

<b>STATEMENT OF WITNESS</b>	
	Date: 11/10/2011
Name of Witness: Patrick Gerard Downing	
Address of Witness: Lvl 4, 34 East Street Rockhampton QLD 4700	
Occupation: Public Servant	
Division: Emergency Management Queensland Department of Community Safety	

I, Patrick Gerard Downing, Rockhampton Area Director (Central Region) for Emergency Management Queensland ("EMQ"), Department of Community Safety ("DCS") state:

1. I commenced employment with EMQ in June 2009 as the Rockhampton Area Director. I was previously employed by the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) as a communications centre supervisor and I acted in relieving capacity of Communications Manager a number of times for a period of 25 years dating from March 1986 until June 2009.
  2. The EMQ Area Office (during the flood event) was located on level 2, 34 East Street Rockhampton.
  3. During the flooding event 2010-2011, I relied heavily on my prior experiences and knowledge gained whilst employed with the Queensland Ambulance Service (as well as my experiences and knowledge gained in my current role) to assist in providing sound advice whilst attending Local Disaster Management Group ("LDMG"), Local Disaster Coordination Centre ("LDCC"), District Disaster Management Group ("DDMG") and District Disaster Coordination Centre ("DDCC").
1. Their role and position within Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), including information about their direct supervisor and the person to whom they report in a disaster.
  4. I have attached a copy of my Role Description marked "PGD 1".
  5. My direct supervisor is [REDACTED] the EMQ Regional Director, Central Region.

This is page 1 of a statement comprising 9 page/s. [REDACTED]

Witness (.....): [REDACTED]	JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations: [REDACTED]
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JP (C-Dec)

2. **The SES units within their region/including details (if known) of any paid SES members within their region.**
  
6. Within the EMQ Rockhampton Area there are five local council areas, each with their own SES units:
  - Central Highlands Regional Council
  - Gladstone Regional Council
  - Rockhampton Regional Council
  - Banana Shire Council
  - Woorabinda Shire Council.

In each Council, except for Woorabinda, there are a number of SES groups and each group has a group leader. The Council forms one overarching unit which is made up of each individual SES group. The number of people in each individual SES group can range between two to forty two.

7. There is one paid Local Controller, [REDACTED] who is employed by the Rockhampton Regional Council.
  
3. **The adequacy of current SES volunteer numbers (including any issues with recruitment and retention of members), level of training and equipment and resources available to SES units within their area/region.**
  
8. I have observed that there are a number of Units/Groups within the EMQ Rockhampton Area that are struggling to recruit and maintain their SES members for a number of reasons. It is hard to recruit members because many of the towns in the Rockhampton area are getting smaller because there are less employment opportunities which means people work in the mines and they fly in and fly out and they aren't available for SES service. The towns also seem to have a large proportion of elderly people disproportionate to the numbers of younger people.
  
9. With respect to membership numbers, my observations are as follows:
  - Central Highlands Regional Council ("CHRC"); SES Unit groups struggling are: Cappella & Springsure. These towns are struggling due to low employment levels. Tieri currently has SES members because there are simply no available people in the area. [REDACTED]
  - Gladstone Regional Council ("GRC"); SES Unit groups have adequate members, approximately 200 to 250 members;

This is page 2 of a statement comprising 9 page/s. [REDACTED]	
<b>Witness (.....):</b> [REDACTED]	<b>JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:</b>  <div style="text-align: right; font-family: cursive; font-size: 1.2em;">JP (c. Dec)</div>

- Rockhampton Regional Council ("RRC"); SES Unit groups struggling; Keppel Sands is struggling because it has a limited population and is predominately a retirement area. Young people who do live in the area work in Yeppoon or Rockhampton, Great Keppel Island numbers are down due to the resort closing but these numbers will likely come back up because a new resort is being opened;
- Banana Shire Council (BSC); SES Unit groups struggling; Wowan, Theodore & Taroom. These towns are struggling because they have limited employment which results in a lack of people who are capable or want to participate in the SES. Baralaba is the same and currently has no members.
- Woorabinda Shire Council (WSC); SES Unit/group has a limited number of SES members for the same reasons as above. I would not describe the membership as active with training.

10. A number of small townships in the region have limited employment opportunities causing potential SES recruits to seek employment away from their communities; in turn, this reduces SES numbers.

11. Fly in and fly out (IFO) or Drive in drive out (DIDO) is another major issue. On the books we have a large number of SES volunteers but the actual numbers available on the ground to respond to an event will be significantly less because members are either away at work, or away on days off. SES members who work at the Mines are only available occasionally.

12. The SES funding is provided by the relevant local Council, EMQ and the local community. The Council gives the SES funds to maintain and run their equipment. EMQ provides protective clothing, finance for training and they also provide big ticket items such as vehicles. The training budget is minimal and is required to cover far too many SES volunteers. Greater funding is required to adequately train all SES volunteers equally. For example as an Area Director this financial year I received approximately twenty-two thousand dollars (\$22,000.00) to fund SES training for just over seven hundred (700) members and this funding includes training one on one. So funding works out to be approximately eight dollars (\$8.00) per volunteer. If I run a flood boat course in Rockhampton and bring people in from Emerald, I have to pay for accommodation. We get minimal funding to do the training and can only train certain people. However, because more people want to do the training it should be fair and equitable and this would be facilitated if there was more funding.

13. Adequate equipment is supplied and available to all SES Groups within the region.

14. The mechanisms for receiving requests for assistance and the process for, and their role in, managing requests for assistance, including the prioritisation and/or management of competing requests for assistance.

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Witness (.....):	JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:
[Redacted Signature]	[Redacted Signature] JP (c-dec)

15. The process during the 2010/2011 flooding event was the standard process taken in such a scenario and which is as follows:

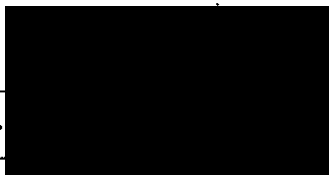
- 132 500 calls were received by the call centre;
- they were then entered into a Kit-referral and the Regional Duty Officer would provide the information to the SES Group Leaders.
- On completion of the request for assistance, the SES Group Leader would phone the Regional Duty Officer back and advise what was done and by how many members.

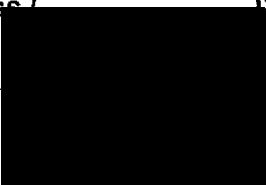
There is a new process now since the January 2011 flood events where the 132 500 call centre takes the call and the call centre gives the information to the State Coordination Centre which notifies the SES of the job. The SES ring the State Coordination Centre and advise when the job is completed. The SES notify the Regional Duty Officer now only if they get overwhelmed. The job then goes back to the Duty Officer to facilitate.

16. This Kit referral is a process used during flooding emergencies. Calls are received by the 132 500 call centre. They then try and locate the SES group to relay the request for assistance. If the call centre can not get onto the relevant SES group, the request for their assistance becomes a Kit-referral. The Kit-referral is then directed to the Duty Officer who opens the request on a computer system and then the Regional Duty Officer dispatches the crew to the job. If the Regional Duty Officer can not get the relevant SES group they get the nearest available SES group.

17. There are a number of issues regarding requests for assistance. The main issue is that all Councils in my area have moved to the Guardian computer system. EMQ have the RFA system and these two systems run individually and do not meet up in their information. The people who created Guardian are trying to get it to connect with the RFA. This will benefit us in that no matter where the call comes from it will come up on the Guardian system. Currently there is confusion because jobs can get logged twice. Most Councils within the Central Region have introduced the Guardian System in their respective Coordination Centres. EMQ are still running with the RFA. EMQ at the area/regional levels have very little input in the overall management of requests for assistance. This is because the requests for assistance go through a coordination centre not EMQ.

5. Their authority for, and role in, the tasking and deployment of SES members, including local controller tasking/deployment, both when a disaster is declared and at other times.

This is page 4 of a statement comprising 9 page/s. 

Witness (  ):	JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:
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*JP (c. Dec)*

18. Prior to a wet season the Rockhampton Area Office would send out Expressions Of Interest ("EOI"s) to the SES volunteers within the area who were available for deployment.
19. Within the Disaster Management Act 2003 ("the DM Act") the Local Controller has the responsibility for coordination of the SES. EMQ Area Office assists in providing both additional resources and SES personnel from within the EMQ Rockhampton area, if and when required.
20. From the EOI, a list of SES volunteers was put together and made available for both the Area and Regional Offices.
21. As the Area Director, I was involved in the consultation process with a number of councils where the SES volunteers and equipment were being deployed. If we have a deployment request in process, for example a deployment request is where we send or request SES members, and/or equipment be transferred for use in another location, the first thing I do is ring the local disaster management coordinator to see if they have the equipment and/or SES capability in the first instance. I do this before the equipment is taken out of an area, because the local Council generally have paid for fuel, maintenance and registration cost's and so "ownership" of the equipment is really held by the Local Council. The disaster management coordinator gives approval for the equipment to be sent elsewhere. This way the region where the equipment has come from is also aware that they no longer have immediate access to it and can plan accordingly.
6. Whether any SES members within their area/region were deployed to another area/region during the 2010/2011 floods and, if so, the process by which this occurred and their role in it.
22. As the EMQ Rockhampton Area Director I was involved in a number of local deployments between the Councils within the area. The process that was followed involved consultation with respective Local Councils and Local Controllers to seek their agreement as to the deployment of SES volunteers and equipment out of their respective areas. These local deployments were to support the smaller groups (mainly Flood Boat operations and agency support), as well as other operations including Ergon, QPS, re-supplies etc. "Agency support" refers to the support the SES offers to government and non-government agencies. For example the SES will support agencies such as Ergon by providing them access to flooded areas with the SES flood boat to cut electricity.
7. Whether there are any SES units in their area with more than one Local Controller, and, where this is the case, a description of:
23. Central Highlands Regional Council are currently progressing towards having one Local Controller for the CHRC unit; they currently have two.

This is page 5 of a statement comprising 9 page/s.		[Redacted]
Witness (.....):	JP/ Solicitor/ Commissioner for Declarations:	
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	JP (c-dec)

24. Late last year, the Central Highlands Regional Council advertised all the SES Executive positions. Some of these positions were filled, but a number still remain unfilled.
25. All other Group Leaders positions were appointed with the exception of Blackwater and Cappella. Deputy Local Controller Blackwater and Springsure positions are still not filled.
26. In the interim it was agreed between myself (as the EMQ Area Director) and the Central Highlands Regional Council that we would leave the Local Controller and Deputy Local Controller in place at Blackwater until such time the positions are recalled either later this year or early in 2012. In the SES operational doctrine that any executive position will be in place for three years after three years we will reassess and recall those positions. That has never been done before I've only been there 2.5 years. Because we were going from three local controllers down to one we decided to call all positions and fill the positions as per the SES operational doctrine.
27. A second permanent Local Controller was appointed to the role of Local Controller Central Highlands Regional Council SES Unit in September 2011.
- a) **the person ultimately responsible for that SES unit during a disaster;**
28. The newly appointed Local Controller for the CHRC SES Unit has the ultimate Responsibility; the Blackwater SES Executives including the Local Controller and Deputy Local Controller understand and agree that they report to the newly appointed CHRC Local Controller.
29. During the 2011-2011 CHRC flooding event SES volunteers were represented at the CHRC LDCC and LDMG
- b) **how communications are coordinated among the various local controllers for that SES unit during a disaster and the process of communicating with the local disaster coordinator;**
30. The respective Local Controllers were in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre communicating with the Local Disaster Coordinator both verbally and through the Guardian System
- c) **whether or not this arrangement is considered effective and/or whether or not it may be subject to review or amendment.**
31. As stated previously CHRC are working towards having one Local Controller to manage the CHRC SES Unit.

This is page 6 of a statement comprising 9 page/s.

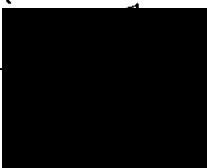
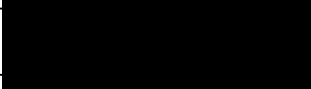
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Declarations:

JP(c-dec)

8. The nature of their contact and coordination with any Local Disaster Coordinator, Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Local Disaster Management Group, and other EMQ officers during the 2010/2011 floods.
32. During the 2010-2011 flooding an SES Liaison Officer was appointed in each of the various Local Disaster Coordination Centres. The Local Controller or the Liaison Officer attended the Local Disaster Management Group meetings. EMQ Central Region appointed an EMQ Liaison Officer to work in both the LDCCs and LDMGs.
9. Any instances, during the 2010/2011 floods, where EMQ's requirements or expectations of the SES differed from those of the Local Disaster Management Group or Local Disaster Coordinator, and how these issues were managed.
1. No issues experienced.
10. The Government (State and State/Commonwealth) funding programs accessed by SES units within their area in the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11, and their role in all aspects of the funding application process and administration of this funding.
33. I am not aware of the funding programs that are available to the SES, however, I am generally aware they can get money from Gaming proceeds. I am not aware of the role of the SES in the funding application process and its administration. As far as I am aware all SES groups are aware of funding initiatives and make their applications where necessary. Sometimes SES groups will ask for a letter from us to support their application for funding.
11. Whether or not issues have been raised with them directly by SES members about the level of funding provided by the State Government, including any suggestions by SES members about how the funding arrangement could be improved.
34. SES members have expressed to me their discontent with the level of funding provided by EMQ/State Government for training.
35. I release the EMQ Rockhampton training calendar. The training calendar specifies the available training for SES groups. In the last two and a half years, every time I have released the Training Calendar I have not been able to provide the SES members with enough training because I don't have enough funding. I know the SES require more training because they have told me this. Unfortunately I am unable to provide more training because I do not have enough funding. Approximately two and a half years ago the training calendar provided a good range of training opportunities. We know with the current levels of state funding we could not achieve that same degree of opportunity anymore.

This is page 7 of a statement comprising 9 page/s.

Witness (.....): 	JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:  J.P. (c-dec)
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12. The results of any assessment or debrief within their area relating to the performance of the SES units during the 2010/2011 floods.

36. My understanding is that there were a number of debriefs conducted by Local Controllers for SES groups who participated in the flood event. It is entirely up to the Local Controllers to provide debriefs. I am not necessarily made aware of the outcome of the debriefs or whether a debrief has taken place. It is common place to have debriefs for SES members. For example when the SES attend a vehicle accident there may be a debrief afterwards.

37. No debriefs where conducted by EMQ Area Director with SES volunteers

13. Any other observations on the structure, funding and command and control arrangement of the SES generally and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 floods, including possible areas for improvement, and any improvements made, or proposed to be made, in any of these aspects following the 2010/2011 floods.

#### Command and Control.

38. There are currently no clear command and control arrangements for the SES/EMQ or councils in Queensland. This, generally, does not produce many issues but during larger events and for disciplinary matters, this lack of clarity is difficult to manage. Currently the Local Controller, EMQ, and local government all have different, and sometimes conflicting, priorities which cause unrest and confusion amongst the SES membership resulting in retention issues. The solution is to have a single point of accountability and this should rest with EMQ as the SES is a state based organization.

#### Funding

39. The current collaborative approach causes confusion due to the different and conflicting budget priorities. This has resulted in limited standard or consistency in facilities. For example the budget and equipment priorities of the big SES group at Calliope is different to the smaller SES groups in smaller towns and where towns are less active in providing for their SES groups. The Calliope SES group receive a lot of funding from their community. Alternatively for example an area like Wowan has only three members and less community funding so their equipment is lacking. This results in disparities where communities collaborate and it is also obvious when they collaborate they have vast differences in experience and equipment. This all has an impact on the ability of the SES groups to attract and retain volunteer members. The solution is for the State Emergency Service to be a single State organisation with base level funding.

#### Structure

40. The current structure of the SES groups is as follows

This is page 8 of a statement comprising 9 page/s.

Witness (.....):

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for  
Declarations:

JP. (Dec)



- Community Members;
- Field Officer One;
- Senior Field Officer;
- Team Leader;
- Group Leader
- Deputy Local Controller;
- SES Local Controller;
- Area Director;
- Regional Director.

A lot of the SES units may not have a Deputy Local Controller. During the recent flood event we would have preferred to have another Local Controller in the actual area to take pressure off the Group Leader.

41. I make this statement of my own free will believing its contents to be true and correct

..

Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of Section 110A(6)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

(1) This written statement by me dated 11 /10/2010 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 9 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and

(2) I make it knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating anything that I know is false.

This is p

Witness

..... Signature

Signed at 0830 this 11 day of 10 /2011

*J.P. (Dec)*

DEPARTMENT  
of EMERGENCY  
SERVICES



# role DESCRIPTION

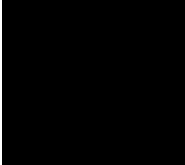
**Role Title:** Area Director  
**Classification:** AO6 (\$72,515 - \$77,584 p.a.)  
**Date of Review:** August 2006  
**Location:** Rockhampton  
**Division/region:** Emergency Management Queensland  
**Branch/unit:** Regional Operations, Central Region  
**Contact Officer:** [Redacted] Regional Director  
**Ph/Email:** [Redacted]  
**Vacancy Reference Number:** QLD/ES102/09  
**Closing Date:** Midnight Monday, 6 April 2009

## YOUR OPPORTUNITY

The position manages the implementation of the EMQ work program that contains elements of disaster management, State Emergency Service and DES Youth Program sub-programs. The position forms part of a dynamic regional team and is responsible for the effectiveness of program support interventions as detailed within the approved operational plan. The Regional team provides high quality support to Government Departments, Local Government Authorities, Indigenous Community Councils and non-Government agencies in the development, implementation, management and evaluation of comprehensive disaster management and volunteer support programs.

## WE ARE SEEKING APPLICANTS:

- Who achieve results,
- Who cultivate productive working relationships and communicate with influence, and
- Who shape strategic thinking and exemplify personal drive and integrity.



**YOUR DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Support the development and implementation of the EMQ regional operational service delivery plan.
- Manage human resources, financial and asset management functions for the area.
- Advise and assist Government Departments, Local Government Authorities, Indigenous communities and non-Government agencies on comprehensive disaster management programming, including risk management and mitigation strategies, volunteer matters, the development and maintenance of disaster management and response plans.
- Provide strategic advice to the Regional Director on disaster management and response planning arrangements and programs for the Area.
- Provide advice and guidance for the proper conduct and assessment of Risk Management Studies and regularly report to the Regional Director on the activities of Study Advisory Groups and the suitability of Study Reports and Mitigation Plans.
- Provide the services as described in the *Disaster Management Act 2003* for the Executive Officer of the District Disaster Management Group.
- Undertake whole of government response coordination functions, including the provision of advice to Disaster District Coordinators and Local Government Disaster Management Groups during large-scale disaster or emergency situations.
- Ensure the effective management of the State Emergency Service (SES) volunteer support program, development and operation of District Support Units and the conduct of annual stock-takes of SES equipment program to ensure operational efficiency.
- Ensure the effective management of and compliance with policy and safety standards for the DES Youth Program and support the department's Volunteer Marine Rescue assistance program.
- Provide advice and guidance to enhance the effectiveness of community education and awareness programs.
- The position will be required to frequently consult and negotiate with senior staff from Local Governments, other Government agencies, authorities, Indigenous communities and community groups to evaluate the effectiveness of disaster management programmes and to provide advice on residual risk mitigation strategies.
- Manage the effectiveness of the Area team in providing high quality support to its customers and address grievances in accordance with departmental policy and guidelines.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of operational and administrative policy, equipment and processes.
- Undertake operational duties during emergencies and disasters.

**BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT:**

You will be assessed on the basis of experience and capability in the following:

1	Demonstrated achievements in the application of strategic and business planning, resource management and the ability to manage within allocated budgets to achieve agreed outcomes.
2	Demonstrated interpersonal, written and oral communication skills including the ability to prepare reports, develop and maintain effective relationships and networks, liaise, consult and negotiate with a diverse range of clients and stakeholders including volunteers, Indigenous Leaders, community groups and Local Government.
3	Demonstrated ability to lead and work as part of a multi-disciplinary team within a volunteer oriented and disaster management environment.
4	High level knowledge, or ability to rapidly acquire knowledge of, disaster management or risk management concepts and principles and their application within diverse environments.
5	Knowledge of, and demonstrated commitment to, the principles and practices of employment equity, ethical behaviour and conduct and workplace health and safety issues.



" PGD 1 "

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- Reporting Relationships -- this position reports to the Regional Director. Position supervises a range of staff within an Area Office.
- Functions associated with this position require you to undertake operational duties alongside SES personnel during emergencies and disasters. It is expected that the appointee will become a member of the SES and promote the organisation to the community. Membership of the SES will require a Criminal History Check to be undertaken as a condition of entry into the service.
- Delegations and accountabilities as per DES HR & Financial Delegations Manuals -- Currently Level 6 HR Delegation and Financial Delegation of \$15,000.
- Travel may be a considerable requirement of this position.
- The appointee will be required to participate in an out of hours on-call roster in conjunction with other regional staff.
- Interested? Refer to the Applicant Information Kit and visit EMQ's website at <http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq/>.
- Applications will remain current for a period of 12 months.

