

# BRISBANE FLOOD 2011

- . Not enough advice about evacuation and assistance offered
- . Extra attention given to Residents living in areas that are prone to flooding
- . The Volunteers being better educated about the affects of such a disaster – the psychological aspects of what is described and documented as a “grief”. Better utilisation of volunteer, army services etc. BEFORE the event as well as afterwards
- . How will the Dam levels be monitored now?
- . Stop the 24 hour media coverage – quality not quantity.

What did the Council or emergency services do to warn people? I have heard so many different stories but there were no notices left in my letterbox, no one knocking on my door where I had left a contact number - no one phoned me. After I went home on the Tuesday after a friend alerted me I couldn't get any answers. I couldn't get on to the Council or the Police. I then walked down to the roundabout at the end of my street and asked the Policewoman who was on duty there re-directing traffic “do we need to evacuate?”. All she did was shrug, said she hadn't heard anything and didn't bother to make any enquiries on my behalf. It was at that point I started to feel helpless without any support.

Later when I did get on to the Council I was told “we are leaving it to people's discretion”. I wondered, at the time, ‘what about the elderly who have some sort of dementia/alzheimers’ – how would they cope?

As often happens in this area there was already water across Oxley Road between Cook Street and Oxley Station Road Roundabout. I believe that, in areas where water often gathers after heavy rain, more warnings should be been given to Residents alerting them to the fact that this perhaps should be taken a little more seriously. Unfortunately because of this happening frequently a false sense of security takes place. I emphasise not only in my neighbourhood but any of these areas around Brisbane should have been given special attention. Where were

Campbell Newman's "wonderful" volunteers and the Army then? Perhaps these services would have been better utilised before the disaster not afterwards.

The manic clean up and "throw out" SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED on that first day people were able to go back into their homes. Home-dwellers needed time to take in what had happened. To be given the opportunity to perhaps retrieve some things that were retrievable and say goodbye to the things that couldn't be saved, just spend some time with their "stuff". I don't mean materialistic belongings, I mean things that cannot be replaced. People were shellshocked, unable to make decisions and a LOT of people around Brisbane feel the same way. The contamination issue could have been handled with more sensitivity. There was a way around this. A lot of families are still suffering the brutality of this day. We needed time to take in what had happened but we didn't get the chance to do this.

Something else needed to be done. In my case, a group of "do-gooders" virtually pushed me through the door and took over –'gung-ho' and hell bent on getting rid of everything. Some were asking questions but only when I came into view. There were too many and there was no communication amongst them. A couple were trying to put some things aside and then others would take from that pile and throw them out onto the footpath anyway...no communication. IT WAS SO BADLY ORGANISED AND WE WEREN'T IN ANY FRAME OF MIND TO BE MAKING DECISIONS ON THAT DAY..... has anyone done any research into the psychology of this? How many of you on this Flood Commission panel actually personally went through this disaster. Most probably none of you – so how could you possibly understand. I am fed up listening to the accolades being showered upon these volunteers.

And what really should be on the top of the list - The Wivenhoe Dam should have been emptied a lot earlier – that is the general belief in the Community - in NOVEMBER the levels were rising and the rain was coming down. Even I, as a joke, was urging people to "just run your taps". This doesn't seem very funny now.

And I hear now Wivenhoe management is passing the buck and blaming the weather forecasters. We were ALREADY having a lot of rain. The

Dam was already FULL. This was not supposed to happen because of this Dam – it was pure bad management and nothing else.

I have some flood insurance – I am luckier than some - but it will never be able to replace all the sentimental belongings I had, some I had been carrying around for the last 50 plus years.

And, please, the continuous media coverage has to be stopped. This 24 hour reporting, particularly before the flood, was far too much – too much nonsense went on and this blurred the important facts we needed to know. This is not about informing the Public, this is about the television stations trying to win points.

Langbroek is right, we needed more time to submit this report. 11<sup>th</sup> March is far too early to expect those hurt and exhausted by this catastrophe to make any sense of it. I know this report is emotional but it is the best I can do at this time.