

Oakey Floods

- Almost 200 properties in Oakey, including 122 homes, were unexpectedly flooded on Tuesday January 11th 2011 when the Oakey Creek broke its banks, joining up with Lagoon Creek, causing flooding in unexpected and never before flooded areas.
- Residents are asking why they were not warned of the potential flooding.
- Much danger to life and damage to moveable property could have been averted if an early warning of potential flooding was provided
- While no one was injured or killed, many were rescued or got themselves out of quite dangerous situations
- Cooby Dam is on the headwaters of the Oakey Creek, collecting water from 1/3 of the catchment of the Oakey Creek. It is a water supply for the Toowoomba Regional Council
- Cooby Dam filled and began overflowing on Sunday 9th January.
- The Cooby Dam Emergency Management Plan calls for downstream residents and authorities, including the Oakey Service Centre of Toowoomba Regional Council and emergency services (Police, Fire Services, Ambulance, SES), to be notified at certain times as water levels in the Dam rise, overflow, and reach certain levels of overflowing.
- It would appear that these notifications were not made to the Oakey Service Centre of Toowoomba Regional Council, or the emergency services in Oakey.
- If the state of Cooby Dam overflows were known an emergency response could have been initiated earlier, including warnings to residents.
- Both Council and Emergency Services personnel in Oakey made enquiries about Cooby Dam water levels on Monday 10th January, but the details were not forthcoming. Some were told Cooby Dam overflows would have minimal impact on flooding in Oakey.
- The Emergency Response in Oakey was not well coordinated:
 - o There was no clear understanding of who within Council was responsible for coordinating a response, and key Council personnel were on leave and or unable to get to Oakey due to being isolated on rural properties by floodwaters

- There was no Oakey Local Emergency Plan to follow
- The Oakey SES Officer in Charge was on leave, and their response was not up to expectations
- While Flooding occurred at c. 11.30 am on Tuesday 11 January, and evacuations had begun shortly before that, there was no meeting between Oakey Toowoomba Regional Council Staff and Emergency Services personnel until Wednesday afternoon, arranged 'on the run' when Council staff and Fire Services staff met while assessing needs of flooded residents, and arranged a meeting for later on in the day
- Once they had met, there was good cooperation in coordinating the immediate clean up

So there are two questions that need to be answered as regards the Oakey floods:

1. **Was the Cooby Dam Emergency Plan Activated?**
2. **Who is responsible for monitoring** the water flows and creek rises that impact Oakey in this scenario, and for analysing other data (e.g. rainfall) to put together some kind of picture of what is happening and could happen, and **making the call to activate an emergency plan?**

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