

21 February 2011

DC McCullagh

*Sunwater*

QLD Floods Commission Inquiry  
GPO Box 1738  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Hello

RE: SUBMISSION RE LAND USE PLANNING  
EMERALD REGION

I would like to make a submission to the Qld Floods Inquiry. I would also like to appear at the inquiry for the following reasons:

1. We own Portion 139 and have farmed it since the scheme commenced in October 1972 and took up our block in February 1973.
2. Some of the problems with flooding occur at the boundary of Portion 139 where the Blair Athol railway crosses Munro Road.
3. We also own [REDACTED] 3780HA of property in the Junction of Theresa Creek & Nogoa River.
4. Sunwater drops the Emerald irrigation LM1 & LM12 drains into our freehold land without adequate construction to take the water to the Nogoa River in a flood event.
5. The story from Sunwater in Emerald is that they are going to give Central Highlands Regional Council LM1 & LM12 drains to maintain.
6. We have a large vested interest in LM1 & LM12 and we want to know the details before this change happens.

Following is our submission regarding the 2008 & 2011 Floods in Emerald and surrounding regions.

Before Fairbairn Dam was built, the river ran as an unfettered stream that flooded sometimes and then there was a string of water holes. Sunwater has been using the river as an open channel to supply water to the coal mines and downstream users since 1973. The dam did not outflow between 1991 – 2008, 17 years without a flush out but 17 years to grow vegetation that is now impeding the flood flow. The 2008 flood could not remove the vegetation that had grown during 1991 to 2008 as it was too large after 17 years of growth. A low level bridge proposed as a bypass for Emerald will cause more impediment for floods and push more water out of the river in a flooding event.

When the irrigation area was build in 1960 – 1970 in Emerald the need for water for coal washing was in its infancy. The area that was going to be irrigated was cut back substantially to accommodate the coal industry. I am sure that the original design papers would contain the methods to be employed to deliver the water to the coal

mines. The environmental lobby has become all powerful and this could be the reason for the river to get over-vegetated and this neglect to cause the river to break its banks.

I believe the Emerald irrigation area was built for irrigators by the IWS and the irrigators pay drainage rates. I don't believe the council or land holders other than irrigators pay drainage rates and are not entitled to drop their storm water into the drainage channels. The TAFE college, the showgrounds, the industrial area and the sale yards have no facilities for storm water except to drain it into town. This storm water cannot enter the irrigation drains because they are full and then the houses are flooded.

The industrial area north of Munro Road used to have a creek running through it called Boggy Creek and it used to run NE and over the Gregory Highway and into LM12. The industrial area has been filled and the water now runs south into LM1. This water overloads LM1 and forces water into houses and cross the racecourse into more houses.

The water in South Emerald comes under the rail line in a pedestrian tunnel and floods houses in North Emerald. This water should be looked after on the south side into the river instead of flooding North Emerald.

There is a new industrial area beside Wills Road that puts water into LM12 without paying drainage rates and LM12 overflows into Cotton farms on Moffat Road.

The town river has bridges that are impeding the flow of the river in flood. Two new road bridges, two old road bridges, a proposed new bypass road bridge, two weirs (Selma Weir & Town Weir – refer Map 1) and a botanical gardens planted on the flood plain between the two road bridges.

The town has built a sewerage ring tank near Donohoe Road in the middle of the flood plain. Donohoe Road has been washed away in 2008 & 2011 because of this structure.

On Selma Road Sunwater has built drains in Blue to control the runoff from the irrigation farms that amount to approximately 1200HA. The blue drain stops at the first bridge on Selma Road and I suppose the water should lead to the river. It also floods South Emerald. At this bridge on Selma Road Sunwater has built a pump station and a pipeline to LM1 to stop farm water entering the town supply.

Lot 134 owned by [REDACTED] is the first farm on Selma Road and takes water from the Nogoa River via a pump and pipeline and a 828ML licence. The water that ran through [REDACTED] property in 2008 – 2011 through a depression in his cultivation could not have done this if [REDACTED] had built the ring tank that he has approval for. This would also have increased the flood in South Emerald.

Sunwater built the LM1 & LM12 drains to be utilised by the irrigators that it services 1500HA and they pay drainage rates. As LM1 & LM12 pass through Emerald town industrial runoff, TAFE college, sales yards, showgrounds and sportsgrounds all make an attempt to use these drains for runoff plus residential areas are in this also. These

drains are for irrigation use only because the whole irrigation area could be planted to cotton in the summer and cotton's water use is approximately 100mm/week and it is quite common for the whole irrigation area to have just finished irrigation and then receive 150mm in a high intensity storm.

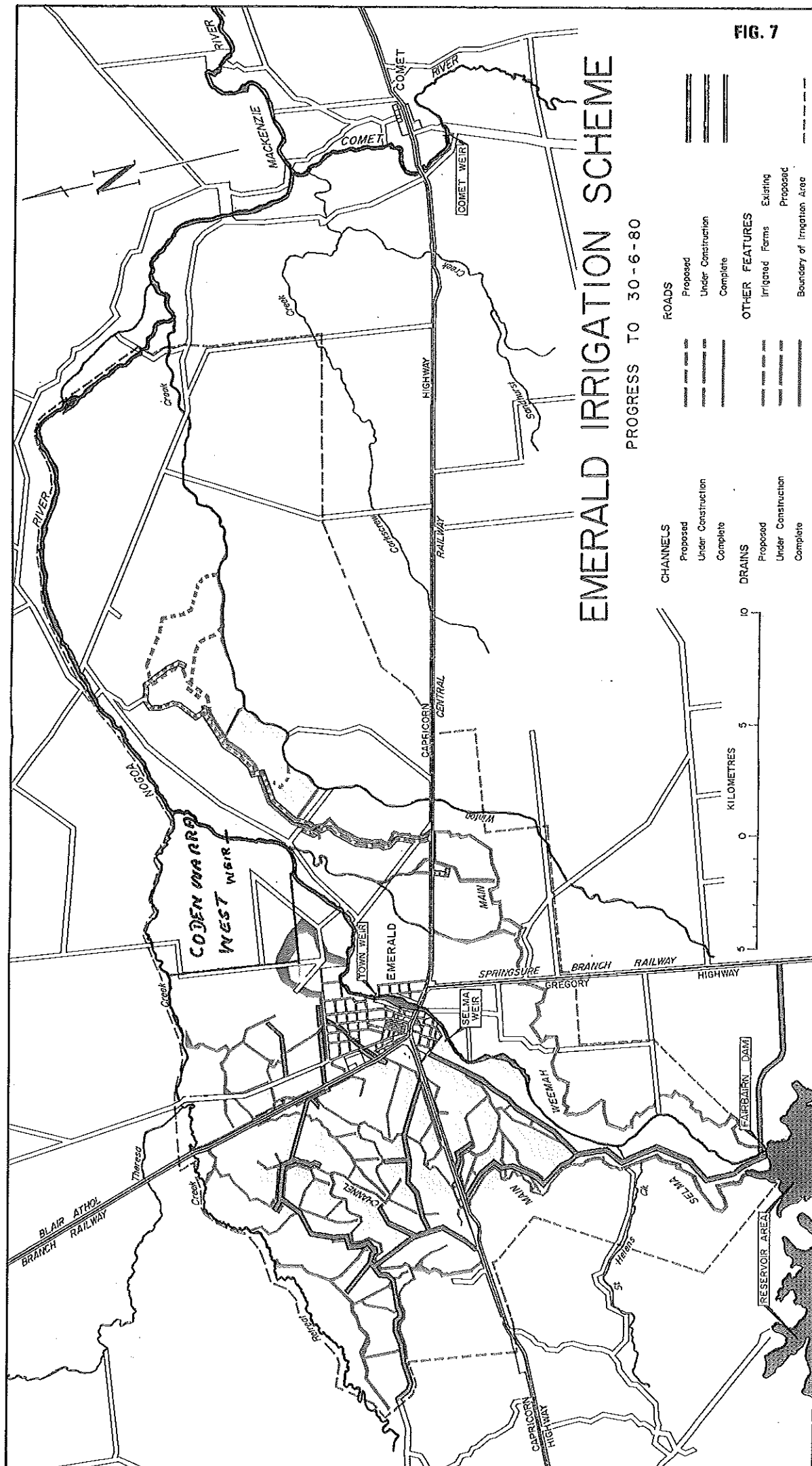
There is no room for any other water in our drains. The nuts & bolts of it is that the town of Emerald does not have a drainage system to take excess water in a large rainfall event. In the 2011 flood, the irrigation area was not being irrigated and it was not raining so the town and the river overflow had the drains on their own. This could have been a much larger disaster.

#### APPENDICES INCLUDED.

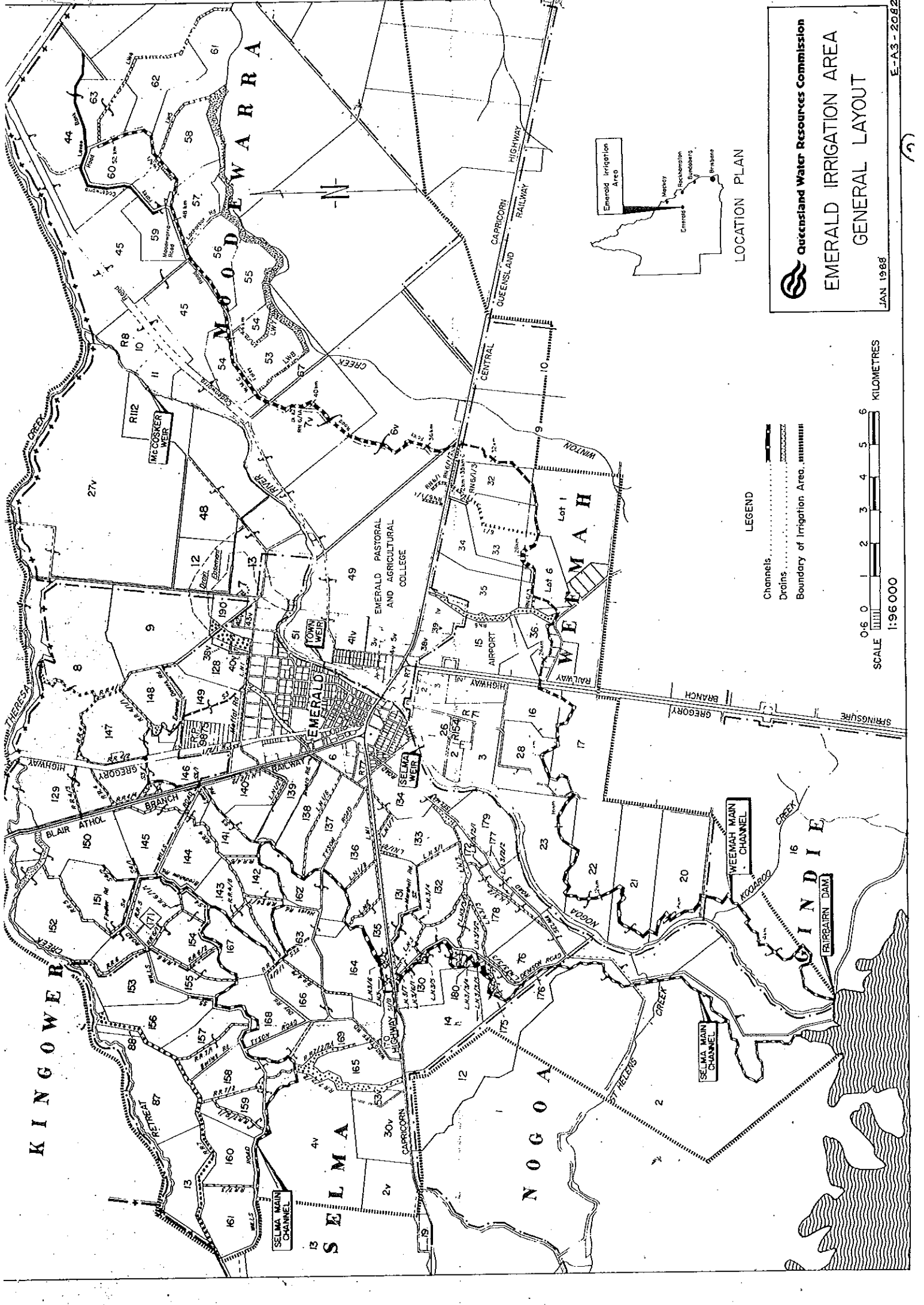
1. Emerald Irrigation Scheme
2. Emerald Irrigation Area General Layout
3. Town Planning Scheme of Emerald (Zoning Map No 2)
4. Letter from Central Highlands Regional Council refusing map of 2008 Emerald flood.
5. McCosker Weir
6. 2011 Map of Flooded Emerald

# EMERALD IRRIGATION SCHEME

CHANNLES	Proposed	Under Construction	Complete
ROADS	Proposed	Under Construction	Complete
OTHER FEATURES	Irrigated Farms	Existing	Proposed
DRAINS	Proposed	Under Construction	Complete



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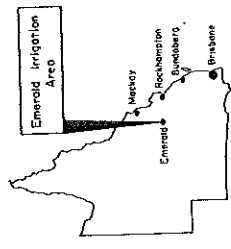
Queensland Water Resources Commission

**EMERALD IRRIGATION AREA**

**GENERAL LAYOUT**

JAN 1988

E-A3-2082



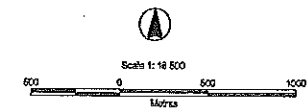
LOCATION PLAN

- LEGEND**
- Channels
  - Drains
  - Boundary of Irrigation Area

0 1 2 3 4 5 6  
KILOMETRES

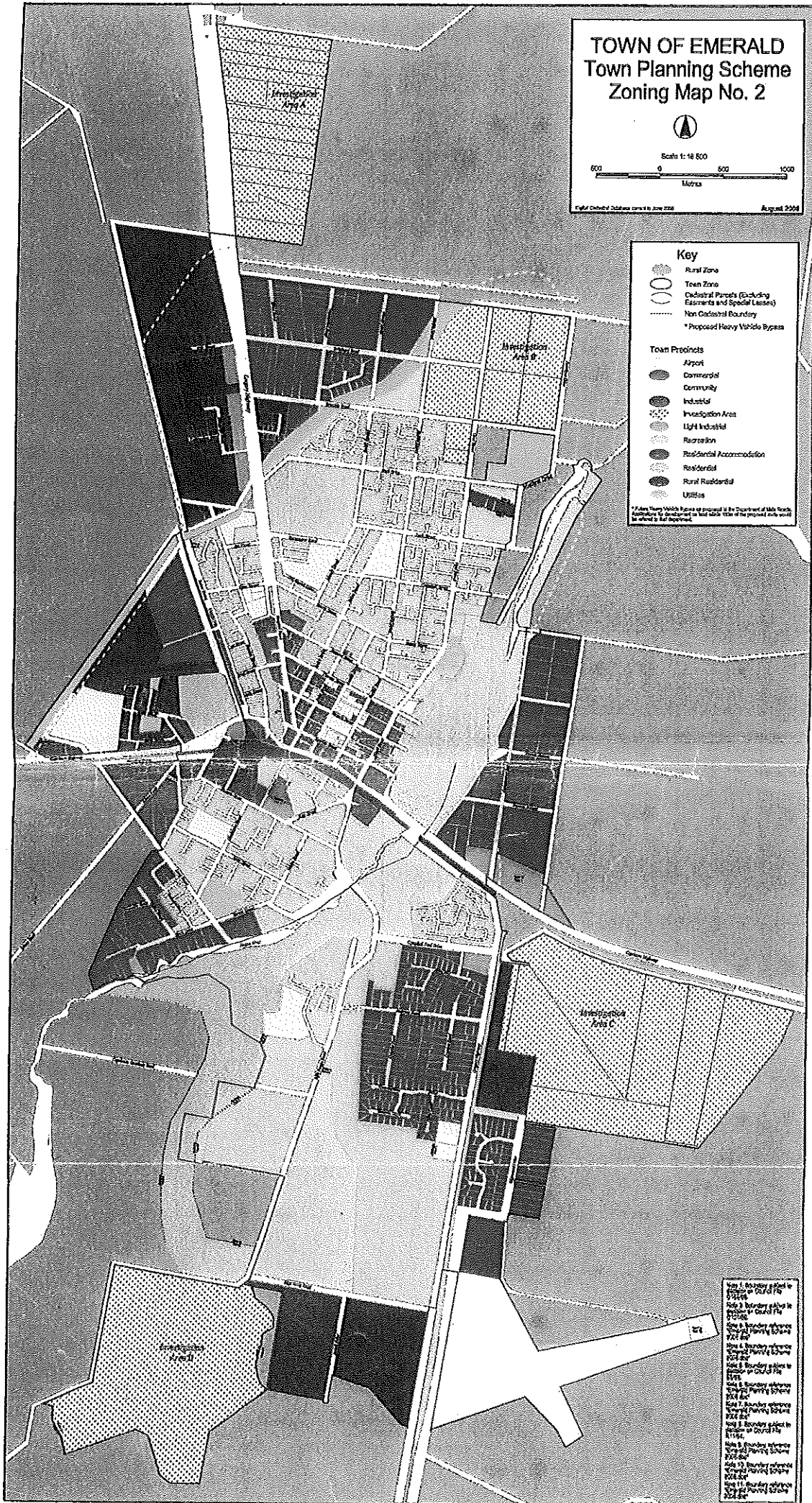
SCALE 1:96 000

# TOWN OF EMERALD Town Planning Scheme Zoning Map No. 2



Original Database correct to June 2006 August 2006

- Key**
- Rural Zone
  - Town Zone
  - Cadastral Parcels (Excluding Easements and Special Licences)
  - Non Cadastral Boundary
  - \* Proposed Heavy Vehicle Bypass
- Town Precincts**
- Airport
  - Commercial
  - Community
  - Industrial
  - Investigation Area
  - Light Industrial
  - Recreation
  - Residential Accommodation
  - Residential
  - Rural Residential
  - Utilities
- \* Heavy Heavy Vehicle Bypass as proposed by the Department of Main Roads. Applications for development on land within 100m of the proposed route will be referred to that Department.



- Key 1. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Rural Zone
- Key 2. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Town Zone
- Key 3. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Industrial Zone
- Key 4. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Light Industrial Zone
- Key 5. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Residential Zone
- Key 6. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Rural Residential Zone
- Key 7. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Recreation Zone
- Key 8. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Residential Accommodation Zone
- Key 9. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Utilities Zone
- Key 10. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Airport Zone
- Key 11. Boundary of land to be rezoned to Community Zone



YOUR REF:



1<sup>st</sup> February 2011

Dave McCullagh  
Emerald Qld 4720

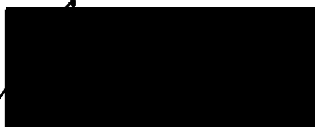
Dear Dave,

**Re: Request for copy of Emerald 2008 flood event map**

In regard to your request, Council passed a resolution soon after the 2008 event, that members of the public were able to visit our Emerald office to view a copy of the flood maps, but Council would not release paper or electronic copies of the maps to the public.

I cannot provide you with a copy of the map. You are welcome, as are all members of the public, to arrange an appointment time to review the maps and discuss any of the data they contain.

Yours faithfully,



**Chief Executive Officer**

(4)







