

Question on Notice

No. 286

Asked on 6 March 2007

Ms MALE asked the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (Ms BLIGH) –

QUESTION:

Will she provide an update of any economic studies into the effect of the Traveston Crossing Dam on the Gympie region's economy?

ANSWER:

The Scoping Economic Futures - Traveston Crossing Region report was prepared by economic consultants ACIL Tasman. This report was tabled in Parliament on 7 March 2007.

The report is a preliminary scoping study that describes and quantifies the current economic and business base of the region, identifies economic and demographic trends in the immediate and wider regions that could be drivers for future growth, and provides an outline of credible future economic and business development scenarios.

The Cooloola region currently experiences higher than average unemployment levels and an average individual annual taxation income around 16 per cent less than the Queensland average. Current trends suggest younger people are leaving, while older people are arriving.

In the context of the regional economy, the \$1.7 billion Traveston Crossing dam project is a major opportunity to attract new investment, introduce and retain a new workforce, and reinvigorate existing agricultural production. It is also an opportunity to think about the long term regional economy as the coastal economies extend into the rural hinterland.

The report identifies specific economic stimuli from the proposed dam including:

- the new workforce engaged for the dam,
- the capital injected into farms and businesses, as part of the lease-back arrangements, to compensate them for losses and disturbance,
- recreational and tourism activities associated with the dam,
- new local water allocations, and
- changes to infrastructure, in particular improved roads and access associated with the dam.

The report quotes that "Around 500 employees will be needed in the construction. The proportion of the workforce that can be sourced locally is uncertain, although 30 per cent of the workforce was sourced locally on the Paradise dam at the Burnett River. This suggests that 150 jobs could be sourced locally for the Traveston Crossing dam."

Finally, the report indicates a flood mitigation benefit of up to 4 metres, which will provide greater certainty for low lying businesses and industrial estates in the Gympie Business District.