

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Amanda (Mandy) Jane WHITE
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	C/- 182 Mary street, Gympie
<i>Occupation</i>	Office Manager
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant Paul Browne
<i>Date taken</i>	28/09/2011

I, Amanda (Mandy) Jane WHITE state:

1. I am a ■ year old married lady and currently reside in the Gympie area with my husband Todd and family. I have lived in the Gympie area all of my life.
2. Up until Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011 Todd and I owned and ran the "Big Bargain" furniture store in Gympie. This store is situated at 182 Mary street, and has rear street access from Reef street. The building is timber construction, two storey with lower level access from Reef street and upstairs street level access from Mary street. There is an internal staircase between levels and I believe the building was built around 1929 as a furniture store.
3. The building has been in Todd's family for a long time and in the time that we have owned it Gympie has experienced several flood events where we needed to evacuate, recover and return. As a result of those floods and other maintenance carried out on the building, over the years we have slowly improved the structure and internal fittings so that the building is able to better cope and respond to floodwater.
4. Some of those improvements include using modern fibro and the use of treated pine on the walls as opposed to gyprock. On one wall we also used a type of compressed bracing ply which is made of timber particles and does not absorb water.

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5. We use acrylic water based paint, so after a flood we simply hose down the walls and give them a scrub while the water is still going down and before the mud has had a chance to dry. Following the 2011 flood we simply used hoses, brooms and 'Morning Fresh' to clean the walls. If you don't start hosing out straight away the mud sets on the walls and it takes a lot of work to get them clean again.
6. Over the years we have also made modifications to the electrical. In 1989 we replaced the lights and fans, making them plug in connections so that when a flood is coming we can simply unplug and remove all the lights and fans from the building. This avoids them from being destroyed by water and needing to be replaced after a flood.
7. We also raised the metre box so that it is above the height of most floods and have put as many power points as possible high off the ground. Because of the age of the building there are a lot of circuit boxes (particularly downstairs) which do get wet, but after a flood we simply remove the covers and spray the wet electrical items with a dewatering fluid and let them dry out. We get an electrician to come through and once we get the all clear and everything has dried out we simply begin to plug things back in and start using them again.
8. On the upstairs floor we have experimented with a few different options and currently have vinyl tiles on the showroom floor. These do not absorb the water and we are able to just hose out after a flood. The only problem has been a few of the tiles lifting because of the age of the building and the un-level floor underneath. Downstairs is concrete and again we simply hose out after an event.
9. With the exception of the stairs there is no carpet in the building. On the stairs we used a rubber backed carpet called "Walkatex" which can get wet. This is glued down, is non water absorbent and can be hosed off after a flood.

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10. For shelving we use form-board which has vinyl cover and can again be hosed off.
11. As part of the process we have a flood evacuation plan in place and in preparation for a flood we begin to move stock out and take it to storage on higher ground. Downstairs begins to flood at a height of 15 metres, but because of the two different levels we usually have a fair amount of time and can start to evacuate downstairs and keep monitoring the height before having to make a decision on evacuating upstairs. This was what we did in the January 2011 flood, however because of the expected height it was necessary to evacuate the entire building. On that occasion water did come up to and flood the upstairs level (Mary street).
12. With the exception of the building itself almost everything inside is removable, including the service counter, fixtures and all of the office equipment. I take responsibility for the office evacuation and removed all of the computers, hard drives, fax machines etc. I placed all of that and the cords into my car and took it to a place of storage. I was the only one involved so that when time came to put everything back together I knew what to do and how to plug it all back together.
13. Sometime ago Telstra also installed a removable box which houses all of the Telstra lines (phone, Internet etc). When the flood is coming we simply unplug that box and remove it from the building. Then after the water has gone down and we get the all clear from the electrician we just plug it back in.
14. With all of these improvements we have a building which is almost completely designed and prepared to go under water and cause the least amount of damage. This enables us to evacuate to higher ground and return to trading as quickly as possible after a flood and with the least amount of damage. Following the January flood we had a about a 5 to 6 day turnaround before we were again trading.

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15. Perhaps the Commission of Inquiry could consider some of the features we have introduced, when making future recommendations about building and operating a business in a flood prone area.




Amanda (Mandy) Jane WHITE.

28<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

**Justices Act 1886**

I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 4 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

..........Signature

Signed at .....Gympie.....this.....28.....day of.....September.....2011....

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