

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
SECOND STATEMENT OF KENNETH LEROY SCHMIDT

I Kenneth Leroy Schmidt of [REDACTED] Fernvale state on oath as follows:

1. I seek leave to make a further Statement to that given by me on 5th April 2011.
2. I am the Chairman of the Mid Brisbane River Irrigators Inc.
3. I reside with my family in our home at the above address which is approximately 14 kilometres downstream from Wivenhoe Dam.
4. My home is built on the top of a hill which overlooks Fernvale and the surrounding valley of the Brisbane River.
5. Immediately below our home is a new development 'Brookside' which was built around 2007 – 2008.
6. That development has approximately 124 home sites.
7. In the 1974 flood some of that land developed in 'Brookside' went under water. That land was then horse paddocks.
8. After Wivenhoe Dam was built, that land was allowed to be developed.
9. In January 2011 approximately 25 houses in 'Brookside' were flooded.
10. Next to that development is Poole Road which in 1974 was also grazing land.
11. After Wivenhoe Dam was built, that land in Poole Road was allowed to be developed and now has approximately 70 houses in it.
12. In January 2011 approximately 45 houses in Poole Road were flooded.
13. After Poole Road was developed, my family sold land in Schmidt Road which was then grazing land.
14. The Schmidt Road development has approximately 26 houses in it.

Exhibit Number:

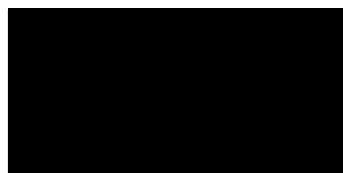
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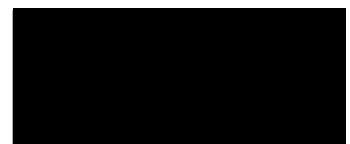
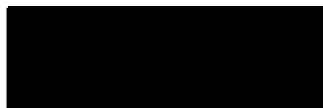
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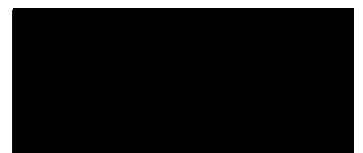
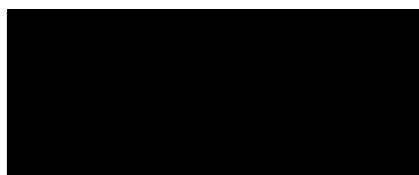
15. In January 2011 approximately 25 houses in Schmidt Road were flooded – all but one house were flooded.
16. Due to the siting of my home I was able to observe the flooding of Fernvale and the surrounding valley of the Brisbane River including that towards Lowood which is upstream towards Wivenhoe Dam.

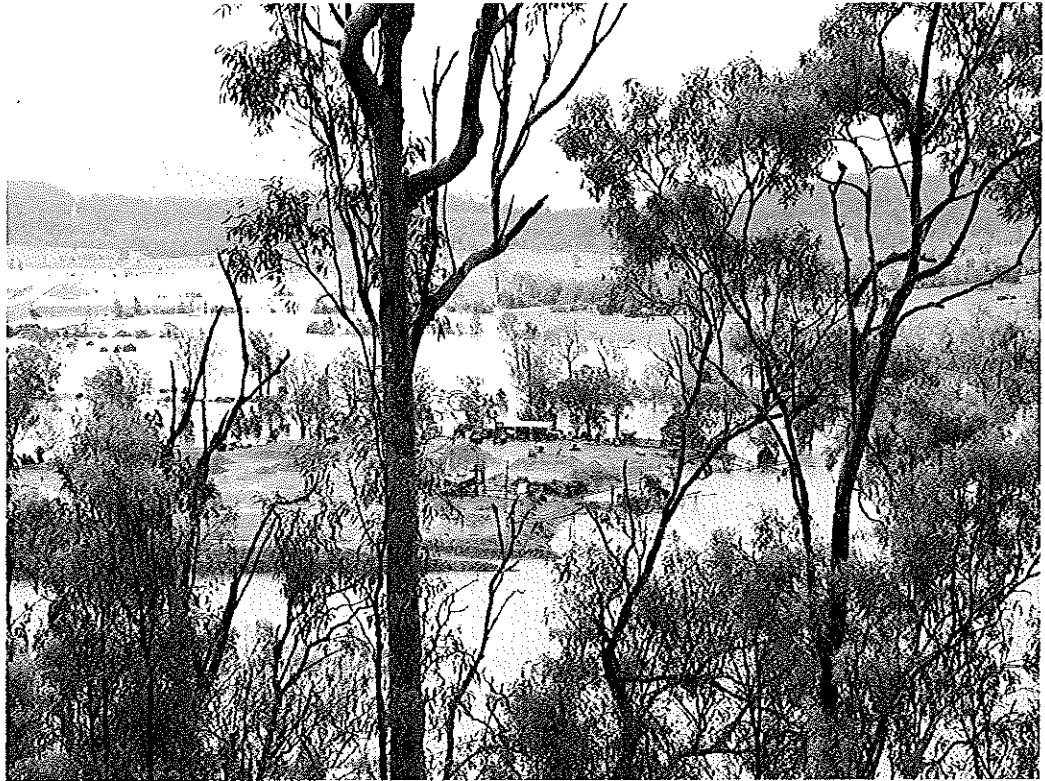
Monday

17. Monday morning when the Fernvale Bridge went under I was on my way home from the North Coast. When I got down to the quarry about 9:00a.m. the Brisbane Valley Highway was cut and was too deep to drive through. There was approximately one metre of water across the Highway at the Twin Bridges turnoff.
18. At first on Monday 10 January 2011 there was about three metres of water in depth on our property. The water from the Brisbane River had covered the bottom river flat of a minimum of 100 acres on my family farm which included the two quarry pits.
19. I cannot remember now how long I stayed down in that area. I was checking our dam and our fences before I returned to the house.
20. I had a clear view of the township of Fernvale below our home site.
21. Ferny Gully which runs across the Brisbane Valley Highway through Fernvale, running from the west to the east, was backed up a little but was not in flood.
22. There was no water in Fernvale and except for Fernvale Bridge being cut no one would have been aware of any imminent danger.
23. I can see the bridge over Ferny Gully near the service station in Fernvale. The bridge over Ferny Gully was not cut.



24. People were driving up and down towards the bridge over the Brisbane River outside Fernvale.
25. I could see the River at Savages Crossing but could not see the bridge.
26. At some stage I drove down and inspected the Fernvale Bridge and the Highway where it was cut. The water was flowing fast, faster than I had seen in the past.
27. I went with my children to the point on the hill where Wivenhoe Dam is visible and from where Lowood and the populated areas along the Brisbane River towards Lowood and Wivenhoe Pocket can be seen.
28. From the top of the hill I could see that the quarry office was not submerged and the river had risen to cover the bottom flat of our farm.





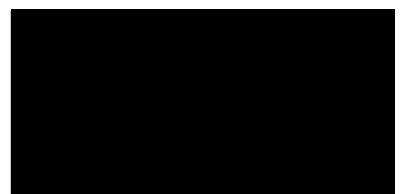
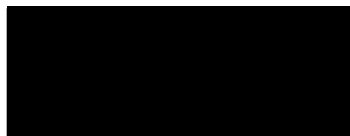
29. In the photograph immediately above the Brisbane River is between the two horizontal rows of trees running from left to right about half way down from the top of the photograph and ending just behind the shed in the foreground. In this photograph those two rows of trees are about two millimetres apart.

Monday night

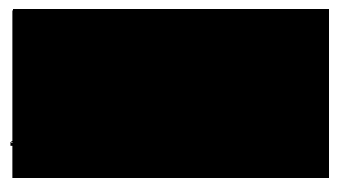
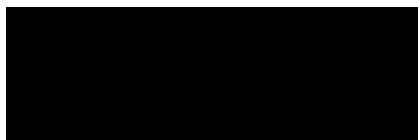
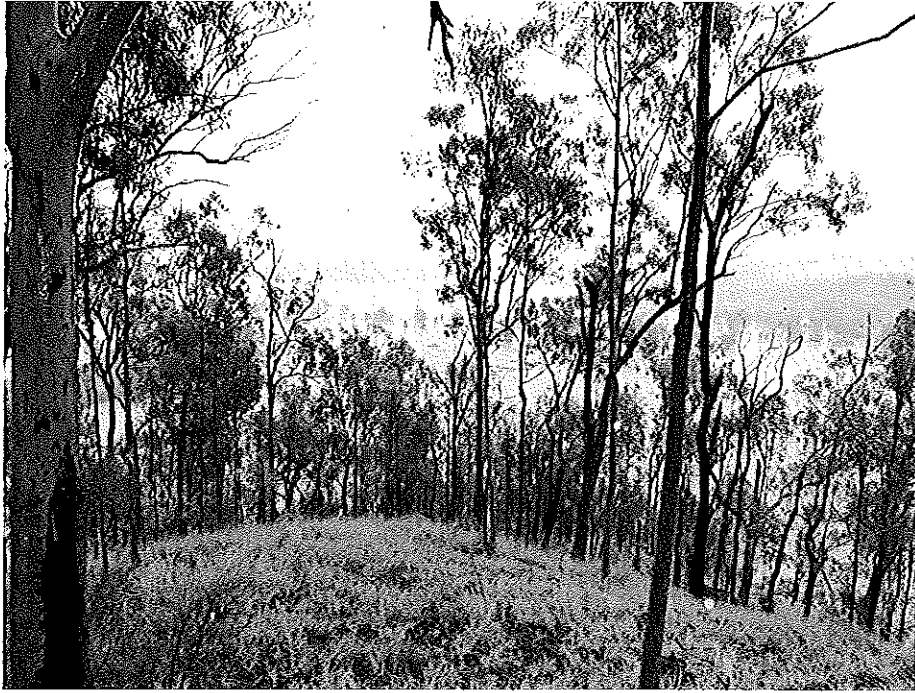
30. I was at Zannows' Quarry with a lot of other people helping to move equipment away from the river flats. At that stage the water was over the bottom of the Fernvale Bridge. We were aware of the rain which had fallen to the north of Wivenhoe Dam and were confident that there would be flooding through the quarries.

Tuesday

31. On Tuesday morning there was very heavy rain. We had one inch (25 mm) of rain overnight then rain from about 5:00a.m. for five or so hours.



32. I was helping Darren Zannow move his machinery for the third time when the heavy rain started.
33. The power went out during the storm.
34. From the top of the hill after the heavy rain the quarry office was under water but was still there.

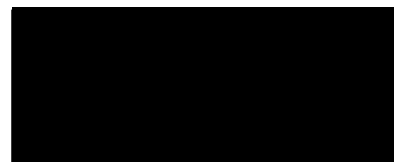
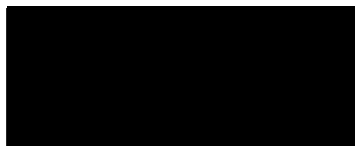




35. In the photographs above, the office at Zannow's quarry is now surrounded and inundated by water.



36. In the photograph above Stumer's house on the left is partially inundated.



37. When I was looking up the river towards Lowood I could see the River was still within its banks. This is to the left in the middle of the photograph below.

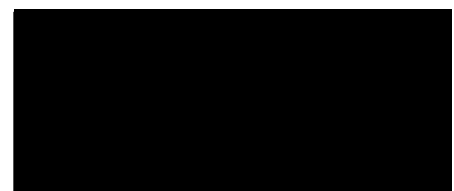


38. I could see Tom Wilkinson's house on his land which is bordered by the Brisbane Valley Highway to the east and the banks of the Brisbane River to the north. It was well out of the water.
39. While there I received a telephone call from Tom and did not even think to ask him if he wanted to come up to our house as I did not think then that the Brisbane River was a risk in that area.
40. After I returned to the house I received a telephone call to my mobile telephone from Graham Keegan. I told Graham that we had 16 inches of rain in 8 hours. He said "Shit, we are in big trouble. We're not prepared for this." (or something to that effect)
41. He then said: "I think we will have to start releasing water. It's going to be big. We will have to move to protect dam safety."

42. I became aware then that the situation was going to be serious and I telephoned Tom Wilkinson to tell him that his family was welcome to come to our home if the situation deteriorated.
43. Around that time I was told by my father who had heard it as a rumour in Fernvale, that Wivenhoe Dam was gone.
44. There was overland flow coming from Ferny Gully into Fernvale during the heavy rain early morning.
45. The Brisbane Valley Hwy was cut for about three hours and once the rain cleared the water ran away into the river.



46. The Honeywood building estate on the south west of town was flooded and the water flowed away.
47. Many properties in Poole Road were flooded about 1 – 1.5 feet. I could see that the water came from Ferny Gully, from the south west of Fernvale from the Glamorgan Vale hills.

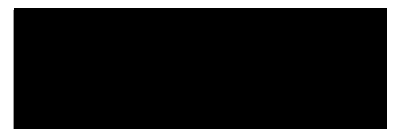
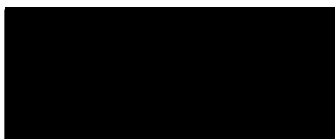


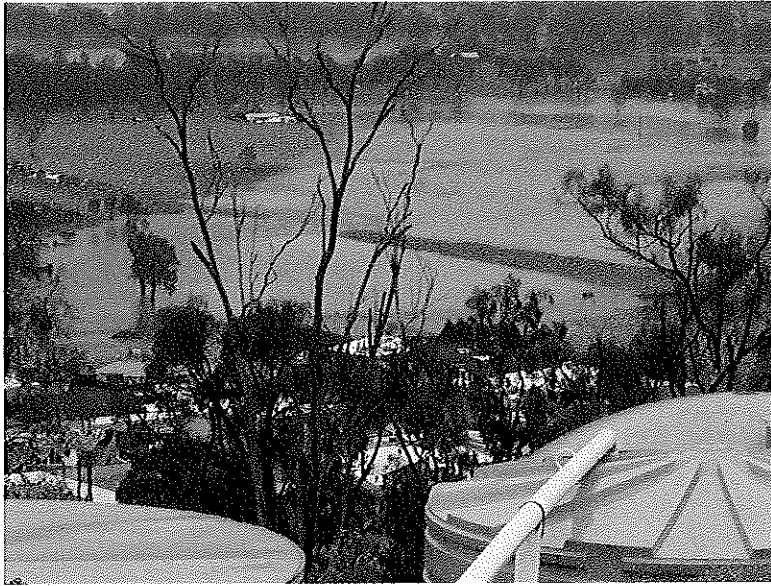
48. Ferny Gully is a twisty and deep creek which runs from the south west adjacent to Poole Road. The water from Ferny Gully cannot get away easily because of its natural form.
49. Ferny Gully is a gully that crosses beneath the road near the service station on the Brisbane Valley Highway. It is not even a creek.
50. The water from Ferny Gully came up and went down in about four hours.
51. Since the urban footprint has been implemented in Fernvale Ferny Gully collects the water from the new developments nearby.
52. In the past, Ferny Gully did not flood very much but in late 2010 Ferny Gully flooded twice.
53. By about 2:00p.m. all the flood water below my house was almost gone.
54. After lunch when the water had receded my family and I went down to Poole Road to see if we could help.
55. All the earlier flood water was gone from the urban area.
56. From my observation, only the properties which had been flooded in that first round of water were vacated.
57. Around 3:00p.m. to 4:00p.m. I observed the water rising rapidly again.
58. I returned to the quarry pit which by then was pretty well under water. The water was flowing through our Paulonia trees to a depth of perhaps five metres. The water was flowing by at a furious rate.
59. I was particularly concerned then about our irrigation boom. I could not see the boom as it was under water. The boom was at least 6 – 8 metres above river level.
60. By 4:00p.m. the flood water was level with the top of the dam bank on our property.

61. Our dam wall is 25 – 30 metres above the river bank level.
62. I saw the river meet the dam and cover the dam.
63. I became increasingly worried when I saw the dam water flowing backwards.
64. Between 4:30 and 5:30p.m. the water across the highway went up at least a metre.



65. The above photograph was taken at 5.53pm on Tuesday 11 January 2011 and shows the dam bank consumed by the Brisbane River and in turn threatening the low lying houses in the foreground.
66. Shortly after this my friend Tom Wilkinson arrived with his wife.
67. Tom Wilkinson informed me that the water in his stretch of the River was coming up very fast and the only way they got out was on their tractor with their suitcases in the bucket of the tractor.



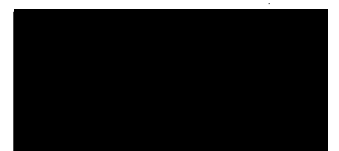
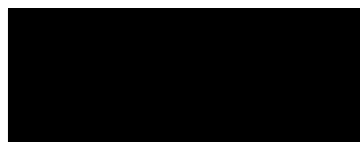
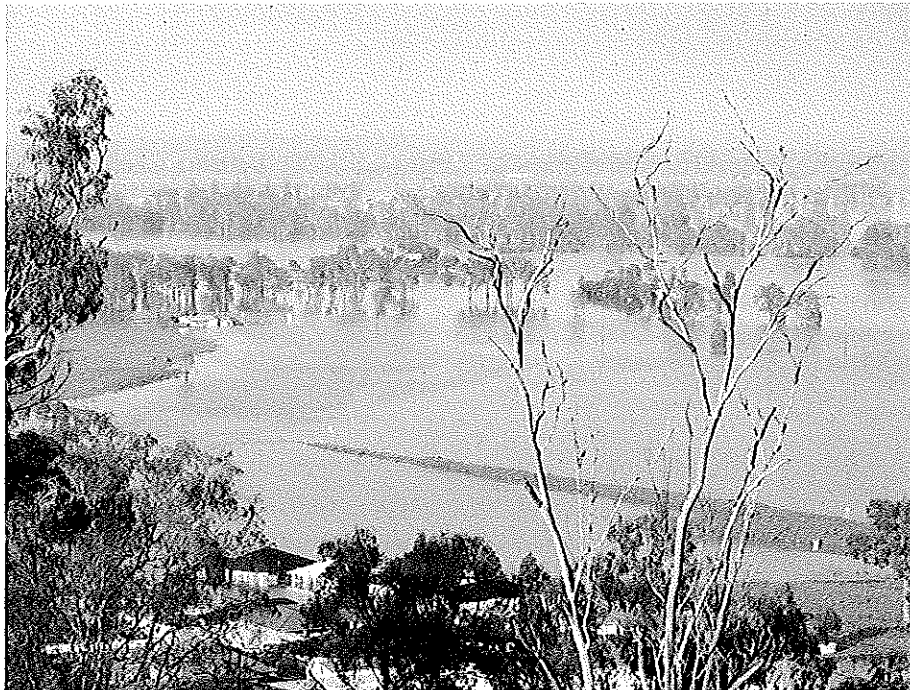


68. The above photograph was taken at 6.40pm on Tuesday 11 January 2011 and the water had covered the land in the top right hand corner to a further depth of one metre. This can be compared with the previous photograph.
69. Mrs Wilkinson had also heard that Wivenhoe Dam was at risk.
70. All the local runoff water from the rain on Tuesday morning was gone when the water started to come back up Ferny Gully from the Brisbane River and into Poole Road.
71. Just before dark on Tuesday 11 January 2011 I could see all the lights flashing in Poole Road and people shouting out.
72. The worst of the flooding happened during the night and the peak occurred between 12.00 midnight and 2.00am.
73. The water in Poole Road covered the roof of one house.
74. It went half way up the windows in some low set homes in Schmidt Road and in some went nearly to the ceiling.



Wednesday

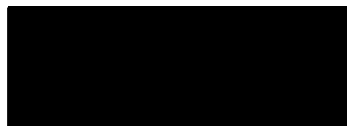
75. The water began to recede just before daylight on Wednesday morning.



76. Referring to the two photographs above, in the top photo the red/brown line across the centre is a sorghum patch. This patch is visible in the photo above para 65 half way up on the right hand side of the photo.
77. In the photograph immediately above, the houses in the bottom of the Brookside development are inundated. The isolated white house in the centre left of the photo above can be seen in the photo above para 68 between the branches of the tree in the foreground.
78. On Wednesday morning, on the farm, I saw freezers, refrigerators, 1,000 gal. water cubes, thousands of fish, poly styrene foam, onion bags, large sheets of plastic scattered throughout the farm, high in trees and on the ground, where the water had receded.
79. I then went into the Schmidt Road development below our hill and saw the damage.



80. I saw houses still sitting in water up to a depth of 1 – 1.5 metres as shown above. The strong flow of the water can be seen in the photograph above.



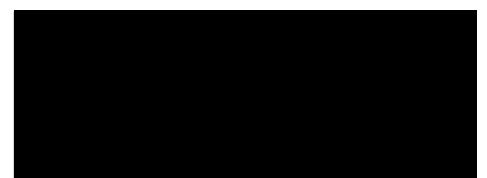
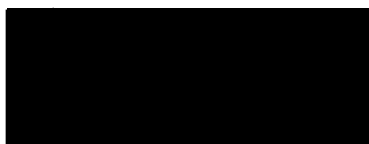
81. I saw two motor vehicles sideways in a garage where they should have been straight.

82. I saw debris to the top of fence lines

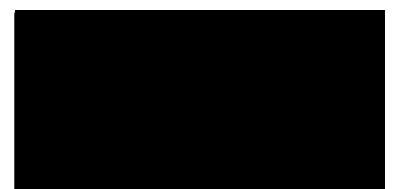
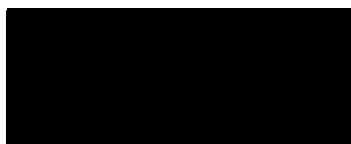


83. I saw fences wrecked. The dark line about one third up, across the above photograph is a fence line covered in debris.

84. On Wednesday afternoon my wife and I took one woman back to her house which she had not seen since leaving it the night before. When she walked in and saw it she went outside and vomited.

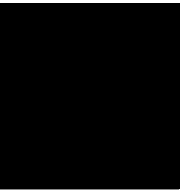


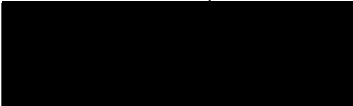
85. In the photograph above, the refrigerator is lying on its side after being lifted up by the water and pushing a hole, which is visible, through the ceiling above. A chair which had been lifted up by the water is visible on the rear bench. The table in the foreground is dry on its surface as it was lifted up and then lowered on to a magazine rack or other piece of furniture. The brown floor is mud, about two inches thick. The mud line on the kitchen curtain shows the water height.
86. The above house was not an isolated incident. Up and down Poole Road I saw houses with inches of mud and yards covered in silt. There were dead fish. I saw in other homes where refrigerators had been lifted up by the water and gone through the ceiling. I saw beds and free standing cupboards wrecked from the water. In some rooms the furniture was piled on top of each other – I saw a bed on top of a cupboard which was busted. In the hallway there were smashed cupboards. Where the windows had been open the rooms had been hit by a lot of water turbulence.
87. The walls were buckled and bowed.



- 88. I went home to get a forklift which I used to shift a full 2,000 gal water tank which had been washed from its yard to the middle of Schmidt Road.
- 89. I saw people in shock.
- 90. Both in Poole Road and Schmidt Road I saw water tanks, hot water systems, children's plastic forts and playground equipment washed out into the road.
- 91. It looked like how I imaged a war zone would look.
- 92. I saw an SES stall giving away toilet paper and food.
- 93. On Thursday and days following as I was cleaning up with other people in Poole Road I became aware from helpers of the extent of damage also suffered along Fielding Road and between Lowood and Fernvale.

AND I MAKE this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the *Oaths Act 1867*.

 Affirmed and Declared at ^{Brisbane} Lowood)
this 12th day of May 2011 in the)
presence of:)
1366


Signature of Declarant

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Solicitor