

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

Statement in response to Dr Bruce Abernethy Report 'Brisbane River Flood January 2011 - Report on River Bank Erosion' by:

Name Jocelyn Margaret Wilson BAILEY  
DOB [REDACTED]  
Address & Contact Details [REDACTED] Riverside Dr Pine Mountain QLD 4306  
[REDACTED] or [REDACTED]  
Date 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011

1. I have provided previously a Submission to the Queensland Floods Commission in relation to the operations of Wivenhoe Dam causing environmental damage to the mid Brisbane River and my property.
2. I am a Town Planner and Farmer.
3. I am a committee member of the Mid-Brisbane River Irrigators Association and as one of the three committee members who have worked together with the MBRI Solicitor [REDACTED] in relation to the Flood Commission material and as such have reviewed the 'Brisbane River Flood January 2011 - Report on River Bank Erosion'.
4. I have not published or released the Report to any other person.
5. I have concerns about the accuracy of that Report after reviewing its contents.
6. On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2011 I was visited at my above property on the mid Brisbane River by Dr Bruce Abernethy (Geomorphologist at Sinclair Knight Merz), Mr [REDACTED] (Senior Environment Co-ordinator at Seqwater) and [REDACTED] (Senior Associate at Allens Arthur Robinson representing Seqwater).
7. I accompanied these people on an inspection of the riverbank along the entire length of approximately one kilometre of my property.
8. I discussed with Dr Bruce Abernethy the high velocity of the peak Wivenhoe Dam water release causing immense damage due to the force of the water, the rapid drain down phase causing major bank slumping and the fact that damage caused by the 1974 flood was minimal compared to this flood as the 1974 was a natural flood, that is slower up and down, not rapid up and down as was this event.
9. I provided Dr Bruce Abernethy with my previous Submission. I also provided him with 'before repair' photographs of the riverbanks via [REDACTED] (refer attached 9 emails 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011 including 29 photos).
10. I suggested to Dr Bruce Abernethy that he contact [REDACTED] of SEQ Catchments to obtain a copy of their report on mid Brisbane River damage caused by the flood.

11. I am since informed by [REDACTED] and verily believe that Dr Bruce Abernethy did not contact her.
12. I also suggested to Dr Bruce Abernethy that he inspect Mr [REDACTED] property at Burtons Bridge which sustained major damage. [REDACTED] informed me that this property was not inspected.
13. Dr Bruce Abernethy conducted only two days of site inspections on a number of sites which were both above and below Wivenhoe Dam. SEQCatchments conducted 40 site inspections averaging 1.5 hours each along the mid Brisbane River.
14. Dr Bruce Abernethy states in Section 5.2 paragraph 4 of 'Brisbane River Flood January 2011 - Report on River Bank Erosion' that:

*"At Jocelyn Bailey's place at Pine Mountain the river is confined within a narrow valley. Here the river generally flows at the base of the valley sides but the occasional small alluvial flat is apparent, typically only developed on one side or other of the river. Again, a variety of processes have given rise to bank erosion. Figure 7 shows an intact bank section on Jocelyn Bailey's property where the bank has been protected by a bed-rock outcrop. Elsewhere along this reach minor failures have occurred but the banks had been re-battered prior to my visit, so it was difficult to infer process or extent of failure."*

15. I had provided Dr Abernethy with the following: a copy of my earlier Submission; a series of 21 photographs taken after the flood had receded that clearly show the riverbank slumping and damage and my testimony that the riverbanks slumped following the 3,500 m<sup>3</sup>/s post flood sustained release was dropped quickly.
16. While assessing my property, Dr Bruce Abernethy photographed the riverbank but only used in his Report a photo of the approx 10% of my riverbank which did not collapse due to the flood event.
17. Dr Abernethy has dismissed all the rest of the riverbank on my property which is the damaged riverbank as having already been battered so unable to be assessed.
18. Dr Abernethy has dismissed 'minor failures' which have already cost me approximately \$10,000 to repair with a total repair cost estimated at \$20,000.
19. In Section 5.2 at paragraph 6, Dr Bruce Abernethy states:

*"All the property owners above remarked to me that they believed a contributing cause of the erosion was the operation of Wivenhoe Dam. They believe that the flood's peak could have been reduced by storing more of the flood waters within Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams and that the recession was unnaturally fast and that this led to drawdown induced failures of the banks"*.

20. I deny ever stating to Dr Bruce Abernethy that I "believed that the flood's peak could have been reduced by storing more of the flood waters within Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams".

21. I did inform Dr Abernethy of the meeting with Seqwater on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 which I attended with associates from the Mid Brisbane River Irrigators and SEQ Catchments when we requested that the FSL of Wivenhoe Dam be reduced to 75% to use the dam as a buffer and allow longer slower releases during the whole of the wet season to reduce riverbank slumping.
22. I am also aware that Dr Abernethy's interpretation of what riparian property owners told him could be mistaken. From lengthy discussions I have had with various property owners and members of the MBRI the almost unanimous view of property owners is that the peak releases of 7500 m<sup>3</sup>/s only became necessary due to the failure of the flood engineers to respond to the circumstances expeditiously, and to drop the releases from 7500 m<sup>3</sup>/s to 2500 m<sup>3</sup>/s at 11.30pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January was a reckless action.
23. Dr Abernethy's Report at Section 5.2 Figure 9 'Modelled and gauged hydrographs at Mt Crosby Reservoir' gives the answer as to why riverbanks slumped massively after the Jan 2011 flood and not the 1974 flood (note that Mt Crosby Reservoir gauging station is 60 kms below Wivenhoe Dam wall). I respectfully suggest that the Commission study the 2011 gauged blue line and observe that from 14 - 18<sup>th</sup> January the line is constant (representing approx 3500 m<sup>3</sup>/s release from Wivenhoe) then falls sharply from the 18<sup>th</sup> to midday on the 19<sup>th</sup> January.
24. In comparison with the 1974 gauged over the same time period, the purple line reduces gradually then levels out thus allowing riverbanks to dry out gradually.
25. It is this difference which caused massive bank slumping after the January 2011 flood as the release rate was reduced rapidly causing water levels to recede quickly which did not give the riverbanks time to dry out. Eyewitness accounts including my own testify to the riverbanks slumping as the water receded rapidly from 3500 m<sup>3</sup>/s after the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
26. I respectfully invite the Commission to consider whether this Report is perhaps contrived to divert attention away from the January 2011 releases which occurred between 5.30pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011. These releases went from 3500 m<sup>3</sup>/s up to 7500 m<sup>3</sup>/s over a 3 hour period. The releases then dropped instantly to 2500 m<sup>3</sup>/s and stayed there before increasing to 2800 m<sup>3</sup>/s and then 3500 m<sup>3</sup>/s on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January.
27. I am an environmentalist and have lived at my property for 22 years. I have lived on this stretch of the river for a total of 28 years.
28. I say it is misleading that '*a variety of processes have given rise to bank erosion.*'
29. In my opinion and having observed the mid Brisbane River for 28 years it is the huge fluctuation in releases of the entire January 2011 event which caused the massive environmental damage to the mid Brisbane River.

Signature:



Name:

Jocelyn Bailey

Date:

24<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Witness Signature:



Witness Name:



Date:

24<sup>th</sup> October 2011