

## Submission to Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry 2011



Picture 1 '2010'08 Table Top 024.jpg'

This view is looking north east, Blanchview Road runs from right to left towards the Warrego Highway. This is part of the catchment area for the flood water that travelled through Grantham.

### Links

#### Internal Links

Internal links only work when viewing the document from the disc 'Flood Commission Submission March 2011 Bruce Hughes' provided with the hardcopy.

Hover mouse over icon, press Ctrl key + click left mouse button to go to internal links.



Internal Link: Submission Form.pdf

#### External Links

Submission Form: <https://acrobat.com/#d=KADhlpnPkwelj4cez53hpQ>

Entire document as a pdf file: <https://acrobat.com/#d=d6o8wXbhY8ypUpqZ7Fp4ag>

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## Wednesday 19 November 2008

### 80mm of rain in 60mins, 10:00 pm

I was working at Oakey Power Station, starting at 0700 hrs and finishing normal duties at 1600 hrs. On this particular day a fellow worker was on late shifts and was to lock up at 1900 hrs. Being on call meant I was responsible for the after hour needs of the plant.

At approximately 2000 hrs I received a phone call from the security monitor indicating that the security system was not activated. I rang the fellow worker, who lived only 15 km away and he should have activated the security before leaving; he was therefore required to return to the site to activate the security. At approximately 2100 hrs, during the thunderstorm, I received another phone call to start both units at the power station on fuel oil and bring them up to full load (150 MW each). I did this and proceeded to drive to Oakey, 36 km during the thunderstorm. The events of that night are well and truly still vivid in my mind. The 80 mm of rain caused flooding at our house as well as the power station and the roads from Kleinton to Oakey.

Ref: Journal 2008

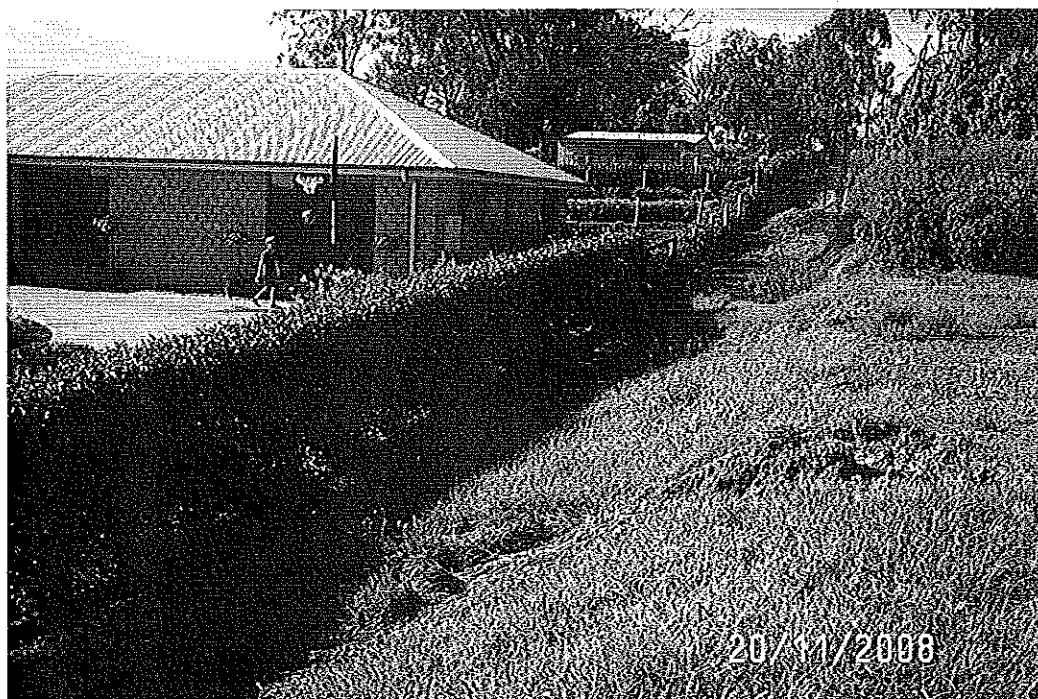


Picture 2 'Aerial Oakey Power Station Maybe 2003.jpg'

We were lucky that night not to have water enter our house. It made us realise where the water flows, how quickly and how much damage it does. Since then we have made modifications to our yard drainage and garden edges, trying to prevent water ingress and damage to our house and garden. Some of these were successful and some required further work.



Picture 3 '2008 Nov Rain (5).jpg'



Picture 4 '2008 Nov Rain (3).jpg'

## Sunday 26 December 2010

### 63 mm of rain at Kleinton

From the start of December 2010 to 26 December 2010 we measured 281 mm of rainfall. Then on 26 December 63 mm of rain fell at our home in Kleinton. We had to use an electric

sump pump to empty the water from behind the house. Previously I had dug a trench so the water would pool where the pump is.



Picture 5 'Dec 2010 Rain (1).jpg'

The water cascades from our neighbours' houses (three) and proceeds to wash out our front garden. Often during heavy rain our neighbours have septic systems that overflow into the main stream of water. The polypipe in the foreground comes from the electric sump pump at the rear of the house.



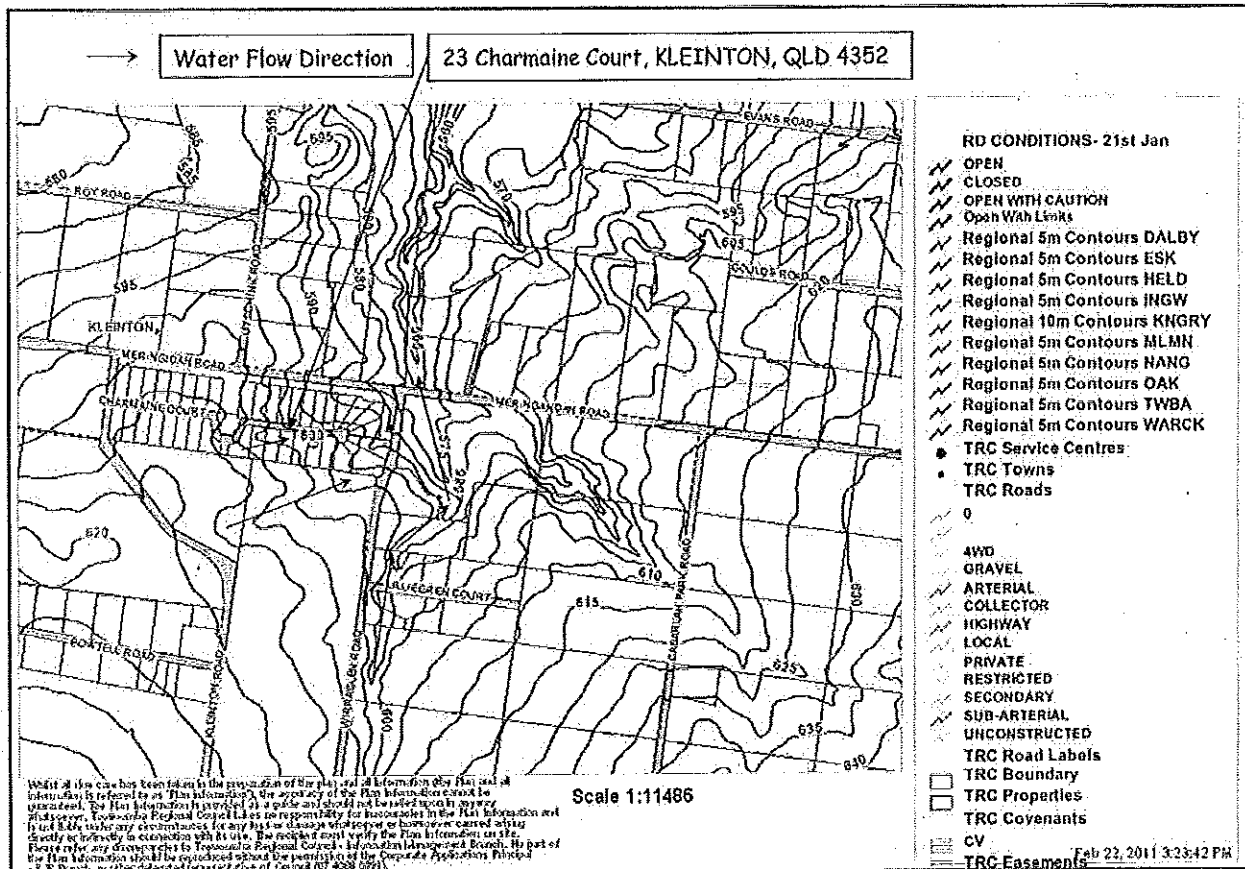
Internal Link: 2010 Dec Rain.avi





Picture 6 'Dec 2010 Rain (14).jpg'

The contours indicate where the water originally flowed, but now houses and gardens have influenced this flow. Water wants to go where it has always gone, thus it tries to take out our front garden, like it did in November 2008. In the days immediately after 10 January 2011, I increased the height of the garden edge and put in drainage pipe and channel to try and capture some of the water, diverting it to the road gutter and preventing it from washing out the garden. The neighbours' dirt is not yet retained. The establishment of grass has helped to some extent.



Picture 7 'Charmaine Court KLEINTON 4352 Contour Map with Descriptions.jpg'

**Sunday 9 January 2011**

**118 mm rain at Kleinton**

I was working at Acland Mine. My job there involves operating a coal preparation plant (wash plant) and attending to electrical issues. I work a seven day roster, 12.5 hour shifts day and night rotating.

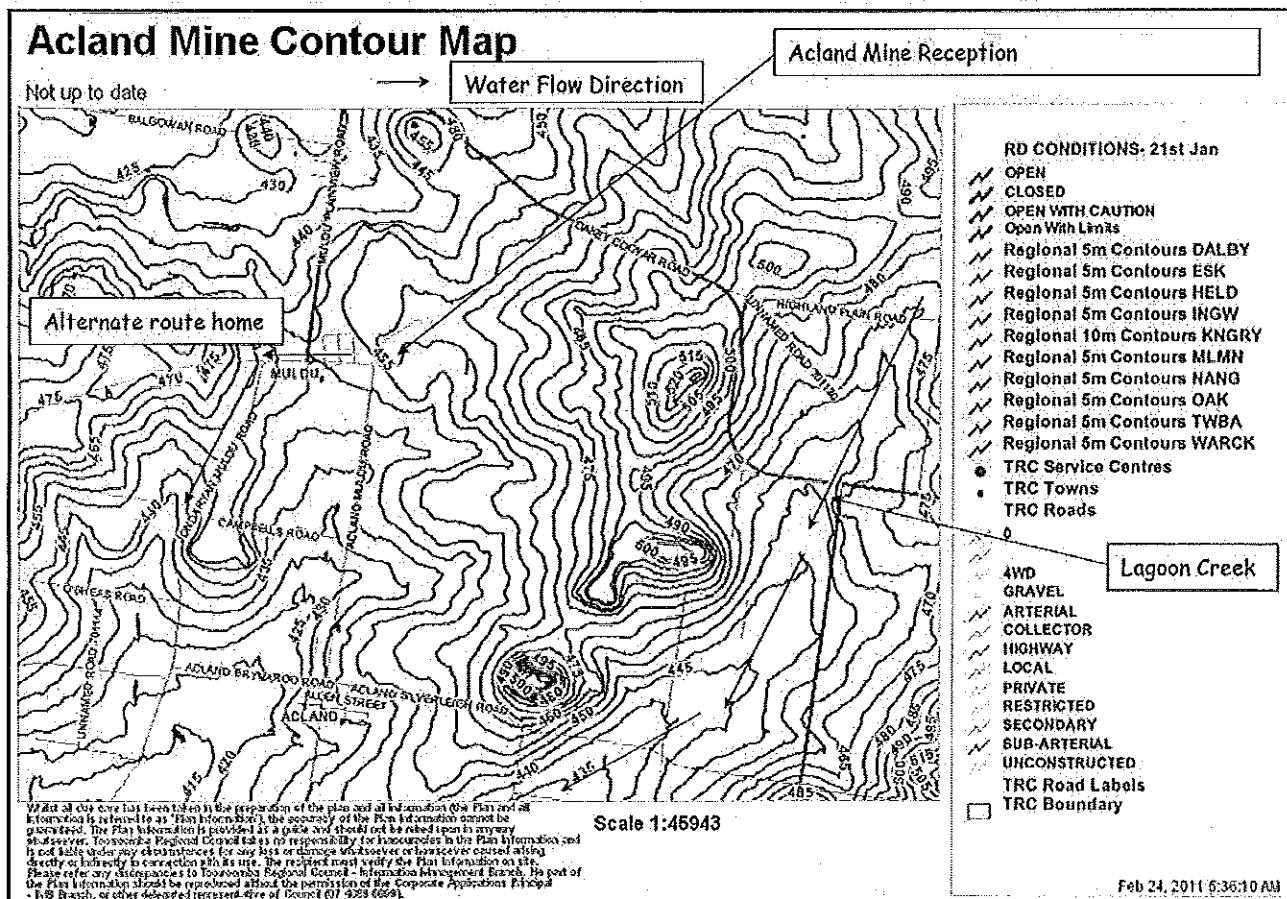
On this day I was on day shift starting at 0605 hrs and finishing normally between 1805hrs and 1835 hrs. I do not have the rainfall figures for Acland, but we had a lot of rain. At approximately 1630 hrs there was a two-way communication indicating that the Lagoon Creek was rising and the pit crew were evacuating the mine site.

As part of the wash plant crew we were not involved in the evacuation, but continued to operate. By knock-off time the local gullies and creeks were up and my normal route home, via Goombungee, was cut.

A group of four vehicles made a round trip journey from Acland Mine via the Jondaryan road to Oakey. By this stage the surrounding district was already in flood. The trip involved several water crossings. After arriving at Oakey we went our separate ways. I arrived home by approximately 2100 hrs. I have written this to indicate the amount of rain that had fallen prior to 10 January 2011.



Ref: Journal 2011



Picture 8 'Acland Mine Contour Map with Descriptions.jpg'

**Monday 10 January 2011**

**134mm of rain at Kleinton in two downpours one at approximately 1000hrs and the other at approximately 1345hrs**

I was up early knowing that there was plenty to do, considering the amount of rain that fell on 9 January 2011. I was also rostered to work night shift starting at Acland at 1805hrs. During the first downpour I moved some timber sleepers onto our front driveway to divert the water in an attempt to save the garden. I vaguely recall emptying 70mm of rain out of the gauge after the first downpour. Fortunately I was unable to get to work for my three rostered night shifts, due to flooded roads in the area. This gave me time to manage our water issues.



Picture 9 'Flood 11th Jan 2011 Work (3).jpg'

In-between the two downpours I took our children out to Cooby dam to see the level. At the turn off to the dam wall or the picnic area, we were stopped by council workers who indicated that the dam wall road was closed. They also indicated that the dam started overflowing at 0100hrs. Photographs of the picnic area that my son took, indicated the level had peaked overnight and was approximately 1-2metres lower at the time of our visit between 1000hrs and 1300hrs. His photographs unfortunately indicate the incorrect dates.

By this stage I had also added a petrol transfer pump to the drain in the back yard and was pumping this down the eastern side of our house to the front road gutter.

I could have my days wrong, but I recall a phone call to the ABC radio (frequency 747) from a female resident of the upper Brisbane river catchments in the morning or possibly inbetween the downpours. She was very concerned about her neighbours due to the fact that she had witnessed an incredible rise in the water level where she lived. The lady had tried to ring BOM but could not get through. Her message was to warn residents downstream of the pending flow of water.

The second downpour I recorded on our home video approximately 5minutes after the rain started. This video records a time of 1345hrs and lasts for approximately 5mins. It shows the flow of water around our neighbourhood. This water travels via Klein creek to Cooby dam.



Internal Link: 2011 Jan 10 Flood MLP.avi

**Tuesday 11 January 2011****Work on Garden Edge, Raising Height**

To prevent the water from our western neighbour jumping the garden edge I added some pine sleepers. Note in the picture the water is still running from the neighbour's yard and seeping through the hill we live on. It continued to seep for at least 6 days.

Ref: Costs.xls



Picture 10 'Flood 11th Jan 2011 Work (5).jpg'



Picture 11 'Flood 11th Jan 2011 Work (6).jpg'

## Wednesday 12 January 2011

### Trench Digging Neighbours Front Yard

Water was seeping under the pine garden edge and starting to kill plants. I dug a trench to try and get the water to flow away from the garden edge.



Picture 12 'Flood 12th Jan 2011 Work (4).jpg'

## Thursday 13 January 2011

### Trench Digging Our Rear Yard

I continued with the trench in our rear yard. The trench has 100mm slotted drain pipe in it and drains to the front yard gutter. The pond serves as a feature as well as a place to pump out of when the drain does not get rid of the water quickly enough. I have the option of putting an electric pump at a pit near the gas bottles or a petrol transfer pump sucking from the pond. When we get heavy rain we deploy both options and keep a close eye on water levels. So far we have not had water enter the house.





Picture 13 'Flood 13th Jan 2011 Work (1).jpg'

## Friday 14 January 2011

### Backfill and Transplant Grass Neighbours Front Yard

I worked to complete the drainage on our western neighbours side. This involved transplanting grass from our rear yard. I was concerned we would get rain which would wash out the drainage gravel. Fortunately the rain held off and the grass has now established.

## 19 & 20 January 2011

### 20mm & 24mm of rain fell at Kleinton

Wednesday 19 and Thursday 20 January 2011 another 20mm and 24mm of rain fell. All the drainage work held up okay. We did however put the electric pump in to help drain the water in our rear yard.



Picture 14 'Flood 16th Jan 2011 Work (2).jpg'

## Friday to Wednesday 21-26 January 2011

### Front Yard Channel and Cement

Between Friday and Wednesday I installed a channel and grate drain. This captured some of the water from our rear yard and western neighbours front yard and channelled it to the road gutter.

## Monday 21 February 2011

### 46mm rain at Kleinton during afternoon storm

46mm of rain fell during an afternoon storm. It was a good indication of how the drainage modifications worked.



Internal Link: 2011 Feb 21 Rain 46mm MLP.avi





Picture 15 'Flood 26th Jan 2011 Work.jpg'

## References

TRC (2009), TRMAPS, Toowoomba Regional Council, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia, <http://trceview.toowoomba.qld.gov.au:8082/evview-html/index.html#>, viewed February 2011.

## **Question 1**

### **What is the process followed by the ABC radio when residents phone in to inform the public of their situation?**

Under the heading 'Monday 10 January 2011' I mentioned recalling a phone call from a resident who indicated she had never seen water rise so quickly and wanted to warn others. I would like to know the process that occurs after such phone calls. I would also like to hear a community advertising campaign similar to the SES announcements to ring '132500' for emergency assistance. This would indicate a dedicated service for the community to ring to inform and warn others of their situation.

## **Question 2**

### **What steps are in place to install more river monitoring stations?**

I would like to see more monitoring stations, linked into the BOM website, in the Toowoomba river catchment areas. What plans for the future are in place?

## **Suggestions**

### **Air Siren**

Is it possible for Toowoomba city to install an air raid siren to warn people in the city to evacuate the area during heavy rain?

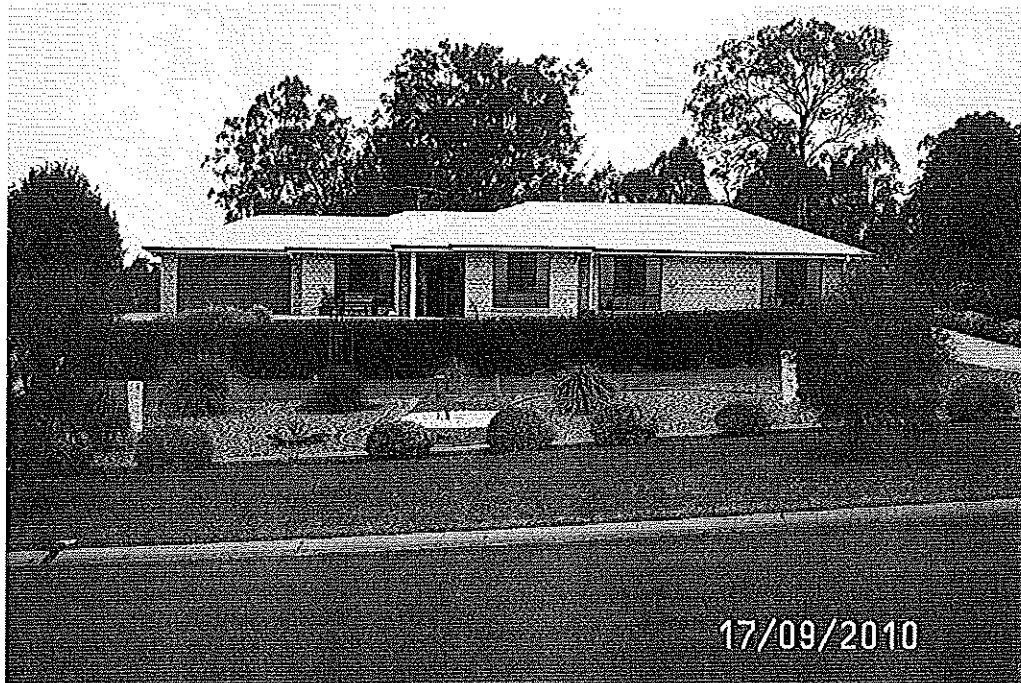
### **Emergency Equipment Cabinets**

Install at strategic points in Toowoomba City cabinets that have emergency equipment kept in them. These would need to have an alarm system that rings through to emergency departments to indicate someone has accessed them and automatically informed them of the current location. Keep inside the cabinets rescue harnesses, lines and like equipment. I understand the general public are not trained in their use and there would be risks involved. But I believe there are people trained within our community that could use these items competently enough to rescue people in trouble.

## About the Author

### Bruce Hughes

I was born in 1970 Newbury, England and moved to Australia 1975. I completed most of my schooling at Moranbah Central Queensland. After school I completed an apprenticeship at an open cut coal mine as an Electrical Fitter Mechanic. I have worked in both Power Stations and Coal Mines for 20 years. I have also worked for SunWater at Biloela looking after the electrical side of water infrastructure from Rockhampton in the north, Emerald in the west, Gladstone in the east and Monto in the south for 14 months. I am currently married with two children who attend high school. We have been affected by floods, not to the extent of others, but enough to feel compelled to try and do something to prevent such tragic events occurring again after such heavy rain.



Picture 16 '2010'09'17\_ [REDACTED] 019.jpg'

