

<i>Name of Witness</i>	HACKNEY, Peter John
<i>Date of Birth</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Address and contact details</i>	[REDACTED] Whiteside. [REDACTED]
<i>Occupation</i>	Doctor
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Det Sgt Glen CATCHPOLE
<i>Date taken</i>	10/4/11

I, Peter John HACKNEY states;

1. I am a man, [REDACTED] years of age and I reside at [REDACTED] Whiteside. I am also currently the President of the North Pine Residents Association, P O Box 124, Petrie. We have approximately 41 members. This association commenced approximately twenty years ago.
2. These submissions are filed by the North Pine Residents Association on behalf of our members, all of whom reside in the Whiteside area. Our submissions can be summarised as follows: 1. It is essential that a flood mitigation responsibility be included in the Dam's Operational Procedures Manual. 2. It is essential to include a flood mitigation component in the allocation of the Dam's capacity. 3. The Dam needs to be kept at less than one hundred percent capacity to avoid any risk of overtopping. 4. It is essential that a range of factors be considered when determining releases of water from the Dam. 5. It is essential to design and implement an effective early warning system for residents affected by water releases from the Dam. 6. When Vores Road is cut by flood waters, disruption to life of the residents of Whiteside should be minimised by allowing them vehicle access across the Dam wall.

Witness Signature.. [REDACTED]

Page Number 1 of 4

..... Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone 1300 309 634
Facsimile +61 7 3405 9750
www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au
AON 65 959 415 158

QFCI

Date:

09/05/11

JM

Exhibit Number:

310

3. During the January 2011 flood I did not receive any warning from any person or government agency. There is great confusion within the community as to the early warning system that is supposed to be in place. Residents are supposed to be advised by a SMS message from the Moreton Bay Regional Council. It appears that no person/agency is taking full responsibility to ensure that residents are warned. The system is inadequate, no one knows how to get on the register, the register is not up to date and not checked. It appears that no one maintains this register. I attended a public meeting on the 7th February 2011 at the North Pine Country Park and we discussed this early warning system. Some issues raised were: 1. Some people did not know about the warning system. 2. Some people did not know that you had to register for the system. 3. Some people claimed that they did not receive the message during the extreme event but had received other messages. 4. Those people who received a message said it was no different to other messages.
4. This meeting was attended by Mr Jim Pruss from SEQwater, Mr Peter Bird a media relations person from SEQwater, Mr Bob Millar and a Mr David DWYER both from the Moreton Bay Regional Council. I have minutes of this meeting. I am able to produce a copy of these minutes.

ATTACHMENT 1: Minutes of meeting held on the 7th February 2011.

Marked No.....

Witness Signature.
Page Number 2 of 4

Signature of office

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5. Whiteside is a residential area approximately twenty-nine kilometres from the Brisbane GPO. It is within the boundaries of the Moreton Bay Regional Council. It is bounded on its southern side by Lake Samsonvale and on its eastern side by the North Pine River, which is a tidal river. There are two hundred and thirty-eight homes in Whiteside all of which are freestanding single dwellings on small acreage allotments.

6. The population is approximately six hundred and ninety - two people and includes families with young children through to elderly people living alone.

7. Personally I was affected by the flood in January in that water entered the bottom of my property, I had damage to fencing. Soil erosion and the water undermined the cement slab of my shed.

8. I have not been instructed by our local council or government agency on evacuation plans in the event of a natural disaster. I do not know who the local disaster co-ordinator is. I consider that the forecasts provided by the Weather Bureau at the time were adequate. I was not assisted in the preparation for the flood by any Federal/State/Local Government. The Emergency Services did not provide any assistance to me at the preparation stage of the flood. In my opinion I consider that the community was not adequately prepared for the flood event in January 2011. During the January flood we only had local roads closed for approximately twelve hours. I am insured with Suncorp and at this stage it is unknown about recovering any of my losses.

Witness Signature.

Page Number 3 of 4

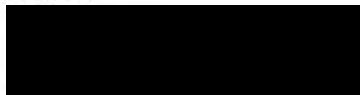
Signature of officer

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9. I have forwarded a submission to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry where I have listed my concerns about the floods. This submission is attached to my statement. I am able to produce this document.

ATTACHMENT 2: Submission to Qld Flood Commission of Inquiry.

Marked No....



P J HACKNEY

Justices Act 1886

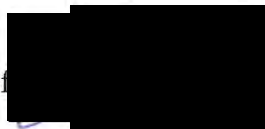
I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 10/4/11 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 4 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

.....Signature

Signed at Whiteside this 10th day of April 2011....

Witness Signature..... Signature of of
Page Number 4 of 4



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NPRA Minutes – Meeting 7 February 2011-02-12

Attendance:

Speakers: Peter Hackney- Chairman, Jim Cruse SEQ Water Executive, Mary-Anne O'Neil- State Representative, Bob Miller- Moreton Bay Regional Council, David Dwyer- Moreton Regional Council, Lawrie Smith and Gerard Fernando, North Pine Residents

5:00pm

Official-Roll call handout: put name and contact.

Thank you to everyone for attending.

Meeting called by the NPRA to discuss damage caused by the large release of water from the North Pine Dam on the 11th of January 2011 and to talk about initiating measures to prevent this happening again.

Thank you to invited guest for their willingness to listen to our concerns and hope and expect they can assist us in the future.

Welcome to State member for Kallangur, Mary-Anne O'Neil, Moreton Bay Councillors, David Dwyer- Division 7 and Bob Miller-Division 11, SEQ Water Representatives, Executive General Manager, Jim Pruss and Communications Advisor, Paul Byrd.

In agreement with SEQ water to present at this meeting, they are unable legally to comment on exact events of the recent flood because that is coming under the attention of an Inquiry led by the Government. All efforts that relate to the events of that flood are going to be unveiled at that inquiry, for them to talk about it now would be illegal. After the meeting we will have a better understanding and after the commission's findings, they will come back to us and present the findings.

Questions on the Agenda.

Impact Statement:

Digital Presentation by Lawrie Smith – some of the impact of the damage.

Invitations for other personal accounts after the video.

Thanks to the council for the Map from of Aerial photograph with the flood line.

Invitation to add information to map.

Map details. Various photos from various people. Wyllie Bridge and Dam when full, Sweeney Reserve. Mungarra Reserve, Dayboro Road, all along the River, Damage to environmental areas, Whiteside area. Substantial flooding in houses. Some completely destroyed. Damage to Lawton all the way along the river.

9:25am the river was at 12 meters equivalent to 1974 flood level.

9:50am the river up another metre.

10:40am another metre which makes this the biggest flood level recorded.

12:45pm – 1:48 the top- [redacted] Vore's Road.

2:05pm flooded the rest of the section of the river

5:15pm- 16.6 meters. Higher than building permit endorsed by council.

5:30pm flood level began to go down.

Time put together for council.

Addition of resident's houses destroyed and substantial damage.

“You didn’t receive any warning?” NO’s.

Video of personal damage. Grant Street.

5:20 Questions; Why is dam so full? Water over the wall. Rain 10 days prior to event. Where is preventative action? Why so much greater than previously?

1. The residents would like an explanation why the volume of water was so much greater than released previously.

Jim Pruss: I am unable to answer your questions. Acknowledges frustrations.

Firstly North Pine Dam is part of a fleet of dams that SEQ water manages.

We have really good professional people working on these systems.

Comes from the most extreme events we’ve had on record. Twice as much water as the 1974 flood before the Wivenhoe Dam.

We operate under a range of restrictions. instructions and manuals approved by the government. To the best of my knowledge, we operated under these.

The government has announced the official inquiry. We are preparing for the commission.

Is this an act of nature? Was it completely unavoidable? Is there policies and procedures we can adapt to make sure this couldn’t happen again? Summary of Residents questions from the community.

North Pine Dam does not have a dedicated flood allocation level. Wivenhoe dam and Somerset Dam have a water storage component and a flood level component. North Pine Dam does not have those components.

“Why?” It was never designed as part of the plan.

We are under instructions to use this as a water supply dam and to keep it full, after a flood level, at 100% supply level. That’s where we have to keep that dam. We don’t have the flexibility to pre-release the water as the rules stand at this point in time. All this information is contained in the Flood Mitigation Manual and it’s about how we have to manage the water and water going into the dam.

Gives numbers, but are not official or not to be quoted. Large substantial event.

As the Commission of Inquiry, by the Premier’s office, there is an opportunity for communities to put together submissions into the Inquiry to get them to look at the flooding and North Pine is certainly a part of that. It is not just about Wivenhoe and Somerset but how water is managed all through the state.

Be aware that we as an organization do not have the authority to change the supply levels, that is what we are instructed at, therefore that is the regulations under which we operate at.

Bob Miller: In perspective the work that I have done, most of the catchments in the North Pine and South Pine are out of my patch as are many of the streams and tributaries. Dayboro experienced the worst flooding in 80 years. It came on top a number of factors. For a start the weather forecast wasn’t anything like what happened on on that Tuesday. They were talking about 75 mm of rain in that region. In the hills of the North Pine River the flooding and parts of Mt. Glorious, which is part of my patch as well, saturating rain all across the Southeast? The North as well, Mackay..... On Sunday night the midnight to midnight type figures Mt. Glorious had a 150 mm of rain. On the Monday they had 108. On the Tuesday they had 430. Dayboro had about 404. So not only was that rainfall, it was flash flooding. Not only

did it catch everybody by surprise the forecast, the speed at which it moved by the old timers at Dayboro had never seen it move so fast. Exactly the same experiences below the dam as well. At the peak time those catchments are running I'm told at the water level was filling up at a rate of 2 meters per hour. These guys had to deal with it. Enormity of the event we've been smashed with.

"Did you say that was a flash flood, sir?" Flash flood. "Thank you."

David Dwyer: Understanding this was a meeting just for Whiteside residents. Mick Gillam was invited but his understanding of Whiteside residents and he had another meeting to attend to. So councillor knew there were going to be people from Lawnton he would have been here. He had already spoken to most of those concerned.

A couple of things as we talk about North Pine Dam and Dayboro, Lake Kurwongbah were very involved in this. Residents I know that live up on Lake Kurwongbah believe it was 2 meters above the highest Kurwongbah had ever been before. You put that enormous water, just a spillway running over, so there was an issue in the back and also this time of year there is very high tides. So there are a lot of things getting involved in this. Some of the issues we need to understand.

Bob and I talked about the properties built in the past, now to the best of our understanding; your property has to be 750mil. Above the Q100 flood level. Take into consideration this was well above the Q100 flood level. Speaking to the Petrie Police who are above the Q100 level that building also got flooded out. There has been a lot of people and businesses affected by this. Even with our traffic issues. We are really looking into what we can do to avoid anything like this in the future.

2. The residents would like an explanation of the notification process for water release. It is not clear anyone was notified of this exceptional release on the day. Given there is no apparent process, it has failed. We would like the process to be revised in consultation with the residents who were affected. Who could respond to that?

Bob Miller: Away for a couple of days and back on the Wednesday. My responsibility through this disaster was to chair our local disaster group. That basically is the council and representatives of some of the other agencies. We come back to the Disaster District management group; it is police superintendents and so on who if we need assistance at our level can engage directly through the state disaster control centre.

That 750 mil level that David referred to also got problems with people who got flooded up in Narangba in their estate. The old Caboolture council used to work on the free boarding fall of 300 above this Q100. So about 30 homes up there were flooded. Different zone but a significant event.

Getting back to the issue of notice, the council took on, changed over time, it's got a very robust process, whenever SEQ word is released, water from the dam, the Council know and we put out an SMS message. At one stage (audience dissent) no, you're right, I'll have to take that on notice because I'm not aware we received notice in respect of the flooding. But I guess that was an evolving thing. The bottom line is talking about the flash flooding component, the speed from which this may have come up, which in a normal situation if it's just a dam release, there haven't been many of them since late last year, we get advised and we advise the residents through that SMS process. More dissent (not getting any notice, living here for ten years)

that's probably the issue as you weren't in an area to be effected. You would have received advice from council (more dissent). If you give me the details after, anyone who lives in your area with potential effect, can you e-mail me or David and we'll make sure you get your mobiles on the system. This is a Telstra initiated system and they are working right across Australia now, (mentions SMS in Brisbane) this system works, but you've got to be on the system. We need to do some investigations. This is just about the flooding in the dam not the others. For some reason your not on the system. It's out of our control. We can only advise Telstra who is put on. (Dissent) I assume it's only for those along the water front (not in the flood plain?).

Peter: It's evident they have the message and I think our major issue now is to establish a procedure for the future. (Issues by audience)

David Dwyer: We have a list of the names and property owners to the best of our knowledge (dissent)

Peter: We need to set up a process where we need to know people who have been affected or think they have been affected, in the future to make sure their name is on the list.

What has happened in the past, that's...? Apparently the formation of the list has been too laxidazal , too informal. I've lived here for 18 months and I never knew any of this. There's been no process for people who come and go. No responsibility on the part of SEQ or Council or whoever responsibility this is to notify us. How do residents know they have to be on the list? Bob's just raised a very important issue for going forward. He said it's not the Council's responsibility. So as residents we need to fix that. We need to have somebody responsible for it. If SEQ's not responsible for it and the Council's not responsible for it, what's going to happen?

Complaints from audience how Council responses, "We don't have any time for that."

In the agenda overall we feel that there should be more consultation between the dam operators and potentially effected residents and we ask SEQ Water and State and Local Governments to instigate this. I can't see it's our responsibility or to be expected to coordinate this. I think that's reasonable.

Bob Miller: A bit of perspective about this. No body told the people in Cobble Creek they were to be flooded, what we've got here is an issue. (Dissent) We have here is a dam. Water comes out. Water comes out in a certain way. It is not a Council responsibility to advise, it's not our water, it's not our dam, it's not our creek. It's the State Government. We identified sometime ago there was some confusion and people were not given some advice, Council took it on itself to say we need to put in a process to advise people. I am surprised to hear tonight that there are people who back on to the water who don't normally get their SMS'. The issue on Tuesday I can't explain where that might have broken down for not getting the message as I wasn't here at the time. But certainly we can look into that. In a normal situation when water is being released from the dam the Council gets advised, because we have to close Young's Crossing, for a start and part of that process we send SMS message. Need to get a bit of robustness around this. Surprised there are so many people who are not on that system, so we'll chase that up. (Dissent about how difficult it is getting on the list, attempts and quality of message. No subsequent message if it continues or amount or level.)

Peter: It seems to me that to have SEQ advise the Council and the Council advise us. Seems that's an intermediary that doesn't need to be there. I can't see why SEQ can't contact us directly. The dam operators.

Jim: Keep in mind that generally the council doesn't want us interacting directly with the residents. We set up a common system for everybody, that perhaps the system is not adequate by what is there.. We should be part of the solution.

Gerard: Why did the water board wait until Tuesday to the king tide to let the water go? It rained on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday? Why didn't they let it go four or five days earlier?

Peter: The question was why did SEQ Water wait with the water when they knew it was coming?

Jim: Ladies and Gentlemen, as I have said before we are governed by what we can by the dam by the manuals as written by the state. We have no authority to do anything other than what was in the manual. This dam is a water supply dam and should be and is required by regulations, a 100 % full when it can. Once it gets flood event then we have a very small amount of free board. So what ever comes into that dam has to be released. I would suggest, once again, if the community wants to make a recommendation, to make any changes to that, to go through the commission of inquiry. We do not have the authority to change that or change the flow. These manuals were put in place to make sure that people had guidance around this position because any particular event would actually put that dam at risk. If that is at risk you can understand what would happen if that dam would collapse.

Audience: Is this a commercial decision?

Jim: There is nothing commercial about the regulations. The only thing I can say is we do not have the authority to change the manuals. That could be part of the submission and what the inquiry is looking at to see that there is equal representation through all state and local members. (More questions)

Bob Millar said it was two meters coming down that day. So coming to that on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday was one meter coming down. It is common sense to let the water go down. Fourth of October it is as high as it is. Bob Millar can get these reports, why can't the residents? You had four days to release it.

Peter: I don't think we can go forward with this particular question. Mr. Cruse has given us his explanation. It may be unsatisfactory but to me it's as far as it's going to go for the moment. What he said to us is the dam does not have any flood litigation policy attached to it. Which obviously is wrong? But that's the government that's apparently set that in place. Now the obvious thing is to move forward and change that policy. For us to push so that there is a flood mitigation policy in the North Pine Dam. That is the answer. Talking about what happened on Tuesday, it's important because many people were affected. The thing now is for us to have confidence in our area and feel okay. The policy for the dam has to change and we have to push for

it. Just saying why you didn't do it on another day before Tuesday is not going to help.

Audience: The North Pine Dam has a monitoring system going from the wall back to the catchment area. That exists to save Dayboro from going under. Was that activated or was that too adhered by the authorities?

Jim: Each of these dams has an active monitoring system which is a management of the rainfall in the state which is sent back to the flood centre which is where all that information goes to a model which predicts the dam rises, dam outflow, dam outputs and monitors what

"May I ask a question? I have a farm on the North Pine River and on the South Pine River. I have been getting telephone messages for years, that we are about to let the dam go. Recently it went to SMS and if you can get on it's really good. I am recently doing a development on one river, and need the flood information. I've got professional consultants on flood levels. My consultants have been trying to get that information on what happened that day, and you won't hand them over. Now I ask you sir, why the secrecy? You won't answer the questions. For years you've been letting the dam go, when it's full, doesn't matter what the position of the tide, what happens to anyone's property down south. My consultant says that flood level was a 1 in 1500 year occurrence. If I give you the list of questions now, will you answer them?"

Jim: I'm not sure what we can and can't do, but everything is in place which is in the commission of inquiry which is a legal process. The best way for you to do that is to send your questions in. We have to work right the way through this and helping in any way we can. So if you have questions we can answer we will. We would like to be part of the solution.....

Peter: We'll move on. When Vores Road is flooded can residents of Vores and Grant Street allowed to transport across the dam road for essential journeys?

Jim: No

Peter: Okay, what help can the effected residents receive either from the SEQ water local or state government for damages received?

Mary-anne: I'm not sure what you mean. If you mean payment for damage or do you mean is there a system if you've been flood affected? One of the issues I have with the whole event is there appears at times it is hard to get information about what flood inundation happened in this area but we've got kits available for what kind of assistance is available from the state government if you have been a victim of flood. So if you would like to come and see me before I leave I can actually get that information. There are pages and pages of the kind of help you can get. I'm not sure if that's the kind of help you mean but I'm happy to provide that for you.

Question from audience: Permits to take things to the dump. Pro active, when I call no one rings back.

Mary-Anne: Is that a permit for the dump, is it?

Audience: problems with using the open dump.... We do ask for assistance, and no one calls back.

David D.: If the question is you need to dump stuff before the assessor, you need to contact..

“The issue I have with this process is people come around and take your details and we go through the process with them and three weeks later we still haven't been told anything about it. You can give me all the information packs you want but when asked a question, nothing still happens after three weeks.”

David: I apologise for that. Obviously there are breakdowns in every system, but I can assure you if you contact council and we will give you (Audience) the point is that people did visit you and they didn't respond. We can't answer that here. Anyhow why there was no response I'm just saying that's an issue and we can sort out the issues. I don't know if you have Bob's number or my number but you can ring us and we will follow through and get back to you with a response as soon as possible after we receive your call. Look we are running out of time, and I believe Peter has got some more comments.

Peter: The last question is can the repairs to the Wyllie bridge be expedited to allow traffic flow to return to normal as soon as possible and any future flooding with the bridge only partially open causing severe traffic problems.

Mary-Anne: I don't know if they can be expedited, the answers that I am getting is that they are working as hard as they can with the damage, and that they are going through the process to make sure it's safe, what I am asking for is a list of what they are trying to do or what the damage is. There is no one there, no one in coats doing stuff so I've asked for the department to give me a run down of the precise kind of work that is happening so you will have an idea about what is happening. I do get people everyday contacting me about it so I know they're working on it and it's not in their interest to delay it. If I can find out the precise nature that might be at least clearer.

Audience: They are going to knock one down are they?

David: I understood there was to be a meeting today and as a result of that meeting, that meeting may still be in attendance, but a decision was going to be made on what is to happen at Gympie Road. Part of what I'm led to believe part of the bottom bridge was built in about 1931; pylons were out of the ground. Top bridge was built in about 1987, with the floods all the debris has blocked at the Gympie, Wyllie bridges, which has built up so much, creating turmoil. I am led to believe that it eroded away by some soil around the pylons, and then I'm led to believe the bridge might have moved a little bit. They are still investigating what happened, when it happened, the best way to go about that. Whether it is to repair and invest in the bridge or replace it. And that's where the discussions are that were being held today. They would still be meeting, so we haven't got the information on that. Several weeks ago, council moved to resolution that we contact the state and federal

governments about holding discussions on ways that we can possibly put a Q100+ bridge across at Young's Crossing. So under the many, many years there has been different concepts come up, the first back in 1967. That Young's Crossing at the North Pine River is susceptible to flooding, and over the recent rains, it has been cut on several occasions. Particularly when water has been released from the North Pine Dam. the original road network that relies on Young's Crossing Road, and Gympie Road, as it's main North South connections into Brisbane, supporting the Bruce highway. If either one of these connections is unavailable it then causes congestion, frequent delays in traffic movement, on the remaining major roads. Temporary closure of the AJ Wyllie Bridge, traffic volumes used Young's Crossing. This stresses the importance of this connection, however, Young's Crossing is narrow and flood effected. For this road to be dependable, regional, network connections, Young's Crossing Road requires renewed to be removed from flooding. It is noted that Young's Crossing Road is a council controlled road at this point of time. The recommendation was that Council apply to Minister for Transport and Main Roads seeking assistance from the federal government for the need to establish a tri-level government initiative to put reconstruction of a Young's Crossing Bridge and road connection to the main road network. Something we have to do ... That is being looked at has been looked at, since 1967. What you have to do is look at the economics. The number of times Young's Crossing Road was closed, it doesn't really warrant the finances required. (Audience)

Close of meeting:

Really important point was that the dam has no flood litigation policy and there is an opportunity to put that in place with the commission of inquiry. That we have the right as a group to set ourselves up to do that.

The notification process didn't work and we need to get it reviewed. The notification process needs to work.

It would also be good if the people who attended today are able to re-attend after the commission of inquiry is finished and exact the details that people were frustrated in not getting responses to.

That the policy changes for this dam to be safe for us in the future.

Recorded by Marcelien Hunt, temporary secretary for the NPRA. 5:02 pm, 07/02/11

**SUBMISSIONS TO
QUEENSLAND FLOODS
COMMISSION OF INQUIRY**

**BY
NORTH PINE
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

9 MARCH 2011

SUBMISSIONS TO QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

BY NORTH PINE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	page 3
INTRODUCTION	page 3
OUR SUBMISSIONS	page 4
BACKGROUND	
(A) The North Pine Dam	page 7
(B) Whiteside	page 8
PREVIOUS FLOODING IN WHITESIDE	page 8
THE 11 JANUARY 2011 FLOODS	page 9
Damage	page 10
SYSTEMS OPERATION PLANS, RELEASE STRATEGY, SUITABILITY OF THE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES RELATING TO FLOOD MITIGATION AND DAM SAFETY –Terms of Reference item (f)	page 11
1. Include a flood mitigation responsibility in the Dam’s Operational Procedures Manual.	Page 11
2. Include a flood mitigation component in the allocation of the Dam’s capacity	page 13
3. Ensure that the Dam is kept at less than 100% of capacity to avoid risk of overtopping	page 13
4. Factors to be considered when determining releases of water from the Dam	page 15

MEASURES TAKEN TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY
-- Terms of Reference item (c) page 16

5. Implement effective early notification procedures page 16

SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING THE
2010/2011 FLOOD EVENTS –Terms of Reference item (d) page 17

6. Access over the Dam wall page 17

COMMENTS

PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE INSURERS – Terms of
Reference item (b) page 18

CONCLUSION page 18

SUBMISSIONS TO QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North Pine Dam (the Dam) is located in the residential suburb of Whiteside. On Tuesday, 11 January 2011, the Dam appeared to overtop during a very large water release which caused unprecedented flooding and damage in the Whiteside area and further downstream. There was no warning given of this very large water release. The operator of the Dam has indicated that the Dam has no flood mitigation capacity. This state of affairs is unsustainable and must be altered urgently.

INTRODUCTION

These submissions are filed by the North Pine Residents Association on behalf of our members, all of whom reside in the Whiteside area. We are aware that a significant number of residents in the adjoining suburbs of Lawnton and Petrie suffered similar damage to the residents of Whiteside during the January 2011 floods but we do not comment on their situation as membership of our Association is limited to the residents of Whiteside and a small part of Kurwongbah.

We wish to make submissions on items (e) and (c) of the Inquiry's terms of reference and indirectly on item (d). We will also make some limited comments on item (b). Because our focus is the Whiteside area our submissions and comments will be limited to the North Pine Dam.

Throughout these submissions we refer to the 'Dam's Operational Procedures Manual' but we have not been able to read this document. Our Secretary, has asked SEQWater (the operator of the Dam) to provide us with a copy of the Operational Procedures Manual for the Dam but they have declined for security reasons and on the basis that they expect it will be made public through the Inquiry.

It will be important for the Inquiry to see the current and all previous versions of the Dam's Operational Procedures Manual as it may be that previous versions of the Dam's Manual included a flood mitigation responsibility which was deleted in the version gazetted on 28 September 2007.¹

We have also not been able to verify whether the Dam complies with all applicable safety guidelines including Queensland Dam Safety Management Guidelines (NR&M 2002a), Guidelines for Failure Impact Assessment of Water Dams (NR&M 2002b)

¹ At page 3 headed Rationale, of a document issued by the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) and labelled 'DS 5.1 Flood Mitigation manual for a dam WIR/2009/3991 – Version 1' prepared by Peter Allen, Director, Dam Safety (Water Supply), Office of the Water Supply Regulator, the following words appear 'existing [flood mitigation] manuals for three dams approved under the former Water Act 2000... The three dams are Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine. The most recent approval dates for each of these dams are: North Pine Dam, gazetted on 28 September 2007; Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams (approval for one manual for both dams) gazetted on 22 January 2010'.

and Guidelines on Acceptable Flood Capacity for Dams as well as subsidiary guidelines such as Selection of Acceptable Flood Capacity for Dams (ANCOLD 2000a), Assessment of the Consequences of Dam Failure (ANCOLD 2000b), Risk Assessment (ANCOLD 2003) and Guide to Flood Estimation (AR&R 1999, Nathan R.J. and Weinmann, P.E), or their current equivalents.

OUR SUBMISSIONS

Our submissions can be summarised as follows:

1. It is essential that a flood mitigation responsibility be included in the Dam's Operational Procedures Manual.
2. It is essential to include a flood mitigation component in the allocation of the Dam's capacity.
3. The Dam needs to be kept at less than 100% capacity to avoid any risk of overtopping.
4. It is essential that a range of factors be considered when determining releases of water from the Dam.
5. It is essential to design and implement an effective early warning system for residents affected by water releases from the Dam
6. When Vores Road is cut by flood waters, disruption to the life of the residents of Whiteside should be minimised by allowing them vehicle access across the Dam wall.

Our first four submissions relate to item (f) of the Terms of Reference, the fifth submission relates to item (c) and the sixth submission relates (albeit indirectly) to item (d).

On 18 February 2011 the Secretary of our Association wrote to SEQWater asking for information which would assist us to understand why the level of flooding which occurred in Whiteside on 11 January 2011, was much higher than any previously recorded flooding. A copy of that letter is included below. The Association has not received answers to the questions asked in our letter. We hope that the Inquiry will be able to obtain the information we seek.

[REDACTED]
Petrie Qld 4502
18 February 2011

The Chief Executive
SEQWater
240 Margaret Street
BRISBANE Q 4000

By hand delivery and fax to: 3229 7926

Dear Sir,

North Pine Dam

I reside in the Whiteside area and my home was flooded on 11 January 2011. The North Pine Residents Association is currently preparing a submission to the Queensland Floods Commission and to complete that submission we are trying to access data relating to the North Pine Dam.

Since 13 February 2011, I have emailed your organisation (twice) asking you to supply me with a copy of the Operational Procedures Manual for the North Pine Dam. You have not responded to my emails. Could you please provide me with a copy of the Manual urgently. If you can supply it in electronic form you can email it to me at

[REDACTED] Otherwise you should post a hard copy to me at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Petrie Qld 4502.

Could you also please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Can you please confirm that since 1 July 2008 the owner and operator of the North Pine Dam (the Dam) is Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority trading as SEQWater?
2. Please advise (perhaps by reference to a map) what constitutes the catchment area for the Dam.
3. What is the full supply level for the Dam?
4. According to Dam records, what rain fell in the Dam catchment area and in the area where the Dam is located (the Dam location area) in the 6 week period prior to 10 January 2011.
5. In the 6 week period prior to 10 January 2011 did the Dam exceed its full supply level at any time? If so, on what dates and by how much?
6. How much water was released from the Dam in the 6 week period prior to 10 January 2011 and on what dates?
7. What were the reason(s) for releasing water from the Dam in the 6 week period prior to 10 January 2011?


8. What was the level of the Dam on 10 January and 11 January?
9. What were the forecasts for rainfall in the Dam catchment and the Dam location area for the 10 and 11 January 2011?
10. What water was released from the Dam and at what times on the 10 January and 11 January 2011? (Please provide details including the number of gates and valves open at the time of maximum water release and the timing of the maximum flows from the Dam).
11. What were the reason(s) for releasing the volume of water which was released from the Dam on those dates?
12. What were the reason(s) for releasing the water at the times it was released from the Dam on those dates?
13. When deciding to make those releases of water on those dates, what evidence in relation to the following was taken into account:
 - (a) the existing saturated state of the soil in the Whiteside and adjacent areas
 - (b) the size of the projected king tide on 11 January and the impact that would have on water-flow in the North Pine River
 - (c) the likelihood and extent of the flooding which those releases of water would cause on properties in the Whiteside area and further downstream?
14. Did any overtopping occur at the Dam at any time in the 6 week period leading up to 10 January or during 10 and 11 January 2011? If so, when?
15. Do you have knowledge of a 'tidal wave' moving across the Dam or down the North Pine River at any time on 10 or 11 January 2011? If so:
 - (a) On which date and at what time and
 - (b) Can you please provide an estimate of its height?
16. Where are the personnel who make decisions about releasing water from the Dam located?
17. Are there any personnel permanently on duty at the Dam?
18. Were there personnel on duty at the Dam throughout the whole of 10 and 11 January? If so, can you please advise their qualifications and how many years experience they have had in operating the Dam? (I do not wish to know their names).
19. Did anyone from the Dam notify any other body (for example Queensland Police or Moreton Bay Regional Council) before releasing water from the Dam on those days?

18. If so, who did they notify, how did they notify them and at what times?
19. Did they receive an acknowledgement of their notification?
20. Has a report to the Chief Executive been prepared by the Dam in relation to the flood event of 10 and 11 January 2011? If so, could you please provide a copy of it to me?
21. Were reports to the Chief Executive prepared after previous flood events eg 1974 or 1989 which may help to explain why properties in the Whiteside area which have not flooded previously did flood on this occasion? If so, could you please provide copies to me?

I thank you in anticipation for your answers to these questions.

As there is only a short time until submissions to the Inquiry need to be filed, I again re-iterate the urgency of this matter.

Yours faithfully,


Acting Secretary
North Pine Residents Association

BACKGROUND

(A) The North Pine Dam

The Dam dams the North Pine River and its installation created Lake Samsonvale. The Dam has 5 radial gates and was built between 1973 and 1976. According to a paper written by Middelmann, Harper and Lacey and published in 2000² its Full Supply Capacity is 200,000ML and its Crest Capacity is 295,000ML.

The Dam is located right in Whiteside, with the Dam wall being as little as 100 metres from some of our members' homes. Just over 3 kilometres downstream from the Dam wall, beginning at Youngs Crossing Road, are the densely settled urban areas of Petrie and Lawnton. From there, the North Pine River continues on through the adjoining residential and commercial suburbs of Strathpine, Kallangur, Murrumba Downs and Bald Hills and enters Moreton Bay at the suburb of Griffin.

Our understanding is that the catchment area for the Dam is located to the west of Lake Samsonvale, in the Mt Pleasant, Dayboro, Lacey's Creek, Kobble Creek and Samsonvale areas. (We have asked SEQWater to confirm the catchment area but have received no response.)

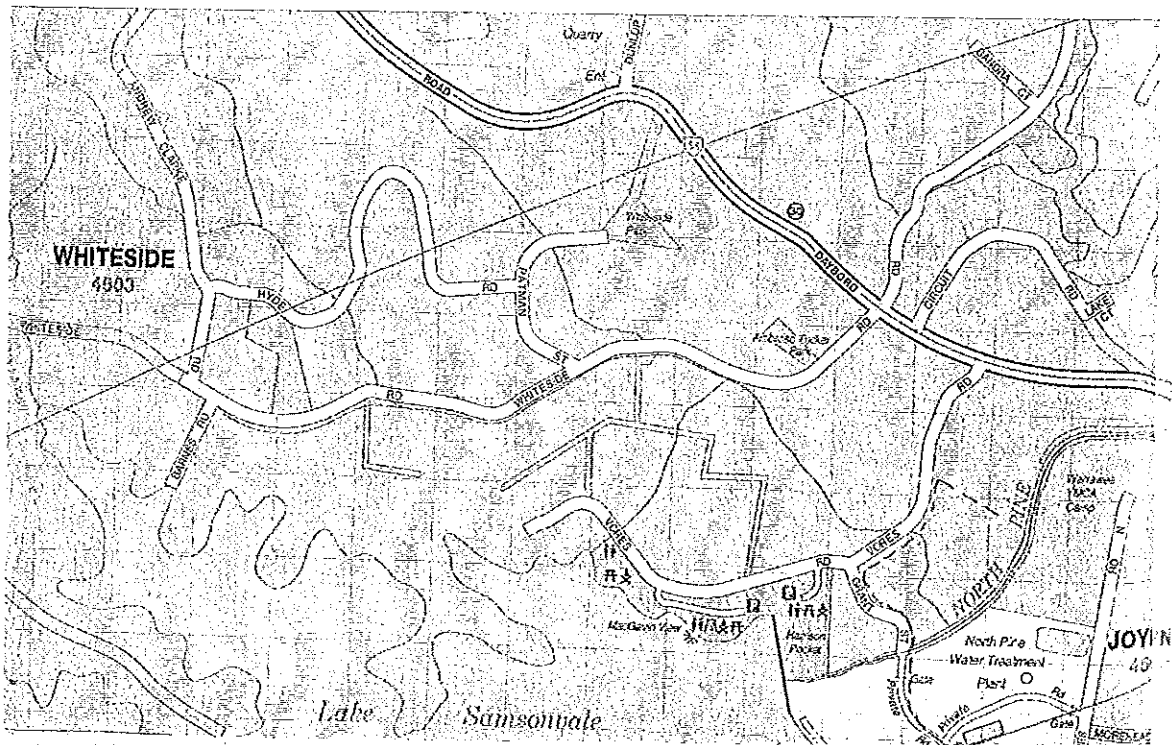
² Chapter 9 of 'Natural hazards and the risks they pose to South-east Queensland' published by the Australian Geological Survey Organisation in conjunction with the Bureau of Meteorology, 2000 see table at paragraph 9.14)

Our research indicates that the Dam was initially operated by the Brisbane City Council, but in 1985 its ownership and control passed to Brisbane & Area Water Board and in 2000 ownership and control passed to SEQWater. From 2008 Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority trading as SEQWater has been the owner and operator of the Dam.

(B) Whiteside

Whiteside is a residential area located approximately 29 kilometres from the Brisbane GPO. It is within the boundaries of the Moreton Bay Regional Council (the Council). It is bounded on its southern side by Lake Samsonvale and on its eastern side by the North Pine River, which is a tidal river.

There are 238 homes in Whiteside, all of which are freestanding single dwellings on small acreage allotments (averaging from 5260square metres to 13,355square metres). The population is approximately 692 people and includes families with young children through to elderly people living alone.³



There are 2 major thoroughfares intersecting Whiteside (being Vores Road and Whiteside Road) with smaller streets running off them. Vores Road crosses Whiteside Creek approximately 0.6 kilometres from Dayboro Road. This creek runs into the North Pine River, below the Dam wall. If there is a high tide, and the level of the North Pine River is up, water coming down this creek is not able to flow freely into the North Pine River. It will then bank up and may cover Vores Road. When the tide goes out, the water will usually flow into the North Pine River and dissipate rapidly.

³ Data on number of homes and residents supplied by Moreton Bay Regional Council.

PREVIOUS FLOODING IN WHITESIDE

One of the members of our Association, [REDACTED] architect and landscape architect of [REDACTED] has collected a lot of data relating to flooding in the Whiteside area. He has collated it into the PowerPoint presentation which accompanies this submission. Mr Smith has also prepared a large topographical map charting the flooding which occurred in Whiteside on 11 January 2011, and also anecdotal information on previous flood impact in the area. This map is also submitted with this submission. We urge the Inquiry to refer to the information provided by Mr Smith as well as the accompanying video [REDACTED] when considering our submissions.

Prior to the flooding in January 2011, the three highest recorded floods in the Whiteside area occurred in 1972, 1974 and 1989. Mr Smith, has established that in 1972 the flooding at Whiteside peaked at approximately 14.5 metres, in 1974 it peaked at approximately 12.5 metres and in 1989 it peaked at approximately 14 metres. On 11 January 2011 the flooding at Whiteside peaked at approximately 16 metres in the North Pine River and approximately 16.5 metres in Whiteside Creek.

THE 11 JANUARY 2011 FLOODS

During December 2010 and into January 2011 there had been heavy rainfall throughout South-East Queensland and further rain was openly predicted for the period from 7 to 12 January.⁴

On 9 January 2011, heavy rainfall fell in the Dam's catchment area, it eased somewhat on 10 January but then further heavier rainfall occurred on 11 January. We understand SEQWater would be aware of the predicted and actual rainfall figures for the Dam catchment and Whiteside areas for that period. SEQWater has not, however, provided them to us.

The Council has published some rainfall figures for the broader region. Mr Smith has included this data in his PowerPoint presentation. The figures are:

Sunday 9 January 2011

(broader region)

West Bellthorpe	341mm
Peachester	277mm
Mt Mee	201mm
Wamuran	180mm
Woodford	179mm
Mt Glorious	150mm

⁴ News report, 'Five Day forecast; rain, rain, rain, rain, rain' by Simone O'Brien, brisbanetimes, January 7, 2011.

Monday 10 January 2011

(broader region)

West Bellthorpe	103mm
Peachester	75mm
Mt Mee	74mm
Wamuran	51mm
Woodford	70mm
Mt Glorious	108mm

Tuesday 11 January 2011

(these figures do list some localities in the Dam's catchment area)

Mt Glorious	430mm
Dayboro	404mm
Moorina	400mm
Wamuran	365 mm
Baxter's Creek	352mm
Lacey's Creek	350mm

In December 2010 and through to January 2011, water was being released from Wivenhoe Dam. Although we have requested data from SEQWater on water releases from the North Pine Dam prior to and on 10 and 11 January, SEQWater has not provided this information to us.

██████████ from his own observations at his property at ████████ Vores Road, recorded the following time-line for the flood on 11 January 2011 (this information is taken from one of the slides in ██████████ presentation):

NOTE: ALL LEVELS ARE APPROXIMATE INTERPRETED FROM CONTOUR PLAN AND KNOWN LOCATIONS		
	4 metres	natural river level
9:25am	12 metres	1974 flood level (average 2m water over river flat)
9:50am	13 metres	100mm above the base of the Melicope tree
11:20am	14 metres	the April 1989 flood level (the previous highest flood)
12:05pm	15 metres	at the base of the corner column under bedroom 1
1:48pm	15.5 metres	three quarters up the Stephens tennis court fence
2:05pm	16 metres	at the top level of swimming pool coping (maximum level)
2:37pm	16 metres	just below the top of tennis court fence (maximum level)
4:30 - 5:00pm	16 metres	at maximum level (unsure of exact time)
		then slowly receded overnight
NOTE: The North Pine River flood flow effectively dammed the inflow from the tributaries eg Whiteside Creek and the gully adjacent to 17 Vores Road; this resulted in the flood level in those backwaters being approximately 500mm higher or RL 16.5 metres.		

At approximately 2:30pm, Queensland Police advised residents whose personal safety was at risk that they had to evacuate their homes.

Damage:

On 11 January 2011, 31 properties in Whiteside suffered damage from flooding with 7 homes being inundated. Of those homes 2 have been destroyed and the remainder have suffered severe damage.⁵ On both the 1972 and 1974 flood levels, only 2 residences would have been inundated and on the 1989 flood level 3 residences would have suffered inundation.⁶ As noted at the start of our submissions, we are aware that other residential properties downstream from Whiteside were severely impacted by the release of water from the Dam on 11 January but we have confined our comments to Whiteside properties only.

In addition, 24 built gardens and landscapes were destroyed (approximately 15,000 sqm), 3.2kms of riverine forest was severely impacted on the north bank of the North Pine River, 2.5kms of riverine forest was impacted on the south bank of the North Pine River and 1km of riverine forest on the banks of Whiteside Creek was also impacted. The destruction was extremely significant, specifically including the felling of mature gum trees up to 30 metres high, as well as the destruction of many smaller trees, under-story plants and ground covers in the natural riverine forest. The disturbance to the root systems allowed the washing away of the river bed and bank with consequent erosion and deposition of countless cubic metres of sand and gravel downstream. The areas impacted include prime koala and platypus habitat.

SYSTEMS OPERATION PLANS, RELEASE STRATEGY, SUITABILITY OF THE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES RELATING TO FLOOD MITIGATION AND DAM SAFETY - Terms of Reference item (f)

Our over-arching submission is that procedures must be designed and implemented which will provide optimum protection of residential properties from inundation. To achieve this we submit that the following changes need to be made.

1. Include a flood mitigation responsibility in the Dam's Operational Procedures Manual.

As previously noted, we have asked SEQWater to provide us with a copy of the Manual of Operational Procedures for the Dam, but they have not done so. We are therefore not able to ascertain what it provides with regard to the system operation plans or release strategy for the Dam.

SEQWater have been quoted in the media as saying that '[The Dam] was different from Wivenhoe. "It was designed as a drinking water storage only with no flood mitigation capacity".⁷ On the basis of this we have to assume that, unlike the Manual of Operational Procedures for Wivenhoe Dam and Somerset Dam, the Dam's Manual

⁵ Full details – addresses, names of owners and a description of the damage done to these properties – can be provided to the Inquiry on request. We have not included this information here out of consideration for the people affected.

⁶ Data collected by ██████████ Some of the residences inundated in 2011 were not built during 1974 but we can calculate how many would have been inundated by reference to land contours.

⁷ News report , 'Water torture: residents agonise over dam threat', by Miranda Forster, Pine Rivers Press 16 February 2011.

does not impose on the operator the objectives of providing optimum protection of urbanised areas from inundation or the minimisation of impact on riparian flora and fauna when operating the Dam.

As described above, the Dam is situated in the midst of a residential area. Fortunately, no one was killed in the Whiteside area on 11 January but that was something of a miracle. Because the flood water rose so rapidly, it is unlikely that anyone who was wheelchair bound or bed-ridden would have been able to escape from their homes. As it was one 86 year old resident had to wade through water approximately 5 feet high to escape from his home and another elderly couple were trapped in their home as the water rose, until the police arrived by boat up their driveway.

Even though no serious personal injuries were suffered by residents, it has had a deep emotional impact on people, particularly those whose homes were inundated.

We have gathered together some comments from some of our residents to help you understand something of the emotional trauma they are suffering.

‘We lost all our wedding photos and the only photos I had of my late parents - as well as personal treasures we’ve gathered over the years. It’s as if the flood has taken away a large part of my life.’ [REDACTED]

‘Aside from things washable ie crockery, cutlery, solid furniture and clothing, we have lost everything. No insurance and seeking some counselling, Sad and frustrated.’ [REDACTED]

‘The kids lost everything, all their toys. The 8 year old understands what’s happened but the little one doesn’t. We got an insurance payout but the bank has taken it and so it means I can’t get on and rebuild.’ [REDACTED]

‘I would like to explain the nature of our concern about the sudden rise of water threatening our property. My wife and daughter were extremely agitated about the safety of evacuation, especially as it had been stated that a 20 foot wall of water was approaching down the North Pine River. I feel that the stress and concern to myself and family could have been averted by a more controlled release of water and that the storage capacity of the Dam should have a margin of flood mitigation included in its operation.’ [REDACTED]

‘We need to not have to live in fear of extreme water release.’ [REDACTED]

The total value of the property damage suffered by Whiteside residents has not yet been calculated. The losses for those residents whose homes have been destroyed will amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars, for those whose homes were inundated the losses will be tens of thousands and for every property that was flooded the likely losses will be numbered in the thousands.

As there has been more than 6 kilometres of riverine vegetation destroyed it would be a costly and time consuming exercise to restore it - initially requiring the removal and mulching of the destroyed trees and shrubs, followed by earthworks to create a suitable riverbank profile for re-vegetation then spreading the mulch ready for planting, acquiring the endemic species and planting and maintaining until established.

It would be unconscionable for SEQWater to seek to reject all responsibility for the losses resulting from their actions, by simply saying its Manual of Operations Procedures did not require SEQWater to try to minimise the impact of their actions.

To ensure clarity for the future it is essential that the Dam's Operational Procedures Manual be amended to spell out to the operator that the Dam has a flood mitigation responsibility (secondary only to the structural safety of the Dam) and that the Dam must be operated with the objective of flood mitigation in mind.

2. Include a flood mitigation component in the allocation of the Dam's capacity.

An ancillary requirement to submission 1, is that a requirement be imposed on the operator that a percentage of the Dam's capacity must be allocated to flood mitigation (as is the case with Wivenhoe Dam). The Association does not have the expertise to determine what percentage of the capacity of the Dam should be maintained for flood mitigation purposes, although we note that 60 per cent of Wivenhoe's capacity is allocated to flood mitigation.

It will be necessary for the Department of Environment and Resource Management to undertake an independent study to determine how much of the Dam's capacity needs to be allocated to flood mitigation. In doing so, it will need to consider the Dam failure which occurred on 11 January 2011 (see below) and the rapidly increasing urbanisation of the areas downstream from the Dam.

3. Ensure that the Dam is kept at less than 100% of capacity to avoid any risk of overtopping.

At a public meeting held on 7 February 2011 at North Pine Country Park a representative of SEQWater said that SEQWater was required to maintain the level of the Dam at 100% of capacity or as close as possible to that level, at all times.

We do not know if this requirement is contained in the Dam's Operational Procedures Manual.

Providing sufficient drinking water for the people of Brisbane would be the main aim for the operator of the Dam, but now that the Dam is part of the Water Grid it does not require that it be kept at 100% of its capacity to achieve that.

The Association can understand the commercial reasons which may cause SEQWater to wish to maintain the Dam at 100% capacity at all times, but a large body of water is a dangerous object and those who have control of it have a high duty of care to those who could be foreseeably affected by their conduct.

We have asked SEQWater if any overtopping occurred at the Dam at any time in the six weeks prior to 10 January, or on 10 or 11 January. We have not received a response.

The video taken by Mr Sciffert on 11 January 2011 (and provided to you along with this submission), appears to show that overtopping did occur.⁸ Does the Dam operator have any CCTV footage of this event?

Overtopping is of great concern because it can damage the wall of a dam and cause it to break. In a paper titled 'Operation of Spillway Gates – How to Avoid the Problems and Pitfalls' presented to a Workshop on 16 – 18 June 2009 by Mr Peter Allen, Director of Dam Safety for DERM, Mr Allen described an incident in January 1982 when the Dam overtopped, and his horrified response to that incident.⁹

The issue of a dam break was considered by Middelmann, Harper and Lacey in their paper at paragraphs 9.14, 9.15 and 9.16. In paragraph 9.15 they note that, 'North Pine Dam is the only major dam immediately upstream of an urban area'. Table 9.2 shows that if the Dam was to break it would take 0 to 3 hours for the waters to reach Petrie (in 2000 Petrie was 10 kms from the Dam wall but now, as a result of extensive residential development, the suburb begins just over 3 kms away).¹⁰ Council data indicates that in 2006 there were approximately 8520 people living in Petrie. Multiplying this number by the population increase which has occurred throughout the Council's territory since then (approximately 3% per annum), the approximate population for Petrie would now be 9798 people.

On 11 January, both the Young's Crossing and Wylie Bridges were cut after the water release, and trains travelling north and south had to be cancelled. In the event of the Dam breaking (when presumably flood levels would be even higher) the chances of getting 9800 or so people out of Petrie and to safety in under 3 hours would be slim.

⁸ Under the *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008* failure of a referable dam (and the Dam is a referable dam) is defined as:

'(a) the physical collapse of all or part of the dam; or
(b) the uncontrolled release of any of the dam's contents'.

⁹ Mr Peter Allen: 'North Pine dam just north of Brisbane had an incident in January 1982 when, it is understood, the flood engineer concluded that a flood event was 'over' and shut down the flood control centre and went home (the flood engineer was the only person who could authorise gate movements). Soon after, there was another major burst of rainfall on an already saturated catchment. Because none of the operators on site was authorised to open the gates, the water level rose rapidly to inundate the electrically powered gate lifting gear (which was housed under the bridge decking) and the gates were unable to be opened and the gates were overtopped. I remember going out to the dam and seeing the 'Channel 7' helicopter hovering overhead and sure enough, it featured on the news that night with the story indicating what a good thing it was to see dams overflowing. Those who knew anything about what was actually happening realised what a close run thing it was to dam failure and were horrified. There have been many changes to North Pine operating rules and data gathering systems since that time'.

¹⁰ There is no estimate of how long it would take to engulf Whiteside, although at 9.15 the authors say 'Contrary to popular perception, flood waves from dam breaks travel relatively slowly – at only a few kilometres an hour – except in close proximity to the dam'..

And what of the tens of thousands of people living in Lawnton and the other suburbs further downstream from the Dam, all of whom would need to be evacuated in a matter of 5 – 6 hours.¹¹

To avoid any risk of over-topping it is essential that the Dam *not* be kept at 100% of its capacity, particularly if there is any possibility of heavy rain or run off in the Dam catchment.

4. Factors to be considered when determining releases of water from the Dam

As early as 4 October 2010, the Bureau of Meteorology issued a media release that warned Queensland was likely to be wetter than normal because we were in a La Nina climate phase. This was followed up with a further media release on 23 December 2010 that stated, 'The Bureau of Meteorology is predicting hundreds more millimetres of rain to fall along much of the already saturated areas of the state before the end of the year. The Bureau of Meteorology's Queensland Regional director, Jim Davidson, said that many river catchments have become so thoroughly soaked that any further rain is likely to spill very quickly into rivers and streams'.

In December 2010, Nine MSN was broadcasting, 'Over southern and eastern Australia the cold front events with potential to bring widespread rain are now expected about 27 December to 31 December; 4 January to 8 January, and 17 January to 21 January 2011. Rain events originating in the tropics and moving south are possible about 4 January to 8 January, 10 January to 14 January, and 21 January to 25 January'. The shorter term forecast, for the period from 7 to 12 January 2011, was for heavy rain each day (see footnote 4 above).

We expect that the Dam operator would have been aware of these forecasts and would also have access to the same Real Time Flood Model data to evaluate forecast and potential rainfall and likely run-off in the Dam catchment as is available in respect of the Wivenhoe and Somerset Dams. During December and the earlier part of January, water was being released from the Wivenhoe dam (as far as we can ascertain, on a daily basis). We have asked SEQWater to advise what water was released from the Dam during this period and on what dates, but have received no response.

The other question we would like answered is: Did SEQWater keep the Dam at its full capacity throughout this time, despite the weather forecasts?

During December 2010 and the earlier part of January 2011 there was in fact unusually heavy rain in the whole of South East Queensland and the soil was saturated. By 11 January 2011, Sideling Creek which enters the North Pine River approximately 3 kilometres downstream from the Dam was heavily flooded. The North Pine River was itself flooding and there were higher than usual high tides. In these circumstances, it was inevitable that if all of the Dam's five gates had to be fully

¹¹ The Council website estimates that in 2006 the populations of these suburbs were: Lawnton (5565), Joyner (1,897), Warner (4,705), Kallangur (16,895), Strathpine (10,908), Murrumba Downs (7,012) and Griffin (no estimate). Bald Hills is in the City of Brisbane. A private website estimates its population as 5856. Current populations would be approximately 15% higher (5 years x 3% per annum). Not all of these people would be in the path of the floodwaters.

opened at once due to heavier than expected run-off in the catchment, serious flooding would occur downstream.

If the Dam's operating rules do not require factors such as forecast or potential rainfall and run-off, actual rainfall, tidal conditions, the existing state of the North Pine River and downstream tributaries and the surrounding land to be taken into account when deciding when water should be released, then the operating rules need to be amended.

MEASURES TAKEN TO INFORM THE COMMUNITY – Terms of Reference item (e)

5. Implement effective early notification procedures

In the past there was a well-established procedure in place to advise Whiteside residents when water was about to be released from the Dam.

Interested residents could have their names and telephone numbers placed on a list held by the Dam operator and then approximately one or two hours before releasing water, Dam personnel would telephone them. These telephone calls would be made at any time of the day or night.

It appears that some years ago (and there is general confusion as to when) the Council took over the task of telephoning residents on the list to advise them of imminent water releases. Approximately 18 months ago the Council changed to doing this via SMS.

The Dam's early notification system (or lack thereof) was the subject of spirited discussion at the public meeting held on Monday 7 February 2011 at North Pine Country Park. At that meeting several attendees asked why the people living downstream from the Dam had not been notified that water would be released from the Dam. (Unofficial) notes made of that meeting record that the following exchange took place:

- Representative from SEQWater: "It is the Council's responsibility. We pass the information on to the Council and it is up to them to disseminate it".
- Local Councillor: "We don't have the information and it is not the Council's responsibility".
- Representative from SEQWater: "Well we pass the information on to you."
- Local Councillor: "We can't notify all of you because we don't know who lives in the flood area".
- A member of the audience: "You know who lives here when you send out the rate notices".

The notes go on to say that, 'Many people said they had lived in the area for many years and had never been notified [prior to water releases from the Dam].'

Other notes taken at the meeting record:

'Councillor [name] advised...: Council had put in place the current water release warning system as it was not the responsibility of SEQWater. There was a lot of confusion about this system. It appears that SEQWater advise Council of a proposed water release and an SMS text warning message is sent out to the mobile phones of those who are registered on the system. Some issues raised are:

- some did not even know about the warning system;
- some did not know that you had to register for the system;
- some claimed that they did not receive the message during the extreme event but had received other messages;
- those who received a message said it was no different to other messages;
- an audience member offered his experience and expertise to improve the flood early warning system'.

Although there are significant differences in these notes, it does seem clear that the great majority of the Whiteside residents likely to be impacted by any release of water, were not given prior notice of the water release made by SEQWater on 11 January 2011.

It is essential that an effective warning system, which warns residents as early as possible before water is released from the Dam, must be put into place. It should be either an opt-out system or well publicised on an ongoing basis. It's effectiveness needs to be monitored. Simply sending out SMS messages is not adequate as many older members of the community are not familiar with SMS nor would they have a mobile phone, and it is only recent models of landline telephones that have an SMS function.

SUPPLY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES DURING THE 2010/2011 FLOOD EVENTS – Terms of reference item (d)

6. Access over the Dam wall

This submission relates to item (d) of the terms of reference, in that it refers to measures to manage an essential service, being road access, to residences during the 2010/2011 floods.

When large amounts of water are released from the Dam, water can flood across Vores Road to a depth which makes it impassable. This occurs where Vores Road crosses Whiteside Creek approximately 0.6 kilometres from Dayboro Road. The effect of this is to prevent those Whiteside residents who live beyond the crossing - in Vores Road or in Grant Street - from accessing their homes while the flood waters are present.

On 11 January 2011, Vores Road had become impassable by approximately 9:15am and remained impassable for the remainder of the day and that night. This caused

great inconvenience to a large number of residents, in that some of them were prevented from getting to work and those that had left their homes in the morning were not able to return to them that night and had to find accommodation elsewhere (this included at least one unaccompanied teenager).

The width of the Dam wall is sufficient for a vehicle to be driven along it. Although both ends of the dam wall are usually locked-off with high gates, it is possible for the operator of the Dam to unlock those gates and allow people to drive from the land owned by SEQWater on the Joyner side of the Dam wall, across the Dam wall to the MacGavin View Picnic area at Whiteside.

The Association submits that SEQWater should allow all emergency vehicles and those residents who are unable to access their homes when Vores Road is impassable, to drive across the Dam wall. This would do away with the considerable inconvenience and risk to health which residents suffer by being prevented from accessing or leaving their homes.

COMMENTS

PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE INSURERS – Terms of reference item (b)

The Association has sent a questionnaire to all those Whiteside property owners who, according to its records, were flooded on 11 January asking them to advise:

1. Have you made an insurance claim?
2. Has it been handled appropriately?

Most of the people whose properties were flooded have made an insurance claim but the majority of the claims have not yet been processed. A common response given by insurers is that the insurance company is waiting on an hydrologist's report to determine if the flooding was a 'flash flood'. (The definition of 'flash flood' used by each insurance company differs).

This failure of the insurers to accept liability and make payouts is causing severe hardship to all of those affected who just want to be able to get on with their lives.

CONCLUSION

While there was widespread and more damaging flooding in many other areas of Queensland, the flooding that followed the release of water from North Pine Dam on 11 January 2011 was unique. Unlike Wivenhoe and Somerset dams, there are many residential properties in close proximity to the North Pine Dam and in the direct path of its discharge.

When the gates were opened, this flooding occurred very rapidly and without warning, directly due to the actions of the Dam operators. The flood levels reached were higher than in living memory and most of the houses affected by flooding had never been flooded before. This indicates the rate of water release was higher than ever before, but despite this, residents in danger were not given any warning. This was not simply a cruel act of Mother Nature.

The SEQWater website states that North Pine Dam is a water storage facility and does not have a flood mitigation function. We have not been able to ascertain how this description translates into dam procedural policy and workings, because SEQWater have not provided us with a Manual of Procedures for Operation of the Dam.

Especially now, after this very serious flooding, we believe strongly that the North Pine Dam should have a flood mitigation responsibility to protect the community. We fear that subsequent flooding could be more disastrous.

The Association appreciates being able to make submissions to the Inquiry on the various Terms of Reference which impact on the people of Whiteside and we hope that the information provided has been of assistance to the Inquiry. If we can provide any further information which may aid the Commission in its deliberations, please do not hesitate to contact us by email to Dr. Peter Hackney at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Signed by Peter Hackney
President
On behalf of the North Pine Residents Association
9 March 2011