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From: "Val Schier, candidate for Mayor" <val@cairnfirst.org.au>
To: "Aart Northernbelle" <manager@northernbelle.com.au>
Sent: Thursday, 28 February 2008 8:37 PM
Attach: 0804 22 February 2008.doc.pdf
Subject: Fw: Chinaman Creek is a disaster waiting to happen.doc

Aart, It was great to catch up with you and to hear your issues with Council. KB is advertising that we need to keep the city in experience hands. Huh!?? The hands that have stuffed you around, created the situation below, allowed sediment to damage the reef at False Cape, let Villa Romana take over public footpath with no approvals, supported a developer to push for a "town centre" at Smithfield without any consultation. It goes on and on. Val



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Chinaman Creek is a local disaster waiting to happen.

Personal observations of the rainfall on the evening of Monday, 25 February 2008, support the conclusions of my report into 2006/2008 flooding incidences.

The conclusions were:

- That development across the flood plain opposite Cava Close was affecting flows.
- That the flood flow level that was previously a 10 to 20 year event is now possibly a less than one-year event.
- That the creeks capacity has been reduced to accommodating a less than one year event.
- That similar flooding to 7/8 January was going to become a regular occurrence with only moderate rain falling for approximately 75 minutes

The observations on Monday evening were:

- Chinaman Creek at Cava Close reached peak flow at Cava Close after approximately 75 minutes.
- The rainfall was light to moderate only, of an intensity and duration that is consistent with an annual pattern or less.
- The level and time of the next high tide was low enough and far enough away in time to have no effect on flow.
- The peak flow was only approximately 300mm below the levee at the peak flow of the evening.
- The peak flow had broken its banks and was being impeded from spreading across its natural path by retirement village development.
- The level of flow impacted on outflow of drainage from Hutchings Street resulting in street flooding from incapacity of runoff behind levee to escape.
- It was observed that the flood level was impacting on the efficiency of the Ishmael Road culvert.
- It was observed that the flood level was impacting on the efficiency of Mulgrave Road culvert.
- BOM rainfall figure for the 24 hour period was only 38.6mm.

Council's community letter of proposed works fails to show any commitment to addressing any of the real issues that are causing the increased incidences of flooding and amounts to little more than what should be an annual maintenance program.

I have responded to council with regards their letter and have also forwarded my observations of recent "minor" event, which occurred after writing response to council. I have attached a copy of this letter to council.

22/07/2009

22 February 2008

The CEO,
Cairns City Council,
P.O.Box 359,
Cairns. 4870.

Dear Sir,

Re: Community letter "Update-Flooding in the Chinaman Creek area", your reference, 1655261v4.

The Council's community letter of the 15 February 2008 fails to show any commitment on the part of council to addressing any of the real issues that are causing the increased incidences of flooding problems along the lower reaches of Chinaman Creek from Mulgrave Road to Smiths Creek. My independent report, delivered to Cairns City Council 30 January 2008, into the flooding incidences shows the problem being caused by a council approved development encroaching on and impeding the flood flow path of Chinaman Creek. This encroachment has reduced the flow capacity and increased the flow levels by "bottle-necking" the flow resulting in increased flow depths. Council's letter conveying it's proposed works strategy does not detail any proposed work to increase the capacity of the creek to accommodate the loss of flow from the council approved development.

There is another issue I would like to raise and have on record that is directly linked to council's approval of the development that now occupies the flood path of Chinaman Creek. Prior to development the land usage was rural grazing land, whether it was zoned this or not. The land was capable of being developed with improvements to Chinaman Creek being incorporated into any advanced planning. According to council policy, in this case, a drainage study should have been undertaken and future-upgrading works investigated for incorporation into a drainage management plan. Chinaman Creek is a major overland flow path and the flow path should have been recognised and incorporated as a legitimate land use in the planning of any development adjacent to it. This is both council policy and Queensland Urban Drainage Management policy.

It was possible, prior to the existing development, to allow for flood management works that would have accommodated 100 year flooding within the natural overland flow path limits. The Hutchings Street area would have benefited from this to the point of flooding frequency being reduced considerably from what it was prior to the existing council approved development. There would be

no talk now of increasing levee bank levels and installing pumps as flood flows could have been catered for to a point where flood levels in the drain would be kept low enough to allow relatively free outlets for the streets stormwater drainage system. This level of efficiency and management is no longer possible solely as a result of the council approved development impeding so far across the flood path.

Cairns City Council failed the community by approving a development that has compromised the long-term management of the Chinaman Creek catchment. Cairns City Council has failed the community by allowing development that contravenes it's own stormwater policy and the accepted Queensland Urban Drainage Management standard. The development adversely affects upstream drainage, potentially affects downstream drainage, critically reduces the overland flow path of a major drainage system to below council policy, increased surcharge flow paths with the effect of increasing the recurrence of private property damage and local flooding in an area that was already on the border line of council policy.

Cairns City Council is continuing to fail the community by putting forward a plan of works that is little more than a cosmetic screen in an attempt to alleviate their position in the short term. The plan of works, put forward in their letter, represents little more than what should be annual maintenance procedures and in no way addresses any of the real issues. The real issues are, that Chinaman Creeks flow capacity has been reduced, flood levels have been increased, frequency and severity of private property flooding has been increased, risk to public health and safety has been increased and the overland flow path of Chinaman Creek has been cut off.

Council's letter refers to the only new work to be carried out is to lift the level of the existing levee banks and install a pump station at the end of Hutchings Street. I find it hard to contain my outrage at such a non- engineering and apparent contemptuousness toward the community needs and expectations. These "solutions" in no way address improving the damage that has been caused by Councils approval of the downstream works that have caused the present situation and complicated the acceptable management of the combined Chinaman Creek/Clarkes Creek catchments.

Levee banks are a last ditch effort to control flooding by keeping flows from spreading to undesirable limits. The consequence of this is to reduce the flow of the stream and in so doing either increase flow levels or force flows to be accommodated somewhere else on the flood plain or upstream catchment. As in this case the flood plain has been reduced the stream will need to flow to increased levels once the flows break over the banks of the formed channel. Higher flood levels

will be experienced more frequently and flooding and drainage problems will be extended further upstream. The existing problem caused by Council approval of development on Chinaman Creek flow path will be exacerbated and extended to a wider community area (including the retirement village development and businesses and communities bounded by Ishmael Road, Mulgrave Road and McCoombe Street) by Council's reluctance to address the real issues.

With regard the installation of a pump station at the end of Hutchings Street, this is a short term answer in helping to alleviate the pressure off local residents and is not an acceptable final solution. If a pump station was to become a final solution levee banks would need to be at a level to prohibit inundation behind the wall of a 100 year flood event (levee banks at this level would be unworkable and would have enormous impact on the surrounding area) and the pumps of a capacity to remove 100 year runoff of the existing catchment behind the levee. This pump would need to have it's own auxiliary power supply to ensure it's use during times of cyclonic activity and power outages, a very likely scenario to coincide with this level of flooding. Even in the short term any pump station proposed should have a backup power supply. This is a reasonable public expectation.

I have had no written personal replies to my earlier correspondence or report nor has any of the requested information to aid in investigation been forthcoming. I repeat the request for this information in addition to digital and hard copy of recent council survey and any reports prepared pertaining to the development or Chinaman Creek/Clarkes Creek management. This investigation is being carried out as an unfunded community service and as such requires access to existing terrain data pre and post development that is available through council's records.

Your's Faithfully

Kerry Eaton.