

[REDACTED]

From: STEPHAN Merilyn [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 28 March 2011 1:56 PM
To: Submissions Flood Commission
Subject: Our frustrated times from Dec18 to Jan 18th 2011

We are writing on behalf of our Grantham family member at [REDACTED] Harris St and ourselves who live 5 minutes away and had several floods causing property damage in December and January.

The 1300 number that was advertised on radio and TV to ring to report and enquire about a family member that we were searching for, still to this day no one ever replied. Three family members living in 3 different areas wasted 30 minutes and 45 minutes each, on mobile phones waiting for someone to answer and no one did. How ridiculous is that?

If it wasn't for the local radio ABC Southern Downs radio station giving accurate and useful info, we would have had no idea. They eventually gave out local evacuation locations and contacts. After 4 days we finally got to have some idea where he was. When we could get across our flooded creek we headed to town, to 3 different Gatton locations where no one could inform us where he was – more frustration. By this time there was no bread or milk available to the public, and it was a 40 minute drive to go the long way round to Helidon where after a much heated discussion he was located and reported to us. We brought him home to house him under very stressful conditions.

Since 1991 we have been writing to DNR, now DERM suggesting the creek beds need to be cleaned out every couple of years, but what would we know- no action has ever resulted. Consequently with this violent flooding in all areas, huge debris of trees, old machinery etc, tanks, T tape and animals, choked the waterways and caused further damage as these things smashed into property and infrastructures several times.

One or two helicopters from Toowoomba could have easily been mobilised, to see an SOS message under it in no time to Grantham, following the path from Toowoomba through and down the highway. Everyone looks at a helicopter. Not everyone has or carries a mobile, so that is not an answer for an alarm.

As we are farmers, we are very conscious of daily weather conditions and observe animals behaviours which were very unsettled from Oct so that's why we kept saying to ourselves why was Somerset Dam left at that high level from Oct. We knew this was a mistake.. Don't people observe where rain is falling in the catchment areas? We do.

Councils need to be vigilant with not passing housing to be built in low level areas and if they must – high stumps as the older generation did – they knew what they were doing. These homes flex with stress. Tie down bolts need to be attached, as many weren't in Grantham.

Early vehicular blocks on roads needs to be put in place, especially in Toowoomba, as many people I spoke to were driving into this water and had no idea of the severity. Warnings need to be well and truly advertised in all media.

Flood meters need to be placed regularly and accurately along all creeks. Our Ma Ma creek doesn't even have one. Many were washed away. They need regular maintenance. The people around Kentville and Lockrose need better channelling of water after rain, as it dammed on many properties for weeks breeding mosquitoes.

Moving the railway line at Grantham will not change things, as the topography of the land funnels the water as it did and this will not change.

Steve, Graham and Merilyn Stephan 25th March 2011

