

Supplementary
Submission to
the MBRI
Queensland
Flood
Commission
Inquiry

March 28

2011



Promoting Effective Sustainable
Catchment Management



Supplementary Submission to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (Floods Commission) on behalf of the Mid Brisbane River Irrigators Inc. (MBRI)

Introduction

1. MBRI request that the following supplementary submission be considered by the Flood Commission. The matters raised stem from the limited opportunity given to submitters to review the 'Jan 2011 Flood Event Report on operation of Somerset Dam & Wivenhoe Dam 2nd March 2011' (therein after referred to as the Seqwater Report)
2. The MBRI acknowledges its professional knowledge is limited when responding to the 1250 page technical Seqwater Report. However, MBRI repeats its claim that the Conclusions set out in the Executive Summary will be shown to be self serving.
3. We hope that consideration of the Report by members of the Commission will include the following matters in addition to those already outlined in the MBRI submission.
4. Reference is made to the following parts of the Report, as set out below.
5. *MBRI Submission Para 11 page 4. It is the opinion of MBRI that the strategies set out in the FOM are extremely high risk.*
6. MBRI contends that the January 2011 Flood Event is the single most significant risk in Seqwater's existence both from a community, Government and financial perspective. MBRI can find little in the Seqwater Report to link the Seqwater Executive, the Government or the Water Grid Manager(The Executive) with the risk management of Wivenhoe Dam and raise the following issues:
 - 6.1 With respect, could we request that the Commission pay particular attention to the conversation/actions/knowledge/questions posed to and by The Executive at the critical decision making times.
 - 6.2 Press release/comments by The Executive in both October 2010 and January 2011 show lack of knowledge of both the FOM and the size of the Flood Compartment.
 - 6.3 Press releases laud the efforts of the 13 engineers in the Flood office. If the correct information was reported and the engineers worked and slept the entire



period in this office, the working environment would not promote good decision making. Was the Executive aware of this situation and did they approve of the arrangements?

7. *MBRI Submission, Sentence 2, Para 12 page 5 MBRI does not think the Manual of Operational Procedures for Flood Mitigation at Wivenhoe Dam & Somerset Dam(FOM) is as prescriptive as saying each individual bridge should be preserved but rather that the primary strategies of safety and urban inundation should always be paramount.*

7.1 The FOM does not reflect the true capacity of the Flood compartments of the Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams. Neither do the press releases of the The Executive indicate an awareness of the correct capacity, or the management and use of that capacity, during the Flood Event.

The Seqwater Report continually refers to “hold back flows that would cause high level urban inundation until it was certain it could not be avoided”. *It is the contention of MBRI that extreme flood events are such that that certainty will never be available until it is likely to be too late and the Flood Event will almost certainly be exacerbated.* MBRI could not locate any requirement to this effect in the FOM.

7.2 There is no requirement in the FOM to retain the dam level at FSL during a Flood Event.

7.3 Contrary to requirements in the FOM the outflows/ releases did exceed the inflows for period during this event which indicates a failure to mitigate.

7.4 Seqwater claims that their actions reduced the Brisbane flooding by 2.0m. This is inadequately supported by the Report. Please request the Executive justify this claim, as against a counter claim that untimely Wivenhoe Dam_releases increased the AHD by 2.60m at the peak.

7.5 The 2011 Flood Event should not be viewed as a Brisbane flood alone. The 2011 Flood occurred along all the Brisbane River and the e-mails previously supplied to the Commission shows that in the mid Brisbane River the 2011 Flood Event was higher than the 1974 flood.



8. *MBRI Submission Para 29 page 7 To assist the Commission in its consideration of the effect of the January 2011 flood along the mid Brisbane River a number of photographs has been included in this submission. These can be found in Annexure 6.*
- 8.1 Is the Flood Commission aware that State Government Valuers have already visited many of the properties shown in Annexure 6. The Valuers(at some properties accompanied by a Seqwater Representative) advised that they are recording flood levels to assist with revaluing the properties. When queried, the reason provided to landholders was that the new valuations will reduce Council Rates whereas in effect, the revaluing of the properties will result in lower valuations which will have ongoing affects upon asset values and financing by lending institutions.
- 8.2 MBRI considers this to be a serious error of judgment on behalf of the authorities- Residents, trying to rebuild after tragic personal and property loss, would suffer the added burden of losing value in their properties because of mismanagement of the January Flood Event creating an unnatural flood level.
- 8.3 Further, this raises questions of inequity when Insurance companies have the right to withhold payment to policy holders for inundation from the Dam release and yet Government or Seqwater effectively make the decisions on who will be flooded. For example; if the Seqwater claim that they reduced the inundation in Brisbane by 2.0m is correct, then this is a massive saving for Insurance Companies, at the expense of 4.0m increase to the flooding of residents in Lowood, Fernvale and other areas of the mid Brisbane River where the same companies are refusing to make payments on the basis the flood was a deliberate release from a dam. The Wivenhoe Dam release also increased substantially the river levels in the Lockyer and the Bremer.

9.

Footnote

We attach a copy of Annexure 4(ii) MBRI Submission to replace the copy that was submitted on 11th March.



Historic water levels in Lake Wivenhoe

