

STATEMENT

I, **DENNIS WARD** of [REDACTED] Fernvale, Queensland, 4306 (Date of Birth [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]), say that:

1. I make this statement in relation to events and concerns arising from the 2011 Queensland Floods for the Fernvale area for the purposes of the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry.
2. I am the Co-ordinator and founding member of the Fernvale Community Action Group and have been involved in all community meetings and discussions canvassing the experiences of members during the January Floods and our concerns arising from this event.
3. I have been a resident of the Fernvale resident for approximately 18 years
4. Approximately 7 years ago I moved to [REDACTED] a few houses up from my previous property. I live there with my wife Sue Jones, and my son Trent aged [REDACTED] and daughter Meghan aged [REDACTED]
5. For the entire 18 years, I have lived on the same watercourse. This watercourse starts from a drain which causes water to flow from the South side of the Brisbane Valley Highway between my current property and my Neighbours' property, Dave Townend. The watercourse then flows down into a lagoon and then feeds into the Brisbane River.
6. Attached and marked "Attachment DW01" is a map showing the watercourse as referred to in paragraph 5.
7. I am familiar with the Somerset topography and know the Fernvale area well. I have witnessed the development of Fernvale over the last 18 years. Over this time I have been able to foster a broad relationship network within the Fernvale Community.

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8. Nardoo Street, and the property I reside, is part of the original settlement of the Fernvale area and this area is essentially flat.
9. During six years previous to the floods, there has been significant development on the Fernvale hillside, above the original settlement area, which is part of the "Residential Corridor" developed by the Somerset Regional Council.
10. As a result of the large scale development in the area, a number of storm drains were put in place by the Council. Some of these drains lead to small holding pools. Once these were full, they would overflow causing the water to continue down hill.
11. The increased number of drains and no design to direct water away when it came to the bottom of the hillside meant that water was redirected into the original settlement area and would arrive at this area in larger volumes and in a shorter period than prior to development.

Previous Flood Events in Fernvale

12. In approximately October 2010, consistent rain was unable to be managed by the storm water drains in place and water flooded across the Brisbane Valley Highway and flooded part of my neighbour's property, Dave Townend. My property was not affected.
13. In response to this minor flood event, Dave Townend meet with Wayne Wendt, State MP for Ipswich West, Graeme Lehmann, Mayor for Sommerset and Bob Bain, CEO of the Somerset Regional Council, along with an engineer from the Department of Main Roads. They came to Fernvale to discuss the drainage issues in the area.
14. At this meeting and through previous correspondence between residents and the bodies these three gentlemen represent, they were aware of the drainage problems in the Fernvale area. Dave Townend had requested the 3 x 450mm pipes under the highway be upgraded to increase flow rate.

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15. Prior to this incident, the drains appeared to cope with storms we had had but there was some concern amongst myself and other Fernvale residents as this was a fairly minor event and drainage infrastructure was unable to cope with an increased amount of rain.
16. After this minor flood event, the drain closest to the highway was cleaned to create a faster flow of water through the drain. There was no other major work undertaken in relation to drainage or maintenance of other drains of which I am aware.
17. Dave Townsend had a levy bank on his property which he extended when the drain was cleaned in order to prevent further damage to his property as he believed the work undertaken would only increase water flow to the drain pipes, not resolve the issue.
18. During the last six years, residents that live on the nearby roads, Nardoo Street and Poole Road have advised me that there had been regular instances of minor flooding on this road. In the event of consistent heavy rain, the road itself would turn into a watercourse due to drainage issues causing minor inundations of nearby properties.
19. I had been advised by a number of residents in Nardoo Street and Poole Road that they had contacted the Council a number of times identifying specific storm drainage problems that had resulted in the redirection of water onto their properties..
20. Prior to the flood events in January 2011, Local Council and State Government had been advised and were aware of the drainage issues that were being experienced throughout the Fernvale area.

Previous Wivenhoe dam releases

21. In approximately late 2010, Wivenhoe dam had its first release of water. I remember this as it was quite a big event and there was a large amount of tourist traffic through the area. Out of interest, I even went and viewed it myself on a couple of occasions.

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22. I noted that the release of water was different on the two days I went to view it. On the first day there was only one gate open and it was open fairly wide. On the second day I went there, they had all five gates open, but there was only a small opening from each gate.
23. During the releases from the Wivenhoe dam at this time I do not recall there been any inundations or flood events in the Fernvale area.

Events of the January 2011 Floods

DAY ONE: Sunday 9 January 2011

24. There was heavy rain in the Fernvale and surrounding areas throughout the day but there was no flooding at this time.

DAY TWO: Monday 10 January 2010

25. As it had continued to rain heavily through the night I did not go to work in the morning as I was worried about possible flooding. My wife continued with her usual routine and went to work.
26. During the morning, I did not see any signs of floods.
27. At approximately 2pm I was required to take one of our two dogs to the vet, located on the Forest Hill - Fernvale Road which runs between the towns of Fernvale and Lowood. Travelling to the vet I notice that the Brisbane Valley Highway just beyond the turnoff onto Forest Hill - Road was blocked by Police and vehicles turned back.
28. While I was at the vet, my wife was on her way home, driving along the Forest Hill - Fernvale road, which runs close to the Brisbane River. She told me when I returned home from the Vet at approx 2:30pm that on her way home the water level was high in the river and was near to the side of the road.
29. I became concerned for my 17 year old daughter who was at work at the Lowood IGA and was due to finish at 7pm. She drives a small Holden Astra and had only recently got her driver's licence.

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30. I thought that the best course of action was for my wife and I to collect her car and pick her up in our Ford Territory, a high clearance vehicle, when she finished work. I feared that if the river continued to rise that the roads would be impassable, or dangerous to navigate in a small car by an inexperienced driver.
31. At approximately 3.30pm my wife, son and I drove to Lowood to collect the car, we stopped at a point just before Lowood and I took photos of the water levels at this time. At approximately 4.15pm my wife and I were returning from collecting my daughter's car and were traveling along Forest Hill - Fernvale Road. I noticed that the water had continued to rise and was now starting to lap over.
32. Due to the fast rate in which the water had risen, I became concerned for the immediate safety of my daughter and the consequences of the rising river for my family and property.
33. I turned around immediately and drove back to my daughter's work. I was driving the Ford Territory at this time. My wife continued on and drove my daughter's car home.
34. When I arrived at my daughter's work I told her that she needed to finish work immediately and that I would drive her home.
35. My daughter advised that she could not finish until 5pm as she was covering another staff member's break and she was due to return at this time. I waited until my daughter finished and we returned home.
36. When we were driving on the Forest Hill - Fernvale Road the water had begun to flood the road and smaller cars were parked to the side as they were unable to cross the water safely. I was able to get through due to the high clearance of my vehicle, but I became increasingly worried due to the rapid increase of water flooding the area.
37. When we arrived home there was no flooding at the property, but this did not alleviate my concerns. As soon as we were inside I put on the TV and scanned the major channels for news or warnings for our area. I also was scanning the internet for news and also the Bureau of Meteorology website to keep track of


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river levels, particularly the level at Savages Crossing, the nearest marker to Fernvale.

38. I concentrated on TV and the internet rather than the radio for any warnings or updates as we have limited radio reception where we are.
39. From the news we became aware of what was termed the "Lockyer Valley Disaster" where the flooding in the area was extremely fast and many people lost their lives.
40. I started to become anxious about the possible impact on the Somerset and Brisbane Valleys due to the sheer volume of water flowing down the Lockyer and Bremer Rivers.
41. There were numerous media releases at the time regarding the Lockyer Valley but there were no warnings or directions to residents of the Sommerset or Brisbane Valleys to prepare for, or consider evacuating due to likely flooding.
42. By approximately 6pm, I decided it was unsafe for my children to be exposed to the very real potential of a significant flash flood. I drove a few Kms along the Brisbane Valley highway towards Ipswich to check if the road was still open. There was no sign of flooding. On my return we packed photographs and other important documents into my daughters car and she drove the two of them to their grandparent's residence in Macgregor. We anxiously waited for the call from my daughter to say she arrived.
43. My mind was turned to the devastating impact of the floods previously in Grantham and I was worried that our lives would be in danger. I placed a ladder at the back of the house with a rope to tie to a post if my wife and I needed to get to the roof and secure ourselves to prevent being washed away. I surmised if people in Grantham had the opportunity to take such measures, there may not have been such a great loss of life.
44. There was still no news or warning regarding our area through any media or emergency services directly and I didn't know what other measures or precautions that we should take.

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45. Around 7pm there was no water approaching our house at this point, but we observed a panel member of the "7pm project" broadcast a message which was advising evacuation of low lying areas in the Lockyer Valley, Murpheys creek, Gratham and Gatton. I commented to my wife that the telecast was on a 1 hour delay. We still had not received any news about our area specifically.
46. I checked again, as I had been doing consistently all night, with the Bureau of Meteorology website and it appeared that the water levels were rising in Savages Crossing and Murphy's crossing, but there were still no warnings for the Fernvale or the broader Sommerset area.
47. After careful consideration, together with the fact that no water had approached our house at this time, my wife and I decided to stay at the property.

DAY THREE: Tuesday 11 January 2011

48. After an extremely restless night's sleep, I was woken at approximately 5am by a sever storm that had moved in that morning.
49. I got up and went straight onto the Bureau of Meteorology website to check the status of the storm. After seeing the severity of the storm had the direction it was travelling, I said to my wife "We are in trouble here; this is going to be a 2 - 3 hour storm."
50. I looked outside and there was no water approaching the house but water had begun to pool in sections of the yard. I couldn't see any flooding coming up or down the road at this time.
51. At approximately 6.50am there was a significant amount of surface water around the property and it was coming up around the house and onto the verandah. I took a photo of the surface water on my mobile.
52. At approximately 7am I went outside and starting moving rocks and other obstructions that could possible prevent water from flowing off the property. I was increasingly worried that our house was going to flood, so I started putting spare mattresses and similar goods up to higher ground in the shed as I felt it


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was at greatest risk due to the layout of the property. I put spare bales of sugarcane mulch in a gateway to act as a levee bank between 2 gardens.

53. At approximately 7.30am I returned inside and within minutes witnessed the contents of the bales floating past the rear of the house. I went outside and observed that these bales had been destroyed.
54. At this time the water had risen to approximately 300mm at the front of the house, and was now above the floor level of the house but had not yet got inside. The water was flowing in from the south western corner of the property.
55. At approximately 7.45am water had begun to enter the south west corner of the house.
56. At approximately 8am, my wife and I got on the roof of our house as the water was rising rapidly and we were scared that we may suffer the same fate as those in Grantham if we didn't get on the roof.
57. From the roof I made one call to another resident living on higher ground in Fernvale, along with a second call to a work colleague in Upper Mount Gravatt and asked them to contact Emergency Services and tell them we were trapped on the roof. I took a photo of the water and could see it rushing into the property. We stayed on the roof for about an hour and the water had risen to about 1 metre up the side of the house. The entire area was flooded and there was no way of evacuating due to the speed of the water flow..
58. At approximately 9am, the storm was so intense in the area that the house was shaking. We were fearfully of being struck by lightening and we could see that the smaller of our 2 dogs that was on the roof with us was distressed.
59. The storm had not stopped but water levels had stabilized. We got off the roof and secured our larger dog who we had left inside the house on furniture. My wife sat on top of our BBQ table for approximately 30 minutes while the water receded. I entered the house to survey the damage.

60. At approximately 10.00am almost all of the water had receded and I opened all the doors to the house to let the last of the water out. I could see from the high water mark on the internal walls that approximately 450mm of water had come into the house.
61. I then went to check on our neighbours to see if they were ok and surveyed the damage to our property. The rapid surge of water had knocked down our front fence and had washed away the gravel sections of our driveway, transporting the gravel some 30 metres away.
62. While returning from checking on the neighbours I saw a man in yellow overalls on stationed on the Brisbane Valley Highway. I assumed he was from the SES and approached him to see what was happening.
63. He said that they were evacuating the area to the local school which was on higher ground.
64. I returned to the house and while my wife gathered a few belongings I took a short video of the flooding and observed the water starting to rise again. We then evacuated to the school. From the school we had limited view of the house, but could observe that there was no let up in the storm for a period of time.
65. We stayed there for approximately 1 hour. The school was not opened and there were no facilities for the few people that had evacuated to this point.
66. At approximately 11:30am, we could see that the rain had stopped, There were no supplies at the school, so my wife and I thought that we were better off going home. We stood on the corner of the Brisbane Valley Highway and Schmidt Road with other onlookers observing the water flowing over the Highway and the damage in the area. The road was still closed to traffic at this time.
67. When we arrived home, the water had completely receded from the house. I lifted up the sliding door sills to let the last of the water out. These sills sit approximately 2 cm above the floor. My wife and I were in shock, but relieved and we thought that the worst was over.

68. We sat down in our flooded house and had a cup of coffee and were discussing that we thought that it would be safe enough for us to stay at the property. Water was boiled on the BBQ which had not been located at the rear of the house and had not fully submerged.
69. At approximately 1pm a friend of ours, Claire Horsefield, who lives on higher ground in Carralluma Cres, came to our house. She insisted that we go and stay with her.
70. Over the next few hours, we packed up what we could and tried to get out some of our belongings, however we needed to trek items across the flooded front yard to the highway. The yard was water logged and slippery and fences had been pushed down so we had to walk across the gates and fencing wire. I was able to get out one of our cars.
71. At approximately 5pm Dave Mills, resident of Poole Road visited to see how we had got on. His property had also been flooded. Dave Mills observed that the water damage in my house was to approx 600mm, leading me to believe that a second surge had occurred whilst we had evacuated the house. When we were almost ready to leave some unknown person on a bike came up to us in the yard and said that water was coming back up on Nardoo Street. We could not see this from my place. Dave Mills immediately returned to his property as it was located in the area concerned.
72. At approximately 5.30pm we left our property to go to Claire's house. There was no water on the property when we left.
73. We traveled down the Brisbane Valley Highway. At Ferny Gully there was an SES officer on one side of the road and a police officer on the other as the road had been severely damaged and traffic was only able to cross one lane at a time, moving around debris.
74. I asked the SES officer whether he knew if the water was rising again. He said that he had not heard anything regarding the water rising. He advised to talk to the police officer on the other side of the road.

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75. I asked the police officer whether we knew if the water was meant to be rising again. He too had not heard anything to that effect. I suggested that he needed to talk to the person on the bike as I was worried about his motives at the time.
76. We arrived safely at Claire's property. At approximately 11pm, we heard some activity in the surrounding area but I didn't know what was going on. We saw vehicles driving into a house just up the road, an thought that it looked a bit strange, but not being from that part of town thought nothing more about it and went to sleep.

DAY FOUR: Wednesday 12 January 2011

77. At approximately 6am we looked out the back of Claire's property and could see water in areas that previously did not have water. From this view, parts of the Fernvale Township could also be seen.
78. Claire came out and was puzzled, saying "There shouldn't be water there".
79. Claire and my wife went for a walk down the street to see if neighbors down on the lower parts of the street were safe. One of Claire's neighbours told them that many residents at the bottom of the street were evacuated during the night. Houses were still underwater and then I realised that must have been the cause of the noise.
80. Not one of the evacuation personnel came up to Claire's property and let us know that an evacuation was taking place or that the area was flooding again.
81. At approximately 6.30am I left Claire's property to return to our house. As I got to the highway near our property, I could see that the water was about 1 metre up the side of our house and was starting to recede.
82. Over the next two hours the water level dropped by 1 metre and at approximately 9am the water had completely receded from our property. The water did not rise again after this time

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83. When I got to the house I could see on the walls that the high water mark was approximately 1.2 metres on the outside and 1 metre on the inside of the house. There was still a significant amount of water in the house at this time

Observations of Water Levels

84. Through the experiences I endured above, I make the following observations as the water levels that Fernvale experienced during the floods and the speed at which these levels peaked and receded.
85. On Monday 10 January 2011 at 3.30 the water level was below the road level on Lowood Fernvale Road. By approximately 5.00pm the water level had risen approximately 18 inches above road level. In approximately 1 ½ hours the water level rose 18 inches or approximately 12 inches per hour.
86. I am unable to comment on the rate this water receded, however, the next morning the Brisbane Valley Highway was still closed due to flooding.
87. On Tuesday 11 January 2011 prior to 7.30am, whilst there was some pooling of water on my property, there was no flooding at this time. However, from approximately 7.30am to 8am there was a surge of water and water levels rose from nothing to 1 metre outside the house. When we managed to get on the roof my wife and I were walking through a significant amount of water to get to the ladder at the back of the house.
88. When my wife and I came down from the roof at approximately 9am, the water had begun to recede. We sat of the BBQ table outside for approximately 30mins watching the water flow out of our house and at approximately 9.30am the water had completely receded. From approximately 9am to 9.30am the water levels receded by 1 metre in 30 minutes.
89. The second surge of water occurring on Tuesday 11 January occurred at approximately 10.15am. We evacuated our property at approximately 10am and it takes approximately 10 minutes to get to the school (evacuation point). When we left the property there was no flooding.

90. We arrived at the school at approximately 10.15am. From this viewpoint we could see that water was being to collect in areas and that the water levels were beginning to rise.
91. At approximately 11am, the rain had stopped and it appeared that the water was starting to recede. We left the school at this time and returned home. It took us approximately 10 minutes to arrive back home and we arrived at approximately 11.15am. Our property was still flooded up to approximately 1 metre on the exterior of the house at this time and the water was rushing away from the property.
92. At approximately 12pm, all the water had receded from the house. I talked to my neighbour Dave Mills at this time, who did not evacuate, and he confirmed that the water rose to 1 metre outside the house and approximately 600mm inside the house.
93. On Wednesday 12 January 2011 at approximately 6.30am I observed that our property was inundated with approximately 1 metre up the side of the house. Since I was not at the property overnight, I cannot comment on the rate at which the water rose
94. By approximately 9am, the water had completely receded and did not rise again. The water receded by 1 metre in 2 hours or approximately 6 inches per hour

Fernvale Community Action Group Concerns

95. In the weeks following the floods, the Fernvale Community Action Group was formed. There was a range of individual and group concerns that were vented over the meetings that we had at that time and to date.
96. Whilst there were varying personal concerns for group members, the broader concerns shared by the group can be described as follows:

Local Council Planning in relation to the large growth and development of the Fernvale area was insufficient.

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97. We felt as a group that the infrastructure and maintenance of the development, especially the drainage systems, were insufficient to cope with any increased volume of water. Also the failed design of the drainage meant that water was redirected into our properties and contributed to the severity of flooding that we experienced.
98. I noticed on the morning of Tuesday 11 April 2010 that the storm water drains were struggling to cope with the volume of water flowing from the constant rain, but was still managing to get a fair portion of the water away from the area.
99. However, as the morning progressed and the rain continued, it became apparent that the drainage system did not have a sufficient capacity to move a significant amount of water away from the area.
100. I inspected the drains closest to my property and noticed that they reaching capacity. As the rain continued, the area flooding area the drains was increasing as the drains simply were not big enough.
101. Further, there was no design to redirect water overflow or any ancillary back up for drainage failure. As such the excess water was directed straight into properties in the low lying areas causing significant flooding.
102. We believe that the infrastructure and capacity of the drainage system failed to also take into account the dramatic reduction of absorption of water through natural causeways which have been covered with cement and the like due to continued development.
103. Together with the Wivenhoe dam releases, the already failed drainage system had no capability to redirect the combination of dam and storm water away from the Fernvale area.
104. We believe there was significant lack of foresight regarding the drainage requirements for the Fernvale area which contributed to the severity of flooding we experienced. Prior to and in the aftermath of the flood, we brought our concerns regarding the drainage to the attention of the local Council. The local


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Council has been conceded that the capacity of the drainage system needs to be investigated and a Capacity Assessment is currently underway.

No Disaster response or warning for Fernvale Residents.

105. During the entire time during and leading up to the floods which impacted the Fernvale area, we were given no warning or support.
106. The Council was aware prior to this time that there was no emergency response team in place for the Fernvale area and the former emergency response team had become defunct during the 12 months prior to this event. There were no substantial efforts made to resolve this issue to my knowledge.
107. Further there were no sirens or similar auditory warning systems in place to alert Fernvale residents to evacuate prior to flooding. The rural fire brigade has at least 2 fire trucks with loud sirens and these were not sounded at any time to my knowledge. There was also no community speaker system or the like to play a recorded message to evacuate which would have enabled Fernvale residents at least to take measures to prepare for the floods.
108. At approximate 6pm on Tuesday 11 January 2011 a SES truck had got into the area which I was told by other residents was sounding its siren. I never heard this siren. However by this time the Fernvale area was already experiencing significant flooding and major crossings out of the area were blocked.
109. We had television, internet and some radio capabilities and at no time did we receive any community warnings, media statements or direction to evacuate. However, on Monday 17 January 2011 when the Fernvale area was experiencing heavy rain, media statements expressly mentioned Fernvale and gave warning of heavy rain and the possibility of flash flooding in the area.
110. There were helicopters in the area at the time and none of them were fitted with a speaker system to provide warning or direction to Fernvale residents.
111. There was a text message warning system initiated by the SES, however it had limited ability and was instituted after the flood events in question. Some

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residents received a test text message on Wednesday 19 January 2011 which featured no warning but was merely a test of the system.

112. This text alert system was of limited utility as these texts did not go to all or majority of Fernvale residents. None of Fernvale residents had registered to this system or were advised it was being initiated. Further there was no identifiable source from which the resident contact list for this system was devised. For example, while many residents use the same telecommunication providers, some received texts from the SES warning system and some did not. I never received one of these texts.
113. We consider that this system not only has limited functionality as a warning mechanism but was instituted too late and is another example of the lacking emergency response infrastructure in place in the Fernvale area.
114. On the most basic level, there was no support on the ground. There was nothing as simple as door knocking to tell people to evacuate their homes.
115. With all the technology that Fernvale residents had access to before and during most of the flooding, there was no warning mechanism used. Even rudimentary methods such as door knocking and loudspeaker warnings were not implemented.

Improper or insufficient Management of the Wivenhoe dam.

116. As residents in the shadow of the Wivenhoe dam we believe that we were directly impacted by the management of its water releases.
117. Firstly, we believe that too much water was released in too short a time frame. It was discussed that the drainage system, as much as it struggled for reasons discussed above, managed to get a large portion of the water out of the Fernvale area and delayed the rate of storm water levels and the severity of flooding during the day on Tuesday 11 January 2011.
118. However, due to significant releases of water from Wivenhoe, combined with the constant heavy rain, the drainage system could not move such massive amounts

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of water away from the area. In a period approximately of 90 minutes on Tuesday 11 January 2011, Fernvale was severely flooded and all major crossing such as the Brisbane Valley Highway, Savages Crossing and College Crossing were largely impassable.

119. Not only did the massive "panic" releases of such large volumes of water cause severe and sudden flooding, it effectively isolated our community and restricted access to outside emergency assistance.
120. Secondly, we believe that there were not enough releases from the Wivenhoe dam in the days prior which would have prevented massive "panic" releases of water.
121. In discussions after the flooding with Mid Brisbane River Irrigators ("MBRI") I was advised of the levels that the Brisbane River can "run" at before the major crossings in the area would be breached. This information was also included in radio reports at the time. It is my understanding that where these crossings are breached the Fernvale Area will flood as a result..
122. Through the media after the event, it had come to our attention that the Wivenhoe Dam was significantly above 100% capacity and it was foreseeable that capacity would be increasing dramatically with the expected flow from the Lockyer and Bremer Rivers and the enduring rain.
123. Prior to Monday 10 January 2011, we were experiencing significant rain but all the relevant levels at the crossings were well below their breaching point.
124. There was capacity for these crossing to tolerate smaller and consistent releases of water from the Dam without reaching its breaching point or causing flooding in the Fernvale Area.
125. With the knowledge of the crossings' water level capacity, the expected rapid increase of Wivenhoe dam capacity and that Fernvale would flood where crossing levels were exceeded, the need for smaller releases over a period of time was obvious. We believe the overall mismanagement of the Wivenhoe dam contributed to the severity of flooding that we experienced

126. As a community we were promised by Government and SEQ Water that the Wivenhoe dam was a significant flood mitigation facility and that a flood in the similar ilk as the "1974 Floods" would never happen again. Essentially we were told that because of Wivenhoe Dam, Fernvale would not flood.
127. It appears now that it was in fact because of Wivenhoe dam that the Fernvale area experienced such severe flooding. Whilst there were other contributing factors, the failure to release appropriate volumes of water at appropriate intervals caused the speed and severity in which the Fernvale area was flooded.

Response of Insurers to the Flood Crisis.

128. Luckily there were many people in our area that received favourable outcomes from their insurers. I understand that this is different from residents of the broader Brisbane area generally. However many of those insured with AAMI, RACQ, Allianz, Elders and Real Insurance have had their claims denied.
129. Further, despite favorable responses from insurers for some residents, many have not been paid nor has any work commenced to rebuild their homes.
130. The delay in receiving an outcome, let alone payment, has been excessive.

Failure of Transparency of Relevant Officials

131. On 5 February 2011, 1 month after the flooding, was the first meeting that was called by the Government and Council to address the flood crisis with Fernvale residents. Prior to this we had received no communication from any level of government in response to the flood itself or the clean up process thereafter.
132. Attached and marked "DW02" is a copy of the agenda of the meeting on 5 February 2011.
133. At this first meeting, all levels of Government from Local Council up to Federal Government were represented at the meeting as well as senior officials of SEQ Water.

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134. At this meeting, we specifically asked SEQ Water when they knew that there was a need to make the "panic" high volume releases of water. We also asked why they didn't warn Fernvale residents of the impending releases. Fernvale residents would obviously be impacted by these decisions. We argued that it could not have been an on the spot decision and there had to be time between when the decision was made and when it was carried into effect.
135. Further, the Manual for operation of the Wivenhoe Dam states that SEQ was responsible for all communication regarding releases. Again, we asked why this information was not communicated to Fernvale residents.
136. SEQ Water refused to provide any meaningful answers to our questions.
137. At this meeting, there was an "information pack" of sorts created by the Somerset Regional Council which was passively made available but was not given out to residents nor were resident's attention brought to in any substantial manner.
138. Much of the information was of little value. For instance there was referral to the ability for residents to either have their refuse collected in Council curb side collections or to personally dispose of it at Esk Landfill free of charge. However these services expired on the 28 January 2011, some 8 days before the meeting was held.
139. The information pack said that the Council may collect refuse after the 28 January 2011 but this was subject to their discretion and a registration process.
140. The information pack made reference to the recommencement of wheelie bin collection. It failed to acknowledge that many Fernvale residents no longer had wheelie bins as they were lost or destroyed in the floods.
141. This information pack was of little use and was provided too late in comparison to what other Councils were providing to their flood affected residents.
142. Attached and marked "DW03" is a copy of the Somerset Regional Council Information Pack.

- 143. Wayne Wend MP for Ipswich West, Shane Newman, Federal MP for Somerset, Bob Bain, CEO of Somerset Council and other government officials were in attendance at this meeting.
- 144. We asked similar questions of these officials such as when they became aware of the need for large scale releases, why this was not communicated to Fernvale residents, why there was no warning systems in place or greater emergency response personnel directed to the Fernvale area.
- 145. Again, these officials refused to provide any meaningful answers to our questions, merely saying "It will all come out in the Commission".
- 146. The only assistance we received from a government body was the Consumer Protection Unit of Legal Aid Qld. Members of this unit came out to Fernvale on two occasions to provide information as to where we go from here in relation to insurance claims and the dispute process and the general offer of assistance.
- 147. Legal Aid Qld have been an invaluable resource to Fernvale's ability to recover from this disaster.
- 148. Fernvale residents prior to the floods and to date have been kept completely in the dark in how to manage the threat of the floods and its aftermath. We believe that we are entitled to answers regarding the systematic failure of all levels of government as discussed above.

Dated this *8th* day of *APRIL* 2011


.....
Dennis Ward


.....
Dennis Ward


(3009110v1)
(TBL)FloodCommission/stat/tbl

"DW01"



"DW03"

FERNVALE COMMUNITY MEETING AGENDA 5/2/11

This meeting has been called at the request of residents living in Fernvale. It is intended that the meeting will provide advice and support for the residents on a range of issues. However it may not be possible to answer all questions on the day, due to the fact that expert advice is required, time constraints, etc. In cases like this it will be necessary to document the question so that an appropriate response can be provided as quickly as possible.

1. 9am - opening by Wayne Wend MP
2. Introduction of attendees
3. Address by Shayne Neumann MP
4. Address by Mayor Graeme Lehmann
5. Address by SEQ Water
6. Questions
7. Next meeting
8. 10am - close

"DWOH"



**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL
BUSINESS RECOVERY INFORMATION
SESSIONS – EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**



In response to the recent flood event Somerset Regional Council, in partnership with the Business Enterprise Centre Ipswich Region, will be hosting Business Recovery Sessions on the 17th February, Esk (Council Chambers – Meeting Room 1) at 10.00am, Kilcoy (Kay Avery Place) at 2.30pm and 18th February 2011, Fernvale (Fernvale Futures) at 10.00am.

The sessions have been designed to inform the Somerset Regional business, industry and agricultural sectors how they can access the various forms of flood relief and assistance.

To ensure the sessions are tailored to your needs, we ask you to complete the details below to determine the assistance required during the sessions.

1. **Business name** _____
Business address _____
Contact name _____
Contact email _____
Contact phone _____

2. **What type of business are you?**

3. **What immediate assistance do you require? (please provide details)**

Financial Assistance Information

Assistance with applying for grants

Assistance with retrieving lost business records

Other

Which session are you interested in? Esk 17th Feb 10.00am Kilcoy 17th Feb 2.30pm Fernvale 18th Feb 10.00am

To register your interest in these sessions please complete this form and e-mail to _____ or drop the form into any of Council's Offices located at: Lowood, Fernvale, Kilcoy or Esk preferable by Monday, 14th February 2011.

Please note: These sessions will be run at no cost to you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE – Privacy Statement

Somerset Regional Council is collecting and handling your personal information in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009. The information will be accessed by Somerset Regional Council for Council business related activities only. Some of this information may be given to BECIR to identify and assist you. Your information will not be given to any other person or agency unless you have given us permission or we are required by law.

This is a joint initiative of Somerset Regional Council & Business Enterprise Centre Ipswich Region

Somerset Region Frequently Asked Questions

Flood Recovery

25 January 2011

1. How do I find out about road closures in my area and beyond?

Council is currently working hard to assess the extent of damage to our road network. This will be an extensive task and will require a lot of patience from the community. We are prioritising emergent works on a basis of accessibility and public safety. Council updates on road closures are being coordinated at frequent intervals and can be found at www.somerset.qld.gov.au, for conditions on major roads and highways please visit www.131940.com.au

2. How do I report damage to a road in the Somerset region?

Council is asking residents to register road damage by calling 07 5424 4000. Once registered the road issue will be tasked for assessment and scheduled for restoration according to accessibility and public safety needs.

3. Are Council still running the kerbside collection of flood-affected rubbish?

Council is scheduled to collect kerbside rubbish from flood-affected areas until 28 January, 2011. Council has asked residents to leave rubbish on the footpath in urban areas and as close to the road as possible in rural areas.

4. Will Council still run kerbside collections after 28 January, 2011?

Council is asking residents who are unable to have their flood-affected rubbish ready for collection by 28 January, 2011 to register their details by calling 07 5424 4000. Council will assess extensions on a case by case basis.

5. Can I take my flood-affected rubbish to the landfill myself?

Yes, flood-affected rubbish can be disposed of at the Esk Landfill free of charge until 28 January, 2011.

6. When will my regular wheelie bin be collected?

Wheelie bin collection has resumed, however normal collection timetables will vary during the coming weeks. Residents are asked to leave their bin out until it is collected.

7. Can I still get help with the clean-up of my flood-affected property?

Council is trying to match volunteers who are willing to help with those who require assistance. If you need a hand with clearing flood-affected rubbish, please register with Council on 5424 4000 and we will endeavour to match you with someone who is able to help.

8. How can I help?

Council is asking those would like to volunteer assistance to register by calling 5424 4000. If you would like to donate money to the Somerset Flood Appeal please visit www.somerset.qld.gov.au

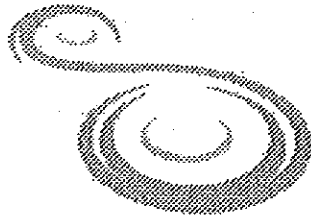
**For more information and up to date information please visit
www.somerset.qld.gov.au**

Contact Numbers

- **SES:** 132 500
- **Police – Non-Urgent:** 131 444
- **Disaster Recovery Hotline :** 1800 173 349
- **Donate:** 1800 219 028 (0600 – 2300 7 days)
- **Centrelink:** 180 22 66
- **Insurance Council of Australia:** 1300 728 228
- **Volunteering Queensland:** 1800 994 100
- **Qld Government General enquiries and assistance:** 13 QGOV (13 74 68)
- **Community Recovery:** 1800 173 349
- **RSPCA:** 3426 9999
- **National Registration and Inquiry System (NRIS), register your details or find out about family:** 1800 727 077
- **Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (replacement of certificates):** 1300 366 430

Contacts

Department of Communities Disaster Recovery Line	1800 173 349
Queensland Government	(13 QGOV) 13 74 68
Queensland Government Interpreter Service	13 14 50
Queensland Government	TTY 13 36 77
Australian Red Cross	1800 733 111
Building Services Authority	1300 272 272
Centrelink – Employment Service and Job Network	13 28 50
Centrelink – Family Assistance Office	13 61 50
Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation	13 25 23
Electrical Safety Infoline	1300 650 662
Employment Services Information	13 62 68
Insurance Council Hotline	1300 728 228
Lifeline Telephone Counselling	13 11 14
Fairwork Infoline	13 13 94
Financial Ombudsman Service	1800 337 444
Legal Aid Queensland	1300 651 188
Ipswich City Council	3810 6666
TTY via NRS (Quote 3810 6666)	13 36 77
Office of Fair Trading	13 13 04
Queensland Government Traffic and Travel Information	13 19 40
RACQ Road Conditions	1300 130 595
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277
Residential Tenancies Authority	1300 366 311
Salvo Care Line	1300 363 622
SES	13 25 00
The Insurance Ombudsman Service	1300 780 808
Worker Assistance Hotline	1800 035 749
Energex	13 62 62
Ergon Energy	13 22 96



Somerset
REGIONAL COUNCIL

NEWS RELEASE – 19 January 2011

Flood Clean-up information - *Collection of bulk flood damage refuse*

Residents are requested to place all flood damaged goods for collection on the footpath in urban areas and as close to the road as possible in rural areas.

Council will continue bulk rubbish collections until Friday 28 January 2011.

Flood damaged goods can also be deposited at the Esk Landfill at no charge up until 28 January 2011. Council transfer stations are open as normal.

Flood clean-up information - *Burning of Rubbish*

Should residents be intending to burn flood debris, please ensure this is restricted to vegetation only, as burning of other items may release dangerous chemicals and toxins into the atmosphere.

Mosquito and Disease Control

Residents should ensure that all containers where water might accumulate should be emptied eg pot plant trays etc. This action will reduce the potential for mosquitoes and subsequent mosquito borne diseases.

Donated Items

Large quantities of donated items still remain at the Fernvale State School and Lowood High School Hall. Residents affected by flooding are encouraged to visit these locations to resupply themselves with donated furniture, household items, clothing and foodstuffs.

For further information about this news release, please contact:

Mayor:
Chief Executive Officer:
2 Redbank Street
(PO Box 117)
Esk Q 4312

Councillor Graeme Lehmann
Robert Bain

ST VINNIES OFFERINGS

Flood affected people can access resources including furniture for free from St Vinnie.

People who live in the Brisbane area- call the St Vinnies call centre on 3010 1096

People who live in the Ipswich area - call the St Vinnies call centre on 3812 2055

A person will come to their home and make an assessment of the goods needed. The goods (including furniture) will be delivered to them by truck.

People can also go to a St Vinnies shop and talk to the manager, explaining that they have been in the floods. They can then get resources for free.

Tues 1st Feb 2011

Need help with tax?

If you have been affected by natural disaster we can help with any concerns you might have about tax, including:

- fast tracking refunds
- giving you extra time to pay debts
- giving you more time to meet activity statement, income tax and other lodgment obligations
- helping to reconstruct tax records where documents have been destroyed, and make reasonable estimates where necessary
- helping you if you are experiencing serious hardship.

➤ MORE INFORMATION

- visit our website at www.ato.gov.au
- phone 1800 806 218 between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday
- for assistance with reconstruction of records register on www.ato.gov.au/assistancevisit





Optus increases assistance to customers affected by Queensland floods

12 Jan 2011

Optus has increased its support for customers affected by the Queensland floods by adding new measures to its existing assistance package.

The package includes support for customers that experience financial hardship as a result of the floods and temporary loss of Optus services. Optus is also working with Red Cross to deliver 1,500 Pre-Paid Optus mobile handsets loaded with \$1,000 of credit to assist people affected by the floods in Queensland. These mobile handsets will be provided to residents who no longer have access to telecommunications services, regardless of whether they are an Optus customer, with call credit valid for up to 186 days.

Other measures include:

Extended payment period: Customers experiencing financial hardship as a result of the floods can arrange special extended payment timeframes for their Optus bill by contacting the Optus Financial Services team. In addition, in cases of extreme hardship as a result of property destruction due to the floods, Optus will consider waiving a customer's bill on a case by case basis.

Fees waiver: Customers that incur fees for late payments, service suspension or early service termination as a result of the floods can request to have their penalty fee waived. No reconnection fees will apply for customers that wish to reconnect their services within 12 months.

Free fixed-to-mobile and fixed-to-fixed call diversion: Optus engineers continue to work hard during this period to minimise impact on the Optus network in flood affected areas. Should customers experience a disruption to their Optus fixed home phone service, Optus offers free call diversion to any mobile or fixed number of their choice.

Consumer customers that are eligible for the assistance package can contact Optus Customer Care on 133 937, while SMB customers can contact 133 343.

Optus is also donating over \$500,000 in cash and services to assist the Queensland flood disaster relief efforts. This includes \$200,000 to the Queensland Premier's Flood Relief Appeal, in addition to the \$25,000 pledged through the Harvey Norman fundraising appeal. Optus will also match employee donations to the Flood Relief Appeal dollar for dollar as part of its internal workplace giving program.

Media contact: [REDACTED] Optus Corporate Affairs - Tel: [REDACTED]

<http://www.optus.com.au/aboutoptus/About+Optus/Media+Centre/QLD+Floods/Optus+increases+assistance+to+customers+affected+by+Queensland+floods>



Somerset
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Somerset Region Community Recovery Newsletter

Issue 1

25 January 2011

Message from the Mayor Cr Graeme Lehmann

This Community Recovery Newsletter aims to inform Somerset residents of current issues relating to the recent flooding event, as well as offer helpful advice, contacts and information to assist in the recovery of our region.

I'm happy to say, our region is now in recovery mode and we are working hard towards building a strategy to rebuild the livelihoods and infrastructure of our communities. This will be a long term project and patience from our community is going to be paramount, however we will endeavour to keep you up to date with our progress.

As I have travelled through the Region over the last two weeks, I have been touched by those affected by the floods, and uplifted by the sense of community and coming together of neighbours, friends and strangers in an effort to help each other through this disaster.

Our region has rallied together and donated a lot of food and clothes for those who have been affected by the floods. I would like to thank those who have donated and also encourage those who been affected to accept the help of others during this tough time by visiting one of the nominated drop-off points.

I am a proud leader within the Somerset Community, a community that is willing to pitch in and help others.

Helpful Phone Numbers -

Somerset Regional Council	5424 4000
State Emergency Service (SES)	13 25 00
Financial Assistance (Flood)	1800 173 349
Centrelink	180 22 66
Power - Energex	13 62 62
Water - Queensland Urban Utilities	13 23 64
Road Closures - Dpt of Main Roads	13 19 40

Public Health and Safety -

The safety of our region's residents is paramount; to ensure you stay safe and healthy during flood recovery visit one of the Recovery Centres or www.health.qld.gov.au for information and practical advice from Queensland Health on how to ensure your safety after the floods.

Community Recovery Centres -

Community Recovery Centres offer a number of services to flood-affected residents including, recovery information, personal support, financial assistance and counseling.

LOCATIONS:

ESK CWA HALL

Centre Contact No: 0467 708 358

Open daily 10am - 4pm (including Australia Day)

LOWOOD HUB

Centre Contact No: 5426 3432

Open daily 9am - 4pm (including Australia Day)

FERNVALE FUTURES COMPLEX

Centre Contact No: 5427 0200

Open daily 10am - 4pm (including Australia Day)



Roads Update - Road maintenance crews are working to repair damage to the region's road and bridge network. Works are being prioritised on the basis of accessibility and public safety. Council would like to remind residents to drive according to the conditions and to adhere to traffic signs. The restoration of the region's road network will be a long term task and the patience of road users is appreciated. Report road issues to Council by phone 5424 4000 or email

For more information on road conditions and closures visit www.131940.com.au

Clean-up Information - Wheelie bin collection has resumed, however normal collection timetables will vary during the coming weeks. Residents are asked to leave their bin out until it is collected.

Flood debris and household goods damaged as a result of the flood should be placed on the footpath in urban areas and clear of the road in rural areas. Residents with the capacity to transport flood damaged goods are able to dispose of rubbish at the Esk Landfill at no charge.

Power – Residents are reminded that inundated properties require an inspection from a licensed electrician, before power can be reconnected. If you're still experiencing trouble with power, please call Energex on 13 62 62.

Water & Sewerage – Water supply to all areas of Somerset is now restored. The boil water alert for Lowood, Fernvale and Vernor has been lifted; however a precautionary boil water notice remains for the communities of Minden, Brightview, Coolana, Helensvale Estate, Tarampa and surrounding areas on town supply. For more information on water related issues please contact Queensland Urban Utilities on 13 23 64.

Food Supplies – Supermarkets and shops across the region are beginning to receive deliveries and are starting to restock their shelves. Emergency food hampers are available to families affected by the floods at Community Recovery Centres (locations on front page).

How can you help? – Volunteers can register to help by calling Council on 5424 4000. Donated goods including food and clothing are available from the following locations:
Fernvale State School Hall
Esk Recovery Centre, CWA Hall
If you are able to donate cash to the Somerset Flood Appeal please visit www.somerset.qld.gov.au for information.

Financial Assistance – The State Government has a variety of flood assistance programs. For information on eligibility and how to apply, visit a Flood Recovery Centre or www.qld.gov.au/floods


***Wide Bay:** Bundaberg, Munduberra, Electra, Maryborough and Gympie.

Central Queensland: Bilôela, Cracow, Emerald, Moura, Rockhampton, Taroom, Theodore and Wowan

Southern Queensland: Allora, Alpha, Boonah, Chinchilla, Condamine, Dalby, Jericho, Killarney, Surat, St George, Warra, Warwick, Woodbine, Mount Sylvia, Tent Hill, Mount Whitestone, Grantham, Withcott, Murphys Creek, Gatton, Helidon, Toogoolawah, Toowoomba, Esk, Oakey, Bundamba, Brassall, Goodna, Ipswich, Mount Crosby, Redbank Plains

Sunshine Coast: Caboolture, Morayfield, Upper Caboolture

Brisbane: Flood affected suburbs including: Albion, Ascot, Brookfield, Bulimba, Charlotte, Chapel Hill, Coorparoo, Darra, Edison, Jamboree Heights, Lutwyche, Moggill, New Farm, Paddington, Pinkenba, Roma St, South Brisbane, Sherwood, Salisbury, Sunnybank, Tingalpa, Toowong, Valley, Wacol, Woolloongabba, Wynnum, Yeronga

Media contact: 

Reference Number: 455A/2010

<http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/media-centre/announcements/update-to-telstra-assistance-package-for-queensland-customers-affected.xml>