



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: 2 Date: 21/04/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: MCDONALD, Keith William

Date of birth: Age: Occupation: Police Officer

Police officer taking statement

Name: MCDONALD, Keith William

Rank: Inspector Reg. no.: 4005930

Region/Command/Division: Southern Region Station: Ipswich District

Statement:

Keith William McDonald states:

I am Inspector of Police, currently employed within the Ipswich District. I commenced duty within the Ipswich District on 31 January 2011.

During the Brisbane Flood of 2011, I was the Acting District Officer for the Oxley District performing all the duties of this position. The Oxley District is part of the Metropolitan South Region which also comprises the South Brisbane District and Wynnum District.

Superintendent Matthew Vanderbyl was the District Officer for the South Brisbane District during the Brisbane Flood. Superintendent Vanderbyl and myself reported flood related issues to the District Disaster Coordinator, Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin during the Brisbane Flood. Chief Superintendent Kerry Dunn was Assistant Commissioner Martin's assistant during the Brisbane Flood. The role of the District Officer, Oxley District was to support the Disaster District Coordinator in the facilitation of the disaster response for that particular area of the Brisbane City Council or Local Council Disaster area.

Exhibit Number: 375
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During the Brisbane Flood, except for the initial Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) meeting, which I attended, Superintendent Vanderbyl and myself established our own communications for LDMG purposes. Due to the difficulty in attending meetings in the Brisbane Central Business District, any issue I wished raised I would advise Superintendent Vanderbyl who would raise the matter with Assistant Commissioner Martin. At the conclusion of the daily LDMG meeting, Superintendent Vanderbyl would advise of priority matters, identified issues, resolutions and direction of the LDMG objectives. Superintendent Vanderbyl and me would liaise at other times during the day to identify concerns or issues which were impacting on our respective areas.

Normal operational requirements were required to be maintained and usual channels of command were followed during the Brisbane Flood. During normal operational requirements any major incident which occurs is firstly advised to the Operations Coordinator who during the Brisbane Flood was Acting Chief Superintendent Tony Cross.

During the Brisbane Flood the areas within the Oxley District which were affected included the Centenary suburbs, the suburbs of Chelmer, Graceville, Sherwood, Corinda, Oxley, Rocklea, Willawong, Wacol and the industrial areas of Wacol, Sumner and Rocklea. The areas of the Oxley District affected were south of the Brisbane River between Wacol and Yeerongpilly and the areas in proximity of Oxley Creek.

On Tuesday 11 January 2011 I attended a Local District Management Group meeting which was conducted at the Brisbane City Council offices. An extensive number of emergency service agencies were present along with major external and internal stakeholders. This meeting provided advice on the anticipated flood level expected at the City Reach over the next 3 days and the potential flooding in low lying areas.

At the conclusion of this meeting I returned to the Oxley District Office and in discussions with District Management and Officers in Charge established a Major Incident Room (MIR). This MIR would commence immediately and operate 24

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hours per day until further advice was received. This office was established at the Tactical Crime Squad Office at the Oxley District Police Headquarters. A Forward Command Post (FCP) was also established and staffed at Mt Ommaney to focus on evacuation issues relevant to the divisions of Mt Ommaney, Sherwood and Moorooka (Northern Divisions).

The outcome of this meeting re-established the objective to maintain core operational requirements and ensure the flood response had minimal impact on this need. The major concern during the initial stages of the Brisbane Flood was the safe evacuation of residential suburbs which were likely to be affected by the rising waters. It was anticipated that a number of residential suburbs within the Oxley District would be inundated in varying degrees. Areas of suburbs which were evacuated would then have to be patrolled to reduce possible criminal activity.

Resources available for evacuation across the 3 Northern Divisions included Surf Life Saving Association (SLSA) personnel (varied between 10 - 20 dependant on the day), State Emergency Service (SES) personnel (maximum of two vessels but majority of time, one vessel), Wynnum District Water Police (one vessel) and Swift Water Rescue personnel (from Queensland Fire and Rescue Service). SLSA personnel were unable to assist during the night period as their vessels did not have night navigation capabilities. The vessels available included inflatable rescue boat (IRB), rigid inflatable boat (RIB) and jet skis.

These personnel were also tasked as required to patrol inundated areas during the recovery phase on Thursday 13 January 2011 and Friday 14 January 2011. After the available resources were identified and tasked for the evacuation and associated response, planning began to commence for the recovery phase once the anticipated peak of the Brisbane River had been reached.

On Thursday 13 January 2011, the recovery phase commenced as flood waters commenced to recede. The FCP at Mt Ommaney was closed on Thursday 13 January 2011 and a "flood controller", who had responsibility for liaising with staff in the Northern Divisions, was implemented.

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On Thursday 13 January 2011 a request was received for 22 personnel from the Oxley District to be made available to form "looting" patrols in conjunction with staff from interstate Police Services. These staff were required from Tuesday 18 January 2011 to commence these patrols in flood affected areas.

On Friday 14 January 2011 at about 1.00pm, I received a telephone call from Acting Chief Superintendent Cross who advised that as a result of that day's LDMG meeting the Brisbane Markets on Sherwood Road were identified as critical infrastructure for the State of Queensland. The supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to Queensland households was to recommence as a priority. Acting Superintendent Cross requested I contact the management of the Brisbane Markets and provide all assistance required to ensure this occurred. A short time later, Superintendent Vanderbyl contacted me and advised me of the same matters.

At this stage, floodwaters had receded in some areas, but access to numerous areas was still not possible due to flood waters which remained. On this Friday, the Ipswich Motorway from Oxley to Moorooka had not re-opened and was in the process of being cleared of debris and cleaned and the surface inspected to ensure traffic would be able to traverse this section of the Motorway.

I contacted the Operations Manager for the Brisbane Markets, Mr Jessie Field a short time later and had a conversation with him. Mr Field advised that due to the level of inundation on the site, alternative venues were being considered to enable the temporary distribution of fruit and vegetables. Mr Field also advised that there would be a number of trucks attempting to access the Brisbane Markets later that afternoon. Upon their arrival at the Brisbane Markets the vehicles would then travel in convoy to the temporary distribution venue.

Due to the number of road closures which still existed I consulted with Oxley District Traffic personnel on a proposed course of action. Firstly, to have the trucks attend a prearranged location at a specific time and then have the trucks escorted to

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the Brisbane Markets on an appropriate route. Further the vehicles would then have to be escorted from the Brisbane Markets to the temporary distribution venue.

During that afternoon I had numerous discussions with Mr Field. At 5.15pm I attended the Brisbane Markets and held discussions with Mr Field, the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Young and the Assistant Operations Manager, Mr Pat Buckley. I was advised that the temporary distribution venue was not a viable option due to the number of roads which were still inaccessible. It was also considered by these persons that an extensive amount of their equipment had been damaged and transporting this equipment to an alternative venue would be time consuming and leave the existing site with minimal equipment. Further, a suitable alternative site was becoming increasingly difficult to locate.

It was decided that the rehabilitation of the existing site would continue and that the site initially would be established as a distribution centre operating from the Central Trading Area of the complex which is surrounded by Buildings, A, B, C and D. The management of the Brisbane Markets sought assistance from me of Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel to assist with the clean up of the site and also the Brisbane City Council with the cleaning of Sherwood Road.

Access to the Brisbane Markets site at this stage was extremely limited. No traffic could travel westbound along Sherwood Road past the Brisbane Markets due to flooding near the Oxley Common caused by Oxley Creek. There was no rear access to the site due to flooding and no electricity due to flooding. There is a major intersection eastbound of the Brisbane Markets at the intersection of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road. This intersection is the major route in and out of the Brisbane Markets and due to flooding the traffic control lights were inoperable. The traffic control lights at the main entrance to the Brisbane Markets were also inoperable.

Subsequent to these discussions email advice was forwarded direct to the District Disaster Coordinator requesting 20 ADF personnel for the Saturday (15/01/11) to assist with the clean up of the Brisbane Market. This action was taken due to the identified critical status of this site and also due to the large volume of requests that

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had been made to the Local Disaster Coordinating Committee (LDCC) who were unable to positively action all requests.

I also contacted Councillor Angela Owen-Taylor, Parkinson Ward, Brisbane City Council who had been of enormous assistance to the Police and other Emergency Services in the days preceding, seeking Brisbane City Council assistance to clean Sherwood Road. Councillor Owen-Taylor was also an active member of the local State Emergency Service. The reasons for this request was due to the efforts to clean the Brisbane Markets site being diminished by vehicles carrying contaminants from Sherwood Road into areas which were being cleaned on the Brisbane Markets site. This required continuous cleaning efforts by Markets personnel on areas reducing the endeavours to clean the required site.

On Saturday 15 January 2011 I contacted Mr Field early in the morning to be advised that Brisbane City Council crews had attended during the evening and were cleaning Sherwood Road from the main entrance of the Brisbane Markets to the intersection of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road. This is a distance of about 1 kilometre and comprises four lanes of roadway.

At 8.30am that morning I attended the Brisbane Markets and spoke to Mr Field. ENERGEX crews were present along with Queensland Fire and Rescue Service personnel and other professional industrial cleaning agencies that were cleaning the required site with chlorine. Mr Field advised that Queensland Health personnel would attend at about 7.30am on Sunday morning (16/01/11) to approve the Central Trading Area as a distribution centre and enable the Brisbane Markets to operate. There was a large volume of traffic operating in and out of the Brisbane Markets site at this time.

Sherwood Road commenced to return to full operation as flood waters receded and this Saturday was the date of high volume traffic due to the volunteer clean up which had commenced. Police personnel from the Oxley District were required to staff a number of traffic control light intersections on this day and into the Sunday. These locations were Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road, main entrance to the Brisbane

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Markets on Sherwood Road and the entire length of Granard Road with the intersections of Beaudesert Road, Beattie Road, Balham Road and the Ipswich Motorway underpass. These intersections were required to be staffed 24 hours per day. Police were also required to control key intersections and locations across other areas of the Northern Divisions to ensure maintenance of safety of residents and businesses and enable clean up by work crews of roads and streets as water receded.

I had numerous discussions with Mr Field on Saturday 15/01/11 and during one of those discussions was advised that the ADF personnel had attended and were assisting with the clean up. The discussions mainly related to the present status of the clean up effort to enable the Central Trading Area to function and what additional resources were required to ensure the Brisbane Markets resumed trading in the shortest possible time frame. I was further advised during the Saturday afternoon that the Brisbane City Council crews had finished their endeavours to clean Sherwood Road at about 3.00pm that afternoon. These crews had commenced cleaning this road about 3.00am on the Saturday morning.

On Sunday 16 January 2011 at about 8.21am I had discussions with Chief Superintendent Dunn in relation to the progress of requests to have power reconnected to the traffic control lights along Granard Road and Sherwood Road. Chief Superintendent Dunn advised that if power could not be re-connected, generators would be provided to enable each traffic control light set to operate. An email was then forwarded to the District Disaster Coordinator's office and the LDCC seeking high priority approval for the return of power to these intersections.

During the early hours of 16 January 2011, a shooting occurred at Inala. This required the available Criminal Investigation Branch staff and some Child Protection and Investigation Unit staff to be delegated to investigate this incident. This was about 20 personnel. This investigation was finalised on 19 January 2011.

At 9.23am I was advised by Senior Sergeant Watson from the LDCC that ENERGEX were deploying generators to Granard Road to enable operation of the traffic control lights. Gradually from about 1.30pm during that day, power was

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restored to the traffic control light signals at the four intersections along Granard Road by the generators. Power was unable to be restored to businesses and residences due to flood and safety related issues.

After power was restored to the last set of traffic control lights at the intersection of Granard Road and the Ipswich Motorway underpass, Police were advised by Main Roads Department personnel that Sherwood Road was controlled by the Brisbane City Council. However, the Main Roads Department personnel had a cursory look at the traffic control light control box at the intersection of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road and advised that the control box had suffered extensive damage. The extent of the damage and length of time these lights would be inoperable would not be known until further examination was conducted.

At 9.43am I contacted Mr Field and was advised that the initial clean up was finished and that Environmental Health officers had approved the Central Trading Area and Buildings A, B, C and D to commence trading as a distribution centre. It was anticipated that at about 6.00pm that the Brisbane Markets would re-open as a distribution centre.

I maintained liaison with Mr Field during the day and directed traffic personnel to personally liaise with Mr Field and establish an appropriate traffic management plan to safely respond to the anticipated vehicle influx when the Brisbane Markets re-opened. Night time had been identified as a critical time for officers performing traffic control at the intersections on Sherwood Road. The anticipated vehicle influx would occur within a short time after the anticipated re-opening of the Brisbane Markets and posed a major safety issue to officers performing traffic control duties.

As a result of the traffic management plan devised a number of traffic controllers were employed to assist with traffic direction and control at this location. Traffic controllers were subsequently employed for a period of time over the next couple of days.

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At about 4.20pm I attended the Brisbane Markets and held discussions with Mr Field and a number of other Police personnel. The 6.00pm re-opening time occurred and a minimal number of vehicles commenced transportation of fruit and vegetables into the site.

I advised Chief Superintendent Dunn and Acting Chief Superintendent Cross shortly after 6.00pm that the Brisbane Markets had re-opened as a distribution centre. The distribution centre was the Central Trading Area and the four buildings which immediately surrounded it. Gradually in the future weeks additional areas would come on line.

Continually over the 2 days (Saturday 15/01/11 and Sunday 16/01/11) I had numerous discussions with Acting Chief Superintendent Cross and apprised him of the current status of the clean up of the Brisbane Markets and ongoing issues. These issues were directly relayed to the District Disaster Coordinator. I also maintained constant liaison with Acting Superintendent Cross and Councillor Angela Owen-Taylor. The requests to Councillor Owen-Taylor included the maintenance of the special arrangements for waste vehicles from the Brisbane Markets to access the Willawong Refuse Centre through alternative entrances, which were not open to the public. This would enable the transfer of waste to occur 24 hours per day.

On Sunday 16 January 2011, the MIR at the Oxley District Office was reduced to operating 18 hours per day due to the focus solely being on the recovery of the affected areas. The MIR continued to operate between 6.00am and 10.00pm which could be extended to midnight or later dependant on demand. The Oxley District Duty Officer was tasked with responsibility for flood related issues when the MIR was not staffed.

On Monday 17 January 2011 police were still required to maintain control of the intersections of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road and the main entrance to the Brisbane Markets on Sherwood Road. Advice was received that major damage had occurred to the traffic control light control box at both locations and that the intersections would not be operating for some time. Priority was being given to the

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Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road intersections as this controlled a large amount of traffic.

A further request was placed to the LDCC for continuation of traffic controllers at the main entrance to the Brisbane Markets (in conjunction with police). Due to the inability of the LDCC to positively action the requests being received, the Oxley District MIR coordinated the traffic controller response to this location.

Later during the day on Monday 17 January 2011 I had a conversation with Mr Field who advised that over 1,000 vehicles had accessed the Brisbane Markets since 6.00pm the previous evening. The main influx of vehicles had occurred from about 1.00 am on the morning of 17 January 2011 until about 9.00am.

During the afternoon of 17 January 2011, a request was forwarded to the LDCC seeking lighting for the intersection of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road to improve the safety of the environment for officers performing duty there. This request was subsequently met by the State Emergency Service, through Councillor Owen-Taylor, who provided the lighting required.

On Tuesday 18 January 2011 I maintained regular contact with Councillor Owen-Taylor and Mr Field. Contact with Councillor Owen-Taylor related to the traffic control lights at the intersection of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road. I was informed by Councillor Owen-Taylor that this intersection had the highest priority for the Brisbane area for restoration of traffic control lights. The Traffic Control Light poles and controller box had sustained major damage and replacement appliances had been obtained and were being installed. A priority email request was also forwarded to the office of the District Disaster Coordinator seeking urgent attendance to the return to operation of these traffic control lights.

My liaison with Mr Field related to the continuing operations of the Brisbane Markets and any obstacles to the continuing operations. Mr Field advised during 18 January 2011 that the number of vehicles that had accessed the Brisbane markets

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since 6.00pm Monday 17 January 2011 had exceeded over 1,500 vehicles. This number was more in line with normal operational processes.

At about 5.11 pm on Tuesday 18 January 2011 advice was received that ENERGEX and Brisbane City Council staff had restored to operation the traffic control lights at the intersection of Fairfield Road and Sherwood Road. This enabled a further police crew to be tasked to operational needs. These crews now focussed their attention on the only remaining location without traffic control lights which was the main entrance to the Brisbane Markets. This intersection remained under police control.

At 10.00pm on Tuesday 18 January 2011 the MIR at Inala was closed. During the MIR the minimum number required to staff varied from 6 on a night shift to 10 during the day. The role of "flood controller" also ceased on 18 January 2011.

On Thursday 20 January 2011, a request was forwarded to the office of the District Disaster Coordinator seeking approval for the continued requirement for police to staff the main entrance to the Brisbane Markets to be conducted on special service. Until this stage, police had performed duty at this location on normal shift with minimal overtime. Police had performed duty at all other intersections on rostered duty prior to those traffic control lights becoming operational. This particular intersection did not have operational traffic control lights and information received did not provide any possible time frame during which these lights would become operational.

Approval was subsequently received from the District Disaster Coordinator that continued policing of this location would occur on rostered overtime. Arrangements were then implemented by the Officer in Charge, Sherwood to have officers perform duty at this location on rostered overtime. This commenced at 4.00pm on 20 January 2011.

During the repatriation of the Brisbane Markets police vehicles performed as part of normal operational patrols, patrols through this site. These patrols supplemented

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private security patrols. These patrols were conducted as part of the Service's overall response to the flood recovery for affected areas.

My involvement with the Oxley District concluded on the evening of 21 January 2011 due to my transfer to the Ipswich District. I understand that the traffic control lights outside the Brisbane Markets became operational on 23 January 2011 at 6.30pm.

During the conversations I had with Mr Field over a number of days, I ascertained that the variance of inundation across the Brisbane Markets site was between 1.8 metres, near the Central Trading Area to over 4.5 metres. At this early stage over 10,000 cubic metres of fruit and vegetables had been removed to the Willawong Refuse Centre. A large number of vehicles were also inundated with water and were unserviceable.

Mr Field also advised that when information was received on 14 January 2011 about the possible flood peak being close to 1974 levels, most Markets staff had ceased duty. This resulted in minimal food supplies and resources being removed prior to the site becoming inaccessible.

During the Brisbane Flood police who were unable to attend their respective home station provided assistance. The numbers were low about 10 and all officers finished assistance on Friday 14 January 2011. The Oxley District was also provided with 3 4WD vehicles to enable patrols in affected areas where normal police vehicles would have difficulty accessing.

Due to the Brisbane Flood a number of personnel were recalled to duty from recreation leave. The actual number of personnel is difficult to ascertain without further investigation but was about 6 up to Friday 14 January 2011 and an increase above that number from Saturday 15 January 2011.

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The Queensland Police Service Academy made available a recruit squad of 20 people in conjunction with 2 staff on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (12 January 2011 to 14 January 2011) of the Brisbane Flood.

During the Brisbane Flood the number of staff required to maintain a core operational response for the Oxley District was about 20 personnel per shift across the 24 hour day. This number was severely affected during daylight hours on Saturday 15 January 2011 and Sunday 16 January 2011 due to the sheer volume of community and vehicles who were wishing to access flood affected areas. This additional impact resulted in assistance being requested from neighbouring Districts. The Logan District Traffic Branch provided support up to Tuesday 18 January 2011 (about 4 personnel during daylight hours) and Wynnum District provided 2 staff to assist with core operational response.

The State Traffic Support Group provided assist in varying numbers from Monday 17 January 2011.

It is estimated the number of personnel on traffic control on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (13 January 2011 to 16 January 2011) would have been about 60 % of rostered staff. From Saturday 15 January 2011 police were also required to provide assistance to ADF personnel tasked on clean up duties. The numbers required for traffic control varied from 2 to 6 dependant on the location and the number of major intersections affected.



K W McDonald

Inspector 4005930

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