

Name of Witness	David Mark TOTENHOFER
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]
Address and contact details	[REDACTED]
Occupation	Community Economic Development Officer
Officer taking statement	Det Insp Mark Ainsworth
Date taken	13/4/2011

David Mark TOTENHOFER states;

1. I am a married man, [REDACTED] years of age and I reside with my family at [REDACTED] Highland Plains. This property is a 320 acre property located approximately 20 kilometres north of Oakey. We have rented the dwelling only at this location for the past three years but have lived in the Oakey District for the past 20 years. This residence was not affected by the recent January flooding however we were stranded at the house due to roads being cut off by flooding.
2. At the time of the floods I was employed by the Toowoomba Regional Council (TRC) as the Community Economic Development Officer for the Oakey District, however this position is part of a re-structure Council is undergoing. I have been employed with council for the past 10 years, with the first 7 years of that employment being with the Jondaryan Shire Council. This was up to the time when the council's amalgamation took place and since that time I have been employed at the TRC. The position of Community Economic Development Officer involves liaison with the Community and Community groups, assisting with funding to the community, co-ordinating activities such as Australia Day, ANZAC day activities, and supporting community initiatives. Basically the position provides a face for the TRC in the community.

Witness Signature: [REDACTED]  
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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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Telephone 1300 309 634  
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Exhibit Number: 186  
 QFCI  
 Date: 29/4/11  
 DM

3. I am currently Treasurer of Oakey Church Unlimited, a member of the Oakey High School P&C, and a Board member at St Monica's School. In the past I have been President of the Oakey High School P&C, and secretary of the Oakey Agricultural, Pastoral and Rodeo (Show) Society . In a previous position within Council, and previous employment, I was involved in event, project and volunteer management and community liaison.
  
4. I recall Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2011. On this date my family had been to Pittsworth and were returning along the Oakey-Pittsworth road between 4.30 and 6pm, and drove through flooded parts on that road. As we progressed further to our home along the Oakey-Cooyar, through flooded portions of the road , we could not get through the flood waters running over the Doctor's Creek crossing. As we could not get through we returned to Oakey and stayed there the night.
  
5. At about 5.30am on 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 I saw that Oakey Creek near the Bridge Street crossing had risen significantly and was about 5.5 metres on the gauge (higher than normal). It had rained significantly overnight, and on and off during this day. We attempted to go home about 10.30 am, but were unable to get through the Lagoon Creek, about 3 kms north of Oakey. By about 3pm on the same day we were able to make it through to our residence. On the following day we became aware that Oakey was flooded and we were basically isolated in our own home by flooded roads in all directions.
  
6. I recall the flood events of January, 2011. At this time I was on long service leave from the TRC. I commenced my leave on 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 and was due to return to work on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2011 (now extended to

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9<sup>th</sup> May). On 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 as a result of being aware of the flood events in Oakey, I contacted my work supervisor, Ian Stevenson, at that time Acting Oakey District Manager, and volunteered to return to work to provide assistance to the Oakey community. As a result at about 9am on 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 I returned to work. I remained there for the next three weeks assisting the community.

7. On returning to work, a colleague Karen King and I commenced doing an assessment around Oakey. This assessment included checking fuel and food supplies in town as well as assessing houses and residents affected by the flood. We recorded the houses we checked on maps provided by the Council then entered the checked residences on a data base. Whilst attending to the house visits on the afternoon of 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 we came across personnel from the Oakey Auxiliary Fire Brigade who were doing the same thing. As a result we divided up the affected areas and pooled information gleaned together. Later on I co-ordinated the clean up of effected houses, liaising with the Auxiliary Fire Brigade who were coordinating Rural Fire Brigades to wash out flooded houses. I also utilised corporate and other volunteers. The TRC conducted footpath clean-ups of debris in the Oakey area.

8. I also arranged with the Oakey branches of St Vincent's De Paul, Lifeline and Aussie Helpers to manage the donated items for the community. As part of this they utilised the Oakey Showgrounds for a couple of weeks to facilitate the storing and distribution of donated items.

9. With respect to keeping the community informed of what was occurring we commenced an information booth at the local shopping centre. This booth was unmanned but it did provide brochures informing the

Witness Signature

Signature of officer

community of services available including Queensland Health, Department of Communities, Centrelink, Building Services Authority and Premiers Relief Fund information that was helpful to them in this situation. This information was also posted on a community website [www.oakey.qld.au](http://www.oakey.qld.au).

10. During my liaison with the effected community I became aware of a couple of concerns that were circulating around the community. One common story was the lack of warning about the flood event. The flood waters rose quickly and people were not expecting it to get so high, or to flood the areas it did. There were various rumours about Cooby Dam, apparently distributed on social media sites (e.g. facebook) and word of mouth.

11. I have forwarded a submission to the Flood Commission of Inquiry outlining a number of issues I have concerns with regarding the flooding in Oakey. This submission is attached to my statement.

12. Basically my concerns can be summarised under the following headings:

- a. There was inadequate warning of potential flooding to Oakey residents.
- b. Accurate, reliable and timely information on the status and impact of Cooby Dam overflows was not available.
- c. The initial emergency response was not co-ordinated.
- d. There has been little analysis after this flood event in Oakey to learn the lessons of the flood.
- e. It would appear that no person or organisation was observing the effects or the bigger picture of creek rises, rainfall and the potential impact of Cooby Dam overflows on Oakey.

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13. The Oakey Creek meanders through Oakey and is normally quite benign. Occasionally it will rise in response to upstream and local rainfall, the worst result being the Lorrimer Street causeway being flooded, forcing drivers to detour through the town to gain access to the western side of town.

14. There is a depth gauge located on the corner of Bridge and Kent Streets between the road and railway bridges. I am not aware if this is monitored and records kept.

15. Cooby Dam is on a tributary of the Oakey Creek. It had been at very low levels for most of 2010 and before. It filled to capacity and began overflowing over the weekend of 8 – 9 January, 2011.

16. Record rainfall in the Oakey district during December and January resulted in the Oakey Creek rising to significant levels a number of times. As far as I am aware there are no official records of the Oakey Creek levels in Oakey. The following are personal observations and anecdotes:

- a. 19 December, 2010 – widespread flooding in the District, roads cut.
- b. 27 December, 2010 – Oakey Creek over 5 metres at the Bridge Street gauge. Widespread flooding and road damage.
- c. 9 January, 2011 – heavy rainfall. Roads cut and creek flooded.
- d. 10 January, 2011 – Oakey Creek at Bridge Street gauge peaked at 5.45m at approximately 5.30am. It peaked at a similar level at 9.30pm the same day. The flash flooding in Toowoomba sends huge volumes of water into Gowrie Creek.
- e. 11 January, 2011 – Oakey Creek floods Oakey.

17. In my opinion once the flooding event occurred in Oakey the Auxiliary Fire brigade performed to a very high level as did the emergency services and the TRC.

I also consider the Department of Communities and other state government departments did an excellent job in supporting the community, and collaborating with other agencies.

The Oakey SES displayed a lack of leadership and in my opinion did not contribute as much as they could have. This could be attributed to the early lack of coordination between the emergency services, and a lack of accurate information. I believe a number of the key SES staff were on leave at the time of this event.




D.M.TOTENHOFER

**Justices Act 1886**


I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 13/4/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 1-6 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

 Signature

Signed at Toowoomba this 19<sup>th</sup> day of April 2011

Witness Signature 

Signature of officer 

## Oakey Floods

- Almost 200 properties in Oakey, including 122 homes, were unexpectedly flooded on Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup> 2011 when the Oakey Creek broke its banks, joining up with Lagoon Creek, causing flooding in unexpected and never before flooded areas.
- Residents are asking why they were not warned of the potential flooding.
- Much danger to life and damage to moveable property could have been averted if an early warning of potential flooding was provided
- While no one was injured or killed, many were rescued or got themselves out of quite dangerous situations
- Cooby Dam is on the headwaters of the Oakey Creek, collecting water from 1/3 of the catchment of the Oakey Creek. It is a water supply for the Toowoomba Regional Council
- Cooby Dam filled and began overflowing on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January.
- The Cooby Dam Emergency Management Plan calls for downstream residents and authorities, including the Oakey Service Centre of Toowoomba Regional Council and emergency services (Police, Fire Services, Ambulance, SES), to be notified at certain times as water levels in the Dam rise, overflow, and reach certain levels of overflowing.
- It would appear that these notifications were not made to the Oakey Service Centre of Toowoomba Regional Council, or the emergency services in Oakey.
- If the state of Cooby Dam overflows were known an emergency response could have been initiated earlier, including warnings to residents.
- Both Council and Emergency Services personnel in Oakey made enquiries about Cooby Dam water levels on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January, but the details were not forthcoming. Some were told Cooby Dam overflows would have minimal impact on flooding in Oakey.
- The Emergency Response in Oakey was not well coordinated:
  - o There was no clear understanding of who within Council was responsible for coordinating a response, and key Council personnel were on leave and or unable to get to Oakey due to being isolated on rural properties by floodwaters

- There was no Oakey Local Emergency Plan to follow
- The Oakey SES Officer in Charge was on leave, and their response was not up to expectations
- While Flooding occurred at c. 11.30 am on Tuesday 11 January, and evacuations had begun shortly before that, there was no meeting between Oakey Toowoomba Regional Council Staff and Emergency Services personnel until Wednesday afternoon, arranged 'on the run' when Council staff and Fire Services staff met while assessing needs of flooded residents, and arranged a meeting for later on in the day
- Once they had met, there was good cooperation in coordinating the immediate clean up

So there are two questions that need to be answered as regards the Oakey floods:

1. **Was the Cooby Dam Emergency Plan Activated?**
2. **Who is responsible for monitoring** the water flows and creek rises that impact Oakey in this scenario, and for analysing other data (e.g. rainfall) to put together some kind of picture of what is happening and could happen, and **making the call to activate an emergency plan?**

**David Totenhofer**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Qld 4401

P [REDACTED]

M [REDACTED]

E [REDACTED]



**Norman Fry**

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**From:** David Totenhofer  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 25 January 2011 1:55 PM  
**To:** Ian Stevenson; Jason Bradshaw; Norman Fry  
**Attachments:** DOCS-4056265.DOC.DRF

Attached is my report on the Oakey Flood of January 11 th 2011

Jason, can you pass this on to the the Director, Water Services, as they requested to review any comments on Cooby Dam

I am happy to discuss the important issues that will arise from this

**David Totenhofer**  
**Community & Economic Development Officer**  
Community Development & Facilities  
Oakey Service Centre

**T:** [REDACTED]  
**F:** [REDACTED]  
**M:** [REDACTED]  
**E:** [REDACTED]  
**W:** <http://www.toowoombaRC.qld.gov.au/>  
Toowoomba Regional Council  
PO Box 3021, Toowoomba Village Fair QLD 4350

*"Don't judge each day by the harvests you reap,  
but by the seeds you plant". (R.L. Stevenson)*

In January 2011 substantial rain began on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January, (50.4 mm to 9am 6/1/2011), continuing over the next few days, with heavy falls from Sunday 9 January to Wednesday 12 January.

Over the first 12 days in January 6 to 12, a total of 329 mm fell in Oakey, 4 times the monthly average for the entire month January.

#### **Oakey Rainfall to 9am (mm) – 1 to 13 January 2011**

<u>Sat 01/01/2011</u>	<b>0.0</b>
<u>Sun 02/01/2011</u>	<b>0.2</b>
<u>Mon 03/01/2011</u>	<b>8.8</b>
<u>Tue 04/01/2011</u>	<b>0.4</b>
<u>Wed 05/01/2011</u>	<b>0.0</b>
<u>Thu 06/01/2011</u>	<b>50.4</b>
<u>Fri 07/01/2011</u>	<b>10.2</b>
<u>Sat 08/01/2011</u>	<b>11.0</b>
<u>Sun 09/01/2011</u>	<b>4.2</b>
<u>Mon 10/01/2011</u>	<b>64.0</b>
<u>Tue 11/01/2011</u>	<b>78.8</b>
<u>Wed 12/01/2011</u>	<b>101.0</b>
<u>Thu 13/01/2011</u>	<b>0.0</b>

Source: Weatherzone website > Home > Queensland > Darling Downs > Oakey Ap Daily Summaries  
<http://www.weatherzone.com.au/station.jsp?it=site&lc=41359&list=ds> Accessed 20 January 2011

#### **Oakey Creek**

The Oakey Creek runs through the middle of Oakey, crossed by a road bridge on Bridge Street, and rail bridge carrying the main Western rail line, and a causeway on Lorrimer Street.

Oakey Creek is fed by tributaries:

- Little Gomaren Creek
- Meringandan Creek
- Cooby Creek, which headwaters are dammed by the Cooby Dam.

Westbrook Creek connects to the Oakey Creek just south of town, c. 600m south of the Warrego Highway, c 750m west of the Oakey – Pittsworth Road.

Gowrie Creek joins the Westbrook Creek c. 3500m upstream from the above junction, east of Oakey Pittsworth Road, south of where the Gowrie Creek crosses the Warrego Highway, c 2.5 km east of Oakey.

Oakey District Office is not aware of any records being kept of Oakey Creek levels in Oakey, or any other place along the creek to its headwaters at the

Doctors Creek is a tributary of Oakey creek, joining it near the Jondaryan Golf Course after it crosses the Railway Line and Warrego Highway east of the Jondaryan Mt Tyson Road. It crosses flat plains north of the Oakey Army Aviation Centre. There is some evidence that these waters, and drainage from the Army Aviation Centre may have joined the Oakey Creek waters to contribute to flooding of the northern residential area and north-east Rural Residential area and the Showgrounds.

### Cooby Dam

The record December rainfall saturated the catchment of the Oakey Creek, and raised the level of Cooby Dam from very low levels during 2010 to 80% capacity by the by 31 December 2010 (14,000 MI of 18,000 MI).

The TRC Website records Cooby Dam storage of almost 15,000 MI (83%) on Friday 7 January.

Cooby Dam reached 100% and went over the spillway at 7.23 pm on Sunday 9 January 2011, reaching a peak of c.800 mm depth over the spillway in the early hours of Monday morning.

The uncontrolled overflow continued at decreasing levels, then spiked quickly to a peak of c 1.25m between 2 pm and 6 pm on Monday 10 January, then continued to overflow at decreasing, levels overnight.

Cooby Dam spillway overflow spiked again, reaching a maximum depth of 1.55 m over the spillway at 7.43 am on Tuesday 11 January 2011, falling slowly from that peak to a steady 0.1 m depth over the spillway at the time of this report.

### **Cooby Dam Storage, 6 to 20 January 2011**

Thursday, 20 January 2011	18,592
Wednesday, 19 January 2011	18,728
Tuesday, 18 January 2011	18,429
Sunday, 16 January 2011	18,484
Friday, 14 January 2011	21,284
Thursday, 13 January 2011	21,772
Wednesday, 12 January 2011	22,112
Tuesday, 11 January 2011	26,303
Monday, 10 January 2011	22,461

Cooby Dam spillway overflow reached 1.55 m over the spillway at 7.43 am on Tuesday 11 January 2011.

As far as we are aware no Oakey Service Centre staff were notified of Flood Event 2.

### Toowoomba Flash Flood

Intense rainfall on the peak of the Great Dividing Range north and south of Toowoomba on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January caused a flash flood in East and West creeks, details of which will be recorded in other reports.

These creeks feed into the Gowrie Creek which flows west of Toowoomba through Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe to join the Westbrook creek just before it joins the Oakey Creek south of Oakey

While this water does not flow through Oakey, the additional flow it caused in the Gowrie/Westbrook creek systems and the Oakey Creek below Oakey would have contributed significantly to 'backing up' Oakey Creek in Oakey.

### Climate Summary

Oakey's flood surge was contributed to by a combination of:

- Very high and continual rainfall on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday 9, 10 and 11 of January in the town and Oakey Creek catchment areas sustaining high water levels in the Oakey Creek
- Significant additional flows in the Oakey Creek due to Cooby Dam overflowing on Sunday 9 January, and continuing to do so at higher levels on Monday and Tuesday.
- The spreading of Doctors Creek and Army Aviation Training Centre drainage
- The 'backing up' of the Oakey Creek through Oakey as the huge volumes of water from Toowoomba's floods reached the Westbrook and Oakey creeks, on Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 January.

### Impact

Houses and property were flooded along the Oakey Creek and in known low lying areas and drainage channels in town.

The flooding of the Donely/Davidson/Beale/Stanley/Fitzpatrick and Racecourse Roads north of the railway line was unexpected and un-prepared for. It is attributed to the water being dammed by the railway line embankment once the water rose to the level of the railway bridge, and across land flow from Doctors Creek and the northern plains.

- Homes inundated	128
- Property (Shed and Land) inundated	26 (additional to above)
- Property only inundated	43

assisting or did they have a first aid officer available to assist the evacuees? This was unknown.

- Throughout the afternoon our staff tried to co-ordinate efforts to ensure all evacuees were registered and okay, attempted to give counselling for distressed residents, locate missing residents both from verbal community requests and from people ringing Council to locate them/my mobile, attempted to contain inside Auditorium etc
- It is my belief that the Oakey Cultural Centre was going to be used as an Evacuation Centre on this day and I expected relevant "qualified" agencies at the Centre This was not the case and I was advised around 2:30pm that Residents would be bussed to the Toowoomba Grammar School that afternoon after I was attempting to work out Food, Bedding etc
- Librarian left mid afternoon and took the list of evacuees with her.
- In conjunction with two Oakey Police Officers and One Constable from Dalby (who resides in Oakey) we co-ordinated the evacuation of residents to buses. The Police Officer listed names of all people who boarded the bus to Grammar. This was then relayed through to Paul Reynolds at Grammar who was to meet the residents. Oakey Police seemed unsure of the co-ordination efforts of disaster personnel in Oakey. About 60 residents were evacuated to Grammar.
- Chronicle reporters where in attendance during the afternoon and requested interviews - were referred to TRC Corporate Communications
- Channel 7 reporters arrived - after evacuees had left on buses. Arranged transport for them to Toowoomba.
- TRC Disaster Management Plan was emailed later that day and flooding in Oakey was deemed to be "Low Risk"
- We then received notification that Residents from the local QCWA Rest Home were evacuated to the Uniting Church Hall. Ian Stevenson advised that we were going to house these residents at the Oakey Cultural Centre overnight and that they would be bringing there own medication, food etc. I was not in favour of this as for the Health and Safety of these people and in the event of more flooding, hospitalisation etc being the main issues. It appeared there was a problem with their staffing and travel to Toowoomba. Further discussions took place in conjunction with the Police and the decision was made to evacuate these 40 residents to Grammar.
- Building was closed at 4:30pm

#### **For the future:**

- **Better Co-ordination and Communication** of all Emergency Services, Council and key Stakeholder Community Personnel - before during and after a Disaster
- Oakey Cultural Centre staff to receive information as to what the Disaster Management Plan entails and what are our key responsibilities and job roles are.
- TRC's Disaster Management Centre needs to have clear lines of communication with local TRC staff during a Disaster - needs to be

- TRC Oakey would become the call centre for Oakey flood relief enquires.
- TRC Oakey would pass on house washout requests to QFRS
- QFRS would task the Rural Fire Brigades to wash out houses
- TRC Oakey would task volunteer groups to lift put furniture and other tasks the QFRS could not do.
- QFRS would pass on tasks they could not do TRC Oakey

#### **Thursday 13 January**

- Met with Qld Fire & Rescue for 8.30 am briefing.
- 16 Rural Fire Brigades were deployed cleaning houses
- TRC Oakey and contractors continued collecting rubbish from kerbsides
- TRC Oakey was received many offers of assistance, including:
  - Volunteers from various corporate organisations, and individuals, were deployed as teams to do furniture liftouts, clean ups etc.
  - Volunteer corporates with trucks, backhoes, pumping equipment, were deployed on rubbish collection and pumping water from under houses
  - Offers of household goods, accommodation, supplies were referred to Oakey Lifeline and St Vincent DePaul shops, after discussion with these agencies.
  - Oakey Hospital Bus was used to transport volunteer crews between jobs
- TRC Oakey co-ordinated the offers received direct by the TRC Oakey Office, matching tasks with assistance offered.
- The widespread disaster situation that TRC was dealing with in Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley as well as Oakey resulted in communication of information for Oakey residents through media and TRC channels was not happening in a timely manner, so flood relief information was posted on an Oakey Community Website ([www.oakey.qld.au](http://www.oakey.qld.au)), and this was communicated through local networks
- A Department of Communities Community Recovery team was established in the TRC Oakey meeting room, and we liaised closely with them as they went house to house
- Catering was set up in the Cultural Centre for Emergency Services personnel and volunteers
- Staple grocery items (Milk, bread, meat, flour, sugar, dairy products) soon disappeared off shelves, but people still seemed to be able to get food
- Fuel supplies remained adequate
- 20 SES volunteers from SA arrived mid afternoon, and were deployed by the QFRS in house lift-outs and moving rubbish to the footpath for collection. QFRS decided to let them go to more needy places, as we had adequate local volunteers.

#### **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

- Funding repairs, i.e. insurance issues
  - o Were they insured?
  - o Will the insurance cover the damage?
  - o If not, how those repairs are effected
- Coordinating donations
  - o What is being offered?
  - o Where can this be stored?
  - o Who is in need of it?
  - o How are those best matched?

## **Emergency Management**

There are a range of issue to discuss within Council and the community, including:

- Flood mapping for Oakey – currently being attended to by TRC Oakey staff
- Early warning systems - information and communication of important information, e.g. Cooby Dam spillway levels
- Improve local emergency management coordination – Oakey QFRS, Oakey Police, Oakey TRC, Oakey SES, Oakey welfare agencies.
- The capacity of the Oakey SES
- Evacuation procedures, centres, equipment (bedding etc) and responsibilities
- Better communication with TRC Disaster Coordination Centre. No Oakey related information was communicated to Oakey Service centre Staff from the DCC.
- Timely flow of information
- Timely and effective communication with the public
- Clarification of roles
- Clarification of policies and procedures, e.g.
  - o Volunteer deployment
  - o Media liaison

## **Acknowledgements**

These people and organisations need acknowledgement for their support of the Flood response efforts in Oakey from where I sat:

- Ian Stevenson, Acting Oakey District manager
- Karen King, Events Co-ordinator, Oakey
- Carl Baxter, GIS Officer, Oakey
- Jackie Henningsen, Trainee, Oakey
- Elizabeth Jones, Acting Community Development Officer, Oakey
- Angela Cowan, Fiona Smith, Renee Anderson, - Customer Service staff, Oakey Service Centre
- Christine Buckley, contract caterer
- Rodney Mason, Auxiliary Captain, QFRS Oakey, and his Oakey QFRS Auxiliary team
- Rural Fire Brigades
- Oakey and Jondaryan Police
- JT Drilling Company

**Norman Fry**

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**From:** davidtot [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 2 February 2011 1:35 AM  
**To:** Ian Stevenson; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Norman Fry; Elizabeth Jones  
**Subject:** Cooby Dam/Oakey Floods  
Ian/Jason

I would like to contribute the following to any debrief of the Oakey Flood, in addition to my report

**Cooby Dam impact on Oakey Floods**

- Almost 200 properties in Oakey, including 122 homes, were unexpectedly flooded on Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup> 2011.
- Residents are asking why they were not warned of the potential flooding.
- As far as we can ascertain, this was a record flood for Oakey
- Nobody is suggesting the flooding could have been prevented, but much danger to life and damage to moveable property could have been averted if an early warning of potential flooding was provided
- While no one was injured or killed, many were rescued or got themselves out of quite dangerous situations
  
- Council has released a statement that attempts to deflect responsibility from Cooby Dam overflows for flooding in Oakey
  
- As I ended up after the event coordinating a community and council response to the disaster, answers are sought to the following queries associated statements that need either confirmation or denial, so we can attempt to do better next time in warning residents, and incorporate the lessons learned into a Disaster Management Plan for Oakey

**1. Was the Cooby Dam Emergency Plan Activated?**

The Plan, issued to Council Service Centres and Emergency Services agencies, details water level

- o Triggers for notifying downstream farms
- o Triggers for notifying Emergency Services
- o Triggers for notifying Council staff

**2. Who is responsible for monitoring the water flows and creek rises that impact Oakey in this scenario, and for analysing other data (e.g. rainfall) to put together some kind of picture of what is happening and could happen, and making the call to activate an emergency plan?**

- o Is this a Council responsibility?
- o Does this role sit within the Oakey Service Centre, or elsewhere - i.e. Disaster Management staff?
- o If the latter, what happens when there are simultaneous disasters across (and adjacent to) the region, as was the case in these events?
- o What happens when key people are on leave?

Council's media statement reads, in part:

"In actual fact, Cooby Dam lessened the flood peak that was experienced in Oakey.

"Cooby Dam held back the flows from at least one third of the catchment, thus lessening the peak flood in Oakey.



9. While the peak flow over Cooby may not have contributed to the peak in Oakey creek on Tuesday 11 January, earlier Cooby spillway flows, which were significant and prolonged, could well have been a contributing factor, and knowledge of these levels, in combination with other climatic data and observations, would have allowed earlier decisions to be made and information to be relayed to residents.

Cr Antonio said this tended to indicate that the extreme rainfall that occurred on January 9 to 11 over the whole catchment was the cause of the flooding in Oakey.”

10. The extreme rainfall was very significant in the Oakey flood, as was the impact of Toowoomba Floodwaters in backing up the Westbrook/Gowrie creeks, but the overflow of Cooby has also to be considered as a significant contributing factor.

The purpose of this treatise is not to apportion blame, but to establish how we can do better in the future, in which case all scenarios must be examined with an open mind and a generous consideration that all are doing their best to serve the communities that we hold responsibilities for and to.

David Totenhofer  
Disaster response coordinator, Oakey floods

**David Totenhofer**

[REDACTED]  
Highland Plains Qld 4401

P [REDACTED]

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