

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Prepared by: Legal Services Unit

Date: 23/03/2011

Name of Witness: Wayne Peter Waltisbuhl

Address of Witness: Level 2, 128 Margaret Street, Toowoomba Queensland 4350

Occupation: Public Servant

Position: Regional Manager – Rural Operations – Southwest Region

I, Wayne Peter Waltisbuhl, Regional Manager, (Rural Operations – Southwest Region) Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and employed by the Department of Community Safety state:

1. I have been employed with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service ("QFRS") since 1998 and I currently hold the rank of Superintendent.
2. I have been employed in my current role since 2006.
3. I hold a graduate certificate in applied management and also hold a range of additional QFRS specific qualifications and competencies. A list of those additional competencies is marked "WW-1" and attached to this statement.
4. I am responsible for the South-West Rural Operations, QFRS. This comprises of two areas being Toowoomba and Roma.
5. Each area has a QFRS officer at the rank of Inspector who is appointed to the role of Area-Director – Rural Operations.
6. Each Area-Director reports directly to me and collaboratively we manage a total of thirteen QFRS staff and approximately 8,500 volunteers.
7. In my role as Regional Manager – Rural Operations ("RMRO") I support the Regional Assistant Commissioner with bushfire mitigation/suppression and community awareness within Southwest Region.
8. My roll during hazard events (including preparation and response activities and the recent flood events) is primarily working in the Toowoomba Regional Operations Coordination centre (the "ROCC") and I

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performed the role of Regional Coordinator and Regional Operations Coordinator throughout the activation of the ROCC.

9. The ROCC supports the movement of resources across the region and provides logistical and staffing support to the incident control centres ("ICCs"). The ROCC also has a fatigue management function and coordinates requests for support from outside of the region.

Role in Planning, Response and Recovery

10. I developed the Regional Wildfire Response (RWR) plan. The plan addresses pre-planning for wildfire events, taking into account weather events and forecasts four days out and then the pre-emptive movement of staff and resources so that we are fully prepared before any fire events. We used the RWR plan throughout the flood events. All identified incident control centres were checked and prepared and relocated if they were affected by floods.
11. Rural Fire Brigade Group Officers were kept informed by the Area Director Rural Operations, who in turn informed the Rural Fire Brigades in the relevant Group areas.
12. The Fire Warden network across the Region was used to gather information on rainfall and river levels. The concept of using Fire Wardens as Flood Wardens was utilised in the Roma Rural Operations Area, allowing valuable local knowledge to be provided from volunteers on rainfall and creek and river levels, which was used to assist in planning for flooding events.
13. I was appointed to undertake roles in the ROCC by the Regional Fire Commander. I performed the roles of Regional Coordinator and Regional Operations coordinator. Some of my duties included:
 - Appointing personnel to functions in the ROCC, ICC and liaison positions at Police MIR and Councils;
 - Attending daily state video conferences;
 - Conducting daily teleconferences with all regional senior officers and active ICC's;
 - Provide briefings to the State Operations Command Centre ("SOCC");
 - Coordinating staff (including swift water rescue technicians) movements into locations prior to flood waters arriving;
 - Liaising with District Disaster Coordinators';
 - Preparing staff rosters for ROCC and ICC's;
 - Authorising the purchasing of logistical requirements for use in the field for recovery operations;
 - Approving the requests for strike teams to move into the South East region;
 - Approving flights for staff across the Region;
 - Conducting planning meetings in the ROCC to discuss future events and resource allocation;
 - Monitoring weather forecasts and river heights to predict downstream flooding events;
 - Coordinating and planning in conjunction with Area Directors the movement of staff and volunteers; and
 - Ensuring that safety messages were passed on to all staff.

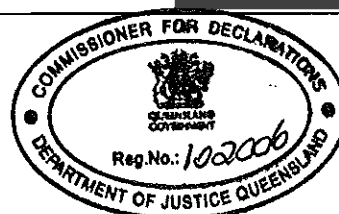
Use of Weather Data

14. A key task of Rural Operations staff during and prior to bushfire season is to monitor the weather. All lead up weather is taken into account with calculations such as Drought Index, Drought factors and Curing. This coupled with fuel loads gives us an indication of the potential fire that may occur.

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15. This is done by observing seasonal effects and four day forecasts issued by the *Bureau of Meteorology* ("BOM"). Daily observations of weather elements, temperature, humidity, wind strength, direction and dew point all allow us to predict a Fire Danger Rating (FDR). The FDR plus seasonal effects and current fire behaviors observed can then provide a Wildfire Alert Level (WAL). At each level of WAL all areas and staff have certain responsibilities to undertake in order to meet any wildfire that may occur. These predictions are a minimum of 48 hours in advance.
16. I maintain contact with DDC's in the Southwest QFRS Region to share information on weather events and advise of the actions that QFRS is taking.
17. During the flood events QFRS monitored the BOM website (synoptic chart four day, River heights and rainfall charts). This provided us with a good assessment of upcoming weather events and flood areas to allow us to move staff and volunteers into areas prior to towns being cut off or affected by fast rising flood waters. This information was passed on internally within QFRS and shared with Police.
18. While QFRS has the authority to inform members of the community in relation to bush-fires events, QFRS is not tasked with providing alerts regarding weather or flood-related issues.
19. The ROCC was active from 20 December 2010. One of the key responsibilities of the planning coordinator (who reports to the ROCC coordinator) is to monitor weather data from a number of sources and present that data to the ROCC coordinator to be disseminated to QFRS staff within the region.
20. As a result of the weather data observed in the lead-up to the flood events we implemented a number of contingencies, including:
 - Adding a third FireCom operator to increase operational capacity in the Fire Communications Centre;
 - On the morning of 10 January 2011, we 'Stood-up' several auxiliary stations resulting in a number of unmanned stations becoming fully manned and operational;
 - Extra swift-water rescue equipment was sourced from Brisbane and used to equip appliances in the South West region;
 - Additional appliances were brought into the Region from Brisbane and South-East; and
 - A senior-officer was positioned in the Fire Communications Centre in anticipation of a higher than normal workload.

Communications between myself and the DDC, DDMG, SDMG, SDCC and SDC

21. I am a member of five Disaster District Management Group's (DDMG's) in Southwest region. Of the five only four were activated during the period of the floods. As a member of these groups I received regular advice of special weather events and response and recovery operations. I attended all of the Toowoomba DDMG meetings as I was unable to travel to other centres such as Warwick, Dalby and Roma due to road closures. However, I believe other senior staff attended in my absence.
22. I had regular meetings and communications with the Toowoomba District Disaster Coordinator ("DDC") throughout our operations.
23. I had no contact with the State Disaster Management Group ("SDMG"), the State Disaster Coordination Centre ("SOCC") or the State Disaster Coordinator ("SDC") during the 2010/2011 flood operations.

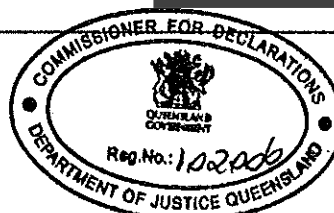
Involvement with State Agencies

24. I maintained regular contact with QPS throughout the floods.

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25. I maintained general communication with *Queensland Parks and Wildlife* to offer QFRS support.
26. Rural Fire Brigades supported SES volunteers in Tara and Dalby while the township was cut off by flood waters.

Involvement with Commonwealth Agencies

27. I had no personal contact with any Commonwealth Agencies during the flooding events however, I was aware (due to my role as ROCC coordinator) that the *Department of Defense* was involved in the transport of a flexible habitat to St George and later Condamine.

Adequacy of Equipment During Flooding Events

28. The Southwest Region had developed a cache of equipment for flood recovery operations, including a range of hand tools; personal protective equipment; cleaning products and hygiene products. These items have been identified as items required during operations through feedback from debriefs.
29. The Southwest Region relied on Swift water rescue equipment from Brisbane to back up the small amount held in the Region.
30. I am informed and believe that all current communication facilities functioned well throughout the flood events however there are still radio 'blackspots' in the Region.
31. QFRS utilised all available and suitable fire-fighting appliances and I believe they performed well under the operating conditions.

Assessment of QFRS to respond

32. I believe that QFRS have all the resources required to manage an air base. The DDC appointed QFRS to manage airbases in Roma and St George in January.
33. The management structure QFRS use to manage incidents is to form Incident Manage Teams (IMT) at Incident Control Centres (ICC) located near the incident. The ROCC supports the incident management team and coordinates the movement of resources and personnel to each incident. Due to the nature of these flood events and that QFRS was not the control agency we did not fully establish an IMT at each location but provided two senior officers and operational staff to provide support at each location. Most logistical components were managed from the ROCC.

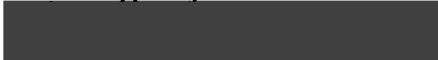

Training

34. I believe it would be beneficial for more QFRS staff and volunteers to undertake awareness training relating to working in floods and swift water.
35. I believe QFRS senior staff could benefit from clearer guidelines around the roles and responsibilities of officers who are undertaking duties as a liaison officer to (e.g. with QPS or Council).

Joint Initiatives between EMQ and QFRS

36. I am aware that QFRS participated in Operation Orko and Operation Hamish.

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Directive From Ipswich Fire Service Area Office

37. I am unaware of any instruction or directive from the Ipswich Rural Operations area office or from any Senior QFRS officer to the Grantham Rural Fire Brigade, to desist from self responding to flood related operations and respond only if activated by the SES.

Suggestions and Improvements

38. Given the operation nature and my role as Regional Manager (Rural Operations) I am unable to comment on matters of policy, departmental performance or strategy.

39. I make this statement of my own free will believing its contents to be true and correct.

Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of Section 110A (6C) (c) (ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

(1) This written statement by me dated 18/10/2010 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 8 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and

(2) I make it knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating anything that I know is false.

..... Signature

Signed at Brisbane this *28* day of *March* 2011

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WW-1

Learning History

Wayne Waltisbuhl

Person No: 013027

Includes Profiles:
013027 26 QFRS

Region:

Organisation Unit: QFRS Rural South West Region

Course	Status	Completed
FRURL055 Fire Danger Meters	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL056 Back Burning	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL057 Scene Preservation	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL058 Map Reading and Interpretation	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL059 Fire Behaviour and Safety for Structural Fires	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL060 Tactical Priorities, Fireground Operations: RECEO with PACT	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL061 Incident Decision Making	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL062 Hazardous Materials Recognition	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL063 Pumps and Primers	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL064 Introduction to ICS	Successful	1/06/1999
FRURL065 Practical - Level 2 Fire Management	Successful	28/04/2003
FUNIT050 Incident Control Systems Introduction - 16 hrs	Successful	2/08/1997
FUNIT219 Road Accident Rescue Awareness	Successful	19/11/1995
FUNIT295 Operations Doctrine - Introduction	Successful	19/05/2005
FUNIT311 Operations Doctrine - Detail	Successful	19/05/2005
FUNIT405 Operations Mapping System	Successful	25/10/2005
FUNIT407 A/IMS/IMS - Management	Successful	16/07/2007
FUNIT493 Senior Officers Command & Control Residential	Successful	12/08/2005
HRBC010 Code Of Conduct Awareness	Successful	2/02/2010
OPRC005 Electronic command and control	Successful	17/03/2010
PUACOM001B-1 Communicate In the Workplace-assessment	Successful	27/08/2003
PUACOM004A-1 Manage Organisational Communication Strategies-assessment	Successful	16/01/2007
PUACOM004B-1 Manage organisational communication strategies-activity	Successful	21/07/2009
PUACOM007B-1 Liaise with other organisations-activity	Successful	20/11/2009
PUACOM009A-1 Manage Media Requirements At Major Incidents-assessment	Successful	19/07/2005
PUACOM010A-1 Promote The Organisation's Mission And Services-assessment	Successful	16/01/2007
PUACOM010B-1 Promote the organisation's mission and services-activity	Successful	21/07/2009
PUACOM012-1 Liaise with media at a local level	Successful	20/11/2009
PUACOM012B-1 Liaise with media at a local level-activity	Successful	20/11/2009
PUAEME001A-1 Provide Emergency Care-assessment	Successful	27/06/2003
PUAEQU001A-1 Prepare, Maintain and Test Response Equipment-assessment	Successful	27/06/2003
PUAFIR201A-1 Prevent Injury-assessment	Successful	27/06/2003
PUAFIR202A-1 Respond to Isolated/remote structure fire-assessment	Successful	27/06/2003
PUAFIR203A-1 Respond to Urban Fire-assessment	Successful	27/06/2003