of the dam.

“My decision requires me to balance environmental, economic and social impacts. The likely economic and social benefits of this proposal do not outweigh the serious environmental impacts on our nationally protected species.

A proposed decision under the EPBC Act allows the proponent and relevant Commonwealth Ministers 10 business days to comment on it. This is required under the EPBC Act and ensures the process meets the requirements of natural justice. The minister must consider any submissions made by the proponent or the relevant ministers before he makes his final decision.

“Now that I have made my proposed decision, as legally required under national environment law, the proponent and the relevant federal ministers have 10 business days to make comment.

Information on the federal decision process can be found at www.environment.gov.au

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