

STATEMENT BY BARRY BALL MANAGER WATER RESOURCES
DRAFT BRISBANE RIVER FLOOD STUDIES

1. I am currently the Manager, Water Resources Branch within Urban Management Division with (inter alia) responsibility for giving strategy and policy advice to Council in relation to water issues within Brisbane City.
2. During the period 1999 to 2002, my official title was Manager Waterways with the responsibility for stormwater policy, planning and management within Brisbane City.
3. During this period I reported to the then Chair of Urban Planning Committee, Councillor Tim Quinn through my Divisional Manager Michael Kerry.
4. Sinclair Knight Mertz had been commissioned by Works Design Office in the previous Works Department of the Brisbane City Council in approximately 1995 to prepare a Brisbane River Flood Study. That report was received in 1998 and had indicated that the Q100 level set by Council in its 1984 Flood Strategy was too low.
5. I had concerns over the validity of some of the data used and conclusions reached in that Flood Study. The study had assumed the coincidence of a number of low probability events in its determination of the flow for the river and I therefore felt that this flow had a lower probability than a Q100. I asked for and received an independent peer review in December 1998 by Professor Mein an expert in this field.
6. The Professor Mein review indicated that the Draft SKM report had not fully incorporated emerging methodologies in hydrologic modelling and challenged some of the assumptions used. He concluded that the flood levels estimated in that report "were likely to be over estimated". Professor Mein then made various recommendations that, if followed, would enable the flood levels to be more accurately determined. This confirmed my earlier concerns on the likely Q100 river flow.
7. As a result I commissioned City Design Branch of Council in early 1999 to review the Draft SKM 1998 Report and to act on the recommendations of the Mein report.
8. Although this Draft Report was not presented until June, I was aware of its likely conclusions in May 1999. Those conclusions were that the flood levels exceed the 1984 levels adopted by Council but were significantly lower than those estimated in the Draft SKM report (consistent with Professor Mein's 1998 Report).
9. I was still concerned that the Mein review recommendations had not been fully incorporated in the Draft June 1999 report by City Design. I was also concerned about the consequences of releasing data about an increase in flood levels that was potentially inaccurate. I sought policy direction from Councillor Tim Quinn the then Chair of Urban Planning Committee who had policy responsibility for these matters.
10. A meeting occurred with Councillor Quinn on 5 May 1999 and other Council Officers, Michael Kerry, Peter Cumming and Gavin Blakey.

At that meeting I used the notes forming Attachment "A" to this statement.

I recall that I explained the study process so far and, because of my concerns about the validity and accuracy of the figures produced,

QFCI

Date:

20/09/11

JM

Exhibit Number:

553

cautioned against changing the development control levels at this time (this was consistent with the recommendations of the Draft June 1999 report).

Councillor Quinn indicated that this was a matter for policy direction and indicated that he would refer the issue to the then Lord Mayor Councillor Jim Soorley to discuss how that policy direction would be provided.

11. I recall being summoned to either E&C Strategy or Admin Sub-Committee sometime in mid to late 1999 (I cannot recall the exact date). These committees consist of administration Councillors who assist officers in giving policy direction on matters before formal submissions are made to Civic Cabinet.
12. I recall that Councillor Jim Soorley and Councillor Tim Quinn were both present at that meeting. I cannot recall with certainty the names of other Councillors present at that meeting.
13. At that meeting I made a presentation similar to the one made to Councillor Tim Quinn on 5 May 1999. A copy of that presentation forms Attachment "A" to this Statement.
14. I recall that I made the following recommendations:-
 - (a) The reports to date of increased flood levels did not fully accommodate the recommendations of Mein's review and were therefore likely to overestimate the Q100 event and therefore should not to be relied upon to change existing flood levels;
 - (b) More work needed to be done to get a more definitive Q100 flood level;
 - (c) As a consequence it was not appropriate to alter official development control levels at this time as per the recommendation in the Draft June 1999 report.
15. I recall that my verbal recommendations were accepted.
16. I don't recall there were any formal presentations to either E&C Strategy or Admin Subcommittee from late 1999 to June 2003 although I kept Councillor Quinn informed on an ad hoc basis of progress during that period.
17. I also answered queries from time to time from the Lord Mayor's Office on progress.
18. I asked City Design to review the Draft June 1999 against Mein's recommendations as I felt they had still not been fully considered. This resulted in the Draft December 1999 report, which further reduced the estimated flood levels.
19. Despite this reduction I still had concerns that the Draft December 1999 report had not fully incorporated the recommendations from the Mein review.
20. We convened a Technical Workshop in October 2000 with water industry experts including Professor Mein. The purpose of the workshop was to bring together technical experts to assess the major components of the flood study to ensure that the final flood study report would be technically rigorous and using an approach / methodology that would be consistent with the current practices using the latest available information. At that meeting John Ruffini of the Department of Natural Resources outlined work being undertaken by his Department for the SEQWCo on rainfall data in the

Brisbane River Catchment. John informed us that the figures in their report would be available about December 2000 and would most likely show that it would be a lot closer to the 1984 estimate of the Q100 than the earlier 1993 study by DNR.

21. I determined that it was appropriate to wait for the DNR report before finalising the BCC report and determining the development control level.
22. Due to reasons beyond Council's and DNR's control their report was substantially delayed and some results are only being made available July 2003. Again the indications are that the results when obtained will once again lower the predicted Q100 flood levels to levels far closer to the 1984 levels than those predicted in the Draft SKM and City Design Reports.
23. I am also confident that improvements in relevant methodologies to date will enable me to assess more confidently the appropriate Q100 flood level when the data is input into Council's flood model.

Dated

22nd

day of

July

2003

Signed

Barry Ball

DAVID ASKIN