



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

PETER DRAPER MP
Independent
Member for Tamworth



13 March 2007

The Hon John Howard
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Capital Hill
CANBERRA ACT 2600

FAX: 6273 4100

Dear Prime Minister

I write in relation to Chaffey Dam, the principal water supply for the city of Tamworth.

The Chaffey Dam Reference Panel, a group comprising representatives from the Tamworth Regional Council, Peel Valley Water Users Association, Namoi Catchment Management Association, plus various State Government agencies, has recently completed an investigation into water provision for this area.

The group found that unless Chaffey Dam is augmented to meet the demands of the city's industrial and business community, irrigators and tourism operators, water security would drop significantly across the district and severely inhibit future development.

The Reference Panel's report has recommended that each of the identified beneficiaries contribute towards the estimated \$14.6 million cost of the dam augmentation, with the Commonwealth Government's recommended contribution being \$6.545 million; the NSW Government's recommended contribution being \$4.697 million; and other beneficiaries, including local industries and residents contribute to the remainder of the cost.

I have recently written to the NSW Premier Morris Iemma, who has now committed to seeing the augmentation completed.

Premier Iemma has drawn attention to the uncertainty highlighted in the Panel's report surrounding the appropriate funding arrangements arising from the Commonwealth's current proposal contained in your National Plan for Water Security.

I appreciate that the final negotiations regarding the referral of NSW powers as they relate to the Murray Darling Basin and its tributaries will determine the appropriate arrangements for cost sharing between the Australian Government and the NSW Government.

ELECTORATE OFFICE
13 Fitzroy Street (PO Box 1740)
Tamworth NSW 2340
Tel: (02) 6766 1422
Fax: (02) 6766 6765

Mobile: 0417 290 376
E-mail: tamworth@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Web site: www.peterdraper.com.au

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PARLIAMENT HOUSE
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9230 2341

I am writing to seek your commitment to provide, at a minimum, the funding recommended by the Reference Panel and to increase the level of Commonwealth support for the augmentation of Chaffey Dam in accordance with the future legally binding agreements that I understand are to be made between the Commonwealth and NSW Governments in relation to State Water assets.

I look forward to your support for this project of critical importance to the Tamworth district.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Draper". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

PETER DRAPER MP
Member for Tamworth

PD:km