

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

An evaluation of the effects of flooding
on communities in the upper reaches
of the Brisbane River 2011,
compiled by
Brisbane Valley Heritage Trails Inc.
on behalf of its members.

April 2011

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The following respondents will make themselves
available for further information on request.

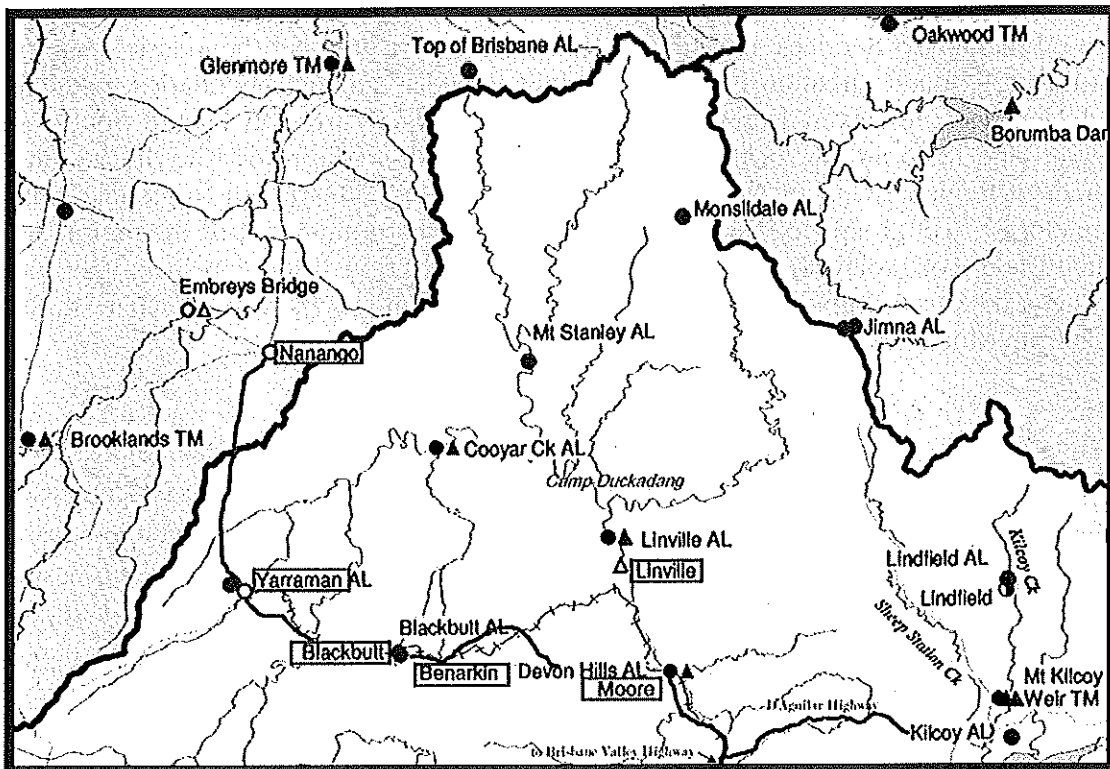
Mr. & Mrs. J. [REDACTED] Linville
Mr. & Mrs. R. [REDACTED] Moore
Mrs. R. [REDACTED] Mt Stanley Road
Mr. H. [REDACTED] Moore

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This submission represents the concerns about the 2010/11 flood disaster management provided to members of Brisbane Valley Heritage Trails Inc. who live and work in the upper reaches of the Brisbane River that are served by the towns of Moore, Benarkin, Blackbutt, Yarraman, Nanango and Linville including especially those residents who live on rural properties in the Mt. Stanley region.

The area under consideration is approximately 660 square kilometres located in the Upper Brisbane River catchment area and 53 kms from a local Disaster Management Group Command Centre at Esk. This was relocated to Fernvale because of local flooding at Esk and was effectively 90 kms south of Linville and an estimated hour and a half's travelling time in good weather. Camp Duckadang, a Lions' Club facility at Avoca Vale that can accommodate 100 visitors, is also situated on the Brisbane River beyond Linville.



SECTION A: PREAMBLE

Councils: The area under consideration is served by three regional councils: the Somerset Regional Council is responsible for Moore and Linville & some of the Mt. Stanley area; the Toowoomba Regional Council services Yarraman; and the South Burnett Regional Council serves Benarkin, Blackbutt, Nanango and the rest of Upper Brisbane River nearer to Nanango. The South Burnett Regional Council is the only one of the three with Divisional representation.

Emergency services: (see Table 1 below)

- Police Services at Moore are controlled from Redcliffe; those at Blackbutt & Benarkin are controlled from Gympie; the district office for Yarraman is Dalby, and Nanango police services are controlled from Gympie.
- Rural Fire Brigade services for Moore and Linville are controlled from the Gold Coast area (SE Region); services for Blackbutt & Benarkin are controlled from Caloundra area (North Coast Region); Yarraman Fire services are controlled from Toowoomba area (SW Region); and Nanango Fire & Rescue Services are controlled from Caloundra area (North Coast Region).
- State Emergency Services are linked to the local government boundaries but their administration and direction is arranged within broader regional boundaries. Blackbutt and Nanango are served from the North Coast Region, Yarraman by the South West Region and there are no local SES groups established at Moore or Linville within the Somerset Regional Council nor at Benarkin within the South Burnett Regional Council. The closest SES groups to these townships at the northern most part of the region are at Kilcoy and Toogoolawah (31.87 kms and 27.27 kms from Moore respectively and a further 7.33 kms to Linville in each case) and at Blackbutt (3.24 km from Benarkin, 21.51 kms from Moore and 28.84 kms from Linville).

Other services: There are schools at Harlin (D'Aguilar Highway, 12.21 kms south of Moore), Linville, Benarkin, Blackbutt, Yarraman and Nanango. There are NO medical or pharmaceutical services in the area under consideration. When the power supply was cut, fuel was only available at Harlin, Blackbutt, Yarraman & Nanango and there is at least one general store in each town. The closest garage at Colinton (8 km south of Moore) declined to use a generator to maintain fuel supply to the district under these circumstances. The closest bakeries are located at Kilcoy, Esk & Blackbutt, road access permitting.

Table 1: Central Locations for the coordination of emergency services to towns located in the upper reaches of the Brisbane River.

Town	Police service (District Office)	Fire&Rescue service	Rural Fire Brigade	State Emergency Services
#Toogoolawah	Ipswich	Sth. East Region, Ipswich area (3381 7122)	"The Rural Fire Service (RFS) is the volunteer arm of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) and is part of the larger Department of Community Services"	Sth. Eastern Region Somerset area (advice by phone 132500), Somerset Regional Council (SES unit)
Moore	Redcliff	Sth. East Region, Gold Coast area		<i>Not mentioned*</i>
Linville	Redcliff	Sth. East Region, Gold Coast area		<i>Not mentioned*</i>
Blackbutt	Gympie	Nth. Coast Region, Caloundra area		Nth. Coast Region, Sunshine Coast area, Sth. Burnett Regional Council (SES unit)
Benarkin	Gympie	Nth. Coast Region, Caloundra area		<i>Not mentioned*</i>
Yarraman	Dalby	Sth. West Region, Toowoomba area,		Sth. Western Region, <i>No area</i>
Nanango	Gympie	Nth. Coast Region, Caloundra area		Nth. Coast Region, Sunshine Coast area, Sth. Burnett Regional Council (SES unit)
#Kilcoy	Caboolture	Brisbane Region, Caboolture area (5420 1333)		Sth. East Region, Somerset area, (advice by phone 132500), Somerset Regional Council (SES unit)
* There is no mailing address for an SES group in the towns of Coominya, Fernvale, Moore or Linville within the Somerset Regional Council.				
#Towns to the south and east of this region with resources called into play during the 2011 flood crisis.				

Road access: Moore, Benarkin, Blackbutt, Yarraman and Nanango are located on the D'Aguilar Highway. The eastern and western branches of Mt. Stanley Road between Linville and Nanango serve the other residents. It has been estimated that there are 58¹ river/creek crossings between Linville and Nanango on this road, and those residents depending on five of these crossings are unable to move either north or south during serious flooding in the Brisbane River. Closure of the D'Aguilar Highway over the Blackbutt Range restricts all further movement north.

Communication: Mobile telephone coverage for residents in this area is erratic or non-existent. A land line phone service was unavailable to residents for several days in the towns to several weeks in rural areas. One satellite phone performed reliably during the flood crisis. One mobile phone used with a car antenna also provided fair service within the Brisbane River Valley.

¹ Wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridges_over_the_Brisbane-River

SECTION B: FLOOD TIMELINE:

The first of the serious flooding within the region was noticed by 9 January and one of the residents () had rung ABC with this advice. It had been refuted on air and a Linville resident () supported her claims later that night. Requests from ABC were made for photographic evidence but the electricity supply to the area was cut before this could be achieved, (see Flood diary, Appendix 1).

It should be noted that two fishermen had been isolated by flash flooding previously in this area (in the week before Jan 9 floods) and rescued by helicopter, so that at least one branch of emergency services had prior knowledge of potential flood danger.

Families in the townships of Moore and Linville were isolated above Harlin by 9 January, with occasional access to Toogoolawah for the next two days as water over the bridges at Emu and Boundary Creek receded before rising to block access again. Blackbutt Range road (D'Aguilar Highway) was closed on 9 January because of a landslip between Moore and Blackbutt and the Esk-Hampton road remained closed to those who were travelling to Toowoomba. Road access from Moore and Linville to Kilcoy, Toogoolawah & Esk was re-established on 12 January.

Energy supplies were interrupted to the towns between 9 p.m. Sunday 9 January and 10.30 p.m. Sunday 16 January. The rural areas outside the towns were without power until Friday evening, 21 January. Land line telecommunication was unavailable in Moore and Linville from 10 January to 17 January and it was erratic for several weeks thereafter. Approximately 50 visitors were accommodated at the Harlin Hotel and 10 were transferred to the Moore Memorial Hall for emergency accommodation².

State Emergency Services were first contacted by from the Moore Hall on Monday 10 January for medication for local residents. At that time he was told that Boundary Creek Bridge was flooded and delivery would be difficult. in conjunction with a stranded tourist who was a registered nurse, collected a list of medication requirements from residents in the district and Senior Constable attended to this problem in the Mt. Stanley district from that time. A further request to SES was made by for a surveillance helicopter on 12 January, again without success.

The D'Aguilar Highway over the Blackbutt Range was closed on 9 January and the highway remained closed until 26 January for small vehicles and 31 January for trucks up to 42.5 tonnes. The Mt. Stanley Road was closed by flooding from 6 to 23 January so that the restoration of all services to the Avoca Vale area took considerably longer than it did in the townships with some road access after 12 January. The Army³ had made the initial repairs to the crossings on Mt. Stanley Road and the first crossing on this road was open to regular traffic by 23 January.

² See Appendix 4, Flood Diary from Moore Memorial Hall

³ "Council was advised on 18 February that the ADF units that have been assisting Somerset Region with the recovery effort had to leave and that Council would need to lodge another request for assistance. This was done but Council has now been advised that any future deployments will be on a contract basis with the taxpayers of Somerset to pick up the ADF bill."

There were no fatalities amongst the residents of the upper reaches of the Brisbane River, some of whose families have lived there for four generations since the area was opened as a soldier settlement after WWI. The 2011 floods have produced stories of resilience and resourcefulness, generosity of spirit and heroism that have now passed into the realm of local legend. But it is also apparent that there were difficulties in the delivery of emergency services to this area that caused unnecessary anxiety and encouraged risky options for service delivery and rescue as the flood waters continued to rise.

SECTION C: DIFFICULTIES WITH FLOOD MANAGEMENT, 2011

The difficulties that have been raised by this flood experience include the following, each of which will be considered separately:

1. **Poor public access to mapping** that identifies the water courses flowing into the upper reaches of the Brisbane River, and no manual or telemetric river station above the town of Linville (see Section 1a, Aust. Gov. Map 143.1)
2. **Uncertainty about appropriate authority**, where shared responsibilities by agencies without a local representative interfere with public perception of a clear chain of command in an emergency that is not immediately life threatening
 - a. **Limited knowledge of, or access to, rural properties** by service providers
 - b. **Emergency Services Delivery**
 - i. Police
 - ii. State Emergency Services
 - iii. Rural Fire/Fire & Rescue
 - iv. Others including private helicopter
3. **Vulnerability of road access** via Mt. Stanley Road (Western & Eastern Branches) and D'Aguilar Highway to flooding.

There are 58 crossings on both branches of Mt. Stanley Road (River Road) and flooding in just 5 of these crossings isolate families from services out of Linville and Nanango. D'Aguilar Highway over the Blackbutt Range is subject to landslides during serious flooding and becomes impassable. There are no other roads in the district to serve emergency services except a Forestry Road and the old mail coach road that remains dry except for a crossing at Wallaby Creek but is now permanently gated and closed.

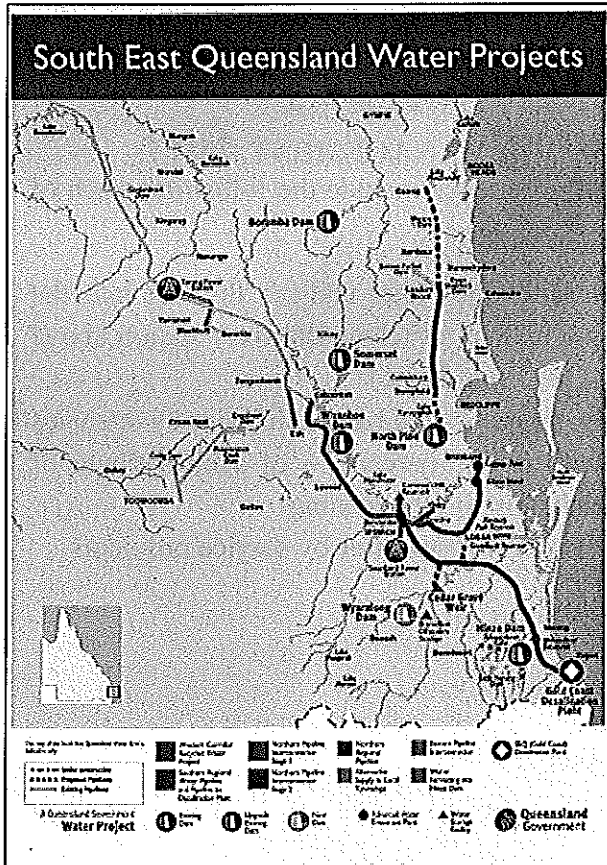
4. **Communication difficulties in rural areas**
 - Resident's warnings were challenged by inaccurate expert advice.
 - Universally poor mobile phone coverage
 - Slow recovery of damage to land line phone communication
 - Slow recovery of damage to power supply for electronic communication
 - Limited formal advice/support from regional councils.

SECTION D: FINAL OUTCOMES

SECTION E: RECOMMENDATIONS

Section C1. DIFFICULTIES WITH FLOOD MANAGEMENT, 2011

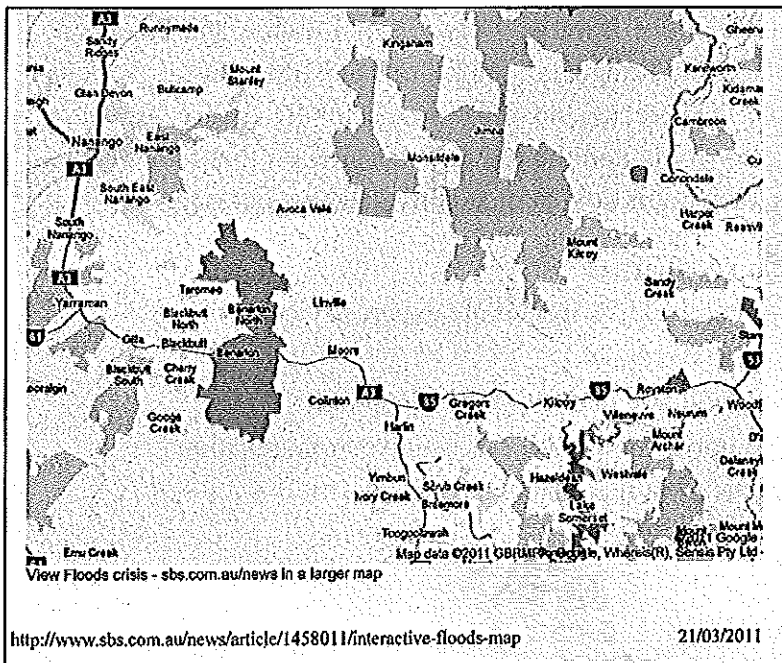
(a) Mapping of water courses within the upper reaches of the Brisbane River.



One of the many surprising outcomes of this recent flood emergency is the relative lack of knowledge on the part of the public in general of water courses within the state of Queensland. Despite the political imperatives to establish pipelines and desalination plants to 'drought proof' Queensland, the debate appears not to have been received by the wider public in terms of the physical reality of water distribution.

A cursory glance at information from relevant websites indicates that there was, and still is, little publicly available mapping of waterways on which to base any argument about water distribution or water management. Most such maps are included to serve the agenda of the service provider, and not educate the public at large and they are lamentably incomplete.

An example taken from a map of the SE Qld. Water Projects (Map 1) that appears to the left suggests that there are no water courses in the region under consideration for this submission other than the Brisbane River, and not even Cooyar Creek, as it may affect the town of Yarraman, has been included.



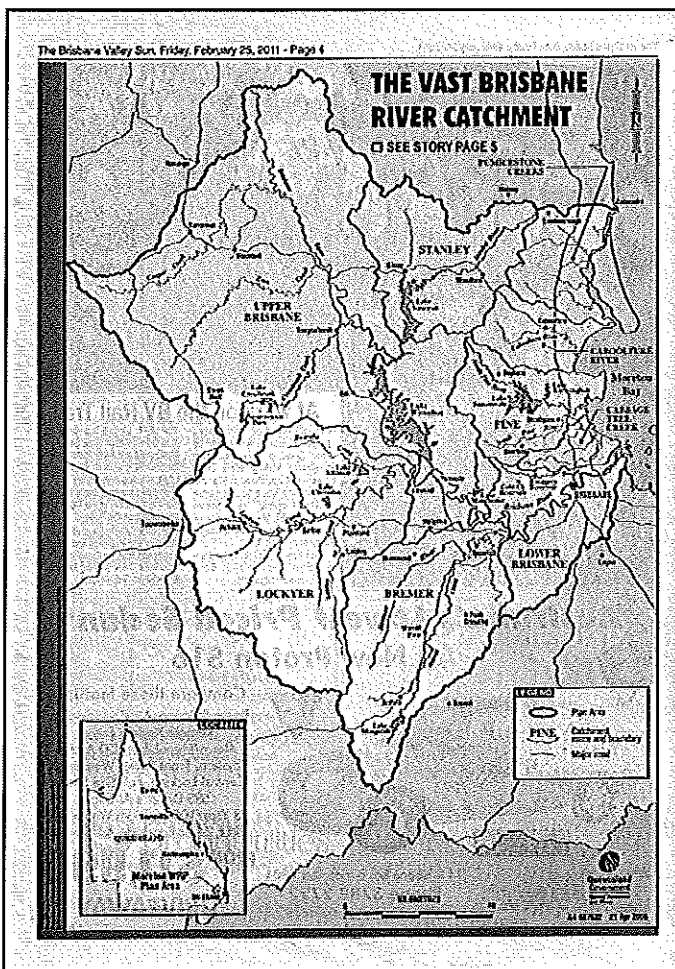
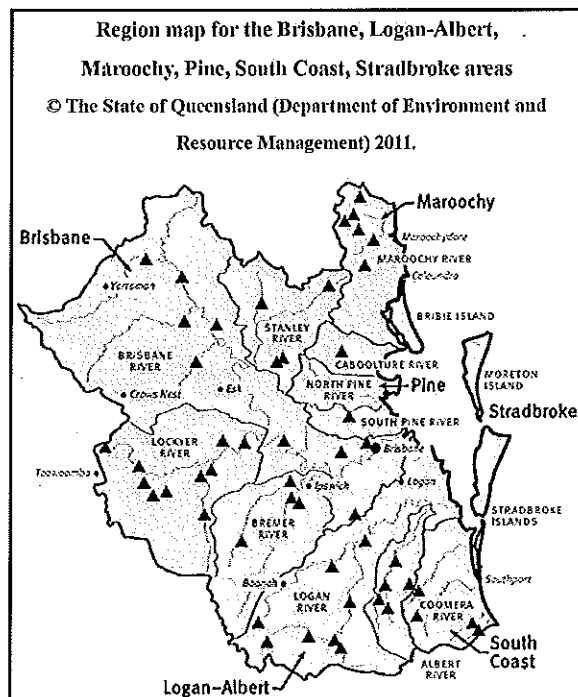
This map above, however, is certainly rather better than the very poor resolution Google maps used by such organisations as SBS News (Map 2, left) that provided an interactive flood map where only the towns, roads and dams were included.

No other water courses, not even the Brisbane River, could be

identified reliably here under any enhancement.

Significantly better than the previous map is the Map of Rivers produced by Dept. Environment and Resource Management (Map 3, right) that identifies the major river systems in a general way but only the town of Yarraman is included in the area under review.

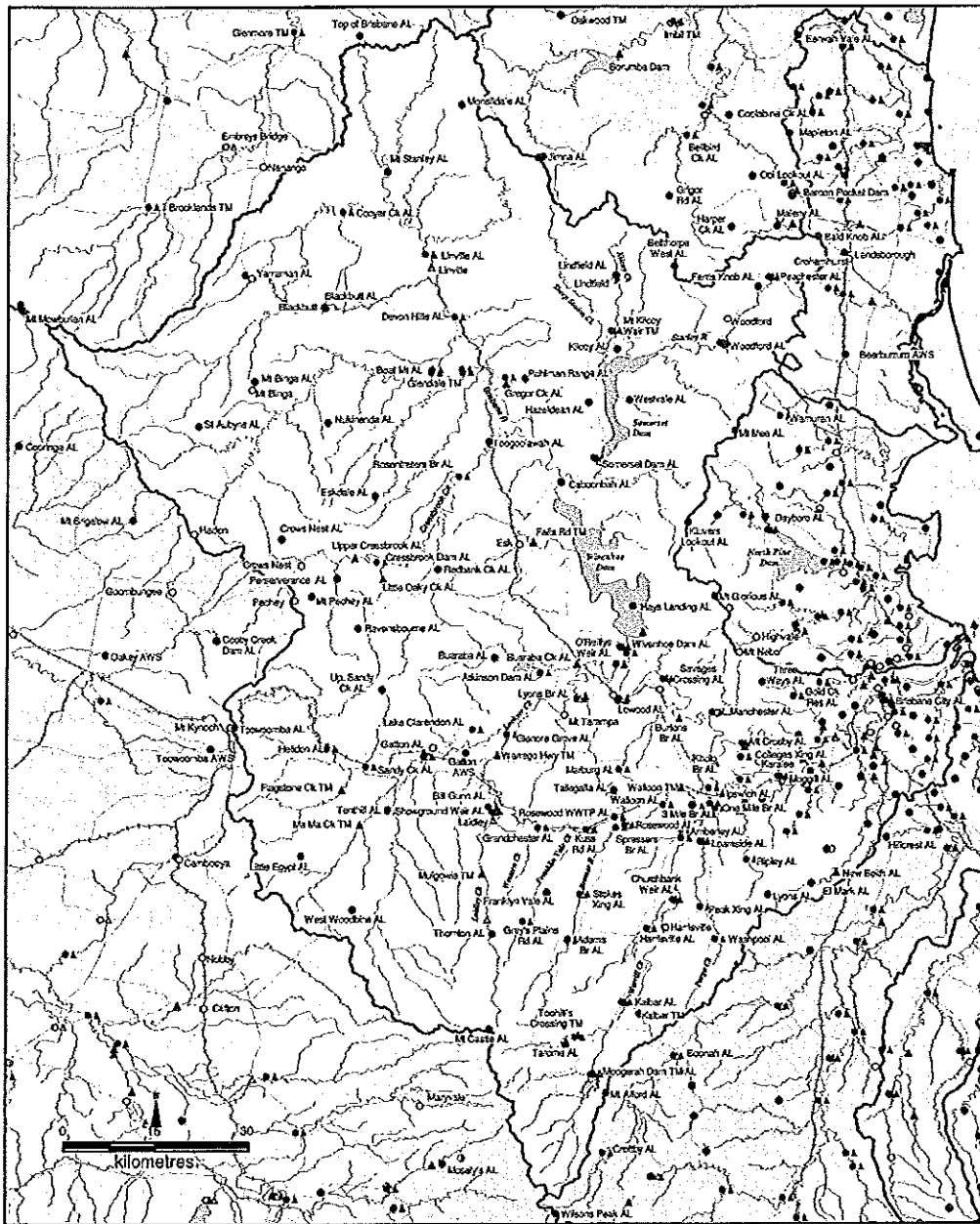
This kind of mapping may be particularly useful in conjunction with cadastral maps belonging to local property owners, but it is less useful in conjunction with touring maps used by visitors to the area who were at risk of being stranded.



Some long time after the flooding had occurred, the next map (Map 4, left) was printed in a local newspaper (Brisbane Valley Sun, 25 February 2011). Once again, there are no townships identified between Toogoolawah and Blackbutt despite the public facilities of primary schools at Harlin, Linville and Benarkin and a police station at Moore

Map 4 was adapted from a particularly informative Bureau of Meteorology map of the Brisbane, Stanley and Bremer River systems and the flood warning network thereon (Map 5, see below). It can be noted immediately that there is a rainfall station at Mt. Stanley but the first manual and telemetric river station for the headwaters of the Brisbane River is at Linville, (more than 75 kms from the river's source). This issue will be

addressed in Section C1(b).



- ▶ Manual Heavy Rainfall Station
- Daily Reporting Rainfall Station
- △ Manual River Station
- Telemetry Rainfall Station
- ▲ Telemetry River Station

**BRISBANE, BREMER
& STANLEY RIVERS
FLOOD WARNING NETWORK**

- Major Roads
- Railway
- Revised: April 2010

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It should be noted as well that the towns of Moore and Benarkin are not included on this map and, more importantly, there is no indication of the Eastern or Western Branches of Mt. Stanley Road that serve as the principal access road for most rural properties in the area.

Perhaps this relative paucity of comprehensive mapping of the Mt. Stanley area was the reason that an ABC news reporter, who was covering the Gympie flooding at the time, was uninterested in the river heights of the Brisbane River on the night of Sunday, because he advised his caller, [REDACTED] that the Brisbane River started just a little north of Ipswich!

Section C1. DIFFICULTIES WITH FLOOD MANAGEMENT, 2011

(b) Community advice about flooding.

The speed and velocity of flood waters is not a surprise to local families who have lived beside water courses all their lives. In fact, many farming families can judge to the half hour when they can expect flood waters to inconvenience them after they have been reported upstream. It is perhaps more surprising then that there are no daily rainfall reporting stations on the Brisbane River before Esk. There are, however, telemetry rainfall stations at Mt. Stanley, Cooyar Creek, Yarraman, Blackbutt, and Devon Hills (near Moore) and telemetry river stations at Cooyar Creek, Linville and Devon Hills. This constellation of data gathering devices was not sufficient to support a local report of river flooding on Sunday 9 January, and the speed at which these data are transmitted to meteorological experts in this field must now be questioned.

Country people always give advice about potential flooding to those families downstream. This same strategy was employed at least twice by residents in the Mt. Stanley area who tried to advise people well beyond their immediate network of neighbours by calling ABC radio. "Your" ABC was surprisingly selective. [REDACTED] who has lived on the river for 55 years, took it upon herself on Sunday 9 January to offer advice about the Brisbane River heights below her homestead. The presenter's response implied that this was scaremongering. A meteorologist refuted her figures. This expert advice was clearly wrong and needs further investigation.

A Linville resident [REDACTED] also contacted the ABC to support [REDACTED] on the same Sunday evening. She was asked to provide evidence for her flooding claims in the form of photographs. Electricity supply to the area was cut by the flooding before the photos could be transmitted electronically and there was no public reporting of flooding in the Mt. Stanley area until there was a closure notice for the D'Aguilar Highway between Moore and Blackbutt on 9 January

Section C1. DIFFICULTIES WITH FLOOD MANAGEMENT, 2011

(c) Flooding and the Wivenhoe Dam.

While water supplies from the upper reaches of the Brisbane River affect the Wivenhoe Dam directly, the operation of this catchment facility does not affect the residents around Mt. Stanley. During the recent flood crisis, the operation of the Wivenhoe Dam by SEQ Water did excite significant public debate about whether it did, as Premier Bjelke-Petersen had

suggested, 'flood-proof Brisbane'. This political slogan seems to have provided, in the minds of the general public and the reporting media at least, the *raison d'être* for the Wivenhoe Dam's existence, and established the level of some poorly informed debate about its operation during the 2011 floods. "I thought that this dam was designed and built to prevent the 1974 floods from happening again. It should have acted as a buffer." (Comment posted to Courier Mail report 11 Feb 2011)

The adversarial nature of this debate elicited little more expert information from SEQ Water about either the operation of the dam or the water course that serves it other than what dam levels trigger necessary water release. It is certain that the operation of the Wivenhoe Dam will be presented to the Commission of Inquiry for review. It is also likely that a recommendation to educate the general public about its uses (and limitations) will follow. It would serve the residents of Queensland who live on the Brisbane River above the Wivenhoe Dam if that education might include some further information about the important characteristics of the Brisbane River from its source.

Recommendation 1. *That a multi-media educational package about the physical geography of the Brisbane River be prepared as a matter of some urgency for several target audiences, including emergency services, news media, local school pupils, prospective residents and/or investors, tourists and local residents of Brisbane River Valley.*

Recommendation 2. *That the budget for this undertaking includes a review and necessary revision in 2020.*

Recommendation 3: *That expert advice is sought about the advisability of introducing telemetric river stations closer to the source of the Brisbane River than Linville.*

Section C2. STRENGTH & WEAKNESSES IN COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY SERVICE DELIVERY

(a) Local authority and chains of command for Emergency Services

Several points need to be made about these problems at the outset.

- i. The only authorities with responsibility for emergency services **who live locally** are the local police officer (Senior Constable [REDACTED]) who has earned the undying gratitude of the community for his efforts, and the Rural Fire Brigade volunteers, whose efforts were also much appreciated. There is no local SES group within the Mt. Stanley district.
- ii. Life threatening emergencies will always be directed immediately to 000 when there is phone service or to the local police station at Moore when there is not.

- iii. When the situation is of concern as an impending flood emergency, but not immediately life threatening, there is a reluctance to involve a serving police officer with many other responsibilities in the district.
- iv. It is counter-intuitive to contact the Rural Fire Service in times of flood and its chain of command to "Fire and Rescue" is not well understood.
- v. In this situation the residents depend on the local 'grapevine' where those who live up-river advise neighbours further downstream who make fairly reliable estimates of water velocity and take long established measures to deal with being flood bound. Without reliable phones this strategy becomes inoperative.
- vi. State Emergency Services are seldom sought in this district because of the distances from the closest groups (Toogoolawah, Blackbutt and Kilcoy) and the certain knowledge that in the case of flooding the residents of the larger regional towns where they are located will be given a higher priority.
- vii. There is no Somerset Regional Councillor who lives closer than Kilcoy and whose name residents may recognise to seek local advice by phone.
- viii. When the telephone links are cut the only help in an emergency comes from those who can be accessed **locally**. These include neighbours, one police officer and a putative 27 volunteers with the Rural Fire Brigade located at Moore, Linville and Mt Stanley (27 km from Linville). In case of flooding these volunteer numbers are sometimes reduced to the five who have keys to the two vehicles available to the townships.
- ix. No efforts were made by the Somerset Regional Council to proactively seek advice about the risk of flooding to their residents in the Mt. Stanley areas until Councillor ██████ was able to drive from his flooded property in Kilcoy to the Mt. Stanley area on 17 January when the crisis had largely passed for the town dwellers.

This is perhaps not surprising in light of the quote from their Local Disaster Management Plan 2008, "*The Somerset Regional Council does not have a specific policy addressing disaster management*" (1.03.02). This is contrary to their legislative requirement⁴ that specifies that their disaster management plan must include, "(a) the State group's strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State, and the local government's policies for disaster management;

In what appears to be something of a contradiction to the layman, the Plan goes on to say, "*For the purpose of coordinating all emergency/disaster activities, the location of the primary disaster/event coordination centre will be in the Council Chamber, Council Administration building, 2 Redbank Street Esk.*" The plan is silent about whether there is a policy that this Disaster centre in the Council Chambers will be manned by Council staff.

In this context the flood relief measures offered to the residents and 'visitors' of the district were somewhat variable.

⁴ Queensland Disaster Management Act 2003, 57(2) (a) [See Appendix 3]

Story (i): Somerset Regional Council: The first advice about flooding in the district occurred in early January when two fishermen, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] from Coominya, had been trapped at a local property (Riverleigh) by flooding on Mt. Stanley Road. They were air-lifted out several days before the later flooding that began on 9 January. If the local disaster management group in the Somerset region was working effectively this information should have been available to all providers of emergency services in the district well ahead of the more serious flooding that followed.

As the weather deteriorated they were understandably anxious to retrieve their car from "Riverleigh". [REDACTED] who travels between Rosewood and his property "[REDACTED]" at Mt. Stanley, rang [REDACTED] about the fishermen's access to Mt. Stanley after the landline phone service was re-established to Linville and was told that in her estimation the road would be closed for 2 months. The next day [REDACTED] rang again on his mobile phone from Paddy's Gully to say that [REDACTED] CEO Somerset Regional Council had assured the fishermen that the road to Mt. Stanley was open. On that advice they travelled again as far as the first crossing on the Mt. Stanley Road that was still flooded at that time and impassible. They returned to Linville and finally to Coominya.

If the attribution of this negligent advice is accurate, then this story provides evidence of

- (a) poor coordination of communication at the primary disaster coordination centre within the region, and/or
- (b) ignorance of the plight of residents at Mt. Stanley by the most senior officer within the Somerset Regional Council.

It appears in both word and deed, therefore, that the Somerset Regional Council has no direct policy about disaster management within its region. Its disaster management plan prohibits it from being a 'lead agent' in disaster response and its partnerships with those agencies who do accept this role extend only to providing financial support for SES equipment, a Disaster Coordination Centre and a **part-time** Disaster Management Co-ordinator who is also a Council employee. The Somerset Regional Council has written itself **out** of the chain of command for the delivery of emergency services to its residents.

This contrasts sharply with the South Burnett Regional Council's Disaster Management Plan that applies to the townships of Blackbutt and Benarkin. Here, "Disaster Management is to be an integral part of Council's core business" (1.4) and the Mayor is identified as the Chair of the South Burnett Local Disaster Management Group (1.6.2).

Story (ii): Moore Police Service and a private helicopter: The Emergency Service Provider at Moore who took effective command of emergency responses in the Mt. Stanley district was a relatively newly appointed police officer, Senior Constable [REDACTED]. In conjunction with Kilcoy police officers, Senior Constable [REDACTED] called a public meeting at Linville on Thursday 13 January, co-chaired by local resident [REDACTED] where the need for food supplies, generators, shower facilities and fuel for power were discussed.

Before this meeting Senior Constable [REDACTED] had been hampered in his attempts to contact isolated families with no active phones. In this venture he was fortunate to find a local contract musterer [REDACTED] at home in Linville because of the wet weather. Mr. [REDACTED] had worked on most of the local properties over many years and could give reliable information about road access. Senior Constable [REDACTED] delegated the responsibility for contacting Toogoolawah SES about a helicopter to check on the safety of isolated families to Mr. [REDACTED] which he did on Wednesday 12 January, using the only mobile phone available with coverage in the region (owned by [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Earthworks) [REDACTED] was advised that a helicopter would be available that same day. He made several more phone calls when no helicopter appeared and was told to contact the "Command Centre". After three more calls to that number he was asked not to call again and waited until midnight for their return call on the only functional mobile phone in the town. **SES did not return his call for help.**

Mr. [REDACTED] then contacted Mr. [REDACTED] who had previously lived in the district and had a helicopter pilot's license. He referred Mr. [REDACTED] to a friend of his at the Sunshine Coast who generously flew his own helicopter into the district twice. On the first trip he landed at some of the flooded properties and took orders for emergency supplies needed by these now completely isolated families. His second trip was flown after the public meeting on Thursday 13 January where the pilot delivered fuel, food and medication and air lifted in total 13 people out of the district including one family from Camp Duckadang and a woman from Mt. Stanley. Previously medication was obtained on 11 January by Senior Constable [REDACTED] over dangerous roads from the nearest accessible pharmacy at Blackbutt. The mediation for the helicopter drops was obtained by road from Kilcoy.

To most readers this would appear to be a story about the most extraordinary good fortune in the face of adversity. But it appears that no less is expected of rural communities in the Somerset region and as a consequence few additional resources are planned for or provided. This cavalier dismissal of their need, indeed their right, to safety support in a crisis is discrimination at its most blatant, and is even articulated clearly in the Somerset Regional Council's Disaster Management Plan:

"4.01 Rural communities are well known for their resilience and self sufficiency compared to (sic!) their urban cousins and are more likely to have in place appropriate strategies to cope with an event impact."

In this instance these strategies included providing themselves with communication services that work reliably in areas of notoriously poor mobile phone coverage as well as developing and maintaining a network of colleagues and acquaintances with such vital resources as helicopters and hovercraft at their disposal. The "urban cousins" are only obliged to develop emergency plans for the first 24 hours of a flood event.⁵

It should be noted as well that there had been no permanent police officer at Moore for almost 18 months prior to November 2010, and without Senior Constable [REDACTED]

⁵ Somerset Regional Council's Disaster Management Plan, Section 4 Preparedness; 4.01 Introduction

proactive approach to resident safety, his coordinating skills and his authority to arrange appropriate emergency service support, the "extraordinary good fortune in the face of adversity" could easily have been replaced with panic and disaster. This is too high a price to pay for living on a rural property within the Somerset Region of Queensland.

Additional emergency service support also included serving police officers from other stations who provided food, fuel and a much needed sense of security to the Mt. Stanley district in the first seven days after the initial flooding. Another of the services arranged at the 13 January Public Meeting was to make available two cooked meals a day for residents of Linville and Moore for several weeks until reliable food supplies were available and to deliver generators and fuel to isolated families. There is also a story, hopefully apocryphal, of the Moore police officer riding "shotgun" over bread supplies from Kilcoy bakery to Moore and Linville. Senior Constable [REDACTED] continued to discharge the coordination role in the district with distinction until the immediate recovery phase was complete.

Story (iii): Rural Fire Brigade for communication.

Senior Constable [REDACTED] was quick to realise the potential of the Rural Fire Brigade in the region, with at least two vehicles available at Linville and Moore and a response capability at Mt. Stanley with two radio links with Moore. Radio communication between these three centres was available through VHF Tait radio using VHF channel 17 that can, in turn, transmit to Southport Regional Centre. This clearly became the most effective volunteer base to mobilise quickly because of its communication potential while other forms of telecommunication were unavailable. Communication difficulties in this area will be addressed in more detail in a later section.

While there may be, under optimum conditions, 27 potential volunteers to help in a fire emergency, flooding isolated many of these and most of the work during the present emergency fell to the local Fire Warden [REDACTED] and a handful of volunteers. Their reliable communication network, however, proved a boon under these circumstances as well as the establishment of a necessary network with Toogoolawah and Nanango when the Rural Fire Brigade has the use of Shire Tankers from Somerset and South Burnett regions in the case of high intensity fires.

The next request for a helicopter was processed by the Rural Fire Brigade service that obtained one from Karreman Quarries, Simnamon Lane, Harlin. This helicopter, again generously on loan, made several trips towards the end of the week (i.e. 15 January), delivering fuel to rural properties and airlifting out at least the caretakers from [REDACTED] property.

Obtaining the fuel for these deliveries identified yet another problem in the district. All the fuel had to come from the Harlin Petrol Station, 12.21 kms from Moore and 19.54 kms from Linville. There is a closer BP Petrol Station at Colinton (8.08 kms) but the managers there would not permit their computerised pumps to be powered by the generators available in the district according to their company policy. The first two fuel drops were paid for by local residents who were reimbursed in an equivalent amount of fuel at a later date.

Rural Fire provided a reliable source of communication and support to the Moore police officer before and after the loss of power and telecommunications, as did many of the residents of the district who acquitted themselves admirably without the benefit of SES resourcing and training whose members provided little help in this area during the 2011 flood crisis.

These stories illustrate four points in relation to emergency service delivery and its coordination in the Mt. Stanley district:

1. The most effective emergency service provider in the district was the serving police officer and there were several reasons for this.
 - a. His was the only pro-active approach to the emergency where he took the responsibility for checking on isolated family who could not ask for help because there is no mobile phone coverage in this area.
 - b. He was confident of the clear and efficient chain of command and support within his own service, and the service's impeccable data collection and recording in spite of emerging difficulties.
 - c. He had the authority to demand compliance from the population that in this case was entirely unnecessary, and to prohibit foolhardy approaches to danger and
 - d. He had a personal presence that easily persuaded the 'hard men' (and women) of a rural district to support his coordination and forward planning.
2. It is interesting that the only other emergency service with a clear pro-active mandate was the Rural Fire Brigade that has permission to conduct hazard reduction burns. The communication capability of this Rural Fire Brigade has been developed in response to the complete lack of mobile phone coverage beyond the Moore-Linville cemetery. It now covers almost all of the Moore-Linville-Mt Stanley area (943 square kilometres or 3550 square miles), and this communication network has been developed largely by donations, ingenuity and volunteer effort. It was invaluable during the recent flood crisis and has now been extended to include Camp Duckadang that can take up to 100 visitors. More details about these communication initiatives will be covered in Section C4 (Communication).
3. State Emergency Services had nothing to offer the Mt. Stanley district during this flood crisis. Their delay in processing the request for the first helicopter prompted some rash panic reactions that were dangerous and could easily have proven fatal. In any case they appear to be a service that is reactive and cannot be activated without a request from the general public or other emergency service providers/local council disaster management committees. When communication is cut, as it regularly is in the Mt. Stanley area, this service become irrelevant.
4. The local disaster management committee established by the Somerset Regional Council was either inactive through lack of political will to become involved with its legislative responsibilities for the Qld. Disaster Management Act 2003 in the Mt. Stanley district, or

it failed. Even though the original command centre in Esk was flooded, there were contingency plans for this, and help was certainly sought from the Somerset Regional Council. On Wednesday 12 January two Linville residents who had been without phones since the previous Monday drove to the Kilcoy Council Chambers seeking help. On their return they reported that, "We're on our own; they're not going to do anything for us." This was the signal for the first request for a helicopter from Toogoolawah SES that also failed.

It is clear that the coordination of information about emergency needs in this region is deeply flawed. The 2003 legislation⁶ referred to above appears to suggest to residents without legal training that the co-ordinating role is intended to be taken by the Regional Councils through the local disaster management groups with elected council members in the chair.

It was unexpected and not encouraging to find that the Somerset Regional Council "does not have a specific policy addressing disaster management".⁷ This compares unfavourably with the South Burnett Regional Councillors for whom "The primary focus of the South Burnett Regional Council Disaster Management System is to mitigate the effects of disasters on the community wherever possible or practical, and being prepared to respond when disasters do occur."⁸ The Toowoomba Regional Council that serves Yarraman also identifies itself as the Lead Agency in the event of Earthquake, Flood and Landslide.⁹

Recommendation 4: That the Disaster Management Plans established by all Regional Councils in Queensland be reviewed regularly by the relevant State government Minister to ensure that they are equitable across regions and that they include international best practice for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

Recommendation 5: That a fully resourced SES group be established in the Mt. Stanley area with response vehicle and boat.

Recommendation 6: That the Rural Fire Service be re-named "Fire and Rescue" with at least one of the senior volunteers undertaking training in water rescue in each of the established regions within the Council boundaries.

Recommendation 7: That there is a permanent police presence in Moore because of the importance of, and danger posed by the upper reaches of the Brisbane River to local residents in particular and residents in South East Queensland in general.

Recommendation 8: That the police service is acknowledged as the primary emergency service in the state and that its budget is increased to reflect this fact.

⁶ Queensland Disaster Management Act, 2003

⁷ Somerset Regional Council's Disaster Management Plan, 1.03.02

⁸ South Burnett Regional Council's Disaster Management Plan, 1.1

⁹ Annex A, Toowoomba Regional Council's Disaster Management Plan. Roles & Responsibilities: Lead and Support Agencies

Section C3: VULNERABILITY OF ROAD ACCESS

(a) D'Aguilar Highway

There are two public thoroughfares for motor transport within the Mt. Stanley region. The first is a major highway (D'Aguilar Highway) that connects with the Bruce Highway north of Caboolture and runs past Kilcoy and Moore before ascending the Blackbutt Range to serve Blackbutt, Yarraman, Nanango and Kingaroy. The D'Aguilar Highway makes a T-junction with the Brisbane Valley Highway that takes local traffic to Toogoolawah. Local residents from Linville, Moore and the Mt. Stanley region access essential goods and services from Toogoolawah and Blackbutt via the D'Aguilar Highway. This is a well maintained two lane motorway of approximately 160 kms, from Caboolture via Woodford & Kilcoy to Nanango where it joins the Burnett Highway and on to Kingaroy where it meets the Bunya Highway. Its maintenance and upkeep are the responsibility of the State Government. This highway has earned an unenviable reputation for car accidents.

The section of this highway on the Blackbutt Range is particularly problematic for several reasons.

- i. It carried all of the heavy produce in vehicles up to and including B-doubles (i.e. restricted access vehicles in excess of 42.5 tonnes) up and down the Blackbutt Range as well as all the mining and industrial equipment to Tarong.
- ii. It is steep in places with wide curves, with only a safety barrier between the driver and a long drop to the valley below. The recommended speed in some places is 40k but there are few opportunities here for safe emergency stops when vehicles experience difficulties.
- iii. There is poor mobile phone coverage for drivers in difficulties on this section of the D'Aguilar Highway, so that emergency response time is dependent on two-way radio links between passing truck drivers whose courtesy in this regard is an essential feature of this highway's use.
- iv. An accident on this section of the D'Aguilar Highway can disrupt traffic in both directions for many hours, with no possibility of re-routing traffic except by a relatively rough Forestry road that is now little used.
- v. The flood crisis in January 2011 produced landslides down the Blackbutt Range that covered up to 2 kms of the roadway and closed the D'Aguilar Highway between Blackbutt and Moore on 9 January. After sixteen days one lane of the highway was reopened to small vehicles under 4.5 tonnes (26 January), to light trucks under 15 tonnes on 28 January and by Monday 31 January it was open to heavy vehicles up to 42.5 tonnes. B-doubles were still prohibited because of their relative lack of manoeuvrability rather than their weight and size. The traffic was controlled by lights and staff that permitted traffic up the range on the hour and half hour, and down the range at a quarter to, and a quarter past the hour.

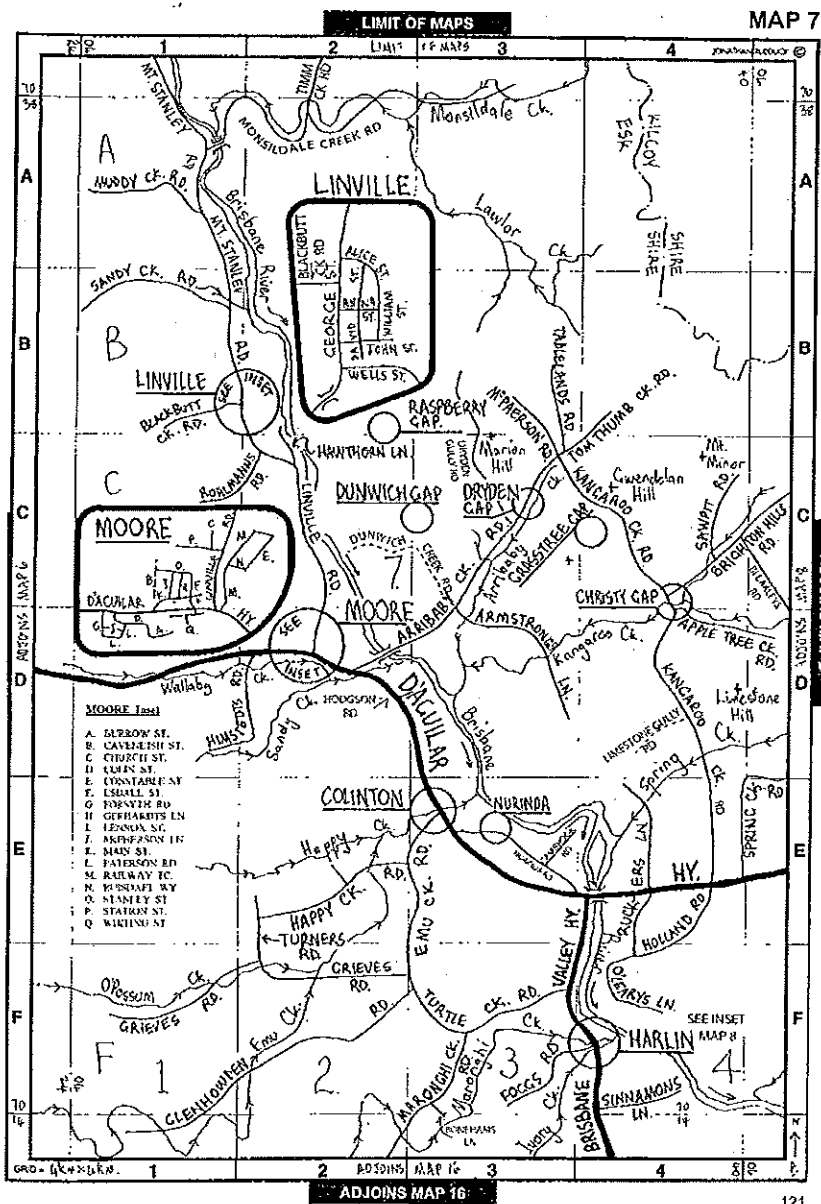
The major consequences of this road damage to the residents in the Mt. Stanley district have been two-fold: interruption of ongoing professional services from doctors and allied services

at Blackbutt and further north and increased business costs of transporting stock to northern markets. Emergency medical services from Kilcoy and Toogoolawah were available relatively soon after the flooding and the final cost of the 2011 floods to business in the Mt. Stanley district is not yet clear.

(b) Linville Road, Mt. Stanley Road; Eastern & Western branches

Rather more problematic than the D'Aguilar Highway is the regionally controlled road from the highway at Moore to the township of Linville that goes on to serve all the pastoral properties within the Mt. Stanley region and leads finally to Elginvale and

Goomeri or Nanango. This is a single lane bitumen road initially called Linville Road and follows the river from the turn-off at Moore, past Linville and into the Mount Stanley State Forest with 12 river and creek crossings to this point. This is colloquially known as the 'River Road' because it was constructed beside the Brisbane River and crosses it many times.



Beyond Linville the sealed road branches into the Eastern and Western branches of Mt. Stanley Road, neither of which is sealed. The Western Branch follows the western branch of the Brisbane River and leads through the Elgin Vale State Forest, northwest of

Mount Stanley, rejoining the D'Aguilar Highway north of Nanango and on to Goomeri.

Eastern Branch Road follows the east branch of the Brisbane River most of the way to its source north-east of Mount Stanley, crossing it about 20 times before it ends in a Forestry

lease grazing block 3 kms north of the last cement crossing on this road. In spite of being a gazetted road to Elgin Vale, it disappears into a paddock at this point without road signage or maintenance. It is almost certainly the 'road' referred to in the Australian 4WD Action homepage communication quoted below. Both these branch roads are single lane dirt roads and the only unsupported access roads available for the necessarily resourceful residents at Avoca Vale and Mt. Stanley.

The many creek and river crossings make these dirt roads impassable in wet weather.

For the touring public it is difficult to obtain accurate, or indeed any, information about Mt Stanley Road electronically. The RACQ trip planner resolutely takes motorists from Linville and Avoca Vale back to the D'Aguiar Highway on the sealed Linville Road if they are planning to drive to Nanango. It is only if you happen to have the local knowledge to instruct the planner to travel via Avoca Vale that there is the possibility of obtaining directions on what is surely a gazetted road. No R.A.C.Q. condition report has been obtained about this road to date. After a determined search it was possible to get written directions to drive along this road from Linville to both Nanango and Goomeri.

Other travellers have not been so lucky. The following interchange came from the Australian 4WD Action homepage, 2008, and it has been repeated verbatim.

[Question:] *Mt Stanley State Forest QLD???*

I was playing around on Google Maps ([Google Maps](#)) and came across this huge state forest around the tributaries of the Brisbane River with all these tracks. Does anyone know anything about this state forest (Mt Stanley State Forest 1)? There is no information about it on the internet but I reckon there would be some good 4x4 tracks in there.

[Reply 1.] *used to go there when i was about 10 with the rellies.... some mean tracks out there.... (refer to blackbutt or nanango when looking on the net)*

[Reply 2.] *Hi Peter ST_R i did a recce out that way a couple of months ago with our club some of the tracks on maps are marked as roads. But they go through farms. We followed one and it led to a house so we asked if the road continues on:) He said that it is private property even tho it is on my gps as a road:confused: .He told us if we go up Linville rd till you get to a y junction take the eastern branch rd you run into some forest. It is an easy run but you will need a gps it will eventually come out on the Kilcoy Murgon rd north of Land cruiser park. We had to cut some trees that fell across the track so be prepared to do the same. Not many people use the track. We didn't venture of the main track as it was getting late in the day there was plenty of side tracks at the northern end. It is nice country up there you will see some wild deer around the hills i hope it helps.*

Older and possibly wiser heads were taking no chances with their directions on just 12 kms of this dirt road, and were unflattering about its condition. This extract comes from "The Bicentennial National Trail (2nd Edition 1991) Guide Book Number 5 Trail Updates, Aug 2010"

MAP 13

Pre trip: To arrange access to Nanango Showground, Phone 0428 631 273 or 07 4163 1273 or 07 4171 0494

Support vehicles please note that Mt Stanley Rd is badly washed out in places [i.e. during dry weather in 2010, ed.]

15.1 Continue straight on along Mt Stanley Rd ignoring roads first on left and then on the right. Do not attempt to go through the forest. The trail skirts around the edge of the East Nanango Forest for approx 12km

20.7 Turn left into Calvert Rd 56J 406603 7052644

The comments about the condition of Mt. Stanley Road compare quite favourably with another warning in this Guide Book, "caution bulls in paddock". Mt. Stanley Road is clearly not for the fainthearted.

It seems likely that Mt. Stanley Road was 'upgraded' to a defence road in the early 1940s, and then became a Forestry Road before being taken over by the local Shire, now Regional, Council. It is not family-friendly but probably still adequate for 4WD vehicles. As a safe exit for families on Mt. Stanley in wet weather it has not been adequate for many years and is more reminiscent of a public facility in a developing rather than developed nation.

It is remarkable, therefore, that local government took no steps after the 2003 legislation in relation to disaster management to either up-grade this road or locate State Emergency Services (with a boat in particular) into this part of their region.

At this point it is probably appropriate to examine the cost-benefit analysis of upgrading 40+ water crossings for a small number of residents in the area. There are two kinds of answer to such a question. The pragmatic one is that both branches of Mt. Stanley Road are public thoroughfares, not private roads, and the number of people who could be put at risk by its deterioration must include local residents, visitors to Camp Duckadang (up to 100 at a time), tourists who can find directions for its use and touring parties like the award winning initiative 'Bunya to the Bay'¹⁰ event held annually by Education Qld. The second answer, however, is the more telling one even to the most fiscally conservative. It is only possible to estimate the cost of a human life when it is lost for want of a budget, and every life that this safety exit can save in wet weather is worth the cost of an upgraded road.

A cursory examination of the Works Committee Reports for the Somerset Regional Council in the twelve months prior to the flooding in January 2011 reveal only three references to Linville or Mt. Stanley Roads (see Appendix 2). Two were reports of the same repair to No. 4 crossing on Mt. Stanley Road in October and November, 2010. In February 2010, it was reported that, "The town stewards have continued with normal duties including the clean up of Linville Road intersection with Brisbane Valley Highway." Sadly, without divisional

¹⁰ The 2010 Bunya to the Bay Eco Adventure is a 16-day hike, bike, canoe and boat journey in August-September for a group of 30 River Ambassadors. Journeying from the source of the Brisbane River to Fort Lytton, the Ambassadors will be in regular contact with expert mentors as they explore the management of our waterways and their value. (Ed. Qld website)

representation, there was no Councillor who lived within the Mt. Stanley district who knew that Linville Road intersects with D'Aguilar Highway and not Brisbane Valley Highway and could make the appropriate correction.

It is not drawing too long a bow from these data to suggest that a centralised Somerset Regional Council with no policy regarding disaster management is unlikely to upgrade the two branches of Mt. Stanley Road to provide safe access for the residents of Mt. Stanley in the foreseeable future.

If legislation about local disaster management plans mandated the maintenance of safe public thoroughfares in case of flood and fire as a priority, the long standing problem of Mt. Stanley Road's inaccessibility during flooding would be overcome at once. In this instance the State Government would serve as the 'lead agent' in disaster management again.

But if, however, there is no political will to take such a step, the only prospect of providing safety for small rural communities is to return to divisional representation so that the resources of land taxes and especially Government road grants can be distributed more equitably across the Somerset region. Economies of scale within the Somerset Region have been achieved at the expense of small isolated communities such as Mt. Stanley, the consequences of which were life threatening during the 2011 flooding of the Brisbane River.

Recommendation 9. That Somerset Regional Council return to a divisional representation system where ALL elected councillors represent their divisions on the local Disaster Management Group and resources for prevention of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disaster are shared equitably throughout the region.

Recommendation 10. That an independent review of the serviceability of the Western and Eastern branches of Mt. Stanley Road between Linville and Nanango when the Brisbane River catchment area is in flood be undertaken as a matter of urgency and a business plan for its remediation, in consultation with the Queensland State Government Disaster Management Committee, be implemented.

Section C4: COMMUNICATION DIFFICULTIES IN RURAL AREAS

This section addresses several issues in relation to communication to and from an established rural community in crisis. It includes,

- (a) The lack of credence given to experienced observers of the Brisbane River whose families have lived beside it for several generations,
- (b) Universally poor mobile phone coverage with which to summon help

- (c) Vulnerability of land line communication and slow repairs because of poor road access
- (d) Vulnerability of power supply for electronic communication
- (e) Lack of advice from Somerset Regional Council's "Command Centre" to residents at Mt. Stanley during the flood crisis.

(a) Experience vs. expert advice on the emergency

This issue was raised previously in Section C1(b). A resident of Mt. Stanley, [REDACTED] contacted the ABC about the extraordinary river levels she had noted in an attempt to offer timely advice to those further downstream of impending flooding. [REDACTED] has lived beside the Brisbane River for 55 years by her own estimate and is considered knowledgeable in the local area. And as it turned out her information was valid. But the ABC presenter chose to refute it with expert advice that was less accurate and ABC listeners were eventually misinformed.

In this case, the preliminary advice about an impending emergency could not have been processed by a local Command Centre that was not established until three days later. The question remains, Where do experienced and concerned citizens with early warnings about impending danger make their reports so that they are considered on their merits and not through a journalistic bias? This issue is an on-going one in the Somerset region where the later Member for Stanley, H.P. Somerset, sent riders at great personal risk to Ipswich with early advice about the 1893 flooding of the Brisbane River, and that was also ignored. It does not appear that this issue has been resolved in the last one hundred and eighteen years.

(b) Universally poor mobile phone coverage.

The single most distressing issue in relation to the flooding in the Mt. Stanley area was that telephone poles for land line are particularly susceptible to both flood and bushfire and the regular mobile phone coverage in the whole area of the Upper Brisbane River catchment is very poor or non-existent. This problem extends to the D'Aguilar Highway where tourists travelling over the Blackbutt Range are unable to call for help on mobile phones in the case of accidents regardless of the Telstra mapping that indicates that they should be able to do so. Mobile phone coverage becomes a vital safety net in accessing reactive emergency service providers like SES, Ambulance and Rural Fire Brigade. Without this service in the Mt. Stanley area (where Telstra mapping does indicate the need for satellite phones), together with many other areas in the Somerset region, no help is available when the land line telecommunication is cut. Although a generator will run computers for electronic communication, this is not a common feature of most homes and becomes an irrelevance without unflooded access to reliable fuel supplies. But even without power a mobile phone can be charged from a car that may not be able to transport the caller to safety but can be used to call for alternative forms of emergency transport. In similar vein the local Command

Centre is not able to directly transmit advice to residents in a flood emergency except through portable or car radios.

Emergency service vehicles in the Mt. Stanley area remained in contact via radio links, with Rural Fire Brigade vehicles stationed at Moore, Linville and Mt. Stanley. They transmitted on channel RF17 on a VHF Tait radio and this service has been energetic in improving its radio coverage throughout most of the Mt. Stanley area. To do this they have erected additional towers, paid for by public donation, so that before the 2011 flooding much of the affected area could be covered if a vehicle was in the area to receive or send the relevant message. There are radios in both response vehicles that were at Moore and Linville during the flooding and there are two other radios on rural properties, one at the branching of the Western and Eastern branch of Mt. Stanley Road at "Mt. Stanley", and another beyond that on the Eastern branch at "Melchan Hills". It is clear that this form of communication is satisfactory and since that time another tower has been erected so that transmissions can also be received by the Rural Fire Warden at Moore from Camp Duckadang, where large groups of visitors can be accommodated and often in school groups. They have been supplied with a second hand radio transmitter at no cost to the camp facility. It is anticipated that additional radio transmitters will be 'mended to make do' with the generosity of local residents and the dedication of the local Fire Warden, [REDACTED], so that additional centres can be operational in the case of a second emergency.

This is a good example of the resourcefulness of the residents of this area but it is an emergency measure and patently inequitable. It is only in under-developed countries that safety in an emergency is the prerogative of the wealthy who can afford satellite phones (one only in the district), and the spirit of the 2003 'Disaster Management Act' suggests that Queensland residents are entitled to rather better than that.

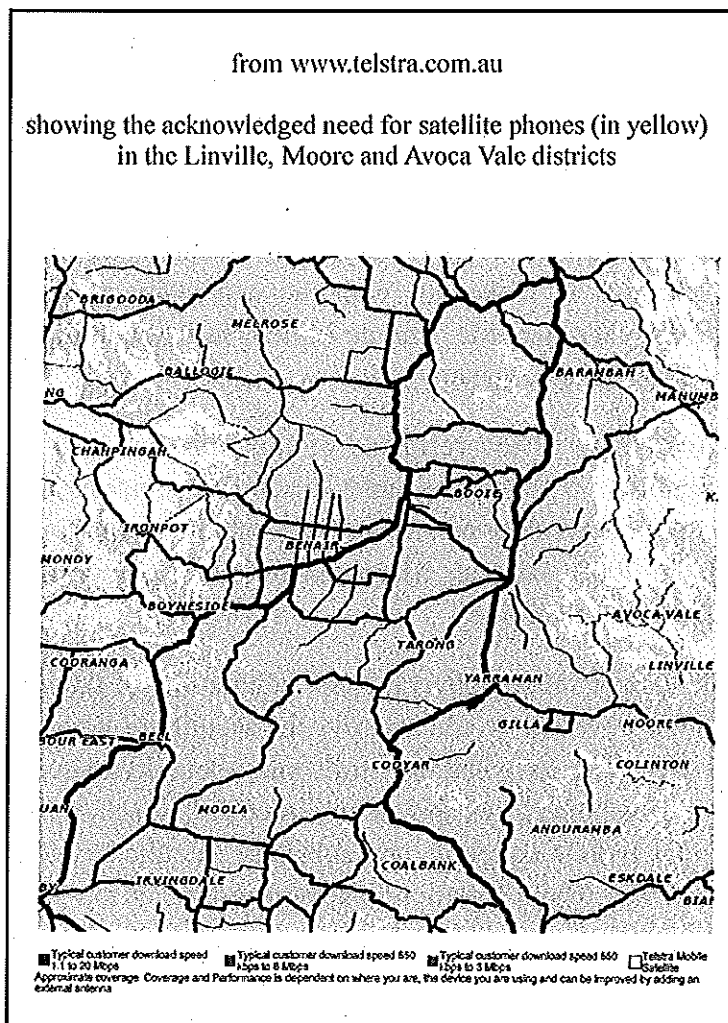
There are two obvious responses to this lack of mobile coverage and neither one of them is cheap. Additional towers for mobile phone coverage would improve the security of both the residents and tourists in the Mt. Stanley area, who have had little influence about decisions of that moment in the past, and no level of government has shown any interest in a scheme of this kind. The other is to accept the poor mobile coverage and subsidise satellite or radio telecommunication for those who live in area where isolation has been proven in the past. This option would not serve the touring public in the district but it may provide local relief from danger and it would be easier to make such a case in the short term. But it also begs the question, "What price a life?" when the communication system fails again at a later date.

(c) Vulnerability of telephone and power services

The vulnerability of phone and power lines during flooding is self evident except in the case of underground connections, the cost of which would be prohibitive over the 660 square kilometres from which this report is drawn. An effective mobile phone service to call for help would overcome much of the chronic anxiety about the loss of these services in an emergency. This issue has been discussed in C4 (b) above.

Satellite dishes are also common in this area and generators are used to supplement power to computers for emergency calls when power lines are down. Continuing to power a computer while waiting for a reply that may never come, however, is costly in terms of fuel. And fuel must be reserved for escape in the face of rapidly rising river heights. In addition to this, satellite disks commonly fill with water in heavy rain and remain inoperable until they have dried.

The acknowledged lack of regular mobile phone coverage in the Mt. Stanley area as an alternative to interrupted phone and power supplies in an emergency is shown in the following map of regular and satellite coverage from the Telstra website.



This map provides a persuasive argument for the need for more than a regular mobile phone to communicate their need for help in an emergency for most residents in the area under consideration. The appropriate resources are expensive. Subsidies for personal satellite phones, strategically placed satellite phones or strategically placed radio transmitters throughout this vulnerable region will form one of the recommendations of this report.

It does need to be said that Telstra was quick in re-establishing land line communication with this district that it served poorly with regular mobile phone coverage. In some instances Telstra crews were seen to effect repairs to washed-out crossings to gain access to damaged resources.

The only real signs of panic in this resourceful rural district occurred when telephone communication was cut and family members could not be located in any fashion. Effective communication links in an emergency were found to be the most important resources of all, and urgent attention is required to up-grade them to an acceptable standard for all Australians in the twenty first century.

(d) Communication with residents from local Council

There is a common public perception that section 30 (1) (e) of the Disaster Management Act 2003, "to ensure the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster;" implies that the local council is responsible for making the public aware of emergency responses to a disaster in their region.

At the time of the emergency those residents with power followed the comprehensive media coverage of emergency responses to local flooding throughout Queensland. The Somerset Regional Council was notably silent on these issues. Local newspapers were not printed in early January and there was little public interest in flooding in the Brisbane River Valley until the Wivenhoe Dam releases that provided such a graphic visual display. It was local newspaper coverage several weeks after the event that alerted residents in the Somerset region to the effects of flooding in the Upper Brisbane River catchment area, and that report was provided by residents. Photographs of the flood damage were taken by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Coordinator of SES facilities for the Somerset Regional Council and later printed in local newspapers. But no pro-active attempt on the part of the council to advise residents about rescue attempts in this area were noted.

To say that communication from the local council to residents in emergency situations was poor would be an understatement. To say that it was non-existent would be consistent with the perception of all the residents in the Mt. Stanley district. To suggest that it was a violation of the council's mandated responsibility under the Queensland Disaster Management Act 2003 would require legal opinion, but conventional wisdom is suggesting that many of the electors of this region also believe this to be true. Clarification of this issue will affect the vote in the next local government election.

There is a clear expectation amongst voters, however, that it is the responsibility of local government bodies to be pro-active in its response to emerging disaster situations. This not only includes coordinating emergency responses but also advising residents about these responses in the local areas, so that they can become informed partners in the district's emergency responses.

Without the dedicated coordination of Senior Constable [REDACTED] from Moore, advice about emergency response vehicles in the district, as well as medical, fuel and food supplies would not have been available to residents in the townships of Moore and Linville and the outlying properties in the Mt. Stanley district during the 2011 flooding. While grateful acknowledgement of this service has been made in Recommendations 7 & 8, the deficit in the local council's management response remains an issue. The final recommendation of this report addresses this point.

Recommendation 11: *That there is clear identification of a central reporting agency to which citizens can report emerging disaster situations with confidence.*

Recommendation 12: *That urgent attention is given to upgrading mobile phone coverage in the Upper Brisbane River catchment district.*

Recommendation 13: *That consideration be given to subsidising radio transmitters for use in emergencies by isolated families*

Recommendation 14: *That local council responsibilities in relation to advising residents of emergency responses during an emergency be articulated clearly in amendments to Queensland Disaster Management Act, 2003.*

SECTION D: FINAL OUTCOMES

The recovery phase is by no means completed in the area under discussion, and this section must be accepted as a work in progress. Road repairs continue with commendable rapidity on the D'Aguilar Highway. Some roads remain closed and promises of bridge repairs extend towards the end of the year in the Somerset region. Transport of stock is possible with care although changed routes in some cases will impact on business profitability. Living quarters are dry, wells have been pumped, flooded machinery is being repaired, replacement fencing is underway and insurance claims are being pursued with vigour. Federal government support through the member for Blair (Shayne Neumann) with recalcitrant insurance companies has also been solicited. Grass roots action groups to influence the Somerset Regional Council towards more effective disaster management have been established.

Disaster Management meetings in local sectors, by invitation only at the moment, have been called by the Somerset Regional Council. The upper reaches of the Brisbane River have not been identified as a separate sector so that no new resourcing for this district is currently being discussed. Members from Mt. Stanley who have contributed to this report attend. They are rarely heard, and are unsupported when they do contribute. Anger has given way to hopelessness again and, in private, 'ginger' groups are plotting uncoordinated local responses to a further flood. This information is not being shared widely, and especially not with Somerset Regional Council members who, it is feared, may try to absolve themselves from blame by attributing the responsibility for these new initiatives to themselves. Clear contenders for the next council election are jamming local email servers and newspapers with evidence of their indispensability in a crisis. In this climate recovery can only be distressingly slow.

Clear and practical guidance from independent sources such as the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry will contribute greatly to the recovery of isolated and resilient communities, far from any seat of government, who would only ask for help in an emergency and who, without divisional representation, are obliged to spend most of their social and working lives "Out of sight, out of mind".

SECTION E: RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations have been included in the body of the report with supporting arguments to accompany them there.

Recommendation 1. *That a multi-media educational package about the physical geography of the Brisbane River be prepared as a matter of some urgency for several target audiences, including emergency services, news media, local school pupils, prospective residents and/or investors, tourists and local residents of Brisbane River Valley.*

Recommendation 2. *That the budget for this undertaking includes a review and necessary revision in 2020.*

Recommendation 3: *That expert advice is sought about the advisability of introducing telemetric river stations closer to the source of the Brisbane River than Linville.*

Recommendation 4: *That the Disaster Management Plans established by all Regional Councils in Queensland be reviewed regularly by the relevant State government Minister to ensure that they are equitable across regions and that they include international best practice for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.*

Recommendation 5: *That a fully resourced SES group be established in the Mt. Stanley area with response vehicle and boat.*

Recommendation 6: *That the Rural Fire Service be re-named "Fire and Rescue" with at least one of the senior volunteers undertaking training in water rescue in each of the established regions within the Council boundaries.*

Recommendation 7: *That there is a permanent police presence in Moore because of the importance of, and danger posed by the upper reaches of the Brisbane River to local residents in particular and residents in South East Queensland in general.*

Recommendation 8: *That the police service is acknowledged as the primary emergency service in the state and that its budget be increased to reflect this fact.*

Recommendation 9. *That Somerset Regional Council return to a divisional representation system where ALL elected councillors represent their divisions on the local Disaster Management Group and resources for prevention of, preparedness for, response to and recovery from disaster are shared equitably throughout the region.*

Recommendation 10. *That an independent review of the serviceability of the Western and Eastern branches of Mt. Stanley Road between Linville and Nanango when the Brisbane River catchment area is in flood be undertaken as a matter of urgency and a business plan for its remediation, in consultation with the Queensland State Government Disaster Management Committee, be implemented.*

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Recommendation 14: *That local council responsibilities in relation to advising residents of emergency responses during an emergency be articulated clearly in amendments to Queensland Disaster Management Act, 2003.*

Appendix 1. Flood Diary for [REDACTED] Linville

Brisbane River Crossing No. 1

Rainfall, January 2011

Jan 2 20mm	Jan 8 6 mm	Jan 15 0 mm
Jan 3 2 mm	Jan 9 100 mm	Jan 16 0 mm
Jan 4 0 mm	Jan 10 78 mm	Jan 17 0 mm
Jan 5 0 mm	Jan 11 70 mm	Jan 18 0 mm
Jan 6 64 mm	Jan 13 2 mm	Jan 19 33 mm
Jan 7 53 mm	Jan 14 0 mm	Jan 20 0 mm
Total Rainfall 428 mm		

Diary entries, January 2011:

6 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crossing flooded, • No vehicular access until Sunday 23 January. • River continued to rise
9 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost power at 10 p.m. while attempting to email photos of the flooding to the ABD to verify the information as to the seriousness of the flooding supplied by other residents (Valmai Burnett & Kate Dohle). Power was not restored until Friday 21 January, late p.m.
10 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River level dropped to near the level of 6 January. • Lost phone mid-afternoon, not restored until late p.m. on 30 January
11 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2.30/3.00 a.m. the river level had risen to peak height; higher than recorded in the 30 years we have owned the property.
13 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By chance we discovered we had random mobile service when standing in the back of the ute on top of a hill. This access was restricted to only one of our mobile phones. • Contacted [REDACTED] Somerset Regional Council, at approximately 8.30 a.m. He was unaware that we had been without power since Sunday or of how many people had been affected at or above the first crossing. We requested that he find out what the situation was and ring us back or leave a message. We have had no call to date.
14 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our daughter [REDACTED] who was at Kilcoy, organised a generator for us and, after being unable to contact the SES, spoke to both the Kilcoy (they did not get back to her) and Moore Police about getting the generator across to us. The Moore police advised her that a hovercraft would meet her here at the crossing and transport the generator across. Fuel had also been organised for us by [REDACTED]
21 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power restored late evening
23 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisbane River Crossing No. 1 now accessible with 4WD tractor and truck
30 January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landline telecommunication restored

Robyn Gray

Appendix 2: Summary of minutes from Somerset Regional Council,

Jan 2010 – March 2011
re Mt. Stanley Road and Linville Road

Date	Meeting type	Reference to Mt Stanley road	Reference to Linville road
23032011	Ordinary	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting 23 March 2011 3 Matters of Public Interest Thank you to Council Contractor Cr Caddy wished to thank the Council appointed contractor for the recent work on the Linville to Mt Stanley Road. Cr Caddy advised that residents in the vicinity were very appreciative of the work undertaken.	
09032011	Works	nil	nil
09032011	Ordinary	nil	nil
23022011	Ordinary	nil	nil
09022011	Ordinary	nil	nil
17122010	Ordinary	nil	nil
08122010	Ordinary	nil	nil
08122010	Works	nil	nil
24112010	Ordinary	nil	nil
10112010	Works	Works Committee Meeting 10 November 2010, 9 Esk Bitumen Crew: [REDACTED] This crew has been extensively involved in the clean up after the wet including slips and drains on the Esk Kilcoy Road and continuing with an endless amount of potholes and failures over our network. During the wet approximately 30 tonnes of patch mix was being used per day. The crew have just finalised repairs to No 4 crossing on Mt Stanley Road	nil
10112010	Ordinary	nil	nil
27102010	Ordinary	nil	nil
13102010	Works	Works Committee Meeting 13 October 2010, 4 Bridge Crew: [REDACTED] This crew has been undertaking general maintenance on a number of bridges including Tetzlaffs Lane. Major repairs have been done on Old man Camp Road, Sandy Creek (Bryden), Foggs Bridge, Toogoolawah footbridge, deck repairs on Buaraba Creek, deck repairs on O'Learys Lane and repaired the approach to No 4 crossing on Mt Stanley Road.	nil
13102010	Ordinary	nil	nil
22092010	Ordinary	nil	nil
08092010	Works	nil	nil
08092010	Ordinary	nil	nil
25082010	Ordinary	nil	nil
11082010	Works	nil	nil
11082010	Ordinary	nil	nil
28072010	Ordinary	nil	nil
14072010	Works	nil	nil
14072010	Ordinary	nil	nil
23062010	Ordinary	nil	nil
09062010	Works	nil	nil
09062010	Ordinary	nil	nil

26052010	Ordinary	nil	nil
12052010	Works	nil	nil
12052010	Ordinary	nil	nil
24042010	Ordinary	nil	nil
14042010	Works	nil	nil
14042010	Ordinary	nil	nil
31032010	Ordinary	nil	nil
10032010	Works	nil	nil
10032010	Ordinary	nil	nil
24022010	Ordinary	nil	nil
10022010	Works	nil	Works Committee Meeting 10 February 2010, 9 Town Stewards: The town stewards have continued with normal duties including the clean-up of Linville Road intersection with Brisbane Valley Highway.[Where? Linville Road intersects with D.Aguilar Highway]
10022010	Ordinary	nil	nil
27012010	Ordinary	nil	nil
13012010	Works	nil	nil
13012010	Ordinary	nil	nil

Appendix 3: Extracts from **QUEENSLAND DISASTER
MANAGEMENT ACT 2003** re Local Government

Division 3—Local government disaster management groups

Subdivision 1—Establishment and functions

29 Establishment

A local government must establish a Local Disaster Management Group (a “**local group**”) for the local government’s area. **s 30 25 s 30** *Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003*

30 Functions

(1) A local group has the following functions for its area—

- (a) to ensure that disaster management and disaster operations in the area are consistent with the State group’s strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State;
- (b) to develop effective disaster management, and regularly review and assess the disaster management;
- (c) to help the local government for its area to prepare a local disaster management plan;
- (d) to identify, and provide advice to the relevant district group about, support services required by the local group to facilitate disaster management and disaster operations in the area;
- (e) to ensure the community is aware of ways of mitigating the adverse effects of an event, and preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster;
- (f) to manage disaster operations in the area under policies and procedures decided by the State group;
- (g) to provide reports and make recommendations to the relevant district group about matters relating to disaster operations;
- (h) to identify, and coordinate the use of, resources that may be used for disaster operations in the area;
- (i) to establish and review communications systems in the group, and with the relevant district group and other local groups in the disaster district of the relevant district group, for use when a disaster happens;
- (j) to ensure information about a disaster in the area is promptly given to the relevant district group;
- (k) to perform other functions given to the group under this Act;
- (l) to perform a function incidental to a function mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (k).

(2) In this section—

“**relevant district group**”, for a local group, means the district group for the disaster district in which the area of the local group is situated. **s 31 26 s 33**

Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003

Subdivision 2—Application of sections 29 and 30 in particular circumstances.

31 Local governments may combine

Despite section 29, 2 or more local governments (the “**combined local government**”) may, with the approval of the Minister and the district disaster coordinator for the disaster district in which the local governments are situated, agree to unite for the purpose of establishing a local group.

32 Application of ss 29 and 30

(1) This section applies if 2 or more local governments agree as mentioned in section 31.

(2) Sections 29 and 30 apply to the combined local government and local group as if—

- (a) a reference to a local government were a reference to a combined local government; and
- (b) a reference to the local government’s area or the local group’s area were a reference to the area of the combined local government.

Subdivision 3—Membership

33 Membership

(1) A local group consists of the persons appointed as members of the group by the relevant local government for the group.

(2) At least 1 person appointed under subsection (1) must be a councillor of a local government.

(3) The relevant local government for a local group may appoint a person as a member only if satisfied the person has the necessary expertise or experience to be a member. s 34 27 s 39

Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003

34 Chairperson and deputy chairperson of local group

(1) The relevant local government for a local group is to appoint—

- (a) a member of the group as the chairperson of the group; and
- (b) a member of the group as the deputy chairperson of the group.

(2) The member appointed as the chairperson must be a councillor of a local government.

35 Executive officer of local group

The relevant local government for a local group is to appoint a member of the group as the executive officer of the group.

36 Function of executive officer of local group

The function of the executive officer of a local group is to help the group to manage and coordinate its business.

37 Notice about membership of local group

The relevant local government for a local group must, at least once a year, give written notice of the members of the group to—

- (a) the executive officer of the State group; and
- (b) the district disaster coordinator for the disaster district in which the local group is situated.

Division 4—Business and meetings for disaster management groups

38 Conduct of business

Subject to this division, a disaster management group may conduct its business, including its meetings, in the way it considers appropriate.

39 Times and places of meetings

(1) Disaster management group meetings must be held at least once in every 6 months at the times and places decided by the chairperson of the group.

s 40 28 s 41

Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003

(2) However, the chairperson of the State group must call a meeting if asked, in writing, to do so by the Minister or at least one-half of its members.

(3) Also, the chairperson of a district group must call a meeting if asked, in writing, to do so by the chairperson of the State group or at least one-half of the members of the district group.

(4) In addition, the chairperson of a local group must call a meeting if asked, in writing, to do so by—

- (a) the district disaster coordinator for the disaster district in which the local group is situated; or
- (b) at least one-half of the members of the local group.

40 Quorum

A quorum for a meeting of a disaster management group is the number equal to—

- (a) one-half of its members for the time being holding office plus 1;

or

(b) if one-half of its members for the time being holding office is not a whole number, the next highest whole number.

41 Presiding at meetings

(1) The chairperson of a disaster management group is to preside at all meetings of the group at which the chairperson is present.

(2) If the chairperson is absent from a meeting of the group, but the deputy chairperson is present, the deputy chairperson is to preside.

(3) If the chairperson and deputy chairperson are both absent from a meeting of the group—

- (a) the member of the group nominated by the chairperson is to preside; or
- (b) if the chairperson does not nominate a member under paragraph (a)—the member nominated by the deputy chairperson is to preside.

(4) If the offices of chairperson and deputy chairperson are vacant, the member of the group chosen by the members present is to preside. s 42 29 s 44 *Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003*

42 Conduct of meetings

(1) A disaster management group may hold meetings, or allow members of the group to take part in its meetings, by using any technology that reasonably allows members to hear and take part in discussions as they happen.

Example of use of technology— teleconferencing

(2) A member who takes part in a meeting of a disaster management group under subsection (1) is taken to be present at the meeting.

(3) A resolution is validly made by a disaster management group, even if it is not passed at a meeting of the group, if—

(a) a majority of the members of the group gives written agreement to the resolution; and

(b) notice of the resolution is given under procedures approved by the group.

43 Minutes

A disaster management group must keep minutes of its meetings.

Division 3—Disaster management plans for local governments

Subdivision 1—Disaster management plans

57 Plan for disaster management in local government area

(1) A local government must prepare a plan (a “local disaster management plan”) for disaster management in the local government’s area.

(2) The plan must include provision for the following—

(a) the State group’s strategic policy framework for disaster management for the State, and the local government’s policies for disaster management;

(b) the roles and responsibilities of entities involved in disaster operations and disaster management in the area;

(c) the coordination of disaster operations and activities relating to disaster management performed by the entities mentioned in paragraph (b);

(d) events that are likely to happen in the area;

s 58 35 s 60 Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003

(e) strategies and priorities for disaster management for the area;

(f) the matters stated in the disaster management guidelines as matters to be included in the plan;

(g) other matters about disaster management in the area the local government considers appropriate.

58 Requirements of plan

A local disaster management plan must be consistent with the disaster management guidelines.

59 Reviewing and renewing plan

(1) A local government may review, or renew, its local disaster management plan when the local government considers it appropriate.

(2) However, the local government must review the effectiveness of the plan at least once a year.

60 Plan to be available for inspection etc.

(1) A local government must keep a copy of its local disaster management plan available for inspection, free of charge, by members of the public at—

(a) the local government’s head office; and

(b) other places the chief executive officer of the local government considers appropriate.

(2) The plan may be made available in written or electronic form.

(3) The local government must, on payment of the appropriate fee, give a person a copy of the plan.

(4) In this section—

“appropriate fee” means the fee, decided by the chief executive officer of the local government, that is no more than the reasonable cost of providing the copy.

PART 5—FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

80 Functions of local government

(1) The functions of a local government under this Act are as follows—

(a) to ensure it has a disaster response capability;

(b) to approve its local disaster management plan prepared under part 3;

7 For the offence of failing to comply with a direction under section 78(1), see

section 116 (Failure to comply with direction). *s 81 48 s 82 Disaster Management Act 2003 No. 91, 2003*

(c) to ensure information about an event or a disaster in its area is promptly given to the district disaster coordinator for the disaster district in which its area is situated;

(d) to perform other functions given to the local government under this Act.

(2) In this section—

“disaster response capability”, for a local government, means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government’s area.

APPENDIX 4: Flood diary from Moore Memorial Hall

FLOOBOUND IN MOORE - 2011

Departed Ipswich at 9:05 am - destination Linville/Moore Cemetery to lay Mum's ashes to rest on top of Dad's grave. Drove through torrential rain from Esk to Linville. River levels rising and much water on the road.

Upon our arrival we drove on to Linville to check out the facilities for a family picnic later in the day. Found the park awash and the toilets full of water and frogs.

Returned to cemetery to await the arrival of my siblings - a dry underfoot shelter was available (though rustic) - at least the toilet facilities were good.

Finally all the family members arrived (except Roy), after Trevor returned to Taogoolawah with Maureen and Ken so that they could travel the rest of the way with him - too much water over the road west of Taogoolawah for their car. It was pouring rain most of the time with some small respites occasionally.

Set up a shelter over the grave and began the task of placing the ashes and mixing and laying concrete. Trevor, Rodney and Derek carried out this task with help from Ben. Lois began to place flowers in the large pot on the grave. The rain had stopped just long enough for this to happen. Plaque placed and the finishing off began - so did the rain! Everyone was soaked.

We all huddled into the shelter to have our picnic lunch - there were still some dry spaces on the floor. By the time we finished we were practically floating - everything and everyone was muddy.

Removed the shelter over the grave after covering the new work with a tarpaulin held down by pavers found in the cemetery and levelling the stones on top of the grave.

It is pouring, pouring, pouring!!

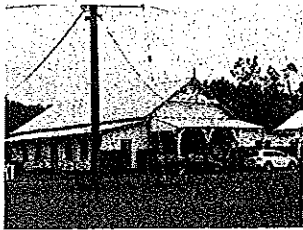
Packed up the cars and changed into dry clothes in the toilet. Alan's car bogged in the water filled cemetery grounds - the men pushed it out. Even the road outside the cemetery is covered with water.

Drove to Harlin only to find that the road beyond that was closed. It was still pouring.

Derek and I headed for Blackbutt in an attempt to get home that way - Blackbutt Range closed, so we headed back to Harlin. Rodney and Rhonda had booked the last motel room at the hotel. The hotelier offered for us to sleep in the dining room on the floor and then informed us that if we went back to Moore we could stay in the Moore Hall - there would be food and a mattress.

Four of us took up the offer and headed off - Colinton Bridge just about to go over. We were greeted by [REDACTED] and Betty from next door who cooked fish and chips for us for tea and organized mattresses for us. We set up camp and settled into a game of Frustration when the power went off at approx 9:15 pm - luckily there were emergency lights in the hall which lasted until the early hours of the morning when the batteries went flat.

Three females from another family shared the hall with us tonight - that made 10 in all. Finally got to sleep at approx 12:30 am. It poured all night.



Moore Hall

MONDAY Jan 10

Woken at 4:00 am by the commotion of most people up and wandering around looking for candles. Got out of bed at 4:30 am.

The problem with no power - no water and no pumps to flush the toilets - so a visit to the toilets meant filling a bucket from the drain outside the Hall. We gathered water from the storm water drainpipe off the roof for washing up etc,

Breakfast was sausages, bacon and eggs and toast on the barby. Also able to boil the kettle.

Rain more intermittent today. Trevor has spent most of his time up on the hill or down at Colinton to get phone reception as there is none here at the hall. Roy went to Linville and called at the cemetery. He was able to remove the tarp from the grave. Derek went up the hill and after a few attempts was able to phone Cameron and our neighbours to inform them of our dilemma.

Colinton Bridge was 5 metres under water but is now open with extreme caution (debris, disturbed bitumen and missing rails). There is 5 ft of water over the road west of Toogoolawah and the bridge at Fernvale is under water. Blackbutt Range is closed. Even the road to Linville has been cut by floods. We are stuck in every direction and may be here for days.

Local policeman [REDACTED] called at the Hall to see if we needed anything and to give us an update. The other 3 women were trying to get to Blackbutt and one of them needed heart medication so the policeman gained permission for them to travel the Range at their own risk - otherwise \$120 fine and 3 demerit points for anyone trying.

We said we would be fine if only for a couple of days - a local resident brought some diabetes tablets for Derek and Roy.

I killed time today by playing Patience and paddling in the drains with Kris. Most others had a sleep - still no power and it is 2:25 pm.

No showers - no flushing toilets (bucket brigade) - also not flushing too well as septic tank needs emptying. Locals are supplying us with essentials. Luckily Derek and I have our Wetpack with us so that means toothpaste, brushes, deodorant, shampoo etc.

Made a sandwich for lunch from what is available in the kitchen. Tea tonight is stew made by Linda. She has a freezer full of food which will go off without power. It appears the power lines could be down over the Brisbane River and crews cannot reach this area to make repairs.

Wivenhoe is 150% full at this stage.

Oh, no - I need the toilet again!!! Where's the bucket?

Derek and I drove to Linville - called at the cemetery and retrieved the metal bin left there by Alan - also used the toilet there - it flushes!! We listened to the radio on the way and heard about the devastation in Toowoomba (5 inches in 2 hours) and Esk (freak flooding). When we arrived back in Moore we found that Trevor and Kris had taken off to get home through Mt Glorious - hope it was a good decision! We thought the road was closed at Kilcoy.

Had a sponge bath today - it felt really good - even though some of the clothes need washing. Dinner is cooking - steak stew - yum, yum!

Derek hung this shorts, shirt and undies up on the flag pole to dry but that was short lived as it rained yet again. Showers of rain come and go all the time.

Still no power. Linda and Bob are going home - we have the Hall to ourselves (and the big pot of stew). It's starting to get dark - candles will be the order of the day. Haven't heard if Trevor and Kris got home.

Lovely tea and then sat outside with a candle till 11:00 pm. Maureen and Ken went to the police station to organize for their car to be shifted to higher ground in Toogoolawah. Off to bed after filling Alan's bin with water and placing it inside the front door of the Hall (for the toilets).

There are 2 new stranded people here tonight (Greg and Annette). They brought candles with them from a local. We have torches but use them sparingly. It is very dark in the hall.

TUESDAY Jan 11

Woke at 8:30 - 8:45 - had a good sleep - it has rained all night. Colinton Bridge is over again and the road to Linville is cut. But we are high and dry. Townspeople and the local policeman have been wonderful.

Cooked breakfast (now conserving gas) - toast, bacon, raisin toast and tea or coffee. Washed dishes and also rinsed some clothes - all in the same water using dishwashing detergent - it worked a bit!

Linda, who is looking after us, may have a problem with flooding at her house if this rain keeps up. The policeman came by and got our medication lists as he is attempting to go to Blackbutt to get them for us and also some gas (plus other necessities for the community).

Some other people from the town (Jackie etc) brought towels, books, magazines, games and toiletries, buckets, gas bottle and a camp shower for us. Everyone is so wonderful. We even have a wind up radio.

The floods are getting worse. Lunch today will be fish and chips as they have gone off the freeze - will cook all the fish in the hope of saving it. Maureen cooked lunch. Derek had a shower. I washed my hair using a bucket and a husband.

Then the policeman came with our medications - unable to get liquid morphine for Annette. We were able to pay by cheque (thank goodness). Derek will be going for a drive with him later to assess power line damage.

I'm now in rolled up three quarter pants (too hot and humid - no fans or airconditioner!) and a cotton top from Linda - no bra - it's been washed.

Then [redacted] and [redacted] called in for a chat as they had heard we were there. Cecelie's house went very close to flooding (along river at Colinton). Maureen had her photo taken with them.

By now the washing is dry. Everyone has gone. Roy is away phoning Debbie and visiting the rest of the family at Harlin. The breeze out the front of the hall is beautiful - blue sky with clouds today.

Ken returned with the BMW and Roy arrived back from Harlin.

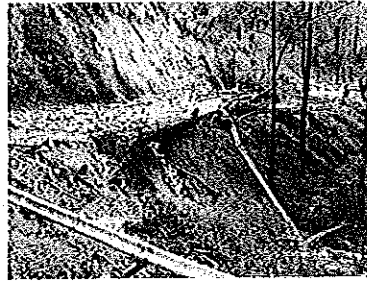
Had fresh unsliced bread sandwiches for lunch with silverside and tomato - yum! Yum!

A large freezer was delivered to the hall - one couple called to say that things should be co-ordinated from the hall (as in Linville) - they were quite irate and insinuated that we were better off than others in the community (which may have been correct) but it made a few hairs bristle - we were not sure what was going to happen - thought perhaps people would be calling all the time to put their meat in the freezer and using the barby to cook meals - anyway the freezer was removed and taken to Linville for the people of Moore to share the facilities up there.

Maureen and Ken went for a drive to Linville. Sue brought some more grapes for Derek as he liked them (as did Roy, so they shared them). She took some bread and water for other people.

I made some sandwiches for Andrew (in case he called in again) - run off his feet.

Informed that the Blackbutt Range will be closed for at least 2-3 months while repairs are carried out as it is extremely unsafe.



BLACKBUTT RANGE

Maureen and Ken arrived back at approx 3 pm. Roy arrived back with Rodney and Rhonda following. They stayed and we all had afternoon tea with Linda (Bob not well).

Had a shower - lovely! Maureen rang Auntie May re Uncle Jack's surgery - it has been postponed due to floods. Continued to sit out in the cool.

Had dinner at 9 pm - I cooked this time - chicken legs, snags, potato slices and zucchini on the barby. Sat around and talked. Then sat outside and read some of a magazine by torch light. Roy had dinner with Rodney and Rhonda.

While we sat outside tonight a lady from Colinton Station stopped to see if we knew the road conditions towards Blackbutt - she offered the use of 2 houses on her property and we were able to give her some bread and milk. Bed at 11 pm - going home tomorrow - Lois and Alan went today and got through.

Drove to Colinton hill to make phone calls (reached Grant - no luck with Lois and Rodney). Took photos of the bridge which now has a tree over it but no water. Some men are clearing a path through the middle. When we arrived back at the hall Derek went for a drive with Andrew to see the power situation - later that night he drew up a diagram of the damage for Andrew to fax to Energex.

Rinsed out some clothes today and hung them anywhere and everywhere - but they don't want to dry - too humid. We now have a good radio to listen to what is going on with the floods - non stop broadcasting.

Cooked late dinner in the dark (chips, steak, steakettes, chops and left over casserole). Sat in the eating area with tealight candles and talked - then sat out the front in the dark. Some stars out tonight. Went to bed about midnight.

We have now run out of ice and rely on small gas fridge for keeping things cool.

WEDNESDAY Jan 12

Up at 7 am. Derek dropped info off to policeman re power. Drove to Colinton. Rang Grant and Judith - attempted to ring Yvonne but to no avail. Drove over the bridge through the mud and out along Arababy Road. Back at the hall the washing (undies and all) is now hanging along the front of the hall on makeshift clothes line - lady next door gave us some pegs.



Washing Day



Flagpole



Colinton Bridge

Lois and Ben called in to see us. Maureen, Roy, Greg and Annette went to Kilcoy for supplies (as road now open). Derek drove to Harlin for petrol. Bob and Linda organised fruit and veges for us - Maureen and Roy bought cakes, lollies etc. Betty brought cakes as well (including a delicious fresh mudcake).

Soon after arriving back from Kilcoy Greg and Annette decided to attempt to get to Yarraman via Hampton and Crows Nest - heard later they had succeeded.

Help arrived to pump out the septic tank and now the toilets will flush properly - so long as we fill them with water each time.

Other townspeople turned up to offer help. One man disconnected the hose off the tank so that we could access water via the tap (only had a dribble in the kitchen). The sink has been blocked the whole time we have been here.

The sun is trying to come out but there are still some showers. Ipswich is under water today.

Howard and Sylvia [redacted] son turned up at the hall looking for Derek - sent by policeman- to inquire about the safety of the fallen power lines, as he needed to gather up some wandering cattle and there were power lines touching the fence. Derek went with him and moved the lines as they were 'dead'.

It is now afternoon and Bob and Linda have called in for a chat. While they were here Heather and David [redacted] and her parents [redacted] called by to say hello as they heard about our plight. They happened to be the ones who moved Maureen and Ken's car to their holding yard. Heather and Maureen go way back!

Roy and Maureen went to Colinton hill to make phone calls. Linda and Bob left later and so I then had a shower - It felt wonderful - never thought I would enjoy a cold shower so much! Sat out the front of the hall in the cool reading and doing a crossword - I have taken a table and chairs out of the hall onto the footpath under the awning.

Whilst there 2 lads arrived (one was John [redacted] son) to deliver boxes of bottles of water which arrived in Linville by Careflight helicopter. That meant we had drinking water and lots for the townfolk.

Police car went flying past, siren blaring today - not sure why.

A local named Sue called by with some grapes from her vines and offered to wash for us tomorrow.

Maureen and Roy arrived back and after dark Derek and I went to Colinton. Rang Yvonne (her house is fine) and Cameron. Met up with Lois and Alan at the 'phone call' spot. They informed us that they were going to try to get home tomorrow via Esk-Gatton Road. We have decided to stay until we are completely sure the road is safe and passable.

Roy had dinner cooked by the time we got back. Had dinner and dessert (mud cake). Sat outside again - much cooler out there - old fireman called in for a chat.

Went to bed at approx 11 pm.

THURSDAY Jan 13

Up at approx 3:30 am - lots of flies today - they especially love our smelly clothes! However Sue (who has a generator) has offered to wash clothes for us today. Maureen and Ken went with her to watch the floods on TV while the clothes washed. Roy, Derek and I had breakfast.

We hung the clean clothes on our clothes line across the front of the hall - lovely breeze today and some sunshine so they dried rather quickly - which was great.

A local stopped by (think she was the cleaner for community toilets) - she gave us some disinfectant so we cleaned the toilets (even Derek scrubbed the Urinal) which was nice.

Bob and Linda were going to Toogoolawah today so they took Ken with them to collect his car. Betty arrived with bread and disinfectant (for toilets).

Later 2 men arrived (followed by the policeman) with bread he had organized from Kilcoy. Andrew designated Derek to hand out the bread to anyone who wanted it (half a loaf at a time). We also handed out water.

FRIDAY Jan 14

Woken up at 6 am by much busyness in the hall - packing up. Hunting and gathering time!!!

Had breakfast - fresh bread and a cup of tea - sooo nice! Andrew called - offered him his lunch from yesterday but he politely declined. He suggested we write a letter to his boss re suggestions, good and bad comments about the flood situation.

We busied ourselves cleaning up and leaving the hall as we had found it.

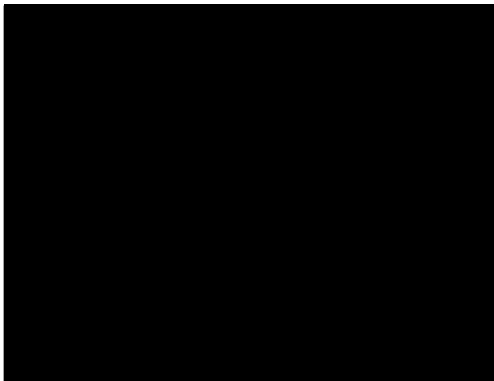
Linda arrived and seemed upset when we said we were leaving - I think she had enjoyed our company - said we should be friends for life.

Finally left Moore after many tears from Linda - left a card signed by all and gave them some money. They were very touched.

Arrived home one and three quarters hours later - Maureen and Ken headed to Stanthorpe, Roy to Forest Lake and us to Chelsea Close. We saw much devastation along the way especially in the river beds.



Bob and Linda (the wonderful couple who looked after us)



Andrew - our 'medicine man'