

To: Helen Scott (Local Controller, Maryborough, Fraser Coast Regional),

You have been identified as a State Emergency Service Local Controller. As such, the Commission is interested in finding out from you more about the nature, role and funding of SES units in Queensland. We are particularly interested in knowing how your SES unit and its various groups operate, and how operations were undertaken during the 2010/2011 floods. This will help us to understand better the arrangements for running the SES in Queensland.

We would appreciate your taking the time to answer the following questions. This should take about 15 minutes. Upon completion, please forward the questionnaire by mail to: Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, GPO Box 178, Brisbane QLD 4001; or by way of email to info@floodcommission.qld.gov.au by **Friday, 14 October 2011**. If you are legally represented, you should forward it to the Commission through your legal representative.

Alternatively, if you do not wish to provide a written response to the Commission, we can arrange to have a Commission investigator ask you these questions over the phone. If you would prefer to respond in this way, please contact Conor McGarrity on [REDACTED]

The information you provide may be used in the preparation of the Commission's final report, which will be published in February 2012.

400 George Street Brisbane
GPO Box 1738 Brisbane
Queensland 4001 Australia
Telephone 1300 309 634
Facsimile +61 7 3405 9750
www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au
ABN 82 696 762 534

Questionnaire for SES Local Controllers

The following questionnaire is split into six sections. Each section contains a number of questions asking you to describe the nature of your SES unit/groups, and also the nature of response operations conducted by your SES unit/groups during the 2010/2011 floods. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to the Commission by Friday, 14 October 2011.

1. Structure of SES units

1.1 Please describe the structure of your unit, including the number and location of any constituent groups and the number of members in each group.

The Maryborough S.E.S. Unit consists of the following groups

*Maryborough Group - Reed Avenue M/Bro.
25 Active members -*

*Sandy Straits - Eckert Rd, Boonoonoon.
6 active members.*

*Woocego S.E.S. - Boundary Rd, Oakhurst.
18 active members*

Uaro - Copenhagen St, Uaro, 8 active members

1.2 Please indicate whether any members of your unit are employed on a paid, full-time basis. If so, how many are employed on this basis and what positions do they fill?

No member of the Maryborough SES Unit has a paid position this include the Local Controller

Structure of SES units

1.3 Do you believe there is a need for SES members (including Local Controllers) to be employed on a paid, full-time basis? Please explain why or why not, including whether there are other ways in which SES members could be rewarded for their time.

Local Controller: I believe that what is required by Council and EMQ, accountability - paperwork, budget reports, training and the management of Groups plus members that this position in the near future will have to be paid a paid position as the time needed is more than should be asked of a volunteer. The role of Local Controller has no official or formal training and I believe that the people doing this job do the best they are capable of.

SES members: should be given more recognition and given some reward for years of service and dedication to the Community under sometimes extreme conditions.

1.4 If there is more than one Local Controller in your local government area, what effect does this have on operations?

After amalgamation there is now two SES units under the Fraser Coast Regional Council
Merrey Bay SES Unit - Maryborough SES Unit.

This works very effectively as we had always a close working relationship both during operations and community events. Merrey Bay assisted Maryborough with the use of their larger flood boat. As Maryborough SES has only a smaller flood boat and was able to be used on the river during the initial start of flood.

2. Readiness for the 2010/2011 floods

We would like to know whether you feel that your unit was adequately prepared to cope with the demands of the 2010/2011 floods. Please provide a brief explanation in response to the following questions.

2.1 Did your unit have enough training to prepare it for the 2010/2011 floods?

Training is an ongoing programme. I feel that we had adequate trained members for the flooding in Mansborough but would have needed more if flooding was on a much larger scale.

2.2 Did your unit have enough volunteers to cope with demand?

As members were used to do sand bags constantly at least a month before flooding, they were reaching their limit. Hence we would have need more volunteers and reassess our jobs.

2.3 Did your unit have enough equipment and resources?

Yes. to meet initial activations. Re-supply on sand bags was a priority

2.4 Overall, do you think your unit was adequately prepared to respond to the 2010/2011 floods?

yes - initially but members felt overwhelmed by the extreme weather but I feel that with our training we were prepared to respond

3. Operations during the 2010/2011 floods

3.1 Please describe the activities undertaken by your unit and/or its groups during the 2010/2011 floods (e.g. Requests for Assistance, rescues, evacuations).

The main role for the Marnborough SES Unit was follows.

RFA - Local flooding, sand bagging.

*Floodbeat operations, removal of tree (limbs).
Clean up after floods.*

The main role was the use of flood beat across the river: - people and resupply.

Other emergency service personnel were also ferried across.

4. Command and control

4.1 Generally speaking, please describe your responsibilities as Local Controller during disaster response operations.

After being notified by E.M.O to activate and open E.O.C. notified Group Leader to start activating members. Oversees the running of E.O.C.

4.2 As a Local Controller, who do you report to during disaster response operations?

When activated an E.M.O officer was stationed at HQ to assist in the E.O.C. - reporting was back to Co-Ordination Centre on regular basis to Area Director. mobile phone number was made available.

4.3 Where does your SES unit receive Requests for Assistance from?

132500 and general public.
Some floodboat request (medical supplies) from Co-Ordination Centre
Police

4.4 What is the process of tasking SES members when Requests for Assistance are received by your unit?

As requests were received they were assigned to members - eg floodboat crews.

4.5 During the 2010/2011 floods, did your unit receive any competing Requests for Assistance? If so, how were these managed or prioritised?

Any urgent requests were prioritized and dealt with eg food supplies to people who were flooded in. Working the Co-Ordination to arrange for pick up of supplies and delivered to the staging area for the boats.

Command and control

4.6 During the 2010/2011 floods, did your unit receive any Requests for Assistance that it was unable to respond to? If so, how were these requests managed?

Any request that were received and unable to respond to were directed to Co-Ordination Centre for them to evaluate.

4.7 Were any members of your unit deployed to any other region during the 2010/2011 floods? If so, how was this managed?

Yes - to assist with the flooding at Bundaberg

4.8 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your unit's contact and coordination (if any) with the following:

a) Local Disaster Coordinator

Through EMQ - Area Director

b) Local Disaster Coordination Centre

Through EMQ

c) Local Disaster Management Group

Through EMQ.
I attend meetings as an observer

Command and control

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*Through EMQ.
Attend meetings as an observer*

Command and control

4.9 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your unit's contact and coordination (if any) with the following:

a) District Disaster Coordinator

Through EMQ

b) District Disaster Coordination Centre

Through EMQ

c) District Disaster Management Group

Through EMQ

4.10 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your contact (if any) with Emergency Management Queensland's Area Directors and/or Regional Directors?

Contact with EMQ? - I was kept informed and up to date on a regular basis. Greatly assisted by EMQ Officer at EOC. We did not interfere but assisted in perhaps any situations which I was concerned about.

4.11 During the 2010/2011 floods, what was the nature of your interactions (if any) with other emergency service organisations?

Police: Assist traffic control on flood bridge.

Ambulance: ferried officers across river for change of shift.

Tow Service, as above.

Command and control

4.12 During the 2010/2011 floods, were the requirements or expectations of local disaster managers ever in conflict with those of Emergency Management Queensland? If so, how were these various demands resolved (if at all)?

At my level as Local Controller I was not aware of any conflict. Any issues or concerns that I raised were covered to my satisfaction.

4.13 In your view, what is the role of Emergency Management Queensland's Area and Regional Directors during disasters?

I believe that their roles are to keep the Units informed with information and general well being of members whilst not taking over from the local Controller. Visit maybe and see how things are actually happening. Arrange for resupply of equipment, supply including relief crews from out of area if needed.

5. Communications

5.1 What type/s of communication devices were available and/or used during the 2010/2011 floods?

mobile phone
land line.
SES Radios.
internet

5.2 Did any of the communication devices your unit used fail during the 2010/2011 floods? If so, please provide details.

Internet service - failed due heavy use
unable to receive RFA. had to use a pre paid
for some time (we are on wireless).

5.3 Generally speaking, are any of the communication methods your unit uses integrated or inter-operable with other emergency service organisations?

We are able to use radio to contact
Police on their channel.

Council, Fire Service, Ambulance - No.

6. Funding

6.1 Where does your unit receive funding from?

Fraser Coast Regional Council through a budget

6.2 Has your unit applied for additional funding from the State Government in the 2009/2010 or 2010/2011 financial years? If so, what was the funding program and did you find the application process easy/difficult?

No

6.3 Do you have input into how the funding received by your unit is used?

not really.

6.4 In your view, is the total amount of funding currently received by your unit adequate? If not, please describe how your unit would benefit from additional funding.

at present funding is adequate but the need to replace aging vehicles and meet training requirement more funding needs to made available.

Funding

6.5 Do you think that the way in which funding is allocated and distributed to your unit is adequate? If not, how could this be improved?

No. As I do not received an easily understood report stating exactly what is spent and the balance.

Improvement: A budget report stating Maryborough Unit only and easy to be understood

6.6 Does your unit undertake any additional fundraising activities? If so: *yes.*

a) what types of fundraising activities does your unit undertake?

Community events for Council and General public.
Anzac marches - RSL.

b) approximately what percentage of your operating budget does this account for?

20% -

c) does fundraising present any difficulties?

members are asked and they do it give up week-end for fundraising and sometimes it is "back to back" week-end as Training courses are also set them and members need to do these for qualifications

7. Other

7.1 Do you have any suggestions as to how the SES can attract and retain members, either for your particular unit or at a state-wide level?

Membership will "rise and fall" but in times of emergency there will always be the dedicated. The question is: What do people expect from the SES and what are they prepared to contribute towards this. When we have this answer then we will have the membership.

7.2 Please make any other comments you wish about SES operations generally and/or during the 2010/2011 floods.

Overall I believe the SES did an excellent job. We made some mistakes but for a volunteer organization we will always be there.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire