

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 566**  
**Asked on 17 April 2007**

MR NICHOLLS asked the Premier and Minister for Trade (MR BEATTIE) -

**QUESTION:**

With reference to Question on Notice No. 280 asked on 6 March 2007, referring to the full page advertisement that appeared in *The Australian*, and paid for by the Queensland Government, entitled "Open Letter to Australians", and details of options referred to the Northern Australian Taskforce—

Will he provide (a) precise details of the information provided to the Northern Taskforce including the specifications of Option 1, 'the North/Western Rivers Scheme' and Option 2 'The Northern Rivers option', (b) details of any studies on the environmental impact of Option 1, "the North/Western Schemes" and Option 2 'The Northern Rivers option' dating back to the election of the Queensland Labor Government in 1998 that led him to advocating these two options to the Northern Australian Taskforce and (c) any cost estimates in the possession of the Queensland Government for Option 1 'the North/Western Schemes' and Option 2 'The Northern Rivers option' dating back to the election of the Queensland Labor Government in 1998 that assisted him in advocating these two options to the Northern Australian Taskforce?

**ANSWER:**

(a) No details have been provided to the Northern Australian Taskforce as the Queensland Government has not been formally advised of the Terms of Reference and details of the membership of the Taskforce. This is disappointing given the Prime Minister supported a proposal I put forward in a joint letter with the Premier of South Australia on 22 February 2007. In that letter we requested the Commonwealth incorporate within its National Water Strategy a commitment to work with the States to examine prudent and feasible options to augment supply into inland rivers, including proposals I put forwards to augment Murray Darling water supplies such as the Bradfield Scheme. The Water Summit Communiqué of 23 February 2007 places on record the agreement reached between the Commonwealth, the ACT and the States (other than Victoria) on this issue.

(b) In previous studies of the Bradfield Scheme and the Northern Rivers options it was recognised that these schemes had the potential to address the critical water shortages in the South. Environmental impacts including those associated with inter-basin transfers would need to be fully assessed in any investigation of the viability of these projects.

(c) It is expected that the economic feasibility of the proposed schemes will be assessed by the Northern Australian Taskforce to see if they have the potential to economically provide additional water security for Queensland and Murray-Darling water users.