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Auchenflower Qld. 4066

6 April 2011

The Honourable Justice Catherine Holmes
Commissioner
Queensland Floods Commission of Enquiry
PO Box 1738
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Justice Holmes

This submission is made in relation to the **Flooding of Brisbane** in January 2011, under the following selected headings of the Commission's Terms of Reference for public submissions:

- Preparation and planning by governments, emergency services and the community
- The response to the 2010/11 flood events, particularly measures to inform the community and protect life, private and public property
- Adequacy of forecast and early warning systems.

a. Preparation and planning by governments, emergency services and the community

On a local level, a **very useful aid for the community in preparing for a flood - is knowing the heights of previous major floods, as they relate to a person's workplace and/ or residence** - such as the 1974 flood, which is widely recognised as the benchmark in South East Queensland.

Although such information is reportedly available electronically on the Brisbane City Council's flood maps, a far more useful and practical aid - immediately before and during a flood - would be to have markers on permanent structures in public places, such as on power poles or street light poles in all known flood affected streets.

For example, the 1974 Flood Level was painted (by someone in 1974) on a power pole in Grimes Street, Auchenflower. During the January flood event, such level provided a very valuable reference point for residents in that and surrounding streets, before and during the flood.

Also, there are other 'valuable' 1974 Flood Level marks shown on some commercial buildings/ properties in this area - eg. at the Regatta Hotel, Toowong, and on the car park fence at the rear of the shops named 'Rosalie Mews', Cnr. Nash & Elizabeth Streets, Rosalie.

I **recommend** to the Commission, that all Local Governments be statutorily required to attach markers to all power & light poles in any street which has been inundated with significant flood/s, which for Brisbane would be the 1974 and 2011 (January) Flood Levels.

Also, the installation by Local Governments of **early warning sirens** in known flood prone areas (like those installed in some rural towns), would also be worthy of consideration by the Commission of Enquiry.

b. The response to the 2010/11 flood events, particularly measures to inform the community and protect life, private and public property

In terms of informing the residents and workers of Brisbane (and South East Queensland), the type, amount and frequency of information that a person actually requires from Government/ agencies is mainly influenced by whether they were in Brisbane (or SE Qld.) in 1974 - or they weren't there. Obviously for information providers, the amount and type of information has to be based on the latter.

Nevertheless, the 1974 flood level was an important benchmark/ reference level, and it's relevance to me (and other nearby residents) was enhanced by knowing where such level was in a nearby street – Grimes Street.

Because of the significance of Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams, it's important that information provided about their features/ capabilities - and their operation during floods - is accurate/ factual and can be easily understood. In this regard, the percentages used to describe the water levels in Wivenhoe Dam during the flood were confusing - ie. with 100% being the 'Full Supply Level for Water Supply Purposes', percentages above 100% were used to describe the volume of water in the dam's Flood Compartment. It also begged the question/ query, what's the maximum level that the dam can reach/ store - especially when percentages like 190 & 200% were used.

To avoid confusion, it would be better to **describe the amount of water in the flood compartment of a dam, as a percentage starting from zero** (ie. with zero being when the water level is at the 'Full Supply Level for Water Supply Purposes') **and the maximum percentage of the flood compartment being 100%**. That is, for a dam with a flood compartment, the volume/ percentage of water in its flood compartment should be described completely separate to the water stored in the water supply compartment.

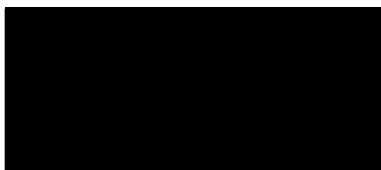
I also **recommend** to the Commission, that a **comprehensive education program be undertaken by the Queensland Government** to inform people of the roles of various agencies involved in Flood Management in their area, and the flood mitigation capabilities of dam/s in their area - and how they operate during flood events - which for Brisbane City, Ipswich City and Somerset Region - are Wivenhoe & Somerset Dams.

c. Adequacy of forecast and early warning systems

For Brisbane, the forecasting and warnings given by the Premier, Lord Mayor and various agencies were adequate and timely for this flood - given that most of the flooding came from catchments upstream of the boundary of Brisbane City – which gave ample time for warnings - and there was minimal local flooding which occurred during the 1974 flood.

As previously mentioned, the installation by Local Governments of **early warning sirens** in known flood prone areas (like those installed in some rural towns), would be worth consideration by the Commission of Enquiry.

Yours sincerely



Jeff Watson