



Core units: Exemplars – Year 7

Illustration 4: Flooding in south-east Queensland

## The Wivenhoe Dam

The Wivenhoe Dam was constructed after there was severe flooding in Brisbane in 1974. The dam was designed to hold back the water of the Brisbane River and reduce the risk of extreme flood events by controlling the release of water into the river.

Water is also stored in the dam to provide a safe and reliable supply of water for the communities in south-east Queensland, which is especially important during droughts.

There has been criticism that the water level in the Wivenhoe Dam was kept too high in January 2011 so that the dam could not fulfil its flood-control function. With the high volume of water flowing into the dam from extremely high rainfall in the catchment, pressure built up on the dam walls and the operators had no choice but to release it. This water spilled into the Brisbane River, which was already full, increasing the severity of the flooding.