

SUBMISSION

THE BRISBANE FLOODS OF JANUARY 2011

PROPERTY [REDACTED] ROSALIE VILLAGE

APPROXIMATE RL 4m to 5m

The 11th January 2011 was the date when the severe monsoonal weather pattern finally struck S.E.QLD.

This event was a culmination of months of very heavy rains and flooding throughout Qld particularly in central and western Queensland.

Prior to this and in fact as early as 14/10/2010 my wife and I were heeding the warnings made primarily by Campbell Newman[Lord Mayor of Brisbane] that the citizens of Brisbane should get flood insurance because this summer will be very dangerous for flooding.I knew that our property was flooded in 1974.

Our Suncorp insurance agent [REDACTED] [REDACTED] has documentation that we made every attempt to secure flood cover from about the 14/10/2010.

We were refused by several companies including our current insurer Vero. Incidentally we had flood insurance for a period after we purchased the property in 2005.

During late 2010 my wife and I watched with dismay and concern as the summer developed.

A friend in Boston USA emailed about the disastrous flooding in Central and Western Queensland. I replied on the 08/01/2011 that Brisbane had been spared at this point of time; however the situation reminded me of 1974.

At work on the 10/01/2011 i.e. on Monday afternoon pictures of the devastation in Toowoomba was being relayed by email.

That night it was obvious that Brisbane was in the “firing line” and on Tuesday morning following warnings that Brisbane residents should prepare for the worst, I and thousands of others decided to sandbag our properties.

I and a group of friends and relatives worked very diligently to sandbag the building to approximately one metre at the lowest point. However that afternoon we were advised by Government and Local Government members that the flooding was to reach 1974 levels which meant that our efforts were wasted. We then started to remove the tenant’s stock and equipment.

Three events appear to have happened.

1] There were very high/king tides in the Brisbane River

2] There was a very large volume of water flowing from Toowoomba through the Lockyer Valley to the Bremer River and then to the Brisbane River.

3] Most disturbingly, huge volumes of water were now being released from the Wivenhoe Dam into the Brisbane River.

These events combined to create the flood disaster in Brisbane.

Having experienced the 1974 flood I knew that the volume of rain i.e. the precipitation did not compare to 1974. That was a cyclone induced disaster. Vast areas of SE Qld including the Gold Coast were flooded. This did not happen in the January floods which in my opinion were more storms induced.

Further evidence of this was the speed with which the flood waters receded. Rosalie Village was almost clean of rubbish by Friday afternoon the 14/01/2011

Flood warnings that were issued by the weather bureau on Monday 10/01/2011 only referred to potential flooding to about RL 3 metres.

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION IS

Why if Wivenhoe dam was primarily designed after the 1974 floods as a flood mitigation measure was water only finally released about the 10/01/2011 instead of months before when all the warnings were in the press and elsewhere? Also of course, large areas of Qld had experienced disastrous flooding weeks and months before. Further it was well known that this year was to be the most severe La Nina weather pattern in almost 95 years.

Most importantly it should be remembered that the Qld Government had spent \$billions in "drought proofing" the South-East.

If then, the S.E.Qld was drought proofed, why was it necessary to keep excess water in Wivenhoe and at such a dangerously high level particularly with the La Nina weather pattern in place at the time. If for instance the Wolffdene dam had been proceeded with on the Logan River, this scenario may never have arisen. Brisbane would have had plenty of drinking water and Wivenhoe could have been

used primarily as a flood mitigation dam as it was designed. There may well have still been some flooding but nothing to the extent experienced. I believe that in those circumstances our sandbagging on the day could have been sufficient to protect our property.

Interestingly on the 01/02/2011 the State Government decided that there was no need to release further water from the Wivenhoe dam as a protective flood mitigation measure.

Then, later on from the 04/02/2011 following a prediction by long range weather forecasters Ken Ring and Hayden Walker, that SE Qld would be hit by a cyclone before the end of the summer and that there would be serious additional flooding in SE Qld in March 2011, the Government decided to reduce the water level in the dam to 75%.This release commenced on the 21/02/2011.

IN CONCLUSION

The government and the management of Seqwater have failed to exercise proper care and due diligence to protect the people of Brisbane even though the danger signs were clear to see months before the event.

The citizens of Brisbane have sustained massive losses because of the incompetence of the Government and the bureaucracy .They did not have the originality of thought or the foresight to see that the policies which were in place for the management of the Wivenhoe dam were gravely flawed and unrealistic.

I believe that the decision now to reduce the water levels of the dam to 75% is an admission of guilt. Such action should have occurred much earlier.

This would have protected much of Brisbane from disaster.

Denis Rylands

05/03/2011