



**It can happen again!.....and again!  
And it does in January 2011!**

**1974**



Farms were inundated from the overflow from the Dam. Stocks and harvests were lost. There was irreparable damage to top soil. Farmers and their families lost their means of support not only while the waters swirled around their doors but for six months afterwards; waiting for the soil to be able to bear crops, hens to start laying again, milk cows to come back to level of production prior to the flood.

**But this is not the main issue, the loss of the water resource is!**

After the 1974 floods, representation was made to the Government to raise the walls of the Cooby dam.

We were told the 1974 flood was a 'one off' and would not happen again.

It can happen again .....and again.....and it does in January 2011

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## 1976

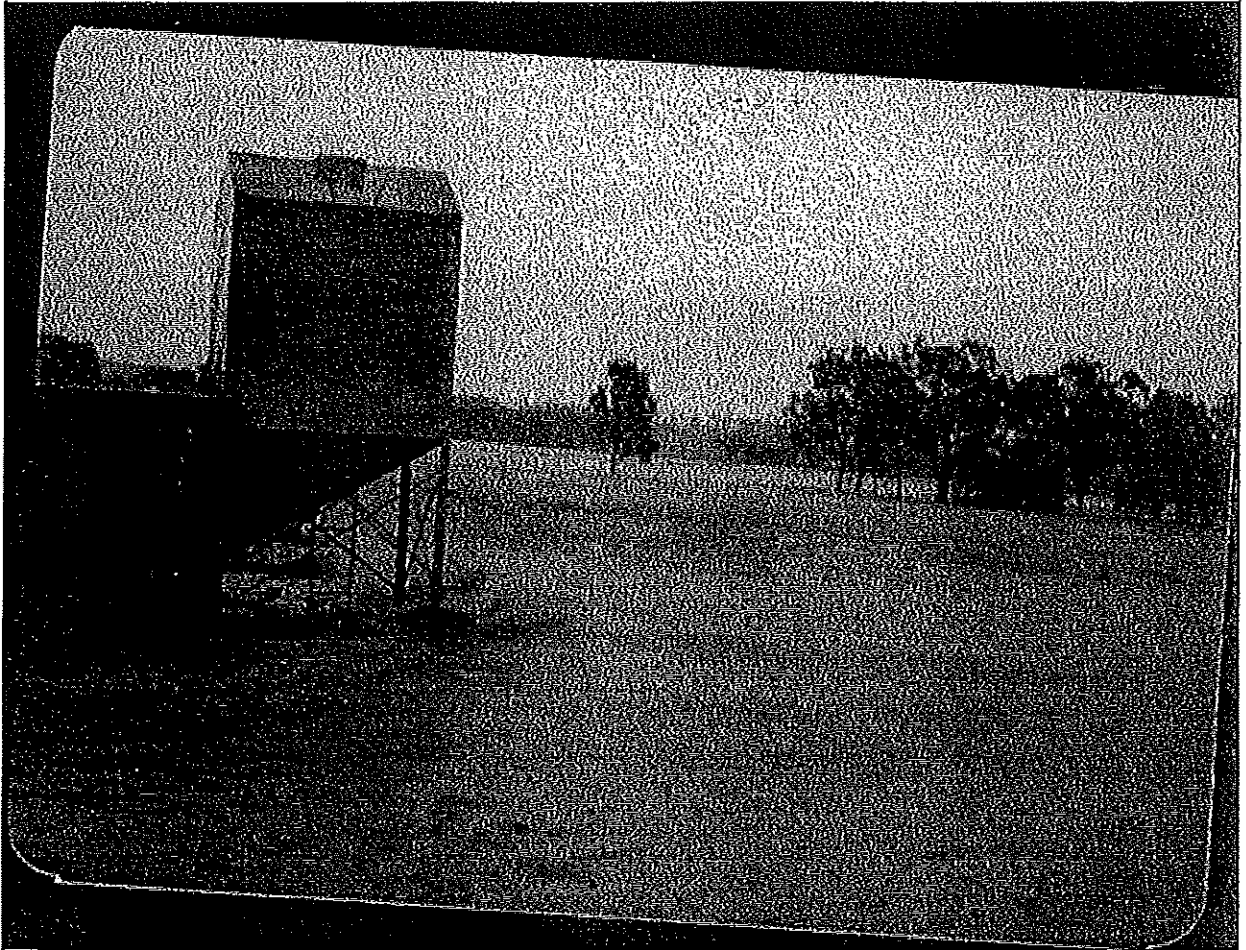
So why did we watch our water resources rushing through the countryside again in 1976?



The trees in the background are where the creek runs a half kilometer away. The flood extends for an equal distance on the other side of the creek (not visible in this photo). As you can see, this is not still water, but is running quite rapidly and at a depth of up to 1 metre in places.

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1976 continued.....



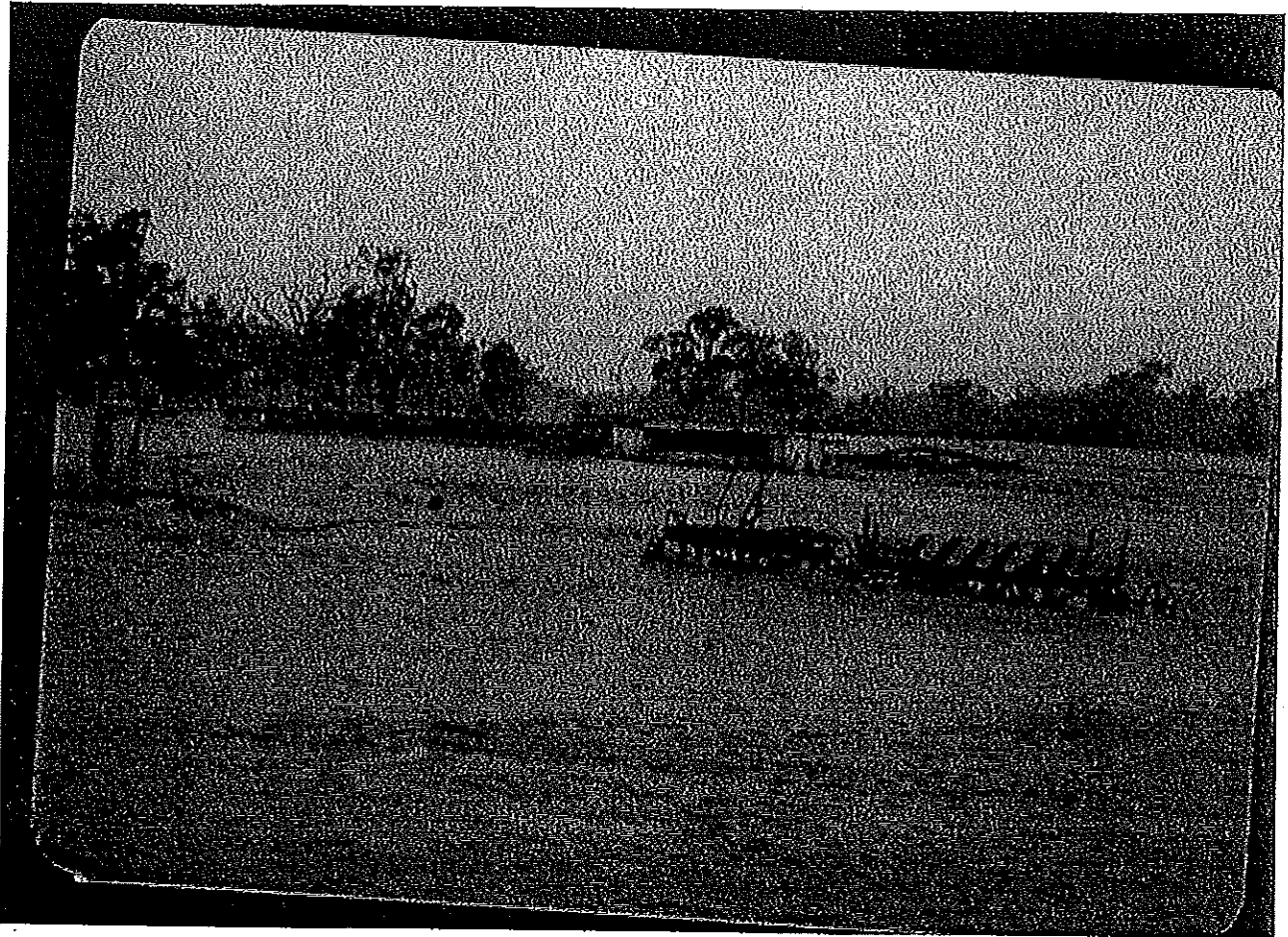
Prior to the dam being built, the buildings and sheds on our property had never been inundated with water.

The creek bed is the second line of trees in the distance.  
What an expanse of water and what a waste!

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1976 continued



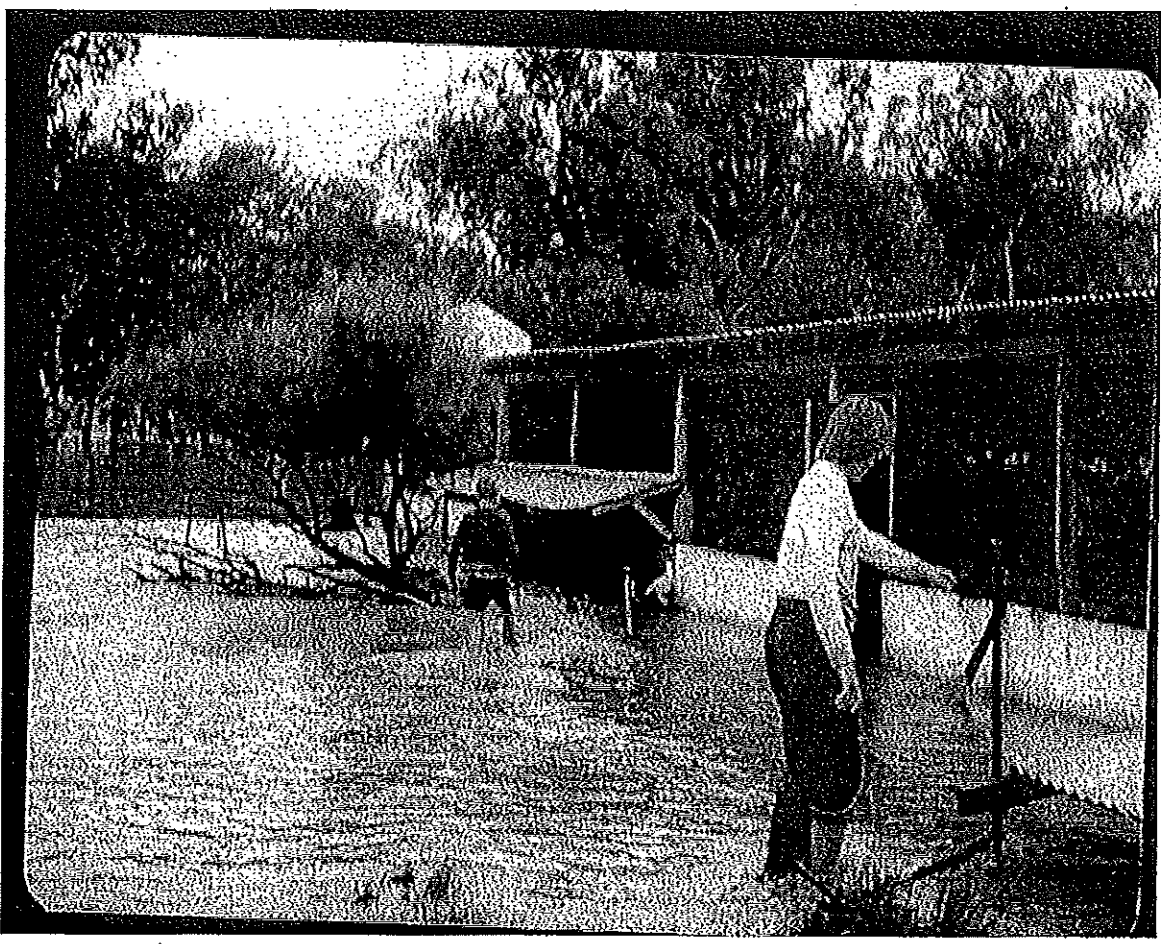
All the crops were lost. It took six months for the land to fully recovery and produce a harvest.

**And it didn't stop after that, did it?**

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Again in **1981**



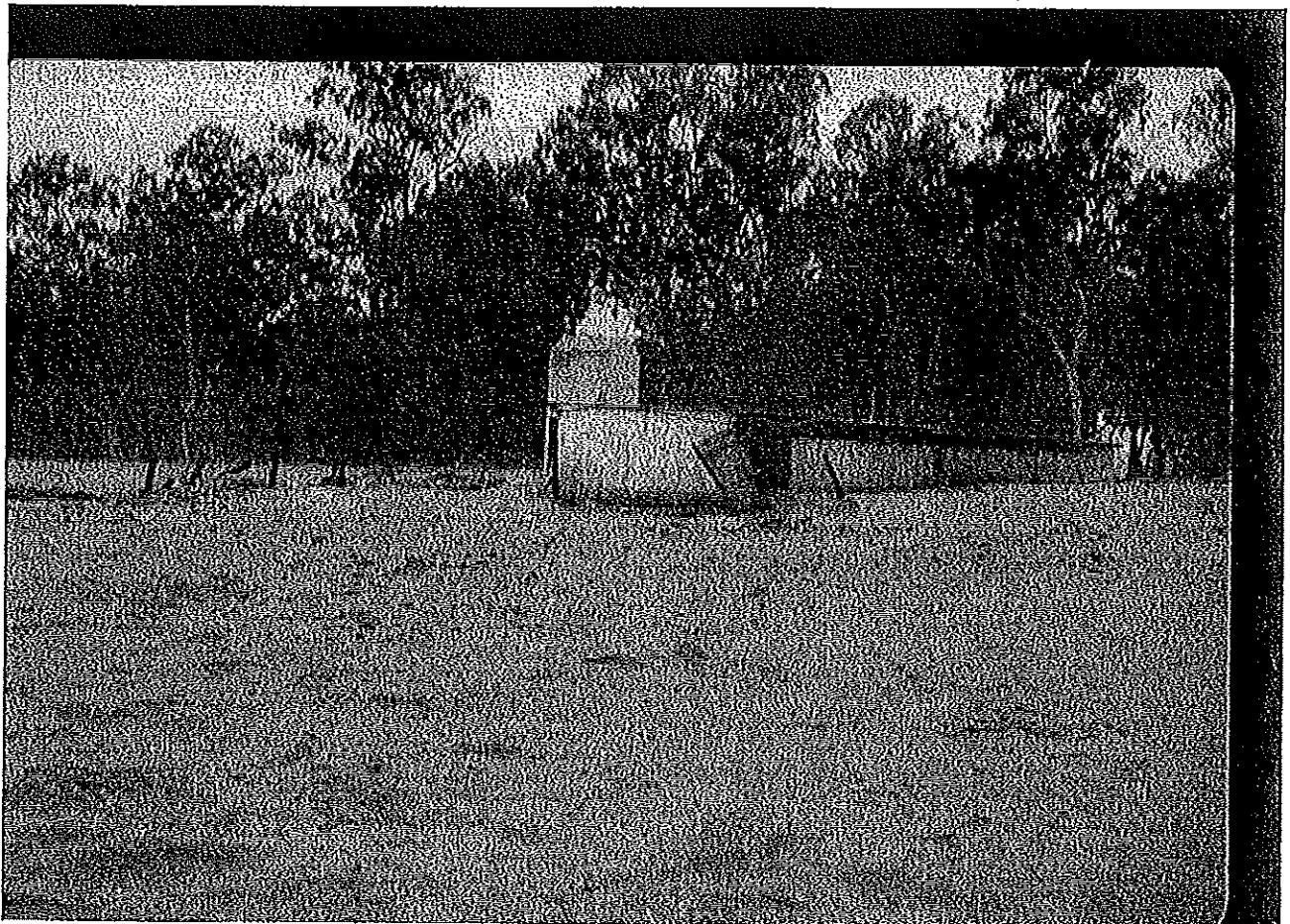
Great fun for the kids; but the Chooks don't enjoy the challenge!



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And yet again.....**1984**



This photo shows the force of the water as it came through knocking out shed walls.

Hens don't stand a chance if caught in this water. Even the cattle have a hard time moving through it to higher ground.

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## 1984 Continued



Wait, haven't we seen this one before. Yes but that flood was in 1976; same place, eight years later.

The cost of replacing fences alone is a hardship to the farmers.



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1984 continued



This photo really shows the extent of the areas that were affected; not by standing water, but a rapid flow of water rushing through the property.

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And finally, before the dry years cycle came round again

**1988**



After the first two floods, we did raise some levies to try to lessen the effect of flood waters and have continued to improve these levies as seen in the photo above in 1988.

We have not had a major flood since that time to test their effectiveness

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## **And this is what it's about – the Cooby dam**

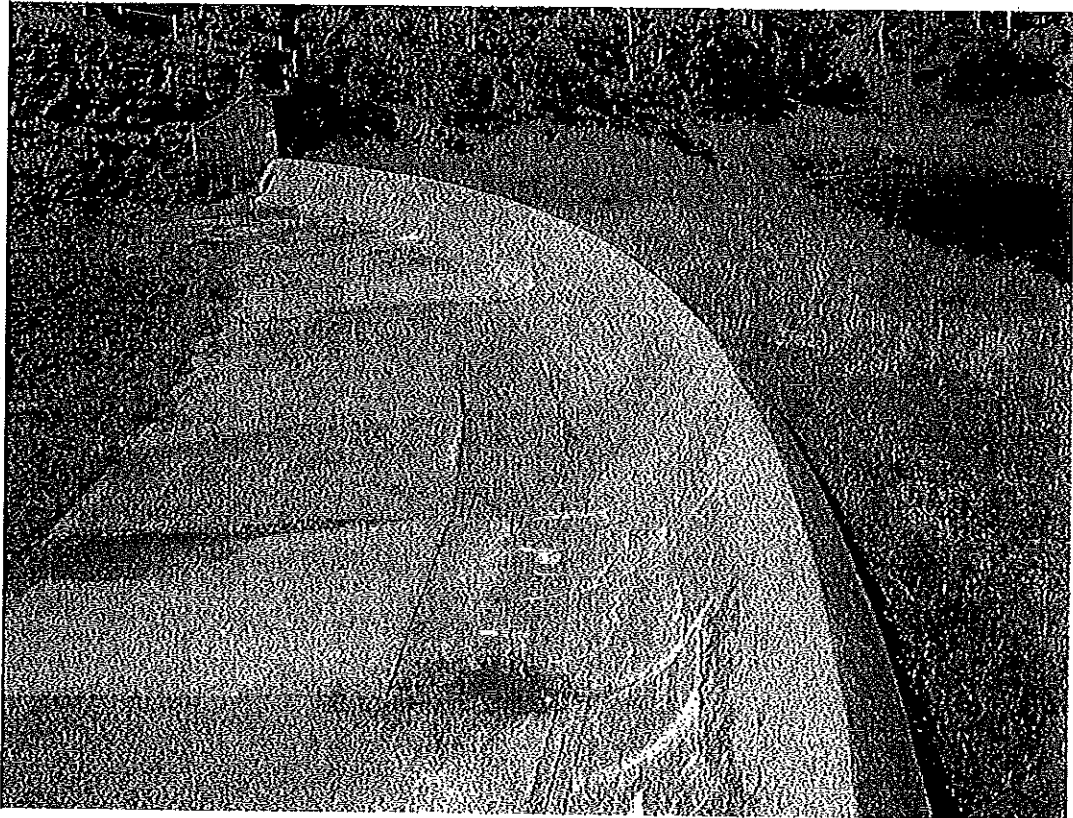


If most of the water in the above photos had been retained within the Cooby Dam, one wonders if we would be in such a resource shortage now.

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## And the spill way



Surely it is time to reconsider raising the spill way wall and insert flood gates; now while the water levels are down - in preparation for the next flood!

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**BUT NOBODY LISTENED.....then came  
January 2011.**

What will it take for the Toowoomba Regional Council, men and women that we voted for, to come to their senses and realise we have a major problem here that should be addressed to improve what could be a dangerous situation waiting to happen?

This is the third document I have written, showing what has gone before and if it is repetitive, that is because, in all these years, nothing has been done to address the state of affair.

**January 2011**



Certain councilors must be red faced now after the 2006 fiasco where funding of \$27 million dollars "aimed at

eliminating risk of flooding towns in the Brisbane Valley, as absurd saying Cressbrook and Cooby dams hadn't overflowed in 16 years and risk of flooding was virtually nil." was rejected and such statements as "you would have to have rain like a tsunami and it's never going to happen" were made. How wrong can you be? And why should we start to believe what councilors are telling us now? The money was rejected and sent elsewhere because "it had nothing to do with water but the safety of residents and properties below the dam wall". Tell that to the people of Oakey. Was embarrassment about the flood, (that was never supposed to happen), the reason the council never sent out any courtesy calls to residents below the Cooby dam advising them the dam was rising? Not one of council's proudest moments.

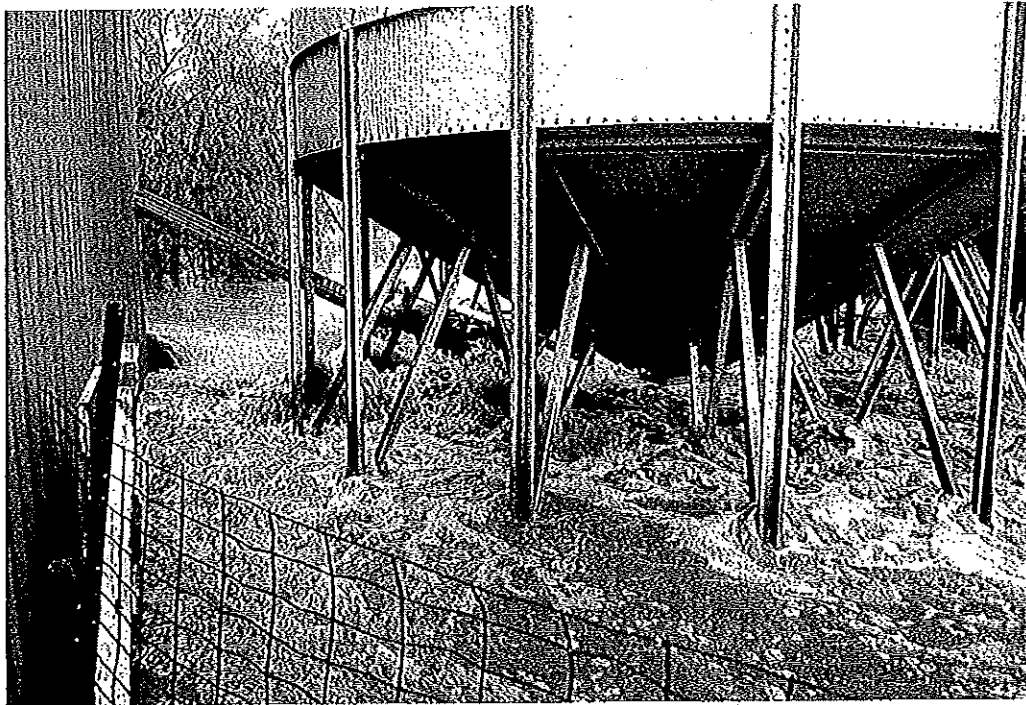




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The area of concern below the Cooby is no longer just farms and livestock. The township of Oakey has grown into a reasonably sized country town with a population of 3657 (2001 Census). Previous to the dam overflowing, the town and district was able to manage the record high waters on two or three occasions from both the Meringandan and Gomoran creeks. There was some flooding but it was manageable. And that is the operative word. If Cooby had been managed properly with operational sluice gates that would have allowed water to be released gradually before it filled up and overflowed, there would not have been the subsequent wall of water coming over the spillway that decimated everything in its path. That was the danger. That caused the gouging, raging torrents that ripped through farms and the town of Oakey carrying away both rural and town livelihoods.



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The other factor towards the large area of flooding was the inability of the Oakey creek to flow and get rid of the water quickly due to an amassing of overgrown trees, shrubs and debris which had accumulated. Approximately 6 Klm needs to be cleared through the Boodua area.



There is no argument with the Deputy Mayor, Paul Antonio, we agree the Cooby dam held waters back.... until it was full to overflowing with no control measures in place to curtail its flow, nature at her most dangerous.

The mute question is – Why was the sluice tunnel not cleared when the Dam was at 8% capacity? Was it neglect, complacency? I guess we will never know because council is not going to tell us.

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For 73 years I have lived on this farm, as did my father and grandfather since 1911 and I know which creeks cause the problem and have raised levies to protect our farms. I will have to raise them again as I had them higher than any other flood on record and this flood just rolled over them destroying laying hens, chickens, pullets, damaged sheds, graded eggs, egg packaging, mill shed, pallets of ingredients, grain, hay, cattle sheds most fences, loss of production for at least 6 months and cattle. Approximately a loss of \$500,000.



Now the dam is full again and we are only approaching our wet season now, there is the possible threat of heavy rains. Is it possible for Council to become proactive, see the possibility of a threat and use more of the water from the

Cooby Dam for town use to maintain a lower level? Surely, this would also cut the cost of pumping water uphill from the other two dams?

And it's no good to say we, the writers, are pointing the finger or being un-Queensland. We are all pulling together but we have seen a problem and a possible solution and, yes, we maybe stating the obvious. But how many times do we have to point something out before we get a response.

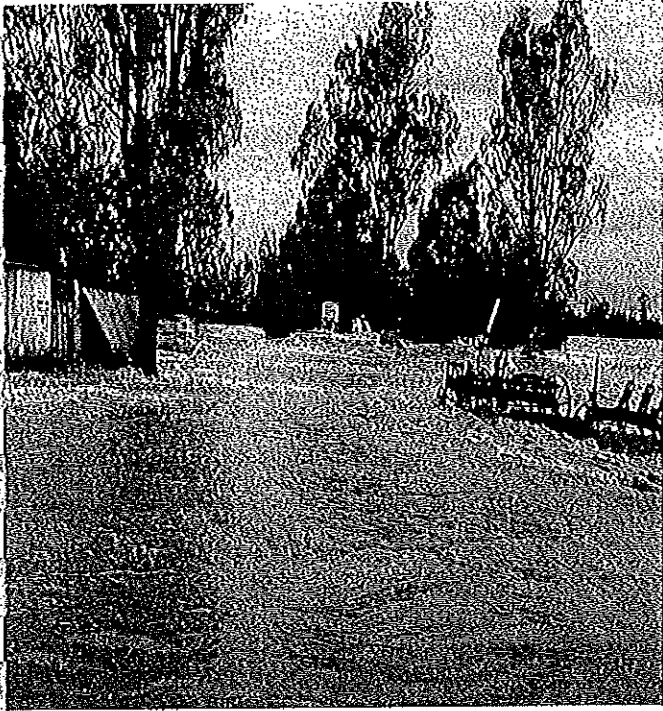
Let's accept the lessons together but let's do it better this time and have open discussion. Let's put to good use some of the historical knowledge on hand; put in the preparations that will allow us to manage nature a little better, rather than stare in horror at the raging torrents around us.

To restoring the tranquility of the area prior to the floods

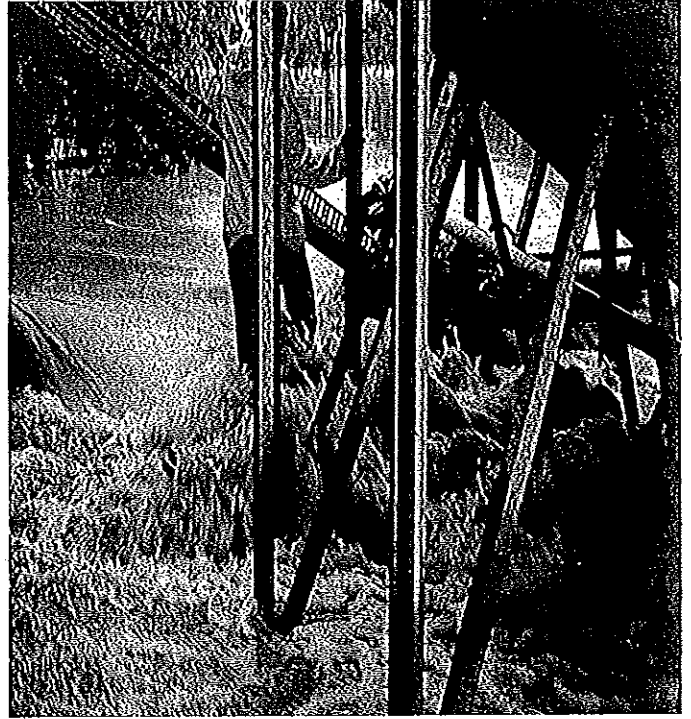


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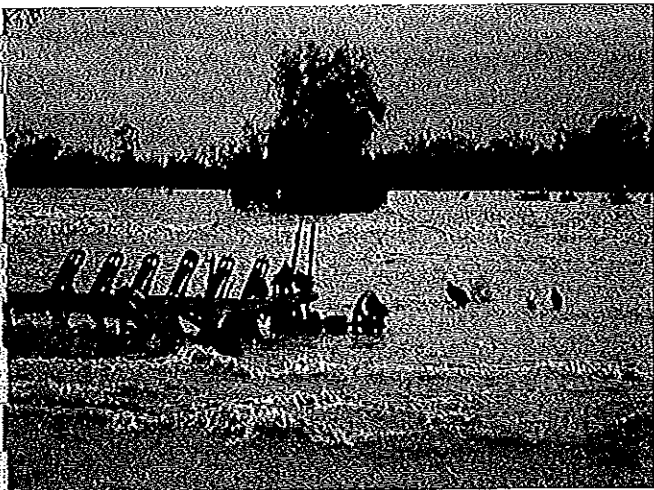
I really don't want to write a 4<sup>th</sup> edition of this flood record.



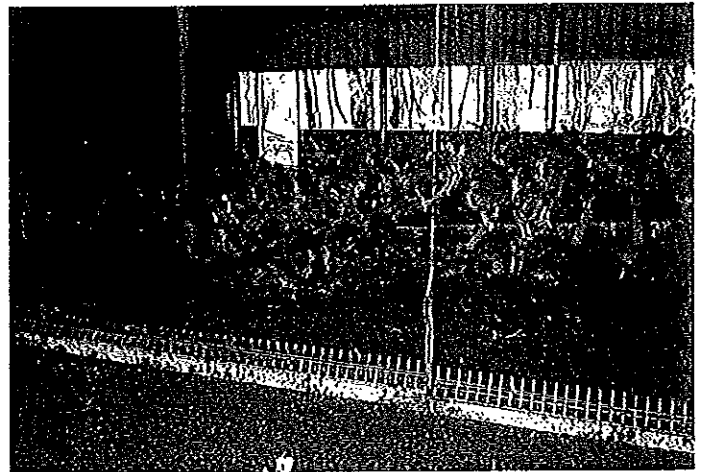
Walls of Hen sheds torn away



Farmer risking life and limb to save Farming equipment



Victims of the roaring waters that ripped through hen houses drowning hens under roosts



# TOOWOOMBA CITY COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 153 HERRIES STREET, TOOWOOMBA, QUEENSLAND — TELEPHONE (076) 31 6811

FAX No. (076) 38 3830

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO  
THE TOWN CLERK, BOX 3021,  
TOWN HALL P.O., TOOWOOMBA, 4350

FOR INQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT:

[REDACTED]

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

ECS F. H06/0

YOUR REFERENCE:

R D & I B INWOOD

[REDACTED]  
OAKLEY QLD 4401

26 APRIL 1990

Dear Sir

## RELEASE OF WATER FROM COOBY DAM

Reference is made to your undated letter which Council received November 1989 and you are advised of the following matters relating to Cooby Dam:

- (a) The impounded water is required for domestic consumption needs and to ensure present and future needs are protected, no surplus supply is available for downstream use;
- (b) The mere existence of Cooby Dam, even when full, significantly reduces the extend of flooding for normal floods. However, the dam is not large enough to cause a significant impact on flood reduction in a major flood. This is particularly so when the flooding impact of Meringandan and Gomaren Creeks is considered;
- (c) Copies of your letters have been forwarded to the Water Resources Commission for their information and for any follow up action which may be within the Committee's jurisdiction;

.../2



(d) The Council Ranger can be contacted on one of the following telephone Numbers at any time for information on the status of Cooby Dam:

CONTACT

TELEPHONE NUMBER

1st Ranger (currently [REDACTED])  
2nd Ranger (Currently [REDACTED])  
Cooby Pumping Station

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

TOWN CLERK



# Country Range Farming Pty Ltd.

ABN: 46 102 573 053

██████████ OAKBY Qld 4401 ██████████

Grading Floor: ██████████

Website: [www.organicegg.com.au](http://www.organicegg.com.au)

26<sup>h</sup> April 2006

The Right Honourable Henry Palaszczuk  
Minister  
Natural Resources, Mines and Water  
PO Box 15456  
Brisbane Qld 4002

Dear Minister

Please find attached a presentation on floods perpetuated from the Cooby dam overflowing for your perusal. The photographs were all taken by me at our farm in the Boodua area and all are relevant to the dates specified.

I am 69 years old and have witnessed every flood since the dam was constructed. I was 14 years old in 1951 when the dam first overflowed. We drove up to the Cooby dam in an old Chev 4 utility with chains on the wheels through black soil roads to witness the spectacle. Photos were taken at the time but I have misplaced them. Floods occurred again in 1956 but unfortunately, we did not take any photos.

The Inwood family has been on this farm since 1911. According to history handed down through the generations, we had no floods prior to the building of the dam as the creeks handled all excess water during those years when we had heavy rainfall.

Normal floodwater from other systems flowing through our property doesn't cause problems but when the Cooby comes over the spill way, (and we usually receive notice) within one hour we are underwater.

It would be nice to be able to control Cooby dam water by raising the spillway another meter or so and adding floodgates that would allow the water to be released as and when the dam is full which would stop the wall of water that we receive in one hit.

As you will see in the photos (especially the photo taken in 1976 and again of the same site in 1984), when this water hits the Boodua area, the flood area is more than half a kilometre wide on either side of the creek.



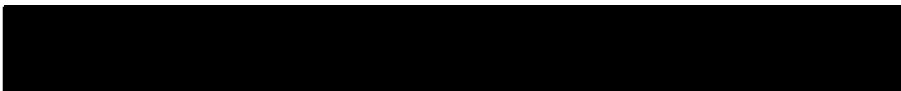
Home of  
"INWOOD'S COUNTRY RANGE ORGANIC EGGS"





# Country Range Farming Pty Ltd

ABN: 46 102 573 053



Website: [www.organiceggs.com.au](http://www.organiceggs.com.au)

An important point to note is there are no working floodgates in the wall of the Cooby dam. Should, by some freak of nature, a fault appear in the wall, there is nothing that could be done to discharge the volumes of water to release pressure while repair work was carried out.

Water resources will always be a problem but when solutions are available and supported by the State Government we can only shake our heads when we read statements made by Toowoomba Councillors in The Chronicle rejecting the idea as 'a waste of money' and 'the risk of flooding was virtually nil'. Ridiculous statements such as those made by Councillor Ramia "that the dam has not overflowed in 16 years" and "that it will never overflow again" is incorrect as the last time it overflowed was in 1999 - just seven years ago.

**Surely it is time to reconsider raising the spill way wall incorporating flood gates; now while the water levels are down - in preparation for the next flood years?**

Just for your information, I am in full support of water recycling.

I am available at the above address, should you wish to discuss this matter further with me.

Yours faithfully

Roy Inwood  
Inwood Farms

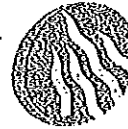


Cc: Toowoomba City Council



Home of  
"INWOOD'S COUNTRY RANGE ORGANIC EGGS"





Queensland  
Government

Office of the  
Minister for Natural Resources,  
Mines and Water

- 7 JUN 2006  
Ref CTS 03266/06

Mr Roy Inwood

[REDACTED]  
Oakey Qld 4401

*Roy*  
Dear Mr Inwood

The Honourable Henry Palaszczuk MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Water has asked me to reply to your letter of 21 April 2006 concerning Cooby Dam.

The Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water only holds stream gauge data for limited periods for both Cooby Creek and Oakey Creek, with the earliest available stream gauging data relating to a station at the Cooby Creek dam site from 1935 to 1940. This data is insufficient to draw any significant conclusions from without considerable additional work.

However, Cooby Dam controls only about 38 percent of the catchment of Oakey Creek above your property and is therefore limited in the effect it could have on flow past your property. Because Cooby Dam does not have a gated spillway, it will always tend to ease the peak discharge from the catchment above the dam and delay the flood peak from what would occur without the dam. The timing of the flow out of Cooby Dam in any particular flood event will very much depend on the distribution of rain across the catchment and the water level in Cooby Dam prior to the event. If the rain is not concentrated on Cooby Dam's catchment or the initial level in the dam is well below full supply level, then the ease effect of Cooby Dam will be more significant.

While it is accepted that adding spillway gates may provide some capacity to ease floods downstream of the dam, this would come at considerable initial expense and with significant ongoing costs to operate and maintain the gates. As the dam does not control all the catchment above your property, gates may have only a minimal impact on some flood events.

Greater flood storage in the dam could be provided by restricting the current spillway and raising the crest level of the embankment. However, this too would come at a significant cost. Any decisions to undertake such modifications to the dam would primarily be the responsibility of the dam's owner, Toowoomba City Council.

Level 13 Mineral House  
41 George Street Brisbane Qld 4000  
PO Box 15456 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3896 3688  
Facsimile +61 7 3210 6214  
Email [NRMW@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:NRMW@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
Website [www.nrm.qld.gov.au](http://www.nrm.qld.gov.au)

With reference to the statements made by others that the "dam will never overflow again", I note that the volume of the maximum design flood for the dam significantly exceeds the storage capacity and that the dam would discharge via the spillway in such an event even if it was empty prior to the event. The magnitude of spillway discharge for smaller, more frequent events will, more significantly, depend on the initial level in the dam prior to the storm event.

The Minister thanks you for bringing this matter to his attention. If you require any further information regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr [REDACTED] Director Dam Safety (Water Supply) of the Department on telephone [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Senior Policy Advisor

[REDACTED]

# State Govt Pressure to raise our dam walls... but councillor says \$27m waste of money

By GREG BERSHOFER  
gregb@thechronicle.com.au

TOOWOOMBA'S water supply dam walls will be raised within nine years at a cost to ratepayers of up to \$27 million, but the city council's water and sewerage spokesman says it will be a useless waste of money.

Cr Joe Ramia said it would also have no effect on the council's plans to recycle effluent water for drinking.

Cr Ramia labelled the State Government directive, aimed at eliminating risk of flooding towns in the

Brisbane Valley, as absurd saying Cressbrook and Cooby dams hadn't overflowed in 16 years and risk of flooding was virtually nil.

Raising Cooby Dam's spillway has been proposed by some opponents of Water Futures as an answer to Toowoomba's water shortage, but the council has continually rejected it as being no solution because climate change meant there was insufficient rain to fill dams, even at their present heights.

Cr Ramia conceded the council would probably have to comply with the directive to keep its State Go-

vernment's dam operating licence. "Cooby is not a dam where you can say that if we spend \$20 million, we're going to eventually have more water. The records prove it has been once in 16 years whereas Hinze Dam (Gold Coast) has been over 16 times in two years," Cr Ramia said.

"This has nothing to do with water availability but safety of residents and properties below the dam wall."

Cr Ramia said he doubted Cressbrook levels would get anywhere near the height of the new wall.

"You would have to have rain like a tsunami and it's never going to hap-

pen - our catchment is just not big enough."

Citizens Against Drinking Sewage co-ordinator Rosemary Morley said she was aware some Water Futures opponents proffered raising dam walls as a solution but had no opinion on it herself.

Natural Resources Mines and Water Minister Henry Palaszczuk said operators of 250 Queensland dams were being asked to comply with national standards for flood safety.

Submissions from the council on the new heights would be carefully considered, Mr Palaszczuk said.

## IN BRIEF

### Concert correction

THE Toowoomba Choral Society Easter Concert will be held on Sunday, April 2, at 2pm at the Church of Christ, Hume Street. The date in yesterday's Chronicle was incorrect. Inquiries to 4639 2948.

### LARRY FERRY RAISES

THERE will be some extreme rock crawling/buggy action at the Neil Street Toowoomba Greyhound Terminal today from 10.30am-1pm to raise funds for the Cyclone Larry relief effort. Staff will cook hot dogs while call centre staff members and extreme sportsman Paul Meyers will rev up his extreme rock crawling buggy. Mr Meyers, a member of Tough Tracks, will show off his buggy before it hits the road to compete in the Xtreme Rock Crawling Championships and World Xtreme Rock Crawling Championships.

### RAISES RAISES

ABOUT 60 Emergency Services cadets from the south-west region are holding a camp at Beardmore Dam Youth Camp, St George, from April 7-11. Cadets from Miles, Clifton, Stanthorpe and Brisbane will undertake training and activities including flood boat safety, rural fire awareness, rafting, navigation and land search.

# Nurses answer call from north

By KATE MCINTOSH

WHEN a group of Toowoomba nurses heard their counterparts in their North Queensland needed their help, they leapt at the opportunity.

Five nurses from Toowoomba's emergency department joined relief efforts in the far north after cyclone Larry devastated the region last week.

They joined a 30-strong contin-

