### Statement of Thomas Fenwick dated 31 January 2012

#### IN THE MATTER OF THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

#### A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY UNDER THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1950

#### AND PURSUANT TO THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDER (No. 1) 2011

#### STATEMENT OF THOMAS DAVID FENWICK

On the 31<sup>st</sup> day of January 2012, I, **Thomas David Fenwick**, of C/- 240 Margaret Street, Brisbane, state on oath:

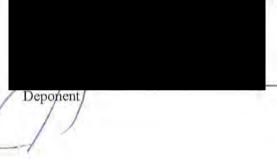
- 1. I am a member of the Board of the Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority ("Seqwater").
- This statement is provided to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry pursuant to a "Requirement to Provide Statement" issued by the Commission dated 27 January 2012 (the *Requirement*).
- The comments I make below relate only to the matters referred to in the Requirement, which I
  note relate only to the period 6 January 2011 to 2 March 2011.
- 4. During the period the subject of the requirement, I do not have a recollection of anyone suggesting to me that there was a possibility of non-compliance with the Manual.
- 5. In making the comment in the preceding paragraph, I have assumed that the Commission does not require me to outline my recollections of the numerous press reports which, almost immediately after the flood, suggested the flooding in Brisbane had resulted from poor management of Wivenhoe Dam. These press reports were discussed in a number of Board meetings I attended. However, my broad recollection of the discussions was that the issues raised in the press reports should be considered by Seqwater's technical staff. At no stage was it subsequently suggested to me during the period referred to in the Requirement that the consideration of those matters by Seqwater's technical staff had led to there being a possibility of non-compliance with the Manual.
- 6. The Requirement also requires me to outline any communications regarding a document sent by Mr Michael O'Brien. My recollection is that Mr O'Brien communicated with my fellow

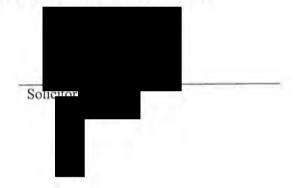


Board member, Leeanne Bond. Peter Borrows sent me the correspondence Leeanne had received from Mr O'Brien. It is attached to this statement as Attachment TF1.

- 7. I do recall reading Mr O'Brien's document. I also remember reading a response document prepared by John Tibaldi, which I thought addressed the issues raised by Mr O'Brien. I believe that document is Attachment TF2 to this statement. At the time, it seemed to me to be a case of Mr O'Brien operating on incorrect information.
- 8. The only other discussion I recall regarding Mr O'Brien's document was a Board discussion as to the manner in which Seqwater should respond to Mr O'Brien. My recollection is that the Board decided not to engage directly with Mr O'Brien given the announcement of this Commission.

SWORN by Thomas David Fenwick on 31 January 2012 at Brisbane in the presence of:





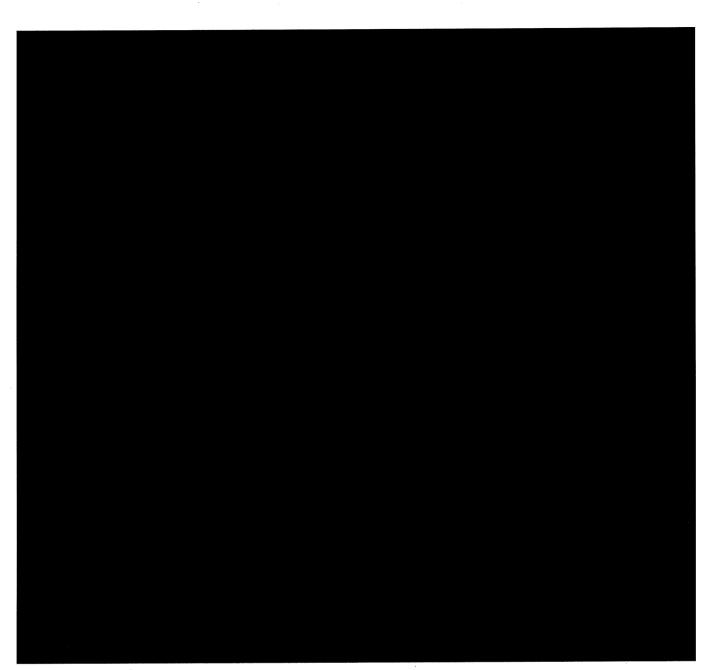
#### IN THE MATTER OF THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

#### A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY UNDER THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1950

AND PURSUANT TO THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDER (No. 1) 2011

#### STATEMENT OF THOMAS DAVID FENWICK INDEX OF ANNEXURES

Annexure No.	Document	Date
TF1	Correspondence from Peter Burrows to Thomas Fenwick	17 February 2011
TF2	Response documents - John Tibaldi	January 2011



"TF1"

From: Peter Borrows Sent: Monday, 17 January 2011 12:58 PM To: Tom Fenwick Subject: FW: Brisbane Flooding

As discussed Tom.

Regards, Peter.

Peter Borrows Chief Executive Officer Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority *trading as* Seqwater

cid:image003.png@01CB0654.C3

Ph Level 3, 240 Margaret St, Brisbane City QLD 4000 PO Box 16146, City East QLD 4002 Website | <u>www.seqwater.com.au</u>

cid:image008.png@01CB8736.F84905B0

From: Peter Borrows Sent: Monday, 17 January 2011 11:15 AM To: Duty Seq; John Tibaldi; Rob Drury Cc: 'barry.dennier Subject: FW: Brisbane Flooding

John R, as discussed.

Regards, Peter.

Peter Borrows

Pł

Chief Executive Officer Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority *trading as* Seqwater

cid:image003.png@01CB0654.C3

Level 3, 240 Margaret St, Brisbane City QLD 4000 PO Box 16146, City East QLD 4002 Website | www.segwater.com.au

cid:image008.png@01CB8736.F84905B0

From: Hennessy, Phil A Sent: Monday, 17 January 2011 10:55 AM To: Peter Borrows Subject: Fwd: Brisbane Flooding

Cam you confirm our people are using the latest data

Phil Hennessy

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Leeanne Bond"	
Date: 17 January 2011 10:41:55 AM GMT+10:00	,
To: "'Peter Borrows'"	<pre>phennessy</pre>
Subject: FW: Brisbane Flooding	
Reply-To: < <u>lbond</u>	

I rang Mick and asked if there had been another email that I missed as the newspaper article indicated that he had worked the weekend on it. He said he had updated his documents with more accurate references and he has now sent me the same version that he sent Hedley Thomas. He has also given me the backup data he used to reach his conclusion.

He said he is very angry as he believes that Brisbane would not have been flooded if action was

taken to increase releases on Sunday when the met data said there would be substantial rainfall. This is his key point.

He says releases should have been 300,000ML per day on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and that would have allowed water to get away before the Lockyer waters reached Brisbane and flooding to be more like current inundation levels. He says even on Tuesday morning releases were only 212,000 indicating a slow response to the situation. that meant on Tuesday afternoon there was a sudden increase which caused the widespread flooding.

He is happy to talk to Segwater and I can give you his contact details (mobile email mick.obrier live told him there are lots of operational issues (water treatment, buildings etc) so you might not get back to him straight away.

Leeanne Bond Director Breakthrough Energy Pty Ltd PO Box 225, Wilston Qld 4051 Phone: mobile:

From: <u>mick.obrief</u> Sent: Monday, 17 January 2011 10:22 AM To: Leeanne Bond Subject: Brisbane Flooding On Behalf Of Mick O'Brien

Leeanne, attached is an updated version of the paper that I sent through to you - called Rev 1A - Hedley Thomas has this.

A spreadsheet called Release, which is the data I collated from the web sites on the weekend so that I could confirm the release rates that I had pulled from newspapers.

And then a third spreadsheet which contains all the data plus some workings.

Thanks

Mick

\*

The information in this e-mail is confidential and may be legally privileged. It is intended solely for the addressee. Access to this e-mail by anyone else is unauthorised. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately by return e-mail with the subject heading "Received in error" or telephone +61 2 93357000, then delete the email and destroy any copies of it. If you are not the intended recipient, any disclosure, copying, distribution or any action taken or omitted to be taken in reliance on it, is prohibited and may be unlawful. Any opinions or advice contained in this e-mail are subject to the terms and conditions expressed in the governing KPMG client engagement letter. Opinions, conclusions and other information in this e-mail and any attachments that do not relate to the official business of the firm are neither given nor endorsed by it.

KPMG cannot guarantee that e-mail communications are secure or error-free, as information could be intercepted, corrupted, amended, lost, destroyed, arrive late or incomplete, or contain viruses.

KPMG, an Australian partnership and a member firm of the KPMG network of independent member firms affiliated with KPMG International Cooperative ("KPMG International"), a Swiss entity. KPMG International provides no services to clients.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

Important information: This email and any attached information is intended only for the addressee and may contain confidential and/or privileged information. If you are not the addressee, you are notified that any transmission, distribution, or other use of this information is strictly prohibited. The confidentiality attached to this email is not waived, lost or destroyed by reasons of mistaken delivery to you. If you have received this email in error please contact the sender immediately and delete the material from your email system. QLD Bulk Water Supply Authority ABN75450239876 (Trading as Sequater).

### What went on in Brisbane?

#### Was this a natural disaster or a manmade disaster?

First a bit of a disclaimer – I am new to some of this river data and may not have interpreted it all correctly.

#### First a bit of background: -

- Somerset Dam has a Water Storage capacity of 379,849ML with an additional 524,000ML for flood storage. The dam is rated as 100% full when all the water storage capacity is full. Therefore when both the water storage capacity and flood storage are fully utilised, the dam would be at 238%.
- Wivenhoe has a Water Storage capacity of 1,165,238ML with an additional 1,450,000ML for flood storage. Similarly when both the water storage capacity and flood storage are fully utilised, the dam would be at 224%.
- Somerset is upstream of Wivenhoe and flood flows from Somerset are discharged into Wivenhoe.
- There is a river height monitor at Wivenhoe Dam: -Station Number: 540177 Name: Brisbane R at Wivenhoe Dam Hw # Owner: SEQWCO:143822

SEQWater operate a web site which gives levels in all dams, including Somerset and Wivenhoe; but interestingly, levels for Wivenhoe and Somerset were not updated between 08:00 11<sup>th</sup> February January and 09:00 13<sup>th</sup> February January during the peak of the emergency. Historical data now shown for this period on the SEQWater web site does not show any peak during this period and so are obviously incorrect.

I have therefore used the Wivenhoe Dam river height monitor as a proxy for the dam level during this period. There are some interesting disconnects between the river level data and the reported water levels in Wivenhoe: -

Information from media reports had Wivenhoe at a peak of 191% overnight for the night of  $11^{\text{th}}/12^{\text{th}}$ ; but generally at 190% through most of the emergency period.

The river height shows a height of 73.77m at the time SEQWater were reporting a Wivenhoe capacity of 175.9%. The river experienced a minor peak of 74.51m commencing at 14:57m Tue  $11^{th}$  falling substantially (to 74.19m around 17:45 Tue  $11^{th}$ ) until peaking again at 74.85m between 18:00 and 19:23 on Wed  $12^{th}$  (compared to a reported peak in Wivenhoe during the night of  $11^{th}/12^{th}$ ). The river level fell gradually, and has continued to fall, from this peak.

The sequence of events for the current flooding event seems to be: -

- 06:30 Tue 04<sup>th</sup>, Wivenhoe first went above 100% (i.e. using the flood storage capacity).
- Wivenhoe was at 106.3% at 06:00 on Fri 7<sup>th</sup>; but there are no reported heights for Sat 8<sup>th</sup> or Sun 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Wivenhoe continued to rise, and at 09:00 on Mon 10<sup>th</sup> it was at 148.4% and it was reported that "managers scrambled to increase the release from 116,000ML to 170,000ML per day.
- At 0800/0900 Tue 11<sup>th</sup> Wivenhoe was at 175.9%, Somerset at 160.8%; total available capacity for flood storage in both dams stood at 858,642ML. This is the last available data from SEQWater. At this stage the River height at the dam was 73.77m.
- The river (and by assumption the Wivenhoe dam) continued to rise over the next six hours and reached an interim peak of 74.51m at 14:57 Tue 11<sup>th</sup>.

- At this time the river level started to fall quickly to 74.19m around 17:45 Tue 11<sup>th</sup>
- Media reports indicate that the discharge from Wivenhoe was increased from 344,00ML/d through 490,000ML/d (both reported by the Courier Mail) to an overnight peak of 645,000ML/d (reported in a media release by the Queensland Police Service).
- SEQWater reported that at 0730 on Wed 12<sup>th</sup> the releases from Wivenhoe were reduced temporarily to 215,000ML/d to allow Lockyer Creek peak to enter Brisbane River and would subsequently be increased to maintain a maximum flow through Moggill of 301,000ML/d.

#### Some additional data: -

- SEQWater report that there is a delay of approximately 36 hours between a release at Wivenhoe and a peak at the Brisbane City Gauge.
- It is likely that the rapid drop in the river level at Wivenhoe commencing around 14:57 Tue 11<sup>th</sup> was due to a substantial increase in the discharge rate from Wivenhoe (645,000ML/d?).
- At around the same time, 16:03 on Tue 11<sup>th</sup> the Courier Mail reported that Wivenhoe was at 190% and Somerset at 176%, indicating a total capacity for additional flood storage of 636,000ML.
- 36 hours from 14:57 Tue 11<sup>th</sup> is 02:57 Thu 13<sup>th</sup> which corresponds almost identically with the peak of 4.46m experienced at the Brisbane City Gauge.

Now for an attempt at interpretation of this sequence: -

- SEQWater were very slow to respond to the initial increase in levels at Wivenhoe and took 6 days before there was any real increase in rate of release from Wivenhoe to return the dam to proper flood management levels. Even though there is apparently a legislated requirement to manage this over 7 days.
- SEQWater then substantially over responded during the afternoon of Tue 11<sup>th</sup> increasing the discharge to 645,000ML/d(?). This was at a much higher rate than the current water inflows, resulting in a substantial drop in the level in Wivenhoe. This was even though there was approximately 636,000ML of capacity available for additional flood storage in Wivenhoe and Somerset.
- This substantial increase in the discharge from Wivenhoe was the cause (sole cause?) of the peak in the Brisbane River.
- Early on Wed 12<sup>th</sup> (07:30), SEQWater recognised that this discharge rate was excessive and reduced it substantially to 215,000ML/d. This discharge rate has been sufficient to ensure that the river level at Wivenhoe (and presumably the dam) did not continue to increase and indeed has allowed the level to gradually fall.
- Hindsight is a wonderful thing; but there are really two decisions that were taken which would seem to have little justification at the time they were made. These are: -
  - Not increasing releases from Wivenhoe between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> when the dam levels were rising and there was no downstream flooding, and
  - The decision to substantially increase the discharge rate from Wivenhoe to a peak of 645,000ML/d on the afternoon/night Tue 11<sup>th</sup>.
- It is difficult to understand the justification for this increase in the discharge rate, especially
  as the decision was substantially reversed within about 12 hrs. In addition even if SEQWater
  had released at the low rate of 215,000ML/d (which is the rate it was reduced to at 07:30
  Wed) rather than a maximum rate of 645,000ML/d for the whole time from 14:57 on Tues it
  would have used only 306,000ML of the available free capacity in both dams of apparently
  859,000ML.

#### The serious questions are: -

- Why did SEQWater not allow the total available flood storage capacity of Wivenhoe to be utilised during this period?
- What justification was there for the substantial increase in discharge from Wivenhoe to 645,000ML/d when a release rate of 215,000ML/d has been demonstrably sufficient to stop the levels in Wivenhoe rising and while there remained substantial capacity in Wivenhoe for additional flood storage?
- Was this increase to 645,000ML/d the sole reason for the significant flooding in Brisbane?
- Why did it initially take SEQWater 6 days to respond to the gradually increasing water levels in Wivenhoe which reduced its flood control capacity?

Rev 1<u>A</u> Mick O'Brien <u>14</u><sup>th</sup>-<u>16</u><sup>th</sup> January 2011

		Wivenhoe	Somerset			Wivenhoe	
6/01/2011				Releases commenced during the evening of the 6th	Through Regulator Valve	Gate Operations will be required	Water is be
7/01/2011					Through Regulator Valve		Water is be may be incr
8/01/2011				Expected to reach 100,000ML/d by afternoon	Through one gate	At Wivenhoe Dam, all five gates are now open. Releases are expected to reach around 100,000 megalitres a day by this afternoon.	Water from through on
9/01/2011				116,000ML/d	Through sluice gates	At Wivenhoe Dam, releases commenced during the evening of Thursday 6 January 2011, with all five gates opened by Saturday 8 January 2011. Releases have reached around 116,000	Water from through the
10/01/2011	AM	154	158	172000	Through sluice gates	releases from the dam have been increased today from 116,000 megalitres per day to 172,000 megalitres per day	Water from through the
10/01/2011	PM	>140	>150		Through sluice gates	releases from the dam have been increased today from 116,000 megalitres per day to 170,000 megalitres per day	Water from through the
11/01/2011	AM	173	160	236,000 increased to 490,000 with peak of 645,000ML/d		Controlled releases through the five gates have been held at around 236,000 megalitres since early last night but will need to be increased further today	d
11/01/2011	PM	190	176			Controlled releases through Wivenhoe's five radial gates have now been increased to around 490,000 megalitres per day	
12/01/2011	АМ	190	190 <sup>.</sup>	205,000		Wivenhoe's five radial gates are currently releasing 205,000 megalitres pe day, down from 370,000 megalitres and an overnight peak of 645,000 megalitres. After the expected downstream peak in the lower Brisbane River has passed, releases will need to be increased to 301,000 megalitres per day	
12/01/2011	PM	189	186	215000	123000	Wivenhoe's five radial gates continue to release 215,000 megalitres per day. This is considerably down from an overnight peak of 645,000 megalitres	discharging sluice gate
13/01/2011	8:30	187	174	215000	121000	Wivenhoe Dam is at 187 per cent, and is dropping gradually with controlled releases through all five gates of 215,000 megalitres per day	inflows of 1 Somerset [
13/01/2011	17:30	186	167	228000	120000	with controlled releases through all five gates of 228,000 megalitres per day	120,000 m
14/01/2011	8:00	179	151	301000	118000	Releases have been graduated to 301,000 megalitres per day in a 7 day strategy designed to draw down the flood storage compartment with no noticeable effects downstream	7 111,800 m sluice gate
14/01/2011	16:00						
14/01/2011	18:00	172	140	301000	111800	Releases have been graduated to 301,000 megalitres per day in a 7 day strategy designed	dropping st
15/01/2011	15:30						
15/01/2011	9:30	163	129	301000	79000	Releases continue at around 301,000 megalitres per day	about 79,00 the sluice g
15/01/2011	18:00	154	121	301000	79000	Releases continue at around 301,000 megalitres per day	with about via the sluid

#### Somerset

s being released into Wivenhoe through a regulator valve

s being released into Wivenhoe through a regulator valve. Release increased to utilise sluice gates later today or over the weekend

from Somerset Dam is being released into Wivenhoe Dam n one gate

from Somerset Dam is being released into Wivenhoe Dam n the sluice gates.

from Somerset Dam is being released into Wivenhoe Dam n the sluice gates

from Somerset Dam is being released into Wivenhoe Dam n the sluice gates

ging 123,000 megalitres per day into Wivenhoe Dam via a gate

of 121,000 megalitres per day via a sluice gate from set  $\text{Dam}_{\,\text{s}}$ 

megalitres per day via a sluice gate from Somerset Dam

) megalitres per day being released into Wivenhoe via the ates

steadily with 111,800 megalitres per day

9,000 megalitres per day being released into Wivenhoe via ce gates

out 79,000 megalitres per day being released into Wivenhoe sluice gates

Date & Time					Rele	ase Rate	Quantity in S	torage @ 0900		vail for Flood @ 0900	Release p	orior period	Inf	flow prior pe	riod	Dam Level	if release fror up to ML/d	n Wivenho	e Comment	
	Wivenho	e Capacity	Somerse	t Capacity	Wivenhoe	Somerset <sub>(</sub>	Wivenhoe	Somerset	Wivenhoe	Somerset	Wivenhoe.	Somerset	Wivenhoe	Wivenhoe less discharge from Somerset			300000			
	ML	%	ML	%	ML/d	ML/d	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	Flood ML	%		
Fri 31-Dec-10		112.7%		100.0%	No Report	No Report	1313223	379849	147985	0										www.seqwater.com.au
5at 01-Jan-11					No Report	No Report					30000	0							No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
5un 02-Jan-11					No Report	No Report					30000	0							No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
Mon 03-Jan-11					No Report	No Report					30000	0							No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
Tue 04-Jan-11		102.1%		102.9%	No Report	No Report	1189708	390865	24470	11016	30000	0	-3515	-3515	11016	1165238	0	100%		www.seqwater.com.au
Wed 05-Jan-11		102.4%		103.2%	No Report	No Report	1193204	392004	27966	12155	0	0	3496	3496	1140	1165238	0	100%		www.seqwater.com.au
					Releases commenced															
Thu 06-Jan-11		103.2%		103.8%	during the evening of th	e Through Regulator Valve	1202526	394283	37288	14434	20000	0	29322	29322	2279	1165238	0	100%		www.seqwater.com.au
					6th															
Fri 07-Jan-11		106.3%		107.2%	No Report	Through Regulator Valve	1238648	407198	73410	27349	50000	10000	86122	76122	22915	1165238	0	100%		www.segwater.com.au
																1100100		10070		mmacquatercomat
5at 08-Jan-11					Expected to reach	-														
291 08-J9U-11					100,000ML/d by afternoon	Through Regulator Valve					50000	10000							No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
5un 09-Jan-11					116,000	Through sluice gates					87500	10000							No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
5411 05-5419-11					116 000 increased to	0 <b>0</b>					87500	10000							No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
Mon 10-Jan-11		148.4%		154.7%	172,000	Through sluice gates	1729213	587626	563975	207777	116000	50000	744065	694065	250428	1165238	0	100%		www.seqwater.com.au
					236000 increased to															
Tue 11-Jan-11		175.9%		160.0%	490,000 with a peak of	No Report	2049654	607758	884416	227909	144000	50000	464440	414440	70132	1609303	444065	138%		www.seqwater.com.au
					645,000 overnight						1			121110	10152	1005505	111000	10070		mmnocquater.com.ac
Wed 12-Jan-11		188.5%		189.7%		No Report	2196474	720574	1031236	340725	426500	0	573320	573320	112815	1773744	608506	152%		www.seqwater.com.au
Thu 13-Jan-11	2172604	186.5%	651026	171.4%	228,000	123,000	2173169	651061	1007931	271212	215000	70000	191695	121695	488	2047064	881826	176%		www.seqwater.com.au
Fri 14-Jan-11	2085584	179.0%	559552	147.3%	301,000	111,800	2085584	559552	920346	179703	228000	123000	140415	17415	31491	1938759	773521	166%		www.segwater.com.au
5at 15-Jan-11		163.0%		129.0%	301,000	79,000	1899338	490005	734100	110156	301000	111800	114754	2954	42253	1779174	613936	153%	۰.	
5un 16-Jan-11											301000	79000							No reports from either SEQWater or WaterGrid	
			Total											1929315	544956				2474271	
															vs SEQWate	er			2600000	
	Water	Flood	Total																	

 
 Water
 Flood
 Total

 Storage
 Storage
 Capacity

 (ML)
 (ML)
 (%)

 379849
 524000
 237.9%

 1165238
 1450000
 224.4%
 Dam Somerset Wivenhoe

om.au/public/dam-levels

om.au/public/dam-levels om.au/public/dam-levels

om.au/public/dam-levels

om.au/public/dam-levels

om.au/public/dam-levels

m.au/public/dam-levels

om.au/public/dam-levels om.au/public/dam-levels om.au/public/dam-levels

www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au

Date & Time					Releas	se Rate	Comment	
	Wivenhoe	e Capacity	Somerset	t Capacity	Wivenhoe	Somerset		
	ML	%	ML	%	ML/d	ML/d		
Fri 31-Dec-10		112.7%		100.0%	No Report	No Report		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Sat 01-Jan-11					No Report	No Report	No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	www.seqwater.com.au/public/uam-levels
Sun 02-Jan-11					No Report	No Report	No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
Mon 03-Jan-11					No Report	No Report	No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
Tue 04-Jan-11		102.1%		102.9%	No Report	No Report		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Wed 05-Jan-11		102.4%		103.2%	No Report	No Report		
					Releases commenced			www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Thu 06-Jan-11		103.2%		103.8%	during the evening of the	Through Regulator Valve		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
					6th			www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Fri 07-Jan-11		106.3%		107.2%	No Report	Through Regulator Valve		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
					Expected to reach			
Sat 08-Jan-11		•			100,000ML/d by	Through Regulator Valve	No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
					afternoon			
Sun 09-Jan-11					116,000	Through sluice gates	No dam level reports available on SEQWater site	
Mon 10-Jan-11		148.4%		154.7%	116,000 increased to 172,000	Through sluice gates		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
					236000 increased to			
Tue 11-Jan-11		175.9%		160.0%	490,000 with a peak of	No Report		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
					645,000 overnight			
Wed 12-Jan-11		188.5%		189.7%	215,000	No Report		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Thu 13-Jan-11	2172604	186.5%	651026	171.4%	228,000	123,000		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Fri 14-Jan-11	2085584	179.0%	559552	147.3%	301,000	111,800		www.seqwater.com.au/public/dam-levels
Sat 15-Jan-11		163.0%		129.0%	301,000	79,000		
Sun 16-Jan-11							No reports from either SEQWater or WaterGrid	

Dam	Water Storage Capacity (ML)	Flood Storage Capacity (ML)	Total Capacity (%)	
Somerset	379849	524000	237.9%	
Wivenhoe	1165238	1450000	224.4%	

www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au

www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au www.watergrid.com.au

### JANUARY 2011 FLOOD EVENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why did Seqwater not allow the total available flood storage capacity of Wivenhoe to be utilised during this period?

- Wivenhoe Dam is not designed to overtop. If it did, the dam would fail and the resulting damage and loss of life would be at least 100 to 1,000 times greater than that currently being experienced.
- To ensure that this never occurs, the dam has been designed with fuse plugs that automatically open when it reaches more than 200% of full supply volume.
- Once triggered, the rate of release through these plugs cannot be varied.
- The plugs continue to release water at this rate until the dam reaches full supply level.
- The fuse plugs would take four to six months of dry weather to repair, and severely restrict the capability to manage further flood events during this period.
- Flood operations were managed to ensure a buffer below 200% to allow for possibilities of further extensive inflows to ensure that the dam does not fail.

What justification was there for the substantial increase in discharge from Wivenhoe to 645,000ML/d when a release rate of 215,000ML/d has been demonstrably sufficient to stop the levels in Wivenhoe rising and while there remained substantial capacity in Wivenhoe for additional flood storage?

At the peak of the event a discharge rate of 215,000ML/d would not have been sufficient to stop the levels in Wivenhoe rising.

The reasons why the remaining flood storage capacity in Wivenhoe Dam was not used at the peak of the event are contained in the answer to the previous question.

## Was this increase to 645,000ML/d the sole reason for the significant flooding in Brisbane?

The Bureau of Meteorology has stated that, even at their peak, outflows from Wivenhoe Dam contributed slightly more than half the flood arriving in Brisbane (Courier Mail, 14 January). Sequater agrees with this assessment.

Based on the fact that the current event was one meter lower than the 1974 event, BOM and Seqwater have agreed that the flow in the Lower Brisbane River at the peak of the event was in the order of 690,000ML/d. Accordingly outflows from Wivenhoe Dam contributed around 350,000ML/d to the total flow at this time. The difference between this flow and the peak outflow from Wivenhoe Dam during the event is due to attenuation effects along the length of the river as would be expected in such an event.

# Why did it initially take SEQWater 6 days to respond to the gradually increasing water levels in Wivenhoe which reduced its flood control capacity?

Seqwater responded immediately to increases in storage level by commencing releases from Wivenhoe Dam at the commencement of the flood event. When managing a flood event using Wivenhoe Dam, the primary objectives in order of importance are:

- Ensure the structural safety of the dams;
- Provide optimum protection of urbanised areas from inundation;
- Minimise disruption to rural life in the valleys of the Brisbane and Stanley Rivers. Primarily this involves minimising inundation of the seven bridges below the dam upstream of Moggill.

The most recent four flood events (commencing October 2011), demonstrate the importance of following these objective to minimise overall downstream flood impacts.

## Why did Seqwater permit the flood storage capacity to build up so much over the weekend?

Seqwater commenced releases from Wivenhoe Dam at the start of the flood event on 7 January 2011. When managing a flood event using Wivenhoe Dam, the primary objectives in order of importance are:

- Ensure the structural safety of the dams;
- Provide optimum protection of urbanised areas from inundation;
- Minimise disruption to rural life in the valleys of the Brisbane and Stanley Rivers. Primarily this involves minimising inundation of the seven bridges below the dam upstream of Moggill.

The most recent four flood events (commencing October 2011), demonstrate the importance of following these objective to minimise overall downstream flood impacts.

Why did Seqwater not release significantly greater volumes on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, prior to the freak rainfall event on Monday over the Toowoomba escarpment?

No agency or person was able to forecast the freak rainfall event on Monday over the Toowoomba escarpment prior to it occurring. Therefore it was not possible to ramp up releases to cater for this freak event before it actually occurred.

What does Seqwater say to the suggestion that its strategy to limit the releases on the weekend meant its storage buffer was limited, necessitating a massive outflow on Tuesday of 645,000 megalitres?

The peak outflow that occurred for three hours of 645,000 ML/d (total volume of 80,625 megalitres) does not reflect the impact at Brisbane due to the attenuation effects of the river. The Bureau of Meteorology has stated that, even at their peak, outflows from Wivenhoe Dam contributed slightly more than half the flood arriving in Brisbane (Courier Mail, 14 January). Seqwater agrees with this assessment.

Based on the fact that the current event was one meter lower than the 1974 event, BOM and Seqwater have agreed that the flow in the Lower Brisbane River at the peak of the event was in the order of 690,000ML/d. Accordingly outflows from Wivenhoe Dam contributed around 350,000ML/d to the total flow at this time. The difference between this flow and the peak outflow from Wivenhoe Dam during the event is due to attenuation effects along the length of the river as would be expected in such an event.

What does Seqwater say to the suggestion that this 645,000 megalitres release was responsible for more than 80 per cent of the peak flow rate (which you advised me last Friday was about 9000 cubic metres per second in Brisbane)?

The Bureau of Meteorology has stated that, even at their peak, outflows from Wivenhoe Dam contributed slightly more than half the flood arriving in Brisbane (Courier Mail, 14 January). Sequater agrees with this assessment.

Based on the fact that the current event was one meter lower than the 1974 event, BOM and Seqwater have agreed that the flow in the Lower Brisbane River at the peak of the event was in the order of 690,000ML/d. Accordingly outflows from Wivenhoe Dam contributed around 350,000ML/d to the total flow at this time. The difference between this flow and the peak outflow from Wivenhoe Dam during the event is due to attenuation effects along the length of the river as would be expected in such an event.

What does Seqwater say to the suggestion that its delay in responding to the increasing water levels at Wivenhoe forced its management to take rash action on Tuesday, which produced the flood in Brisbane?

No rash action was taken at any time during the flood event in managing releases from Wivenhoe Dam. Wivenhoe dam reduced flood levels in Brisbane by up to 2.5 metres in Brisbane city and a metre from the BOM peak flood level forecast. This was achieved by following carefully considered objectives and procedures.

Seqwater commenced releases from Wivenhoe Dam at the start of the flood event on 7 January 2011. When managing a flood event using Wivenhoe Dam, the primary objectives in order of importance are:

- Ensure the structural safety of the dams;
- Provide optimum protection of urbanised areas from inundation;
- Minimise disruption to rural life in the valleys of the Brisbane and Stanley Rivers. Primarily this involves minimising inundation of the seven bridges below the dam upstream of Moggill.

The most recent four flood events (commencing October 2011), demonstrate the importance of following these objective to minimise overall downstream flood impacts.