

29 January 2012

The Hon. Justice Catherine Holmes
Commissioner
Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
PO Box 1738
Brisbane QLD 4001

Dear Justice Holmes

I write to reiterate my availability to the Commission of Inquiry (COI) following recent media articles focusing on water releases from Wivenhoe Dam immediately prior to last year's devastating floods in Ipswich and Brisbane.

As you know, the COI announced on Wednesday 25 January 2012 that it will conduct additional public hearings into releases of water from Wivenhoe Dam prior to the flooding in Ipswich and Brisbane in early January last year. This follows stories in *The Australian* which questioned the release strategy put in place by SEQ Water immediately prior to the floods. I understand that these public hearings will be conducted in Brisbane between 2 and 10 February 2012.

Following the stories in *The Australian*, *The Courier Mail* published a number of stories on Friday 27 and Saturday 28 January 2012 and subsequently on their web sites that stated I had been in receipt of information regarding the dam water release strategy that is alleged to have contradicted evidence provided by SEQ water engineers to the COI. The email referred to in *The Courier Mail* articles was dated 10 January 2011.

The email was sent to me and others from SEQ Water's Dan Spiller in my previous position as Director General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) and Chairman of the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG). The stories alleged that my name had been purposely "blacked out" prior to the material being provided to the Commission of Inquiry. I had no knowledge of my name being "blacked out" and understand that the document provided to the COI was provided in full with references to all recipients, including myself being fully and openly available to the Inquiry.

The subsequent release of a version with my and other names "blacked out" and the apparent contradiction with the release of an unedited version of the same email through a Right to Information release to *The Courier Mail* by DPC sparked the assertion that there must have been an attempt to cover up information that I was aware of in respect of the particular issues relating to releases from Wivenhoe Dam at the time.

I am concerned that there might be any imputation that I may have wanted to conceal any information from the COI that I had access to in my official capacity at the time. Prior to taking up the position of Agent General in London, I had responsibility to ensure that all information required by the COI would be provided in an open and timely manner. The need to fully cooperate with the COI's information requirements was a matter of priority for the Premier, The Hon Anna Bligh who asked me to treat this as the highest priority in Government administration.

As you know, when I was aware in April 2011 that I would be leaving the Director General's position in June 2011, I offered any assistance I could prior to my departure, including being interviewed by the Commission on the role I played as Chair of SDMG in the lead up, during and following the floods in December 2010 and January 2011. Given the latest publicity, I reiterate my availability to the COI at any time, whether in person or via tele or video conference. I would of course need to access relevant documents from Brisbane, so I would need to be given some notice to properly prepare.

I can be contacted at any time on my landline, [REDACTED] mobile [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Ken Smith

Agent General and Trade Commissioner for Europe