

My name is Lisa Spierling and I am 42 years old. I have lived in Grantham at [REDACTED] Gatton-Helidon Rd for the past 18 years with my husband Stephen Spierling and our five children. Not only was this our home but also our place of business.

We owned and operated Lockyer Cut Flowers Pty. Ltd and employed 11 staff plus our selves. We had approximately 3 acres of shade houses and grew mainly roses for the cut flower market.

On the day of 10<sup>th</sup> January I was at home with three of my children, Hahns (13), Klaus (10) and Ilsa (4) .I had stayed home from work that day ( I also own Gatton Florist ) as I was preparing to travel to Melbourne for a friends wedding.

At approximately 2:30pm I had phoned the [REDACTED] Bank in Gatton about my new [REDACTED] debit card which I needed for my trip south and was told that I would have to come into the branch to activate the pin on the card. I put my children into the car for a quick trip to town and left Grantham at around 2:40pm. I went to the bank, fueled up my car and returned to Grantham by just after 3pm. At no time on my trip out or back to Grantham did I see any SES or Police. The Sandy Creek Bridge was open as the water had not come over the bridge.

By about 3:40 I had a visit from Robert Wilkin saying that he had heard there was some water "coming up "I believed this to mean that water would be slowly approaching our farm from the East, out of Sandy Creek. I thanked Rob for letting me know and started thinking to move some of our vehicles further West away from the creek. Within minutes of Rob leaving he returned, grabbed my daughter Ilsa and ran out of the house towards his ute parked in my driveway. At this stage I had no idea of the approaching danger and it wasn't until we were reversing out of my driveway that I saw the wall of water heading straight for our home. We managed to make it to the railway line along with a number of others. While up there we watched our homes, cars (with people on them) and every imaginable thing come crashing past us. The water level continued to rise toward us and it came apparent to us that the railway line was not going to remain dry for much longer. I had been looking for escape routes (such as dropping down onto the other side of the line) but it was already flooded and I did not think that with little children it was possible to wade through as there is an old barbed wire fence between the line and the road. We looked toward the West but were confronted by another wall of water covering the line and heading towards us. Our only option was to run towards the Grantham rail line bridge and to Sandy Creek, which I knew would also be flooded. It is one kilometer from where we were to the bridge. It was slow going with little children and some older and more overweight people who were having trouble keeping up. I was carrying my daughter on my hip when I realized that it would quicker to run with her on my back in a "piggy back ". While I was running my daughter asked me not to let her drown.

When we came to the bridge it was already starting to go under water and we were assisted over by a number of residents of Grantham who live on the higher part of town. Once we were on higher ground we made our way to the Grantham School under the direction of Sgt. [REDACTED]

After a while I introduced myself as Pte. Spierling from the ADF and offered to help where needed. I am first aid trained so I started looking after the injured. In the following hours I had a number of different injuries.

- [REDACTED] collapsed in the library of the school and stopped breathing. I started shaking her by her shoulders and calling her name to which she did not respond. I was only seconds from starting CPR when she finally started breathing again.
- A gentleman I am unaware of his name (he was also on the railway line) who had multiple meat ant bites on his groin and down his legs. ( the ants were in the water as we waded to higher ground )
- The [REDACTED] who when dropped to us from the helicopter were hypothermic and very unstable on their feet. They were in shock. Mr. [REDACTED] is a diabetic and he had a gash under his knee and all the skin missing from the full length of his shin. Mrs. [REDACTED] had a cast on her arm from a break sustained the week before, but it appeared from the amount of pain that she was in that it was once again broken. Mrs. [REDACTED] was very unsteady on her feet and required a number of people to assist her down numerous flights of stairs to go to the toilet. On a number of occasions she was vomiting as she had swallowed a lot of dirty water. I had nothing to offer her for pain relief except panadol brought to me from a nearby resident. I was unable to find any saline solution or any other appropriate liquid to clean Mr. [REDACTED] wounds as I was worried about infection.
- I had a very limited first aid kit at the school.
- I had a young man who I suspected may have had a fractured leg. He would not allow me to look at it as he was more concerned about his partner . He was unable to walk properly when he was pulled out of the water. . Late in the night he finally allowed me to look at it. All I could do was bandage it and offer him panadol.
- I also looked after a teenage girl who had a previous knee injury aggravated by the day and I also bandaged this and offered her panadol. A nearby resident went to their home and got her some crutches so she could access the toilet.
- Mr. [REDACTED] was of particular concern to me. He has been my neighbor for the past 18 years and I know he has a quite serious heart condition. I monitored him every half hour during the night. He did not have his heart medication with him. Mr. [REDACTED] also had an existing wound on the back of his leg that the stitches had opened up and it was bleeding. I cleaned it as best as I could with what I had and bandaged it also.
- I was concerned about Mr. [REDACTED] as he was due his insulin in the morning and he did not have any.

On many occasions I informed Sgt. [REDACTED] of the situation and asked many times for help. I have limited skills and I was very concerned about a number of the older people. Also during the night I heard Sgt. [REDACTED] repeat our list of survivors on numerous occasions and we commented that it seemed to be a bit of a mess with all the different agencies calling. I never saw police officers arrive at the school during the night, I may have been in the back classroom checking on people, but if I had I would have made it quite clear to them that we had a number of people that required professional medical attention.

The days after the disaster we were made aware of numerous security breaches. Many of the locals were accessing Grantham from back roads and time and time again we were assured that Grantham was in a complete lock down. I want to make clear that myself and my family (along with many others) never complained about not being able to return to our homes. We were well aware of the enormous task confronting the authorities. Our concern was that what was left of our homes was going to be looted. On one occasion I was told by a senior police officer, "don't worry, looters aren't going to walk through muddy paddocks ". When I informed him of the numerous journalists standing on the rail line directly behind our farm he told me not to worry as no one including looters would be able to drop down off the rail way line. I then reminded him how so many of us with young children and babies had made it up onto the line.

My father is a retired police inspector and I have always had the upmost respect for the service, but I have to say that the weeks after this disaster the majority of the senior police treated myself, my family and my neighbors with little compassion. I found the senior officers to be very arrogant and condescending. One police officer [REDACTED] told me to shut up when I went to him with concerns about security.

The day we were allowed back into our home for 5 minutes with a police officer to attempt to save our family photos we traveled through the police road block at Placid Hills. We were in a police paddy wagon. On arrival at our home a white 4WD pulled up behind us and a journo hopped out wanting to take photos of us and our reaction to seeing our home for the first time. When asked by the police officer how he got in to Grantham he said he had just followed in behind us and indicated to the police officer at the road block that he was with us.

The events that occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Jan. were unprecedented but I would have to say it didn't happen quickly. The authorities had many hours to warn us. As a parent I feel that I have a duty of care to protect my children and that was not afforded to me that day, along with everyone in Grantham. We deserve at the very least the truth. I have always believed (maybe naively) that the authorities would always be there to protect us. I can only hope that this never occurs again as it has all been too big a price to pay for some ones incompetence.