

Statement of Witness

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Doctor Luis Prado
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	C/O Wesley Hospital, PO Box 499, Toowong Qld 4066 [REDACTED]
<i>Occupation</i>	Director of Medical Services, Wesley Hospital
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant Stephen Platz
<i>Date taken</i>	7 th September 2011

Doctor Luis Prado states:

1. I am the Director of Medical Services at the Wesley Hospital located at 451 Coronation Drive, Auchenflower. As Director, I manage all clinical areas, medical administration and all necessary Hospital accreditation. I have performed this role for the last seven years.
2. On the 23rd August 2011 the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry (QFCI) sent a requirement to the Acting General Manager of the Wesley Hospital requesting information concerning the impact of the 2011 floods on the Hospital and any subsequent measures taken to mitigate flood damage in the future. As the Acting General Manager wasn't present during the 2011 floods I assumed responsibility for this requirement.

QFCI

Jm

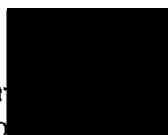
Date:

21/09/11

Exhibit Number:

580

Witness Signature
Page Number 1 of



..... Signature of officer

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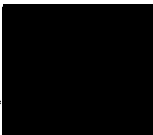
3. On the 30th August 2011, the Acting General Manager, Ann Maguire forwarded a detailed report to the QFCI, that I compiled, concerning the flood event between the 11th January 2011 and 16th January 2011. Within this report I outline the impact of the floods on the Hospital and the subsequent actions taken by staff in response to this event. I am able to produce this report to the Inquiry.

Exhibit: Report in relation to the Impact of the Brisbane Flood Event 2011 at the Wesley Hospital.

Marked Exhibit No/...

M.Baldock

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 07/09/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 2 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.
.....Signature
Signed atBrisbane.....this.....X.....day of.....September.....2011	

Witness Signature...  .. Signature of officer

11 February 2011

The Wesley Hospital Director of Medical Services 2011 Floods Summary



(Aerial view of The Wesley Hospital)

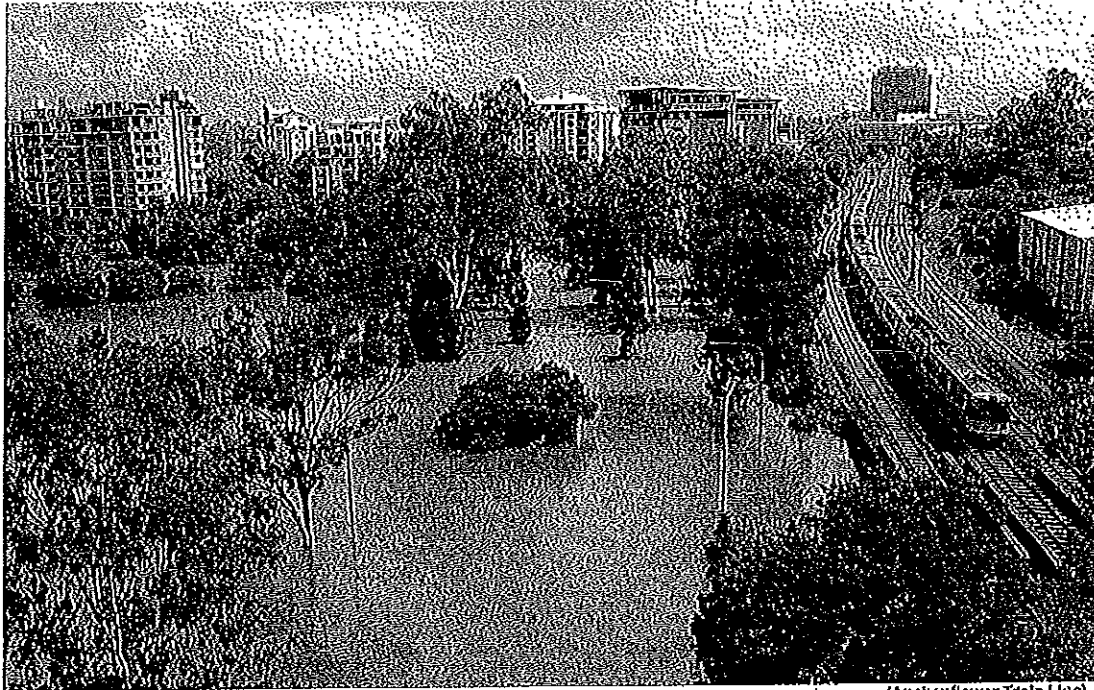
In October last year, in response to concerns raised regarding potential cyclonic conditions in South East Queensland from December through March 2011, The Wesley Hospital Executive reviewed the 1974 flood maps for the area on which The Wesley Hospital was built in 1977. Whilst it appeared that The Wesley Hospital itself would be very unlikely to be inundated, it was apparent that there was significant risk of the hospital becoming isolated with road access limited. However the Executive was advised that Coronation Drive was expected to remain open in such instances, as it had been significantly re-built over the years.

In the days preceding the floods in Brisbane, our sister hospital, St Stephen's Maryborough, was severely affected by floods as a result of rain at Gympie and its consequential effect on the Mary River. The Wesley Hospital Executive were in regular contact with St Stephen's Maryborough Hospital staff during the weekend when the flooding risk was the greatest. As the disaster in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley unfolded, the Executive team at the hospital commenced its emergency preparedness. On Tuesday 11th of January however, events unfolded rapidly and weather and flood warnings were followed closely. Information at this point was scant and mixed but it became rapidly clear that Coronation Drive would flood and close. By midday the hospital emergency response team and command centre was operational, and in view of the impending flood waters and high tides expected Wednesday through to Friday, all elective admissions and procedures were postponed; initially through to Thursday and subsequently this was then extended to Friday. This resulted in some inconvenience to VMPs and patients, but was a decision I believe was absolutely correct.

Announcements to patient's relatives and friends were made over the PA to advise of the worsening access issues and asking them to leave the hospital if their personal circumstances would allow. In view of the road issues, and in particular with the impact of staff being able to safely access and leave their homes and the hospital, and as there were 290 in-patients, many staff including Executive volunteered to remain in the hospital, ensuring patient clinical care and services were maintained. On Wednesday night, 113 staff and on Thursday night, 201, stayed on campus. In addition, a number of medical specialists also remained in or near the hospital whilst many others advised that they could assist to provide medical care. A number of Resident Medical Officers also volunteered to remain, so that

additional RMO support was available, including conducting ward rounds throughout the hospital and assisting VMPs who could not access the hospital.

On Wednesday at 02.45am I checked Coronation Drive and watched the Brisbane River breach its bank at the Regatta Hotel and then progressively cross the road to flood the entire area. Later during the day the water reached the border of the hospital, and Coronation Drive was also closed near to the city.



(Auchenflower Train Line)

From Tuesday afternoon to Wednesday, having made contact with the Chief Health Officer, I was in regular communication with the State Health Emergency Control Centre (SHECC) and then with the District Disaster Group (DDG) through the Queensland Health representative (from RBWH). The main concern on Wednesday was potential power interruption. The Wesley Hospital had anticipated the power supply risk with the East Wing building and has three back up sources. Our Chasley Street neighbours lost supply prior to my inspection of Coronation Drive in the early hours of Wednesday morning. Whilst the hospital's engineers were in contact with staff at Energex, there was the potential that with the planned Central Business District supply cut off, The Wesley Hospital may have been affected. The Wesley Hospital generators provide emergency supply only and this is not sufficient to support the hospital with total in-patients of 290 and additional staff of 200.

At 12.30am on Wednesday I formally advised the DDG of 2 issues.

1. Power loss would likely result in The Wesley Hospital evacuating patients if supply was not guaranteed.
2. Closure of Coronation Drive in both directions would have a severe affect on the supply of goods, QAS transport and staff access, therefore direct notification of any closures to the hospital was essential.

These messages were directly referred to Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ) via the DDG Queensland Health Representative. Therefore power supply was not interrupted. Supply of linen, pharmacy and food was via the Auchenflower Rail Station overpass. Staff volunteered to carry or push supplies across to the hospital. I particularly thank Wesley Linen Service for their assistance and those staff involved, especially Pharmacy, for their hard work.

The General Manager and I met with the QAS liaison officer to confirm emergency transfer of emergency patients via this access. After inspecting all options and having reviewed my Landing Zone guidelines, I ruled out helicopters landing on the campus.



(Staff Oval Carpark - Dixon St)

Supplies

The Wesley Hospital supply managers ensured that all patient supplies, linen, food, pharmacy and medical supplies were available for the duration, having placed up to three days holding on site at all times.

Communication

The hospital's Emergency Response Team met in the Command Centre based at the Emeritus Room at least twice daily. Other campus providers, Queensland Medical Laboratory, Sullivan Nicolaldes and Wesley Medical Imaging were also present. I wish to thank our other clinical providers for maintaining their services throughout, including their staff staying in the hospital over night. Daily teleconferences were held with Queensland Health to inform EMQ and also regular contact with the SHECC.

VMPs were updated via email, although this has raised an issue of email use and access by VMPs. The hospital's "on hold" message was updated regularly as was the website. Staff received regular email updates as did our governing bodies: UnitingCare Health and UnitingCare. UnitingCare Health CEO, was in regular contact with The Wesley Hospital Executive. Patients received a letter from myself and were updated by ward staff. However a number of issues of communication have been identified, including use of SMS, for us to consider as part of the formal review.

Clinical Services

Whilst elective, non acute services were cancelled and the WEC was technically on by-pass, in-patients requiring surgery were operated on, including emergency procedures. The WEC attending to many acute "walk-in" patients. However there were a number of patients, who are normally admitted to The Wesley Hospital that were directed to St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital and other hospitals, such as some dialysis, oncology and cardiac patients. Progressively after the crisis, these patients have been transferred back to The Wesley Hospital.

Because of the efforts of the providers mentioned above, imaging and pathology services, including blood supply, were not interrupted, although PET scan was not available. Many nursing staff worked extra hours, double shifts and stayed in the hospital to provide care. As mentioned the RMO's provided an excellent service and of course maintained the MERT and Code Blue response which indeed was required on a number of occasions. As I mentioned an evacuation plan was developed with Queensland Health and DDG in case this was necessary.

Progressively, through Thursday to Friday access to The Wesley Hospital significantly improved. I have attached photos that indicate the degree of access problems. Despite this difficulty, safe high quality patient care was maintained, as well as emergency care including surgery on in-patients as required.

Staff Affected

I have already drawn to your attention that many Wesley Hospital staff that have been severely affected. Staff have reached out to their colleagues and friends affected, helping with cleaning, accommodation, supplies and goods. In addition the hospital's pastoral care and nurse counselling teams have made direct contact with those severely affected. Counselling support has been offered, emergency accommodation provided and a fund established for cash and "leave donations". I am very proud to be associated and work with such people who have supported their colleagues through this time.

Support Services

Over the four days of the crisis The Wesley Hospital staff from cleaning services, catering, engineering, security, medical records, switch board, administration and bookings office worked tirelessly to provide for both patients and their colleagues who remained on campus. Without their efforts the hospital could not have remained operational.

Recovery Phase

Through Wednesday/Thursday during the peak of the crisis, The Wesley Hospital executive team commenced its recovery phase planning. This included plans for acute surgery and admissions. Whilst other less affected facilities continued on reduced services through the next week, through this planning the hospital was able to be fully operational by Monday 17/01/2011.

Review/Debrief

The Wesley Hospital Executive and Managers have had the first review meeting post the floods and the Executive will be taking carriage of ensuring that issues raised are fully reviewed and that our emergency plans are amended as required. VMPs will be invited to contribute as well. It is only via an open and thorough review that necessary improvements can be made to our disaster management plans.

Conclusion

Many people contributed significantly to ensuring not only the safety of our patients, but the maintenance of high quality care and comfort. Additionally, Wesley Staff have, and continue, to assist their friends and colleagues through these difficult times. As DMS I am well aware that there are many lessons to learn from reviewing the emergency response, however I am immensely proud of the Wesley Hospital and its staff. As a General Practitioner in Brisbane I am, again, reminded that The Wesley Hospital remains the pre-eminent hospital in Brisbane and that its VMPs and staff will always do their best to ensure the safety and care of patients that I and my colleagues refer. As a medical practitioner, I thank my colleagues in the VMP community for your support, consideration, co-operation and service to The Wesley Hospital.

Yours sincerely


Dr Luis Prado
MBBS, Grad Dip SpMed, FRACGP,
FCHSM, FAAQHC, FRACMA
Director of Medical Services


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