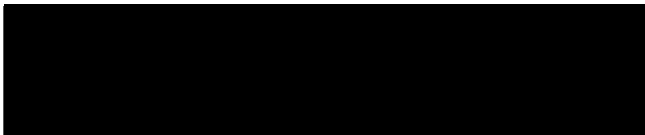




Mervyn Arnold HOPPNER,


Pastoralist, Mt. England,
England Creek Rd. FERNVALE 4306.
8.3.11.

Queensland Flood Inquiry,

I am a pastoralist on a cattle property of 3,000 acres at Mt. England, England Creek Rd. Fernvale and my family and I have owned and operated this property for the past 42 years.

These are not the ramblings of some vexatious litigant or some political activist.

They are the submissions of an ordinary person effected by the January 11 flood. You may recall that the Hon. The Premier of Queensland stated in her many press releases that the "Flood Inquiry" wanted to hear from "the ordinary people" effected by the flood.

I was disappointed in that nowhere in any public or press releases, did I find the address of the Flood Inquiry to whom such submissions should be mailed.

Furthermore, it was not until Courier Mail dated 8.3.11 that I learned such submissions were to be made by the 11.3.11. which makes these submissions rather urgent.

The crux of these submissions is that this was a 'man-made flood' caused or exacerbated by untimely and/or inappropriate release of water from the Wivenhoe Dam.

It is true that I do not hold a ~~piece~~ piece of paper that I am an hydrologist or some other expert. My expertize comes from a lifetime of experiences on and off the land, especially in the Brisbane Valley area,

and by associating with and talking to "the Old Timers" of this generation and their forebears. I surely represent many of the persons of England Creek and Fernvale areas and thus voice their concerns.

You may say why did I not do something about it or voice my concerns before this inquiry. Well the truth of the matter is that I did.

I wrote to the Esk Shire Council - now Somerset Shire- and stated my concerns about the untimely and inappropriate release of water from the dam stating it was inability, in-experience and absolute negligence to release water as they did. No, I never received any reply or acknowledgement of my letters.

After all, "Blind Freddy" and a ten year old child would have/or should have released that it was being poorly managed. I observed, as would many other interested persons in the locality, that dam levels were increasingly becoming dangerously high. The big drought was over, we had had good rains and water was seeping out of the hills.

True, we had had a bad drought. Every day after that was a day closer to a flood. A flood was imminent and inevitable. "The dogs were barking it" Long range weather forecasters, to wit Hayden Walker etc, Campbell Newman, just about anyone who was anyone kept warning a flood was coming. Actually I was a year out, I forecast a flood the year before.

Please let me deal with January 11 flood. Insofar as Murphy's Creek, Grantham, Lockyer Valley areas Nothing and/or no person on earth could have saved those poor people. They never had a chance. It might be said that earlier warning would have helped. Be that as it may, I submit that no amount of bells or whistles or media advise would have helped them, - the deluge was

so sudden, so unforeseeable and so unprecedented that they never had a chance.

Nothing could have saved the devastating flood on my property at England Creek, Fernvale.

However I hasten to state that the untimely and as I have said, inappropriate release of water from the Wivenhoe Dam had no adverse or contributing affect on the Lockyer Valley and the England Creek floods.

MAN MADE FLOOD.

I assert that untimely and inappropriate release of water from the Wivenhoe Dam at that particular time, contributed to the flood waters from the Lockyer Valley and England Creek areas and surrounding areas aggravated and/or exacerbater the flood situation. Thus we had extensive flooding in the Goodna, Oxley, Rocklea etc. areas.

Let me say this; had my property been in those effected areas I would have campaigned for a class action for damages against SEQWATER.

One has only to apply "The objective Test" to the situation.

The Brisbane River, as is the case with other similar rivers, is a natural mitigation feature which will normally handle the average flooding. Here we had an inordinate and unprcedented deluge of water from storms, that caused some flooding, but the release of water from the Wivenhoe Dam- so many Sydney Harbours full- made the event greater than it should have been. That is what I mean by applying "the objective test".

It could be said that release of water from the dam was at that stage necessary. I think not. That is a matter

for conjecture.

I submit that it was quite foreseeable and almost factual and this should have been realized by SEQWATER. I submit that SEQWATER wrongly advised themselves or were wrongly advised by some other authority, in which case it should be corrected and should not or ought not happen again.

SEQWATER chose to ignore certain signs and warnings. Whether for greed or fear of further drought or whatever, SEQWATER held the dam at 180-190 percent full, yet we know from past knowledge that as a mitigation dam it should be kept at 65-70 percent full. My maths tells me that the difference between those two figures is 110 per cent which would represent a number of "Sydney Harbours"

The idea and intent for the dam was to prevent or alleviate a flood. Clearly this is not what happened. The dam should have been at such a level so that it could accomodate much of the flood waters.

SOME CAUSE FOR CONCERN.

Some four to six weeks prior to the January 11 flood, - you will have access to the exact dates- I got flooded in on my property for about one week. For some apparent reason, unknown to me, SEQWATER decided to suddenly release water from the already over-full dam and opened all gates on the spillway. The event attracted much publicity and resulted in a tourist attraction.

Unfortunately I got flooded in. That evening when I went to go home to Wynnum, I found over a metre of water over the England Creek Road bridge. I stayed that night in the stockman's hut on my property - on hard rations - and next morning found two metres of water over the bridge. Mobile phones are great, I arranged for a mate to pick me up on the other side of the creek, waded across the 2 X metre water

and returned to my Wynnum home. I recovered my motor vehicle a week later when the water receded. A mere inconvenience but absolutely unnecessary. For some inexplicable reason, SEQWATER decided to put the plug in and completely stopped the release of water. Sure, they should have released water, they should have controlled its release, and they should have kept it at manageable levels. After all they can extrapolate the levels of water over the bridges from the water released.

Many of such instances have occurred over the years and are still happening to this very day.

I make these submissions with utmost respect:-

- (1) Dam levels should be kept at a safe level for mitigation purposes which is well established at 65-70 per cent full.
- (2) Water releases should be gradual and controlled and not sudden and extreme.
- (3) Stoppage of release of water should be gradual and certainly not sudden. The 'old timers' will tell you and I will tell you now that sudden stoppage creates havoc to trees along the riverside. With flooding of the river, the river banks become sodden and soft; sudden stoppage creates a vacuum and huge trees hundreds of years old collapse and fall into the river. I have seen this happen downstream from the Geoff. Fisher Bridge which is on the Brisbane Valley Highway over the Brisbane River just down from the Wivenhoe Dam. Every pastoralist is a conversationalist in his own right.
- (4) SEQWATER and/or Somerset Shire should be required to notify land holders such as myself of the sudden release of water from the dam.

(5) Man-made flooding such as release of water from the Wivenhoe Dam should be kept at a manageable level so that effected properties are still accessible.

For the information of this inquiry I expound the following information.

In another era of life I was required to furnish a "Contingency Plan" for a natural disaster and/or in the event of an earth quake or earth tremor.

My information at that stage gleaned from a responsible person at the Wivenhoe Dam (a Mr. VERENKAMP) was that the Wivenhoe Dam and the Splityard Hydro Electric Scheme Dam were both built on an earth fault. Should the dam ~~XX~~ wall ever go, flooding would occur to chaotic proportions and the Brisbane Valley Highway would become the Brisbane River and back-up water would be eight feet deep on the Lowood Showgrounds as it then existed.


M.A.HOPFNER