

Public understanding of flood issues

I cannot claim this idea as my own, it was one I heard on ABC local radio from a caller.

There is a general feeling among the community – both those in position of authority and those who are not – that we are unsure how to make people aware of a predicted flood level and how that is relevant to the area in which they live.

Unless you were here in the 74 flood you don't have an understanding of what happened.

The caller's idea was to put a line on the street light post of the 1974 and 2011 flood so that people have a relevant reference point when they hear reports comparing the coming flood event to past flood events.

I think that it would also be helpful to locate on all poles a marker one meter above the pole base of the relative level to Australian Height Datum (AHD) (or an appropriate datum) that the marker is located. This then gives people an easy reference point when announcements are being made that the flood peak is expected at XmAHD you can go out to the street and understand what your house is relative to that level.

It has risks in that whilst flood peak levels at the Brisbane gauge is XmAHD it may mean that your property could still flood due to backwater effects at a higher level. There is also the issue property devaluation, but we have to accept that Brisbane, and many other areas of the state are flood prone and it would be one way of keeping people informed.

I think the idea has merit but do acknowledge it needs to be worked through.