

<i>Name of Witness</i>	WILKIN James Edward
<i>Date of Birth</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Address and contact details</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Occupation</i>	Fork Lift Driver (Farmgate Packing)
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Mark Reid Detective Senior Sergeant
<i>Date taken</i>	17 March 2011

*Addendum to statement dated 20/1/2011***James Edward WILKIN states:**

1. I would like to provide further information to the original statement that I provided to police on 20 January 2011 about the floods on 10 January 2011 at Grantham.

Warning

2. Prior to the flood on 10 January 2011, I was not aware of any official warning letting Grantham residents know about the floods further up the creek. I did receive some warning when I accidentally overheard a conversation at the local Grantham Shop. I heard the female shop keeper receive a telephone call where water had washed cars off the Helidon Bridge. It didn't seem likely at first but it proved to be accurate.
3. This provided us with about 5 minutes warning. This allowed me to warn all of the neighbours near my home to go towards the railway lines for safety. I then helped my brother to hook up his boat to his car so that we could use it later should we need to help anyone.
4. For the future of the area I would like to see a flood warning system introduced. If the water reached a certain point short of breaking the banks, a siren would sound to warn people to go to higher ground. This would be used in the same way smoke detectors are used in homes.

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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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Preparation

5. People who have lived in Grantham all their lives know about the local floods the area have had. The biggest flood that I can remember was 1996. People started to build low set brick homes during the drought period of the next 10 years.
6. No government agency has been involved in any planning for flood in area to the best of my knowledge. I can say that I did see the SES in the area about 2 days prior to the flood on 10 January 2011. I think that the community was not prepared or the flood at all.

Response

7. I thought that the Emergency Services responded well to the flood event in our area. I do think that we need more helicopters to respond to incidents, which means there should be 2 or 3.
8. The Government response to the flood was slow. I think that they could have got people out quicker to help people get back on their feet. Asylum seekers get accommodation and food, but we have to pay for everything personally. I did receive a \$2000.00 grant, which took a couple of weeks to get. The resources that were available in the first four days were only supplied by the residents. The Government started to get involved on about day three.
9. The only measures that were put in to protect life and property in our area were road blocks to keep people not related to the town out. These measures stopped us getting into town, and stopped the use of local resources by the Emergency Services. I think that this was the right thing to do and that locals should stay out of the town till the police had finished their part of the investigation.
10. Our initial response on the 10/1/2011 was co-ordinated by local residents. Rod MINNS, the husband of the local School Principal did all of the co-ordination using his mobile telephone with outside police.

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- 11. I think that for future events the government should have more helicopters for rescues. There were not enough helicopters on the first afternoon of the rescue, and they could not fly after it got dark. The equipment on the helicopters should also include equipment that would allow the helicopters to continue to fly at night.
- 12. I think that the community response to the event was good. Our community made sure that everybody was safe, and having the school was helpful in giving us somewhere to go after the flood had gone.
- 13. Communication was not really an issue during the event. The Mobile telephone towers were not taken out, as the mobile telephone coverage came back on a few hours later. Landlines were taken out with the poles being destroyed and I don't think any planning could have stopped this from happening. We did have mobile telephone coverage during the flood. I was running along the railway tracks with my brothers wife Shandi, and she was talking to triple 000 on the telephone requesting helicopters for the rescue of some of the towns people.
- 14. I do not think that the information provided to the community on road closures, evacuation points and water/food storage was sufficient.

Recovery

- 15. The recovery process in our area was quite good considering the amount of damage that was done. We seemed to have enough resources to cope. Power was put back on 4 days after the flood as a priority. Everything else came back on after that. The army were great during the stage in the cleanup of the area. The emergency services in our area did their jobs. The government probably did not do enough. I think that they could have looked after the residents a bit better in regard to accommodation assistance, more funds to help people get back on their feet again. The government personnel did come and some things at the recovery centre, such as counselling which was good.

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16. We did receive regular updates from emergency services when they were able to do. They were doing the best that they could. Some briefings were every 5-6 hours each day, but these only started after about day 4. The local community council put out weekly newsletters on what was happening, and the local government was putting information into the Gatton Star newspaper. The local community also hosted weekly meetings at the Grantham Recovery Centre.

Insurance

17. I was not insured for flood. My mother and I lost all of our possessions in the flood including the house.

Other Issues


18. Years ago the creeks were regularly burned out to remove overgrowth and debris. I think that the debris and logs in the creek beds contributed to the damming and the overflow of the creeks.


J E WILKIN


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 17 March 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  this 3 day of April 2011

Witness Signature 

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