

Re 2011 January 10-11th Floods of Oakey and the
Oakey's creek systems

In the past, by older folks recollections Oakey did not have a serious flood problem until the Cooby Dam overflowed. The creek systems, Boolee swamp and Oakey Lagoon would fill, but no real damaging occurred, and no houses or businesses were built in the danger area.

Only when the major creek systems, namely Oakey Doctor's Cooby, Waringandan, Gernaman, Gaurie & Westbrook all had heavy rain and the Dam overflowed was there major flooding as in July 1969 and January 1974, 1983 and now in 2011.

It is reported that Cooby Dam catches 38% of the water, leaving 52% to flow freely and to fill the creeks and the flood plains before reaching Oakey so slower flow through Oakey. But when the Dam is full the system gets the full 100% of the water.

Ever since the Cooby Dam was built and the telephones were reliable, when it rained 3 inches or more, or as soon as the Dam was full the Dam Ranger would 2 or 3 Farmers down stream and they in turn would ring further down stream and their neighbours until the message got to all farmers that maybe affected.

The Messages would be at 2:6. 10: 14 inches. (4: 15:30 cm) etc. to give an idea of the flood plain depth. But now with the widening of the spillway we need to be told the extra amount of water that will come at these heights, or get warnings at shorter heights.

When we get the warnings I would also ring the Oakey Police and the S.P.S. as well as neighbours.

It has been timed several times in small and

large flows the time from the dam to the floodline reserve -
 Wake Farm is 5-7 hours and Wake to Oakby 5-7 hours
 depend on the amount of flow. This 10-14 hours from the
 to Oakby

This gives plenty of time to for most farmers to move
 livestock, animals and birds, to safer places, turn off and
 remove fuses from electrical switch boxes, move engines,
 irrigation systems, electric fencing, and other farming
 gear above flood height. The height depends on the
 amount of water over the spillway.

The 10-14 hours notice to Oakby gives ample time
 for people to lift belongings, move animals, and
 birds to higher, safer places and to evacuate them-
 selves, if necessary.

This time there was no warning, and no knowledge
 of the alteration to the main spillway, so unable to
 give any useful warning to the police or any neighbours
 until the waters were rising to flood height here.

The Oakby Police first rang me about 10.00 AM, thinking
 I was still the controller of the Oakby S.L.S. I gave them
 the phone number of Oakby's S.L.S. members and went
 to check the creek. It was up about 10 cm from local
 run off only. I rang the police when water here
 indicated minor flooding and still rising and again
 later about 4.15 PM. the water was nearly 1983 level
 and still rising.

I only got through to Oakby Police with the last
 warning. All other warnings were diverted, at no time
 could I contact the Oakby S.L.S. or Council office.

The lack of these warnings has the combined
 loss of livestock and equipment that could have
 been skirted is several \$100,000 Dollars worth.

along with the loss of fences, buildings, and equipment that could not be protected.

Since 1993 a lot of alterations have been made to the Railway drainage by removing pipes and culverts, and narrowing the waterflow at the Coker and Doctors creek crossings, maybe made the line stronger for coal cartage but it is now a dam wall from Kingshorpe to Jondaryan with only 2 limited outlets.

The Bypass is also a dam wall with limited outlets.

The railway was the major cause of the flooding on the northern side of town with water in nearly all properties and most houses especially the ones on skabs. It also backed up the Doctors creek as far as 550 Kingshorpe / Silverleigh Rd and turned the Coker Creek there.

The Gowie - Westbrook creeks are steeper sided with little flood plain and are shorter so peak at Coker earlier after storms but in long time rains as in deep lows - cyclones as in 1974 Gowie will fill the south side of Coker through the Bypass leaving the Coker creek nowhere to go except up then there will be floods both sides of the rail line and Bypass.

The Jondaryan Council started to make / build a measuring station on our farm but it was never finished. I would be happy to continue to do the monitoring.

I would suggest another site on the Doctors Creek at Fred Sharps, near the Bear Water Ndb erom Roads or higher up the creek.

Improvements.

Extra pipes/drains under the rail line between Kingscrope and Jonclaryan, widening the space under the Jonclaryan rail bridge and road bridge.

Raising and widening the space under the Dudge. st. bridge in Oakley to the same capacity as the road bridge with a byback of land if necessary.

To stop permitting houses and businesses to build below the natural creek bank level, for example G, CWA Nursing Home and G, CWA Units and several other houses in Creek and Cherry streets, Deans st, Kent st etc. as well as in known areas as Oakley lagoon bounded by Vall, Cory and Cunningham.

To set up creek gauging stations on Oakley, Doctor's and Gowrie and Westbrook creeks upstream from Oakley.

It could be useful to have minimal receiving stations near Highfields, Graham, Crows Nest and Hacken so as to have an idea of the amount of water that may be coming down.

To review the County disaster plan and all the major clubs know what is expected of them and to give them a paper copy as computers are useless in black outs or you are not at H.Q.

Warning systems.

Until some other reliable warning system may be devised PLEASE use the old handline phone system from the Dam as mobile phones, reception, towers and satellite is unreliable in the upper reaches of these creeks.

