

BURNETT RIVER FLOODPLAIN ACTION PLAN

COMMUNITY REFERENCE GROUP MEETING

MONDAY 23 APRIL 2013 – 4PM

FUNCTION ROOM, BUNDABERG MAIN ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 190 BOURBONG STREET, BUNDABERG

MINUTES

Attendance:

Rowan Bond (Chairperson), Kay Amsler, Helen Dayman, Chris Hardy, Rob Marshman, John Olsen, Barry Ehrke, Mark Pressler, John Lee, Jon Carman, Andrew Fulton (General Manager Infrastructure & Planning), Dwayne Honor (Manager Design), Shane booth (Development Planner) AND Robyn Laing (Administration Support).

Apologies:

Apologies were tendered for Steve Cooper of Coopers Hardware and John Bailey from Wallaville.

Introduction and Welcome:

Chairperson, Mr Rowan Bond welcomed CRG members to the Meeting and referred to the role of the CRG to represent the community.

Brief Project Overview – Dwayne Honor:

Dwayne Honor presented an overview of the project, Burnett River Floodplain Action Plan. He advised that the Burnett River Flood Study commenced after 2010/11 Flood. Ex-tropical cyclone Oswald was unique in that it paralleled the coastline and headed inland to Sydney creating very high rainfall in the Burnett River Catchment which resulted in a significant flood event for Bundaberg. Approximately 16,500 cubic metres of water flowed down the Burnett River every second during the heights of this flood. To put this in perspective, he referred to such quantity of flow being similar to almost 7 Olympic swimming pools every second. The Burnett River has one of the largest river catchment in Queensland and the amount of scouring associated with this flood was unique. Urban Search and Rescue crews at the time of the flood recorded 50 homes with catastrophic damage; 448 homes severely damaged; with a total of 837 homes with flood damage. He referred to Back Electra Road area where rural residential properties were flooded with depths ranging from 5.5m to 25m in depth. The largest depth of flooding that occurred in the Bundaberg Region was just less than 27m above ground level near Ned Churchward Weir.

CRG Member, Kay Amsler told the meeting that her home in the Back Electra area experienced very high depths of flooding. They were in great peril before Bundaberg City experienced the flooding and the Electra / South Kolan / Pine Creek / Sharon / Givelda residents didn't know this amount of flooding was coming. Residents of the said area experienced extended isolation.

Dwayne Honor advised the Meeting that flood surveying was done to record peak flood levels; many were marked by locals who live alongside the river. This information is used to calibrate and refine the flood model. The river bathymetry (river bed cross sections) were also surveyed for the Burnett River from Paradise Dam to the river mouth. The CRG's attention was drawn to the presence of two large, naturally occurring holes in the river bed; one at the Isis pump station and one just downstream of Mt Lawless.

Dwayne Honor showed the Meeting a comparison of the river bed level after the 2010/11 flood versus the 2013 flood. This comparison showed deep scouring of the river bed and some sedimentation areas along the River. He stated that approximately 3,500,000m³ of sediment had been removed from the river bed between Ben Anderson barrage and the Port as a result of the 2013 flood causing significant bank slumping and destabilisation; some sections are now much deeper.

Dwayne Honor further stated that the flood modelling allows us to measure flood depths, velocities, hazards and shear stress to show where scouring might occur. It shows breakouts, bypasses and backwaters for different flood scenarios. The model is calibrated with data from peak flood levels of actual historic flood events of 1942, 1971, 2010, 2011 and 2013.

CRG Member, Helen Dayman stated that 2008 flood was missing from the calibration. This flood may not have had much affect in Bundaberg City but it had affected her area at Goodnight Scrub. Since Paradise Dam was built there has been frequent flooding. She explained the periods of isolation for different flood events; from 2 – 3days for small floods and up to 3-5 weeks for the 2010/11 and 2013 flood. She pointed out that these smaller floods are insignificant by the time they reach Bundaberg City but it is important to take into consideration the affect these smaller floods have in her area.

There was discussion regarding the areas quick to flood ie Perry River Bridge, Booyal Causeway, St Agnes Bridge, Currajong Creek area. It was noted that there was no historically recorded peak flood level data for the Perry River from the Bureau of Meteorology. Dwayne Honor further stated that if the flood model can replicate the bigger moderate to major floods then it should be able to replicate the lower floods that are affecting these rural areas. The Mt Rawdon area had very high rainfall and additional gauges and upgrades will be done in this area in coming months.

CRG Member, Jon Carman referred to the affect of river flooding on the boating community. Dwayne Honor likened Paradise Dam to a giant measuring jug which tells us what is coming our way. Burnett and Kolan River floodplains join at Moore Park. Council learnt after 2010/11 floods, that it needed to acquire an understanding of the relationship between rain gauges at Paradise Dam and Walla and the respective flooding to the City which led to regression analysis to determine this flood level relationship of key river gauges to Bundaberg. Council has also developed mapping to show at what point on the Bundaberg gauge the flood affects individual properties. He also stated that on average it takes 24 hours for flood waters to reach the City from Paradise Dam and 17 hours from Walla.

CRG member, Kay Amsler pointed out that her area at Pine Creek / Back Electra had less warning time before flooding and that her community needed to understand this. Her community needs to not only understand the relationship between gauge levels and flood levels of the properties but also the roads for evacuation purposes. She stated that phones do not work in her area and that there is no access to help other than what they can do for themselves. There is no help from emergency services owing to isolation. CRG member, Helen Dayman stated that it was the same in her area at Goodnight Scrub and that residents had to take note of the rainfall at Monto and Mundubbera which provides approximately 24 hours notice to prepare for evacuation or isolation.

On the lower Burnett, the flood warning system will be upgraded from Woongarra Pump Station to Mt Lawless, St Agnes, Perry River in November 2013 ready for the next wet season. Currently, there is no redundancy if Telstra IP networks fail. With the proposed upgrade the rain gauges will be linked to the Bureau of Meteorology's ALERT technology which is a VHF radio

network. All information will be streamed real time to the main administration building of Bundaberg Regional Council at the same time as the Bureau of Meteorology. An additional 6 rain gauges will be installed in the lower Burnett River catchment as part of this upgrade. This upgrade will help with flood warning across the lower Burnett and also includes the Paradise Dam gauge.

Dwayne Honor further advised the Meeting that the flood model accurately predicts the behaviour of flooding in the lower Burnett and allows Council to undertake 'what if' scenarios. The flood model is now ready to assess flood risks and impacts to assist with identifying the top five flood resilience options to be submitted to the State Government by December. Detailed engineering assessment will be undertaken in the first half of 2014 on these five options.

CRG Member, John Olsen pointed out that there were two different issues to be considered: risk of life and property; and flood resilience options.

Dwayne Honor stated that Council's window of opportunity to acquire funding support for flood resilience options was closing by the month which is why Council is running all aspects of the project in parallel to meet the State Government's December timeline. The five options could include projects like raising of homes, communication and upgrades of early flood warning systems and infrastructure to improve flood resilience.

CRG Member, Kay Amsler asked if Council was undertaking 'what if' models of Paradise Dam failing and Dwayne Honor stated that a State Government report was expected soon on the Paradise Dam. Andrew Fulton stated that one of the options to be investigated was whether Paradise Dam could be extended to act as a flood mitigation dam. The meeting noted that Paradise Dam was on a permanent release as there are no flood gates on this dam.

CRG member, Rob Marshman asked regarding the capacity of Paradise Dam and Dwayne Honor advised that Paradise Dam had a capacity of just over 300,000 ML and that about $\frac{2}{3}$ of Paradise Dam's total storage capacity was reached in one hour of inflow during the 2013 disaster.

CRG member, Barry Ehrke pointed out that the Government may not fund what we identify as the top five options. Chairman, Rowan Bond stated that it was unlikely that both the CRG and the appointed Technical Working Group was going to come up with same top five options. Andrew Fulton advised the Meeting that the Minister was aware that this CRG had been appointed and its purpose. Rowan Bond further stated that this CRG will submit a report to Council in December 2013 clearly identifying the community's top five flood resilience options. Individually, he stated, we have a responsibility to interact with our community. Any option is considered however, left field ideas will naturally fall off as we go through this process. Barry Ehrke asked that it be made very clear to the community that this report is only the community's recommendation of what the top five options should be and not necessarily what is submitted to the Government for funding.

Proposed Timeline:

Chairman, Rowan Bond stated that he would like the third meeting to be held in mid November and call a fourth meeting for December so there is clear direction from the CRG for that final report to Council.

A Media Statement outlining to the community the various members comprising the CRG was passed around for perusal by the CRG Members.

Terms of Reference:

Chairman, Rowan Bond asked if everyone had closely read the Terms of Reference and sought discussion on the role of a CRG member. He referred to his role as the Chair and asked for general agreement or proposed changes.

CRG Members, Jon Carman and Helen Dayman moved that the Terms of Reference, as tabled at the Meeting, be accepted.

The motion was put and carried.

Media Protocol:

CRG Member, Helen Dayman referred to the tabled media protocol and asked how this worked with passing information back and forth between members of the community and the CRG members. She sought clarification to see if there were any restrictions on what the CRG could give out to the community.

Chairman, Rowan Bond stated that the intention of the media protocol was to ensure a standard message goes out from this group. Should any CRG member wish to make media statements, it should be made clear that it was a personal statement and not a statement of the CRG group. He clarified by stating that our main role is to get information to and from the community via our networks (ie using community newsletter) and that there were no restrictions on seeking information from our community. If there is descent within this group, then that discussion should be within this group, not with the media.

CRG Members, Chris Hardy and John Olsen expressed concern regarding the media protocol preventing them from speaking as they saw fit. Chris Hardy raised the matter of resigning from the CRG. Chris Hardy referred to her efforts on the flood mitigation group and the Chairman, Rowan Bond asked Chris Hardy to submit this information collected from the recent meetings and other information gathered since the 2013 flood to this CRG for inclusion in the community consultation process. He stated that this was valuable information that the CRG should process. CRG Member, John Olsen stated that he would resign immediately if he could not speak his own personal opinion and Rowan Bond assured CRG members that everyone would have a fair say in this meeting and that he encouraged everyone to speak. He further stated that the CRG would be operating independently from Council.

CRG members, Jon Carman and Rob Marshall moved that the media protocol be accepted.

The Motion was put and carried.

The Chair allowed further discussion to take place during which various CRG members encouraged Chris Hardy to refrain from resigning and remain on the CRG. Chris Hardy stated that she represented the people who tried to make a difference from 2002. Chris and her friends have already submitted their flood ideas and it is well known what they want. Chairman, Rowan Bond stated that this CRG really needs your input in view of your extensive community

network. CRG Member, John Lee stated that you are one of the most valued members of the CRG but this Action Plan represents the whole catchment not just North Bundaberg. CRG Member, Barry Ehrke stated that you can have your own views in the media but you just don't say it is the views of the CRG. The Meeting was advised that Minutes of CRG Meetings would be posted on the Council's website along with technical reports.

Community Information Sessions:

Chairman, Rowan Bond referred to the community information sessions to be held around the region during the week commencing 24 September 2013. Dwayne Honor stated that the sessions would offer a range of static and interactive information. A brief overview of the flood study will be delivered by GHD's Flood Engineer. The attendees will divide into groups to view various information stands on the history of Burnett River, Early Flood Warning System Upgrade, information supplied by the Bureau of Meteorology, Incremental Flood Mapping which shows the relationship between the gauge readings at Paradise Dam and Walla to properties in the Burnett River catchment. Questionnaires will be used to gather information from the community and Council asked all CRG members to assist Council in collecting this information.

CRG Member, Helen Dayman stated that her community obtained approval to erect community noticeboards for isolated areas and that a voluntary database of vulnerable residents was being prepared which would include GPS coordinates of their location and document who is on medication. This model of community self help was supported by Council's Disaster Management Officer, Matt Dwyer who would like to see other communities use a similar model. The Meeting was further advised that the 'Get Ready' campaign was coming up and the community information sessions will be sharing some of this information. By request, Dwayne Honor offered to join Helen Dayman in a community information meeting in her area at Goodnight Scrub. Chairman, Rowan Bond also offered to attend if he was available.

In answer to questions raised by Helen Dayman, Andrew Fulton stated that it was reasonable to ask if paradise dam could be augmented so that it offers some flood mitigation.

Multi-Criteria Assessment Process - MCA:

Dwayne Honor stated that the MCA facilitates consideration of economic, social and environmental impacts. A key action of this CRG is to review and adopt the criteria and weightings prior to it being used for assessment. This tool will process the ideas for flood resilience. The Agenda for the second meeting will include a draft of this MCA for discussion at the next Meeting.

At the suggestion of Rowan Bond, **the Meeting agreed to create an independent email address (and small website if possible) to facilitate communication between CRG meetings.**

Next CRG Meeting:

It was decided to hold the next CRG Meeting on Tuesday, 8 October at 4pm in the Bundaberg Office.

This concluded the business of the Meeting at 6.10 pm.