

6. Apr. 2011 16:34

No. 0119 P. 1

Statement of Witness

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Ronald Leslie HORTON
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	
<i>Occupation</i>	Farmer
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Senior Sergeant Mark Reid
<i>Date taken</i>	31 March 2011

Ronald Leslie HORTON states:

- I am a married man, [redacted] years of age and currently live at [redacted].
[redacted] I have lived in Tara since 15 September 1997, where we farm wheat and sheep on 3115 acres of land.
- I have been involved in more than 10 floods since taking over the property in 1997. We border the Undulla Creek which is less than 100 metres from our house. In 1998 we built a levy bank around our house and shed yards. The levy bank is 8 foot high, 12 metres thick and about 750 metres long which circles our residence, shearing shed, sheep yards, workshop and machinery shed. The levy has been built to keep out the flood waters from Undulla Creek.
- On Monday 27 December 2010 we had received flooding in Undulla Creek. The water rose about 2 inches every 10 minutes. After reaching its full capacity outside of the levee bank, the flood water overflowed and filled up inside the levee bank within 20 minutes. We had had constant rain over the December period with 81 mm on 26 December 2010 and 49 mm on 27 December 2010.
- The water continued to rise and exceeded the height of the levy wall at 1.40pm on 27 December 2010. This resulted in being inundated with 1200mm to 1800mm of water through the entire yards, flooding the house, sheds and immersing all of the machinery.

Witness Signature. [redacted]
Page Number 1 of 4

Signature of officer

400 George Street Brisbane
GPO Box 1738 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone 1300 309 634
Facsimile +61 7 3405 9750
www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

6. Apr. 2011 16:35

No. 0119 P. 2

- 5. Our property is about 15km downstream from the weir at Tara. Generally the water would take between 6-12 hours to travel from Tara to our home.

Warning

- 6. At no time did we receive any warning regarding the creek being bigger than normal. Any warning at all would have allowed us to shift machinery, seed and stock to higher ground prior to the water exceeding our levy wall. As a result of a lack of warning the inundation of our property resulted in the loss of valuable stock and machinery which will effect the operations of our property for years to come.

Recommendations

- 7. I would like to see automatic and manual gauges installed on the creeks to notify people down stream of increases in creek heights that may flood properties. This could be done by using SMS text messages directly to concerned persons. On our property communications were lost around 8.00am on 27/12/2010. We had been monitoring the ABC radio until our power was turned off voluntarily at 2.00pm.
- 8. We have no mobile telephone coverage at home unless an aerial is installed. We do have UHF radio as contact until the power is turned off.

Response

- 9. We rang the SES on the day but they were unable to assist. They stated that they could collect us if required, but we would have to get ourselves to higher ground. At that stage the house and yards were flooded making it impossible to get out. At the peak of the flood our home had approximately 10 inches of water through it, so we were required to sleep in the wet house with our animals till the water receded.

Recovery

- 10. We were offered assistance with cleanup, but decided to cleanup the property ourselves so that we could try and salvage as much of the equipment as possible. We did not require any food or water as we had sufficient stores at home prior to the flood. The only problems we did have were getting fuel that was being rationed at

Witness Signature, [Redacted]

Signature of officer

6. Apr. 2011 16:35

No. 0119 P. 3

10 litres per person. This made it hard to keep the generators running and we were using quite a lot of fuel driving into town.

11. We are insured with Suncorp/Vero. The payment of insurance is still unclear at this stage. We have been told by the broker that the house and contents are covered, but we have not been paid out at this stage. The sheds/machinery are not covered. The vehicles were covered only if full comprehensive insurance was obtained on each vehicle.

12. We have been covered for 13 years with Suncorp. In December 2010 we went to a broker as Suncorp has ceased to insure rural properties and changed to CGU insurance who are not paying for general flood damage. They stated that they will only pay people for storm flooding.

R L HORTON

Witness Signature

Signature of officer