



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: _____ Date: 15/04/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: MCDONALD, James John

Date of birth: [REDACTED] Age: [REDACTED] Occupation: Police Officer

Police officer taking statement

Name: SELF,

Rank: A/Inspector Reg. no.: 6271

Region/Command/Division: _____ Station: _____

Statement:

James John McDonald states:-

This is an addendum to my statement provided on 14 March 2011.

In response to the written requirement of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry dated 13 April 2011, I provide the following information:

My response has been sought for the following points:-

1. **A description of the way in which police communication systems operate generally.**

During my career I have operated basic police communications systems on a daily basis. These systems operate by utilising mobile (UHF two way) radios in vehicles (mobile) handholds (personal two radios) and fixed mobile (station installation). All of these radios are capable of talking through a system of base repeaters or on simplex direct from one to the other. These base repeaters are linked together to form a number of radio networks. These networks are set on channels which align with divisions, districts and regional boundaries and meet the needs of policing in those areas.

[REDACTED]

(Witness's signature)

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

(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MCDONALD, James John**

This network of radios allows operational police, communications centres and stations to communicate. This process is significantly used to give jobs and receive feedback when these jobs are completed, and to provide operational advice and gain authority from the Communications Coordinator (ComCo).

Since the development of mobile phone technology, occasionally jobs or information are passed to crews via mobile phone. This practice occurs when sensitive information is required to be exchanged and where this information could compromise an investigation.

2. A detailed description of the way in which '000' emergency calls are received by the QPS and actioned.

I do not have a technical knowledge of the Toowoomba Communications System.


I am aware that priority telephone lines receive '000' calls. These lines over-ride the phone calls received on the general lines.

These calls are accepted by communications room operators who assist the caller and record the information on the Toowoomba Information Management System (IMS). These jobs are detailed to crews as a priority by operators wearing audio headsets. The system has the capability for the operators to talk to crews whilst still talking to the caller.

All Operators as well as the Communications Coordinators have the ability to task crews with jobs independently. These taskings are then recorded against the appropriate IMS job.

3. A description of what happens when there are insufficient QPS call operators to receive '000' emergency calls originating from a certain State or Territory, where the 'overflow' is sent to, and how interstate call operators action QPS personnel to jobs or incidents.

I do not have a technical knowledge of the Toowoomba Communications System.


(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/
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(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MCDONALD, James John**

I am aware that priority telephone lines receive '000' calls. These lines over-ride the phone calls received on the general lines. I understand that once these lines are full the excess '000' calls are diverted to Ipswich Communications Centre and then on to Brisbane Police Operations Centre.

4. A description of any particular way in which '000' emergency calls are managed in the Toowoomba region.

Triple '000' calls are dealt with on a priority basis and making use of the priority policing model.

5. A description of the training QPS call operators receive before they are able to hold positions in the communication room/s and receive emergency '000' calls.

I understand that QPS call operators receive training but I do not have details of that package.

6. A description of the way in the Toowoomba communications room/s and call operators responded to and actioned '000' emergency calls on 10 January 2011.

On 10 January 2011 at 1:35pm I was assigned to the Communications room to coordinate operations and gain situational awareness of the event for information of incident command by the District.

During this time in communications I observed the communications operators taking '000' calls. When an operator receives one of these priority calls, they attract the attention of the Communications Coordinator (ComCo) Sergeant Bob Coleman who has the option to take over the call, listen in on the call and provide advice or give advice based on a briefing by the operator. This briefing occurs in real time and can't be heard by the caller. The operator then provides the desired advice.



(Witness's signature)

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MCDONALD, James John**

During the afternoon there were many occasions when the ComCo was on a triple '000' call and I would provide guidance and prompt advice.

Sgt Coleman and I were continuously briefing each other.

During my time in communications I was roaming the room and providing advice and support to officers as required.

I was also inspecting the City Safe and Main Roads cameras in the Communications room to assist with priorities.


I also made many phone calls to seek resources including helicopters and providing advice to QPS staff regarding the situation. I recorded these efforts in my notebook which have been provided to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.

7. Whether there were any operational difficulties encountered by the communication room/s and call operators due to the volume of '000' emergency calls received on 10 January 2011.

The operational difficulties encountered during the afternoon including the volume and serious nature of general and '000' calls.

The rainfall, flooding and other events caused by the rain and floods hindered the ability to deploy resources to some areas. Examples of this include the CBD of Toowoomba, the New England Highway Mt Kynoch and the Warrego Highway Toowoomba Range.

At 1446 I took note of difficulties experienced with radio transmission and reception and made a call to the Radio Electronics Section (RES). Mr Paul Young of RES promptly attended and corrected the problem.


(Witness's signature)

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MCDONALD, James John**

I was later informed that a microwave radio link to Mt Kynoch had gone out due to the rain. Mr Young put a diversion in place and the radios were restored within minutes.

8. Whether '000' calls went unanswered on 10 January 2011, why and what was done to remedy this.

I do not have a technical knowledge of the Toowoomba Communications System nor access to their system.


I understand that due to the volume of serious '000' calls a number of calls went unanswered.

During the afternoon A/S/Sgt Kelleher advised me of the capability to switch all general calls to Police Link. I authorised this diversion. A/S/Sgt Kelleher later advised me that he had made those arrangements through Telstra and the QPS Telephone Coordination Unit.

9. Any additional resources required by the communications room/s and/or call operators that might assist in disaster situations like that which occurred on 10 January 2011.

During my time in the communications room I observed a number of calls that were received that came from triple 0 calls that had been diverted as overflow calls to other Communications Centres in Ipswich and Brisbane.

I observed the frustration by operators who were taking calls from these Communications Centres and having to manually record the calls on the Toowoomba IMS system. I understand that there is a significant cost involved but would recommend that a commonality of communications systems between communications centres.


(Witness's signature)

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MCDONALD, James John**

The ability for other Centres to record the job details and then forward this information to the area of disaster would alleviate duplication and save critical time. These jobs could then be tasked if resources are available.

10. Any operational changes or recommendations to improve communication room/s and/or the conduct of call operators in disaster situations.

I believe that the overall performance of the operators in the Communications Room at Toowoomba on 10 January 2011 was to a very high standard.

The ability for the Communications Coordinator to see an electronic map of the exact location of police vehicles would assist with situational awareness and decision of deployment of units.

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
JJ McDonald
Inspector 6271

Justices Act Acknowledgement

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 15 April 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.

.....
[Redacted] Signature

Signed at *Toowoomba* this *15th* day of *April* 20*11*

(Witness's signature) (Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/
Commissioner for Declarations's signature) (Signature of police officer
preparing statement)