


15th September 2011

The Honourable Justice Catherine Holmes
Commissioner
Queensland Floods Commission

Dear Commissioner,

Re: Inappropriate development in Bremer River floodplain – North Ipswich Railway Workshops Site

Further to our submission to the Commission we make the following additional points:

1. State Government authority for approvals in flood-prone zones

In correspondence with the Ipswich City Council (ICC) Planning Department I asked whether any future applications on this land would be code assessable or impact assessable. The reply suggests that the developer would have two avenues to continue the development on the site. I quote:

“...the first would be to make an application under the preliminary approval issued as part of the State Government Minister for State Development and Innovation's 'ministerial call in' decision. This preliminary approval has a number of different precincts identified over the subject land, with each precinct having an attended development table which prescribes the level of assessment required different types of development and uses. Depending on the use applied for and the precinct that the land is included in, it will determine whether the application is code assessable or impact assessable.”

This implies that the State Government is still a controlling party to the development on this land. The developer has made it quite clear that the land in question is to be used for medium/high-density dwellings, all to be constructed **below of the 1974 flood line** (21-22m). This would surely make the State government liable in the event of another flood.

In the event of the State Government being asked by Leda to approve building development below the 1974 flood line on the site, (ie planned hundreds of residential units for Lot 54) we call for the Commission to recommend that the Government to decline approval. This should apply to any marginal floodplain development proposals.

2. Mandatory 3rd party review of complex sites

There has never been any 3rd party review of the development proposal for this site. I and other local residents have serious concerns about the adequacy of the developer's hydrology study justifying the earthworks on the site because it uses parameters that are inconsistent with appropriate risk analysis for a stretch of the river like this.

The one-dimensional Mike 11 study used to support this development, and the number of cross-sections used in it are completely inadequate to arrive at velocity distributions and to ascertain flood hazard vectors. A Mike 21 study, used as a matter of course by other councils, has been the industry standard for some years.

In the 2011 flood, the flow patterns observed were strongest on the eastern bank of the river. The effect of the earthworks will redirect these strong flows onto the western bank (Figure 1).

The fact that a number of post '74 developments were inundated in the 2011 flood demonstrates that the criteria that the ICC planning department used **and continues to use** for floodplain developments are inadequate.

Third party reviews of development proposals for complex sites such as the North Ipswich Railway Workshops site should be mandatory. Before ICC or State Government decide on any future approvals for this site (ie DA for residential units on Lot 54) they should require the developer to provide 3rd party reviews of contaminated fill containment and flood hazard for the site and surrounding suburbs.

3. Mandatory TLPI adopted level for any future development applications

We have been advised that development approval (or pre-approval?) for the site was granted prior to the January 2011 flood and therefore the Temporary Local Planning Instrument (TLPI) does not apply. Although we can't get a straight answer from ICC, it appears that the developer already has pre-approval for hundreds of residential units on the 'elevated platform' of Lot 54. (There has been frantic haste in the months following the flood to fill Lot 54 to approved level of 19.5m so there is an obvious expectation of being able to proceed with plans).

The developer already has impact assessed approval for 118 units on Lot 55 (RL 19.05-21.2)

We ask that the Flood Commission recommend that the construction of any building on this site (or any other site) below the TLPI adopted level should not proceed.

4. Residents subject to intimidation

On 27th October 2010 we had an uninvited visit [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] two days after we sent a letter about the development to ICC.

Conclusion

Future flooding is inevitable and an increase in extreme weather events is predicted. I and many other Ipswich residents are very concerned that continuing development on the Bremer floodplain should be permitted. What right has a developer, in collusion with both state and local government to increase flooding and damage from floods to exiting residents. (2008 Cardno Flood Study admits "slight increases to the peak velocities ... for major flood events ...so impact is considered to be minor.")

It is apparent that both state government and local council have a dilemma choosing between encouraging development and avoiding the tragic loss of life and property through inappropriate floodplain development. It is sincerely hoped that the Commission will assist these parties to resolve this dilemma.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Nick White