

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Julie Marie JOHNSON
<i>Date of Birth</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Address and contact details</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Occupation</i>	Retired (Hobby Farmer)
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Det Insp Mark Ainsworth
<i>Date taken</i>	8/3/2011

Julie Marie JOHNSON states;

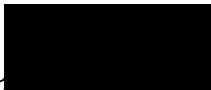
1. I am a married woman, [REDACTED] years of age and I reside with my husband at [REDACTED]. I have owned this property for the past 22 years and have resided at the address for the past 11 years. I am a retired person that runs a Hobby Farm at the same address.
2. Whilst residing at Grantham I have been involved in a number of community organisations including the Grantham Rural Fire Service (approx 15 years ago), the Mama State School and Community Hall. More recently since the floods in Grantham I have taken on the role as the co-ordinator of the Grantham Relief Centre and am also secretary of the Grantham Community Flood Appeal.
3. I recall the flood events that occurred at Grantham in December, 2010 and January, 2011. Since Christmas there seemed to be a lot of localised flooding in Grantham and surrounds due to heavy rainfall falling constantly in the region. I recall the Gatton-Helidon Road at Grantham being closed on a number of occasions over this period due to flooding. A number of other low lying roads were also closed at various times for the same reason.


Witness Signature: [REDACTED]
Page Number 1 of 8

Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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4. On Monday 10 January, 2011 at about 3.30pm my husband and I were at Redmans Produce at Gatton purchasing supplies for the animals. Whilst at Redmans, I saw the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website was being displayed at the store. This site showed heavy rain over the Lockyer Valley areas. As several roads were already closed due to minor flooding, my husband and I decided to return immediately to our residence. We travelled home via the highway as the Gatton-Helidon Road was already flood affected. Upon arriving home my husband and I tended to the animals. I recall hearing the phone ring about 4.15pm, however I did not answer it and the call went to the message bank.
5. On entering the house after tending to the animals I played the message on the phone and heard it was my 13 year old grandson, Christopher Johnson-Spiers. Christopher sounded quite hysterical and told us to get up high as the water was coming into Grantham. Christopher is the son of my daughter, Lesley Ann Johnson and they live in Victor Street, Grantham. As a result I rang my daughter and she told me that they were watching television when Christopher and her heard a strange noise coming from outside their house.
6. Lesley told me that she went out onto the road outside her house and saw a huge quantity of water washing down the middle of Grantham. The water had swept away cars, people and anything in its way. By this time it would have been approximately 4.30pm. Lesley told me that people were running over the Grantham Railway bridge from the Western side to get to higher ground to avoid the water.

Witness Signature, 
Page Number 2 of 8

Signature of officer 

7. As a result of this information from my daughter and grandson, I jumped into my car to travel to their place however I could not get through as Philips Road was cut by flooding. I returned home. I recall after a period of time I lost power and landline phone contact to my residence. I still had mobile phone contact.
8. The only warning I had regarding this flood event was the initial notification at Redmans Produce on the BOM site. I found this site to be very accurate and recall it indicated a dark red area along the Toowoomba Range indicating heavy rain. I am aware most of the warnings in the Grantham area came via word of mouth from people further west of Grantham who had already been affected by the heavy flooding.
9. I think for future disaster events in the Grantham area we need to review our warning systems. Currently ^{GATTON} Grantham has a siren that sounds if there is a serious traffic accident or fire that alerts volunteers to go to the Rural Fire Station as their assistance is needed. Perhaps something similar could be utilised to warn the community of pending weather events or fires. The only other form of warning that I think would be suitable in these circumstances would be a text message system whereby people receive warnings via texts messaging on their phones.
10. Grantham is an area that floods regularly, resulting in the community becoming used to the fact that flooding here is a part of life.

11. In saying that we have never experienced a flood incident like this one from 10 January, 2011. The community is aware of what parts of Grantham floods first, what roads become flood affected. It is a well known fact if flooding is occurring, or about to occur people take their vehicles to the Grantham Railway yard which is situated on a higher part of Grantham. With respect to the flooding of 2010/11 people had already commenced moving their cars to the Railway yard prior to the 10 January, 2011.

12. On the morning of 11 January, 2011 after becoming aware of the extent of the flooding event in Grantham, I started ringing around friends to try and find out which people had survived the flood, who was missing, what had occurred. There appeared to be total confusion within the community as to what had occurred and what was going on.

13. On Wednesday 12 January, 2011 I drove to the Grantham State School which had been set up as the Community evacuation centre. At this centre I spoke to a number of people and commenced a co-ordination role to assist the community with accommodation, food, clothing and other necessities of life. Initially I commenced a diary/contact list of all of the Grantham people who attended the evacuation centre. This contact list included names and details of persons who attended the evacuation centre and contact mobile phone number of the same people.

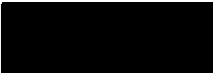
Witness Signature..
Page Number 4 of 8

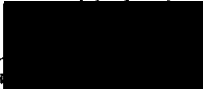
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14. I continued in the co-ordination role at the evacuation centre throughout the initial stages of this incident. On or about 18 January, 2011 we had to relocate the evacuation centre due to the need of teachers preparing the school for the upcoming school year. As a result, Education Queensland supplied us with large marquis and other equipment to relocate the evacuation centre in parkland next to the school. This is still the current location of the centre which has more or less taken on the role as a relief centre.

15. With the assistance of the Federal and State Governments we set up various community offices in demountable buildings located in the vicinity of the relief centre. These services included Centrelink, Banks, Counsellors, chaplains, communication companies such as Optus who supplied mobile phones to affected people. A temporary police station was also established in this area.

16. The initial response to the incident of 10 January, 2011 by emergency services was very good once they could get into the area. It took a while for them to get in however once they did arrive things started to happen very quickly. In the initial stages prior to the arrival of emergency services the Grantham community worked well together assisting one another with rescues, resources such as generators, fuel and other items as needed. The community all pooled in together. Once emergency services got into the community the resources they brought with them were fantastic. The community had the assistance of police, Australian Defence Force personnel, SES, Queensland Fire and Rescue, numerous helicopters and the Lockyer Council also contributed resources. There were also a number of other organisations that provided assistance.

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17. The community lost power supplies for at least five days, with some areas being without power for a lot longer. The same situation with landline phones occurred where landlines for down for a period of five days with some areas being without landlines for a lot longer.

18. Once the response phase of the incident turned into recovery, emergency services remained as did the ADF. The community continued to work well together. At one stage during the recovery process the ADF were about to withdraw their resources, however a request form the Lockyer Council saw them remain for a further week. I believe the council panicked a little and they were not prepared for a disaster of this magnitude in the area. The council is only a small organisation covering a large area and their resources were stretched trying to cope.

19. In my opinion I think that all agencies involved in the response and recovery worked extremely well together. The allocation of Inspectors Mike McKAY and Rob GRAHAM has been of great assistance to the community. People were kept well informed by the recovery team. The relief centre co-ordinated food deliveries to various persons in the community and included in these food deliveries were information sheets advising community people of what was occurring. In general I believe the community was well informed as to what was going on.

Witness Signature,


Page Number 6 of 8

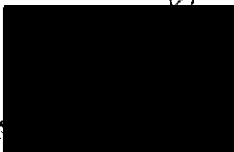
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20. On 12 January, 2011 as part of my role as the relief co-ordinator for Grantham, we formed a committee to manage the operation of the relief centre. The committee was made up of local people and included Warren Kimlin, Marty Warburton and myself. After a period of time the committee membership was expanded due to the enormity of managing the relief centre and associated requirements. A community vote was held to elect members and resulted in the committee expanding to 7 people who included Kieren McNamara (Solicitor), Allan Marshall, Danny McGuire, Helen McGroare, Peter Friend, Marty Warburton and myself. Community meetings were conducted regularly and minutes of these meetings were recorded.

21. In considering what worked well, I believe the government assistance in setting up the relief centre was very good in particular the provision of relevant government agencies to the relief centre to assist the community with monetary payments and advice. The response of emergency services and the ADF once they got into the affected area was very good. Prior to this time the community rallied together helping one another out very well.

22. I believe there are several factors that could be done better in future, including the development of an warning system to provide the community with early advice of a pending disaster, the construction of levy banks in the Grantham area to protect the community from flood waters and the cleaning out of waterways in the Lockyer Valley Region to prevent large quantities of debris from entering the waterways.

Witness Signature. 
Page Number 7 of 8

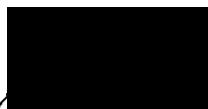
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22.To this date I am still co-ordinating the Grantham Relief Centre.



J.M.JOHNSON

Witness Signature.
Page Number 8 of 8



Signature of officer

