

Name of Witness	Reginald Thomas O'DEA	
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]	
Address and contact details	[REDACTED]	GOODNA.
Occupation	Retired Electrician	
Officer taking statement	Detective Sergeant Paul Browne	
Date taken	18/05/2011	

I, Reginald Thomas O'DEA state:

1. I am a [REDACTED] year old man and currently reside at the above address. I built my home over a few years and have lived in this house since the early 1980's. I have lived in the Goodna vicinity all of my life and was there at the time of the 1955, 1974 and 2011 floods.
2. My house was not flooded during the January 2011 flood event, because of the way my property was constructed. The water did come up to about 600mm below the level of my lower floor. However, because of the way my property was constructed it did not enter the house. Others around me who cut and filled their blocks were not so lucky, but I don't blame them for that, it was the builders who talked them into it.
3. I am a qualified electrician and before retiring I was employed in the Control room of the Swanbank Power station. I started at the Power station as a shift electrician, however after completing my Steam Tickets to operate machinery, I worked in the generation control room for 30 years. Through that I have some knowledge of telemetering and it's potential failures, for this reason there must always be a back-up.

Exhibit Number:

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QFCI

Date:

20/05/11

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Witness Signature

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Signature of Officer

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 ABN 65 959 415 158

4. As a result of the flood in January 2011, I made a submission to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry. That submission was contained in a four page report.

I am able to produce a copy of that submission.

Exhibit number.....

5. Throughout my submission I identified a number of main concerns which I believe the Commission need to consider further. These include:

- the Operation and activities of the State Emergency Service (S.E.S.), not as good as in 1974;
- development and approval of housing constructed in low lying areas which had previously flooded;
- availability of escape routes from the Goodna area; and
- issues relating to an SMS warning message sent at the time of the flood.

6. In researching the flood and preparing my submission I referred to a 1974 publication "Proceedings of Symposium January 1974 Floods Moreton Region". I recommend this publication and the contents for further consideration by the Flood Commission.

7. All floods are different, however the 2011 flood was different to the 1974 flood in a few ways. According to my book the speed of the river in 1974 was around 10 feet per second. The speed of the water and flood in 2011 was much faster and noisier. The water seemed to rise

Witness Signature. [Redacted] Signature of officer [Redacted]

more quickly than it did in 1974 and also didn't last as long. I believe this is attested too and demonstrated by the state of the banks being so badly damaged and scoured after the flood.

8. On page 3 of my submission I referred to a meeting that I attended in Ipswich. That was with two Gentlemen from the Government who were going around and talking to people about what had happened in 1974. I can't be certain but I think that my name was put forward as a resident, by Councillor Paul TULLY.
9. The relevance to this is that one of the issues I raised with them at the time was in regards to escape routes. During the 1955 flood residents were able to traverse the railway line to get out of the area, however with the advent of electric trains that crossing was fenced in and gated to restrict access. At the time I raised that issue, it was suggested that a key to the gates would be placed at the Goodna Police station and be made accessible to residents thru the Police in time of flood.
10. I don't know whether or not that ever eventuated but I remember speaking with a Senior Police officer in the very recent past and being told that they had never heard anything about it, or words to that effect.
11. At the top of page 4 of my submission I referred to a television program called "Engineering Marvels" broadcast on Channel 7 'Mate'. I make reference to this because of the way in which they dealt with dam issues in Kuala Lumpur.

12. It seems to me that one of the problems in the January flood was related to the operation of the Somerset and Wivenhoe Dams. My book states it would take two days to empty the Somerset Dam and five days to empty Wivenhoe. However, one of the problems with emptying Somerset is that all of that water must then go into Wivenhoe, exacerbating the problem.

13. I do not know what the cost would be or whether it is possible but think consideration should be given to introducing a diversionary channel, between the Somerset outflow and the Wivenhoe inflow, perhaps out in a Westerly direction. This could then be used to drain down Somerset Dam by diverting the water away from and around Wivenhoe, reducing the impact on that dam in a flood event. I would leave this to an Engineering expert, but this was something similar to what they did in Kuala Lumpur.

14. Towards the end of my submission was an S.M.S. warning message which was received by one of my neighbours. I did not receive this message myself because I do not have a mobile phone. However, had I received the message or something similar it would have only raised more questions, like at which particular datum point is that measure relevant? I raise this because a measurement of between 18 and 19 metres at one point, is no good to someone at a different datum point or gradient in the River.

15. Probably the thing that concerns me most is the way development and housing has been allowed to proceed in low lying areas that had previously flooded. Why has this been allowed to happen when there

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is qualified warning against building in those areas, which have been proven to flood previously, in both 1955 and 1974.

16. On Saturday 8th January I spoke with an elderly couple who live in the Retirement Village in Mill street. This area was under water during previous floods, yet the development was allowed. When I asked them if they knew the history of the area or what to do in a flood, they had no knowledge and no idea of what to do.

17. I told them the water rises very quickly and what we had done to evacuate in 1974. I told them go to the Convent School as we had done, however in 2011 it didn't quite work like that because the Police were overloaded.

18. At the time I was concerned about the Mill street area because there are about 200 people living in that complex, many of whom are elderly and I knew that it would not be a simple job to evacuate them in a hurry.

19. I got the shock of my life when I discovered that nothing was being done and that these people had no idea or were not being told of any processes that were in place. I believe the S.E.S. should have been there earlier and speaking to people about this.

20. I am also critical of the S.E.S. in my submission regarding the reliance on telemetering and the fact that there was no evidence of that early warning advice or the two hours to evacuate all of the people in the area. It is my understanding that at the time of the evacuation, nobody from that organisation was anywhere to be seen

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21. I believe that the S.E.S. should be called to order to explain their actions and Code under which they operate.

22. Between the 8th of January and when the flood happened on the 11th I went to the Police Station early one morning. On that occasion I was trying to get some support for my escape route, but the station was not open and there was nobody there. I was also hoping to make them aware of the issues with people in the Retirement Village in Mill street, firstly having no escape route and secondly the need to inform them of the possibility the area could flood and the need to give them some advice on evacuation.

23. I also thought that a lot of the Police would not have witnessed a flood or been aware of the potential for the area to flood and become isolated. This is not just specific to Police but a lot of other residents also. People look at the River and you tell them what did happen previously, but they cannot imagine the River coming up and it was almost a waste of time trying to explain it to them.

24. I know some people refer to this as 'Wivenhoe Syndrome' (a belief some people in the community had, that Wivenhoe Dam would stop anything like this from ever happening again). I don't know if that was the case, however I know that the Head of Town Planning for Ipswich has openly admitted in a statement (distributed in a local leaflet), that he was victim of the 'Wivenhoe Syndrome' himself.

25. This syndrome seems to be the same as what was called 'Somerset Syndrome' identified after the 1974 flood (a belief that Somerset Dam

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would stop anything like what had happened prior to that Dam being built, from ever happening again). It is interesting that one of the authors quoted in the 1974 publication refers to the 'Somerset Syndrome' and hoped then that there would never be such a thing as the 'Wivenhoe Syndrome' (pages 5 and 11).

26. Blokes of my age were not surprised that the 2011 flood event happened, we were expecting this. Unfortunately I believe this Syndrome did happen again and that over time the lessons of 1974 have been brushed into the archives and forgotten about. This should not be allowed to happen again.

27. I would like the Commission to consider these issues and also the recommendations I have made in my submission to restore the escape route in the Goodna area.



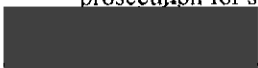
Reginald Thomas O'DEA.

20th May 2011.

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 20th May 2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 7 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 atIpswich.....this.....20th.....day of.....May.....2011....

I am Reginald Thomas O'Dea, aged [REDACTED] years. I reside at [REDACTED] Goodna QLD, at the junction of Brisbane Terrace and Lower Stuart Street, and have lived in this vicinity all of my life. My house is approximately 40m from and level with permanent marker 30539 A.H.D (Australian Height Datum) 17.439m and A.M.T.D. (Adopted Middle Thread Distance) 65km from the mouth of the Brisbane River.

I clearly remember the 1955 Flood and rowed my own boat over a wide area that was flooded then and assisted in shifting materials from flooded businesses in Mill Street, Goodna (photo's available). This is relevant to concerns I will raise regarding buildings allowed to be built after the 1974 Flood, adjacent to Mill Street, Goodna which held approximately 200 people who were eventually evacuated by police during the 2011 Flood.

I also recall the morning after the first flood of 1974 in Goodna, this resulted solely from water which flowed down Woogaroo Creek which came from a huge down pour from New Beith, which is reported on pages 10, 19 & 62 in the publication "Proceedings of Symposium January 1974 Floods Moreton Region", held 3rd & 10th April 1974, which I purchased in 1974 as soon as it was available (I have read this about 6 times). There is no report of the first Goodna Flood of 1974. This flood occurred during the night, people were awoken from their beds by the high velocity water and its rapid rise of 6m in 30 minutes. Many were rescued from their roofs in their night clothes in the darkness, one case a mother with twin babies. This was all done by local boating enthusiasts' in high velocity flowing water, one rescuing over 40 people.

The following morning at 9am, I saw a caravan park that was decimated and very high water gushing into the Brisbane River from Woogaroo Creek, the debris left at the flood peak indicated this flood peaked close to that of the 1955 Flood which came from the Brisbane River. This is Mill Street, Goodna flooded in 1955 by the river and now flooded entirely by Woogaroo Creek 1974 (Friday 25th January 1974). Then there was the main flood of 1974 which rose on Saturday 26th January 1974.

People were going past my house most of the night and heading for our "Flood safety Area", which my father had told me was used in 1893 & 1931. It is about 500m west from my house and south from Brisbane Terrace and north of the railway line. I recall there was a bridge over the railway line close by until about 1950; I have a map showing it. The railway department maintained this bridge but dismantled it in about 1950, this may have been because we had Somerset Dam and to cut costs. I had used the bridge personally many times; it was wide enough to comfortably take a horse and dray. My father told me it was built before 1931 to ensure people could get to the State School during floods. Hence we always had a means to escape floods. In 1974 a temporary causeway was build across the rail line so vehicles could get across the line and get people to their relatives and friends. As you can see, we have always had this flood escape route but not in 2011. I feel there is a public need for restoration of this escape route to be available during floods. This escape route was ruined by housing development and I

REG O'DEA [REDACTED]

have been trying to get it restored for sometime. There have been at least 2 approaches to the Ipswich Council Town Planning Department to develop this area for cheap housing and I have asked that these include our former escape route as part of the plan as it would only be a benefit to the Developer because none of those applications include a southern entry and exit facility. This is not an expensive change when you compare it to some of the extra demand that I have seen put to just small developers in the recent past by Ipswich City Council Town Planning Department.

During the last Development Application which was about 9 months ago, I approached the Chief of the SES for support for my requests to restore this escape route. 2 hours with a bulldozer is all that is required at the present time. I was told that it is not necessary because he has this amazing Telemetering system that keeps him informed of all of the rainfalls and when they reach a certain level he can evacuate all of the people of the threatened area in 2 hours? There was no evidence of this in the 2011 Floods at Mill Street or the retirement village of 99 small houses just across the mentioned escape route on Brisbane Terrace.

I am also amazed at some of the building that has occurred since the 1974 flood. I have heard first hand the strange belief that Wivenhoe Dam will prevent future flooding. The publication covering the '74 Flood (pages 41, 42, 144, 161, 186, 219, 220) clearly states that it would not. It was not commissioned until about 1985. It also clearly states that 46% of 1974 rainfall fell in front of the proposed Wivenhoe Dam wall (page 162). What if 100% of any future flood rains fell in front of the Wivenhoe Dam wall? What then? Another one of the 4 1893 Floods maybe? This was 4.9m > 1974 in Goodna (page 124). ^{5,11,}

Since the 1974 Flood, 200m west from my residence, we have had established a caravan park which was opposed by Ipswich City Council but allowed by the Local Government (I was a witness for the Ipswich City Council in this court hearing). The caravan park has since been replaced by an elderly person's estate (over 55's) consisting of 99 small houses. In 1974 I travelled across this area which had at least 1.3m of water over it.

The height of the 1974 Flood at the permanent marker 30539 was approximately 18.6m. The height of the 2011 Flood was approx 16.54 m which was 600m from my lower floor. 1931 was 12.2 m, 1893 was 18.6m + 4.9m (page 124) - 23.5m according to the 1974 Flood report (page 124).

My father had well informed me of flooding in the area. We have plenty of warning and after the 1974 Flood people advised me they were relieved when I told them of past events, which had been passed on by my father such as when to leave, where to go and wait for the flood to subside.

REG. O'DEA

Regarding The Establishment Of Our Escape Route Used In The Floods Since 1893.

It would only require a few hours with the appropriate earth moving machinery. That is up to early May 2011 because and approved application for a retirement village of 232 dwellings could easily include a suitable road from Brisbane Terrace to Woogaroo Street, to give a south and north inlet and outlet to be open to the public only at flood times. In 1974 when there was no bridge as there was in 1931, a causeway was built across the railway about 100m east of where the bridge was. This enabled people who had used the flood escape route to take vehicles south and report to authorities which were stationed at the Goodna State School. These included a good medical centre, police, SES, helicopter pad, food supply and billeting. It was all very well managed in 1974.

About 20 years ago I was invited to a meeting of emergency personnel in Ipswich to report what occurred in 1974 and I was told that in future the key for the railway gate to the future causeway would be held at the Goodna Police Station. I have reason to believe that not all police at Goodna Police Station are aware of it.

My Main Concerns about Flood in My Area

It takes very little time to be shut off in our area. Restoration of our escape route can be easily done, include it as a road way through any future development and is only required at flood time. I estimate for a flood > 1974 about 700 people could use this escape path.

I would like to hear how the SES plan for future flooding performed recently (refer page 2 para 2). I worked in the control rooms of Swanbank Power Station for 30 years. Telemetry can fail, so there should always be a stand by plan such as when flooding occurs there is a reliable path to safety but the SES said there is no need for this.

There are murmurings that only SES people with special boats can do rescue work. We were all grateful for the boats made available in 1974 late in the night of Friday 25th January 1974 where the water rose 6m in 30 minutes. If the SES is close by during the emergency, then certainly they could do the job, but that will not always be the case.

I can not agree with the thinking of Ipswich City Council Planning Dept to allow the development between Mill and Alice Street Goodna, when one considers its flooding history.

I tried to contact the Ipswich SES Control Centre on the afternoon of 10th January 2011 and was unable to do so. When was it first operational?

REG O'DEA

Could a group of flood experts examine the disc of how the Malays flood proofed Kuala Lumpur? It was shown within the last month on a program called "Engineering Marvels on 7 Mate".

The 2011 flood was no surprise to my age group who lived in the area in 1974. The weather behavior was just so familiar and we were all prepared but our refuge could have been better.

Regarding the River During the Flood

Prior to the flood, 5 gates open resulted in a river level at Goodna similar to a medium king tide and this was also evident when they opened the gates after the flood.

During their first trial in 1999 which went so well, I often looked at the river and I could see a very small effect which indicated that the rate of the out flow decided on was right.

Some hours before the peak of 2011 Flood when the river was racing (faster than 1974), I rang the Wivenhoe enquiry line seeking information and I was told we are closing the gates at 4.30pm to allow the water to flow from the Lockyer because our out flow is stopping water flow from the Lockyer. My 1974 Flood Report Book shows that any change to Somerset out flow takes 1½ days to reach the junction and another ½ day to reach the Port Office. He also said that when we achieve our purpose with the Lockyer we will open our gates again. At about 2.30pm the next day I noticed the Flood level at Goodna had dropped 5" another person agreed with this and overnight the flood level reduced extensively and did not rise again.

I was alarmed at the scouring of the banks and the number of flattened trees. I have never seen the banks so damaged.

I found the police courteous and efficient. I was unable to assess the SES.

SMS sent from


11/1/2011 4:35pm

**Flash Flood Warning – Brisbane River to reach 18-19m Wednesday AM.
Residents close to River or associated tributaries monitor situ overnight
& evacuate if required.**

Who or what authorised this?

Is this some automatic follow up to the brilliance indicated in paragraph 2 page 2?

Which flood gauge was to reach 18-19 metres?

Perhaps it could reach 18-19 metres along its full A.M.T.D.?

What is the background of those involved here?

RODEA



O.D.E.A. 9/11/74
 T.M. 1/1/74

THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA
 QUEENSLAND DIVISION
 AUGUST, 1974

P 162 & 186

8522

18/6

Proceedings of Symposium

JANUARY 1974 FLOODS
 Moreton Region

HELD AT JOHN KINDLER MEMORIAL THEATRE
 QUEENSLAND INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
 3 & 10 APRIL, 1974

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FLOOD SLOPE SURVEYS:

Following the flood, the hydrographic staff surveyed the peak flood levels upstream and downstream of the stream gauging stations in order to provide flood slope data at every stream gauging station in the Moreton Region.

To augment the information obtained during the Centenary Bridge measurements, a local resident in the Jindalee area was requested to take height measurements some distance upstream from the bridge during the flood and these have been used in order to assess flood slopes during the flood.

^{p 50} Figure 5 presents flood survey data that was computed many years ago for the Brisbane River.

INUNDATION STUDIES:

Inundation surveys were commenced immediately after the flood for the majority of streams in the Moreton Region. The surveys were undertaken by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, the Surveyor-General's Department, the Brisbane City Council, the Ipswich City Council, and some other organisations.

Maps have been drawn by the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission indicating the areas that were inundated in these floods and these maps cover the majority of the Brisbane River and its tributaries, the Logan, Albert, Coomera and Nerang Rivers and several other streams.

ANALYSIS OF FIELD DATA:

It is essential that immediately after a significant flood event such as the one of January 1974 that all field data be collected, assembled and assessed for accuracy.

An initial check on the reliability of the field data can be obtained by making a volumetric water balance. A water balance of the Brisbane River Catchment based on the mean catchment rainfalls obtained from an isohyetal map produced by the Bureau of Meteorology and the flood volumes determined from the discharge hydrographs has been undertaken. Table 3 outlines the results of this analysis to date and indicates that there is quite a significant range in the percentage of runoff to rainfall over different parts of the area.

This water balance has also assisted in the extrapolation of existing rating curves.

It is hoped that eventually the hydrograph recorded at the Port Office gauge will be able to be subdivided into the portion resulting from the Bremer River catchment, the portion resulting from the Upper Brisbane etc.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

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The stream heights recorded during the January 1974 floods are by no means unique. Figure 6 shows past flood data for the Brisbane Port Office from which it can be seen that floods of similar magnitude have occurred in the past in the Moreton Region and they will certainly occur in the future. The construction of dams such as Wiyenhoe Dam will no doubt modify the

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~~magnitude of future floods, but it would be false to assume that they will eliminate floods from that time onwards.~~

A City, such as Brisbane, situated at the mouth of a river which has a catchment of some 13,600 square kilometres (5,300 square miles) should devise a warning system that allows everyone to assess what is likely to happen in their area, based on the official information relayed over news media.

It is believed that the information collected from January 1974 flood will allow various re-assessments to be made of the great 1893 flood and consequently will permit further consideration to be given to the best operating procedure for Somerset Dam during a flood crisis. In addition, it should help forecasters by providing more factual data.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

I wish to acknowledge the permission given by the Commissioner of the Irrigation and Water Supply Commission, Mr. Haigh, M.B.E., M.E., F.I.E. Aust., F.A.I.M., to present this paper and the Staff of Surface Water Resources Branch who contributed so significantly to collection of data in the field and analysing it in the office.