

22 December 2011

The Executive Director
Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry
400 George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear [REDACTED]

Your Reference: 1808133

I refer to your letter addressed to [REDACTED], Assistant Crown Solicitor, Crown Law dated 20 December 2011.

I offer my sincere apologies for misinterpreting what was required by your earlier correspondence. Thank you for providing a further opportunity for QFRS to clarify the entries on the schedule which is attachment "LAJ – 1" to Commissioner Johnson's statement, and to provide more detail of QFRS' response in Grantham.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to better explain why the ICC crews were referred to in the spreadsheet provided, what an incident control centre is, and how it operates.

I have also included answers to your specific questions, which have been of assistance. Please be assured, I am keen to ensure that all relevant information in the possession of QFRS is made available to you.

The following calls for assistance, included in attachment "LAJ – 1", were initially logged with the Fire Communications Centre and entered on the Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch (ESCAD) system. This created an incident number (e.g. QF6-11-002910), a priority, and generated a job for a fire crew to respond.

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Incident	Time call received by FireComm
QF6-11-002910	16.39.26
QF6-11-002919	16.51.38
QF6-11-002921	16.56.25
QF6-11-002922	16.57.42
QF6-11-002933	17.11.53
QF6-11-002971	18.20.36
QF6-11-003032	19.30.14
QF6-11-003013	19.31.16
QF6-11-003017	19.43.20
QF6-11-003024	19.55.44
QF6-11-003036	20.27.56

The Fire Communications Supervisors for the Fire Communications Centre (South East) who were on duty on 10 January 2011 were [REDACTED] – Night Shift and Cameran Spalding – Day Shift.

At approximately 16:58 hours, the Fire Communications Centre checked with four different fire vehicles (call-signs 673A, 675Y, Hattonvale 53 and Hattonvale 52), to see if they were able to access Grantham by road. The recordings of these calls (electronically and transcribed) are attached and marked “Attachment 1A” and “Attachment 1B”. Those vehicles were attempting (via differing routes) to access Grantham, and each vehicle advised that they were not able to access Grantham as they had been cut off by flood waters.

At this time, it was no longer possible for FireComm (South East) to task particular fire crews to respond to incidents in Grantham.

An Incident Control Centre was set up and operational from approximately 19:15 hours (7:15pm), due to the scale of the response required. FireComm provided a faxed list of outstanding incidents to the ICC at approximately 19:43 hours (7:43pm). It contains 8 of the 11 incidents (3 incidents were received on, or after, this time). A copy of this document is attached, and now includes the reference to the FireComm incident number. See “Attachment 2”. This list is attachment “LAJ-10” to the Commissioner’s statement.

The term “ICC Crew” was entered on the spreadsheet by the FireComm Analysis Team to denote that the incident had been referred to the Gatton Incident Control Centre for response.

As Station Officer (“SO”) Mark Stephenson was the Operations Officer in the ICC, it was his role to task and direct the crews in Grantham. He was assisted by the Gatton ICC incident controller [REDACTED].

SO Mark Stephenson has advised me that the following operational methodology was used or applied in coordinating the response during the above period:

- 1) The most effective and efficient way of tasking and accounting for crews on the fireground, due to nature of the flooding events was, that QFRS personnel were broken into swift water teams, comprising of Level 2 Swift Water Rescue Technicians and other QFRS operational staff.

The vehicle and crew in each team are detailed in the attached table marked "**Attachment 3**".

Other personnel were operationally active in the surrounds of Grantham, whilst not necessarily working in the flooded environment of Grantham. A table detailing all personal responding from the Gatton ICC was attachment "LAJ-3" of the Commissioner's statement, and is attached again (for your convenience) and marked "**Attachment 4**".

[Note: there was some overlap of geographical area by crews, and there may have been minor crew changes throughout the night, as a result of operational requirements.]

- 2) Station Officer Phil Paff was the nominated point of contact between Swift water teams 2 and 3, and the ICC. SO Stephenson communicated with SO Paff by way of mobile telephone to facilitate tasking of the outstanding incidents. Swift water team 1 liaised with the ICC directly.
- 3) Whilst completing the outstanding the FireComm incidents (refer to "**Attachment 2**"), Swift water teams also systematically conducted house-to-house search and rescue operations, providing assistance to residents in each street as required. As tasks were completed, this was reported to SO Stephenson at the ICC.

For example, incidents: QF6-11-002922, QF6-11-002971, QF6-11-003032 and QF6-11-003013 all had an incident address of Harris Street. Swift water team 3 conducted a house-to-house search of Harris Street in its entirety, conducting rescues.

This action ensured that all of the outstanding FireComm incidents in that location had been attended, as well as the area being checked for persons needing immediate assistance. Details of the other Swift water teams, who attended the balance of the incident locations, are detailed in the table marked "**Attachment 4**".

- 4) Crews were sent to the streets where the incidents were reported rather than being tasked to specific addresses, as the operations were being conducted at night and in a flooded location (with most homes still submerged to varying degree and having suffered enormous damage). This made house identification by specific street number extremely difficult. A map showing the areas that each Swift water team operated in is attached and marked “Attachment 5”.

Several of the fire-fighters involved have given statements regarding their involvement in the search and rescue operations, and I have highlighted those parts relevant to Grantham and the actions described above. Those statements are attached and marked as follows:

Name	Attachment Number
Station Officer Phil Paff	“Attachment 6”
Fire-fighter Nathan Chadwick	“Attachment 7”
Fire-fighter Mark Meier	“Attachment 8”
Station Officer Brad Mills	“Attachment 9”
Fire-fighter Andrew Neil	“Attachment 10”
Station Officer Russell Von Nider	“Attachment 11”
Fire-fighter Shane Bretz	“Attachment 12”

[Note: Some of the above statements were taken internally for the purpose of formally recognising the efforts of crews.]

In relation to your other specific questions relating to the eleven incidents responded to by an ICC Crew.

1. Did a crew (s) in fact attend the incident?

Swift water team 1: comprising of Swift Water Rescue Technicians Brad Mills and Andrew Neil attended incident: QF6-11-002910.

Swift water team 2: comprising of Swift Water Rescue Technicians Phil Paff, Nathan Chadwick, Russell Von-Nider and Shane Bretz, and auxiliary fire-fighters Mark Meier, Mark Dionysius and Neil Barrett attended incidents: QF6-11-002919 and QF6-11-002921.

Swift water team 3: comprising of Swift Water Rescue Technicians [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] attended incidents: QF6-11-002922, QF6-11-002933, QF6-11-002971, QF6-11-003032, QF6-11-003013, QF6-11-003017, QF6-11-003024, QF6-11-003036.

2 (a). From what station was it (they) drawn?

The table at “**Attachment 3**” provides a detailed breakdown of each crew member and the station at which they are usually based.

[Note: the crews may have been formed by fire-fighters from different stations]

2 (b) and (c). When did it (they) attend, and with what result (s)?

Due to issues with the QFRS operational software systems (EIAP) in the ICC, there is no electronic record of the time that each job was completed, or the specific actions undertaken at that job.

However, I have reviewed statements provided by fire officers and obtained information from officers present, during the events of 10 January. Although it is difficult to ascertain the specific time when a particular incident was completed, all the incidents were completed by approximately 1.00am.

The table at “**Attachment 4**” provides a detailed breakdown of the incident, crew, time and outcome .

Future action

QFRS has reviewed its operational procedures for large scale incidents and introduced a new *Standing Order: Recording of Data for Large Scale Incidents* for major and complex events, such as those experienced in January this year. See “**Attachment 13.**”

Once a “Large Scale Incident” has been classified as such, the procedure now provides for an Operations Management System (OMS) operator [to manage crewing of vehicle details] and a Fire Communications Officer [to operate the Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch (ESCAD)] to provide staffing support at the Incident Control Centre.

The provision of a Fire Communications Officer will provide for dispatch, arrival and job details to be recorded directly into the ESCAD system, rather than relying on other means.

In addition, the provision of Fire Communication Officers with ESCAD access in ICCs, will allow Incident Management Teams to view “real time job information” as it appears in the ESCAD system. It is anticipated that these changes will improve the QFRS recording and response systems in the event of major incidents.

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I can assure you that QFRS is committed to recognising opportunities for improvement and building upon them in the future. Once again, I apologise for any inconvenience, and please don't hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely



Iain S Mackenzie AFSM
Acting Commissioner

Transcript of FireComm (South East) wordback soundfile of 10/01/2011

Starts.

FireComm South East, 643 Alpha, over.

FireComm South East 673 Alpha, over.

673 Alpha replying, over.

673 Alpha we have multiple jobs in Grantham. Do you believe that Grantham is accessible via any of the roads in the area, over?

FireComm, 673 Alpha. It's not accessible via Gatton. I did see a Yankee heading in that direction from Helidon. I believe 675 Yankee, but they were unable to pass. You will have to confirm with them, over.

Right your message received. FireComm South East, 675 Yankee, over.

This is 675 Yankee. That's affirmative. We were unable to reach Grantham. If you get onto – we are responding to another job with 675 Alpha at the moment. If you get onto Hattonvale 53, I believe they may have found a way into Grantham, over.

Right your message received. FireComm South East Hattonvale 53, over.

FireComm South East Hattonvale 53. Ah yeah, we made an attempt to get into Grantham via Lawlers Road. Ah we were unable to, however I believe Hattonvale 52 has proceeded in that direction and got through, over.

Roger FireComm South East Hattonvale 52, over.

[unintelligible]

Hattonvale 52, confirm that Grantham is accessible, over.

Hattonvale 52. We got as far as Placid Hills and got turned around, over.

Roger. Confirming Grantham is unaccessible to QFRS appliances 17.00.

FireComm South East Lockyer Creek control, over.

Go ahead Lockyer Creek control.

FireComm could you have Helitak contact swift water rescue team on portable radio Channel 5, over.

This is FireComm South East to Helitak 552, over.

Yeah go ahead. We copied that. Channel 5.

That's affirmative.

Roger. Can you confirm who are we contacting? Just the name of the contact.

FireComm to Helitak. It's 676 Alpha, over.

676 Alpha.

That affirmative.

Ends.

Firecom No	Address	Swift Water Team Tasked
QF6-11-002910	Gatton Helidon Road – [REDACTED] Anzac Ave Grantham	SW1
QF6-11-002919	[REDACTED] Railway Street Grantham	SW2
QF6-11-002921	[REDACTED] William Street Grantham	SW2
QF6-11-002922	[REDACTED] Harris Street Grantham	SW3
QF6-11-002933	[REDACTED] Grantham Winwill Road	SW3 (2139 tasked – incident log)
QF6-11-002971	[REDACTED] Harris Street	SW3
QF6-11-003032	[REDACTED] Harris Street.	SW3
QF6-11-003013	[REDACTED] Harris Street	SW3
QF6-11-003017	[REDACTED] Robinsons Road Gatton	SW3 before they left for Grantham – verbally cleared and advised
QF6-11-003024	[REDACTED] Anzac Avenue Grantham	SW3
QF6-11-003036	[REDACTED] Anzac Avenue	SW3

Swiftwater Rescue Team 1 (SWR1) Station Officer Brad Mills (Special Operations Unit Cannon Hill SWR Level 2), Firefighter Andrew Neil (Special Operations Unit Cannon Hill SWR Level 2)

Swiftwater Rescue Team 2 (SWR2) Station Officer Phil Paff (Ipswich SWR Level 2), Nathan Chadwick (Ipswich SWR Level 2) (then moved to SW3), Station Officer Russell Von Nida (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), Firefighter Shane Bretz (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), Mark Meir (Rosewood Auxiliary Lieutenant Mark Meir SWR Level 1), [REDACTED] (Rosewood Auxiliary Firefighter) [REDACTED] (Rosewood Auxiliary Firefighter)

Swiftwater Rescue Team 3 (SWR 3) Firefighter [REDACTED] (Ipswich SWR Level 2), Firefighter [REDACTED] (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), [REDACTED] (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), [REDACTED] (Rosewood Auxiliary Captain and Ipswich Senior Firefighter SWR Level 2) .

Firecom No	Address	Swift Water Team Tasked	Time	Action
QF6-11-002910	Gatton Helidon Road - [REDACTED] Anzac Ave Grantham	SW1	From 18:00	<p>[43] We began travelling down the Helidon Grantham road and began to see signs of devastation such as heavy vehicles strewn across the road, containers scattered across the road the road and immediate area.</p> <p>[44] I used a large spot light that we have in the truck that is very powerful and began using it to sweep paddocks and we began to see people moving through paddocks and were in obvious distress. I assume that we were the first people they had seen.</p> <p>[48] We met up with a couple of young men...who had rescued an elderly woman and they asked us if we could transport them to a place of safety. Phil and I then transported her back out towards the Gatton-bypass road and we then came across a small convoy of QFRS swift waters rescue crews from Ipswich and Beenleigh the Rosewood auxiliaries.”</p> <p>(Attachment 7: Statement of Nathan Chadwick, paragraphs 43, 44 and 48)</p> <p>[71] During out search located a rural fire service vehicle in flood water. This was branded “Grantham 51”</p> <p>[Note, this was the rural fire vehicle where deceased family members of a rural fire brigade member was found].</p> <p>[73] ...senior officers, who were apparently present in the QFRS south eastern Regional Operations Centre. I reported my discovery to them. This conversation took place, in my estimate,</p>

				<p>between 2330 hours on the 10th January and midnight.</p> <p>[79] <i>At about 0230 hours on the 11th of January, I was relieved by an additional swift water rescue crew...</i></p> <p>(Attachment 6: Statement of Phil Paff)</p>
QF6-11-002919	<p>██████████ Railway Street Grantham</p>	SW2	20:30	<p><i>"We were able to enter the water and approach and get persons in houses and buildings in the <u>Railway Street, Anzac Avenue and Williams Street area.</u>" (Attachment 9: Statement of Bradley Mills, page 6)</i></p> <p><i>"We located numerous houses and vehicles and located several more survivors and assist them to safety over the course of the evening.</i></p> <p><i>At approximately 0100 hours on Tuesday 11th January 2011, I returned to the Rosewood Fire Station and booked off duty.</i></p> <p>(Attachment 8: Statement of Mark Meier, paragraphs 29 and 30.)</p>
QF6-11-002921	<p>██████████ William Street Grantham</p>	SW2		
QF6-11-002922	<p>██████████ Harris Street Grantham</p>	SW3	21:30	<p><i>"Harris Street – Checked OK". See Incident Log 10-11-11</i></p> <p><i>Myself ██████████ and ██████████ I proceeded with our IWP into the intersection of Anzac Avenue and Harris Street. The water was still quite deep and flowing very quickly.</i></p> <p>[60] <i>We completed Harris street and proceeded back down to the Gatton Helidon Road and by this stage it was completely dark at around 7:00pm-8:00pm at night.</i></p>

					<p>[61] We then began searching along toward William street from the centre of town.</p> <p>[64] We decided that they would continue to search down Williams Street and we decided to head down Anzac avenue where the other crew had been tasked with some jobs...</p> <p>(Attachment 7: Statement of Nathan Chadwick, paragraphs 43, 44 and 48)</p>
QF6-11-002933	██████████ Grantham Winwill Road	SW3 (2139 tasked – incident log)	2139	2 Persons Winwill Rd 635K and 673A' - See Incident Log 10/01/2011	
QF6-11-002971	██████████ Harris Street	SW3		See incident QF6-11-002922.	
QF6-11-003032	██████████ Harris Street.	SW3		See Above.	
QF6-11-003013	██████████ Harris Street	SW3		See Above.	
QF6-11-003017	██████████ Robinsons Road Gatton	SW3 before they left for Grantham – verbally cleared and advised	21:30	Checked. See Incident Log 10/01/2011.	
QF6-11-003024	██████████ Anzac Avenue Grantham	SW3	20:30	'...At about 2030hours, the water was dropping and we decided to enter the water to rescue people from <u>Railway and William Streets and Anzac Avenue</u> . Although the water had dropped it was still chest high and still flowing rapidly with debris including a big piece of irrigation pipe which we were able to use to stabilise ourselves. Power lines were also down and in the water and we were unsure if they were live or not. At this point we were operating in the dark with headlamps. We then went to the house and escorted 15 people from separate houses.	

				<i>We all linked arms and proceeded to a safe area identified by the locals that we were rescuing. We continued to operate that night until approximately 0230hours on 11 January 2011.'</i> (Attachment 10: Statement of Andrew Neil, page 3)
QF6-11-003036	██████████ Anzac Avenue	SW3	20:30	See above.

Note: Where the table refers to 'Incident Log' it refers to a document that was Exhibit "LAJ-14" to the statement of Commissioner Lee Johnson dated 12 December 2011. A copy is attached to this table to ease of reference.

Swift Water Rescue Teams

Swiftwater Rescue Team 1 (SWR1) Station Officer Brad Mills (Special Operations Unit Cannon Hill SWR Level 2), Firefighter Andrew Neil (Special Operations Unit Cannon Hill SWR Level 2)

Swiftwater Rescue Team 2 (SWR2) Station Officer Phil Paff (Ipswich SWR Level 2), Nathan Chadwick (Ipswich SWR Level 2) (then moved to SW3), Station Officer Russell Von Nida (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), Firefighter Shane Bretz (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), Mark Meir (Rosewood Auxiliary Lieutenant Mark Meir SWR Level 1), Mark Dionysius (Rosewood Auxiliary Fire-fighter), ██████████ (Rosewood Auxiliary Fire-fighter)

Swiftwater Rescue Team 3 (SWR 3) Firefighter ██████████ (Ipswich SWR Level 2), Firefighter ██████████ (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), ██████████ (Beenleigh SWR Level 2), ██████████ (Rosewood Auxiliary Captain and Ipswich Senior Firefighter SWR Level 2) .



INCIDENT LOG

Date: 10-1-11

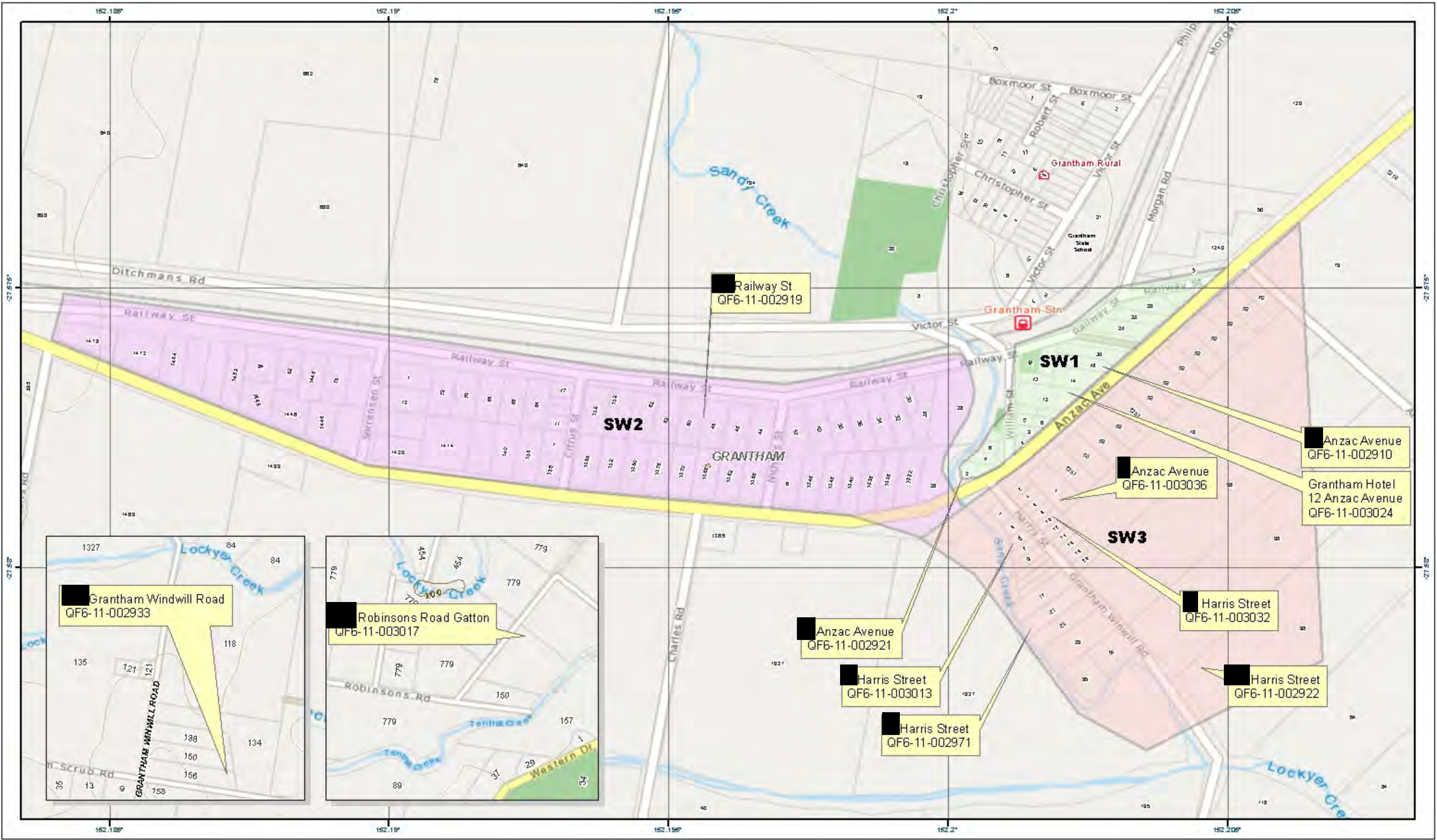
Incident: GATTON

Location: GATTON FIRE STATION

INCFORM 35

Name / Function:

Time	In / Out	Name / Unit	Important Notes	Action Required (Yes / No)
21-30		HARRIS ST GRANTHAM	CHECKED) OK	
21-30		^{ROBINSON} ROBERTSON Rd GATTON	CHECKED) SAFE	
21-30		LAWLER ST GRANTHAM	CHECKING	
2130		¹³⁶⁵ GRANTHAM/HELDON Rd	1-F.C.	
2139		2 PERSONS WINWILL Rd	635K + 673A.	
2147		MURPHY'S CRK 41	1472 MURPHY'S CRK Rd.	
2157		676A - 677E	21 LOCKROSE Rd PEOPLE IN HOUSE	
22.00		678 - 677A	Sent Back to STATION	
2205		GATTON 91	9 Person moved to local Pub.	
2210		MADE CONTACT [REDACTED] ANZAC AV (ALL GOOD)		
2220		Heldow Grantham Rd 6734		
2225		IN Route to Pick up chopper Pails.		JG00
2228		675A Move truck to side Road to let SES/QPS through		
2230		Sitrep on ALL Pumps in Grantham.		
2231		677E Sitrep		
2235		6734 Found 6 Persons Heldow Grantham Rd 1365		
2236		GATTON 91 what Truck so Puffie is on		
2238		Murphy creek 4:1 will Page if Req		
2240		JG00 Pails have already transported.		
2245		673A NO ACCESS will will Rd.		
2250		640K here to Rd Lawler Rd.		
2251		GATTON 91 2nd to GATTON 91 location		
2253		640K GDCB appliance stock take.		
2300		evacuated 15 IM IC from Pub.		
2305		4 People evacuated from [REDACTED] willow to school.		
2300		No Access all return to GATTON ICC		
2305		640K is doing sitrep on all truck in area.		
2310		676A code 4 Back to 46.		
2315		2 swiftwater Men going in to grantham in Backhoe		
2320		2 ELDER couple at GATTON 91		
2325		1 Police Sq at school with Personal.		
2320		640K. Please Ring [REDACTED]		
2325		2 Person staying at 3 Railway St		



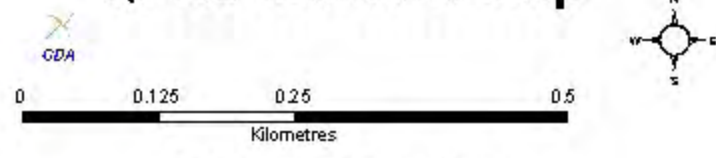
Disclaimer:
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QFRS GIS
 Queensland
 Emergency Services

Grantham 10th January 2011 QFRS Incident Map



- IGWN
- Rural Station
- Index Contour
- Contour

Map Produced: 21/12/2011
 Map Request Number: R11-705
 Email: qfrs@qld.gov.au

Note: Grid co-ordinates are shown as decimal degrees.

Attachments 6 to 12 of this statement have been published as separate statements.