

Flood Submission – Land Use Planning Issues

Property Description and Location

Our 24,000m² property is located in North Toowoomba and is situated below the Harlaxton housing estate. We bought the property in 1993 and initially had no problem with flooding or storm water events until about 2000. We noticed at this time that stormwater flows through our property were gradually increasing. We believe council carried out major drainage works and diverted water from its natural drainage path onto our adjoining neighbours above our properties. There are three streams of water entering above our property and only one of these streams would be classified as a natural drainage course. The other two flood water streams are a result of council diverting and redirecting water along an alternative flow path that is not the original natural flow path.

Development of more houses has occurred in Harlaxton gradually over the past decade and we have directly witnessed the cumulative effects this development has on downstream areas. In the past 5 years each time we have a decent rainfall event our property experiences flash flooding from the runoff of this housing estate and from the additional two redirected storm water streams. We have photos of the past 6 storm water flooding events on our property. These events cause scouring and damage to retaining walls, flooding of 4 sheds, undesirable debris (including syringes, glass) left scattered across flooded areas. During heavy rain raw sewerage overflows upstream of our property and is washed over our land. On at least 8 occasions since 2000, we have had to drive through raw sewerage to enter our property.

On numerous occasions we have complained to TRC about the increased stormwater flow and sewerage overflow and each time we are told that they don't have the money to address the problem. TRC poor management of stormwater problems displays a complete neglect of duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of my family and other neighbouring property owners.

In the January 10, 2011 Storm Event the impacts we usually experience were increased greatly.

1. Every building on the property had storm water enter it, causing property damage and sedimentation, (except for the house). We own a storage shed facility so this was not ideal for all our customers that were impacted.
2. Stormwater from council's drainage entered our property from 3 directions at an extremely high velocity causing major property damage to most buildings, retaining walls, roller doors, infrastructure, major loss of tools and equipment (we estimate \$80,000 of infrastructure as well as tools and equipment lost/destroyed). 600ml of muddy stormwater (containing raw sewerage) entered most buildings. Still waiting for a confirmation from insurance as to whether we are covered for this loss.

Q1. As a rate payer I would like to know why the money collected from headwork's, drainage etc. from new development approvals in the catchment area is not spent directly on developing the infrastructure it was intended for?

Q2. Why can the local authority like TRC actually divert stormwater discharge and modify existing natural flowpaths to the extent that it will have a detrimental effect upon neighbouring land causing the downstream owners to suffer a loss of enjoyment of his property and also suffer actual physical damage to his property? This contravenes legal aspects under the Queensland Urban Drainage Manual.

Q3. What action is TRC taking to control the increase in overland flow through our property?

Q4. Why has council spent over \$4million (in the past 15years) on addressing a storm water drainage issue on the southern side of Griffith Street and completely ignore the property owners on the northern side with identical if not worse problems?