
Tennyson Residents' Association Inc.

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Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au

Submission from the Tennyson Residents' Association Inc regarding Oxley Creek Flooding January 2011

TRA writes on behalf of residents who live in Tennyson who were flooded during January 2011. Many residents witnessed the ferocity of the Brisbane River backwater flowing through the narrow creek on its way to flooding the vast Oxley Creek catchment area.

The combination of

- Unusual direction of the mouth - pointing upstream
- Narrow width of the creek - about 35 meters
- Severe silting at the mouth – (see www.nearmap.com 11/5/2010 & 20/7/2010)
- Shallow depth at the mouth

have long been a concern to residents with regard to flooding issues.

If the January flood event had coincided with heavy rain in the Oxley Creek catchment these points would have contributed to a much higher flood peak than occurred.

Narrow width and silting and depth at the mouth of the creek is a problem whenever localised flash flooding is trying to escape to the river, but combine that with a major flood event coming down the Brisbane River and disaster occurs. The angle of the mouth of the creek means water is being pushed into the creek against the current. The result is a backup which increases the flooding of the creek catchment.

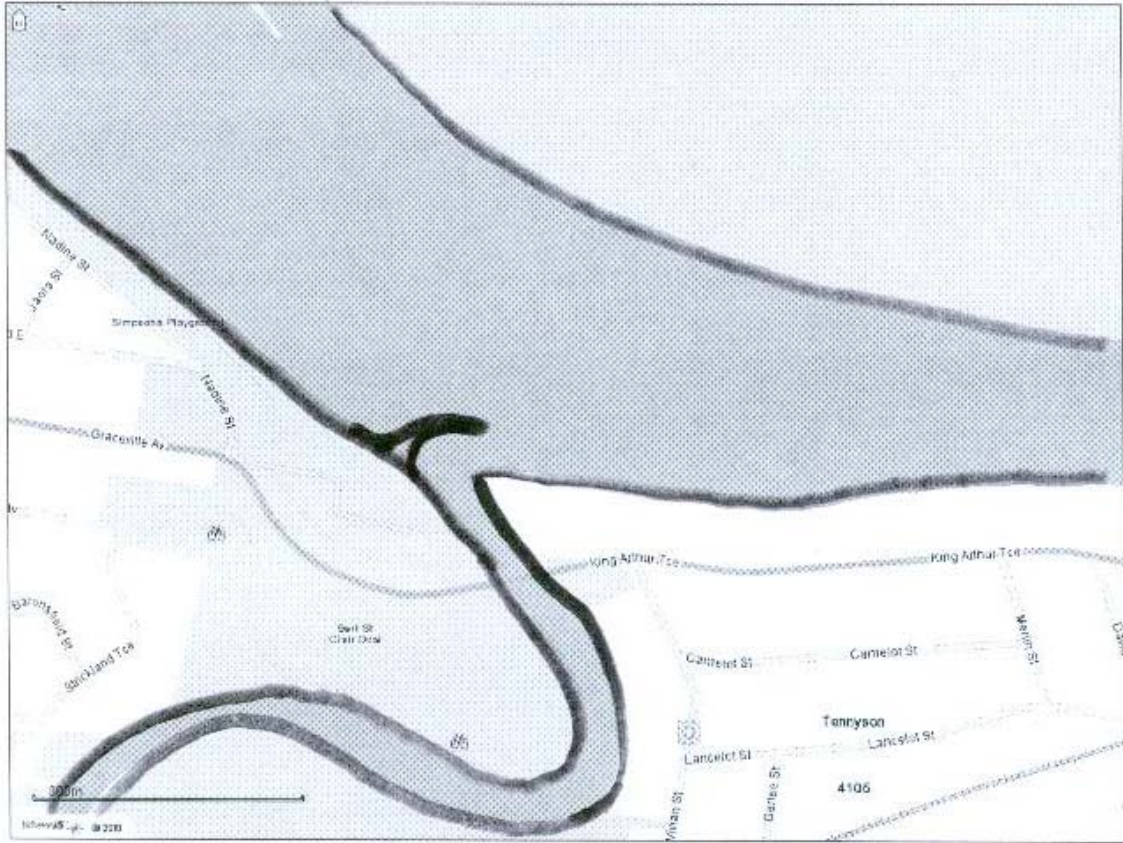
The volume and speed of the water flowing into the creek forced water through stormwater drains in Vivian, Camelot and Lancelot Streets, with result that parts of those streets were deep in water well before the level of water in Oxley Creek rose to that level.

Suggested Solutions

- Redirection of Mouth – Oxley Creek points upstream due to rock formations downstream along King Arthur Terrace. Most creeks and tributaries meet their river pointing downstream giving a siphon effect where the larger stream tends to draw water from the smaller one as it flows out. This could be achieved by removing some of the rocks, or building a GROIN to redirect the flow (see diagram).
- Dredging – After the 1974 floods the mouth of Oxley Creek was dredged and the banks of the narrow creek were excavated to allow easy escape of flood waters.
Recent years have seen the overriding emphasis become one that allows mangrove and mud build up irrespective of the consequences. Silting can be seen in the Nearmap photos mentioned above, showing the boat ramp at the Pamphlet Bridge Sea Scouts was rendered completely useless as it was buried under meters of mud and mangroves. The pontoon is now sitting high and dry on the mud.
- Flood Gates – Using the narrow width of the creek, Pamphlet Bridge could have a Flood Gate incorporated into its structure to reduce the likelihood of flooding of critical infrastructure such as the Brisbane Markets, Oxley Sewerage Plant and the Rocklea Industrial Precinct as well many residential properties

Following the 1974 flood, it is believed that the State Government proposed that the creek bed would be altered so that the creek waters would enter the river on an angle, running with, instead of against, the river flow. Despite much debate on the proposal, nothing was done as it was claimed that the Wivenhoe Dam, then under construction, would overcome the need for any changes to the mouth of Oxley Creek.

The flood event in January 2011 proved how wrong this assertion was.



Tennyson Residents' Association Inc would appreciate your thoughtful and urgent consideration of these issues.

We look forward to your feedback.

Yours faithfully

Barry Sommerlad
President