

4th March 2011

I wish to make a submission to the flood enquiry as myself and my family have been severely affected by the floods. We lived in Fig Tree Pocket at [REDACTED] Ningana Street. We have had to evacuate our home and will be living in rental accommodation for at least the next 12 months.

Our house was submerged 40cm into the second floor. Most of our belongings have been lost and our block has been significantly eroded. Part of our land was washed away into Cubberla Creek. The garden I have spent the last three and a half years replanting after the drought has been mostly destroyed. It is likely the value of the land has significantly diminished. Owing to its history of severe flooding in 1974 and now in the recent event, we are not even sure whether we should attempt re-building there. We don't feel any confidence in its suitability as a residential block. When our land was zoned for residential use in the 1960's, clearly very little was known about its real flood risk. Would it be approved for residential use based on what is now known? I would hope not.

The main issue I would like to express an opinion about relates to the management of the Wivenhoe dam. We were falsely, as it turns out, reassured that the presence of the dam should prevent another severe flood before we purchased at the above address in 2007. I believe that the horrible events we and others lived through in the days following January 11th could largely have been avoided if Wivenhoe's primary role as a flood mitigation dam had been adhered to. If the state needs more water storage, that is a separate issue.

The rainfall predictions for the Summer of 2010/ 2011 all indicated a very wet season, in accordance with the established La Nina weather pattern. High rainfalls over the Summer were to follow what had already been a wet Spring. Why then, was the dam kept full at the beginning of the Summer?

Why was water not let out as it entered the dam in order to leave room for predicted inflows? If the dam had been retained at, perhaps, 80% of capacity, at the beginning of the Summer there would have been no need for a vast volume of water to be released to prevent the dam being overtopped on the Sunday preceding the floods.

Given the large population growths in Brisbane since 1974, many more people have been affected by this event than were affected 37 years ago. I don't think it is acceptable to flood a major city every generation if measures could have been adopted to prevent such an event.

I understand that the dam managers followed the protocols in their manual, but I am suggesting that the protocols need to be changed. Flood mitigation needs to be placed at the forefront of all activities relating to management of the dam. Thankyou for the opportunity to put forward my views.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Felicity Heale.