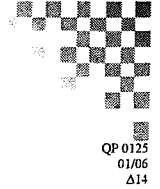




QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE

STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of

Name of witness: **ROW, Peter Richard**

Date of birth: [redacted] Age: [redacted] Occupation: **Pilot**

Police officer taking statement

Name: **MURRAY, Kenneth William Gregory**

Rank: **Detective Sergeant** Reg. no.: **9889**

Region/Command/Division: **SCOC** Station: **Taskforce Galaxy**

Statement:

**Archerfield**

**Taskforce Galaxy**

**Peter Richard ROW states:**

1. I am a [redacted] year old male who lives at [redacted] Victoria Point.
2. I am employed by Emergency Management Queensland Helicopter Rescue (EMQHR). I hold the position of Helicopter Captain (pilot) and have worked at the EMQHR Archerfield base situated on Wirraway Avenue Archerfield for 10 years.
3. I hold an Air transport Pilots Licence (*Helicopters*) and a commercial pilot airplane (*fixed wing*).
4. I have been a qualified pilot for 22 years.
5. I hold a command instrument rating in Helicopters for use in instrument meteorological conditions (*bad weather*).
6. The current aircraft available to the unit is the Agusta Westland 139 Helicopter.
7. It is multi engine IFR (*instrument rated*) aircraft and state of the art for our emergency use.
8. At anytime the Archerfield base has one operational aircraft for emergency use.

[redacted]

(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

[redacted]

(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **ROW, Peter Richard**

9. When in flight the crew consists of myself as pilot, an air crew officer (ACO) and Rescue Crew Officer (RCO).
10. I recall Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2011.
11. At 1700 hrs I arrived at work to undertake night vision goggle training (NVG) with Brett KNOWLES and David TURNER.
12. At 1715 hrs I received a landline call [REDACTED] from State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC). It was Mike SHAPPLAND and he told me about significant flash flooding that had just occurred at Grantham with a number of people being washed away.
13. A second call came straight after from Police Communication Centre (PCC). They told me the same information as before. They told me all hell had broken loose at Grantham. They told me they had helicopters up at Toowoomba but they were fogged in. (*I believe these other helicopters mentioned were flood relief aircraft that had been committed to flood relief for food drop offs.*)
14. A spare aircraft from Cairns was luckily sitting outside the hanger with 1044 kilograms of fuel available for our NVG training session.
15. At this time Brett KNOWLES spoke with me and said that Rescue 500 had sent a message via the Channel Ten helicopter requesting further assistance from EMQHR.
16. The aircraft was deficient of rescue equipment due to pending training so KNOWLES, Stuart WARK and David TURNBULL loaded available rescue equipment on board.
17. At around 1741 hrs we took off in the aircraft.
18. At that time the ACO was Brett KNOWLES and the RCO's were David TURNBULL and Stuart WARK.
19. We were designated "Rescue 510".
20. The weather was shit (*less than favourable*) with low cloud and heavy showers. This meant I took a low level route at approximately 1000 feet along the Warrego Highway rather than climbing to 3000 feet and going direct.
21. On route the helicopter crew discussed some equipment deficiencies and the need to find "Rescue 500" to retrieve some rescue equipment before we could begin rescue operations namely acquiring rescue strops and crew harness.


[REDACTED]  
(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)


[REDACTED]  
(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **ROW, Peter Richard**

22. On cresting the ridge near Plainlands, we were confronted with an ocean of fast moving flood water (20 knots).
23. We knew we were in for something big.
24. We contacted Rescue 500 and they advised that they were getting low on fuel and would soon need to depart Grantham for Archerfield. When they landed in a small paddock on the western side of Grantham to disembark their last group of rescuees, we landed behind them and obtained the necessary equipment.
25. We became airborne and quickly moved into the last location where Rescue 500 had been conducting winch rescue work.
26. The crew and I quickly agreed on an order of priority. (*Where people were in the water, or located on the top of weak building structures, they should be rescued first*).
27. There were many people waiting to be rescued, some in the water, some clinging to trees and many on rooftops. The flood water contained a lot of debris including trees and cars.
28. The railway line through town at this time was visible and adorned with a large number of vehicles and debris.
29. Over the next 1 ½ hours, we rescued 15 survivors including a little girl about 5 yrs old and a mum with her 3mth old baby. We would winch five or six people into the aircraft, then drop them at a farm on the western side of town.
30. On each landing, we were met by IC Paramedic Ilya (Buggsy) SELMES and Doctor Glen RYANN who escorted the survivors away from the aircraft. SELMES and RYANN had been dropped off that location by Rescue 500 and acted in a triage role.
31. It was getting close to 1930 hrs and due to our fuel state and the rapidly fading light, I had advised Brett that as soon as we retrieved the last person off the roof we were over, we would have to drop the last group and return to Archerfield.
32. As Brett was winching the last person into the cabin, I did one last sweep with the Tracker Light, and caught sight of a male person clinging to a tree behind the next house. He was surrounded by fast flowing water. I told Brett that we would have to get him before we departed.
33. When Brett winched him into the cabin. I heard what sounded like a scream of happiness. I later learned that this last person was the husband of one of the

  
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(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **ROW, Peter Richard**

women in the cabin. She had last seen him being washed away and believed she may never see him again. *(It was a very tearful reunion).*

34. Upon landing to drop off this last group, Dr Glen Ryann, requested that we take with us a young mother who was 25 weeks pregnant and had suffered an injury to her abdomen during the flooding event. We loaded her onto the aircraft and departed the scene just after 1930 hrs.
35. I knew that we didn't have the fuel to change category to IFR (instruments only) so decided to track via Amberley at about 1000 feet AGL (*Above Ground Level*). Rain had started to fall quite steadily but we still were able to maintain approx 2000m visibility. As we got closer to Ipswich I could see the visibility to the east was deteriorating and, as a crew, we decided to land at Amberley, hand our patient over to QAS, take on some fuel, and return to Archerfield base.
36. We arrived at Amberley at 1952 hours. We refuelled the aircraft and shortly thereafter recovered to Archerfield via the Archerfield NDB-B approach without further incident.



(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)



(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **ROW, Peter Richard**

37. No further action was taken that night by EMQHR due to deteriorating weather conditions. (*Low cloud and poor visibility*)

[Redacted]

**Peter Richard ROW**

**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 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 ..Archerfield this..14th.....day of February. 2011

[Redacted]

(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/  
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

[Redacted]

(Signature of police officer  
preparing statement)