

The concerns I am addressing are relevant to the matter of “land use planning” which is included in the Commission of Inquiry’s Terms of Reference.

It is imperative that the government be made aware of and give serious consideration to the imminent effects of the numerous levee banks now being installed by property owners along the banks of water ways in the south east and in particular, the Lockyer Creek.

We and others in this area are witnessing extreme measures being taken by people on nearby properties to prevent flood waters from breaking the banks of the creek and inundating their land. These people are changing the natural flow of water in the creek, posing serious threat to people and property on neighbouring land.

Our neighbour has constructed an incredibly high levee bank along the whole perimeter of his property that is girt by creek bank. This will cause a much greater volume of flood water at vastly increased speed to traverse through our property instead of following its natural course, causing irreparable damage to our farming land and severe damage to or loss of our structures, equipment and belongings, including our dwelling. This is to say nothing of the effects their actions will have on other neighbours. They have given no regard to the obvious consequences for us and other properties across the other side of the creek. Without government intervention, the only way for us to reduce the risk to ourselves would be to construct a comparable levee around our own place. This is not a viable option as there are other properties both up and down stream of us who would be severely affected by such action. There are several examples of this type of situation throughout the region.

Some residents in this area who stand to be severely affected by the consequences of levee banks have attempted to seek assistance from the relevant state government department and its representatives, including the minister, only to be advised that there is no legislation in place to allow that department to take action against people building levee banks along the Lockyer Creek.

In times of flooding, people base their preparation efforts and evacuation procedures on their knowledge of previous events. These methods will become completely unreliable as levee banks will significantly alter the known course of flood waters, increasing flooding in areas that are already susceptible to inundation and submerging properties that are not normally affected, including unsuspecting urban and residential areas. If levee banks are allowed to be constructed without restriction, local residents and businesses will not have an understanding of what is likely to occur, reducing their ability to be prepared and aware of affects on surrounding roads and other public infrastructure, leaving them highly likely to suffer loss of life and property in the next flood event.

The intent of the Commission’s report is to make recommendations to improve the preparation and planning for future flood events and implement legislative changes needed to better protect life and property.

The report needs to recommend that legislation to regulate and manage levee banks be immediately implemented. The government cannot possibly improve planning and preparation for future flood events if property owners are allowed to affect the flow of

water now and into the future. Any hydrology models based on the recent event will be totally useless for predictions and warnings in the next event as levee banks will ultimately change all possibilities.

The government has ownership of the creek beds and should have the authority to enforce anyone seeking to install a levee bank to obtain a permit and adhere to strict conditions. There should be a requirement to have a suitably qualified engineer prepare a full report detailing the impact on the surrounding properties and environment. This report should be made available to the interested public and scrutinised in detail by the government prior to any approval being given. The government should also be given authority to insist that levee banks installed to date be removed.

We and others in this district are sincerely concerned that continued lack of management of levee banks will directly result in greater loss of life and property in future flood events. Should the government fail to implement control measures it will be blatant negligence on their behalf resulting in grave loss to the people which could have been prevented. This is a serious matter of safety for the community requiring the government to establish and exercise appropriate power.

Any area without a levee bank is now exposed to the threat of an inland tsunami kind of event. We are all aware of the grave suffering inflicted on human life when this occurs.