

Stephen Muir

From: sheldon [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 3 May 2011 10:55 PM
To: Info Flood Commission
Subject: grantham floods
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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hi

i read with interest the statment of the communication officer of the daybro rural fire brigade, for this has outlined the major problems that has festied within the voleenter ranks of RFB, in concern with QFRS. This has lead to many vols, to leave the service, just like of late, stuart damrow who has already been cross examined by the commission in toowoomba. With his local knowledge, he asked for the township of grantham to be evacuated, to which he recieved the answer "No". this evactuation would not of saved everyone on that fateful day , but it would of lessen the numbers. He had Local knowledge which was not appriceated. this attitude has been built into to many organisation, people just do not appriecate the knowledge held with the people at the coal face.

Also, it is interesting that the QFRS took over all paging links,due to these direct issues about communications and pagering and 000 telstra and emergency service call taking, was one of the recommendation to be improved out of the black saturday bushfires commission. i would believe this has not been fixed within the state of queensland. Also, i hate to say that some urban fire areas refrain from using sms messaging to alert there fire fighters, due to the cost involved. However this view point is not a view over the 7 regions within QFRS. So how much money do we put on saving someones life?

once again, i think some levels of government have been blarsay regarding findings from several royal commissions from other states, "it will never happen up here "about the real risks and the real dangers to life that we could face in Queensland. An example of this, was the little use of the special emergency warning system, what was tested at esk in 2009 with little succsess and then i think it was march 2010, when it final got a tick of approval to use for the state. This could of been used in toowoomba, stop people moving around the city when flooding started to happen and then as a warning to boil the water in toowoomba.

more to come

thanks

sheldon

Stephen Muir

From: sheldon [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 2 May 2011 10:36 PM
To: Info Flood Commission

Subject: QFRS - communications and forward control part 2

back in 2007, the grantham rural fire brigade station was set up as a ICC, incident control point, due to the gatton fire station had very little room to accomandation all the needs of an icc, and also support the AD's office and a working auxiliary fire station. at an exerisize that was conducted in early october, 2007, grantham was the the ICC, with forward controls set up at esk and foresthill fire station. from this time on, problems that were found and on going maintenance of the systems involve was to be taken on board by QFRS, and the cost not born by the volunteer rural brigade. This did not happen. Over the years, i have rung certains areas of QFRS, who i believe were ment to look after this equipment, promises made but no action happened. there has been many times since 2007, i tried to stand up the icc, as a forward control point for large incidents occuring in the old gatton shire area, however i was unsuccessful, due to various problems incounted will QFRS equipment/ the old department of emergency services equipment. problems are DES computer locked with a password that no one new - even after following information regarding passwords that was afixed by the computer on the wall, internet connection was only dial up on an external modem, which is against DES policy of minimum 512K speed ADSL on a corporate connection. the internet dial up connection did not work or connect. phone lines into the station that where installed for the ICC, did not work so out of 7 phone lines in, 3 were lucky to work. I know that a code had to be used on these phone to work, however the fax line which didn't have a code, wouldn't even work. there were requests to put in ups system, this has never been forthcoming. airconditioning has been requested , but never recieved. all these item were to be provided to the brigade due to the amount of higher ranking people using the grantham station as a ICC. the printer provided by DES, did not working insync with the dcs computer and all inks had to come from the voleenteers budget, through the funds the volunteers rasied through there fund raising activities, for the use by QFRS paid officers, who would get these products through there usually work activities. why i believe these are matters to be considered, is due to if these icc was up to scratch, then this could of been a commucation point for the locals that survired, come to talked with there loved ones while they were cordon off due to the on going police investigation. Even through it was not specifical built for this purpose at least it was a place the locals could meet and use the facilities until proper support arrived. another problem was, grantham rural fire brigade was never activated, even though some of our members were involve from when the wave of water hit, they could of had the icc at grantham operating. there may of been concerns with flooding whoever i am unsure if anyone looked at the road on the northern side of the railway line that goes from the school to phillips road and onto the gatton bypass. however due to it was flooding, Grantham brigade was told from higher up not to respond to any flood related calls and direct them to the SES. so this resourse was not utilise and is suffering from neglete, and no fault of the dedicated voleenteers involved. Another concern is, if any thing happens within the township of grantham, it is only by chance that the Grantham rural fire brigade will be notified, due to brigade response areas are based on fire levy areas, and due to grantham township area is under the urban fire levy for helidon, even if the grantham station caught alight, the grantham brigade would not be notified as a response to that occuring fire, go figure !!

more to come

thanks

Stephen Muir

From: sheldon [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 2 May 2011 9:33 PM
To: Info Flood Commission
Subject: QFRS - communications and forward control part 1
to whom it may concern

QFRS works on a closed radio network, which means any radio communications must go through the relevant regions communications centre. so as soon as a job or incident happens and any rural or urban has been assigned to this task they must inform the communication area of their response. all responding appliances must then notify the communication centre when they are on their assigned job. from then an incident controller/ incident command vehicle is assigned, and all further communications should then come from this command vehicle, until these vehicles have been released from their current job. after this then these fire vehicles will then communicate back with the regional communication centre.

Due to the grantham area is covered by a repeater at the peachy forest area by crows nest via toowoomba, this message goes through repeaters at marburg, i think mt brisbane, then another repeater before it gets to the communications centre at southport. the problem with this is, as with what happened with danny mcguire in the grantham rural fire truck on that monday 10 january, 2011, if you simultaneously transmit a message to the comms operations back to southport, the person communicating closer to southport will have their message heard, and a person further away, WILL NOT, have their message heard, and you would not be aware that the communication centre had heard your message. i would believe this radio network situation needs to be investigated to further enhance the ability to isolate towers/ have multiple receiving channels and multiple outgoing channels. you may have in some comms centres 4 operators rostered on the day, however only one operator at a time can talk on the radio, to send and receive.

this problem is a major concern, due to if we have numerous different occurring events, occurring in different locations on a single day, and no incident control centre is set up (due to a known event, may occur, high fire danger), all the response information must be recorded at the comms centre and then they from there need to assign the correct vehicles to the task, and then all communication for all the various jobs, from the crews out in the field, need to be received and recorded on the one radio channel, so some urgent messages like danny's, "gets lost in the system". also one time in 2009, i would believe the repeater we use, to communicate back to comms, may have been hit by lightning and took 2 weeks to get fixed and replaced.

If they can zone the repeaters at times of an extreme event, this will help greatly, and it should be something that needs to be in place before this on coming fire season, or lives will be lost, the public and fire fighters.

to set up a productive incident control centre, it takes a good 4 hours to have all the necessary gear set up, and then be in a position to relieve the comms operator from the radio traffic from the fire fighter on the job.