

Our Names are Anthony and Karen Leighton and our address is [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Bellbowrie. We thank you for letting us have our say.

We would like to firstly comment on our experiences in the January 2011 flood and then on Brisbane City Council's (BCC) practice of facilitating new development on flood prone land and the impact that practice can have on people.

We are one of three families in a dangerous, modern subdivision that were each heavily impacted and traumatised by the 2011 flood event, the other two addresses are [REDACTED] Bellbowrie who are our immediate neighbours, one on either side.

I ask that you look at these three (3) properties on the "nearmap" website for the date of 13 January 2011. At the height of the flood (3m higher than the nearmap photo) these three houses were effectively 100m out in the middle of the river with us in them. We all knew the 100m of water between us and our front street was 10 – 12 meters deep, and that the raging river itself blocked our escape route on our other three sides. It was traumatic to say the least.

On the Wednesday of the flood (12/01/2011) two of these three families (mine included) were evacuated by the SES across a narrow ridge on the Moggill golf course to a boat and then back to our suburb, Bellbowrie, which was itself isolated, although we had no idea of this (or anything else) at the time.

Before this, a young mother of two young girls (aged 5&3) from the third family actually swam 60 – 70 meters across the flooded river before her

house flooded because her husband was away on a business trip and she did not have any alternative.

It happened - and it is due to the terrible town planning of our subdivision which allowed our large (acreage) residential lots to be developed on flood prone land with only a tiny house pad at minimum flood level. We could not get to our suburban Bellbowrie street network, and therefore our suburb, from the Monday night before the flood until 8 days after the flood. I have been advised by BCC (from the office of the lord mayor) in writing before the flood that according to BCC's requirements, this scenario represents sufficient flood immunity.

Despite being constructed as recently as 2001, our residence:

- Is located 100% within a designated waterway;
- Is a single storey dwelling;
- Is constructed on an “anthill” lot comprising two acres of very low land with a tiny house pad built up by fill by developers to the lowest allowable building level with respect to the Q100 line;
- Has a shared (three houses), flood prone 150m long driveway that is a full 10 meters lower than the house (the driveway is almost at the level of the river) which prevented our escape to safety in the flood;
- Is zoned residential despite 90 % of it laying a long way below the designated flood level;
- Is built on a narrow “artificial peninsula” created by “fill” that results in it being effectively stuck 100M out in the river in a flood;

- Is surrounded on three sides by the Brisbane River which is in very close proximity, and is separated from our suburb of Bellbowrie on its fourth side by an enormous 90M wide X 11M deep gully (through which our driveway runs) that is really part of the river and joins the river just down stream from us;
- Is a very very dangerous place to be in a flood; and
- Was allowed to occur and is compliant with BCC development requirements.

In short our subdivision should never have been allowed for many of the above reasons, yet it was.

What this demonstrates is that BCC's requirements are not able to prescribe sufficient protection to allow safe development on flood prone land, Mother Nature can always throw up scenarios that BCC's requirements do not allow for, or Developers will find innovative ways to vitiate BCC's requirements over time as memories of the flood fade. In our opinion BCC's development requirements for flood prone land are no better than the dam manuals, the users may follow them to the letter yet still end up with an unacceptable outcome that could be avoided through common sense.

One example of BCC's requirements being inadequate is the Q100 line which BCC now seemed to have abandoned (along with all the people they allowed to build at that level). We purchased our property knowing that it was constructed to the Q100 flood line which we understood to be the highest flood in the previous 100 years. After the flood we learned that our understanding of the Q100 line was incorrect. When we contacted BCC to point out that their imaginary Q100 flood line was

lower than mother natures actual Q37 line (1974 & 2011) someone spent ten minutes explaining to us that the Q100 flood line does not actually mean a one in one hundred year flood, apparently it has something to do with an AEP? Excuse our language but what a load of rubbish, any Government communication tool as important and seemingly simple as the Q100 symbol must accurately portray what it seems to portray – anything else at all is misleading. In fact we feel as though we have been purposely misled with this symbol. Why has it even got a 100 in it at all?

Another prime example of BCC's inability to prescribe safe subdivision of flood prone land is their approval of the rezoning of the Moggill golf course land from rural to residential as part of the approved draft of the Moggill Bellbowrie neighbourhood plan.

This land was extensively flooded in January 2011, we personally saw 20 – 30 acres of it under meters and meters of water (all of which is to be rezoned residential), in fact our family was evacuated across part of this land, by the SES, **IN A BOAT**– IT IS NO PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE.

What is really alarming is that BCC have approved this draft since the 2011 flood (June 2011) and are intent on implementing it before this inquiry returns its findings. We don't know why this is?

We would like to point out three major issues that BCC either ignored or failed to address as part of this process, there are bound to be others:

1. Rezoning the Moggill Golf Course land from rural to residential would remove our (and our two neighbours') only possible escape

route to any higher ground at all the next time the river floods by allowing residential fences to be constructed right at our back doors irrespective of our protestations. Once residential fences eventuate on our back boundaries, the next time the river floods all the occupants from our house and our two neighbours will have to swim a long way across the flooded river, like our neighbour did in this flood, to escape. There is no other route. If anyone is elderly, disabled, overweight, can't swim, has children etc. there could very easily be a fatality.

2. The Moggill Golf course land is wholly located within a bend in the river. It is very obvious that in previous floods this river has cut straight across the mouth of this bend, in fact it nearly did in January 2011 (see the QLD reconstruction authority website/interactive map for 108 Weekes Road Moggill). Should this land be rezoned from rural to residential, during some flood in the future dozens of houses are guaranteed to end up stranded on a small ridge, out in the middle of the raging river.
3. Although it may seem counter intuitive BCC's assumed intention of allowing development below their latest flood line in 2 storey houses (the habitable floor level principle) in this particular location will be more dangerous to people than single storey dwellings. When (not if) this land floods again people must get out – fast, otherwise the river could (and will at some stage) cut off their only escape route, stranding them out in the middle of a raging river – this will happen, we witnessed peoples behaviour pre flood and people didn't really believe it was coming until it did, despite the authorities best attempts to get people to evacuate. Allowing two storey housing in this particular location will result

in some people “going up instead of getting out” which will prove to be catastrophic.

Also, as part of the Moggill Bellbowrie neighbourhood plan BCC is rezoning all of the flooded properties along Birkin Rd, Bellbowrie from low density residential to low/medium density residential (three storeys). It is not the decision to rezone these properties that we disagree with, what disagree with is that the reason BCC gives for rezoning this land to low/medium residential, is that it gives older people the option of “ageing in place”. Honestly, who would put their elderly people in three storey dwellings on land that floods heavily? BCC should just be honest with their reasoning.

We believe BCC’s true motivation in rezoning this land to 3 storey medium residential is to help them comply with the State Govt requirement for BCC to Provide 130,000 + new dwellings in the coming years.

In fact we believe many of BCC’s poor development decisions on flood prone land – including the Moggill Golf Course land – could be traced back to this requirement.

In summary, this was not an overly large flood for this river and, provided we learn lessons from it, it may provide an opportunity to prevent further heartache in the future. We would like to see the following implemented as part of the flood response:

1. The State Government should remove the mandated quota for how many new dwellings BCC must provide for;

2. Not one square centimetre of land that is below the 2011 flood level + 1 meter, should be rezoned residential – irrespective of multi storey housing, BLE's, or “habitable living areas”;
3. The urban footprint contained in the South East Queensland Regional Plan should be modified to remove all land below the 2011 flood level + 1 meter from it – even if this results in “islands” of lower lands within its boundaries, but exorcised from it;
4. Free BCC Flood Maps that show actual historical flood levels should be provided to residents, not incorrect, misleading, manipulated, fictitious symbols such as the Q100;
5. Immediate intervention to prevent the implementation of the Moggill Bellbowrie Neighbourhood Plan prior to this inquiry returning its findings;
6. Councils should be prevented from allowing developers to attempt marginal (at best) subdivisions of the low golf courses that lay along the river/s, including; Sandy Gallop, Karana Downs, Wolston Park, Moggill, Mcleod, Jindalee, Oxley, St Lucia, Indooroopilly and The Brisbane Golf Club on Fairfield Rd.
– THEY ARE GOLF COURSES BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO LOW;
7. People's behaviour patterns should be taken into account when developing BCC's building code requirements (both for flood and bushfire). Many people were in denial regarding this flood until it was too late;
8. BCC should not allow any “Greenfield” residential dwellings at all to be constructed on land that went under water in Jan 2011 + 1 meter; and
9. BCC must recognise (and make basic provisions for) that occasionally floods substantially larger than the January 2011 flood

will occur in this river. Whist ever people can gradually “back up a hill” or road, most will be safe but if council allow large developments on relatively small, low parcels of land that will be cut off from safety in the larger floods, it will prove catastrophic.

Once again we thank you for letting us have our say, we believe it is the right thing for us to do. It would be very easy for us to sell our property to an unsuspecting buyer and move to a safer residence however we do not intend to do this as we could not live with ourselves if we did so and something happened to the buyers (or their children) in future floods.

We believe our best course of action is to write to this inquiry (and BCC) in an attempt to stop further development on flood prone land which would benefit many unknown families in the future without them even being aware of it.

Regards,

Anthony & Karen Leighton