

Alpha community meeting – 10 March 2011

Summary of discussion

Background

The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry held a community meeting at the Alpha Town Hall. Seven residents attended the meeting, with apologies received from many residents who were unable to attend due to attending a funeral for a local man. The following summary is an overview of the issues raised with Commission staff by Alpha residents. It is not meant to represent the views of the community as a whole.

Issues arising

- The early warnings and doorknocks given by the local police officer were effective and residents were evacuated to the higher land in Alpha where necessary.
- The Barcaldine Regional Council coordinated with police in allowing people access to their homes once the waters subsided and getting electricians to immediately assess houses. Free kerbside collections also helped in the cleanup.
- The local store had extra food wares available for people and community spirit was strong. Power was always on and water had to be boiled for several days due to a burst water main. The whole community was kept up to date with the latest events.
- There was a feeling in the community that Alpha and Jericho were overlooked by the wider media and some insurance companies may have been unaware of the floods in the area. Residents therefore felt that their claims were not given the priority of other areas.
- Some residents had not yet received Queensland or Commonwealth Government assistance payments despite floods occurring earlier in Alpha than those down south.
- It was stated that the itinerant, backpacker and more recently settled population also required extra warning and persuasion to evacuate.
- The main flood mitigation method suggested was a series of automated meters on the several creeks that join together to make Alpha Creek. Different rains in different catchments lead to different floods.
- The swiftness of water flow and limitations on building materials mean that levee banks may not be the best flood mitigation measure.
- Raising the height of the highway approaches over Alpha Creek was also mentioned.