

I, Anthony James Guse of [REDACTED] Toowoomba, Fire fighter with Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, I state under oath that:

1. I have previously been the South Western Region Technical Rescue Coordinator. During my period as coordinator I served in that role for over ten years or for ten years and made numerous requests following my swift water training to purchase inflatable work platforms. IWP's as well call them for the purposes of matching our training and equipment up together.
2. Initially we had purchased for this region only four PFD's or personal flotation devices and that along with a couple of ropes and some throw bags was the entire rescue equipment for the South Western Region with regard to swift water. At the end of Financial year 2006/2007 and again at the end of Financial year 2007/2008, when we were, I had been told by the MSD Laurie Bill that there was some state money available for purchasing of equipment.
3. We forwarded a request for a complete or a full swift water kit. Our request was leaning towards an inflatable work platform and sufficient level 2 personal flotation devices for all of our level 2 staff. As I said at that stage in proceedings we only had 4 for the entire region which was entirely deficient.
4. Both of these requests at the end of the financial years that I stated previously were basically there, the request went in to provide a minimum level of equipment to match that equipment as I said with our training. Our training is very clear that one of the final things you should ever do is enter the water basically in PDF only. Ideally where you cannot reach the casualty with either a throw bag, the options are then to enter with a work platform and perform the rescue in that manner. As I said those were knocked back.
5. The reason given basically was that they were unable to find the funding to gain that equipment and we eventually did get only 10 PFD's which were level 2 PFD's and we put those 10 level 2 PFD's onto the operational appliances based at both Kitchener Street and Anzac Avenue. We placed 4 on the Anzac Avenue appliance which was 312Alpha. We

placed 4 onto 311Alpha, which is the pump here at Kitchener Street and the remaining PFD's were placed on the rescue appliance being 311Lima.

6. At this point in time there were no personal issue personal flotation devices. As we moved into 2008/2009 we were able to secure some level 1 PFD's to complement the level 1 training package and we were then able to reallocate those level 2 PFD's that previously were on appliances and to match them up with their level 2's so they actually had a personal kit, which is the current state standard and was at the time.
7. We've really struggled to get a swift water kit up to I guess previous to 2009. Bearing in mind that we were in a very dry period through that time however even through those periods we had periods where we did rescues and provided standby's out at the Charleville floods in both 2008 and 2009 and we actually had to borrow gear from both south east region and from state in order just to have a basic equipment kit to provide some sort of standby means out there.
8. We were very fortunate that the events through January 2010, additional kits became available simply because purchases had been made to actually train some auxiliary staff and whilst that training hadn't gone ahead yet we were able to secure many of those level 1 PFD's for our own staff use through the period basically from approximately December 16th 2010, which was really when the rain started to impact upon our region here and especially in the local area all the way through until that mid January period.
9. We have had some axillaries trained in basic level 1 swift water down at Warwick. This had been pushed through as the permanent staff had received their initial training but the permanent staff down there are only a day station and the Area Director down there was very keen that his community should have that service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So we gained special permission and you require special permission to undertake any rescue training or technical rescue disciplines with auxiliary fire fighters. We obtained the necessary permissions from the Commissioner and then went ahead and trained the axillaries in Warwick with level 1 vertical rescue, level 1 swift water. And following that training they were then equipped with the basic level 1 equipment to protect the community. That sums up my role and requests over the previous years.

10. With regard to staff training numbers, south west region originally had a total staff of 12 Technical Rescue staff. This was increased from my understanding around 2007, we got that increased to 15. Unfortunately if we had any staff member holding only one discipline he was included in that 15. To this point in time we have approximately 10 swift water staff and whilst we have a number of staff to undergo some further training in swift water, 10 staff was manifestly inadequate through the wet period.

11. We frequently saw staff recalled without their minimum breaks and working extended hours as level 2 staff simply to do the right thing for the community. And whilst any of them would do that in a blink, the problem is that we really, not only were, we were able to deal with the jobs we had but some jobs were actually delayed because we simply didn't have the staff to immediately allocate them to other areas.


12. So during that period from December through to January we had numerous times where there were multiple vehicles with reports of people in water and some rescues were carried out by us, some rescues were carried out by members of the community and there were delays responding to these incidents simply because of the location of the water, the location of the jobs. A lot of them were actually in rural areas so they were outside so we had quite a lot of travel time and often as not our travel time was from east to west, from north to south, quite a few of them were down into the Lockyer Valley area.

13. And I guess even the night prior to the 10th we were on duty on the 9th and during that period we responded down to Withcott for a swift water rescue then we did further rescues or responded to rescues on the Warrego Highway towards Dalby in the Bowenville Area, and then later on in the night we responded into Grantham for what was initially a vehicle rescue in water and turned out that we then carried out further rescues in Grantham township itself due to the flood level. Including two rural fire fighters within a rural fire truck that night.



I swear/solemnly and sincerely affirm that the facts and circumstances stated in this statement are from my knowledge except those which are from information only.

Sworn/Affirmed-by **Anthony James Guse** on *2nd JUNE 2011* at *TOOWOOMBA* in the presence of: *Paula Newman*

Signed: 
Anthony James Guse
Witness


PAULA NEWMAN
Commissioner for Declarations
