

R O B E R T & S A N D R A H E Y M I N K

March 10 2011

The Honourable Justice Catherine Holmes
Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
PO Box 1738
Brisbane QLD 4001

I wish to bring to the attention of the Commission of Inquiry the following information which I feel is relevant to your deliberations.

We are proprietors of a small manufacturing business based in Yeronga, providing Queensland made filing systems to Businesses and Government bodies throughout Australia, and to New Zealand and South East Asia. Our business was severely impacted by the January floods, with inundation through our factory causing extensive damage to stock, raw materials and production machinery. As at this date we have still not been able to return to full production. Likely cost to our business including loss of business, loss of stock, and repair/replacement of machinery will be in the order of \$1,000,000. Our claim for insurance has been rejected on the basis that this was a "riverine" flood (I have disputed this).

1. Operation of the Wivenhoe Dam.

- a. I am a "lay" person. But even I could discern that insufficient water was being released from the dam in the weeks and days preceding the flood event. I made the judgement that the mitigation effect of the dam was being compromised on Friday 7th January, after hearing from a friend who had visited Wivenhoe itself on Thursday and reported to me that there was no substantial outflow. I proceeded on that day (Friday 7th January) to raise anything that was able to be raised within our premises. I spent the next several days and nights doing this. In the end we did save 100% of client records, and substantial stocks, but were unable to save other stock and machinery. If I had not acted until the Premier's televised statement regarding imminent flooding in Brisbane, our losses would have been terminal for our business.
- b. I believe that if I was able to see that circumstances required discharge of water from Wivenhoe in the time preceding the flood event, surely it is reasonable to expect that the operators of the dam, privy to much more detailed information and analysis tools, would see same and act accordingly.

2. Warning and communication of the risk and imminent flooding event.

- a. I believe that the televised Premier's address was clearly too late, and insufficient warning. I point to the "Standard Emergency Warning Signal" and its documented procedure of use. It seems to me that this was not used, and absolutely should have been in frequent use much sooner than the date of the Premier's address. Heavy use of this standardized warning system would have reached many more people than the televised address by the Premier.

In short, I believe that the flood event, the operation of the dam, and the pre-flood warnings and information represent a total failure on the part of the people charged with looking after our interests.

Sincerely,


Rob Heymink