

45. Around 7pm there was no water approaching our house at this point, but we observed a panel member of the "7pm project" broadcast a message which was advising evacuation of low lying areas in the Lockyer Valley, Murpheys creek, Gratham and Galton. I commented to my wife that the telecast was on a 1 hour delay. We still had not received any news about our area specifically.
46. I checked again, as I had been doing consistently all night, with the Bureau of Meteorology website and it appeared that the water levels were rising in Savages Crossing and Murphy's crossing, but there were still no warnings for the Fernvale or the broader Somerset area.
47. After careful consideration, together with the fact that no water had approached our house at this time, my wife and I decided to stay at the property.

DAY THREE: Tuesday 11 January 2011

48. After an extremely restless night's sleep, I was woken at approximately 5am by a sever storm that had moved in that morning.
49. I got up and went straight onto the Bureau of Meteorology website to check the status of the storm. After seeing the severity of the storm had the direction it was travelling, I said to my wife "We are in trouble here; this is going to be a 2 - 3 hour storm."
50. I looked outside and there was no water approaching the house but water had begun to pool in sections of the yard. I couldn't see any flooding coming up or down the road at this time.
51. At approximately 6.50am there was a significant amount of surface water around the property and it was coming up around the house and onto the verandah. I took a photo of the surface water on my mobile.
52. At approximately 7am I went outside and started moving rocks and other obstructions that could possibly prevent water from flowing off the property. I was increasingly worried that our house was going to flood, so I started putting spare mattresses and similar goods up to higher ground in the shed as I felt it

was at greatest risk due to the layout of the property. I put spare bales of sugarcane mulch in a gateway to act as a levee bank between 2 gardens.

53. At approximately 7.30am I returned inside and within minutes witnessed the contents of the bales floating past the rear of the house. I went outside and observed that these bales had been destroyed.
54. At this time the water had risen to approximately 300mm at the front of the house, and was now above the floor level of the house but had not yet got inside. The water was flowing in from the south western corner of the property.
55. At approximately 7.45am water had begun to enter the south west corner of the house.
56. At approximately 8am, my wife and I got on the roof of our house as the water was rising rapidly and we were scared that we may suffer the same fate as those in Grantham if we didn't get on the roof.
57. From the roof I made one call to another resident living on higher ground in Fernvale, along with a second call to a work colleague in Upper Mount Gravatt and asked them to contact Emergency Services and tell them we were trapped on the roof. I took a photo of the water and could see it rushing into the property. We stayed on the roof for about an hour and the water had risen to about 1 metre up the side of the house. The entire area was flooded and there was no way of evacuating due to the speed of the water flow..
58. At approximately 9am, the storm was so intense in the area that the house was shaking. We were fearfully of being struck by lightening and we could see that the smaller of our 2 dogs that was on the roof with us was distressed.
59. The storm had not stopped but water levels had stabilized. We got off the roof and secured our larger dog who we had left inside the house on furniture. My wife sat on top of our BBQ table for approximately 30 minutes while the water receded. I entered the house to survey the damage.

60. At approximately 10.00am almost all of the water had receded and I opened all the doors to the house to let the last of the water out. I could see from the high water mark on the internal walls that approximately 450mm of water had come into the house.
61. I then went to check on our neighbours to see if they were ok and surveyed the damage to our property. The rapid surge of water had knocked down our front fence and had washed away the gravel sections of our driveway, transporting the gravel some 30 metres away.
62. While returning from checking on the neighbours I saw a man in yellow overalls stationed on the Brisbane Valley Highway. I assumed he was from the SES and approached him to see what was happening.
63. He said that they were evacuating the area to the local school which was on higher ground.
64. I returned to the house and while my wife gathered a few belongings I took a short video of the flooding and observed the water starting to rise again. We then evacuated to the school. From the school we had limited view of the house, but could observe that there was no let up in the storm for a period of time.
65. We stayed there for approximately 1 hour. The school was not opened and there were no facilities for the few people that had evacuated to this point.
66. At approximately 11:30am, we could see that the rain had stopped. There were no supplies at the school, so my wife and I thought that we were better off going home. We stood on the corner of the Brisbane Valley Highway and Schmidt Road with other onlookers observing the water flowing over the Highway and the damage in the area. The road was still closed to traffic at this time.
67. When we arrived home, the water had completely receded from the house. I lifted up the sliding door sills to let the last of the water out. These sills sit approximately 2 cm above the floor. My wife and I were in shock, but relieved and we thought that the worst was over.

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68. We sat down in our flooded house and had a cup of coffee and were discussing that we thought that it would be safe enough for us to stay at the property. Water was boiled on the BBQ which had not been located at the rear of the house and had not fully submerged.
69. At approximately 1pm a friend of ours, Claire [REDACTED], who lives on higher ground in [REDACTED], came to our house. She insisted that we go and stay with her.
70. Over the next few hours, we packed up what we could and tried to get out some of our belongings, however we needed to trek items across the flooded front yard to the highway. The yard was water logged and slippery and fences had been pushed down so we had to walk across the gates and fencing wire. I was able to get out one of our cars.
71. At approximately 5pm Dave [REDACTED] resident of [REDACTED] visited to see how we had got on. His property had also been flooded. Dave [REDACTED] observed that the water damage in my house was to approx 600mm, leading me to believe that a second surge had occurred whilst we had evacuated the house. When we were almost ready to leave some unknown person on a bike came up to us in the yard and said that water was coming back up on Nardoo Street. We could not see this from my place. Dave [REDACTED] immediately returned to his property as it was located in the area concerned.
72. At approximately 5.30pm we left our property to go to Claire's house. There was no water on the property when we left.
73. We traveled down the Brisbane Valley Highway. At Ferny Gully there was an SES officer on one side of the road and a police officer on the other as the road had been severely damaged and traffic was only able to cross one lane at a time, moving around debris.
74. I asked the SES officer whether he knew if the water was rising again. He said that he had not heard anything regarding the water rising. He advised to talk to the police officer on the other side of the road.

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75. I asked the police officer whether we knew if the water was meant to be rising again. He too had not heard anything to that effect. I suggested that he needed to talk to the person on the bike as I was worried about his motives at the time.
76. We arrived safely at Claire's property. At approximately 11pm, we heard some activity in the surrounding area but I didn't know what was going on. We saw vehicles driving into a house just up the road, and thought that it looked a bit strange, but not being from that part of town thought nothing more about it and went to sleep.

DAY FOUR: Wednesday 12 January 2011

77. At approximately 6am we looked out the back of Claire's property and could see water in areas that previously did not have water. From this view, parts of the Fernvale Township could also be seen.
78. Claire came out and was puzzled, saying "There shouldn't be water there".
79. Claire and my wife went for a walk down the street to see if neighbors down on the lower parts of the street were safe. One of Claire's neighbours told them that many residents at the bottom of the street were evacuated during the night. Houses were still underwater and then I realised that must have been the cause of the noise.
80. Not one of the evacuation personnel came up to Claire's property and let us know that an evacuation was taking place or that the area was flooding again.
81. At approximately 6.30am I left Claire's property to return to our house. As I got to the highway near our property, I could see that the water was about 1 metre up the side of our house and was starting to recede.
82. Over the next two hours the water level dropped by 1 metre and at approximately 9am the water had completely receded from our property. The water did not rise again after this time

83. When I got to the house I could see on the walls that the high water mark was approximately 1.2 metres on the outside and 1 metre on the inside of the house. There was still a significant amount of water in the house at this time

Observations of Water Levels

84. Through the experiences I endured above, I make the following observations as the water levels that Fernvale experienced during the floods and the speed at which these levels peaked and receded.
85. On Monday 10 January 2011 at 3.30 the water level was below the road level on Lowood Fernvale Road. By approximately 5.00pm the water level had risen approximately 18 inches above road level. In approximately 1 ½ hours the water level rose 18 inches or approximately 12 inches per hour.
86. I am unable to comment on the rate this water receded, however, the next morning the Brisbane Valley Highway was still closed due to flooding.
87. On Tuesday 11 January 2011 prior to 7.30am, whilst there was some pooling of water on my property, there was no flooding at this time. However, from approximately 7.30am to 8am there was a surge of water and water levels rose from nothing to 1 metre outside the house. When we managed to get on the roof my wife and I were walking through a significant amount of water to get to the ladder at the back of the house.
88. When my wife and I came down from the roof at approximately 9am, the water had begun to recede. We sat of the BBQ table outside for approximately 30mins watching the water flow out of our house and at approximately 9.30am the water had completely receded. From approximately 9am to 9.30am the water levels receded by 1 metre in 30 minutes.
89. The second surge of water occurring on Tuesday 11 January occurred at approximately 10.15am. We evacuated our property at approximately 10am and it takes approximately 10 minutes to get to the school (evacuation point). When we left the property there was no flooding.

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90. We arrived at the school at approximately 10.15am. From this viewpoint we could see that water was being to collect in areas and that the water levels were beginning to rise.
91. At approximately 11am, the rain had stopped and it appeared that the water was starting to recede. We left the school at this time and returned home. It took us approximately 10 minutes to arrive back home and we arrived at approximately 11.15am. Our property was still flooded up to approximately 1 metre on the exterior of the house at this time and the water was rushing away from the property.
92. At approximately 12pm, all the water had receded from the house. I talked to my neighbour Dave [REDACTED] at this time, who did not evacuate, and he confirmed that the water rose to 1 metre outside the house and approximately 600mm inside the house.
93. On Wednesday 12 January 2011 at approximately 6.30am I observed that our property was inundated with approximately 1 metre up the side of the house. Since I was not at the property overnight, I cannot comment on the rate at which the water rose
94. By approximately 9am, the water had completely receded and did not rise again. The water receded by 1 metre in 2 hours or approximately 6 inches per hour

Fernvale Community Action Group Concerns

95. In the weeks following the floods, the Fernvale Community Action Group was formed. There was a range of individual and group concerns that were vented over the meetings that we had at that time and to date.
96. Whilst there were varying personal concerns for group members, the broader concerns shared by the group can be described as follows:

Local Council Planning in relation to the large growth and development of the Fernvale area was insufficient.

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97. We felt as a group that the infrastructure and maintenance of the development, especially the drainage systems, were insufficient to cope with any increased volume of water. Also the failed design of the drainage meant that water was redirected into our properties and contributed to the severity of flooding that we experienced.
98. I noticed on the morning of Tuesday 11 April 2010 that the storm water drains were struggling to cope with the volume of water flowing from the constant rain, but was still managing to get a fair portion of the water away from the area.
99. However, as the morning progressed and the rain continued, it became apparent that the drainage system did not have a sufficient capacity to move a significant amount of water away from the area.
100. I inspected the drains closest to my property and noticed that they reaching capacity. As the rain continued, the area flooding area the drains was increasing as the drains simply were not big enough.
101. Further, there was no design to redirect water overflow or any ancillary back up for drainage failure. As such the excess water was directed straight into properties in the low lying areas causing significant flooding.
102. We believe that the infrastructure and capacity of the drainage system failed to also take into account the dramatic reduction of absorption of water through natural causeways which have been covered with cement and the like due to continued development.
103. Together with the Wivenhoe dam releases, the already failed drainage system had no capability to redirect the combination of dam and storm water away from the Fernvale area.
104. We believe there was significant lack of foresight regarding the drainage requirements for the Fernvale area which contributed to the severity of flooding we experienced. Prior to and in the aftermath of the flood, we brought our concerns regarding the drainage to the attention of the local Council. The local

Council has been conceded that the capacity of the drainage system needs to be investigated and a Capacity Assessment is currently underway.

No Disaster response or warning for Fernvale Residents.

105. During the entire time during and leading up to the floods which impacted the Fernvale area, we were given no warning or support.
106. The Council was aware prior to this time that there was no emergency response team in place for the Fernvale area and the former emergency response team had become defunct during the 12 months prior to this event. There were no substantial efforts made to resolve this issue to my knowledge.
107. Further there were no sirens or similar auditory warning systems in place to alert Fernvale residents to evacuate prior to flooding. The rural fire brigade has at least 2 fire trucks with loud sirens and these were not sounded at any time to my knowledge. There was also no community speaker system or the like to play a recorded message to evacuate which would have enabled Fernvale residents at least to take measures to prepare for the floods.
108. At approximate 6pm on Tuesday 11 January 2011 a SES truck had got into the area which I was told by other residents was sounding its siren. I never heard this siren. However by this time the Fernvale area was already experiencing significant flooding and major crossings out of the area were blocked.
109. We had television, internet and some radio capabilities and at no time did we receive any community warnings, media statements or direction to evacuate. However, on Monday 17 January 2011 when the Fernvale area was experiencing heavy rain, media statements expressly mentioned Fernvale and gave warning of heavy rain and the possibility of flash flooding in the area.
110. There were helicopters in the area at the time and none of them were fitted with a speaker system to provide warning or direction to Fernvale residents.
111. There was a text message warning system initiated by the SES, however it had limited ability and was instituted after the flood events in question. Some

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residents received a test text message on Wednesday 19 January 2011 which featured no warning but was merely a test of the system.

112. This text alert system was of limited utility as these texts did not go to all or majority of Fernvale residents. None of Fernvale residents had registered to this system or were advised it was being initiated. Further there was no identifiable source from which the resident contact list for this system was devised. For example, while many residents use the same telecommunication providers, some received texts from the SES warning system and some did not. I never received one of these texts.
113. We consider that this system not only has limited functionality as a warning mechanism but was instituted too late and is another example of the lacking emergency response infrastructure in place in the Fernvale area.
114. On the most basic level, there was no support on the ground. There was nothing as simple as door knocking to tell people to evacuate their homes.
115. With all the technology that Fernvale residents had access to before and during most of the flooding, there was no warning mechanism used. Even rudimentary methods such as door knocking and loudspeaker warnings were not implemented.

Improper or insufficient Management of the Wivenhoe dam.

116. As residents in the shadow of the Wivenhoe dam we believe that we were directly impacted by the management of its water releases.
117. Firstly, we believe that too much water was released in too short a time frame. It was discussed that the drainage system, as much as it struggled for reasons discussed above, managed to get a large portion of the water out of the Fernvale area and delayed the rate of storm water levels and the severity of flooding during the day on Tuesday 11 January 2011.
118. However, due to significant releases of water from Wivenhoe, combined with the constant heavy rain, the drainage system could not move such massive amounts

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of water away from the area. In a period approximately of 90 minutes on Tuesday 11 January 2011, Fernvale was severely flooded and all major crossing such as the Brisbane Valley Highway, Savages Crossing and College Crossing were largely impassable.

119. Not only did the massive "panic" releases of such large volumes of water cause severe and sudden flooding, it effectively isolated our community and restricted access to outside emergency assistance.
120. Secondly, we believe that there were not enough releases from the Wivenhoe dam in the days prior which would have prevented massive "panic" releases of water.
121. In discussions after the flooding with Mld Brisbane River Irrigators ("MBRI") I was advised of the levels that the Brisbane River can "run" at before the major crossings in the area would be breached. This information was also included in radio reports at the time. It is my understanding that where these crossings are breached the Fernvale Area will flood as a result.
122. Through the media after the event, it had come to our attention that the Wivenhoe Dam was significantly above 100% capacity and it was foreseeable that capacity would be increasing dramatically with the expected flow from the Lockyer and Bremer Rivers and the enduring rain.
123. Prior to Monday 10 January 2011, we were experiencing significant rain but all the relevant levels at the crossings were well below their breaching point.
124. There was capacity for these crossing to tolerate smaller and consistent releases of water from the Dam without reaching its breaching point or causing flooding in the Fernvale Area.
125. With the knowledge of the crossings' water level capacity, the expected rapid increase of Wivenhoe dam capacity and that Fernvale would flood where crossing levels were exceeded, the need for smaller releases over a period of time was obvious. We believe the overall mismanagement of the Wivenhoe dam contributed to the severity of flooding that we experienced

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