

**Submission to Flood Inquiry, by Mr Lyndon Evans of [REDACTED] Coleman Street, Graceville.**

I live with my wife and two children at [REDACTED] Coleman Street, Graceville. We have lived there for approximately 16 years. We take issue with the fact that we, and presumably other residents of Coleman Street, were given no specific warning of the expected extent of flooding in our street, despite the information being available immediately prior to the event.

A list of streets expected to be flooded was published in an online article of The Courier Mail on January 11, 2011 7:21PM. Coleman Street was included in the list (see web link below).

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/ipad/check-your-street-flood-danger-spots/story-fn6ck45n-1225985846331>

We found this article online after the flooding event that affected our Coleman Street property around January 11 – 14. The Courier Mail had this specific information but we residents received no official warning in any form whatsoever from either BCC or state government that our specific street was expected to flood. The Courier Mail presumably received this information from one of those official bodies before the floodwaters inundated our property.

At approximately 4pm on Tuesday January 11<sup>th</sup> we decided to remove our belongings from our house, based only on what information we were able to piece together ourselves from the internet and TV, and no specific street information. After that we were too busy moving 16 years worth of belongings to search further for information. Most other residents in our street were taking no action. I do recall that we did try to check the Brisbane City Council website at some stage in the early evening but it was non-functional ("crashed") and therefore useless.

At the flood's peak on or around Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, our house was submerged by about 4 metres of water, almost 2 metres through the main upstairs living area. The water had been rising as we moved belongings out throughout the night and early morning of January 11 - 12, in the dark with no electricity, by torchlight. The electricity had failed at approximately 9pm on January 11<sup>th</sup>, and we abandoned further efforts at 5:30am Wednesday as the water was neck deep at the front stairs. Many of our belongings were damaged in the move itself due to the rushed, unplanned nature of it. Items left behind were largely destroyed. We received no assistance apart from that of friends, and had no contact from any official body at any time before, during, or after the flood event, including the cleanup of the weekend January 15 – 16. Our first contact with anyone official was when we lodged financial assistance forms with Centrelink several days after.

We got approximately two thirds of our belongings out ahead of the flood. With even a couple more hours head start (ie some proper official warning) we may have got it all out. Many other residents of Coleman Street got practically nothing, or very little out, presumably because they did not know what was about to happen. This was especially evident of elderly residents who were most probably not internet literate.

Surely the resources would have been available to either doorknock, text message, or send vehicles with loudhailers through specific streets, to advise of impending inundation. Proper official warnings to residents would have significantly reduced the cost of damages. We cannot understand why, if specific information was available about particular streets expected to flood, this information was not disseminated by any and all available means. The Brisbane City Council text message alert service issued a warning at 8:28am on January 11 for flash flooding but nothing about inundation, and no

specific areas, just "the greater Brisbane area". Surely that system could have been used to better effect as the information appears to have been available?

If we had not pieced together for ourselves what might happen, we may have simply gone to bed that night and woken up with inundation and even more catastrophic loss, which is what appears to have happened with some other residents in Coleman Street. We feel that the state government and Brisbane City Council abandoned us and failed to pass on critical information, which we know that it had in its possession on January 11<sup>th</sup>, immediately prior to the inundation, that would have mitigated our financial and property losses.