

Nthpdam 8/3/11

Comments for Qld Floods Commission Of Inquiry

This should refer to Ground "F"

ie Implementation of the systems operation plans for dams across the state and in particular the Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams release etc

This refers to the North Pine Dam on the North Pine river at Petrie which caused considerable damage but has largely gone unreported in the mainstream media

It is noted a State Govt Politician has made a local media statement that the Inquiry will specially address this dam and river and the damage caused

### **The writers background**

The writer as per submission grew up in Cullen Street Windsor , the next street to Northey Street in his mothers childhood family home

His mother went through flooding of this highest house in 1931-being to a level of the keys in a piano (say windowsill height)

His family went through

Further high flooding in June (queens Birthday weekend Sunday flooding) –100mm below 1931

Further high flooding in Febuary 1972 –400mm below 1931

Further high flooding in April 1972 –Easter Sunday –600mm below 1931

His mother probably set a record with a few other long term residents who grew up there of enduring four floods-no aid and no mud army

Family home was sold for \$7000 in 1972 (less than half value for an ordinary home) and his father took on a new mortgage at age 60 to start again

The writer worked in the design areas of Brisbane City Councils Water and Sewerage Dept and City Design from 1960 to 2000

The writer was on a citizens committee formed in August 1967 headed by Alderman Brian Mellifont and State Member Brian Davies which drew up flood mitigation plans for Breakfast/Enoggera Creeks and got as far as presenting them to the then Minister For Harbours and Marine-Mr Hewitt at Parliament House and a site inspection –but nothing else

The writer is a rural resident of 39 years of Pine Rivers and is a foundation member of what is now the Pine Rivers Catchment Association which is not really a catchment association anymore but a vehicles for people in the environmental business to make money or promote themselves

The writer is a voluntary worker at The Pine Rivers Riding For Disabled Association which was badly damaged by the North Pine Dam Floods

The writer has extensive knowledge of personal household flooding, as a local Govt design employee and as a member of a catchment association is well aware of the “environmental “movement

The writer could probably appear in the press/media as an “expert” that actually knows something about flooding

**Anyway back to the subject**

## **NORTH PINE DAM/RIVER FLOODING**

### **Location etc of dam**

#### **Down river areas etc**

The dam is located on the North Pine River at Whiteside and was designed in the 1950s with landowners being advised of resumptions about 1957

It was built by the Brisbane City Council for \$25 million but was taken over when The State Govt formed a water board in 1979

There are some small acreage houses immediately downstream whose lands are partly inundated during water releases-the river flows further through YMCA Camp Warrarie and Old Petrie Town, and down past Petrie to join the South Pine River above the North Coast Freeway then under the Hornibrook Highway entering Moreton Bay

At Old Petrie Town-part of the YMCA (leased from Council) there is a lower car park and then high ground occupied by Pine Rivers Riding For Disabled (est 21 years-never flooded) and Pine Rivers Pony Club (est 45 years-never flooded)  
A causeway/culvert links all these complexes and is used by YMCA camp parties of students etc to cross the river

The river goes mostly through undeveloped land or, where developers (Petrie/Murrumba Downs) have left large areas of donated riverside parkland  
Some of these areas of public parkland have been taken over by “bushcare” greenies planting trees on grant money

Downstream are three major bridges

Youngs Crossing =low level flooded on a two metre release-an arterial road

Gympie Rd-Petrie-Two bridges

Northbound is lower level last flooded in Easter 1972 –it is two lanes north

Southbound is a newer bridge with two lanes south-never flooded before

Main north coast highway and Hornibrook Highway not considered

## **THE DAM ITSELF**

Websites say it has no flood mitigation capacity (official SEQ Water one) to having little flood mitigation with another apparently saying the flood gates are 3.000 metres high

It is obvious it has some

Since SEQ Water controlled the dam there have been changes to the town plan affecting the development and runoff in the catchment

These are

**Samford and West Strathpine Development Plan**

And

**SEQ Regional Plan**

SEQ Water does not seem to have raised any concerns about these which will increase inflow via allowed developments

## **WATER RELEASES PRIOR TO THE 2011 FLOOD**

There were a number of releases late 2010 with the last in Oct 2010 last

There were road closures and traffic disruptions at Youngs Crossing and SEQ Water did not even advise the police at Petrie

They were also to advise landowners but did not (Gwenda Dohles of RDA in a casual conversation)

The last release in October flooded the car park of Old Petrie Town and caused road and other damage

These road floodings were recorded by local Quest Newspapers as the locals went down with buckets to catch stranded fish at Youngs Crossing

SEQ Water did not apparently even notify the police of these road closing releases

## **THE FLOOD EVENT**

The rain depression that went across from Sunshine Coast area to Toowoomba had substantial falls on the mountain ranges forming the western boundary of the watersheds of Caboolture and North Pine Rivers

It went west of the headwaters of the adjacent South Pine River which is on the Brisbane side of the North Pine and the SP went into a moderate flood and cut the lower road on the Bald Hills flats (normal)

While the floods of Toowoomba damaged the Lockyer Valley the watershed floods of North Pine and Caboolture came the next day

On the day after Grantham, Caboolture and C/River flooding received TV and media coverage-probably because it was easy to get in by helicopter but there was little coverage of North Pine River

There were news announcements on the daytime TV coverage that low lying areas of Pine Rivers were being evacuated which puzzled locals as there was not heavy rainfall and there was no mention of the North Pine Dam overflowing

### **Warnings to residents**

The complaints of residents about lack of, and deceptive warnings have featured In the Quest community Newspapers for January and February

All are similar, no warnings, warnings to evacuate “low lying areas” but not knowing where those areas were-nothing at all

Probably the most alarming was a news item on the flooding of houses at Lawnton (Wade Street) where residents said water came into their yards and houses and they did not know where it was coming from-it came up a park and the storm water system from the river-they were well away from the North Pine River in a relatively older developed/established area

### **DISRUPTION TO COMMUNITY**

The flooding took out the north coast railway bridge at Petrie That afternoon TV crews were at Strathpine Railway Station as people were offloaded and told to find their own way further-on person asking how he was to get to his car at Morayfield

Youngs Crossing was out and both the Petrie bridges were out-the lower one under and the higher one partly and approaches damaged

The traffic disruption was major and still is

### **DAMAGE TO COMMUNITY**

Housing was inundated and the YMCA Camp areas, The Riding for Disabled, The Pony Club, The football club were all damaged, RDA and PC areanas gone and club houses and toilet blocks damaged with walls knocked out-contents ruined

Massive road damage with only one bridge at Petrie operating

### **RESIDENTS RESPONSE**

There have been public meetings one with Councillors Dwyer and Millar and SEQ Water spokesperson

Also residents of an action group (as reported by Quest Newspapers 4/3/2011) have written to Minister Robertson asking for immediate releases from North Pine Dam so there is a flood capacity for any rainfall

That newspaper also reported that day that Emergency Services Minister Roberts would be touring the area with residents on Friday the 4/3/2011 to assess the North Pine Dam Problem

**There has been no main stream media coverage of these which is unusual for a politician**

## **SEQ WATER RESPONSE**

A SEQ Water spokesperson who attended the Councillors/residents meeting was quoted in newspaper that North Pine Dam had no flood mitigation capacity

Another spokesperson was quoted as saying there was “limited” capacity

A website gives another version

**Nobody said there could be a lowering/release of the “drinking water level” to give further emergency capacity which would be sensible while there are inflows and a danger of further heavy rain events**

## **OTHER RESPONSES MADE PUBLIC**

I have only got information from Quest Newspapers and have kept all of them and no doubt your inquiry will hear from most persons affected but have seen the downstream damage as a member of the Pine Rivers RDA in repairing the damage etc

However as a Committee Member of the Pine Rivers Catchment Assoc-run from Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast, which is why it only gets six (6) people to its AGM, I have been made aware of a report titled **“Queensland Floods Moreton Bay Regional Council LGA”** –presumed LGA means Local Govt Area

On 12/2/2011 as a committee member of PRCA, I received an email from the Chairman saying this report had been “requested by QWaLC and was based on contributions by a number of persons”

(By website QWaLC IS “Queensland Water and Land Carers (and by website) is the peak body for natural resource management (NRM) volunteers” [REDACTED])

At the PRCA meeting of 8/3/2011 there was no correspondence from that organization and I had never heard of it.

**The report was published in the PRCA assoc newsletter “Inflow” (see Website [www.prca.org.au](http://www.prca.org.au)) on the 22/02/2011 which is where I was able to read it for the first time, and it contained the following passages concerning North Pine Dam**

I quote (but please check the website-I may have a word wrong )

**“In so far that the North Pine Dam was already full before the rainfall events and the dam has only a two hour lag time between upper catchment run off and receipt of inflows, there was almost an immediate need to release water, which caused most of the damage to the riparian vegetation downstream”**

**continued**

**next page**

the last paragraph is and again I quote (but please check the website-I may have a word wrong )

**“This article was extracted from “Queensland Floods Moreton Bay Regional Council LGA” compiled from information supplied to [REDACTED] all of whom have variously worked with catchment and bush care groups at some time during their careers”**

My knowledge of the persons compiling, supplying information for this report is That two are PRCA committee members ,one is an employee and one is the SEQ Water representative at PRCA meetings-two others I have never met

### **Recommendations**

#### **For elimination of North Pine Dam flooding (FROM LAYPERSON ME)**

- 1-All SEQ Water statements be made by the Chairman-or Manager  
Not by staff members-maybe the top brass may then be held to account and start taking responsibility instead of just taking salaries
  - 2-The statements made in the above report “Queensland Floods Moreton Bay Regional Council LGA” about the releases from the North Pine Dam be verified and all downstream residents and thier insurance companys be informed
  - 3- Immediate replacement of low level and small Youngs Crossing Bridge with a low cost Armco Culvert on upstream side giving reasonable capacity for releases from North Pine Dam on a constant basis without flooding the road  
this could be done for about \$2 million immediately and would allow constant steady releases without disrupting traffic-which is probally the reason they don’t release anything till absolutely necessary
  - 4-An alarm system with sirens activated by rising floodwaters be installed along the North Pine to cover the residential areas to Petrie  
As at Lawnton residents were flooded from the river backing up but are not in riverside areas-they had no idea it was coming from the river or what was happening  
The technology exists for these alarms with similar installations in Sewage pumping stations and one on Todds Rd at Todds Gully at Lawnton which activates flashing lights only when the creek floods the bridge there.
  - 5-Petrie police-and ambulance and fire brigade be alerted before any releases
  - 6-Notice on TV, Radio, press of planned releases-especially for traffic reports
- (Notice of releases is important because of the recreational use of the river-walkers, fishers, canoeists etc could be trapped if it’s a release on a weekend etc-these could be fatal)

Thank you for the oppportunity to comment.-I have not been personally affected  
By flooding from that dam-no percunary interest



Yours Sincerely  
Graham Bowley

END