

Submission to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

The purpose of my submission is to support resilience of communities by ensuring that existing and new members to communities are aware of the impact of flooding. I believe that my proposal is an effective and simple way to ensure that communities don't become complacent and can make informed choices about where they choose to live regardless of the quality of information from real estate agents.

ONE – Allow Brisbane Public Access to Info from more than one Gauge

It is important to recognise that each flood event is different. I was concerned during the January 2011 Brisbane floods to hear from authorities that the flood height at the official gauge in the Brisbane City – Brisbane River gauge near the Port Office was below the 1974 flood height by a metre yet at Tennyson it was above the 1974 flood height by over a metre. So many people were focussed on the official city gauge reading and did not take into account the variances in certain reaches and that each flood event is different. I recognise that had more specific information been conveyed by the mass media some people might have been able to make better informed decisions.

Recommendation: At least 3 river heights are provided for the residents of Brisbane. The official site at the Port Office, an upstream site near Tennyson and a site further upstream at Jindalee. This could easily be used by the mass media to ensure residents across the flood plain were aware of the height close to their home. This is a very cost effective strategy.

TWO – Flood Markers

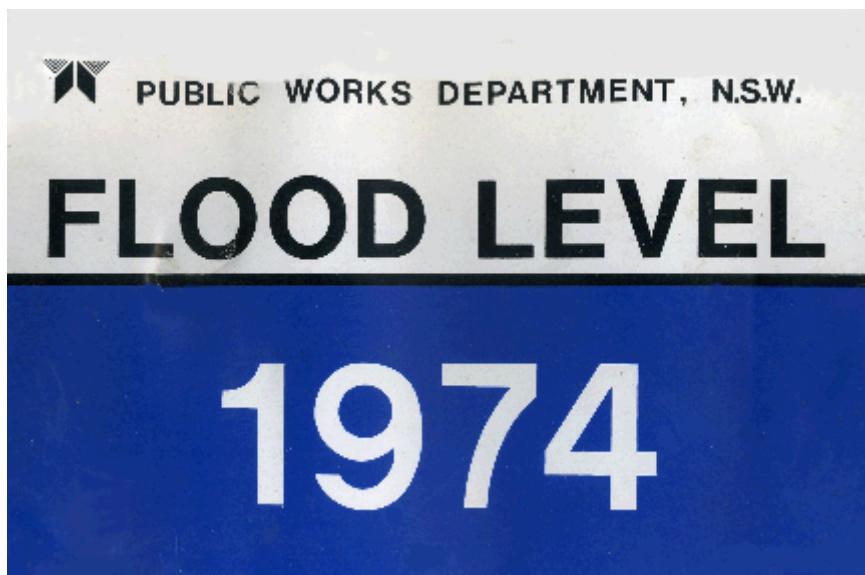
It is important to provide sufficient quality information for the broader public. Information that can not be tampered with, information which is readily available and information which is accurate and will assist purchase decisions particularly in relation to locations and the provision of housing.



A photo of a flood marker attached to an electricity pole in South Lismore.

This next recommendation is not a new concept having been adopted in Lismore New South Wales following the devastating 1974 floods. I have witnessed the successful implementation of flood markers which are displayed on every electricity

pole across the flood plain in Lismore. These markers are unobtrusive and are a point of historical interest to visitors to Lismore. It has been used in purchase decisions and of course residents who chose to move back to their homes did so knowing the height of the Wilson River when it flooded. It also means that new residents arriving can "see for themselves" the height reached by the river and factor that into their purchase decisions.



An example of a flood marker provided after the 1974 floods.

I believe that the inclusion of information across the flood plains of our cities and towns across Queensland attached to electricity poles will provide residents and potential residents with important information to assist in their purchasing decisions. I believe that this relatively inexpensive initiative will assist residents and generations to come in one of the most important decisions of their lives – the decision to purchase a home.

Ideally Government's at all levels would embrace this initiative and support the provision of information to residents to assist them with their purchasing decisions.

Recommendation: That the Government provide flood markers to affected communities across Queensland using the highest known flood information.