

Miss Clare Ferris  
"Abergeldie"  
BARRABA NSW 2347  
4<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Mr Peter Draper  
Ground Floor  
13 Fitzroy Street  
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Dear Mr Draper,

**RE: Barraba Water Supply**

My name is Clare Ferris, I am currently attending Barraba Central School; I am the President of the Student Representative Council and also currently School Captain for 2008. I am writing to express my concerns as a resident of Barraba, and as a Community and School Leader. As a school leader I have a great awareness of the issues, which affect the school and the community, and the restrictions, which are placed upon the town and community of Barraba due to the lack of water and quality is of great concern to me. Barraba may only be a small country town but in the scheme of things it is my firm belief that every community should be given equal opportunities to develop and thrive. Barraba is currently suffering from great inequalities due to the lack of water available to the town.

I am currently undertaking studies in the area of biology and chemistry. As a mandatory experiment within our syllabus my chemistry class was required to conduct water tests and assess the results of the tests in relation to water quality and its uses. When assessing the Barraba town water, we repeated experiments a number of times to ensure accuracy. It was found that when we tested the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) of the water it was outside the regulatory requirement for drinking water. We established the water to be, through rigorous testing 600mg/L. I soon found out that as I quote, from Wilkes University, Centre for Environmental Quality Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences

*"High total dissolved solids may affect the aesthetic quality of the water, interfere with washing clothes and corroding plumbing fixtures. For aesthetic reasons, a limit of 500 mg/L (milligrams per litre) has been established as part of the Secondary Drinking Water Standards."*

I was also able to find information through the World Health Organisation as quoted from "Total Dissolved Solids in Drinking Water"

*"It was reported in a summary of a study in Australia that mortality from all categories of ischemic heart disease and acute myocardial infarction was increased in a community with high levels of soluble solids (TDS), calcium, magnesium, sulphate, chloride, fluoride, alkalinity, total hardness, and pH when compared with one in which levels were low. No attempts were made to relate mortality from cardiovascular disease to other potential confounding factors. "*

As well as the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) that state;

*"Based on taste, TDS in drinking water should not exceed 500 mg/L"*

**I urge you to consider the ramifications of water quality outside regulatory guidelines on the residents of Barraba, as well as the insecure and limited quantity of the water.**

**Water is not a luxury that one wishes to indulge in, water is a necessity, which remains as a founding source from which human populations survive and thrive. Quality Water is a Fundamental Human Right for every individual. Every community depends on water for its residents for drinking, bathing, washing and gardening. Water is also required for industry within the town; businesses rely upon water as a basis for both large scale operations such as mining and Agriculture as well as small scale operations which require water for everyday activities such as cleaning, and growing and supplying products. The world depends on country towns just like Barraba to supply produce for an expanding population. How does the government and World expect to support an exponentially growing population in the future if they cannot support the communities, which they rely upon to provide food.**

**I pose this question to you Your Honour, if this was a bigger centre such as Sydney, or even Tamworth, would the government have even considered threatening their future by denying them of a necessary resource like water? The Answer is NO, so why should the Barraba Township suffer from an inequality which leaves them unable to sustain development and maintain a future for its community and ultimately the nation. It should not. This is not an issue which is unable to be resolved, there is an easy resolution through supplying funding for a pipeline from Barraba to Split Rock Dam. This is not an issue which is recent, this has been a problem for a very long time, the Barraba Township is not established on a major river and the Barraba community has been pushing for the previously promised pipeline for over 15 years.**

**As a representative of Barraba Central School I am very proud to say that I am a member and leader within this school community. As a school we strive for excellence in every aspect and wish to establish a future for the school, which can be relied upon to provide the best education possible as achieved in the past. However, if the township is unable to support a developing population and provide a future for families and businesses the school population will be severely threatened. We are already a small central school, but I believe it has provided excellent opportunities for its students. However, I have no hesitations in admitting that there seems to be little future for a school in a small country town with a dwindling population. If school enrolments severely decline as they are set to do if the town can not establish a reliable water source then the quality of education available at this school will be threatened. There will be reductions in staff, available resources, loss of avenues for funding for education and the survival of the school will be greatly endangered.**

**The Barraba community has been severely cheated in relation to the town water supply. Everyday there are people moving from the country to the city and repopulating urban areas, country areas and towns are already severely declining. The government should be looking to aid country communities in every way possible considering their importance to the survival of the nation and world. It is unfair and unsatisfactory that the Barraba Township should suffer population decline and loss of business and a future due to an unnecessary issue,**

**which can readily be solved. I plead with the government to think of every individual, every household, every business and the Barraba community when they consider the town water supply because it is every one of these entities that would be affected. Funding for the project of establishing, a firm water supply through the development of a pipeline from Split Rock Dam to Barraba will ensure a future for this town.**

**I appreciate you taking the time to read my letter and I sincerely hope that all levels of government will be able to collaborate on this issue and come to an effective solution which ensures Barraba's future as a small country town and developing community. I would be greatly disappointed if the Barraba community remained unable to sustain future growth and development due to an insecure water resource which can be readily resolved through the installation of a pipeline from Barraba to Split Rock Dam.**

**Yours Sincerely,  
Concerned Barraba Resident and School Leader,**

**Clare Ferris**