

Name of Witness	GUTHRIE, Adrian Stuart
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]
Address and contact details	[REDACTED]
Occupation	Retired
Officer taking statement	REID, Mark John Detective Senior Sergeant 6091
Date taken	3 March 2011

Adrian Stuart GUTHRIE states:

1. I am a married man, [REDACTED] years of age and I currently reside at a farm at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
2. I have been part of the Rural Fire Service (RFS) for the past 8 years, and I think I began as part of the organisation in 2003. I have held the position of Secretary, Fire Officer and Training Officer for the Brigade. As part of my role I manage the VCE – which is a volunteer community education program for home/school fire safety. It looks at fire awareness and distributes brochures to assist with education.
3. I have played a role in disaster management in the community as part of volunteer rescue. Our area does not have any State Emergency Service, leaving us to perform roles that sometimes we are not necessarily trained for. We receive a pager message which informs us of an emergency. Most of our RFS members will do anything they are asked to do to assist the community.
4. Our brigade meets on the 1st Monday of each month. Our training is conducted regionally by the Ipswich District Rural Fire Brigade. This area has permanent training officers, whom we see quite often. They meet all of our training needs.
5. I was involved in a flood incident which occurred on 6 January 2011. On this occasion a female needed medical assistance. An SES boat had been used to

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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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collect her and had rolled over in the flood waters. As a result of this incident we assisted in the recovery of the boat.

6. I have been the involved in an evacuation of our area. In 2002 fires came through the Lockyer Valley Region. These fires were what originally influenced me into joining the RFS. On that occasion we were evacuated to Withcott CWA Service Station. On that day I was not aware of any evacuation plan or meeting point. As the fire came closer the police from Gatton came to our home and advised us that we should evacuate to a safe place. We left straight away and I think it was the right call at the time. It was a good early warning.

7. I have not been advised by my local council or a government agency on any evacuation plan in case of a natural disaster. I think there is a need for control systems for this reason.

8. On 10 January 2011 I was involved in the major flood of Murphy's Creek valley. I had recently had the large pump truck for our RFS repaired which was at my home. I decided on that day to shift the truck back to RFS shed at Murphy's Creek which is down near the creek next to the School. I received a telephone call later that day stating that the creek was flooding the RFS shed. I drove down there and saw that the equipment and vehicles had been washed away. I did not have any flooding at my home address. As I mentioned earlier there is not SES or police in our area and I started to receive a large number of calls at my home for help. This applies pressure. We had no communications to pass messages to unit workers.

Warnings

9. Due to the nature of the flooding and its speed we did not have any type of warning to prepare. I think that the area has become a bit complacent regarding

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warnings and attitudes need to be changed for the future. In the event of future incidents I am not sure what could be done to improve warnings. I did not see anything on the Bureau of Meteorology website about heavy rain. Perhaps the use of VHF/UHF radio could be used in future, as long as repeaters were installed in the area. An average person does not require a licence for a hand held VHF radio.

- 10. There had been negligible preparation for flood in our community area. The Environmental Protection Agency would not let the creek areas be cleared, and there is also a lack of consultation within the community.

Flood Preparations

- 11. On my personal preparation I am aware that power is not reliable, so I have had a 12 volt back up system installed at home and a generator to supply power. I am aware that fridges and computers do not run well on generator power which can create problems.
- 12. To my knowledge we have not been assisted by the Federal, State or local government in flood preparation.
- 13. I cannot comment on whether Emergency Services provided assistance in the planning stage to our community. A lot of our Brigades training can be used for all events, but generally relates to fire in our area. At the time of the flood incident I contacted the District RFS Office straight away. The QFS provided a great response. Craig SMITH (Ipswich) replaced our vehicles that were destroyed in a timely fashion. I also contacted the Police at that same point. Their response was great. I would say though that the community was not adequately prepared for the flood event on 10 January 2011.

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[Redacted Signature]

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Response

14. I would describe the Emergency Services response to the area as good. The biggest problem ES faced in our area was knowing what incidents to which they should respond. The area had no communications, which made operational response very hard.
15. The response by the Federal, State and local Government regarding flood assistance was varied. The local government supplied Cameron McDonald who came down to Murphy's Creek early. He did a good job. The Federal/State Governments did not send anyone for 2-3 days after the event.
16. I think the responses of Government bodies was good, considering the massive area that had been affected. All of these areas required assistance, with Grantham needing more help than our area.
17. I think that the level of resources made available to the Murphy's Creek area in the first 24-48 hours was quite good. The amount of food and clothing that was donated was great. Telstra had a tower up in 5-6 days, with a temporary tower up more quickly. The use of Army Helicopters was good, but once again without proper communication, we had no direct contact with the pilot to direct them into the areas of operation. It made our tasking impossible.
18. Much of the community response was co-ordinated by Peter Souter a local resident, who managed the initial confusion and made everything quite organised. As far as resource allocation for the response in the area, I don't know whether there was enough or not. The Queensland Police managed their information internally, and we seemed to have enough rescue equipment for our use. Once again the problem of communication became a problem because we did not know where the response was required. SEQEB did respond to the area within 2 days. I think the community response for our area was more than adequate.

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19. With regard to maintaining communications and power, no measures could have prevented the incident. Power poles were knocked down and damage to the areas roads stopped access which meant no power or communications. During the flood itself we had very little communication. Mobile telephones do not work in our area normally, but my telephone at home still continued to work.
20. I was able to contact Emergency Services once the flood commenced. I initially rang the QFS. Within 6 hours we had no communications. I managed to use a VHF radio ^{and also one} that I had installed in my boat at home. It allowed me to have access to Gatton SES, Queensland Rail and SEQEB.
21. As a result of that contact Emergency Services responded within 48 hours. The vehicles that had been lost in the flood were replaced. Police were at Murphy's Creek within 24 hours assisting residents. These responses were dependant on the road closures into our area. The Road to Toowoomba was closed and the road to Gatton was also closed.
22. I think that there was insufficient notifications and information regarding road closures, evacuation points, water storage and food supplies and I think this needs to be addressed in the future local disaster management plan.

Recovery

23. The recovery process within the area for repairing services such as water, power and the roads has been good. The local government has definitely responded to the needs of the area, but the Federal/State governments have not provided us with information and haven't updated the community on their progress.
24. I did not receive regular updates after the flood on the recovery processes such as the cleanup. I think that updates should be provided every couple of weeks from

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the local government on the progress of the recovery. I think the local governments should also maintain a key list in each area of local expertise. This would include Doctors, medical staff, persons that have access to heavy equipment, and essential emergency services as part of the Disaster management plan.

25. There are some other matters that I would like to include in this statement. I am unhappy with the use of Murphy's Creek Road as the Diversion Route for Toowoomba. The constant heavy vehicle traffic creates a danger for local residents.

26. Power was also something that needs to be looked at for future events. Without power, many residents did not have access to pumping tank water at their homes. There was a shortage of bottled water for the area. There was no access to money (ATM) and with the power off Withcott could not sell petrol. Without petrol in the area we relied on tankers bringing petrol from Amberley to run trucks and machinery. Combined with limited road access this can leave a community feeling isolated.

A S GUTHERIE

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 8.4.2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 6 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 Caloundra this 8 day of April 2011

Witness Signature: [Redacted] Signature of officer: [Redacted]

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