

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

STATEMENT OF RONALD JEFFERY SMITH

I, Ronald Jeffery Smith, Director of Technical Services, North Burnett Regional Council make the following statement under oath as required by the Commissioner of Inquiry:

Council infrastructure that was affected by flooding between the period of 1 December 2010 and 31 January 2011

1. North Burnett Regional Council experienced significant damage to its public infrastructure including rural roads (100%), water intake systems at two towns, sewerage pump stations, treated effluent holding tanks, caravan parks, parks along rivers and public buildings.

I offer the following additional information:

- The rural road network was initially damaged from a heavy rain and flood event in March 2010. NDRRA approval to reconstruct this damage (about \$650,000.00) was not provided until January 2011.
- The December 2010 event (including the March 2010 event and other heavy rain events in the lead up to the December 2010 event) impacted on 100% of the Council controlled rural road network. All roads were either flooded, damaged from flash floods or their pavements weakened due to saturation.
- In January 2011, Council had closed a number of roads and at its Policy and Strategy Meeting held on 1 February 2011 it resolved to impose a 15 Tonne load limit on ALL roads and streets under its control. Road closures were detailed on Council's webpage. The load limiting was publicly advertised, road advisory signage installed and a series of public meetings were held to explain the system. The purpose was to protect the road network and allow it to dry out and re-open quicker with reduced damage.
- My staff considered requests for variations to the load limits based on the individual roads capacity to carry greater loadings. This system continued until the load limiting system was withdrawn on 22 May 2011. Although the roads were still saturated, a decision was made to remove the load limiting to allow the citrus fruit crop to be transported to market and lot fed stock to be transported.
- Some damage was incurred with township streets but the damage was minor in nature.
- The raw water intakes, pumping stations and control systems for the water supplies to the towns of Mundubbera and Gayndah were destroyed by the flooded rivers. The river

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beds changed as a result of the flood and these towns are still reliant on temporary pumping systems until new designs are approved and the pumps reconstructed. The Eidsvold Water Treatment Plant was affected by flood water due to isolation. The towns were subject to water restrictions with Gayndah and Mundubbera still on level 3 restrictions.

- The sewerage pump stations and holding tanks were flooded at the towns of Mundubbera, Gayndah and Monto. Where possible, control panels and electrical systems were removed prior to flooding to allow an expeditious recovery of these systems after the flood water resided. During the flood, effluent was discharged to the river system from Mundubbera and Gayndah pump stations that had been shut down. Council reported these overflows to DERM.
- Two caravan and camping grounds at Paradise Dam and Mingo Crossing went under water due to the high flow rate into this dam.
- Boat Ramps at both Mt Debateable and Greys Water hole have been destroyed and another ski area (buildings, BBQs, jetty and other structures) at Mundubbera was destroyed.
- Parks along the Burnett River were damaged as a result of flooding.
- Public buildings received some minor damage.
- A new bridge was destroyed, floodways damaged and/or destroyed and culverts damaged on various roads. Storm water systems within the towns were not damaged.
- Council, on 16 March 2011, submitted a 1st claim for Counter Disaster Operations, 1st claim for emergent works and a 1st submission for \$19.8M of infrastructure damage to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. Council has approval for most of these submissions and has commenced its reconstruction efforts.
- A 2nd submission for road damage that occurred after the lifting of the load limits is almost completed. The value of this submission is estimated to be \$10M and will be lodged with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority within two weeks. A 2nd and final claim for Emergent Works has also been submitted.
- It is my estimate that about \$30-40M of damage was avoided by the load limiting exercise and it allowed the road network to be made operational much quicker.
- Council did experience problems with enforcement of the load limits and road closures as the various pieces of legislation do not allow easy enforcement and the issuing of on the spot fines by Council. This is a matter that needs to be pursued.

- A full copy of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Submission can be provided if needed. A summary of the 1st submission for reconstruction is shown below as currently approved by QRA:

	Submission Amount	Approved Value	Under Investigation Value	Not Eligible Value	Date Approved
NBRC.3.11 water and sewerage	\$2,143,739.50	\$1,820,739.50	\$0.00	\$118,000.00	17/05/2011
NBRC.13.11 Mt Perry roads	\$381,479.31	\$170,398.32	\$211,080.99	\$0.00	18/05/2011
NBRC.1.11 Emergent works	\$438,253.49	\$438,253.49	\$0.00	\$0.00	19/05/2011
NBRC.9.11 Monto roads	\$4,721,479.95	\$2,432,486.90	\$2,288,993.05	\$0.00	26/05/2011
NBRC.5.11 public areas and buildings	\$504,213.86	\$504,213.86	\$0.00	\$0.00	16/06/2011
NBRC.8.11 Mundubbera roads	\$4,007,154.88	\$4,007,154.88	\$0.00	\$0.00	22/06/2011
NBRC.11.11 Gayndah roads	\$3,107,674.44	\$3,107,674.44	\$0.00	\$0.00	19/07/2011
NBRC.12.11 Bggenden roads	\$2,130,488.83	\$2,130,488.83	\$0.00	\$0.00	30/08/2011
NBRC.4.11 Eldsvold roads	\$1,030,077.43	\$1,030,077.43	\$0.00	\$0.00	31/08/2011
NBRC.7.11 Buildings	\$196,505.00	\$0.00	\$196,505.00	\$0.00	31/08/2011

- Evidence of the damage are contained in a number of Council documents including photo library of damaged assets, GIS layers detailing locations of damaged assets and correspondence to various government agencies outlining the impact of the floods on public assets.
- Evidence is included within Council's submissions to the Queensland Reconstruction Authority for the reconstruction of damaged assets, including a detailed submission for increased community resilience and other documents provided to demonstrate the impact on public assets. A full copy of the first submission is provided on a disc.

Details of any flood mitigation infrastructure (e.g. flood detention basins, storm water culverts, back flow devices) including a description of any maintenance programs

2. There are no flood mitigation devices or infrastructure within the North Burnett Regional area.

Details of the stormwater design capacity and urban run-off capacity, sewerage design capacity and the most recent review of these capacities including any plans to upgrade

3. Stormwater

North Burnett Regional Council towns were subjected to some flooding with water from the Burnett River backing up in associated creeks causing flooding within the lower ends of the towns of Gayndah, Mundubbera, Monto and Eidsvold. Storm water systems within each town functioned satisfactorily and did not cause flooding problems. The flooding was a result of backup water from the flooded Burnett River.

No houses were affected in Eidsvold, several buildings (4 homes, 2 businesses) were flooded in Gayndah with a majority (22 homes) of the houses being flooded in Mundubbera. Storm water capacity was not the cause of this flooding. A significant area of rural land was flooded as a result of the December 2010 event.

With respect to storm water design capacity and urban run-off capacity, none of the North Burnett Regional Council Towns experienced problems as a result of capacity of the systems.

Council is currently developing a "storm water asset management plan" for its systems contained within each town. Part of this system will require an organised review of the existing system. However, no current issues have been identified apart from a lack of detail about the systems.

Council has reports for three towns as follows:

- Monto Town Master Drainage Plan. The Report was drafted by Reinhold and Stanaway P/L and dated January 1995. The report was commissioned by the former Monto Shire Council in September 1994 and is still appropriate for the town in my view.
- Mundubbera Stormwater Drainage Study Update. The Report was commissioned by the former Mundubbera Shire Council and undertaken by Kinhill P/L and dated 13 July 1998. The report still appears to be appropriate for the town in my view.
- Stormwater Drainage Report for Gayndah Township. The Report was commissioned by the former Gayndah Shire Council and undertaken by Hughes, Trueman, Reinhold and dated October 1998. The report still appears to be appropriate for the town in my view.
- I cannot locate drainage plans, reviews or other relevant documents for the other towns namely Biggenden, Eidsvold and Mt Perry. This will form part of the improvement plan for this asset class. The improvement plan will include the assessment of all drainage systems inclusive of a condition rating, globally positioning each drainage

asset, the development of new plans for these assets and a review of the performance of the drainage systems (as time and funding permits).

- As a matter of information, Council utilises the Queensland Urban Drainage Manual to guide it in its deliberations on drainage matters.

Sewerage

North Burnett Regional Council towns were subjected to some flooding with water from the Burnett River backing up in associated creeks causing flooding within the lower ends of the towns of Gayndah, Mundubbera, Monto and Eidsvold. Sewerage systems within each town functioned satisfactorily until flooding required the pump stations in low lying areas to be isolated (power removed, switch board removed where possible) and an effluent transfer tank (Monto) damaged. The flooding was a result of backup water from the flooded Burnett River and not as a result of the sewerage reticulation system capacity failure.

The North Burnett Regional Council has sewerage reticulation systems in the towns of Mundubbera, Gayndah, Biggenden, Eidsvold and Monto.

Council has reports for the following towns:

- Department of Environmental and Resource and Management approved Total Management Plans (TMPs) for all five towns. These schemes were submitted in June 2010 and approved shortly afterwards. The TMPs indicate that all schemes are operating within design capacity.
- Council is currently undertaking a sewerage plant performance review for all treatment plants. The final report is in draft format and should be completed by November 2011. Wide Bay Water Corporation has been engaged as the consultant on this project.

With respect to the performance of pumping stations, I offer the following:

- In Mundubbera, two of five pump stations were impacted and ceased operations. However the two pumps that failed were auxillary pumping stations and the town continued to operate on the other three pumping stations.
- The treatment plant continued to operate normally but the two pump stations that failed caused some leakage into the river system.
- In Gayndah, one pump station was shutdown due to high water levels of the Burnett River.
- In Monto, the recycled water system was damaged but this didn't affect the treatment processes of the primary plant.
- In Mundubbera, flood water entered the sewerage reticulation system through flooded houses. This caused an overload of the pump station that Council shut down.

- Council is in the process of lifting pump stations levels to avoid a repeat of the flooding on the lower positioned pump stations. However, we do not believe that we can control the ingress of water through existing flooded homes. It should be noted that all new building are built at a design level that is above flood level.

Sworn by Ronald Jeffery Smith at Mundubbera this 12th day of September 2011 in the presence of:



Deponent

Ronald Jeffery Smith



Solicitor / Justice of the Peace / Comm. Dec.

