



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: _____ Date: _____

Statement of

Name of witness: PEFF, David William

Date of birth: _____ Age: _____ Occupation: Police Officer

Police officer taking statement

Name: _____

Rank: Inspector Reg. no.: 5472

Region/Command/Division: Central Region Station: Rockhampton District

Statement:

David William Peff states:-

I am an Inspector of Police currently stationed at the Rockhampton Police District Office, Rockhampton Police District.

I was sworn in as a police officer in to the Queensland Police Service on 29 July 1983.

I have 27 years of years policing experience having served at Rockhampton as a Constable and Senior Constable from 1983 to the end of 1991. I transferred to Brisbane and performed duty in the Mounted Police Unit, Traffic Branch and Property Crime Squad up to 1995 whereupon I was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in Charge at the Mount Isa Traffic Branch. In 1998 I was promoted to Senior Sergeant, Officer in Charge, Cairns Traffic Branch. I relieved in various commissioned officer positions in Cairns between 1999 and 2006 including District Inspector, Staff Officer, Professional Practice Manager, and Regional Traffic Coordinator. In 2006 I was promoted to the rank of Inspector, Staff Officer Central Police Region, based in Rockhampton. In January 2008 I moved to my current role as a district inspector at the Rockhampton Police District. I have relieved as the

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

District Officer in the Rockhampton, Mackay, and Gladstone Police Districts since that time.

On 27 December 2010 I commenced relieving as DDC for the Rockhampton District. The role and responsibilities of the DDC is to coordinate disaster operations in the disaster district for the District Disaster Management Group. In performing the role of DDC, I have undertaken Disaster Management training through Emergency Management Australia at Mount Macedon. I completed two courses in 2009, being 'Undertake Emergency Management Planning' and 'Business Continuity Planning'. Prior to this flood experience I had not participated in any desktop exercises or scenario based activities.

Provide details of when, how and why your role as DDC was activated including whether you took over the role during the flood events from another QPS member.

I commenced relieving as the Acting District Officer, Rockhampton District on 27 December 2010 and by virtue of the delegation under the hand of the police commissioner, I was appointed as the District Disaster Coordinator for the Rockhampton Police District. Prior to this I was on recreational leave from the 29th of November 2010 up to the 26th of December 2010. For the period 20 September 2010 to 28 November 2010 I was relieving as the District Officer, Rockhampton District, and during this period I performed the role of District Disaster Coordinator.

In response to the written requirement of the Qld Floods Commission of Inquiry dated 28 February 2011, I provide the following information:

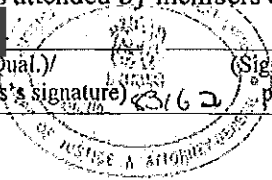
The preparation and planning undertaken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group in advance of and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 floods

In preparing and planning for the 2010/2011 floods, Emergency Management Queensland facilitated a cyclone and flood preparedness workshop in Rockhampton on the 14th of October 2010. This was attended by members of the Rockhampton

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

District Disaster Management Group, and representatives of the Central Highlands and Rockhampton Local Disaster Management groups. The potential gravity of the season was clearly articulated to all attendees and this was reinforced in closing by me as the District Disaster Coordinator.

The Rockhampton District Disaster Management Group met in November 2010 and early December 2010 to discuss legislative changes to the Disaster Management Act and how that would impact on the group. The group also discussed its membership representation (including deputy representatives) and identified the need to ensure representatives were appropriately authorised to represent their respective agencies. The contact details for all members of the group were updated during this period. The group agreed there was a need to meet more regularly and that they should undertake themed exercises at meetings. The exercise would be topical for the time of the year to include cyclones and floods by way of example.

The actions undertaken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management group in respect of the 2010/2011 floods in relation to immediate management, response and recovery operations

On 3 December 2010 heavy rain caused flashing flooding in the Gemfields and other areas of the Central Highlands. The localised flooding event was caused by the heavier than expected rainfall combined with very wet land conditions. The Nogoa River was 9.2m and rising. Sections of the Capricorn Highway west of Duaranga were closed along with the Bruce Highway at Marlborough.

By 6 December 2010 many of the main highways in the Central Highlands area were inaccessible due to flood water inundation. Rolleston was still isolated from rains during the last few days. At Rockhampton the Fitzroy River was 4.8m and falling and Fairbairn Dam was steady at 1.87m over the spillway.

On 10 December 2010 forecasted rainfall of up to 100mm was expected across Central Highlands and Capricornia. The Fitzroy River was 6.06m and rising slowly. The Rockhampton Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) activated Saturday 11/12/10 operating from 12noon to 5pm and Sunday 12/10/10 operating from 9am to 5pm to manage public enquiries.

The forecast rain event over the weekend left the Central Highlands area relatively unscathed and the Central Highlands Local Disaster Management Group (CHLDMG) continue recovery operations.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

By 13 December 2010 the Rockhampton City river gauge was at a height of 7.15m (minor flood level). Rockhampton Local Disaster Management Group (RLDMG) met at 8am and decided the LDCC would not be activated that stage. On 15 December 2010 the Central Highlands were continuing with recovery arrangements and the Rockhampton City river gauge was 7.55m and steady. BoM maintain predictions of a peak up to 7.8m (moderate flood level) at Rockhampton gauge was probable by Thursday 16/12/10 with levels remaining at above 7m until at least 21/12/10. The peak was reached on 16/12/10 at a level of 7.65m. Up to this point, the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) had maintained a watching brief during this time and did not stand up as there was no actions expected or required of the group.

On 27 December 2010 the Central Highlands LDMG activated with the LDCC operating for 24 hours a day with Fairbairn Dam 1.92m over the spillway. A minor flood level of 3.3m at Fairbairn Dam and 14m in Emerald was expected during the next 72hrs. These levels did not include forecasted heavy rainfall over the next 24-48hrs. The Fitzroy River had already reached minor flood level and was currently at 7.2m. Flooding predictions for Fitzroy River continued to be monitored by the Rockhampton LDMG.

On 28 December 2010 the DDMG moved from 'Alert' status and stood up. Four requests for assistance were received from the CHLDMG. Predictions indicated the Nogoia River would reach 14.5m by late Wednesday which would cut the Vince Lester Bridge in Emerald. Floodwaters in Rolleston area appeared to be the highest on record. The Comet River would close the Capricorn Highway mid afternoon and maybe the railway line. The Nogoia River was still rising with a predicted flood height of 4.5m over the spillway at Fairbairn Dam. The Vince Lester Bridge was likely to close at around 6pm on 29/12/10. Fairbairn Dam was currently 2.32m over the spillway.

The Rockhampton LDMG activated at 8am. Significant rainfall in the Mt Morgan area had created flash flooding overnight. The Rockhampton City river gauge was 7.75m and rising. Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) predictions indicated the Fitzroy River would reach 8m at the Rockhampton Gauge later that week and would continue rising. Major flood levels (of 8.5m) were possible early the following week.

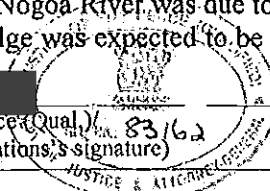
On the 29th of December 2010 it was apparent to me that this would be a significant event requiring my full time attention and accordingly I formally stepped down as Acting District Officer and performed the sole function of District Disaster Coordinator. A District Disaster Coordination Centre (DDCC) was set up at the premises located at the Department of Public Works.

The DDMG met at 1pm on 29 December 2010. The Premier, Minister, Deputy Commissioner Stewart and Honourable Robert Schwarten attended the DDMG meeting. The Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services signed the Disaster Declaration for the Rockhampton Disaster District including the Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council, Central Highlands Regional Council and Rockhampton Regional Council at 2:12pm. The Fairbairn Dam was projected to reach 5m over the spillway. The Nogoia River was due to peak at Emerald at midday on Friday. The Vince Lester Bridge was expected to be cut at 5pm. The rail bridge

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **PEFF, David William**

from one side of Emerald to the other would be cut by midday Friday. Emergency Alert messages were distributed. CHLDMG continued modelling and planning based on flood levels 300mm greater than the 2008 flood. Two evacuations centres had opened at the Agricultural College and Town Hall. BoM predicted major flood levels in excess of 8.5m and up to 9m were expected early the following week at Rockhampton. At 9m 150 homes were expected to be inundated and over 1000 houses impacted by yard water.

By 30 December 2010 three evacuation centres were established in Emerald. The CHLDMG were in the process of setting up 2 further evacuation centres at schools on western side of the river. Up to at least 2500 people were expected to be evacuated based on currently modelling. Current predictions indicated at least 80% of town would be impacted by water at varying levels. Emerald consists of approximately 13,000 to 14,000 people but it was unsure how many were actually in town over the holiday break. At that stage there were no concerns with utilities - power, sewerage and water. Rail across Nogoia River had closed at approximately 8am that morning. Road access was open north to Capella for 4WD and high vehicles. The airport was still open was not likely to be threatened. CHLDMG were expecting a peak of 16.2m.

In Rockhampton an evacuation centre at Central Queensland University was being established and would be advertised to the public from Friday. This facility could hold 600 people comfortably and up to 1200. Current predictions were indicating a 9.4+m height for the Fitzroy River. Road access to the airport would be restricted at 8.5m and the airport closes at 8.6m. Alternate sites for helicopter landings were identified for when the airport closed.

On 31 December 2010 the Nogoia River peaked in Emerald at 16.05m. Fairbairn Dam peaked at 5.65m over the spillway. All roads in and out of the Central Highlands region were closed. Approximately 80% of buildings in Emerald were inundated in some way. There was approximately 100mm of water through Woolworths Supermarket and the hospital was evacuated. The Rockhampton LDMG was planning for a 10+m flood and mapping for 10.5m. The group was planning for evacuations and a lengthy period of isolation. Weather was expected to deteriorate over weekend producing showers and some isolated thunderstorms which would not impact on river levels.

By 1 January 2011 the Nogoia River had dropped to 15.7m. The spillway at Fairbairn Dam had dropped 13cm from its peak. Water over Vince Lester Bridge has dropped 10cm from peak. The total number of people in evacuation centres was 508. Increases in evacuations were not expected at this stage. Approximately 1,000 houses suffered inundation inside at various levels. Approximately 3,000 houses had water in their yards 100% industrial had suffered partial or full water inundation. The Vince Lester Bridge was not expected to be out of the water until at least Tuesday. The Fitzroy River was 8.5m and was expected to be 9.4m by Wednesday. The Bruce Highway south closed at 7:40pm to all traffic. There were 16 persons in CQU evacuation centre and the airport ceased general and passenger movements as at 2:30pm. The airport remained available for emergency air operations. Floodwaters were moving quickly into flood plains surrounding Capricorn Highway.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

From 2 January 2011 CHLDMG began to assess the damage as floodwaters receded. A 250m washout was evident on the western approach to Rail Bridge which would require a substantial amount of restorative work before the railway bridge line would be serviceable again. QR National advised the line was predicted to be opened within 48 hours of waters receding. The Dawson River on Capricorn Highway is still 3.2m over bridge with the peak still expected. The Fitzroy River was currently at 8.7m with the Bruce and Capricorn Highways closed at Yeppen Roundabout with 500mm of water over road surface. Bruce Highway north was still open and had 900mm clearance. The airport is closed with the secondary runway 1/2 covered with water and the main runway having water at both ends. The airport was likely to be closed for up to 3 weeks.

By 5 January 2011 Central Highlands had moved well into clean up and recovery operations. The Central Highlands LDCC had now deactivated. There were still 224 persons in evacuation centres overnight and the CHLDMG were monitoring resupply in outlying areas. The Fairbairn Dam spillway had reduced to 1.92 metres. The river level at Emerald was 11.2m. A severe weather warning was issued at 11:10 am for heavy rainfall leading to localised flash flooding and potentially worsening the existing river flood situation for areas of Queensland. The Fitzroy River peaked at 9.2m and the Bruce Highway south remained closed but northern highway was still open. There were 97 persons in the evacuation centre at CQU.

On 7 January 2011 there were still 61 persons in Emerald evacuation centres. Rail access to Emerald would be delayed for some time due to significant damage to rail lines. Capricorn Highway Emerald to Dingo was open. Road from Emerald north to Capella and beyond were open. Resupply of rural properties in the Duaringa and Dingo localities was continuing under the direction of EMQ. In Rockhampton water levels remain high (9.15m) with levels likely to exceed the major flood level of 8.5m for up to seven days. The Bruce Highway north remains open and will remain so. There were 134 persons in the evacuation centre and Major General Michael Slater attended Rockhampton for a tour of the area with Mayor Carter.

Five days later on 12 January 2011 the Fairbairn Dam had dropped to 1.02m above the spillway. There were still 36 persons the remaining evacuation centre at the Agricultural College. Transport and Main Roads Department were undertaking repairs to the Dawson River Bridge on the Capricorn Highway east of Duaringa and expected the bridge to open by midday. The Fitzroy River had dropped to 8.9m The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin page one 'Where will our food come from' story caused renewed bouts of panic buying of food and fuel in Rockhampton. Panic buying created some resupply issues for local stores in Rockhampton, Gracemere, Yeppoon and Mt Morgan, however resupply was never in doubt or at risk.

On 14 January 2011 the Central Highlands was in full recovery mode and the cleanup was continuing. The Fitzroy River had dropped to 8.5m at 1pm and the Bruce Highway south at Yeppen Crossing was opened to all traffic at 4pm. The airport was expected to open from 24 January for emergency services and hopefully fully operational by 28 January.

On morning of 16 January 2011 there were 29 persons in Agricultural College evacuation centre. The evacuation centre would cease operations from today. Rental

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

accommodation and other facilities around Emerald had been sourced for all remaining evacuees. The Capricorn Highway at Gracemere remained closed until repairs could be completed to road surface.

Final response situation reports were completed on 17 January 2011 with 2 recovery situation reports completed on 18 and 19 January 2011. In Emerald a total of 1060 residences had floorboard inundation in Emerald was 1060. Outside Emerald township, 5 residences in Rolleston, 1 house in Springsure and Arcadia Valley School also had inundations. According to Council data bases the following land use classifications may have been affected to some extent by inundation as a result of this event:

- Aged Care/Nursing Homes - 16
 - Agriculture - 63
 - Business premises - 258
 - Community spaces/clubs - 161
 - Industry - 338
 - Livestock production/use - 791
 - Residences - 2858
 - Vacant parcels - 826
 - Schools - 3
- Total property parcels - 5314

Clean up and recovery operations are continuing in each local government area.

The actions undertaken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group in respect of the 2010/2011 floods in relation to resourcing, coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment

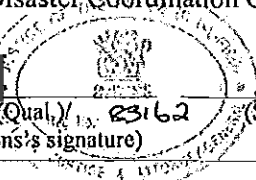
My role as DDC was to receive requests for assistance from the LDMG's in circumstances where the local group were unable to provide the appropriate level of resourcing, be it human or physical. I made an assessment of each request in the first instance and the request was referred to the relevant DDMG member to ascertain if the request could be met at the District level. If the request could not be met at the district level the request was then forwarded to the State Disaster Coordination Centre for action. A total of 24 requests for assistance were received from the Central Highlands LDMG and fifteen requests for assistance were received from the Rockhampton LDMG.

The decision making in relation to all requests remained with me as the District Disaster Coordinator, however coordination, logging and tracking of the requests was facilitated through the District Disaster Coordination Centre which was managed by the Executive Officer to the DDC.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

Measures taken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group to manage, maintain or reinstate the supply of essential services (water, power and communications) during the 2010/2011 floods

The DDMG responded to requests for assistance from the LDMG and provided assistance when required. All requests for assistance were approved by me.

Measures taken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group to inform the community about the 2010/2011 flood events and the response thereto

At the DDMG meeting chaired by me in November 2010, a media strategy was discussed by the membership. In my capacity as the DDC, I recommended to the group that in any future response to a disaster, I would be the spokesperson for the management group as a whole. I further recommended that any statements or comments that I made would be reflective of the groups decision making, however individual members would be able to make comments relative to their area of responsibility. An example of this was the Transport and Main Roads representative provided daily interviews to media outlets on road conditions, including road closures. The group agreed with this proposal and accordingly this is the strategy the DDMG took into the response to this flood.

As the DDC, I requested that a full time member of the Queensland Police Service travel to Rockhampton to manage all media commitments expected of me in my role as DDC. Christopher Loy subsequently was deployed to Rockhampton. The Rockhampton Regional Council employed a media manager who worked on behalf of the Mayor of Rockhampton and managed all media commitments for him. Chris Loy was tasked to work in conjunction with the council media manager to handle all media requests.

One strategy employed to provide information to the community involved a media conference at 1000 hours every day at council chambers. Prior to the media conference the Mayor and I would discuss what message needed to be put out to the community and what elements of the message would be provided by each of us. In

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

addition to this structured media conference, a number of others media interviews were provided on request, however these were administered by Chris Loy.

In addition to this I also did a number of pre-recorded messages that the Queensland Police Service used on its facebook web page. Each afternoon Chris Loy would summarise the days' activities or key messages that needed to get to the public and these were released through the police media unit as official QPS media releases.

A critical communication message that was identified was the need to inform affected householders about the facts surrounding the disconnection and reconnection of power to houses. At a Rockhampton LDMG meeting I recommended that the LDCC contact each resident individually to inform individuals about electricity supply issues. The LDMG reported back that all residents who could be contacted using all available means of intelligence holdings had been contacted and provided with advice.

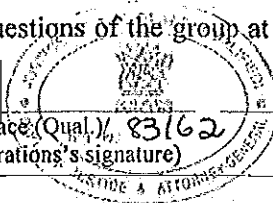
Nature and timing of all communications between the District Disaster Coordinator and/or the District Disaster Management Group and the Local Disaster Management Group and/or the Local Disaster Management Coordinator relative to the 2010/2011 flood events.

The primary method of communication with Central Highlands LDMG during the 2010/2011 flood event was by telephone. This was primarily due to the fact that the Central Highlands LDMG is based some 280 km west of Rockhampton where the DDMG is based, and access to Emerald during the floods was only by air. Daily teleconference sit rep briefings were provided by the Central Highlands LDMG to the Rockhampton DDMG at 1300 hours each day. This informed the DDMG of the actions on the LDMG and all members of the DDMG were afforded an opportunity to make inquiries with the LDMG on matters of interest or concern. All requests for assistance or information were made by the LDMG in writing. Communication between the LDMG and the DDCC was dependant upon the needs of each group.

The Rockhampton LDMG met at 0800 hours each day for the entire period of the floods. As DDC I attended every meeting. I was able to obtain information from those meetings that gave me an understanding of the strategic and tactical decision making of the group. I asked questions of the group at each meeting, and provided

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

direction to the group in terms of advice as opposed to instruction. I was able to pre-empt issues and cause inquiries to be made of the DDMG on possible requests for assistance that may be forthcoming. The Mayor of Rockhampton as chair of the Rockhampton LDMG attended the daily DDMG meetings and provided a briefing to the DDMG in the same way as the Central Highlands LDMG provided a briefing. The format was the same and the ability to ask questions was the same.

Informal and unplanned communications took place between myself and the two mayors on a needs basis. This was generally to clarify issues arising from formal briefings, or requesting information to be included in their daily briefings.

In addition to the verbal briefings provided by the LDMG's, a written SITREP was emailed to the DDCC each day by 1500 hours. The information contained in this STIREP was used to assist in the formulation of the District SITREP to the State.

Nature and timing of all communications between the District Disaster Coordinator and/or the District Disaster Management Group and the State Disaster Management Group and/or the State Disaster Management Coordination Committee and/or the State Disaster Coordinator relative to the 2010/2011 flood events.

Communication with the state group was regular during the flood event. Teleconferences were conducted, sometimes twice daily, with both the SDMG and SDCC. In addition, as DDC I was regularly contacted by the SDCC by telephone. All requests for assistance were submitted in writing.

Availability and provision of services or logistical support within the disaster management hierarchy before and during the 2010/2011 flood events, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.

As DDC in Rockhampton, the provision of information, advice and logistical support was provided upon my request. The model for disaster management is a bottom up approach and when this was followed, I found all aspects to be adequate and timely.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

Involvement with Commonwealth agencies, including but not limited to Emergency Management Australia or the Australian Defence Force, in relation to the provision of emergency response measure, personnel, equipment or services including an assessment of the adequacy or timeliness thereof.

The Rockhampton DDMG has an ADF Liaison Officer. This liaison officer was located in the Rockhampton DDCC and I had contact with the Liaison Officer on a daily basis including discussions regarding the provision ADF assets. I received excellent support from the ADF Liaison Officer and found the support to be adequate and timely. At the height of the response phase, the military assets based in Rockhampton (including Blackhawk helicopters) were able to be tasked directly by me without the need to forward a DACC request to the state group. This was of great assistance in the timely provision of services to the community.

Assessment of the adequacy of equipment and communications systems in the District during the 2010/2011 flood event.

All equipment including communication systems utilised during the flood event were adequate for the needs of the District, although it was only to a minimum standard. Issues such as the adequacy of the DDCC and DDMG meeting place have been subject of a debrief of the Rockhampton DDMG. It was agreed that there is potential for improvement in this area, and the group are exploring alternative locations for any future disaster. The use of video conferencing would significantly improve the functionality of the DDMG and LDMG's.

An assessment of the adequacy of the community's response in the district during the 2010/2011 flood events.

The community responded well to this event. The good will of the people in Emerald was evident throughout the event. The level of cooperation and compliance was high and no issues of negativity were brought to my attention.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: PEFF, David William

Similarly, the community of Rockhampton responded well in general terms. There were some issues of disquiet, however these were addressed by the LDMG. The greatest challenge for the LDMG and DDMG during the Rockhampton floods was the community making comparisons with the 1991 floods which were very similar in height. The challenge for authorities was to get a message to the community that each flood is different and it was erroneous to align expectations of this flood with a previous flood. The significant length of this flood impacted on the good will of the community.

Circumstances of any human fatality within the District, including the measures taken to prevent and/or response to any such fatality, during the 2010/2011 flood events.

There were no flood related fatalities within the Rockhampton Disaster District during the 2010/2011 flood event.

Measures taken within the District to protect private and public property and/or preserve vital infrastructure in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events.

Significant resources, both human and physical were brought to the Rockhampton and Emerald areas to assist in the policing of private and public property. A separate logistics cell was developed to ensure appropriate taskings were carried out at both areas. The logistics cell was responsible for the appropriate provisioning of all operational aspects of the police response. This included items such as vehicles, police vessels, replacement uniforms, meals, accommodation and air transport of staff in and out of Rockhampton and Emerald. As DDC I overviewed and directed taskings to specifically target looting type offences. At the conclusion of the flooding events analysis found that there were no property related offences committed in any flood affected area.

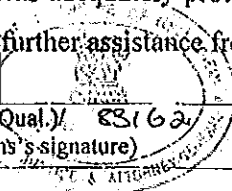
Vital infrastructure that was at risk was adequately protected through the actions of the LDMG's and did not require any further assistance from the district.

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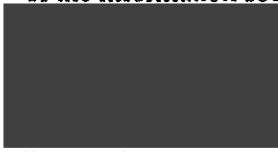
Special consideration that should be given to the District by reason of particular regional or geographic differences.

There are no regional or geographic differences for the Rockhampton Disaster District which would require special consideration.

Features of the disaster preparation and planning stages or the disaster response and recovery operation which, in the opinion of the District Disaster Coordinator presented particular difficulty or may require practical or legislative changes to improve future disaster management in the District.

The transition from response to recovery is covered in legislation, however in an operational or practical sense it is quite blurred and the role of the DDC is not totally clear.

The information contained in this statement is provided on the basis of the knowledge, information and material currently available to me and my interpretation of the information sought by the requirement at this point in time.



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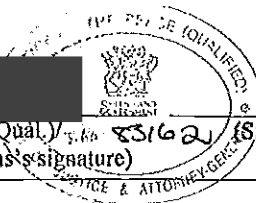
Inspector



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