

No doubt there will be a substantial number of people who wish to criticise a range of aspects relating to the recent floods .

Rather than also do so may I offer some suggestions for the future.

To put my comments in perspective, I am ■■■ years old and have been working in agricultural related fields all my working life.

I am a naturalised Australian who was born in Holland and lived there for the first 15 3/4 years of my life.

I have also been back over there for several visits to family who all live in the north in areas where a substantial part of the country is below sea level.

While I would be the first to agree that one cannot assume that Dutch solutions solve Australian problems I do suggest that they may have some good ideas worth looking at.

The Dutch were handling water under adverse conditions well before the arrival of Captain Cook so it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that they have had a lot of experience.

Added to that is the fact that it is probably the only country with a tertiary institution which concentrates entirely on the management of water (and in the case of Australia 2 the things that float in it)

Because of this wealth of experience may I suggest that there could be some merit in getting input from this quarter.

May I also offer some suggestions on 2 areas which seem to be contributing to repeat flooding with costly consequences.

The first relates to levee banks that are either only marginally higher than the flood or, in some cases thrown up in a hurry within days and sometimes hours of a flood arriving.

Worst of all are the small communities that are flooded repeatedly but have no levee bank of any sort.

In the first the margin for error seems to be far too small and so far most of them have fended off water by luck rather than good management.

In the second, pushing up soil into a levee or bank will only work in areas well away from the main stream otherwise the sheer force of the water would simply destroy it faster than you could construct it.

To resolve both problems may I suggest that thought be given to constructing Dykes like the secondary ones used in the North of Holland (Friesland and Groningen)

These structures have far more substance than most of our levee banks and thoroughfares through them to allow traffic to move freely which can be closed quickly and easily in the event of a flood.

The other area relates to watercourses that carry vast quantities of water when flooding occurs. In many cases they are overgrown completely and/or the bottom is silted.

It stands to reason that if water flowing out to sea is restricted such water will go over the banks of the watercourse and flood the adjoining land and do far more damage than a well maintained watercourse

The creek running through Gatton is a classic example, as is the Pine River.

In the latter case, at low tide large areas of the river bottom are above the water level .

I am convinced that this was a contributory cause of the damage to the Pine river bridges at Lawnton. Ironically the river bottom consists of round river pebbles and river sand ,both valuable commodities that could help defray the cost of cleaning up quite a few watercourses.

In view of these facts I suggest that watercourses are deepened and have obstacles to the free flow of water removed.