

This submission refers specifically to the suburb of Fairfield, Brisbane from the Gladstone/Annerley Rd ridge to the river on the East to North West plane and from Hyde Rd/Cansdale St to the Eleanor Schonnell Bridge on a South West to North East plane. Reference is also made to Brisbane River Flows and storm water flows in this geographic area including impacts due to Wivenhoe/Somerset Dam management.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING BY FEDERAL, STATE and LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

1. The natural topography of the Fairfield suburb as described above is of a high narrow ridge line (Gladstone Rd. along Annerley Rd to Venner Rd turn off that has a natural incline towards to its western slope rather than towards the Ipswich Rd (eastern) side. The western/south western side of this ridge was historically a series of wetlands interspersed with low hills and bounded by a higher river bank rise. These wetlands were fresh water and were fed by run-off from the ridge running behind them on their eastern side. These wetlands were significant sources of water for both crops and livestock in the early days of Brisbane when this was farm country. **WHILST THE BRISBANE RIVER WILL HAVE MAINTAINED A WATER TABLE UNDER RIVERINE ZONES THESE WETLANDS WERE WATERED BY RUNOFF FROM THE BACKGROUND RIDGE.** In recognition of this, several storm water drains were applied to this area when it was opened up for residential development so that the incumbent wetland water and deluge flows would drain to the river. There are original (land covered) and more recent storm water drainage and SWALE systems at the new University Bridge area; there is an old land covered storm water drain off from Princess St.; another original open storm water drain between Turley and Stimpson St; an original underground storm water drain opposite Sharpe St; a recently (post '74) cleared and widened open drainage channel (8m wide X 3m deep) servicing the playing field zones from Fairfield Rd to Victoria, Cansdale and Brisbane Corso that contracts to 4, 1m concrete pipes beneath an earthen bridge under Brisbane Corso beside the Boat shed site; other underground storm water drains from either side of the sewage treatment plant alongside Cansdale St. These storm drains exist because relevant authorities recognize that large sections of this suburb were originally within wetlands which, despite having been drained, will return to their ancient geography in times of high rainfall and deluge. The maintenance of these drains as free flowing facilities equal to the dissemination of such large volumes fresh rain/storm water is therefore of utmost importance.

2. Firemen attending a property near 83 Brisbane Corso on 17th January were heard to be discussing the problem being that of blocked storm drains.

3. The storm water drain opposite Sharpe St had been blocked by vegetation, building rubble and river rubbish for some time

4. The main water drainage for this area (the system largely responsible for draining the playing fields and parklands that were the natural wetlands) is the 8m wide by 3m deep channel that emptied into 4, 1m aperture concrete pipes under Brisbane Corso beside the Boat Shed. During the flood the soft soil and rock earthen bridge above these pipes collapsed on the parkland side - **NOT THE RIVER SIDE.** The water coming down this wide open drainage channel was of too great a volume and pressure for the small aperture of the concrete drain pipes and built up against the earthen wall thus causing the collapse. The hydraulic force of water from this drainage system remained so great that no river water entered against its flow. Neither the grassed areas nor the rumbled land bridge that collapse show any signs of river inundation. This land and nearby properties along Turner, Newcastle, Brougham, Victoria, Alamanda and Brisbane Corso **WERE INITIALLY FLOODED FROM THIS wetlands, storm/rain run-off water DUE TO BLOCKED DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND NOT RIVER INGRESS.** This **MAIN PARKLANDS** drainage channel **MUST EMPTY TO THE RIVER VIA A CLEAR SPAN BRIDGE** if this flooding is to be prevented in future. As we are still in a wet season/cyclone season that future could be very soon. This (all the inadequate and poorly maintained water drainage systems in this whole region) is the responsibility of local government on the land side of the drainage and the State Government on the river end. **FIX IT UP!**

5. Under light storm or normal summer rain conditions the grassed area and road under the Eleanor Schonnell bridge floods due to the volume of water coming down from Gladstone Rd. The landscaping design of this area is such that the whole green space has been created as a storm water facility (ie a swale) in recognition of the flash flooding capacity of this water rushing down from Gladstone Rd, and through the cemetery. The same hydrology applies to

all areas associated with the high background ridge that continues South West from the Gladstone Rd /Annerley Rd continuation. It is therefore the responsibility of the town planners and relevant government bodies that all drainage systems in this region are both adequate to the purpose and constantly maintained. On January 11th - 13th 2011 they were neither adequate in scope nor well maintained resulting in the initial flooding of homes along Heffernan, Turley, Newcastle, Alamanda, Brougham, Turner, Brisbane Corso and adjacent streets being due to the drainage failure of overland - not river - water. There are photographs of water flow and landscape damage that attest to this. There also numerous eye witness accounts to the fact that in this area the first flood waters weren't from the river. Had the gates at Wivenhoe been shut much earlier and The Brisbane River not broken its banks these properties would still have suffered some flood damage due fresh water forced back after being blocked at the various drain exit points

PRIVATE INSURERS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

The report offered by the hydrologists engaged by my insurers would be laughable if this were a laughing matter. They make reference to rainfall as measured at Toowong (a foothills suburb) when this low flat area is under different prevailing winds and rainfall patterns (those coming from the South West). Hydrologists that have previously been involved in government reports and surveys pertaining to areas affected by floods should have not been engaged in this instance in case there be a perceived conflict of interest.

THE RESPONSE TO THE 2010/2011 FLOOD EVENTS, PARTICULARLY MEASURES TAKEN TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY AND PROTECT LIFE, PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PROPERTY

1. The most obvious failure throughout this whole episode is the total lack of relevant information issued from BOM/hydrologists or who ever was responsible for flood height predictions. That the ABC was only given information of predicted flood heights at The Brisbane Port Office/Edward St is woefully irresponsible. Remember we were busy clearing homes and businesses, power had been cut so it was only when we were in our cars that we managed to hear what the ABC had to tell us - and I know that the ABC was frustrated that the information wasn't more precise and more comprehensive

2. Do any of the people whose homes/businesses have been damaged at Bellbowrie, Jindalee, Fig Tree Pocket, Chelmer/Graceville, Tennyson, Yeronga, Fairfield, Rocklea, Rosalie, Milton care what was going to happen at Edward St? No - but they did care about what was going to happen at their particular reach of the river or Brisbane suburb. So why weren't we told? Surely BOM and the various hydrology firms that have been involved in government research have modelling sufficient to extrapolate possible outcomes beyond Edward St (or wherever the Port Office is). Had we been given an adequate estimate of what a flood height of 4m+ would mean in our particular area we would have all moved much faster on January 10th and 11th and the damage incurred would have been just so much less. We need warnings that tells us expected flood heights at each river bridge and at each river reach. We also need warnings that predict when key access roads will flood as in the Fairfield area many of the homes were still high and dry on early January 12 but the access roads weren't. This also applied to suburbs that were cut off by low lying roads.

3. Many of us were prevented by authorities from driving through low over-road water (10cm) in high clearance utilities to try and clear more from houses not yet flooded in the early hours of January 12 - so much more could have been saved.

ADEQUACY OF FORECASTS AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

1. What happened to the SEWS system - the Fed government system that has been designed to let everyone know of impending danger? How is that acronym pronounced as in a needle and thread 'sew' or as in 'sues' which is what we all might yet get together to do.

2. Next time make flood heights geographically relevant and make the predictions earlier.

3. THE ONLY FORECAST THAT WAS CONSTANT AND CONSISTENT FOR THE PRECEDING 6 MONTHS WAS THAT WE WERE IN FOR A BIG WET SEASON. SO WHY WERE WE SAVING WATER? As that revered hydrologist (sadly for the hydrology industry no longer with us) Russell Shields pointed out "you can't store water in a full dam". Why have we still not cleared storm drains and rubbish from the river (including dead mangroves that will pull out more river bank with them in the next flood) - we are still in the wet and cyclone season!

IMPLEMENTATION OF SYSTEMS OPERATION PLANS FOR DAMS

1. We have all heard that the men at the dam "followed the manual". So who wrote the manual? There are manuals for all sorts of intense situations - war for instance - but the presumption is that humans have the power of creative thought in extreme situations, that they can think beyond the manual when the situation itself is 'beyond the manual'. The men in charge of this dam will always be held responsible by many of us no matter what the enquiry may do to ease their pain.

2. Wolfdene Dam was Wayne Goss's and Kevin Rudd's worst political mistake. Everyone needs to remember the short political vision, the selfish political gain of cancelling the Wolfdene Dam.

3. Australia needs many deep water dams - as close to high density communities as possible. They don't have to be big there just needs to be a lot of them across a lot of rainfall zones. On the East Coast that means we must look to The Great Dividing Range and its branches for siting dams. We are wasting the Gold Creek Reservoir in Upper Brookfield (at Brisbane's backdoor). This has one narrow valley (.Gold Creek Rd) and is surrounded by hills - very similar to the highly effective Hinze Dam. What has happened to the refurbishments of Lake Manchester behind Mt. Crosby? These are where we should be developing dams - not on grasslands.

LAND USE PLANNING

1. The codicil to this should be building structure planning. For flood zone houses built of double brick/masonry on concrete slabs with render walls and low to no chipboard joinery the structural damage will be slight to negligible. I have such a house and it remained livable as soon as the mud was hosed out. All that is needed is a building code. We have them for cyclones we should have them for floods.

2. Horticultural farmlands leave soil fallow and totally vulnerable to wind/water erosion for periods of time and short rooted crop annuals can't hold back soil. The amount of lost fertile soil that turned up as mud only to be dumped who-knows-where is the long-term tragedy of the January floods. The difference between this flood and '74 was the amount of soils/mud in the river system. There needs to be more country left as natural grasslands/woodlands with deep rooted perennials to act as a buffer to such hydraulic power.

3. The next tragedy will be the bush fires that will take out homes built amongst the dry Eucalypt forests of Chapel Hill, Kenmore, Brookfield, Pullenvale, The Gap, back of Toowong/Bardon, Ferny Grove, Ferny Hills... floods will seem so much kinder.