

|                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Name of Witness</i>             | Andrew James SOLOMON              |
| <i>Date of Birth</i>               | [REDACTED]                        |
| <i>Address and contact details</i> | [REDACTED]                        |
| <i>Occupation</i>                  | Architect                         |
| <i>Officer taking statement</i>    | Detective Sergeant Glen CATCHPOLE |
| <i>Date taken</i>                  | 29/04/2011                        |

I, Andrew James SOLOMON states;

1. I am a married man, [REDACTED] years of age and reside at [REDACTED] Bellbowrie.  
I have lived at this address since for approximately 2 years.
2. I have not been instructed by our local council or any government agency on evacuation plans for our area in case of a natural disaster. I do not know who my local disaster co-ordinator is.
3. I did receive a warning prior to the flood event alerting me of an impending severe weather event. I received this warning via a text message. I consider that the warning was timely. I think I received this warning at about 2pm on Tuesday 11/01/11. I did understand this warning. I consider that the information provided in the warning was vague and not very useful. In my opinion I consider that in the event of a future incident the best method of warning people is still to SMS but with more details. I also consider that the forecasts provided by the Weather Bureau were adequate.

Witness Signature [REDACTED]  
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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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

4. In relation to preparation in our area for the flood, there was no official evacuation centre and appeared to be no existing evacuation plan.  
Preparations for the evacuation centre were carried out by myself and a group of Uniting Church congregation members on own expectation of what was about to transpire.
5. I was not assisted in the preparation for the flood by any Federal/State/Local Government Agencies.
6. In relation to assistance provided by Emergency Services at the preparation stage, SES workers arrived at the Moggill Uniting Church after set up had already commenced and proceeded to create their base of operations at the church. They provided excellent assistance given the circumstances. I don't consider that the community was adequately prepared for the flood event in January 2011. I would describe the Emergency Services response to our area as being outstanding. SES volunteers and Police were effectively cut off from their usual places of operations but continued to provide excellent service.
7. I would describe the response by the Brisbane City Council as excellent. With regard to the State Government, I'm not sure other than personal involvement and assistance provided by local member Dr. Bruce FLEGG. As for the Federal response I observed the response from Centrelink Community Recovery staff which seemed good. Centrelink and Community Recovery staff was posted at the Moggill Uniting Church for one and a half weeks following the flood event.



8. I am aware that measures were put in place to protect life and property in our area; Police and SES managed road closures and assisted with evacuation of flood affected properties. There were no reported injuries to my knowledge during the evacuation. However medical staff at the centre issued many tetanus injections and there were a range of minor procedures performed during clean-up operations, but I am not sure of any injuries resulting from the evacuation process
9. The response was co-ordinated by ad hoc police unit based at the Moggill Uniting Church evacuation centre; community response (evacuation centre and follow up distribution of supplies) was co-ordinated by me alongside members of the local Uniting Church (Graham BARNARD, Rev. Costa STATHAKIS and Mrs Catherine SOLOMON).
10. No resources were allocated to the response in our area to my knowledge; all the required resources such as generators, fuel and boats were supplied by members of the local community. I am not sure whether the SES had one of their own boats in the neighbour during the flood. There was one parked outside the church at one point but I cannot remember if this was before or after the roads re-opened
11. During the flood event, mobile communication remained operational mostly, electrical power remained cut to most parts of the suburb for three or more days. Water supply was not disrupted. Sewerage was also, to my knowledge not affected except in inundated areas. Mobile phone service was mostly unaffected. We were able to contact Emergency Services once the flood commenced. We had direct contact with Emergency services personnel based at the evacuation centre so all contact was face-to-face or by mobile phone.

12. I consider that there was not adequate information provided to the community in relation to road closures, evacuation points, water storage, food supplies and medical supplies. We did our best to use radio and local signboards to spread information but I am aware that many people in the area still were unaware of our existence.

13. In relation to the recovery process, electricity was restored to most affected parts of the suburb within four days. Moggill Road was opened as soon as it was deemed safe. I consider that the recovery process by the Federal/State/Local Government to be sufficient. Also the recovery process by the Emergency Services has been sufficient. I did receive regular updates regarding the status of the cleanup directly from workers based at our recovery centre. I think that to improve notifications for effected persons of the status of recovery efforts is to use more SMS alerts and the use of loudspeakers by mobile police patrols.

14. I would also like to say that Moggill/Bellbowrie has only two roads connecting it to other areas. Moggill Road is the only connecting road towards Brisbane and Mt. Crosby Road is the only other connecting road in the direction of Ipswich. Other connection is provided by the Moggill ferry. All access in and out of the area was cut during the flood and remained cut from Tuesday evening 11<sup>th</sup> January until sometime on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January. The area has no emergency services facilities other than a small Police Beat Office located in a house at 5 Westaway Crescent, Bellbowrie.

15. Attachments to my statement include the:

Witness Signature

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Signature of officer



1. Moggill Community Flood Relief Centre Committee Sign-off Meeting  
Minutes dated 21/1/11.

2. Timeline of flood related activity – 11/1/11 to 25/1/11.

3. Points for further consideration.

[REDACTED]  
A J SOLOMON

**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 29/4/11 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 5 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.

.....[REDACTED].....Signature

Signed at ...Bellbowrie.....this.....29th.day of.....April.....2011....

Witness Signature

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Signature of officer

**Moggill Community Flood Relief Centre**  
**Committee Sign-off Meeting – Friday 21/01/2011 3pm**  
**MINUTES**

**Opening prayer** (Costa)

**Attendance**

|                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| David Munro (Chair)           | Uniting Church     |
| Catherine Solomon (minutes)   | Uniting Church     |
| Rev. Costa Stathakis          | Uniting Church     |
| Andrew Solomon                | Uniting Church     |
| Graham Barnard                | Uniting Church     |
| June Rice                     | Uniting Church     |
| Lyndal Hutton                 | Uniting Church     |
| Selena Gomersall              | Uniting Church     |
| Marge Stathakis               | Uniting Church     |
| Marisa Wilkinson              | Uniting Church     |
| Superintendent Russell Miller | Qld Police Service |
| Sen Sgt Debbie Nicholson      | Qld Police Service |
| Steve Crabbe                  | Qld Police Service |
| Julie Crabbe                  | Qld Police Service |
| John Corbett                  | Qld Police Service |
| Leesa Richardson              | Qld Police Service |
| Phil McKean                   | SES                |
| Ray Crompton                  | Rotary             |
| Don Mansfield                 | Lions              |
| Jen Stowell                   | CWA                |
| Tina Gorman                   | Volunteer          |
| Annabelle Moore               | Volunteer          |
| Neville Marsh                 | Volunteer          |
| Stephanie Taylor              | Volunteer          |

**Objectives of the meeting** (Andrew)

1. To sign off from the responsibilities held. Any items being stood down to act independently.
2. Feedback, where to from here – debrief.

Andrew introduced and asked David Munro to chair the meeting.

**Tasks already handed over** (Catherine)

**Clothing & household goods** The Catholic Church has received clothes and is keeping a record of furniture wanting to be donated. Car loads were sent to Redbank School of Arts as the need was greater there. The Anglican Church is distributing the donated clothes.

**Childcare** Mother Duck (Sugarwood Rd) will be relocating to the Bellbowrie Community Church on Monday and the C&K are negotiating with Pullenvale State School. Vacation Care and Early Learning on Church Rd have taken on extra staff and children to help this past week.



## Task Area Status & Stand Down

### **Front desk & database (Stephanie Taylor and Neville)**

Wednesday morning early hours the centre got busy with evacuees needing accommodation. Mid morning, Stephanie set up the computers and database. As a result we have contact numbers for those who moved, however records only include those who came through this centre. On Saturday copies were handed over to the police. Costa will hold information because of privacy issues and other information will be destroyed.

*Statistics* - 90 properties were inundated; 191 individuals relocated; 194 accommodation offers; 450+ people volunteered (impossible to get everyone on database in the peak time); 50 houses were cleared by crews organised through our centre. Several houses were inundated that did not know we were here. The first need was to match those needing accommodation and those offering accommodation. Some volunteers were only available on the day they offered, which made the task hard.

Lions at this time requested two actions:

1. To contact all volunteers to say thank you personally
2. Permission required for the next 12 months to use volunteer database for the future. This was discussed at length. Graham Barnard commented that people are still coming in wanting to give directly to people affected rather than leave for someone/agencies to deal with. St Vincent De Paul needs to be looked at further to transfer support. Privacy issues – if it's been added in the database for a specific issue then we can only use their details for that matter. Clarification required here. There were no disclosure agreements signed or clarification of any privacy policy made to people, but the information taken was intended just for flood support.

### Police (Steve Crabbe)

Until 7pm Wednesday, Leesa (local police officer) was involved with evacuation and Scott Meehan had commenced the command centre. Leesa's response and those who manned this centre (stranded with limited vehicles) were effective. Community was excellent in providing assistance. Incident rooms ran very well.

(Owing to the large number of Police present at the meeting it was decided that Police feedback be tabled at this time)

**FUTURE** Communication needed to be done earlier – better processes between police and volunteers and also regular briefings with evacuees to stop rumours.

Julie Crabbe reported that 6:00am Wednesday the evacuation was well underway and the command centre shut down operations 9:00pm on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> January. Approximately 630 police hours, 4 police vehicles (plus private vehicles) were involved. This information with the datasheets from Stephanie will form the Accident Incident Plan. If this or a similar disaster happens again, we will have standard operating procedures, resources, an action plan and list of police in this area (which Leesa will also have). This will take a couple of weeks to collate.

Area to be covered – Kholo Bridge Anstead, Pinjarra Hills, Bellbowrie and Moggill, which is Leesa's area.

This document can be used in any natural disaster. Within 24 hours things were up and running. Superintendent Russell Miller was astounded with what developed and commended the group and noted that they should be proud. Stephanie responded that when a need arose, the organisation metamorphosed as required.

It was noted at this time that the SES has a framework created as a basis for future situations with Lions, Rotary, Council, Police etc. The disaster management act changed last year before the SES had finished compiling the document. It was about 90% complete.



Police based at Indooroopilly were talking with Leesa Tues/Wed and the Police didn't have the resources to get out here. Don't have the trucks like the Army do. Comment made "We were forgotten" and the Police clarified that we weren't forgotten, but issues lay in how best serve from a distance.

A map of the area of Brisbane displayed the enormity of the flooding.

Wednesday night was 12 hours old when the police got the map as they were trying to work out how to get through. Thursday morning the Army was sent to the RSL nursing home at Pinjarra Hills (where there was a deceased person) and then to Moggill. They were deployed at 7:30am and at 2:00pm they rang to say they had arrived. After a reconnaissance run to see if they could get through, a load of supplies arrived Thursday night 10:30pm (took 5.5 hours). We needed the Army as Moggill Rd was cut in 4 places.

It was noted that without training this committee functioned well.

Question - If there is another disaster, is this what could happen? Ray questioned the location - school or Uniting Church? There was miscommunication in the community as to where the centre was located. It was agreed that depending on the incident the location may need to change. Someone needs to clarify this and formalise where the evacuation centre will occur – large size, school? It was queried whether there were bureaucracy issues at play. It was good having all services located on the one site. A disaster plan was almost enacted anyway. Phil (SES) commented that we communicate this through the evacuation setup plan. The framework is there to base on for future. Community involvement was the next step.

Stephanie strongly stated that all personnel worked well together and hit the ground running. There were communication issues but we were very effective overall. Acknowledgement was made to all resources available. Andrew commented as a civilian that the police and SES were outstanding. Having everyone on site was psychologically important to everyone and enabled people to get quick answers. Police & SES worked well with the team and there was no blocking or stonewalling. All were open and approachable. Graham said that it was great to have so many police stranded. The job was made easier and the rapport was brilliant. Medical centre on site with different desks and different queries worked well. It was good to be able to liaise directly with the police, one example being as they were running out of fuel and community donated fuel kept them going.

#### SES (Phil McKean - District Disaster Coordinator)

SES worked well with police. The job got done without any fuss. All Brisbane SES have been stood down from cleanup duties now. Outside SES units (interstate or inland) are now doing this to give them a rest. The SES unit here is the largest in Brisbane covering Colleges Crossing, Kenmore to the Gap, however it does not own a lot of equipment. The SES rely on locals and have the smallest active membership of 17. 11 were here Tuesday morning and couple at Karana Downs. The area gets broken up due to roads getting blocked. The SES depot is located at the back of the pumping station at the Mt Crosby Waterboard. This is the first time Phil has known Kholo Bridge to be blocked from access. The SES boat was well used overall. First Responders were phenomenal and here all the time. One of the first responders became a first time Grandfather during the crisis.

**FUTURE** A list should be published to the community of what the SES needs. Suggested SES membership drive to boost numbers.

#### Supplies (Graham Barnard)

When supplies came in, Graham handed over role of operations manager to Andrew. These supplies came in from volunteers, army Unimog and Coles. Volunteers helped sort it out and got it out to those who really needed it. Now have a small stock of non-perishables. Some stock got delivered to Kenmore, Women's Shelter in Ipswich and Goodna. We have the personal number of the state manager of Coles should any further supplies be needed.

**ACTION** Formal recommendation to thank Coles. (to be actioned by?)



Andrew commented on communication issues. People as of yesterday still didn't know we existed. He questioned if a loud speaker by police cars could tell everyone rather than rely on Ray with loud speaker. Leesa stated that only one vehicle had this facility and their first priority is to keep the community safe. People thought food supplies were only for flood victims not those who lost power. We were focused on what we were doing here, but needed to get info out. Radio networks better. We need to consider our target audience and should have included Tweets and Facebook.

SES went out street by street to every affected house mentioning safety and speaking to residents generally. Many people own electric radios rather than battery operated. A number of people are self sufficient and there are many empty houses now without owners. Need neighbourhood watch in newer areas. Neville has said that 32 streets have been affected and he can drive around to check on those houses.

Summary - We tried but there will always be people who we will miss.

**FUTURE** Pods of people to base themselves at the affected areas/streets to pass on the information.

**FUTURE** Use range of technology – radio ABC, Facebook and Tweets. Media liaison to be appointed early on.

### Food (June Rice)

Big thank you to Marisa Wilkinson had a gas stove and cooked and organised cooking for breakfast, lunch and dinner during the week. We wouldn't have been able to do this without her. When food started to go off in people's homes we got inundated with food donations. Terry Dwyer stood at the BBQ for nearly 2 days boiling water and cooking. A lot of people came for information but didn't want to stay for food since they weren't affected. We had to throw out food because so much was given. We had one generator running the fridge and then used the Catholic fridge and freezer. It was good to have some areas with power to help. RSPCA dogs got well fed on steak that had to be discarded due to having thawed out. Jenny Stowell (CWA) organised food for workers and June (UC) organised food on site. Gave people an opportunity to talk and stop over a cuppa. Service Station went under and gave supplies that were going to be lost anyway and this was very helpful at the start. Comment made that there have been lots of fresh laid eggs during the crisis for some unknown reason.

**FUTURE** More generators required for this area

### Clean up (Ray Crompton & Don Mansfield)

There were 50 houses on the database. Many people didn't register their homes as they were OK (relying on family and friends) and pointed to a house in strife or elderly. Macintyre Centre had 100 volunteers one day and 90 the next (similarly with the nurseries). Ray triaged and worked with Stephanie to handle all the information. Ray contacted his neighbour who is a nurse who helped commence the medical team.

Summary – The clean up was 101% based on what we could do.

Lyndal asked about people sleeping at the church. We were able to house everyone. 25 people stayed the first night and 5 the next night.

### Emotional Care (Margaret Stathakis)

Thank you to Marge and team who also kept checking on us. Emotional Care Team included 14 volunteers - social workers, counsellors, psychologists. We were blessed with 2 specialised volunteers who linked with a particular need throughout the week. Centrelink and Department of Communities joined us (including Lifeline Counsellors) which freed our volunteers to work with the community. Long term care will be an issue. The Psychological Society has been contacted and 30 volunteers have offered to work long term with us. NOTE: the AMA stepped in to supply us with doctors.

Superintendent concluded saying thank you and explained that an extra 50 police have been tasked to the flood areas to offer more support to patrol the areas (for at least another fortnight). Senior Police left at this stage, leaving Leesa, Julie and Steven for the remaining portion of the meeting.



## **General Feedback** (incorporating points raised by Andrew Solomon & Graham Barnard)

Additional points from Graham Barnard not discussed in detail at the meeting but supplied via email have also been added.

### **1. Centre Operations –**

- a. Need to clearly establish responsibilities at the outset.
- b. Need to understand capabilities of community service bodies (numbers, equipment, tasks) as initially not used effectively.
- c. Need more than one phone/line to handle the volume of (principally outgoing) calls. Comment made that we all used our own phones during the crisis and have big bills. Julie rang Telstra and there is a flood assistance package but need to phone individually.
- d. Need staff to 'man' the phones constantly.
- e. Someone from the beginning 'doing' media – radio, TV, twitter, internet. Police have official press release and we can release as well. Suggestion - Leave police to deal with general information about the crisis, road closures, hazards etc, we release what we are doing at the centre e.g food supplies, services offered. Police commented - watch specifics and coordinate the approach.
- f. Someone to coordinate making signs and changing community boards.
- g. Need for early agreement between local Churches for improved co-operation and greater resources.
- h. Access to a formal Disaster Recovery Plan would have provided for a speedier and improved initial set-up.
- i. Key staff had regular briefings and updates but remaining volunteers would have benefited from regular updates. Need a PR person to go to the command centre and coordinator of the centre to check info can be publicised. Public address twice a day.
- j. Need to get Church recognized as official evac/relief centre if plan to do similar in future.

### **2. Front Desk/Information –**

- a. One information desk and someone intercepting people to direct them to the right location. Catherine walked the line on food distribution to explain what was available (and not available) and this worked well deflecting people who had come for food items that were not available.
- b. Front desk noticeboard needs to be larger.
- c. List of rumours and list of facts beside it that would have covered a lot of questions and information.
- a. Need a policy for accommodating families with pets. Need to make it very clear to evacuees that they are welcome with their pets (not necessarily outside in a cage).
- b. Need a 'meet and greet' officer to direct public to correct service area.[worked well initially but none for second week]
- c. Need continuity for compilation and oversight of database.
- d. Need for improved control of loaned items and process to return items at conclusion of the crisis.

### **3. Registers/Rosters –**

- a. SES has done 90% of plan, but the last 10% is probably drawing up registers and rosters. The audit would check this site and others.
- b. Identify resources in the community.
- c. We should document what items are required i.e. noticeboards, equipment and skills are included in the police database. Incident accident plan of the police can't be given to the community but the Police have it. Between the two documents we should have a comprehensive list of community information. We can put a call out if the list changes, it's not detrimental. Noted: If the church hadn't done this no one else would have done this.

### **4. Police –** Some points already noted during Police briefing.

- a. Could have benefitted from more frequent updates.

### **5. SES –**

- a. Though they provided excellent response, Centre needs to clearly understand the role and responsibilities of SES.
- b. Though very resourceful, sometimes SES responsiveness appeared hampered by lack of resources/equipment.



**6. Medical –**

- a. Secure storage of dangerous and controlled drugs proved difficult due lack of secure areas.
- b. Medical team worked really well despite no real facilities. Temporary surgery in the Tennis Shed even worked OK.

**7. Supplies –**

- a. Need a dedicated supplies manager from outset of operations.
- b. Need for a prioritized list of essential supplies and recommended quantities to request in any crisis. Needy. Annabelle and Tina have correlated into a database what could be required next time. This includes quantities, what to order, what to ask for and in priority. Tina has computer copy of this document.
- c. Need to register those seeking supplies, as experience showed many 'non-needy' sought supplies. Note: this was discussed before supplies arrived but the initial rush of people meant it was not practical. Perhaps should have been implemented after the first rush.
- d. Coordinated door knock of all affected areas (when practical) may identify those most needy.
- e. More batteries arrived and food arrived from much further afield - thank you. Supplies process/people– someone to handle requests, distributions to where, loans/items register, fuel register and placement of these labelled. We didn't record people who came into the supplies area distressed and weren't necessarily forward onto the information desk. Kenmore Baptist Church got into membership records early and gave them a street to visit, with the information to comply on their database with their needs.

**8. Kitchen –**

- a. Need for continuous supervisor to provide overall coordination of kitchen/meals and volunteers.
- b. Though regular meals ceased after the first week, there was ongoing need for some meals during second week of operations.
- c. Kitchen facilities at the church woefully inadequate so those involved did a brilliant job under the circumstances.

**9. Accommodation now -** People needing long term accommodation refer to disaster recovery centres - Indooroopilly Catholic church.

**10. Emotional Care –**

- a. Worked really well with plenty of qualified volunteers.
- b. Lack of private counseling spaces provided difficulties

**11. Lions and Rotary –**

- a. Didn't use them early on and could have used them better. By having a plan that would have helped.

**12. Summaries -** All other issues from each coordinator should put on paper/computer. Stephanie noted that we should not be too hard on ourselves, that what we have done on our own in such a short time is extraordinary. Police will be implemented better next time. Next time they will have different roles. Steve - First 6-8 hours will always be chaos. General comment - while the chaos happened it didn't feel out of control.

**13. Insurance -** David Munro spoke as Uniting Church Insurance Officer– we were given cover only for evacuation centre, as a one off basis. The next step is to look at it if we do this again.

**Debrief (Selena Gomersall)**

This is not just about signing off as it is also the emotional closure that we require. It's not just the things we didn't do or did do. We need to deal with gut churning emotion when stuff doesn't happen in the church down the track. If we feel 'flat' do not ignore these feelings. It's not about the content of what we're saying, it's what is fuelling us. This is a closing meeting. We will not be the same again. The community will not be the same. Don't underestimate how you might feel now and in a few weeks or months.

Selena prepared a "Flood Debriefing 2011" document and strongly encouraged us to work through this at some time.

**Closing remarks & prayer (Costa)**



## Andrew Solomon - Timeline of flood related activity

11 January 2011 – 25 January 2011

Tuesday, 11 January 2011

- 11am approximately – discussed with my wife, Catherine Solomon, the likeliness of us needing to open the Moggill Uniting Church building (herein after referred to as "the church") for possible evacuees as we were generally aware via BOM and BCC website information of impending flooding. Our assumptions of the likely extent of flooding were merely based on knowledge of the previous 1974 flood event effects in the area as advised by long term residents.
- Catherine contacted Rev Costa Stathakis to discuss the idea of setting up the church as an evacuation centre. Catherine then rang SES headquarters on their Brisbane office number (not 1300 number). Informed them that we were making the Moggill Uniting Church premises available as a flood evacuation centre. Was told the information would be passed on to the area team leader but we do not believe this actually happened.
- 2pm approximately. Catherine & I made our way to the church with minimal supplies. It was as we were leaving the house that I received an SMS alert advising of severe weather and possible flooding. Our house was in an elevated location so we did not make any personal preparations for flooding.
- 2-3pm – We met with Rev Costa Stathakis, his wife Marge, and several other members of the church congregation and started setting the main hall up for possible evacuees to sleep. Phone calls were made to locate mattresses and bedding and I proceeded to travel around several houses with Graham Davies gathering these. Many offers of accommodation for evacuees were made during the course of this exercise.
- 3-3:30pm – Local SES volunteer Matt Gorman and one or two other SES workers arrived at the church and advised they were scouting for a suitable location to set up a base of operations if needed. We advised that we were already in the process of setting up the church as an evacuation centre and they were welcome to use a room. We asked if they had received advice from SES HQ that we were available and they said they hadn't. They advised they were looking at some other options and would get back to us.
- 3:30pm – 5pm – I went to Bellbowrie Coles to purchase supplies for basic tea & coffee for evacuees (biscuits, chips etc). Supplies of milk and many other food items were gone. I gathered more supplies from home then returned to the church. Catherine and Lyndal Hutton (another church member) proceeded to doorknock houses in the area around Bellbowrie Sports Club to inform them of the evacuation centre at the church as this was considered to be at high risk of flooding. We were not aware of any official evacuation advice having been broadcast.
- 5pm approximately – Matt Gorman from the SES advised they would be setting up at the church and they were evacuating residents from Moggill Pocket area. He also advised us that we should prepare for up to 20 evacuees. We received word that Moggill and Mt Crosby Roads were now cut and we would also need to accommodate people who couldn't get back to Mt Crosby or Karana Downs as well as others who couldn't get back to Brisbane.
- 5pm onwards – evacuees and people stranded in the suburb began arriving at the church. Marge Stathakis began taking hand written details of these people and we began organising the hall area for sleeping. We received advice that there was a boat operating on Mt Crosby Rd at Kholo Creek and several people departed to seek transport back to Mt Crosby & Karana Downs via this means.



- 6-6:30pm approximately – Since those who were stranded by floodwaters had now left, my wife and I went home for dinner. I re-checked the BOM and BCC websites for updated advice on the likely extent of flooding.
- 7pm approximately – We returned to the church and discovered many evacuees from Moggill Pocket now at the church being registered to stay the night. Local police had arrived and were meeting with SES workers in the SES operations room.
- 7-10:30pm – We continued to settle evacuees into the church for the night. We received the following information from SES and Police:
  - o SES workers were effectively stuck in Moggill/Bellbowrie but their base and key equipment was located at Mt Crosby and cut off.
  - o Many Police present were residents in the area but stationed elsewhere and consequently also stuck in Moggill/Bellbowrie.
- 9pm approximately – I discussed with the SES how best to get word out to the community that we were operating the evacuation centre. I was advised that because we were not an "official" evacuation centre our details would not be broadcast via emergency services. I was advised to contact the media to make an announcement myself. I therefore rang ABC local radio and recorded an announcement and was careful to clarify that whilst we were not an "official" evacuation centre, but we were the *only* evacuation centre in Moggill/Bellbowrie.
- 10:30pm – Evacuees were bedded down for the night and no more were expected so we returned home. SES volunteer Matt Gorman commented as we were leaving "have a think how you would do this tomorrow without power". This was the only specific advice I recall receiving with regard to planning during this event.
- 10:30 – 12pm – We continued to monitor BOM and BCC websites for further updates on the likely extent of flooding. BCC flood maps were updated and showed an alarming potential area of inundation. We considered likely numbers of further evacuees at the centre and what equipment we should bring to the church.

Wednesday, 12 January 2011

- 2:30am – Catherine woke and left to drive through the low lying areas checking to see if anyone needed assistance evacuating. Floodwaters were rising with high tide expected at around 3am. At this stage we were not aware of any residents having received official instructions to evacuate and no-one was observed leaving their homes.
- 3am – Catherine proceeded to the church and encountered one family who had self-evacuated their home on Kangaroo Gully Road. From this time people began arriving at the church having evacuated ahead of rising floodwaters. At this time SES were actively involved assisting people to evacuate with the assistance of a local resident with a boat.
- 3:15am – Power to the area around Birkin Rd shopping centre was cut. The evacuation siren at the shopping centre activated.
- 4am – I began gathering equipment to take to the church.
- 4:30am – Catherine came and collected me and we returned to the church. Power was lost at the church around this time.
- 5-10:30am - By this stage there was a long queue of evacuees being registered. A similarly large number of unaffected residents were also arriving offering assistance, accommodation and food. Sandra Johnson & Catherine were taking hand written details of evacuees and volunteers. We decided to try and billet as many evacuees as possible with households offering accommodation to minimise the need to supply food and bedding at the church site. A process of matching evacuees



to accommodation was devised. Other church members began arriving with food for people at the evacuation centre. A local off-duty member of the Australian Federal Police arrived offering assistance and was tasked with the job of organising the registrations. Some evacuees arrived with pets and they were accommodated in either their own or donated crates on site without incident.

- 10:30am – We went home for a break and drove by a couple of properties of friends to observe the extent of flooding and take photos for insurance purposes.
- 11:30am – We returned to the church and there were still more evacuees arriving. The database system was now functioning well with the previous hand written details being entered on laptops. Separate databases were established for evacuees, offers of accommodation and general offers of help with specific notes on specialist skills and equipment.
- 11:30am – 5pm – The process of finding accommodation for evacuees continued. Several church members established a roster to provide meals at the centre. Sometime during the day power went off to the church premises. Evacuee and volunteer registration was able to continue as it was being done on laptops. A generator was sourced from a local resident and rigged up to provide essential power to the computers, kitchen refrigerator and limited lighting. Some evacuees arrived with pets and the pets were accommodated either in crates brought by the evacuees or some donated animal crates.
- Foodwaters peaked in the afternoon around 4pm lower than expected and started to recede but access in and out of the suburb remained cut.
- A local resident doctor arrived at the centre as well as some local resident nurses. We set up a medical table adjacent to the main registrations table to direct evacuees and other visitors who had medical concerns. The doctor was stationed in the Minister's office for consultations and minor surgery whilst the nursing staff were rostered on the medical table for enquiries and triage. At this stage it was becoming clear to us that there may be a problem with shortages of medicine and other important food supplies such as baby formula. We sought and were given permission to retrieve un-damaged stock from the local chemist and Coles supermarket from shelves above the waterline. A team of volunteers was sent with SES and Police to the shopping centre to gather supplies.
- 5pm – 10pm - By this stage most evacuees had been accommodated off-site with other families. Dinner was served to remaining evacuees, volunteers and emergency services personnel at the church. The SES had relocated to St Catherine's Catholic Church across the road as this was a quieter space where they could rest between shifts but continued to liaise with Police and take meals at the Church. One evacuee had significant mental health issues and alcohol addiction and it was agreed she should remain at the Church so a roster of counsellors was established to monitor her. By approximately 10pm there were only about five people sleeping at the church in addition to a handful of Police. Catherine & I returned home for rest and monitored on-line news sites for updates on the state of flooding.

Thursday, 13 January 2011

- 4:00am approximately – Catherine & I went back to the Church to check on things and start organising for the day. No more people had arrived at the Church overnight and there was only one minor incident with the "special needs" evacuee during the night which was handled by the resident Police.
- 6:00am approximately – Volunteers began organising to continue operations and serve breakfast. The computer databases were set-up and some basic hand-written signs erected to better direct people arriving at the centre.



- 7:00am onwards – More people offering assistance arrived at the Church. We continued taking details along with notes on any special skills or equipment they had in the volunteers' database. People also began offering clothing and other household items to evacuees and we started collecting these in the old church building pending a system for distribution. People also arrived periodically with pre-prepared food (cakes etc). These were accepted and served either immediately or stored at the Church and served at a later time. Representatives from other organisations such as Rotary, Lions and Country Women's Association also arrived to offer the services of their respective organisations. They were assigned tasks not currently being carried out.
- 7:30am approximately – a helicopter dropped-off medical supplies on the Moggill State School oval next door to the Church.
- 10:00am approximately – Catherine and I returned home for a rest and to plan. We travelled via the Kholo Creek crossing where local residents had set up a ferry service using a dinghy and sea-doo. Water levels were still receding but access was still cut in all directions.
- 12:00pm approximately – Catherine & I returned to the Church for lunch. Graham Barnard and I discussed the need to organise the volunteers as by now we were doing many different tasks and needed a structure. We identified key people to take responsibility for different areas and called a meeting to discuss the plan for the next few days.
- Sometime during the day an army Unimog arrived having travelled overland into the suburb. A few people with medical conditions, and heavily pregnant ladies were evacuated out of the suburb via this means.
- 2:00 pm approximately – A meeting was held for key volunteers and emergency services workers to establish an organisational structure to continue operations for the next two weeks or so. Many more people attended the meeting than was planned and this was due to everyone being somewhat desperate for information. Although this was not an information session per se, one of the police gave a briefing on the status of road closures and flood waters.
- 3:00pm approximately – a second smaller meeting was held in the old church building to discuss the organisational structure and clarify who was in charge of what. Key people were assigned to areas of responsibility – basically doing what they were already doing but with clarification of the reporting structure. Reverend Costa Stathakis was charged with oversight of the entire operation due to his being employed by the Uniting Church and therefore ultimately responsible for activities on Church property. I took on the role of operations manager to oversee the functions of the committee and carry out media liaison and troubleshooting. Other task areas were assigned as follows:
  - o Catherin Solomon – deputy to Costa, childcare, clothing donations (initially).
  - o Graham Barnard – Supplies (Quartermaster)
  - o June Rice – on-site food catering.
  - o Stephanie Taylor – Reception & database
  - o Dr ??? - Medical
  - o Marge Stathakis – Emotional care (evacuees & volunteers)
  - o Sandra Johnson – Secretary
  - o Ray Crompton (Rotary) – Reception triage
  - o Tony Reading (Lions) – Community clean-up (just about to start).
  - o Jenny Stowell (Country Women's Association) – off-site food supply to workers
- At this meeting it was also identified that people required regular briefings from Police or SES on the state of roads and access. It was agreed that these would occur every two hours although that schedule was subject to Police availability. It was also agreed that the organisation committee would meet every morning around 11am, and afternoon around 3pm to give full status updates. It was further identified that the many diverse tasks now being carried out at the Church might require



continual alteration to the committee structure and some tasks may need to be handed over to other organisations as they were getting too big to handle.

- 4:00pm approximately – The meeting broke up and everyone went back to their work. By this stage many people were asking about food supplies and were also bringing perishable items to the centre in the hope that they could be used or stored before going off. Graham Barnard took charge of negotiations to secure a supply food drop. We began organising volunteers to sort incoming supplies and established a distribution point in the old church building. Throughout the course of the afternoon and evening we received differing advice on what supplies were to be delivered and when they would arrive. Our status as an unofficial evacuation centre caused a lot of problems when trying to get supplies delivered.
- 6:00 – 9:00pm – Graham Barnard continued negotiations to get supplies. It was reported to us that Dr Bruce Flegg, the local state member, was also using radio broadcasts as a means of prompting action in getting supplies delivered. Throughout the afternoon people had been arriving at the Church asking for supplies such as fresh milk and bread and we were unable to give them out. We decided that any existing supplies at the Church were for preparation and serving as meals on site only or delivery to any special needs residents who could not get to the Church.
- 9:00pm approximately – Following a radio announcement that supplies were going to be arriving at the centre, about 50 people arrived at the Church. They were expecting food to be handed out and were not happy that supplies had not yet arrived and that nothing was to be handed out anyway until we had received and sorted things. We requested the assistance of Constable Julie Crabbe to speak to the crowd and explain the situation. We believed the visible Police presence would help ensure things didn't get out of hand. Once the situation was explained most people left satisfied to wait until the morning. A small number of people waited and expressed distrust that food was being somehow held back or had in fact been delivered but not handed out. The Police present continued to help in explaining the situation to these and other latecomers.
- 11:00pm approximately – One army Unimog arrived with selected supplies. A refrigerator was borrowed from the Moggill Store. We unloaded the supplies into the old Church and perishable items into the church's and borrowed refrigerators then locked up and went home. There were still perhaps three people sleeping in the church and at least one member of the Police force remained on site during the night.

Friday, 14 January 2011

- 5:00am – We had decided to commence food distribution from 8am. Catherine and I returned to the Church and I began helping. I had been contacted by 612 ABC radio and proceeded to call in with details of what food we had and the timing of distribution. I also phoned in details to the 96.5FM newsroom.
- 6:00am – 8:00am – Supplies were sorted and arranged in the old Church. I continued to make calls to radio stations and then we started talking with people who were gathering to receive items. We had not received much in the way of milk or bread so we had to explain carefully that we were only handing out non-perishable items but if people wanted fresh food they could still eat prepared meals here at the church. Most people were understanding but many commented asking why such a small amount of fresh food had been delivered. Catherine went along the queue of people waiting explaining the situation so people were able to give a list of items they needed that we did have available by the time they reached the door of the church.
- 9:00am approximately – the queue of people for food and grocery items had reduced and for the rest of the day we were able to service people as they arrived. Graham Barnard continued to phone



EMQ and BCC to ask where the follow-up supplies were but was failing to get any meaningful response. Throughout the rest of the day we continued to prepare and serve food.

- 11:00am – We held our morning meeting if the Moggill Community Flood Relief Committee. All area representatives gave status updates and outlined their plans for the next few hours.
- 2:00pm approximately – We received word that Moggill Road had re-opened and a steady stream of vehicles started to arrive in the suburb with individuals and groups offering clean up assistance and additional food items. A groups were organised by Tony Reading from the Lions club to begin cleaning up at the shopping centre. SES workers also assisted with this operation. By the late afternoon Army trucks had arrived and started co-ordinating the clean up of public areas, roads, footpaths etc.
- 3:00pm – We held our afternoon meeting if the Moggill Community Flood Relief Committee. All area representatives gave status updates and outlined their plans for the next few hours. By this stage it was clear that the supply of donated clothing and household items was too great for us to deal with. We sought help from the local Catholic and Anglican churches in receiving, sorting and distributing these items. We also decided a childcare facility was needed for evacuated people to drop off children whilst they went back to assess and clean up their houses. Catherine organised a group to take this job on and set up in the Moggill State School. The childcare helpers were drawn from local teachers and people already helping lead various children's groups within the church. Consequently all were holders of blue cards for child related employment.
- 6:00pm approximately – Power was switched back on at the Church. The last evacuee (with special health needs) was relocated to another facility now that the road was open. Graham Barnard continued to receive donations of food items from various groups and individuals who were still arriving at the church from outside the area.
- 11:00pm approximately – We closed up for the night.

Saturday, 15 January 2011

- 6:00am – Catherine & I returned to the church. I began ringing around various radio stations to report that we were still operating and what supplies we had available for distribution.
- 7:00am approximately – BCC and Army representatives met with us at the Church to discuss the plan for clean up crews who would be arriving in the area throughout the day as part of the BCC public work-party initiative. We agreed that the church would be a staging area where crews would arrive before being equipped, organised and sent down to the low lying areas of the suburb.
- 8:00am onwards – BCC busses began arriving with volunteer workers who were offered breakfast and toilet facilities before proceeding to their assigned clean up areas. It was clear that we would require additional toilet facilities so a call was made to the owners of a porta-loo that had mysteriously arrived the previous day for additional toilets. They advised that there was a standing order with BCC so additional toilets would be sent out as part of the council order.
- 11:00am – We held our morning meeting if the Moggill Community Flood Relief Committee. All area representatives gave status updates. Clothing and donations were now being handled by the Catholic & Anglican churches. Catherine had taken over running the childcare service and was no longer involved in donations. Graham Barnard continued to receive large quantities of donated food items from various sources and was busy organising the supplies in the old church. We agreed that now that Moggill Road had reopened there should be less need for people to seek donated supplies so we had to begin running down stocks. We tried to work out ways of distributing supplies further afield as there was now much less demand locally. Many volunteers began taking carloads of supplies around to where clean up crews were working looking for houses in obvious need.



Many damaged houses were now evacuated so it became hard to find those people. Some supplies were taken to areas of Goodna and Graceville and driven street to street until they were all handed out.

- 3:00pm – We held our afternoon meeting if the Moggill Community Flood Relief Committee. All area representatives gave status updates. I then proceeded to phone in to ABC radio with an update on what services we were offering and what supplies we still had available.
- 4:00pm – We began closing the evacuation accommodation area and restored the church to its usual configuration. Police were still occupying the situation room but began removing items ready for services to revert to Indooroopilly Station the following afternoon.
- 6:00pm – Dinner was served at the church and it was agreed that breakfast the next day would be the last meal organised at the centre.
- 9:00pm approximately – by this stage only the medical and counselling services as well as reception were still operating at the church. Supplies had been reorganised in the old church and were still available to people as needed but the demand was almost nil. There were however still occasional families from affected areas who arrived at the centre seeking help who had not been aware that were were functioning. This was despite door-to-door patrols of the suburb by church volunteers and representatives from the Lions club clean up crews. We also had had the reconfigurable sign boards outside the church, Bellbowrie service station, Bellbowrie Community Church and Macintyre Centre all changed to inform people of the flood relief centre at the Moggill Uniting Church.

#### Sunday, 16 January 2011

- Breakfast was served at the church before conducting the regular 8:30am church service. Throughout the rest of the day Community Recovery workers, counsellors and medical staff continued to operate out of the church. The reception and database management was handed over to Neville Marsh who would co-ordinate this area for the next week or so.
- The organising committee met to discuss our plan for the next week. It was agreed that we would continue to operate until at least Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> January. It was requested for Community Recovery and Lifeline workers to base themselves at the church as this was already a known location for flood relief services in the area. We were still getting many visitors to the church asking about these services at times when they were not present. We decided to keep our reception desk open from 8am to 6pm to help in directing and informing people of the times when Centrelink staff would be present.
- 4:00pm – I attended the Mt Crosby & Karana Downs flood recovery centre committee de-brief. This was a very interesting meeting and I learned how operations were conducted at their "official" evacuation centre. I noted many differences between how our two communities and two evacuation centres functioned during the crisis. There were also significant differences in how emergency services operated during the crisis. There was a strong sense of frustration amongst the Mt Crosby & Karana Downs committee as to the way emergency services personnel acted during the crisis.

#### Monday, 17 January 2011

- 7:00am – The committee executive comprising Rev Costa Stathakis, Mr Graham Barnard, Mrs Marge Stathakis and myself agreed to meet every morning at this time to discuss and plan our operations for the day.

- Reception, medical and counselling services continued. Supplies had been reduced through aggressive distribution and a small quantity of non-perishable items were retained and stored in the church shed in case they might be needed during the following weeks. Centrelink and Lifeline staff set up operations in the old church but the main reception desk and medical services remained in the main church building.

Tuesday, 18 January 2011

- 7:00am – Committee executive meeting. Operations continued as per the previous day.

Wednesday, 19 January 2011

- 7:00am – Committee executive meeting. Operations continued as per the previous day. Medical operations concluded and the main reception desk was relocated to the old church where Community Recovery and Lifeline were operating. We decided that we would have an official sign-off meeting on Friday and stand down all members of the committee. Only counselling operations would continue for the next three weeks or so and all other flood recovery operations would revert to their individual responsible bodies.

Thursday, 20 January 2011

- 7:00am – Committee executive meeting. Operations continued as per the previous day.
- 8:00am – A meeting was held with representatives of the other churches in the suburb to discuss ongoing recovery operations. The Catholic and Anglican churches were to continue with receiving and distributing donated clothing and household items. Bellbowrie Community Church would begin assisting with inspections and reconstruction of homes. The Uniting Church would continue with counselling and support operations.

Friday, 21 January 2011

- 7:00am – Committee executive meeting. Operations continued as per the previous day.
- 3:00pm – A full committee sign-off meeting was held with additional representatives from the SES and Police. Minutes of this meeting are also attached.

Counselling operations and Centrelink Community Recovery staff continued to operate at the church until Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January.



## Moggill Community Flood Relief Centre

### Points for further consideration:

Prepared by Andrew Solomon based on points raised in the Moggill Community Flood Relief Centre committee sign-off meeting of 21/01/2011.

- SES advise local disaster management plan was 90% complete when the Disaster Management Act was changed late last year. This obviously needs to be completed.
- Specific points discussed relating to the not quite completed disaster management plan include:
  - o Database of key community contacts.
  - o Register of specific items useful in such a crisis (eg. generators, boats etc.)
  - o Prepared kit of signage and other items to be rolled out when establishing an evacuation & recovery centre.
- Decision needs to be made as to permanent options for future evacuation & recovery centre sites in the neighbourhood. School or Church or other?
- If either the church or school are to be used in the future, consideration needs to be given to access between the two sites including possible purchase of the site in between owned by the Greers. Possible use of this land for a shared car park and school set-down & drop off may enable both locations to be used together.
- Facilities at the church are not designed to handle the sort of use experienced during the crisis. Plans have already been prepared prior to the flood which are hopefully going to be implemented in the next year or two. These include a new kitchen and community use room with secure children's playground – all of which would have made operations during the crisis far easier.
- With the exception of the Bellbowrie Police Beat, emergency services stations (Fire, Ambulance, SES and Police) are ALL located in the Mt Crosby/Karana Downs suburbs. These were cut off from the larger population in Moggill & Bellbowrie during the crisis. It was only by happy accident that a large number of emergency services personnel were trapped in this area and able to establish their own command centre.
- There need to be additional ways of broadcasting information to the community during such a crisis, especially when power is cut. We have been informed that only one police vehicle (Leesa Rishardson's) is equipped with a public address system. Regular public broadcast of basic information including the location of the evacuation & recovery centre would have been helpful during the crisis. This could have been done by patrols or even from police vehicles manning roadblocks.
- Other general planning issues identified during the crisis include:
  - o Better all-weather access in and out of Moggill & Bellbowrie above defined flood levels. This will necessarily include raising Kholo Creek bridge, construction of a raised flood-proof bridge at Colleges Crossing, construction of raised & flood-proof sections along Moggill Road at Kenmore, Pinjarra Hills and near the McIntyre Centre. Needless to say, construction of the proposed Kenmore Bypass would take care of the flood prone sections at Kenmore.
  - o De-centralised shopping precinct on high ground in Moggill. Development in the Moggill & Bellbowrie area has extended further to the south-west thereby putting the current, flood prone shopping centre at the northern edge of the suburb. A second centre incorporating basic facilities needs to be considered possibly near the intersection of Moggill & Priors Pocket Roads.