

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

On Wednesday, 9 November 2011, at 8.30am

At level 30, 400 George Street, Brisbane, Qld

Conducted by: Mr Nick Bailey, Mr Conor McGarrity,
Ms Zoe Staines

Also present: Mr Alan MacSporran SC
Mr [REDACTED]

Private interview of Bruce Grady, EMQ

1 MR BAILEY: Good morning. My name is Nick Bailey. I am a
2 principal legal officer with the Queensland Floods
3 Commission of Inquiry. Today is Wednesday, 9 November
4 2011. Could all the people present in the room please
5 announce their appearances for the record, perhaps starting
6 with the Commission staff.

7
8 MR McGARRITY: My name is Connor McGarrity, principal
9 researcher with the Queensland Floods Commission of
10 Inquiry.

11
12 MS STAINES: My name is Zoe Staines, Researcher with the
13 Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.

14
15 MR GRADY: Bruce Grady, Assistant Director-General,
16 Emergency Management Queensland.

17
18 MR MacSPORRAN: Alan MacSporran, counsel for the State.

19
20 MR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Deputy Crown Solicitor, Crown Law,
21 acting for the State of Queensland.

22
23 <BRUCE GRADY, interviewed:

24
25 MR BAILEY: As I have previously indicated, we have
26 provided to you, Bruce, a list of questions signifying our
27 areas of interest. The general plan this morning is simply
28 to run through those, if we may.

29
30 Q. Starting with the General section, question 1:
31 Explain the role of instructors or trainers in specialist
32 fields such as chainsaw operations, traffic control and
33 flood-boat operations, including how they obtain specialist
34 expertise and what, if any, financial compensation they
35 receive, and should they be compensated?

36 A. The role of trainers and instructors in the SES is to
37 provide functional training to SES members. Members
38 require that they are trained in those functions before
39 they can actually complete those functions in an operation.
40 For example, until you have completed your chainsaw
41 training, you can't operate a chainsaw. That's primarily
42 for safety reasons.

43
44 The trainers are required to have completed that
45 functional training. They then are required to have
46 completed a Cert IV in training. The cost of that is met
47 by EMQ. Then they become an assistant trainer, where they

1 are observed. Then when they have reached a level of
2 competency, they are then able to train on their own.

3
4 I have some documents around policy. I am happy to
5 make those available to the Commission, if you would like
6 them?

7
8 MR BAILEY: All right.

9
10 MR McGARRITY: That would be good.

11
12 MR BAILEY: Q. For the record, could you just perhaps read
13 the title of the relevant documents?

14 A. Yes. There is training policy, staff competence,
15 appointment of trainer assessors, appointment of direct
16 supervisors, appointment of core skills trainer, and I
17 think - yes, that's it.

18
19 MR McGARRITY: Thank you.

20
21 MR BAILEY: Q. The trainers themselves, are they by and
22 large SES volunteers?

23 A. Primarily, by volume, yes. EMQ does have a number of
24 permanent training staff for the SES in each region,
25 usually three to four in each region. They will assist in
26 the train the trainer, they will assist in the
27 accreditation process and they will also deliver specialist
28 training when required. So, it is a combination of
29 full-time permanent staff and volunteer trainers who
30 deliver training.

31
32 Q. The expectation is that the volunteers who are
33 qualified then go on and train people within their groups?

34 A. That's correct. That's something that they would - a
35 pathway that they would pursue of their own volition.
36 There is no pressure on them to do it. So, if people want
37 to move into that training then they are supported with the
38 Cert IV in training, which is a nationally accredited
39 certificate so it can be used elsewhere, and then they will
40 undertake that training. They are certainly encouraged to
41 but there is no requirement.

42
43 MR McGARRITY: Q. At the end of the training provided by
44 the SES members who have attained the Cert IV, do they then
45 suggest whether a person who they have trained has reached
46 a level of competence by which --

47 A. Yes, they will have to assess that person. So it's

1 either through training - and I think there are questions
2 later on about recognition of prior learning, and so on,
3 and there's a process there.

4
5 Q. That is a judgment call they make, though, based on --
6 A. Well, it's a judgment to criteria. There is a
7 criteria that has to be met either through the delivery of
8 a particular training course or through an assessment
9 through the RPL process.

10
11 MR BAILEY: Q. Is there a view about compensation?
12 A. Again it goes to, really, a question of volunteerism.
13 Now, there's a couple of issues here. We have certainly in
14 the past taken on volunteers in a casual training role when
15 there has been a specific need for it. If we have had to
16 deliver a lot of training or deliver training in areas
17 outside of the east coast, for example - more remote areas
18 - and there aren't qualified trainers out there, we have on
19 occasion taken volunteers, put them on either as casual
20 staff or contract staff and paid them to go and deliver
21 training. But that's not the norm; that would be for a
22 specific purpose.

23
24 The question about should they be compensated, I
25 think, goes to a - and compensation, I guess, is also a
26 fairly wide reach. Should they be paid, is one question.
27 Should they be compensated if they travel? They certainly
28 are. If a volunteer trainer was to go from Brisbane to
29 Roma to deliver a training course, then all of the costs
30 associated with their travel, meal allowances - all those
31 things - would be met by EMQ. They wouldn't necessarily
32 receive payment for that unless that was part of one of
33 those programs that I referred to earlier.

34
35 Q. Question 2: Is it possible to amalgamate SES training
36 with other emergency services training; for example, the
37 Rural Fire Brigade?

38 A. Yes, it certainly is and that is done. There are a
39 number of courses where accreditation is joint, so if you
40 receive the training in the Rural Fire Service then that is
41 recognised in the SES and vice-versa. I can actually read
42 you a list of what those courses might be: Communicate in
43 the workplace, protect and preserve incident scene,
44 maintain safety at an incident scene, provide service to
45 clients, work in a team, follow defined occupational health
46 and safety policy and procedures, work effectively in a
47 public safety organisation, apply first aid, operate

1 communication systems and equipment, work as a team member
2 in an emergency operations centre, map reading and
3 navigation, trim and crosscut felled trees - it's a
4 chainsaw course - undertake flood and inland waterways
5 rescue boat operations, search as a member of a land search
6 team, and conduct briefings and debriefings.

7
8 They're ones that if you were to receive that in the
9 other service, then that would be automatically recognised.
10 Other courses where there may be - that may have been taken
11 externally to that, we would certainly look at the
12 recognition of prior learning and apply that policy.

13
14 Q. One of those training areas that you mentioned,
15 emergency operations centre training, what is that exactly?

16 A. That's an introductory course to working in an
17 emergency operations centre. That is a generic term.
18 There is a question later on about some conflicting
19 terminology, and so on. EOC or emergency operations centre
20 is a generic term to work in an incident coordination
21 centre or a disaster coordination centre. It's an
22 introductory course and then there are further courses that
23 deal with specific elements of that.

24
25 Q. So, Incident Management Team training?

26 A. There's another course introduction to Incident
27 Management Team. Again, that's a fairly short course.
28 It's a generic "This is what an Incident Management Team is
29 about, this is what it seeks to achieve". Then there's
30 further training about the functions that would occur in
31 there.

32
33 Q. The EOC one is directed to the latter?

34 A. Yes, that's an introductory course, yes. It's an
35 overview, if you like, of an emergency operations centre.
36 If that's delivered in Rural Fire or it's delivered in the
37 SES, they are recognised across those two services.

38
39 Q. Question 3: Has there been any work by EMQ to
40 consolidate the position of local controller in those local
41 governments that have more than one unit? The Disaster
42 Management Act seems to intend only one local controller
43 per local government area. Perhaps we might deal with that
44 question first.

45 A. Yes. I think the assumption in relation to the Act is
46 a correct one. The Act is not absolutely crystal clear but
47 I think when you read several parts of the Act, it tends to

1 infer one local government, one local controller. I guess
2 the conflicting issue arises post-amalgamation, when we
3 have moved from in excess of 150 local governments to 73.
4 That has increased the size, the scale, the scope of a role
5 of a single local controller in a very big local government
6 area. There are issues around span of control, how many
7 groups can a local controller - particularly a volunteer
8 local controller - reasonably be expected to manage. Then
9 there are issues of distance. If the next group is a few
10 hundred kilometres away, is there any reasonable
11 expectation that a local controller is going to be visible,
12 is going to provide regular oversight, assistance and
13 support to that group.

14
15 Q. Are there any specific areas or local government
16 areas, post-amalgamation, where the issue of span of
17 control, as you have described it, is being specifically
18 addressed?

19 A. It has been addressed differently by different local
20 government areas. Some have agreed to deputy local
21 controllers. For example, Toowoomba Regional Council has
22 just moved to a model - and caused some anguish amongst its
23 volunteer community - where deputy controllers were made
24 group leaders. Some saw that as a downgrade. They
25 actually performed exactly the same functions at the end of
26 it, so it was, realistically, a title change only. So,
27 they have moved to a single local controller and then
28 deputies and then group leaders. They have a paid local
29 controller. There are others in North Queensland where a
30 number of local controllers have been appointed in a single
31 local government area.

32
33 Q. I think Central Highlands Regional Council may be one
34 where they are trying to move to a single local controller
35 with various deputies --

36 A. Yes.

37
38 Q. -- as I recall the evidence.

39 A. Yes. If there is going to be a suggestion of a
40 mandating of a model, then I think that there needs to be
41 analysis of what that actually means and then a relook at a
42 structure that would sit underneath that which actually
43 enables the intent of the SES to be delivered. I guess it
44 goes to a number of other questions about where the
45 Commission may seek to make recommendations in relation to
46 payment and professionalisation and a whole range of things
47 that seem to be intended in here. I'm not quite sure where

1 it's going, but I think we have to look at it as a whole
2 package, rather than break it down into component parts.

3
4 Q. The process that you have described with Toowoomba
5 Regional Council, is that process being driven by local
6 government on an ad hoc basis or is EMQ actively involved
7 in that in some sort of collaborative or supervisory role?

8 A. That's being driven by local government. There is no
9 policy approach that EMQ is taking at present, simply
10 because we are, I guess, waiting for the Commission to
11 finish its work, understanding that it is going to focus on
12 this particular area. So, we have made no proactive moves
13 in that area.

14
15 Q. Do you see it as desirable for the practical
16 arrangements to reflect the intent of the Act in this
17 regard or what we infer the intent to be - because, as you
18 have said, it's not made explicit but the inference seems
19 to be that this is the structural arrangement that's
20 intended?

21 A. The difficulty with having a single approach mandated
22 by legislation is that the local governments have very
23 different character. There are big, very well-resourced
24 financially and otherwise councils, there are very, very
25 small remote and regional councils. So, to have a single
26 model that applies uniformly to all of those, without some
27 recognition that there is either a variance that goes to
28 the core of what it is that you might want to legislate or
29 that there needs to be a recognition that there might need
30 to be some practical approach to that, either a
31 substructure that sits under local controller and recognise
32 that through either legislation or policy, I think, would
33 be the way that we need to approach this.

34
35 Part of the issue that both the State and local
36 governments confront is that there is a single piece of
37 legislation that has some quite simple intents in it; the
38 application of that across the variety of scale, scope and
39 viability - in some cases - of local government makes it
40 difficult to have a uniform application of that.

41
42 MR McGARRITY: Q. Has there been any feedback through your
43 area and regional directors from local governments as to
44 how the current arrangements are operating, given that
45 different local governments have different ways in which
46 they operate?

47 A. Well, I think the different ways in which they're

1 currently operating answers that question. Yes, there are
2 different views and different approaches to how local
3 governments have dealt with that. We have taken an
4 approach where we don't believe that getting into conflict
5 with local government over this issue is of any benefit to
6 the volunteers. I guess what we have now is a set of
7 arrangements that are not uniform but they're delivering a
8 reasonably uniform outcome. It comes down more to the,
9 almost, nomenclature about what particular roles are
10 called.

11
12 MR BAILEY: Q. Is that all it is, just renaming people so
13 it accords with the Act and managing their disenchantment
14 if they think they have been demoted in some way, or is it
15 more than that?

16 A. No, I really don't think so. I don't underestimate
17 managing the disenchantment side of it. Volunteers
18 volunteer for a number of reasons and for some it is to
19 have a very visible role in their community. But I think
20 across all of the - what are seen as different models, if
21 we actually just call people common names across that,
22 we're probably able to map an outcome that wouldn't mean
23 terribly much change.

24
25 Q. I suppose that leads into the second part of question
26 3: Is there an anomaly here in relation to there being
27 potentially more than one local controller who is put in
28 charge of a disaster response in a local government area?

29 A. Just in terms of the language used in that, a local
30 controller is not in charge of a disaster. I know that is
31 probably not the intent of it but, just reading through the
32 questions, I think there continues to be a level of
33 confusion around the function of disaster management and
34 the function of disaster operations.

35
36 The SES is not involved in disaster management; it
37 doesn't have a role in disaster management. Disaster
38 management is the overall coordination of the event and the
39 response to the event, and that's a role undertaken by a
40 Local Disaster Management Group, a District Disaster
41 Management Group and a State Disaster Management Group.
42 They are responsible for disaster management.

43
44 The SES is responsible for one area of operation in
45 disaster operations. It has its functions and it basically
46 should be, and is, limited to delivering those functions in
47 a disaster event. The issues around its management or

1 command and control - however you want to characterise that
2 - only relate to the delivery of those functions, nothing
3 more.
4

5 What we are talking about here is should a local
6 coordinator be in command and control - a local controller,
7 sorry, be in command and control of his or her SES unit in
8 the delivery of their functions during a disaster event.
9 The answer to that is yes. The model that we have just,
10 perhaps, talked about is would a deputy local controller or
11 a group leader have the same function for the people who
12 sit underneath them. The answer to that is yes. So, then
13 the role of a local controller would be around coordinating
14 those SES for the delivery of their functions only in the
15 area of operations; do they have the right number of
16 people, what are our priorities here versus there, and so
17 on.
18

19 Q. But are you aware of any difficulties where single
20 local government areas still have multiple local
21 controllers because there are multiple units, in terms of
22 performing the SES responsibilities?

23 A. No, I haven't had any evidence of that.
24

25 Q. Question 4: Does the SES Doctrine state explicitly
26 that there should be one local controller per unit?

27 A. Yes, it does.
28

29 Q. Which ODI?

30 A. That's BMA 8, 4.1:
31

32 *Each SES unit must have one local*
33 *controller appointed in accordance with the*
34 *DM Act.*
35

36 You can have a copy of that as well.
37

38 MR McGARRITY: Thanks. So that's valid from 19 November
39 2010.
40

41 MR BAILEY: That is business management directive BMA 8.0.
42

43 Q. Question 5: Is there a need for greater information
44 sharing between EMQ and local government, particularly with
45 regard to what training EMQ has provided to the local SES
46 and information about the SES groups in their area?

47 A. The issue of need here, I guess, is the question. I'm

1 not quite sure what a local government would do with the
2 information. It is quite low level, in terms of who is
3 trained and what qualifications they have. So, I'm not
4 sure that there is a need for the data to be transferred to
5 a local government.
6

7 Local government and the State agree on the functions
8 of the SES for that particular area and local government
9 may well have an interest in do we have sufficient people
10 trained in a particular function. I think that's entirely
11 legitimate and I would strongly encourage the most frequent
12 possible dialogue between local government, EMQ and the
13 local controller around those strategic issues of do we
14 have an SES that is sufficient in number and trained to
15 respond to the risks that are in our particular local
16 government area. I think that's a conversation that should
17 occur and it should occur frequently.
18

19 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on that, is it incumbent then on
20 the local government to make inquiries about the relevant
21 SES capability within their area or is it incumbent on EMQ
22 to be proactive and provide that?

23 A. The question of incumbency is, I guess, a little
24 fraught. There is no policy or no framework in which that
25 occurs. What we have, certainly through our permanent
26 staff, is an arrangement where frequent dialogue is
27 encouraged with local government on a range of issues
28 around both the SES and disaster management more generally.
29 We play a significant supporting role and advisory role to
30 local government in the development of their local disaster
31 management plans. If there are issues identified in terms
32 of gaps around capability or capacity, then that's where
33 that conversation should occur. We would never withhold
34 information from a local government if it was requested.
35

36 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 6 arises out of one of the
37 attachments to your most recent statement. I think that's
38 the Brisbane SES debrief.

39 A. Oh, yes.

40
41 Q. There was a comment in there about RFAs for flood
42 boats and the issue of three-way tasking between Surf Life
43 Saving Queensland, SES and QPS. Apparently there was
44 something done in that regard which was, I think, regarded
45 as reasonably successful. Is there anything being done to
46 promote that further or to develop that further?

47 A. I guess there 's two points that are relevant to that.

1 One is that since then we have actually executed a
2 memorandum of understanding with Queensland Surf Life
3 Saving, and the second is that there is a meeting on this
4 Friday that will include EMQ, Surf and Police, where they
5 will finalise the arrangements - well, I'm not sure that
6 they will finalise them on the day, but the intent is that
7 that meeting will progress the finalisation of any
8 documentational protocol that needs to exist around there.

9
10 This is not an issue that I have heard raised by any
11 other part of the State. The areas where it would be most
12 likely would be on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast,
13 where there's very active surf life saving clubs. We would
14 certainly undertake to make whatever protocol is developed
15 out of the Brisbane arrangements available broadly,
16 certainly to all those councils in the coastal regions
17 where surf life saving has a presence. That would be
18 handled under that memorandum of understanding. It's a
19 heads of agreement, so it doesn't go to the detail that
20 this will, but it certainly provides a mechanism whereby
21 these things can occur.

22
23 Q. You said that MOU has been executed?

24 A. Yes.

25
26 Q. Are we able to see a copy of that?

27 A. You can have one. It will make my folder much
28 lighter.

29
30 Q. Thank you. Moving on to question 7, RFA Online, could
31 you just explain how RFA Online actually works? I
32 understand that it's the mechanism for transferring
33 requests for help that arise through 132500. That's the
34 starting point?

35 A. Yes, that's its primary - the primary input into RFA
36 Online is calls to 132500.

37
38 Q. If you can just explain how it works?

39 A. RFA Online is an SES tasking system, it's not a
40 disaster management system. Its only purpose is to
41 capture, record, manage and report on SES tasks. It can do
42 that by categories, and so on. As I say, principally, a
43 call from a member of the public for assistance will come
44 to 132500.

45
46 Since the last sittings of the Commission, we have
47 worked with Smart Service Queensland and we have actually

1 developed an onscreen interface. Previously there were
2 about three steps to get a call into RFA Online. Now the
3 operator can directly input the data into RFA Online.
4 There's one step, so it's both efficient and it avoids
5 duplication and opportunities for error.
6

7 That then comes into RFA Online and those tasks can
8 then be distributed to particular SES groups, and those
9 groups that have RFA Online - and not all have it as yet.
10 Some don't have connectivity, some don't have computers. I
11 will deal with that, if you like, at the end of the
12 question. So, they can get visibility of that. If they
13 don't have RFA Online, we can certainly deploy - it's a
14 deployable capability. A group of people with laptops can
15 go into a centre, connect in wirelessly, get the
16 information and start then to manage RFA Online.
17

18 Q. How do you mean "get visibility of that"?

19 A. The number of jobs, the type of jobs. All of that
20 information, if you like, helps to be able to assess do I
21 have enough people to meet these tasks in a reasonable
22 time, do I have the skills, do I need something else, do I
23 need more tarpaulins, do I need more equipment of a certain
24 type, is this something where we might need to deploy
25 additional people with additional skills or additional
26 equipment. So, to anticipate and get ahead, if you like,
27 of what the demand might be on days two and three, we
28 actually - by being able to analyse the tasks that are
29 immediately being input - make some assessments about the
30 future requirements, whereas if you've just got a pile of
31 paper, it's a bit hard to undertake that analysis.
32

33 Q. That assists in the management of ongoing needs and
34 resources --

35 A. Yes.

36
37 Q. -- once the system is up and running?

38 A. Yes.
39

40 Q. What about at the first inception, the first hit-out?
41 A call comes into 132500 and the SSQ operator inputs it
42 into RFA Online?

43 A. Yes.
44

45 Q. Where does it go from there?

46 A. Just in a normal environment where we are getting a
47 few jobs, maybe overnight, it will come to the EMQ watch

1 desk. That's its first destination. That's manned
2 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Then it's distributed
3 electronically or by telephone, depending on whether the
4 unit has RFA Online, but it would be both, particularly if
5 it's at night.
6

7 If there is a job going to Mackay at 2 o'clock in the
8 morning, it will come through to the watch desk and the
9 watch desk will make an early assessment of is it something
10 that we need to do now. So, if it's storm damage, a
11 damaged roof, we would make a phone call to the Mackay SES
12 and alert them to the job. If they have RFA, they'd then
13 be able to see the job online, otherwise we would either
14 email, fax - or what have you - the job through to them.
15

16 MR McGARRITY: Q. That communication goes to the local
17 controller?

18 A. Local controller or nominee. We have a number of - we
19 have a call tree, if you like, and they might nominate
20 someone to be on call, those sorts of things.
21

22 MR BAILEY: Q. With the call tree, presumably your local
23 controller is the top of the list?

24 A. Yes.
25

26 Q. What, is it home phone, work phone, mobile?

27 A. Yes.
28

29 Q. Do they have pagers?

30 A. Some do, I believe, yes. Very rarely, yes, but some
31 do.
32

33 Q. All of those options are available and that's the way
34 you bring it to their attention?

35 A. Yes.
36

37 Q. They turn on their computer, log in - bang - there it
38 is?

39 A. Yes. I guess if I can make a point or a comment at
40 this juncture as well, the SES is not an emergency response
41 organisation per se. This is not triple 0 calls for
42 immediate threat to life or immediate threat to property.
43 This is a service provided to the community and best
44 efforts will always be used. We don't have, if you like -
45 Fire, Ambulance and Police will have targets for response
46 times, and so on. We are a volunteer organisation
47 providing a service, so expectations need to be

1 commensurate with both the structure and the nature of the
2 organisation. I think it's quite important to make that
3 distinction in any analysis that's being done around any
4 potential changes to either the structure, the funding or
5 the nature of the SES.
6

7 Q. Fair enough. The EMQ watch desk is at Kedron, is it?
8 A. Yes.
9

10 Q. How many people staff that?

11 A. There's a rotation. Two shifts per day of three
12 people.
13

14 Q. Do you have the capacity to ramp that up?

15 A. Yes. This is, if you like, the permanent capacity.
16 What they are basically there to do is to be available for
17 warnings. The Bureau may issue a warning for a storm in
18 the middle of the night; they will then distribute that,
19 again through a call tree, electronically - that will be
20 through text messages, and so on.
21

22 Q. To SES local controllers or to --

23 A. No. This will be to a much wider variety of people.
24 This will mainly be local government, other emergency
25 services, and so on. There are no jobs yet, this is the
26 warning of some extreme weather event or severe weather
27 event. They do tsunami warnings, they do weather warnings,
28 earthquake warnings - all those sort of things. Hopefully
29 we never get tsunamis or earthquakes.
30

31 The other things they do is manage those requests for
32 assistance that come through 132500 and they will
33 distribute those. They undertake a range of project work,
34 and so on.
35

36 MR McGARRITY: Q. Could I just touch on something you
37 mentioned previously about the SES not being an emergency
38 service organisation, more of a community service
39 organisation?

40 A. Mmm.
41

42 Q. Is that something that's not well understood in the
43 community or is there a misperception that the SES does
44 provide emergency services?

45 A. Well, there is still a misconception around the SES
46 that it is an entirely volunteer organisation. It's
47 lessening. I think some data - I'm guessing here, but I

1 think it was around 30 to 40 percent of people recognised
2 that the SES was a volunteer organisation, so the balance
3 thought they were paid. I think that drives then a
4 misconception about their role and performance
5 expectations. So I think, yes, that's shifted.
6

7 Again, on my understanding, one of the insurance
8 companies has done some research and I think that
9 recognition is now over 50 percent - raw numbers again - in
10 terms of the recognition of volunteering.
11

12 MR BAILEY: Q. You mentioned that some SES units have the
13 IT capacity to operate RFA Online. In percentage terms,
14 what are we looking at there - unless you have some more
15 specific information?

16 A. Look, I don't - that's current usage (handed). I
17 guess one of the issues here is around the ability to
18 actually connect, and the State's response to the interim
19 recommendations from the Commission have seen some
20 additional money flow to us for that specific purpose. We
21 have \$500,000 per annum recurrent to look at specific
22 issues of connectivity. So, can units actually - do they
23 have a business rate internet connection. Because the
24 money is recurrent, if there are ones that don't and we
25 need to fund that or need to negotiate a funding
26 arrangement with a local government, then we have the
27 capacity to certainly continue to fund that on a recurrent
28 basis.
29

30 In addition to that, there is another \$500,000 a year
31 around development of application systems/software to
32 support operations and administration. So, there is an
33 ability now to start a program to respond, to improve the
34 connection of RFA, for example, to all groups.
35

36 Q. You have provided us with a table, thank you, dealing
37 with RFA use as at 7 November 2011. There are just a
38 couple of terms in here that I would like you to explain,
39 if you could. You say "the number using ICCS". What does
40 ICCS stand for?

41 A. That's an instant coordination software of various
42 types. Guardian is one that you have referred to
43 previously. Other councils might be using other types of
44 software.
45

46 Q. I see one here called Contego. That's another --

47 A. Yes. I'm not specifically aware of that one. I'm

1 certainly happy to answer if there are any particular
2 questions that come out of that.

3
4 Q. We have jumped around a bit here because I think we've
5 probably touched on questions 8 and 9 already. We have
6 received some feedback that some councils are not so
7 interested in RFA Online because they have Guardian up and
8 running and they are happy with that.

9 A. Yes.

10
11 Q. They have some reservations about double-handling
12 information by having the RFA Online as well. Is there
13 some sort of interface between these two systems?

14 A. Yes.

15
16 Q. Can they operate together?

17 A. Maybe if I just make a comment about question 8,
18 because I think that is still relevant around access to
19 RFA. The intent of RFA is that it is made available. It's
20 not a system that we are seeking to protect. Clearly it's
21 containing information around properties that are damaged,
22 and so on, so there's an element that we do need to provide
23 some security, so it's password protected but within the
24 disaster management environment, it's made freely
25 available. There is no intent to limit its use other than
26 to protect the privacy of people who have their details
27 entered on it. It's available to councils as well. It's
28 available via the web, so you can just log on, put your
29 password in and access the information.

30
31 The question that you have just posed around any
32 conflict between RFA and Guardian - certainly Guardian can
33 do some of the things that RFA does. It's a system that
34 captures information around tasks. But Guardian is
35 principally a disaster management system, so it's around
36 capturing information on all of the aspects of damage, of
37 impact, of consequence that a disaster event may cause.
38 Damage to the roads infrastructure, bridges, culverts; what
39 are other assets that have been damaged; calls from the
40 public around perhaps a nursing home that has been
41 impacted; all of those sorts of things.

42
43 I guess the power of Guardian is that it is designed
44 to link into the back end of councils' systems, so systems
45 around their rates base and all the data that they would
46 hold around their community and the infrastructure within
47 their local government. RFA is specifically a system

1 designed to manage the tasking of the SES, so it is very,
2 very specific, it is very, very narrow. It is not to do
3 anything else, not intended to do anything else.
4

5 I think the second part of your question was about the
6 movement of data. We are working - and we have provided
7 some funding to the developers of Guardian - to have an
8 interface between RFA and Guardian so that summary data can
9 move across, so that information on jobs that have come
10 through RFA can be displayed geo-spatially, so we can put
11 them on a map. We can provide applications to councils to
12 do that if they don't have the capability, a program called
13 TOM, Total Operations Mapping. So either through that - we
14 don't really care how they use it, but we are working
15 towards making that information available both
16 electronically and in reporting format, if that's needed.
17

18 MR McGARRITY: Q. What sort of timeframe would you be
19 looking at for that compatibility to be --

20 A. This would be our next wet season outcome.
21

22 MR BAILEY: Q. 2012/2013?

23 A. Yes.
24

25 Q. Job completion for RFA Online would be logged by the
26 SES on the ground?

27 A. Yes.
28

29 Q. It goes back into the system --

30 A. Yes.
31

32 Q. -- that is monitored by EMQ?

33 A. Mmm.
34

35 Q. And presumably --

36 A. Well, may or may not be, depending on the nature of
37 the event. There are some events where EMQ has no need and
38 no expectation that we would become involved. That can be
39 a reasonably sized but localised event. The local
40 controller and his or her team will manage that and provide
41 the reporting of all that information. Major, complex
42 events, that's when we start to get into providing some
43 level of assistance and oversight.
44

45 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is that decision made when the initial
46 RFA goes to the watch desk, whether or not EMQ wants to
47 monitor the situation or perhaps get involved at a later

1 date?

2 A. There would be two ways of managing that. Again,
3 there is a question later on about duty officers. If we
4 were receiving a number of requests for assistance in a
5 particular localised area, we would provide those to the
6 SES and we would also advise the duty officer that there is
7 an event of some substance occurring. Then the local
8 controller or the executive of the SES and the duty officer
9 would work out how they wanted to manage that; is there a
10 need, is there some assistance required from EMQ, is the
11 SES happy and capable of managing that on their own. That
12 would be a negotiated outcome.

13

14 Q. Now might be actually opportune to just get some more
15 information about the role of the duty officer and where
16 they fit into the picture?

17 A. That's pretty much it. It's an on-call - they are our
18 staff, so our permanent staff; they are on-call, so they
19 have a mobile phone with a consistent number for each
20 region. There is a State duty manager at the moment. We
21 are looking to perhaps move away from a State duty manager.
22 Now that we have additional resources in the watch desk,
23 there's probably not a need to have that. They are there
24 really for the specific purpose of managing out-of-hours
25 operations.

26

27 MR BAILEY: Q. Just getting back to the use of RFA Online,
28 this document provided to us is a static snapshot of where
29 we are at?

30 A. Yes.

31

32 Q. What encouragement, if you will, is being given in
33 terms of the take-up or the roll-out of the system? What
34 is being done to promote it and how far do you expect this
35 to go?

36 A. My objective is to have it in all SES units and
37 groups. Whether that is achievable or not, that's a
38 stretch but certainly a target. Now, there are some
39 issues. How much effort do we need to go through for a
40 Paroo or a Bulloo Shire Council, with a population of 350
41 in 90,000 square kilometres, to put a complex IT system in.
42 They can probably manage their events on a whiteboard with
43 post-it notes very effectively.

44

45 So, that would be an assessment that would be made.
46 Is there actually a benefit in going down that path?
47 There's certainly a benefit to EMQ because every bit of

1 data helps and the more quickly we can gather the data and
2 be able to use that in the disaster management framework,
3 then that is beneficial. But we certainly wouldn't want to
4 impose an onerous obligation onto a small remote council
5 when there is no benefit from it. So, that would be, I
6 guess, a determining factor.

7
8 Is there a strategy in operation today to roll it out,
9 other than active encouragement by our regions? The answer
10 to that is no. Will there be, now that we have been able
11 to secure some funding so that we can actually be much more
12 proactive in saying if the reason you're not using this is
13 because you don't have the infrastructure, we can solve
14 that problem for you. So, post- this wet season - we won't
15 be doing anything probably until March but come next year,
16 we will be actively working with local governments and SESs
17 to promote the use of RFA where it is not currently used.

18
19 We are starting to - with all new things there is
20 always a bit of resistance. The fact that we have now used
21 it very, very effectively and a number of people on
22 deployment, particularly for Cyclone Yasi and to Townsville
23 and Cairns, have seen how effective it can be in making the
24 management of tasking much more efficient.

25
26 Q. Moving on to question 10, again this arises out of the
27 Brisbane SES debrief note. There was a comment there about
28 radio channels and radio equipment in Far North Queensland
29 being different from what was in use by SES groups deployed
30 from South-East Queensland, and compatibility problems. Is
31 that being addressed?

32 A. What I understand occurred there is Brisbane City
33 Council has issued digital radios to a number of their SES
34 units. That's not a standard practice, so that's not the
35 standard for the SES. Digital radios don't work on UHF
36 channels and never will. In the rest of the State, any UHF
37 radio will work on those repeater sites in Far North
38 Queensland. It was really an issue of some non-standard
39 equipment having been issued.

40
41 Are digital radios better than UHF? The answer to
42 that's probably yes. We don't have them Statewide, so we
43 do need a Statewide solution to be able to provide
44 consistent outcomes when we move people around, and that's
45 a very significant issue for the SES.

46
47 Q. Is that to be regarded as an isolated incident?

1 A. I think it's an anomaly, an isolated case.

2

3 Q. Can it readily be solved by issuing UHF equipment on
4 deployment?

5 A. I think they have the UHF, they have just chosen, of
6 their own volition, to issue a different type of radio. I
7 think the reason for that is they actually have a digital
8 network for their own council staff, so they actually have
9 the infrastructure and they have made that call. It's an
10 issue that we will need to be aware of in any future
11 deployments either into or out of Brisbane.

12

13 Q. Whose responsibility would it be for additional UHF
14 radio equipment? Would EMQ provide that to a Brisbane
15 group?

16 A. That's equipment that we provide through our funding
17 stream, yes. But, again, I don't think the issue was that
18 they didn't have enough equipment; the issue was that they
19 chose to use different equipment.

20

21 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on that point, could EMQ staff, in
22 the instance of that employment, direct those people who
23 are on deployment to use UHF as opposed to trying to stick
24 with the digital equipment?

25 A. That's what would have happened. I think what you've
26 got is some volunteers who said, oh, we were deployed to
27 North Queensland and our radios didn't work.

28

29 Q. This is just an observation, effectively --

30 A. Yes.

31

32 Q. -- from those people?

33 A. They would be immediately issued with UHF radios and
34 connected in. It's probably somebody has seen it as - you
35 know.

36

37 Q. As a problem that doesn't really exist?

38 A. As a problem - yes, that's right.

39

40 MR BAILEY: Q. That is easily addressed?

41 A. Yes. We certainly wouldn't want to see more instances
42 of individual councils making individual decisions around
43 equipment because that then flows back to a whole range of
44 issues around management and support. Training is based on
45 an equipment profile. Radios are not related to - well,
46 they are related to safety in the instance that if you're
47 not in communication, then that can be an issue, but it's

1 not a direct safety issue. But different equipment can
2 bring with it safety issues, particularly when the training
3 and the equipment are not aligned. So, there's a whole
4 range of things that flow back and it comes back to the
5 dilemma always about standardisation provides uniformity
6 and efficiency. People can always identify that in this
7 particular circumstance, this other piece of equipment
8 would be better or, more often, "I like this particular
9 piece of equipment so why can't I? Why don't we use it?"

10
11 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is Brisbane City Council the only
12 council you are aware of at the moment that supplies
13 digital equipment?

14 A. Yes, it's the only one I'm aware of.

15
16 MR BAILEY: Did you want to deal with question 11?

17
18 MR McGARRITY: Yes.

19
20 Q. Question 11. I think this was an attachment to your
21 statement. There was some suggestion of an SES supporters
22 website for businesses and I think that was a means of
23 saying thank you for allowing your employees to attend SES
24 business, perhaps during work hours, and so forth. Has
25 there been any movement on that or any --

26 A. It's a great idea. I can't find where I said it.

27
28 Q. I think it was attachment 12.

29 A. Oh, okay.

30
31 Q. It might have been in part of the debrief, actually.

32 A. Yes - no. This is a - yes

33
34 Q. So it's not an EMQ --

35 A. No. But, look, it's something we attempt to do on a
36 regular basis ad hoc. We always take the opportunity to
37 publicly thank employers. We offer certificates so
38 employers can have a visible - you know, identify that they
39 have supported the SES. I think the issue raised is a good
40 idea and we have looked to put something on our website or
41 on the volunteer portal. It's not something that I have
42 actively turned my mind to, to this point, but now that you
43 have raised it, I will.

44
45 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 12: If you could just describe
46 the role and functions of taskforces and how they are
47 selected, including a brief overview of their deployment?

1 A. Yes. A taskforce for the SES is established when it's
2 identified that there is a resource requirement, a
3 particular skill set that might be required or in
4 anticipation of those two things. Now, there are two ways
5 that a taskforce could come about; one is through a
6 specific request from the receiving group, so either
7 through the local controller or the Local Disaster
8 Management Group there, or if, for example, the district or
9 the State Disaster Management Group, based on data
10 available to it, was generating a concern that something
11 might be going to happen in the future, it could anticipate
12 and say, look, we need to be ready, so we might look at
13 either pre-deploying or having a deployment ready in
14 anticipation of a need presenting itself. They're the two
15 ways in which a deployment might be mounted.
16

17 The selection is - there's a couple of stages to that.
18 One, we would go to an area where they have no activity or
19 little activity. So we wouldn't be - you know, if there's
20 a flood coming to Brisbane, we wouldn't be looking for
21 Ipswich or the south-west region, we'd be saying, okay, we
22 need to go to our central northern or far northern regions
23 to select those taskforces. It's based on a risk
24 assessment of what potential there is for an event to occur
25 in the area where we might be selecting people from.
26

27 The participation in it is voluntary, so an individual
28 SES member - we will put the call out through the local
29 controller and group leaders that we need this sort of
30 taskforce. They will receive a document that says this is
31 what the taskforce is for, this is the sort of skills we
32 want, this is where it will be, this is the duration; all
33 of the details that would reasonably be expected that
34 people should know. That's documented.
35

36 They will then talk to their members and people will
37 volunteer. They will come back to Kedron and say we have
38 two, three, five, ten volunteers willing to be part of the
39 deployment. We'll then manage all of that, select people
40 and then the deployment will occur.
41

42 They get briefings before they go, before they are to
43 leave. They will get a briefing when they arrive. So,
44 they will be told what you are going for, what to expect,
45 etc. They will then get a briefing when they arrive about
46 what's actually happening on the ground, any particular
47 issues, the conditions they are likely to be working in,

1 the sort of tasks they will be looking at, what the
2 coordination management incident control arrangements will
3 be, etc.
4

5 They will then stay for - what is it? A day there, a
6 day back - it's usually three days on the ground, to manage
7 fatigue. They always want to stay longer. Then they will
8 get a debrief when they return and an opportunity to
9 present any issues they might have encountered, to make
10 suggestions for improvements, and so on. Those things are
11 captured.
12

13 Q. Question 13 --

14 A. Sorry. And they will be accompanied - and I think 13
15 might go to this, about EMQ's role in that? No.
16

17 Q. No.

18 A. All task forces are accompanied by an EMQ liaison
19 officer. There are a couple of reasons for that. Having
20 permanent staff with deployments is a good thing, and they
21 also hold a credit card so they can pay for accommodation,
22 pay for meals, meet any incidentals. You know, if a
23 chainsaw breaks, they can go and buy another chainsaw at
24 Bunnings, or whatever it is we need. They can take care of
25 all of those issues around support and welfare, and so on,
26 for the volunteers.
27

28 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is it the liaison officer who conducts
29 the briefing and the debriefing sessions?

30 A. It may or may not be. It depends. I've done it on
31 occasion, the people who are raising - who are managing the
32 coordination of the deployments might do it, a regional
33 director could do it, an area director could do it.
34

35 Q. But it's always an EMQ officer?

36 A. Yes. I've not seen one - I mean, I can imagine a
37 circumstance where it might be a local controller who's
38 given the information. There's no reason to say that it
39 couldn't be. But in all the instances I have seen, it has
40 been EMQ, simply because we have been the organisation
41 actually managing all of the logistics, so we have all the
42 information, pretty much.
43

44 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 13 I think we have touched on
45 already in the context of question 2, although I think
46 question 2 dealt with cross-recognition of RFB type
47 training.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. I suppose we are asking there is there any scope for
4 broader recognition?

5 A. If you like, that's our applicant guide for
6 recognition of prior learning (handed), so that's how we
7 approach it. I guess I have a couple of observations.
8 From a policy position, we certainly recognise prior
9 learning; we have a predisposition to ensure that we do
10 that. Being a very widely distributed organisation with a
11 volunteer executive, over which we exercise a level of
12 control but not a management type control, there are
13 certainly, I guess, around the State some variations in
14 interpretation of the policy.

15

16 I know of instances where people have indicated that
17 it is very difficult in the local environment to get
18 recognition of prior learning and they are retrained in
19 things. That's certainly not something that we are
20 supportive of. Through our training team, we are working
21 through our regions to provide as much information,
22 encouragement, support for RPL as an instrument for people
23 to get skills.

24

25 Having said that, very clearly we won't compromise
26 standards. The safety of our volunteers is always our
27 primary objective and we won't resile from that. If that
28 creates a conflict, and so on, then I will always err on
29 the side of providing a safe working environment and
30 ensuring that I can demonstrate that safe working
31 environment. So that's, I guess, our position.

32

33 Having said that, it has been raised sufficient times
34 throughout the course of this Inquiry and in the noise that
35 an Inquiry of this nature creates in the community, so I
36 think that there is certainly an issue for volunteers
37 around the ease of access to a recognition of prior skills,
38 prior learning.

39

40 What we will do after this wet season is I will have
41 an independent assessment conducted around our training
42 environment, its appropriateness, focusing primarily on the
43 delivery. I don't think there is any issue with the
44 programs themselves. That's never come into question.
45 It's around how are those training outcomes delivered. We
46 will be undertaking that from around March next year and
47 that will be a - I haven't actually let it yet, I haven't

1 written the terms of reference for it, but it will
2 certainly be broad-based and volunteers will certainly be a
3 primary source of information for that.
4

5 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is it in some respects an issue of
6 awareness, in that EMQ has this policy and these systems in
7 place for RPL and perhaps the volunteers are just not aware
8 of it or they haven't been informed about its existence?

9 A. No, I don't think so. I'd be very surprised if
10 volunteers weren't aware of the availability of an RPL
11 process - very, very surprised. I think the issue is in
12 its application and in the processes that need to support
13 it. I think there's too many steps at the moment. It
14 comes from the volunteer to the trainer to the local
15 controller to EMQ to our training group. I think, by
16 design, it is a complex and convoluted process.
17

18 MR BAILEY: Q. There is no one sticking point; it's an
19 elongated sort of process?

20 A. That's right, yes. It is a process issue, in my view,
21 and probably a performance issue across the service around
22 ensuring that there is a consistent and common application
23 of the policy intent in all areas of the SES.
24

25 Q. When you say this process is involved, going up
26 through the volunteer, the trainer, the local controller,
27 where does the process stop? Who signs off on it?

28 A. It gets signed off in our training unit. They are the
29 people who are responsible for ensuring our registered
30 training organisation, compliance, and so on.
31

32 Q. Are they the ones who will give or provide
33 acknowledgment of prior learning?

34 A. They will assess the documentation that has been
35 prepared at either the group or unit level, it's gone
36 through the region and then comes to us. In my opinion,
37 there are too many steps in that and each one of those
38 steps - given that transmission of information from
39 volunteer to paid service is often slow. Paperwork is not
40 something that people who volunteer sign up to do. So, I
41 think in each step of that process there is an opportunity
42 for delay, impediment, misunderstanding. It moves up to
43 the next stage, they haven't met this part of the standard,
44 it goes back and then people throw their hands up and say
45 this is all too hard. That, I think, is a legitimate
46 concern and certainly one that we will be moving to
47 overcome.

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Q. The review that you talk about implementing next year is designed to --

A. To streamline that process. If there are issues of marketing in that - if we go out and poll the volunteers and I am wrong and most of them say "I didn't know we had access to RPL", then that will obviously be an issue that we will need to address.

MR McGARRITY: Is now a good time to take a break?

MR MacSPORRAN: That would suit us for other reasons.

MR McGARRITY: We will take five minutes.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

MR BAILEY: Q. Moving on to question 14, it's just a query about swift water rescue. Is there any place for SES volunteers receiving some level of training in that regard?

A. I don't believe so. Swift water rescue is a Queensland Fire and Rescue Service function. It's governed by an internal policy called State Rescue Policy, which is a policy internal to our department. It simply seeks to identify roles and responsibilities for rescue functions so that we are not doubling up, and so on. Swift water rescue, I think, is a specialised function and should remain within the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service.

Q. Can you envisage any situations where there is a fine line between flood-boat operations and swift water, because the definition of swift water is, I think, anything moving faster than about 2 kilometres per hour. There is, potentially, that line between when are you operating in floodwater and when are you operating in swift water?

A. The difference, I guess, is we don't enter the water to pull people out. We will, in a boat, pull people into the boat, and we have procedures and people are trained to do that. They are not trained to go into the water to retrieve someone. That's Fire and Rescue.

Q. That training is covered as part of flood-boat operations?

A. Yes, the taking somebody out of the water into the boat, yes. If you are interested, that is a copy of the -- (handed).

1 MR McGARRITY: Thank you. That is a document titled
2 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, State Rescue Policy.

3
4 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 15: The possibility of providing
5 incentive payments to SES members for attendance at
6 training exercises or courses, is there some value in that
7 suggestion?

8 A. I think it goes to the heart of volunteering and
9 volunteerism. Certainly there is a very strong view
10 amongst the SES membership that they hold the fact that
11 they are volunteers extremely dear to their heart; they do
12 it as a sense of community. If you shift it to some form
13 of payment - not compensation. If someone is out of pocket
14 for something, that's different and, yes, they should be
15 compensated for that. That's a very different set of
16 arrangements than people being remunerated for an activity.
17 It then, I think, shifts the nature of why people
18 participate in it.

19
20 It then also brings a significant overhead, in terms
21 of administration and governance, because we're talking
22 about the public purse. So, if we are starting to move
23 into an arrangement where most volunteers receive a payment
24 that is a remuneration type payment, then I think we are
25 fundamentally changing the nature of the organisation and
26 the way we have to administer it, manage it, report on it.
27 Those things then become subject to Queensland Audit Office
28 and that brings then a whole new level of - so I think that
29 it's starting to move on to quite dangerous ground for the
30 SES to move into a remuneration model, particularly one
31 that's ad hoc.

32
33 MR McGARRITY: Q. But currently members who do attend
34 training and have out-of-pocket expenses are compensated?

35 A. If they had to move to another location to attend the
36 training, then in most cases they would - if they make a
37 claim, then that would be covered. Someone going to
38 deliver training who is out of pocket, yes, but they don't
39 receive any payment for attendance at training.

40
41 Q. If a member had to travel 50 kilometres to attend a
42 training session in use of a chainsaw, could they then
43 claim for a fuel reimbursement?

44 A. Yes, strictly speaking, they could. Very few that I
45 am aware of do.

46
47 Q. But the mechanism is there if they want to avail

1 themselves of it?

2 A. Yes.

3

4 MR BAILEY: Q. And they are aware of that?

5 A. I would assume so, yes. I mean, it's not something
6 we're out there promoting every day of the week. What I
7 hear is it's more the commitment of time than the actual
8 cost - than a direct cost.

9

10 Q. Going to your most recent statement, attachment 1 is
11 Approved SES Functions. I take it that is a complete list
12 of SES functions?

13 A. Yes, the one that you have got is, I believe.

14

15 Q. As opposed to it being referable to any particular
16 unit?

17 A. The one that has been added in recent times is
18 fundraising, so as long as it has that on it. It's at the
19 very bottom of the blue section. I will give you the
20 document Approved SES Functions (handed).

21

22 MR McGARRITY: Q. What is the date of this document?

23 A. It is current. It's an attachment to a doctrine but
24 I'm not sure what dates, but I can assure you it is
25 current.

26

27 Q. So that's current, Approved SES Functions, one page?

28 A. Yes. The issue of fundraising I think you have
29 referenced a couple of times and I might just give you a
30 very quick background as to why fundraising has been added.
31 The SES are covered for the purpose of insurance whilst
32 they are conducting an approved function. SES, on many
33 occasions, are given opportunities to fundraise in their
34 local communities, running a sausage sizzle or doing
35 traffic control, and getting some compensation for that.

36

37 This was almost an administrative purpose for adding
38 this. They're doing it and there were some occasions where
39 they were asked "Do you have public liability insurance?"
40 So if someone trips on the corner of the BBQ table, were
41 they covered. This was simply included in the functions to
42 make sure that they had appropriate insurance coverage in
43 the conduct of those. There was no other reason for doing
44 it.

45

46 MR BAILEY: Q. We might just move on to question 18. You
47 stated in your evidence in the first round that you did not

1 consider the SES should be a completely State-run service
2 with a definite command and control structure as exists in
3 New South Wales. Can you expand on your reasons for why
4 such a model may not be suitable in Queensland?

5 A. Can I just say at the outset that I don't think that's
6 actually what I said. I was asked a specific question
7 about did I agree with the New South Wales - something
8 around the New South Wales model, and I said it's not a
9 model that is directly transferable and applicable because
10 there's a range of differences. What I was alluding to was
11 it's fraught to just say we can simply take a model from
12 another jurisdiction and overlay it in Queensland and it
13 will be effective.

14
15 The reason for that difference - and the two models
16 that are, I guess, most applicable are those in New South
17 Wales and Victoria. That's more because of the population
18 density and the size, and so on, of the SESs in those two
19 States compared to the others, which are quite small. The
20 first is that in those jurisdictions, the SES does have a
21 direct role in disaster management. They have a concept of
22 combat agency. So the SES for flood and storms is the
23 combat agency, so it is responsible for disaster
24 management, i.e. the overall coordination of the response
25 to the event or series of events and to the response
26 activity itself.

27
28 Q. This gets back to the distinction you were drawing
29 before --

30 A. Yes.

31
32 Q. -- between disaster management and disaster --

33 A. Operations.

34
35 Q. Discrete operations?

36 A. Yes, yes. That brings with it an overhead and some of
37 their funding is related to disaster management and some of
38 it's related to disaster operations. Now, EMQ, as an
39 organisation, covers both of those, so there is some
40 comparison but there would be a significant body of work to
41 be able to unpack the models and start to get some direct
42 comparisons between the three jurisdictions and where the
43 money actually goes, because we all do something a little
44 bit different and we all fund things slightly differently.

45
46 In both New South Wales and Victoria, there is a
47 separate office of emergency management. That's combined

1 here in Queensland. EMQ does all of those things. We run
2 a helicopter rescue service, so that would have to be
3 backed out. Some administer grants, some don't. There are
4 a whole range of costs that are not necessarily apples for
5 apples comparisons. If we are to make those comparisons, I
6 think there is a body of work that needs to be done - and
7 it hasn't been done, as far as I am aware - that actually
8 starts to do some analysis of the jurisdictions.
9

10 The other aspect of it is the role of local government
11 and the role of local government in Queensland is
12 fundamentally different to in the other two jurisdictions.
13 In New South Wales and Victoria it's a relatively passive
14 involvement; in Queensland they are actually acknowledged
15 in the legislation that they have a role in both disaster
16 management and the SES. In the other jurisdictions there's
17 some legislated responsibilities of local government; ours,
18 there is probably less clarity around them. There are a
19 lot of differences there, so I'm just cautioning that it's
20 not simply being able to take one model and then overlay it
21 onto a different jurisdiction.
22

23 MR McGARRITY: Q. I think we probably touch upon this
24 later on in the questioning but it is related to what we
25 are talking about presently. Is there anything within
26 either the New South Wales or Victorian models that you
27 think could perhaps work in Queensland that perhaps
28 currently isn't being done with respect too SES?

29 A. The arrangements in those States, I think, provide a
30 level of clarity that is absent and the cause of some of
31 the lines of questioning and the focus of the current
32 Commission and its work. To say that there is nothing we
33 can learn from those jurisdictions, I think, would be
34 wrong.
35

36 However, what I would strongly encourage is that if we
37 are going to make recommendations around that, that it be
38 based on a much more detailed analysis than has been
39 available to us at this time. Without wanting to make any
40 suggestions as to where the Commission should go with its
41 recommendations, I think the authority that a
42 recommendation would bring to a detailed analysis of the
43 benefits and disadvantages of opportunities that may be
44 presented from other jurisdictions would certainly be an
45 outcome that would be beneficial to the SES. Making a
46 recommendation to simply apply something because it --
47

1 MR BAILEY: Q. Sounds good.
2 A. -- looks like it - or it sounds sensible, without
3 taking the time to actually map through both intended and
4 unintended consequences of that to funding, membership,
5 culture, is fraught to either underestimate or misrepresent
6 the importance of culture to a volunteer organisation. It
7 is the only reason that people join and if we have an
8 unintended consequence that goes to the heart of that
9 culture, then we will disenfranchise a huge number of
10 existing volunteers and a huge number of potential
11 volunteers, because I think the reason why new ones are
12 going to volunteer is pretty much the same reason why
13 current ones volunteer.

14
15 I think there are lots of good things in the
16 legislation, the policy frameworks and the operation of the
17 SES in other jurisdictions. Whenever they have come here,
18 we have been terribly impressed with their approach, their
19 professionalism, their levels of training - all of the
20 things. There's nothing there that I can point to to say,
21 well, we don't want to touch that because they are not a
22 good organisation. Far from it. They are excellent
23 organisations and we are always happy to learn.

24
25 Q. If a review or an analysis of the type that you have
26 mentioned was to be conducted, who would be the best person
27 or organisation to do it?

28 A. I believe there would be an advantage in a level of
29 independence but I think it would also need to be
30 controlled with some sort of a governance arrangement that
31 had key stakeholders. I think those key stakeholders would
32 certainly need to include the Department of Community
33 Safety and EMQ, would certainly need to involve local
34 government, probably at the peak body level - the LGAQ - as
35 well as a couple of representative councils - maybe a large
36 one, a small one and a remote one, something along those
37 lines - and would absolutely have to include volunteers.
38 There would have to be some level of volunteer
39 representation on that, in my opinion, and again it would
40 have to be broad based. So, whatever the recommendations
41 were, I think, would need to be tested through the
42 volunteer, local government and State government.

43
44 MR McGARRITY: Q. Would there be any role for a
45 Commonwealth agency - for example, Emergency Management
46 Australia - to play in any part of that review or is that
47 not something that --

1 A. No. The Commonwealth play very little role in the
2 SES. An organisation like AFAC, the Australasian Fire and
3 Emergency Service Council, has an interest in the SES. It
4 has an SES group that are full members of AFAC, with all
5 jurisdictions represented, called ACSES, Australian Council
6 of State Emergency Services. That would probably - now,
7 it's a non-government organisation but it is independent
8 and its only purpose is to serve its membership, which are
9 all jurisdictional emergency service authorities through
10 Fire and the SES. It has a level of independence but it
11 also has some equity in the outcome, some interest in the
12 outcome and some expertise to offer. So, it might be an
13 organisation that we could include.

14
15 MR BAILEY: Q. Could I just step back to the idea of
16 approved SES functions for a moment?

17 A. Yes.

18
19 Q. In the material that we have sourced from various
20 entities - I cite by way of example a response from the
21 Gladstone Regional Council where they talk about their
22 particular approved functions. They have listed those in a
23 document for us. What I am interested in is the detail to
24 which they descend, in that they have a unit and eight
25 subsidiary groups and they have the functions listed for
26 each one of those groups, just by way of a table. You're
27 welcome to have a quick look at that, if you like. It's
28 just that table there.

29 A. Mmm.

30
31 Q. They descend to a level of detail in terms of what
32 each group can do by way of approved function. Is there
33 any sort of register held by EMQ that documents all of this
34 information on a Statewide basis?

35 A. I don't believe I have it in aggregate - you know,
36 it's in table - but certainly the functions are approved
37 through, or the role is assigned to, our chief executive
38 but delegated. So, we can certainly create one.

39
40 Q. Are you aware of whether the approved functions are
41 listed on a unit level, or does it descend to the level of
42 individual group approved functions, as that document --

43 A. If it's at a unit level, then those functions are
44 applicable to all groups within that local government area.
45 If there is a desire to limit it or include an additional
46 one for a particular group, then that would be a variation.
47 So, if we only had six functions for a unit, then every

1 group in that unit would have all six functions.
2
3 Q. That is the way EMQ looks at it?
4 A. Yes.
5
6 Q. The council comes along --
7 A. But it's quite appropriate for that council to limit,
8 if they wish to, the way they have there. That's entirely
9 appropriate.
10
11 Q. That is up to the local government --
12 A. Yes.
13
14 Q. -- rather than EMQ?
15 A. Exactly.
16
17 Q. If they do this, do they --
18 A. It's by agreement. We approve the functions but we
19 are required by the legislation to consult with local
20 government. Basically, we ask them what functions do you
21 believe you need; we'll then agree on that. If our region
22 comes back and says they've actually got a flood-boat risk,
23 we then have to start a negotiation around, well, why isn't
24 flood-boat a function of your council. But it would be by
25 negotiation.
26
27 Q. The approved functions, from your point of view,
28 operate at a unit level and if the council wants to be a
29 bit more discriminating about particular groups --
30 A. Absolutely.
31
32 Q. -- that is a matter for them?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. Independently of the --
36 A. That's right. A classic example would be road crash
37 rescue, which is a function that very few SES units or
38 groups have because it's primarily a function of the
39 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. However, if there is a
40 gap in their coverage, we can provide that. So, there may
41 be a group that is trained in road crash rescue but the
42 whole unit doesn't require it because they are not in an
43 area that needs road crash rescue.
44
45 Q. How often, if at all, are the agreed functions
46 reviewed or updated as between EMQ --
47 A. There's no requirement for a review period. It's as

1 often as they're needed. If everybody is happy with the
2 current functions, then they remain static.

3

4 Q. But at any time a council can turn around and say --

5 A. Yes.

6

7 Q. -- we would like to rejig this a bit. No problem?

8 A. No problem.

9

10 Q. Is that an easy process?

11 A. Yes. I mean, it would only be difficult if there was
12 a dispute and I can't imagine a circumstance where it would
13 be, unless it was something around highly specialised and
14 expensive equipment that was required that wasn't able to
15 be funded. If there was a very low risk - and some units
16 would love to have a flood boat but they haven't got a real
17 risk. It's \$70,000 for a flood boat, there's lots of
18 training required for flood-boat operators. If they are
19 never going to use the flood boat then it's a poor
20 allocation of scarce resources. So, that might be an issue
21 where there could be a level of - I wouldn't quite put it
22 in terms of conflict, but there could be a difference of
23 view, but we'd just have to negotiate through that.

24

25 Q. Who within EMQ conducts a negotiation?

26 A. Regional director or area director. It's done at the
27 local level because they know the circumstances best.

28

29 Q. Any approval to a change of functions can be given by
30 a regional director?

31 A. The approval can't. Certainly we would take the
32 negotiation, in terms of we and they agree.

33

34 Q. And they would make a recommendation?

35 A. Our agreement would be based very much on the
36 recommendation of a regional director or an area director.

37

38 Q. Does the final sign-off come down to you, does it?

39 A. Yes.

40

41 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can I just ask - this is probably
42 descending into the technicalities of it. We talked
43 earlier about local governments perhaps having more than
44 one SES unit within their regional boundary, but the
45 agreement as to functions is between EMQ and the local
46 government; basically, the council. Is there then an
47 expectation that it's the council, rather than each unit

1 within that council area, that can perform the agreed list
2 of functions? I'm thinking here is there perhaps a risk
3 that where you have four units, two of those units can
4 effectively perform the functions that have been agreed
5 upon by the council and there may be occasions whereby the
6 council and EMQ has come to an agreement as to the
7 functions that they can perform but when it gets down to
8 the ground level, a particular unit can't actually perform
9 the functions?

10 A. That would be one of the prime considerations that our
11 people would have in that negotiation with council. If a
12 unit has three people and they want to have flood boats,
13 they can't because they need four people trained in
14 flood-boat operations - so those very practical elements.
15 We would be talking to the local controller or the group
16 leader around those negotiations as well.

17
18 MR BAILEY: Q. They would have to produce some evidence
19 that the capacity they are seeking can be fulfilled?

20 A. Yes, that's right. It goes to risk. Again, if you
21 don't have a creek in your patch then having a flood boat -
22 I mean, it's really about a very practical set of
23 arrangements that deal with the risks that present
24 themselves in a particular area.

25
26 MR McGARRITY: Q. In practice, for example, the local
27 government - the CEO or whomever - would discuss with the
28 local controllers within the council what can we do, what
29 can't we do, because we need to sign this agreement. Is
30 that effectively how it would work?

31 A. Yes. It comes both from the ground up, an SES unit
32 wanting to do something or believing they should, and local
33 government and EMQ saying, well, is that reasonable, is
34 there a risk to address, what are the consequences of that
35 in terms of cost, in terms of training, in terms of all the
36 issues.

37
38 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 19: The SES operates an exit
39 survey process for members who leave. Can you describe
40 this process, including how surveys are administered, who
41 does it, how it is marketed or made known to members and
42 what happens with the results?

43 A. Yes. I guess the first observation to make around
44 this and without wanting to be flippant, when I asked them
45 about this, most of my people said that most SES members
46 fade away rather than - so, it's a function of age, or what
47 have you, and they just simply decide that they're no

1 longer able or willing or capable of participating. In
2 those cases, those people would not fill out an exit
3 survey; they would just simply say farewell and head off.
4

5 The other primary reasons for people leaving is
6 relocation or work, and/or both. A lot of people in the
7 rural environment now fly in/fly out, drive in/drive out.
8 Mining is a huge industry in rural and regional areas. It
9 doesn't lend itself to SES membership. Some manage it but
10 many don't. With that, they choose to leave.
11

12 Certainly there are a number of people for whom the
13 SES didn't meet their expectations, for whatever reason.
14 They're usually the ones who fill out an exit survey.
15

16 Exit surveys are made available electronically and
17 physically to anybody who is leaving. Can I sit here and
18 put my hand on my heart and say that everybody is actively
19 managed and provided with a copy? No, I'd be silly to say
20 that.
21

22 There is probably some work that we can do in
23 marketing. I think it is a very useful tool that allows us
24 to take the temperature of the organisation and if people
25 are leaving because of legitimate pressures of work or
26 family reasons or physical relocation, then that's
27 something that's useful to know but it's not driving at the
28 heart of the culture of the organisation. If everybody is
29 leaving because they think it's a terrible organisation or
30 they're being bullied, or whatever it is, then that is
31 really important information. I would absolutely agree
32 that if we can do more to capture that, then that's
33 something that we should do. So, we will look at
34 opportunities to better and more extensively market the
35 exit survey.
36

37 Q. We just have a specific question there as well. There
38 was --

39 A. Did you want a copy of the documentation around that?
40 There is a --
41

42 MR McGARRITY: Yes, please.
43

44 THE INTERVIEWEE: There is a doctrine and there is a copy
45 of the survey.
46

47 MR McGARRITY: Thank you. That is Business Management

1 Directives BMH 26.5, Cessation of Membership.

2

3 Q. In your statement dated 30 September, you attached
4 various surveys that had been conducted by the SES over the
5 past few years.

6 A. Yes.

7

8 Q. There was a recent Sunday Mail article in which the
9 minister referred to a specific survey of 600 members.

10 A. Yes.

11

12 Q. We just want to confirm whether or not that was one of
13 the surveys that was attached to your --

14 A. Yes, it is the one. I think it's 19.

15

16 Q. 19?

17 A. Yes. It's the last one of those surveys and it is the
18 same one.

19

20 Q. No worries. We just wanted to confirm that.

21 A. Yes.

22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 20 --

24 A. I think we have done that one.

25

26 MR BAILEY: We have discussed the role of duty officers.
27 Are you satisfied with that?

28

29 MR McGARRITY: Yes, we did touch on duty officers.

30

31 Q. Duty officer and regional duty officer, are they
32 essentially the same thing?

33 A. Simply location. There's seven regional duty
34 officers. Each region has a duty officer at any one time.
35 They're on-call, so it's our permanent staff on-call,
36 out-of-hours work. There is currently a State duty manager
37 - that's one person - from Kedron head office. We are
38 looking at, as I said previously, with the introduction of
39 the additional staff into the watch desk, the need for a
40 State duty manager, and we will probably do away with that
41 in the near future.

42

43 Q. Just to confirm, the duty officers in the regions can
44 be any one of a number of the EMQ staff? That's rotated
45 around?

46 A. Yes. It's usually more senior staff; area directors,
47 regional directors, some of the more senior and experienced

1 training officers. The function is when something does get
2 a little bit more complex and people are either wanting
3 local knowledge or a decision about should we/shouldn't we,
4 if there's a judgment in it, so it's people who actually
5 have some experience.

6
7 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 21: Can you explain how the
8 Statewide natural hazard risk assessment - Risk Frontiers -
9 will be utilised?

10 A. In relation to the SES directly, not at all.

11
12 MR McGARRITY: Q. Not at all?

13 A. No. This is a planning instrument for local disaster
14 management plans. Now, will those plans potentially drive
15 some activity in the SES? Possibly. If the risk profile
16 identifies something that has either not been properly
17 identified or for which the mitigation arrangements are
18 inappropriate, then that may have a consequence to the SES.
19 But the purpose of that is not for driving any change or
20 changes in the SES. It's purely for planning at the local
21 disaster management plan level.

22
23 Q. Just on that point, was EMQ involved in any early
24 stages when it was decided that this Statewide hazard
25 assessment would be undertaken?

26 A. Yes. The reason for it - what drove the establishment
27 of this was discussions between all of the State
28 jurisdictions and the federal government and, primarily,
29 it's around ensuring that there's a connection between
30 grant funding for resilience and a risk profile. The
31 secondary benefit of it is that it actually allows, I
32 guess, some independent assessment of the risk profiles
33 across the State and that is a useful instrument in
34 assessing those local disaster plans. So, the purpose is
35 twofold; one is to make sure there is a clear connection
36 between streams of funding directed at real risks and then,
37 secondly, an assistance to planning.

38
39 Q. One of those streams of funding you referred to would
40 be the NDRP?

41 A. Yes.

42
43 Q. The Natural Disaster Resilience Program?

44 A. Yes.

45
46 MR BAILEY: Q. Moving on to command and control, question
47 22, what is the status of the document "EMQ Roles and

1 Responsibilities in support of Disaster Management
2 Arrangements"?

3 A. It's currently still in draft. We are just about to
4 put on some additional staff at the moment. One of the
5 functions of that will be to resolve it. We anticipate
6 that it will be finalised, subject to any issues in
7 consultation, through early December this year. It has
8 just simply been a resourcing issue. We have had a little
9 bit to do over the last couple of months.

10
11 MR McGARRITY: Understandable.

12
13 THE INTERVIEWEE: Are you happy with the watch desk part of
14 that?

15
16 MR McGARRITY: I think we have covered that sufficiently,
17 thanks.

18
19 MR BAILEY: Q. Similarly, question 23 we have covered.
20 A. Yes. Do you have the doctrine on deployments?

21
22 Q. Is that 8.0?

23 A. 8.0. You have that?

24
25 MR McGARRITY: Yes, we have that one, thank you.

26
27 Q. If we move to question 24, there has been some
28 suggestion in the material we have received from various
29 people that there is no direct statutory authority for
30 tasking and deployment of the SES, but under the current
31 legislative arrangements there is a delegation to EMQ with
32 respect to the management and performance of the SES and
33 local controllers, specifically, and that this provides
34 indirect authority for tasking and deployment. Is this a
35 view that is shared by you, that there is an indirect
36 authority assumed?

37 A. Yes, it is an assumption. The Act is not clear. I
38 think it is certainly inferred. I guess there is a level
39 of complexity to a solution to that, if it is determined as
40 a problem. I believe that the Act provides in two areas an
41 opportunity for us to make doctrine that goes to the
42 command, control and management of the SES. One is section
43 83 and the other is section 137, which is around making
44 codes for practice.

45
46 We, in the SES or EMQ, have probably not used section
47 137 to the extent that perhaps our colleagues in Fire and

1 Rescue have in relation to the Rural Fire Service. I think
2 that has more to do with the culture and nature of the
3 organisations than anything else. The fire service is a
4 uniformed, command and control organisation absolutely,
5 from the start of recruitment right up to a Commissioner.
6 Its whole structure is predicated on uniform, rank, command
7 and control. EMQ is a public service organisation that has
8 more of a management structure than a command and control
9 structure, and I think that has probably driven the
10 approach to how we deal with this.

11
12 If we use the backdrop of the events of 2010/2011 as
13 the context to have the discussion, then I think it is very
14 clear that greater clarity around command, control and
15 coordination would serve the community better; that there
16 is no confusion, it is absolutely crystal clear who is
17 what. It's not about the issue of barking orders, and so
18 on; it's about greater clarity around roles and
19 responsibilities and accountabilities, in my view.

20
21 So, if there is an outcome that can be achieved that
22 delivers greater clarity in those areas and whether that is
23 - sorry, if I can go back, my ability to be able to
24 articulate a - let's use command and control as an example.
25 My ability to be articulate that, using either section 83
26 or section 137, can't extend - this is my view and I'm not
27 a lawyer - beyond the intent of the legislation. I can't
28 do something more in those sections than the legislation is
29 either clear about or intends. I think that is probably a
30 reasonable position to start. If the Act is silent on a
31 level of command above local controller, then I guess it is
32 ambiguous as to whether I can reasonably make doctrine that
33 actually delivers that.

34
35 However, the SES is established as a State service,
36 not as a regional service, not as a local service. So,
37 again, my opinion is there is always an intent by the
38 legislation that the SES will be managed as a State
39 service. The experience, particularly of 2010/2011 and in
40 many events prior to that, is it has to be operated as a
41 State service because a large event immediately overwhelms
42 capability and capacity at the local level. The whole
43 disaster management system is predicated on that as an
44 assumption and that's why there is a district level, a
45 State level and a Commonwealth level. So, whilst local
46 government is embodied in the legislation as the prime
47 responder to an event, the legislation acknowledges that

1 there is going to be assistance required.

2

3 If we talk about the SES and its units and groups and
4 if we leave to one side any confusion about local units and
5 groups and what the structure of those should be, and we
6 simply talk about bringing disparate bodies of SES together
7 and being able to manage those in a coordinated way,
8 efficiently and effectively, for the benefit of the
9 community, then I think there is absolutely a need to have
10 a clear structure that sits above a local controller. A
11 local controller - in my opinion, it cannot be assumed that
12 a local controller automatically has the capacity to manage
13 and coordinate a major catastrophic disaster event. They
14 are --

15

16 MR BAILEY: Q. Sorry to cut in, but you are contemplating
17 there where other units have been deployed --

18

19

20 Q. -- from outside the region into a location, and a
21 local controller who normally is responsible for 40 people
22 --

23

24

25 Q. -- suddenly has 200 people?

26

27 A. Exactly, yes. This, I think, is where confusion
28 reigns supreme because, historically, if there has been an
29 attempt to codify a set of arrangements, then that is seen
30 as an interference with local arrangements. My personal
31 view is that's not the intent at all. If there is a local
32 event occurring in a local area, the local controller
33 manages it, commands and controls, does everything that is
34 needed to respond to that. It is when it moves beyond
35 their capability or capacity that we need a level of
36 structure that sits above that and enables a very clear
37 chain of command.

38

39 I don't come from a military or uniform background.
40 I'm probably the - people don't like talking to me about
41 uniforms and command because I don't like it. If you have
42 to tell somebody how to do something, you have lost the
43 plot, in my opinion. But if it clearly identifies, as I
44 said before, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
45 then I think that is a really, really beneficial thing.

46

47

48 If I can maybe point to an arrangement that I think
49 does work fairly well and that is in the Rural Fire

1 Service. If there's an event that is occurring in a
2 particular area, then what they do is appoint an incident
3 commander, and there's a fairly structured approach to
4 that.

5
6 In our world, that would be a flood in Roma, nowhere
7 else, and the local controller would be the incident
8 commander. If three or four rivers in the Maranoa were in
9 flood concurrently and we had multiple SES responding to
10 the same cause, then we would appoint an area commander and
11 that would, in most instances, be an EMQ staff member. It
12 wouldn't have to be, and I'll talk to that in a moment. If
13 the whole of South-West Queensland was in flood like it was
14 in 2009, then we would appoint a regional commander and
15 that would probably be our regional director in the
16 south-west. If we had multiple events across multiple
17 parts of the State occurring concurrently, we would appoint
18 a State commander.

19
20 It simply escalates the complexity, the need for
21 coordination, the need for logistics, the need for planning
22 and intelligence, all those things, to an appropriate level
23 but there would be greater clarity around who was doing
24 what. At the moment, there can be those things happening
25 at the local level independently of things happening at a
26 regional level, independently of things happening at a
27 State level. Everybody is well-intentioned but it's not
28 organised, it's not arranged, because there is no clarity
29 around who necessarily needs to do what.

30
31 Q. You are talking in terms of the SES still, I take it?

32 A. Yes.

33
34 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is that reflective, perhaps, of the
35 hierarchical nature of the disaster management system; the
36 local, district, State level? Are you looking at a similar
37 type of --

38 A. Yes, but they're disconnected to the extent that
39 they're doing two entirely different things.

40
41 Q. Of course, but you would see that sort of movement up
42 the chain, so to speak?

43 A. Yes. The bit that would be common would be the scale
44 and complexity of the event. The purposes for doing it
45 would be fundamentally different, however. The SES is no
46 different to the fire service, the ambulance service or the
47 police service in how it needs to arrange itself as that

1 level of complexity and the scale escalates. Whilst I have
2 made the distinction that it is not the triple 0 emergency
3 responder organisation, it still has a very critical
4 community service to provide. The more efficiently, more
5 effectively and more rapidly it can do that, the less the
6 community is suffering. So, there's a clear objective to
7 make it as efficient and effective as we possibly can.
8

9 Q. Would you agree then that the key to the effectiveness
10 of such a system would be absolute clarity around what the
11 SES does and does not do?

12 A. Well, I think there is clarity - there certainly
13 should be clarity around that because it shouldn't extend
14 beyond its functions. That's what it's designed to do,
15 that's what it's trained to do, that's what it's equipped
16 to do and that's what it's managed to do.
17

18 MR BAILEY: Q. But there also has to be clarity around the
19 roles and responsibilities as the situation escalates?

20 A. Yes, and it's the issue of above a local incident
21 occurring, so this is the 5 percent of the time scenario.
22 What is seen, I think, as a great risk - and if not
23 properly managed, will be a great risk - is that the
24 5 percent of the time will be used to manage the 95 percent
25 of the time.
26

27 SESs are established locally, they are established for
28 the benefit of their local community - absolutely, that is
29 a primary objective and a primary purpose - and their first
30 port of call is to their community. However, there are
31 circumstances - and it's the criticality of when those
32 circumstances occur that brings a criticality to the design
33 of an outcome that actually manages it. When it becomes
34 critical, we have an event of usually significant or
35 catastrophic proportions and we have to be able to move
36 quickly, we have to be able to move effectively, we have to
37 be able to have the right people in the right place at the
38 right time with the right things. That doesn't just
39 happen; it needs management, it needs coordination, it
40 needs a level of control and it needs an ability to set
41 priorities across all of those.
42

43 Q. I don't see any difficulty with local level
44 operations. The SES needs to be responsive to a range of
45 agencies when something happens. It could be 132500, it
46 could be QFRS about something, it could be QPS about
47 something else, a search or what have you.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. They can self-activate all these sorts of things. So,
4 at that local level they are responsive in a number of ways
5 and to a number of organisations and stimuli, if you like.

6 A. Mmm.

7

8 Q. A local controller can be the one responsible for
9 dealing with what his volunteers are doing. I can see that
10 as an essential part of what they do and that's a situation
11 that can probably operate fairly clearly. Where the
12 difficulty seems to emerge is when you have complex
13 operations where you need to start building up the scale to
14 the response. You have EMQ officers feeding in to provide
15 support and logistics, and so forth, but there also has to
16 be that connection and integration, if you will, with the
17 disaster management arrangements, and that seems to be a
18 source of confusion as well. I'm talking about big, major
19 events and how these things work in major events. You
20 would agree, would you, that how they integrate with the
21 disaster management structure is something that seems to
22 have caused some confusion as well?

23 A. I think disasters by their very nature are chaotic and
24 confusing. I have not experienced one where there hasn't
25 been a level of chaos and confusion attached to it. Our
26 objective is to limit that to the greatest extent possible.

27

28 The way that the SES - as to do all response agencies
29 - needs to connect into the disaster management
30 arrangements is through an appropriate liaison officer
31 function. The SES locally should have a liaison officer
32 with the Local Disaster Management Group and that liaison
33 officer should be doing a couple of things. They should be
34 taking tasks and information out of the Local Disaster
35 Management Group that's relevant to the SES locally and
36 feeding that through. They are the conduit through which
37 information and, potentially, tasks might move from a Local
38 Disaster Management Group to the local SES, and priorities.

39

40 The Local Disaster Management Group may well make
41 decisions that say we are not going to do work in this
42 area, our top priority is doing work in this area. That
43 may well then change the whole concept of operations for
44 the SES. They may be wanting to go and put tarps on roofs
45 but the higher priority that's established is for them to
46 go and do something else. So, that is why a liaison
47 officer is very important. That should also be replicated

1 at the district level and at the State level.

2

3 Q. The liaison officer in each of those cases would be
4 EMQ?

5 A. In the district and the State level, yes.

6

7 MR McGARRITY: Q. And at the local level?

8 A. At the local level it is probably going to be a
9 member. It might not be.

10

11 Q. Not the local controller?

12 A. I would think that the local controller is probably
13 more use in actually managing operations. I think there's
14 a need for overt leadership and to be seen with your
15 members at the coalface and directing operations is
16 appropriate.

17

18 MR BAILEY: Q. You would see that tasking at the local
19 level - and we're talking about a situation where the Local
20 Disaster Coordination Centre is up and running. Tasking
21 would come from them to the SES liaison officer, fed on
22 then to the local controller, who would decide, in
23 practical terms, how they are going to go about it?

24

A. Yes.

25

26 Q. And direct his members accordingly?

27 A. Yes. The Local Disaster Management Group will set
28 priorities and will allocate tasks. It should not - and
29 will not, whilst ever I'm around - tell the SES how to do
30 the job, as much as it would never tell Fire how to respond
31 to their issues, Ambulance how to deal with a
32 multi-casualty event or Police how to deal with --

33

34 Q. But the tasking and prioritisation should come from
35 the LDCC?

36 A. Yes, and in the absence of any direction, they will
37 just simply work through their tasks in an orderly way to
38 achieve the maximum effect. So, if the LDMG provides no
39 direction as to tasking priority, then the SES will just
40 get on with organising themselves to deliver on the tasks
41 that have been provided to them.

42

43 Q. That would come through RFA Online?

44 A. Yes, primarily that would probably be the lion's share
45 by volume, RFA or 132500, whether it's RFA or another
46 mechanism to actually collate those. But, yes, requests
47 for assistance from the general public through calls to

1 132500, in most instances, will be far and away the lion's
2 share of tasks.

3

4 Q. If you go up the scale, the District Disaster
5 Management Group is up and running as well.

6 A. Yes.

7

8 Q. They can provide tasking and prioritisation?

9 A. Probably not. There is the opportunity to do that
10 but --

11

12 Q. Because their raison d'être is to support downwards?

13 A. Yes. Two purposes for the district level. One is to
14 ensure that the local level is operating, and operating
15 effectively and efficiently, and doing all the things that
16 it needs to. The district officer, under the legislation,
17 has the authority to give direction, so if they see
18 something that should be happening that's not happening,
19 then they can actually give directions to the Local
20 Disaster Management Group. But they are primarily there as
21 the first port of contact in the escalation process; when
22 something is needed, they are able to identify whether they
23 can source that regionally or within their sphere of
24 influence; if not, to progress that up through to the
25 State.

26

27 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can I just go back to something you said
28 under the model you suggested, whereby EMQ has an area
29 presence, a regional presence and then a State presence for
30 SES. You said that perhaps at the area level that might be
31 an area director who fulfills that. So, there is currently
32 expertise within EMQ to fulfil those roles as you see them
33 through that escalation chain?

34 A. My next point was going to be that I would actually
35 see that there is a level of competency required to fulfil
36 those tasks. If you are going to be an incident
37 controller, commander - whatever we want to call it - then
38 I think there should be a multi-tiered incident command and
39 control environment similar to those encouraged through the
40 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission; 1, 2, 3 level
41 incident controllers, level 3 being major events Statewide.
42 You know, highly-skilled, lots of training, down to can I
43 manage a level - level 1, I think, is the lowest level and
44 level 3 is the highest, sorry. You know, managing a local
45 incident.

46

47 I would see that there would need to be a transition

1 through to the acquisition of a set of skills and
2 competencies to fulfil those tasks and we would need to
3 design a set of arrangements that people who were going to
4 be assigned to those roles held the appropriate training
5 and/or competency. In that model, it would, therefore,
6 mean that there might be an occasion where a volunteer
7 local controller or somebody in the SES might be an area or
8 regional commander, if they hold the skill to perform that
9 function.

10
11 So, my sense here is not about particular agencies or
12 particular positions in agencies doing certain things.
13 There's probably a natural order to those things that would
14 occur in most instances, but I would see them as a
15 competency-based appointment rather than a position-based
16 appointment.

17
18 Q. Is there a need then for some analysis to be
19 undertaken, firstly, as to what those competencies would
20 be --

21 A. Yes.

22
23 Q. -- before you can identify the appropriate people
24 within the area to perform it?

25 A. That's right. There are certainly bodies of work
26 around the country about this. Every State, I believe, is
27 in one way, shape or form looking at such a set of
28 arrangements, whether it is as I have described it or
29 whether their view is something different, but they are
30 all, as I understand it, looking at a more structured
31 incident command arrangement. I think that would be
32 consistent with the things that are happening in the
33 emergency community generally, certainly consistent with
34 what's happening in the uniformed areas and, in my opinion,
35 would certainly go to responding to some of the issues of
36 confusion, or more, that have been identified in the
37 evidence and submissions that have been provided to the
38 Commission.

39
40 MR BAILEY: Q. Can I just jump back to the example of a
41 local controller who is used to dealing with or managing
42 40 people and suddenly there's an out-of-region influx of
43 deployment and he has 200 people on his doorstep. What
44 command and control arrangements would you envisage in that
45 situation for the SES operations then to be conducted?

46 A. If it was an area, the area commander could either
47 take command of that or could appoint someone to do that.

1 That would be the way I would see it. So it could, in
2 fact, then be that the local controller is taken out of
3 their role of local controller and put into an area
4 coordination role for the SES. But, again --

5

6 Q. Competency based?

7 A. -- it would be on competency.

8

9 Q. Do the ODIs - and I am thinking specifically of 2.0
10 which is the hierarchy ODI, and 4.0 which is the incident
11 control function ODI - effectively facilitate the
12 arrangement that you have just articulated?

13 A. Not really.

14

15 Q. No?

16 A. I think it's attempting to meet the requirements of
17 too many people; therefore, it's unclear. All of the
18 elements of it that have attempted to take account of
19 particular interests or positions have had the net effect,
20 I think, of watering down its intent and certainly its
21 clarity. I think, thus, we find ourselves in the position
22 that we are and people questioning the authority of our
23 ability to be able to make such doctrine.

24

25 Q. Because it is not clear, it breeds confusion?

26 A. Mmm.

27

28 Q. For example, 2.0 talks about EMQ directors taking
29 operational control when it gets beyond the capacity of a
30 local controller.

31 A. Yes.

32

33 Q. 4.0 talks about EMQ appointing an incident controller.

34 A. Yes. Again, there's --

35

36 Q. In the context of a major event.

37 A. Yes. There are different issues at play and, again,
38 because they're not attached to a very clear structure, we
39 attempt to use other instruments to achieve outcomes. So,
40 the incident controller in that context is more around
41 running an incident coordination team, which is about
42 managing and coordinating the tasks that come, than a
43 command and control structure. So, there's a confusion of
44 purpose here, I think.

45

46 If the legislation was to give a clear intent - not
47 attempt to clarify the structure, but give an intent - as

1 to what outcome was sought to be achieved by implementing a
2 structure and then leaving it up to the ability to make
3 codes of practice and to make doctrine under the
4 legislation, then I think we would have the authority to
5 move down the path of putting in place the intent and then
6 providing much greater clarity.

7
8 Q. That's a really important point and I just want to
9 make sure I have understood it. Any legislative change
10 perhaps, what, in terms of section 83?

11 A. Well, I think section 83 and section 137. I'd have to
12 look at them or somebody with a legal background would have
13 to look at them, I think, in great detail. I think that
14 they would stand on their own merits, perhaps, with a -
15 they may need a minor tweak. But I think somewhere in
16 either the objects or the lead-in, there needs to be
17 clarity around what is the intent of raising the SES; that
18 it is for the purpose of local response but it is also for
19 the purpose of being able to coordinate a Statewide
20 response in delivering the functions of the SES.

21
22 I think that sections 83 and 137 - and, again, I'd
23 take advice on it - certainly would appear to have
24 sufficient authority to be able to then make codes of
25 practice or to make policies that give effect to that
26 intent. What's unclear at the moment is, I think, that
27 heads of purpose for establishing the SES.

28
29 Q. The review of the disaster management arrangements
30 conducted by Jim O'Sullivan, which was finalised in August
31 2009, made the comment in relation to, effectively, section
32 83, which deals with the responsibilities of the chief
33 executive in relation to the SES, that those heads are
34 essentially enabling and supporting roles only and
35 certainly he took the view - and it's a view that can be
36 taken - that it really didn't extend into assuming command
37 and control over the SES.

38 A. Yes.

39
40 Q. Which is what ODI 2.0 asserts or attempts to do, by
41 saying that operational responsibility has been delegated
42 from the chief executive to the executive director - which
43 is now you, obviously, as the assistant director - and that
44 really there was something that was being done there by way
45 of ODI that exceeded the legislative basis for it. Now,
46 that was a view that was taken by Mr O'Sullivan and
47 articulated in his report.

1 A. Yes, and that was attempted to be resolved by the
2 establishment of the memorandum of understanding, because
3 that was the only recommendation that was made in relation
4 to the SES.

5

6 Q. Yes.

7 A. I guess the purpose of that analysis and that review
8 was to look primarily at the disaster management
9 arrangements. The SES was, I guess, a smaller component of
10 that analysis and there was only one recommendation made in
11 relation to the SES, and that was the MOA.

12

13 Q. As we have touched on the MOA, can I just ask about
14 that, because the MOA does seek to deal with certain
15 operational arrangements. At section 5.2 of the MOA it
16 talks about local government undertakings. Under the
17 heading Activations, Taskings and Deployments it
18 articulates four scenarios, if you like. Are you familiar
19 with these?

20 A. Oh, I haven't read it for a while.

21

22 MR McGARRITY: I have a copy here for you.

23

24 MR BAILEY: Q. Page 10. I am just picking up on the point
25 that you said that the recommendation that was made by Jim
26 O'Sullivan, there was only one and it was to do with
27 developing MOUs?

28

A. Yes.

29

30 Q. This document is the result of that recommendation?

31

A. Yes.

32

33 Q. In terms of the issue of command and control, I am
34 interested in this section in 5.2 at page 10 where it
35 articulates four scenarios, (a), (b), (c) and (d). It
36 seems to me that scenarios (b) to (d) contemplate
37 arrangements occurring within the disaster management
38 system.

39

A. Which --

40

41 MR McGARRITY: Have I given you the right document?

42

43 MR BAILEY: Page 10.

44

45 MR McGARRITY: Have you got page 10, 5.2?

46

47 MR BAILEY: That is different to the copy I have.

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THE INTERVIEWEE: I have a copy. I can find it.

MR BAILEY: Q. I am referring to a version which was an attachment to your most recent statement, so if you have a copy of your statement --

A. Yes, I think I'm there.

Q. Attachment 2 is the version I have.

A. Yes. Under Appointments or Activations?

Q. Under Activations. Down the bottom of page 10 it has (a), (b), (c) and then (d) on the top of page 11.

A. Yes.

Q. I am looking at that in terms of your comment that this MOU was developed to try to address the criticism that Mr O'Sullivan had that the ODI really goes beyond the support that the legislation provides it. Those scenarios clearly contemplate these things occurring within, and feeding into, the disaster management arrangements.

A. Yes.

Q. But they're silent on the issue of command and control of the SES itself.

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose the question is where do we go from there, in terms of articulating that, either in relation to the MOUs or generally in relation to SES doctrine?

A. The requirement to have an MOA is driven, I guess, by an unwillingness to have a direct position on this. Therefore, what we have been given is an attempt to manage this by separate negotiation with 73 different local authorities. However skilled and astute we are at managing that, I think we will end up with 73 variations on the theme. Some of them will be quite narrow, some of them may be quite significant.

The ultimate outcome? Will we get 73 agreements? I don't think so. I think some local governments will choose not to enter into an MOA and I can't force them to because it's an agreement and if I make them, then it is no longer an agreement. So, I think that whilst this is certainly a useful step, I certainly would not like to see an outcome that is prescriptive down to a fine level of detail or granularity because I think that there are certainly some

1 local arrangements that do need to be made. I have said
2 before that there is great variability across councils in
3 both their risk profiles and in their capability and
4 capacity to be able to respond, to be able to support an
5 SES and be able to support disaster management generally.
6

7 I think there would be benefit and value in taking
8 those key Statewide principles and structure that would
9 provide assistance to the clarity of the purpose and the
10 organisation of the SES, to make those things more clear
11 and then provide some ability to be able to make
12 arrangements below that which take account of those
13 variabilities and of those differences.
14

15 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can I just confirm one thing in relation
16 to the model that you mentioned with the area, region and
17 State directors. You said that would really be based on
18 the skills required in that particular disaster and you
19 said that perhaps there may even be instances where a local
20 controller is the area director for the SES, let's say.
21 A. Yes, is the area controller or commander, or whatever
22 it is, yes.
23

24 Q. Sorry, commander. In such an instance, there is the
25 potential for a volunteer to be in charge of that
26 particular - in command of that area during a disaster?
27 A. Yes.
28

29 Q. So I have that right?
30 A. Yes. So long as they hold the skills.
31

32 MR BAILEY: Q. We have jumped around a fair bit there. I
33 might just deal with one more topic and then we could take
34 a further break. Turning to your most recent statement, at
35 paragraph 76 you talk about the issue of tasking. The
36 decision to accept tasks is the responsibility of the local
37 controller at all stages, and the local controller is
38 responsible for command and control.
39 A. Of their members.
40

41 Q. Of their members. Moving on to paragraph 77 - and I
42 don't think there is any issue about local level stuff.
43 Where we are running into the potential for confusion is
44 when you have a major event and a large escalation of
45 people and resources, and how it is then going to work. At
46 paragraph 77 you say:
47

1 *In a large and/or complex event, all SES*
2 *tasks are likely to be managed through an*
3 *SES Incident Management Team under the*
4 *management of an incident controller.*
5

6 Just to paraphrase, the role of the IMT is to establish
7 communication channels with the sources of tasking, to
8 record and prioritise all tasks, allocate tasks, plan for
9 future requirements, and so forth.

10 A. Mmm

11
12 Q. That is an essential ingredient in terms of any area
13 commander arrangements?

14 A. Yes, but it's a function. This is not a command role,
15 this is a functional support role. An Incident Management
16 Team is the body through which coordination occurs. It's
17 not about setting direction, it's not about giving command
18 or actually allocating priorities, or what have you; it's
19 about the collation of all of the information that's
20 necessary, bringing that together, and then dealing with it
21 through an incident management system approach.

22
23 We use in Queensland, as most jurisdictions do, AIIMS
24 - Australian Interagency Incident Management System. That
25 provides a structure to deal with incidents and it also is
26 an arrangement that lends itself to escalate. It can be
27 used on the back of a sheet of paper to manage a small
28 thing out of a truck; it can be used to - we use it to
29 manage the State Disaster Coordination Centre, to manage
30 multiple inputs from all over the State. It's the same
31 system. It is a structure to - it allows a structured
32 approach to the management of multiple inputs and to
33 organise them for appropriate outputs to get things done.

34
35 Q. What would be the difference between an incident
36 controller and this notional area commander?

37 A. The incident controller would be the person in charge
38 of that Incident Management Team. So, that is almost a
39 functional responsibility to organise that team. The
40 incident commander - if that's the terminology we want to
41 use - is, in fact, the head of the response.

42
43 Q. The command and control?

44 A. So, the Incident Management Team would sit under the
45 control of the incident controller - commander.

46
47 Q. I think we have already touched on the idea that --

1 A. But to be very, very clear - and I know I keep harping
2 on this - reading back on the transcript when I gave
3 evidence and we talked about incident management teams and
4 coordination centres, I think there was a significant
5 amount of confusion - and there may no longer be - around
6 incident management for the SES and incident management for
7 the disaster. I think that there was confusion that the
8 SES Incident Management Team had a role in coordinating the
9 entire event. It only coordinates the bits that relate to
10 the operation of the SES.

11
12 So, there will be an SES Incident Management Team
13 operating in a big event, there will probably be a Fire
14 Incident Management Team operating, there will be a Police
15 Incident Management Team operating, there may be an
16 Ambulance Incident Management Team all operating
17 independent of each other but their outputs will feed up
18 into the disaster management system in the form of
19 situation reports, so that the disaster management system
20 has visibility of what's occurring in each of those streams
21 of response.

22
23 Q. The first stop, in terms of the sit reps, is the LDCC?
24 A. That's right.

25
26 Q. And then up?
27 A. That's right.

28
29 Q. In relation to, say, an SES Incident Management Team
30 and given their close relationship with the local
31 government, where should they be? Should they be
32 co-located in a disaster --

33 A. No, not necessarily. It's probably not ideal to have
34 them co-located. It's just simply too busy and confusing.
35 In Yasi, Townsville had an Incident Management Team
36 established at the racetrack because it was an ideal
37 situation for it. In Cairns --

38
39 Q. This is the SES?

40 A. Yes - sorry. The Incident Management Team doesn't
41 necessarily have to be fully resourced by SES. We have had
42 occasions where we have outsourced an Incident Management
43 Team to the fire service, simply because that was the best
44 way to approach it. Because we all use AIIMS, we're all
45 using the same structures, and so on, so people are
46 familiar with what it is we are doing. So, it is a skill
47 to work in an Incident Management Team, not a skill

1 necessarily to know in absolute detail the role of the SES.

2

3 Q. You could conceivably have one Incident Management
4 Team that's actually, if you will, servicing a QPS command
5 and control officer - whoever that happens to be on site -
6 it could be QFRS, it could be SES as well?

7 A. Sorry, could just explain what you --

8

9 Q. Could one Incident Management Team actually serve a
10 number of different operational response groups?

11 A. No.

12

13 Q. No?

14 A. No. What you're doing there is getting into the
15 function of disaster management. An SES Incident
16 Management Team will take all of the tasks that are
17 required and start to allocate those tasks out, and so on.
18 The analysis of all of those tasks - and one of the
19 functions of an Incident Management Team is planning and
20 intelligence. They may go, oh, we don't have enough
21 people, we don't have enough resources, we don't have
22 enough equipment - whatever it might be - to meet all of
23 these tasks beyond tomorrow. Can we find it locally? If
24 the answer is no, then that will go as a request.

25

26 It can go two ways. It can either go up the chain of
27 command within the SES, so EMQ may have access to more of
28 what it is they want, in which case we will solve that. If
29 it's not within our ability to solve, it then becomes a
30 request for assistance into the disaster management system
31 where somebody else will need to provide the solution to
32 that. So, whilst ever you can deal with it in your own
33 chain of command, you do so. When you can't, that's hands
34 off and that becomes a coordination issue for the disaster
35 management arrangements, because they might be getting a
36 request from the SES, they might be getting a request from
37 Fire, they might be getting a request from Police, they
38 might be getting a request from Ergon Energy for similar
39 sorts of things. So, they will solve that in the disaster
40 management system.

41

42 MR McGARRITY: Q. So an SES Incident Management Team may
43 have staff members from other response agencies?

44 A. Could do, yes.

45

46 Q. But it still only performs SES functions?

47 A. That's right, yes.

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Q. And still reports straight up through the SES management hierarchy?

A. That's right. Maybe I confused you when I said we could have a fire team. What we would do is say, "Fire, we've got limited resources. The best use of the SES skills is not running an Incident Management Team, it's going and putting tarps on roofs. Could you provide some staff to assist us with an Incident Management Team --

Q. For the SES?

A. -- for the SES. Sorry, that was probably my confusion there.

MR BAILEY: We might take a break at this point.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

MR BAILEY: It seems that we have jumped around a fair bit in terms of our list of questions. We have touched on quite a few of the command and control ones already.

MR McGARRITY: Yes. We probably should discuss a bit more of the MOAs, if we could, or am I jumping ahead too far?

MR BAILEY: No, that's all right.

THE INTERVIEWEE: 32?

MR McGARRITY: Q. We are up to - sorry, if you could go back to 27 and the execution of the MOAs.

A. Yes.

Q. There was some suggestion - and I think it was in a State response the Commission's Interim Report - that all MOAs would be executed by 1 November.

A. No.

Q. We just wanted to gauge the status of that.

A. No, there was no suggestion that MOAs would be executed by 1 November. They would be out for discussion by 1 November.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. I would never give a guarantee that we will have every local government with an MOA, because it's an agreement that is at the discretion of either party to enter into.

1 I've got to say, anecdotally, most councils are waiting for
2 the findings of this Commission before they will enter into
3 a memorandum of understanding. I think they probably see,
4 if they're strategising, see that entering into a set of
5 arrangements may in fact influence the direction of the
6 Commission's findings, so I think they're just all waiting.

7
8 Some of the small ones, where capacity is an issue and
9 the State provides them with additional capacity, and so
10 on, are quite happy to enter into MOAs; others are
11 certainly less so.

12
13 Q. How many currently would be out?

14 A. Nine.

15
16 MR BAILEY: Q. Impressionistically, they are from smaller
17 councils?

18 A. Yes.

19
20 Q. What about attachment A, the local arrangements?

21 A. No. Again, I think the reason is that people are
22 waiting to see what a set of findings might be.

23
24 Q. When you say "No", none have been executed?

25 A. None of them have been executed.

26
27 Q. Are any under discussion?

28 A. Yes. Well, all are on that basis; it's whether we can
29 get them across the line or not.

30
31 Q. Active discussion?

32 A. Yes. I'm sure we will have a hiatus from December,
33 January, February when we will get a series of events
34 occurring, but we will continue. Of course, any
35 recommendations that go to the heart of providing a level
36 of guidance for them would, I think, then require us to
37 revisit the whole arrangement of the MOA and how it's
38 structured and the basis on which it's determined.

39
40 Q. Just moving on to question 32, I simply note in
41 passing - we have already had a discussion about a number
42 of these components - that the MOA does have some
43 information there about tasking arrangements and scenarios.

44 A. Yes.

45
46 Q. But section 6 throws it all back on to the ODIs if
47 there is any inconsistency.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. The ODIs are in the state that they are in, so, again,
4 there is potential for that confusion to be ongoing.

5 A. Yes. The intent there was that the doctrine was to
6 provide the basis for that, if there were to be local
7 arrangements that extended that, then that was fine, but
8 they couldn't go to the heart of it. That's the reason
9 that that was constructed that way.

10

11 Q. Moving on to question 33, dealing with inter-region
12 deployment, I think we might have touched on this already.
13 The idea of deployment out of an area from a donating area,
14 if you like, is voluntary?

15 A. Yes.

16

17 Q. They can't be forced to go?

18 A. No.

19

20 Q. They have to agree to it?

21 A. And I don't believe there is conflict between those
22 two. I think they actually work in concert at different
23 levels. The local controller will determine - based on
24 volunteerism, and so on - whom they will put up. The
25 second part of that, 4.1, is that the regional director
26 will then have a look at that and make sure that the
27 volunteers who have been put forward actually meet the
28 requirements of the deployment. So, if we are saying we
29 want a deployment of chainsaw operators and they are
30 putting up three people who don't have chainsaw
31 qualifications, it's simply, I guess, a filter to go
32 through to make sure that we're getting the right skill set
33 for that deployment.

34

35 Q. Question 34 we have dealt with. Question 35 I think
36 we have probably covered.

37 A. Yes.

38

39 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on 35, the second part of that
40 question, is there any consistent training framework to
41 ensure that SES unit members - that each unit has at least
42 one person who is trained in IMT - incident management
43 team?

44 A. Yes, there is a training framework for that. There
45 are three elements. I think we have touched on one of
46 them, working in the emergency operations centre. That's a
47 one-day course, a general overview for any type of

1 operations centre. That's a nationally accredited one-day
2 course. There's Introduction to Incident Management Team.
3 Again, it's an introductory course that's two hours. That
4 is more about an SES Incident Management Team. Then there
5 is AIIMS training, and AIIMS training is as long as a piece
6 of a string. You can do courses from a day to four days
7 and then you can do further courses to get into more and
8 more detail around that, and they are nationally accredited
9 as well.

10
11 Q. The expectation might be that every local government
12 would have one SES member who has received formal training
13 in setting up an IMT and running an IMT?

14 A. Yes. We would certainly want more than that, yes

15
16 Q. More than one?

17 A. Yes. There is some other doctrine there about
18 incident management structure, incident control function
19 and activation guidelines that might be of use (handed).

20
21 MR McGARRITY: Thank you.

22
23 MR BAILEY: Q. What physical resources are there
24 throughout the SES at the local level to run an Incident
25 Management Team? I mean, if you are going to have a basic
26 IMT running, what do you need?

27 A. Pretty much a room. Most of them would be run out of
28 the SES headquarters, so the SES shed or what have you.
29 Now, they are of varying degrees of --

30
31 Q. Serviceability?

32 A. Yes, usefulness. Certainly there should be an
33 arrangement in planning to say where are you going to run
34 your IMT from. It could be - as I think you suggested
35 earlier, it might be in council but out of another room to
36 the Local Disaster Coordination Centre. So there's a range
37 of options. The training is around how you structure it
38 and what are the basic things you need to operate it. You
39 don't need computers, and so on, to run it; you can run it
40 on a whiteboard or butchers paper. I've seen people run
41 them with post-it notes and the old cards that people used
42 to run incidents. So, it's not a requirement that you need
43 high levels of sophistication. That simply adds to the
44 efficiency of the operation, if you need it.

45
46 Q. With IMT training, just to jump back a bit, how
47 sophisticated is the training? Are they being told how to

1 run a whiteboard or are they being told how to run computer
2 software, or is it everything?
3 A. It doesn't get down to that level of detail. Like, it
4 won't teach you how to run a particular computer program.
5 It's basically about what are the functions and the outputs
6 and what are the issues that need to be addressed. How you
7 then choose to do that is something that you would then
8 plan and practice after the event of training. If there
9 are computer programs or if you want to structure up a
10 whiteboard, or whatever it is that you think is appropriate
11 to deal with the risks that might be presented to your
12 particular area, is how you would then design your response
13 to that training.
14
15 Q. The incident management function is designed to
16 receive information that provides situational awareness,
17 receive tasks, prioritise tasks, dispatch tasks, get
18 reports back on tasks completed?
19 A. Yes. Its basic design is to break up large volumes of
20 information in complexity and chaos and put it into a
21 structured environment where there are very clear roles,
22 responsibilities and arrangements where those roles and
23 responsibilities interact with each other appropriately, so
24 that what you get out of it is an efficient and effective
25 response to the inputs that are coming into that Incident
26 Management Team, and an ability to be able to plan and see
27 into the future and anticipate future requirements and to
28 be able to make requests to satisfy those things at the
29 earliest possible time.
30
31 Q. Going back to the incident management room, at the
32 very least, obviously, you need telephones and radios?
33 A. Yes.
34
35 Q. But maybe not necessarily - well, RFA Online would be
36 good?
37 A. Yes. I mean, if you go to a lot of units, they
38 actually already have an incident management room set up
39 and they will have their radios in there and they will have
40 their comms people, they will have a computer in there with
41 RFA on it - if they have access to it - or a couple of
42 computers, and they will have their little signs overhead;
43 here's operations, here's logistics, here's the intel and
44 planning, and so on. They will have already structured
45 that up. That will probably be appropriate and
46 commensurate to the things that they do on a regular basis.
47

1 Come a major catastrophic event - and I think I have
2 already used the Townsville event - huge and lots of
3 deployments coming in to assist, hundreds of additional
4 volunteers, that was moved off site. A bare room, just set
5 it up. Everybody knew the basic structure of an Incident
6 Management Team, we just made it bigger. Necessity is the
7 mother of invention.

8
9 MR McGARRITY: Q. If we move on to 36 then. A few issues
10 have been raised in respect of the floods whereby there
11 were deployments to particular regions where there may or
12 may not have been enough consultation with the receiving
13 local controller.

14 A. Yes.

15
16 Q. Could you maybe talk us through, in practical terms,
17 what is supposed to happen in terms of consultation with
18 the receiving area before deployment?

19 A. Yes. Again, there are two ways in which a deployment
20 will be raised. One is through a request and that would
21 be, if you like, an outcome of the Incident Management Team
22 in operation saying we have 500 jobs and 20 SES volunteers,
23 that will take us three weeks to finish. That's not good
24 enough; we need more volunteers in. So that would be one
25 way in which that would occur.

26
27 The second is either at the local, district or State
28 level, the operations of the coordination centres there -
29 which may have access to more information or different
30 information - may, in fact, wish to proactively pre-deploy
31 or stand up a deployment in anticipation of a future event
32 or future request.

33
34 That's where the confusion can occur. In an ideal
35 world, that is where the liaison officer network should be
36 working. So, State would say we have information from the
37 Bureau and we have information from other sources that
38 indicate we are going to have a flood somewhere else. You
39 are already stretched because you have a flood event here.
40 We are going to move forward or stand up or pre-deploy 20
41 SES volunteers to wherever.

42
43 Again in an ideal world, that should go back down
44 through the disaster management system, should find its way
45 to the Local Disaster Coordination Centre, the SES liaison
46 officer should then identify that and feed that information
47 back in to the local controller.

1
2 Sometimes there are competing interests at play. The
3 local controller is looking at a fairly narrow view and
4 saying why do I need more people, whereas other people are
5 making risk assessments. As always, you are better to make
6 the decision and not need it than to get caught out not
7 having made the decision and then having to catch up.
8

9 There are issues of course, very practical issues,
10 that the local controller may be able to bring to the table
11 to influence that decision, such as where are these people
12 going to stay and how are we going to feed them. There may
13 be some really practical issues that would moderate that
14 decision, so we may pre-deploy but not to Condamine, we may
15 pre-deploy to Toowoomba so they're only a hop away from
16 where they need to be but we can accommodate them.
17

18 Q. But under current arrangements, is it mandatory to
19 discuss with the local controller --

20 A. It's not mandatory.
21

22 Q. It's not mandatory?

23 A. No. It's good practice.
24

25 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 37 I think we have dealt with. In
26 terms of your statement at paragraphs 80 to 83 --

27 A. Oh, the infamous diagram.
28

29 Q. Yes. Attachment 9 I think it is. You are talking
30 there about a need for better integration of SES and EMQ
31 into the disaster management side of things when the LDCC
32 is activated in a major disaster. The solutions you have
33 suggested and the red arrows that appear there are
34 essentially communication issues, are they not?

35 A. Absolutely, yes.
36

37 Q. Does that highlight the need for the liaison officer?

38 A. Yes.
39

40 Q. This is the key issue with liaison?

41 A. Absolutely, yes. There are two ways that this can be
42 facilitated and I think both of them need to operate in
43 concert. One is people, and people with knowledge. So,
44 liaison officers in the appropriate places but liaison
45 officers who actually understand the environment, who are
46 not there just because they happened to have the right
47 coloured shirt on. Experienced people. Some of your best

1 people actually have to get off the tools and be part of
2 the management.

3
4 The second thing is that there is an opportunity for
5 an enhanced systems environment, and we have talked about
6 the all hazards information management program. It's not a
7 system, it's a series of little products that will come
8 together to actually provide a network that will enable
9 information to flow more readily.

10
11 I think those two things - common operating pictures,
12 so everybody is seeing the same information at the same
13 time for the same purpose.

14
15 Q. This is AIIMS?

16 A. Yes, and then people to actually interpret that data;
17 what does this mean for this stream. So, for the SES, is
18 there information in that - in all of this data that's
19 flowing around and the decisions that get made, is there
20 something there that is relevant to the SES? Then the
21 question should go to the SES liaison officer: What does
22 this mean for you guys? No, that's fine; just give me
23 that and we can progress that. Or no, this is a major
24 problem; we need something; we can't do that. Whatever it
25 might be.

26
27 Q. That data interpretation function you are talking
28 about, that is a disaster management role?

29 A. Yes, it is.

30
31 Q. So that occurs --

32 A. It's taking the expertise out of the line agency and
33 dropping it into the disaster management arrangements, to
34 enable better decision making based on reality, if you
35 like. Rather than making assumptions about what we think
36 the SES can do, have someone from the SES at the table who
37 can actually say, yes we can do that.

38
39 Q. That is the liaison officer function?

40 A. That is the liaison officer role, yes.

41
42 Q. The liaison officer would be in the LDCC?

43 A. Yes.

44
45 Q. Is there any specific training on offer for liaison
46 officer roles for SES volunteers?

47 A. No. It's inferred in the - working in a coordination

1 centre, that's part of the function. So, there's nothing
2 specific. Could there be? Yes. I think it is an
3 important role and probably discrete enough that there is
4 probably an element of interpretation of, yes, you
5 understand the environment you are working in but your
6 specific role in that and what are the skills you need to
7 complete that role.

8
9 Q. One of the impressions that I have from the evidence
10 has been that sometimes there is a perception that EMQ and
11 SES are somehow operating in parallel to the disaster
12 management arrangements. I take away from this morning's
13 discussion that that's not so. You have your disaster
14 management there and your SES, sort of, sitting down there
15 as one of a number?

16 A. Yes.

17
18 Q. But that feeding in, that communication flow, is
19 all-important?

20 A. Yes.

21
22 Q. That is where these liaison people come in?

23 A. That's why we have to deal with those three elements
24 of command, control and coordination and they have to be
25 dealt with almost concurrently, because all of those things
26 are operating in a disaster environment all of the time.
27 It's different to - most of the models come from either the
28 military or the police, or somewhere. Ours, in disaster
29 management, is fundamentally different because you have a
30 combination of command and control people and management
31 people all at the table at the same time and all with
32 equally important tasks to do.

33
34 Now, the Department of Communities is absolutely
35 critical to the response to a disaster, but don't put them
36 in a command and control structure because they will fight
37 and become ineffective, because they manage themselves in a
38 different way. So, this concept of coordination is
39 absolutely critical in a disaster management environment,
40 whereas command is critical in a military environment.

41
42 There are very different approaches to these things
43 and you have to actually look at the cohort of
44 organisations that you are trying to harness and point in
45 the right direction for a common purpose and what is the
46 best mechanism to actually pull all that together and
47 deliver something.

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Q. Just so we are clear about this, coordination is a function of disaster management; command and control is a function of operational response?

A. Yes. There's an element of command and control in disaster management but only a couple of people have it. The share of the SDMG and the district disaster coordinators, they are the only ones who can actually give a direction. They can say I don't care what any of you say, this is what's going to happen and I will write that down and that is what you will do. Everything else is based on cooperation and collaboration.

MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on the liaison officers, where they currently are in place in the system, are they nominated by the local controller to be the liaison officer?

A. That should be the practice.

Q. That's how the practice should work, in effect?

A. That's right.

MR BAILEY: Q. Is that occurring?

A. Yes and no. I'm sure there are Local Disaster Management Groups that operate without an SES liaison officer.

MR McGARRITY: Q. The local controller would effectively say this person has the experience, the skills, they can contribute to the LDCC, LDMG - whatever you want; I trust their judgment and that's why they are the nominated liaison person?

A. Yes.

MR BAILEY: Q. Moving on to funding - unless there is anything else you wanted to say?

A. No.

Q. Question 38. I notice you are leafing through some documents. Is there anything arising out of any of those?

A. Yes. That is some information that was actually prepared out of other documents for the Commission but I am happy to make that available. It simply takes you through some of the more detailed operational process basis for those funding programs. This one is actually talking about the recurrent and non-recurrent. I guess the observation around the non-recurrent is that it is consistently oversubscribed; there are more requests than there are

1 dollars available to meet those requests.

2

3 Q. How oversubscribed is it?

4 A. Well, there's another question about the \$700,000
5 later on, which is at question --

6

7 MR [REDACTED] 49.

8

9 THE INTERVIEWEE: -- 49. That was \$734,000. If I could
10 deal with that question quickly because it is, I guess,
11 relevant. That money was a windfall to EMQ based on the
12 cessation of a Federal Government program, where we
13 received advice that the program was going to cease in a
14 particular year, the money had been utilised for a
15 continuing program of work and we went to Treasury and were
16 funded for its continuation through consolidated revenue
17 for the State. The Commonwealth came back and said, oh, we
18 will pay you the money again in this year and finish the
19 program the following year. So, we had a windfall of
20 \$730,000-odd. That money was applied to the programs that
21 were requested in that year but not funded.

22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. The non-recurrent?

24

25 A. Yes. So there was something like \$300,000 available
26 and we had in excess of \$700,000 of additional funding that
27 was requested in that year.

27

28 Q. Was that disbursed in that year?

29

30 A. Yes.

30

31 Q. Fully disbursed?

32

33 A. Fully disbursed, yes.

33

34 Q. Was it still oversubscribed?

35

36 A. Slightly. I don't think we got to finish all of them
37 but we got the lion's share done that year. But I guess
38 the other thing is because there are - I mean, we can
39 basically do two or three building grants and about seven
40 or eight vehicle grants. There are in excess of 300 units
41 and groups around the State, so it doesn't take much maths
42 to work out and, by any analysis, some of the accommodation
43 is substandard.

43

44 MR McGARRITY: Q. That funding of \$734,000 from the
45 Commonwealth was received under the auspices of which
46 program?

47

47 A. It was called the State Support Package, which wasn't

1 directly for the SES but, given that it came with no
2 strings attached - the Commonwealth said, we weren't going
3 to give you this money, we are now going to give it to you,
4 you can use it for whatever purposes you wish in the
5 disaster management environment. It wasn't specific
6 purpose funding.

7
8 Q. But it was for disaster management?

9 A. Yes, and we chose to apply it to the SES to meet those
10 grants. I think the documentation I have given you
11 actually steps you through the processes, and so on, for
12 each of those grants.

13
14 MR BAILEY: Q. That is in response, really, to question
15 38?

16 A. 38, yes.

17
18 Q. Question 39: Is funding administered directly between
19 the local controller and EMQ's grants and subsidies team or
20 is it channelled through the council?

21 A. All of the non-recurrent grants go through local
22 council simply because local controllers don't have the
23 governance or administration to deal with that. They don't
24 all have bank accounts, and so on, and it's not an
25 expectation that we would have on a local controller to
26 administer substantial amounts of money. So it's a much
27 stronger governance arrangement to provide it to local
28 government. The executive allowances that are paid and the
29 modest allowances for out-of-pocket expenses, that's done
30 direct with each member.

31
32 Q. The recurrent funding obviously goes directly to the
33 council as well?

34 A. Yes.

35
36 Q. In relation to those recurrent subsidies, question 40,
37 are they tied in any way? Do they have strings attached?

38 A. Well, they are tied to the purposes which the
39 application seeks. We don't have a formal audit program
40 but our regions are made aware. So when local government
41 gets the grant for the building, the region is made aware
42 and we work with council to progress those grants.

43
44 I think the question goes to are they monitored?
45 There is not a formal process of auditing and monitoring;
46 it is, I guess, to some extent a trust relationship. But
47 there is, I guess, some oversight that the money actually

1 gets spent on what it was applied for.

2

3 Q. Leading on to question 41, you might have regard to
4 what you have said at paragraph 31 of your statement as
5 well, because there you discuss the criteria used to
6 determine the amount that is payable in relation to the
7 recurrent subsidies.

8 A. Yes.

9

10 Q. I just want to take you as well to attachment 5.
11 This, at some level, gets back to something we were talking
12 about very much at the outset, about the structuring of SES
13 units versus groups, and forth. Attachment 5 seems to
14 indicate that regional councils receive these subsidies
15 based on the number of units they have and there are
16 councils with multiple units, as opposed to a single unit
17 and a number of subgroups. On that basis, it appears that
18 they have the subsidy paid a number of times rather than
19 just once.

20 A. Mmm.

21

22 Q. For example, you can see Bundaberg Regional Council
23 has subsidies paid for Bundaberg City, Burnett Shire, Isis
24 Shire and Kolan Shire, which are the pre-amalgamation
25 council areas.

26 A. Yes.

27

28 Q. That appears to be an anomalous sort of arrangement.

29 A. Yes.

30

31 Q. By comparison, Brisbane has one unit and it receives
32 one subsidy payment.

33 A. Yes.

34

35 Q. Admittedly it is a large and well-resourced council
36 but it is somewhat inequitable; would you agree?

37 A. Yes, it is. The basis of taking that approach was
38 that during amalgamations the determination was made that
39 no council would be disadvantaged by virtue of
40 amalgamation. So, if the SES received \$21,000 in
41 pre-amalgamation terms, then they would receive \$21,000
42 post-amalgamation.

43

44 There was little in the way of equity in the
45 distribution prior to that. It was a blanket fee. By
46 design - it's a modest amount of money and, by design, it
47 was to try to cover things like general administration, and

1 so on, printer cartridges, paper, and that sort of thing.
2 It hasn't been increased in line with CPI or any other
3 function of inflation over time, so its purchasing power
4 has certainly eroded over time.

5
6 There is probably an argument to be made that a model
7 similar to Victoria, where they actually categorise their
8 groups and units into, for the sake of argument, small
9 medium and large, and then there's funding streams that
10 attach themselves to them.

11
12 Q. In terms of the amalgamation strategy, which was that
13 no-one is going to be worse off, is there any sort of
14 sunset clause on those arrangements?

15 A. No. That was the decision taken at that time and it
16 was an administrative decision.

17
18 Q. Taken by whom?

19 A. By me.

20
21 Q. Is there any plan, if you will, to reconfigure these
22 arrangements in any way?

23 A. The difficulty is that the budget is what it is and to
24 reconfigure them in any meaningful way, there is simply not
25 enough in that pot to provide a meaningful solution to that
26 problem.

27
28 Q. When I say reconfigure, I suppose I am moving into
29 question 43 which is, for example, could the total amount
30 of available funding for a particular SES unit be
31 proportionate, say, to the risk profile of the area? Could
32 it be weighted in terms of the resources of the council
33 generally? Are there other --

34 A. Yes. I think, yes, there are. Again, there would
35 need to be some more detailed analysis of how that might
36 occur and certainly that would need to be attached to a
37 stream of funding. I think the only outcome that you would
38 arrive at from that analysis is that it would cost you more
39 money. I don't think there's anything that you would
40 arrive at that would cost you less money than is currently
41 available in the budget for this purpose.

42
43 Q. Which is to say \$480,000 per annum?

44 A. Yes.

45
46 Q. Which is fixed over the four-year budgetary cycle, did
47 you say?

1 A. Well, budgets occur on an annual basis but budgets are
2 based on a zero, so basically you start off from the
3 position that you will get what you got last year, if it's
4 recurrent, and then any new money has to come through
5 submissions and requests.

6

7 Q. Do you see that these arrangements are anomalous when
8 compared to the intent of the structure that is implied by
9 the Disaster Management Act?

10 A. Yes.

11

12 Q. That there would be --

13 A. I think that the arrangements are inconsistent with
14 the current structure of local government,
15 post-amalgamation in particular.

16

17 MR McGARRITY: Q. Would this all be made a lot easier if
18 the various units that operated under one local government
19 were combined into one unit, let's say? I'm not talking
20 here about having one local controller, I'm talking about
21 an amalgamation of units, as such, given that the intent of
22 the legislation seems to be that those transitional
23 arrangements, whereby several units could exist under
24 post-amalgamation circumstances, would perhaps come to an
25 end eventually?

26 A. Yes. Look, I don't know that that's necessarily the
27 answer. I think the answer lies more in what you indicated
28 in the earlier part: what is the risk profile that that
29 local government faces; what are the unique conditions,
30 perhaps of distance, of numbers of units, or whatever it
31 might be that are unique to that particular local
32 government; how then do you arrive at some formula that
33 says these conditions equate to this level of funding.

34

35 Q. Is that something that the Statewide Natural Hazard
36 Risk assessment tool might be used to --

37 A. It could be.

38

39 Q. But it hasn't been --

40 A. No.

41

42 Q. -- suggested as yet?

43 A. No. As I say, its primary purpose is around disaster
44 management and planning for disaster management generally,
45 not for the SES specifically.

46

47 MR BAILEY: Q. Since these questions were committed to

1 paper, we have had some input from LGAQ which suggests that
2 there are variations in funding arrangements; there's no
3 agreed funding formula. I am not entirely sure what is
4 meant by that because there seems to be a formula here that
5 you have articulated for the recurrent arrangements. But
6 the essence of what I want to get to is that there seems to
7 be an implicit suggestion that funding arrangements could
8 be based on functions of the local SES unit, demography of
9 the local community, or identified hazard risk landscape.
10 Is that a preferable way to approach it, as opposed to what
11 we have here in paragraph 31 of your statement?

12 A. I guess we need to contextualise all of the comments
13 around this; that is, under the current arrangements the
14 funding for the SES is a mutual obligation between the
15 State and local government. All we are talking about at
16 the moment is the State's commitment, and that's fine, but
17 I just think we need to be clear that there are obligations
18 on local government to support the SES as well.

19
20 I think the issues that we just spoke about before
21 would go to answering the question that's raised by LGAQ.
22 What is the complexity, what are the conditions or
23 circumstances of a particular local government, and how
24 might we be able to articulate it in some form of algorithm
25 that leads to the finance. That would have been a function
26 of what the available budget is. If it remains at the
27 \$400,000-odd mark, then how do we cut that pie up? Whether
28 we make the pie bigger or smaller, I think, is a different
29 question.

30
31 Q. The question I am asking is how do you cut the pie up
32 because the current arrangement seems to be anomalous,
33 that's all.

34 A. Yes, and what I'm saying is I think that moving down
35 the path of having a risk-based approach to it would be a
36 better outcome, but I wouldn't like that to simply
37 automatically suggest that a consequence of that outcome is
38 more money, because I don't have access to more money.

39
40 Q. I see what you are saying. We might have been at
41 cross-purposes there.

42 A. Yes.

43
44 Q. No, I wasn't implying that you would have a bigger pot
45 or a bigger pie. I'm looking at how the pie gets cut up at
46 the moment, and it seems a bit odd.

47 A. Yes, and I am agreeing that I think some form of

1 risk-based approach to that, which takes account of the
2 unique circumstances of local government, would be
3 something worthy of consideration.

4
5 Q. Irrespective of the size of the pie?

6 A. Yes.

7
8 Q. Who would best be positioned to do that?

9 A. We would have to lead it, I would think, but we would
10 need to do that in conjunction, probably, with LGAQ as the
11 representative of council.

12
13 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is that something that EMQ is looking at
14 progressing, a different way of --

15 A. Not actively at the moment but it is something that
16 has been exercising our mind for some time.

17
18 Q. I think you mentioned Victoria, was it, which operates
19 on a risk-based --

20 A. Yes.

21
22 MR BAILEY: Q. Obviously we are only talking about one
23 component of the funding?

24 A. Yes, absolutely.

25
26 MR McGARRITY: Q. I think we can go to question 45, the
27 sponsorship arrangements that exist with the private sector
28 and, specifically, there has been mention of NRMA, the
29 insurance providers. Would you be able to give us just a
30 few details about the operations of that arrangement,
31 considering certain arrangements such as this occur in
32 other jurisdictions and has there been any commentary on
33 the appropriateness of a commercial entity providing
34 support?

35 A. There is a commercial sponsorship arrangement in New
36 South Wales and Victoria; AAMI in Victoria and NRMA, the
37 same as us, in New South Wales. The arrangement is covered
38 by the State Sponsorship Policy. The State government has
39 a policy for sponsorship of State government entities,
40 instrumentalities, and so on, and it is complying with
41 that.

42
43 As I have indicated in my evidence, the contractual
44 arrangements with NRMA are commercial in-confidence and
45 NRMA are particularly protective of those commercial
46 arrangements, so I would seek not to divulge the quantum of
47 the arrangement. I guess it's up to you. If you need that

1 then we would probably have to go through something a
2 little more formal in order to provide that. So, I can
3 leave that with you. I'm not seeking to be obstructive --
4

5 Q. Of course.

6 A. -- but we signed a contract in good faith and I know
7 that NRMA are particularly concerned that that might become
8 part of - fall into the public domain.
9

10 The sponsorship is a combination of in-kind and direct
11 financial support. The in-kind is principally around
12 assisting with community education. So, they will produce
13 advertisements around storm season that have messages that
14 we concur with and support, but it allows them to attach
15 their brand to those messages and have tag lines that serve
16 their commercial interests.
17

18 They also provide us cash that is tied, but fairly
19 loosely. It's not an enormous amount of string, but it's
20 for the benefit of the SES, so we usually provide
21 equipment, support for SES week, those sorts of things.
22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. Would that go into the non-recurrent pot?

24 A. No, no. It doesn't go into that directly. We might
25 fund equipment for the SES just through our general
26 equipment appropriation, we might apply it to an activity
27 that promotes or supports the SES. They were involved in
28 Can You Survive For Three Days, the house with the two
29 young kids tweeting and facebooking, and so on, in
30 ReddACLiff Place. So, a range of activities that raise the
31 profile of the SES and raise the profile of disaster
32 management.
33

34 MR McGARRITY: Q. Do you have the ultimate decision as to
35 how that money is spent?

36 A. The cash, yes.
37

38 Q. Whatever need there is, it's directed towards that?

39 A. That's right, yes.
40

41 MR BAILEY: Q. I might just drop back to question 44 and
42 perhaps get a response from you about that. I saw you had
43 something written down, so I will see what you have to say.

44 A. Again, the legislation is, I think, somewhat fraught.
45 Introduction of legislation of that nature would require, I
46 think, significant consultation with those stakeholders and
47 I think a lot of consideration would need to go into

1 anything that went down that line.

2

3 Having said that, the positive is - as with the other
4 issues we have talked about - that if there is uncertainty
5 then providing clarity is a good thing. We have to be
6 careful that in the attempt to provide clarity, we don't
7 actually destroy the intent. Whilst there are always areas
8 where we may have different views, and so on, to our
9 colleagues in local government, we do have a system that,
10 when something happens, works. I'd just caution that we
11 are practical in the way that we might progress any
12 recommendations in that area.

13

14 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can we take from that that you would not
15 be supportive of a definite legislative obligation?

16 A. Not unless we could have a genuine negotiated outcome;
17 that position was agreed against all the key stakeholders.
18 That would deliver the best outcome.

19

20 Q. You are talking about extensive consultation with --

21 A. Yes.

22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 46: Does EMQ monitor local
24 government applications for SES funding and identify those
25 local governments that may not be accessing the funding
26 program?

27 A. Again, in --

28

29 Q. I suppose we should be clear that we are talking about
30 non-recurrent.

31 A. Yes. In a formal sense, do we have a program to do
32 that? No. EMQ is working with individual units, is
33 working with individual governments, as needs are
34 identified. If those programs haven't potentially been
35 identified by local government as an opportunity or a
36 solution to those problems, our people will certainly raise
37 that and we will provide assistance in the development, and
38 so on, of an application under those programs. It's
39 really, again, a best-intent approach to that, with our
40 people working with both the volunteers and the local
41 government.

42

43 MR McGARRITY: Q. Again, you are using the local knowledge
44 of EMQ area and regional directors to assist where that
45 need arises?

46 A. Yes, that's right.

47

1 MR BAILEY: Q. But how much do you push it when the
2 program is oversubscribed anyway? You go to the effort of
3 making an application that can't be fulfilled.
4 A. Yes, that's been raised with me and my response to
5 people is, well, there's only one way to assure you don't
6 get the grant and that is don't apply for it. If you have
7 a genuine need --
8
9 Q. You have to ask.
10 A. -- then your need will be considered in a priority
11 sense or a merit-based sense with other applicants. If you
12 are the highest need, you will get the money.
13
14 Q. On that issue, when you have all these applications,
15 how are they prioritised? How are the merits identified?
16 Who gets to the top of the heap?
17 A. There is a process that's gone through and it is
18 guided by a set of principles to score. There's a group
19 that comes together, an assessment team, and they have some
20 rules around how they should conduct that assessment and
21 undertake it and rank each of the applications.
22
23 Q. That assessment team is within EMQ?
24 A. Yes.
25
26 Q. Who is on the team?
27 A. Oh, I would have to give that to you separately.
28
29 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can we get a copy of those rules that
30 you referred to?
31 A. Yes.
32
33 MR BAILEY: Q. Does the team make recommendations?
34 A. Yes, they make recommendations to me.
35
36 Q. And you sign off on that?
37 A. Yes.
38
39 MR McGARRITY: Q. Presumably the applications also have
40 some comments from the regional directors before they go to
41 EMQ; is that correct?
42 A. Yes. We seek input, both formal and informal.
43
44 Q. I suppose that leads on to question 47 about the input
45 from EMQ officers, area and regional directors, about how
46 funding is directed.
47 A. The role is support and advice. We don't write the

1 application. We will provide advice to make sure the
2 application meets the criteria or addresses the criteria,
3 and so on, and what is the best way to form up the
4 application, and so on, but it's a local government
5 application.

6

7 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 48: How is the budgetary
8 allocation for the SES determined?

9 A. Take last year's and --

10

11 Q. Same again?

12 A. Yes. I think we indicated in my formal response there
13 are certainly opportunities for new money through the
14 budget process and through things like election
15 commitments, as that cycle comes around, but principally
16 it's take last year's budget and roll it over.

17

18 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on that point - and this might be
19 something we might touch on later - when making submissions
20 vis-a-vis next year's budget and, so forth, is much
21 consideration given to the amount of fundraising that was
22 undertaken by --

23

24

25 Q. There's no regard given to that?

26 A. No regard at all. I don't know how much they raised
27 or where it's raised.

28

29 Q. There's no barometer as to how much extra money was
30 required across the State?

31

32

33 MR BAILEY: Q. Does EMQ have details from the local
34 governments as to what their financial commitment is to
35 SES?

36

37

38 Q. Really, you are just administering your side of the
39 equation?

40

41

42 Q. Whatever they do is a matter for them?

43

44

45 Q. But acknowledging that under the Disaster Management
46 Act they have a general obligation to maintain a state of
47 readiness?

1 A. Yes.
2
3 Q. SES is the primary way they look at doing that, or one
4 of the ways they look at doing that?
5 A. Yes, one of the ways they look at doing that, yes.
6
7 Q. Some SES units may be accessing funding sources from
8 the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. Is that something you
9 have any knowledge about?
10 A. We usually provide a level of endorsement to those,
11 but that's the extent of it.
12
13 Q. That fund makes its own assessment and allocation?
14 A. Yes, they have their own assessment criteria.
15
16 Q. Is that part of Queensland Treasury?
17 A. I believe so. I think it's administered through their
18 gaming fund.
19
20 MR McGARRITY: Q. I think it's through (indistinct) these
21 days.
22 A. Yes, or the finance.
23
24 Q. Through Liquor Licensing, I think, perhaps, these
25 days.
26 A. Yes.
27
28 Q. When you say "endorsement", is that really an overview
29 as to whether or not you support the application?
30 A. Yes.
31
32 Q. So it may or may not be an endorsement?
33 A. There hasn't been one that I am aware of that we have
34 knocked back yet, but yes it's to - I guess what they are
35 looking for is to ensure that the application is consistent
36 with the purposes and intent of the SES.
37
38 MR BAILEY: Q. Those applications are prepared by the
39 local government?
40 A. Yes.
41
42 Q. Question 51: Has any work been undertaken to estimate
43 the potential cost if the SES was totally funded by the
44 State government?
45 A. The answer is I think so, and I have been turning the
46 place upside down because there was some work done in 2007,
47 not specifically for that purpose, but I understand or my

1 recollection is that it was a question that was asked.
2 Somebody had a recollection that there was a disc that did
3 have some work around that on it. It is not in the report
4 that I have found and, if you will bear with me, I will
5 continue to search for that. If I find it, I will give it
6 to you; if I can't find it, I will let you know.

7
8 MR McGARRITY: Q. Do you know who posed the question
9 initially?

10 A. I think it was me. The work wasn't being done for
11 that purpose, I think that's why it didn't find its way
12 into the final report. But I think it was a question that
13 was of interest, certainly to me and some other people, and
14 it was something that probably could have been done as an
15 adjunct to the work. I can't recall - and the veracity of
16 the output is probably not absolutely ironclad, but it
17 might give an indication.

18
19 Q. That leads on to the next part of that question: Is it
20 possible to even put an estimate on what total State
21 funding might be?

22 A. Yes, you could. It would require work. What I think
23 would need to happen is that it would need to be a proper
24 accounting based assessment, so there will be assets, there
25 will be depreciation, there will be a whole range of
26 tangible and intangible - cash and other elements of that.
27 I think we would need to be able - if we were going to go
28 down that path, it would need to be done properly so that
29 we actually got a realistic assessment of what the cash
30 contribution and what the in-kind and other intangible
31 contributions might be.

32
33 Q. Would you have any idea about the total cost in other
34 States? I know it's hard to compare apples with oranges
35 but just to get an idea?

36 A. See, even there - in New South Wales, the budget for
37 the SES is something in the order of \$100 million, by
38 memory. I would need to confirm that. But that doesn't
39 take account that local government still provides many of
40 the built assets for SES accommodation, and so on. If you
41 take into account the accommodation - which is probably, in
42 terms of an asset base, the most valuable part of the SES -
43 it might be a couple of hundred million dollars in total.
44 I don't know. But that's why I say if we wanted to do that
45 exercise, I think we would have to do it right and set up
46 the criteria by which we did it. Then if we wanted to
47 compare that to other States, then we'd have to be provided

1 that criteria.

2

3 Q. So it can be done but it's very complex?

4 A. It's time-consuming, probably costly and complex.

5

6 MR BAILEY: Q. Do you have a view about complete State
7 responsibility for funding here in Queensland?

8 A. I would not be supportive at all. I think there are
9 enormous benefits that come from a construct of mutual
10 obligation/mutual benefit. The local government is
11 squarely entrenched in our Disaster Management Act and,
12 therefore, the SES, because that's where it resides. I
13 think that brings enormous benefit to the level of support
14 that is provided to the SES, it ensures that there is local
15 content, that this is not something that's run from afar,
16 that it's actually run with significant local knowledge and
17 significant local interest.

18

19 When the SES is deployed, whilst the local government
20 doesn't have a direct command role or a deployment role,
21 they do bring to the table an enormous amount of local
22 knowledge that is incredibly useful and supportive to the
23 SES in doing their work. I would absolutely hate to see
24 any set of arrangements that went to the heart of the
25 concept of mutual obligation/mutual benefit.

26

27 Q. Do you have any general comments about the level of
28 funding, from the State's perspective or EMQ's perspective,
29 or the current funding programs and how they are
30 administered?

31 A. Are we talking about total funding support for the SES
32 or just the recurrent and non-recurrent funding programs?

33

34 Q. Well, in general, yes. Total support.

35 A. Any organisation that doesn't seek more, I guess, is
36 not trying. The SES, along with every other instrument of
37 the State, will compete for scarce funding through the
38 budget cycles. We put forward through the Cabinet process
39 our bids and they get supported or not, as is the case with
40 other elements.

41

42 MR McGARRITY: Q. With the fundraising - I know it's a
43 function under the Act of SES - is it appropriate for that
44 to continue as has been the case, in that some members have
45 suggested they have spent a lot of time and effort having
46 to fundraise because there simply is not enough money from
47 the government to support the units. Do you have any ideas

1 about how that impost could be lessened on those people?
2 A. Well, the only way that I can see it's lessened is
3 more direct funding, but we don't necessarily understand in
4 total what the quantum of that might be.

5

6 Q. Would that be important, to try and get a handle on
7 the quantum, the types of sums we are talking about in
8 terms of fundraising needs, particularly thinking in the
9 future when making submissions to the CBRC, and so forth,
10 for more money?

11 A. Yes. I guess the problem around us having ongoing
12 visibility of that is that it actually drives then an
13 obligation that we would need to manage and administer
14 those funds in some way. There would be an obligation on
15 the State to ensure that those fundraising activities were
16 managed appropriately, that the accounts were audited, and
17 what have you. That would bring an enormous impost onto
18 the paid staff of EMQ. It's one which we are probably not
19 competent to undertake at the moment, so we would have to
20 find ways to do that. All I can see is an awful lot of
21 cost.

22

23 Q. I guess what I am trying to get at is can we use the
24 numbers that are raised through fundraising activities by
25 volunteers and come to some sort of arrangement whereby the
26 State says we think this has taken too much time and effort
27 on behalf of volunteers, we see there is an issue here,
28 there is a discrepancy in fundraising, we will meet you
29 halfway - or something like that? Is that something that
30 could be worked on or is it appropriate to continue under
31 the same model, where fundraising can just take place,
32 dependent upon the particular unit?

33 A. I'm sure there are a number of volunteers who,
34 whatever the case, will continue to fundraise, so I don't
35 know that it is going to solve the problem that has been
36 presented to you. The quantum of fundraising is probably,
37 in the scheme of things, fairly small. Some of them might
38 be talking about several thousand dollars but, in the
39 scheme of running the whole SES, even in aggregate, that's
40 not an enormous amount. It's a difficult question because
41 I can't really --

42

43 Q. That's why I'm asking you. I don't know the answer.

44 A. Yes. It could be an awful lot of work for no value.
45 I don't have an answer, quite frankly.

46

47 MR BAILEY: Q. Just on the fundraising activities side of

1 things, is there a new policy being developed and has it
2 been distributed?

3 A. No, it hasn't. There was correspondence from our
4 regions to all units to advise them of the changes, but
5 there has been no doctrine or administrative instrument
6 developed as yet.

7

8 Q. Question 54: Some local governments have instituted a
9 local levy, with some of the money being used to support
10 disaster management; for example, Mackay. Is this an
11 option that you support?

12 A. It's really a matter of government policy. A levy is
13 a new tax. That's a matter of government policy. It's not
14 really something that I am able to comment on.

15

16 MR McGARRITY: Q. We did receive from various people some
17 suggestions that perhaps there could be a paid arrangement
18 in place in the SES that parallels that in the Rural Fire
19 Service or the auxiliary fire service. I think the people
20 who said the Rural Fire Service might have been referring
21 to the auxiliary fire service?

22 A. There is in my - not from the Queensland Fire and
23 Rescue Service, but my understanding - and I have asked the
24 question - is other than a similar arrangement that we
25 provide for training, occasionally paying trainers on a
26 casual basis, there is no remuneration stream for Rural
27 Fire Service.

28

29 Q. Just to clarify then, we are referring to auxiliary
30 fire service operators?

31 A. Yes. Auxiliaries are not volunteers, they are
32 part-time employees, so we are talking about a
33 fundamentally different set of arrangements.

34

35 Q. Do you know where that operates specifically? Is it
36 the case that they get paid on an hourly call-out basis?

37 A. Yes, I think so and that's only for urban. This is in
38 addition to urban fire fighting arrangements in smaller
39 communities where they might have auxiliaries to meet a
40 night shift, for example. Again, I'm not 100 percent
41 across the arrangement but it's either to meet a part-time
42 arrangement where no urban fire fighting exists or to
43 augment a limited service that's not a 24/7 like you would
44 find in a major centre.

45

46 Q. Basically, the difference is there were two
47 fundamental --

1 A. One is an employment arrangement, the other is a
2 volunteer arrangement. The Rural Fire Service is like the
3 SES; it's a volunteer service. Auxiliaries are simply
4 part-time employees.

5
6 MR BAILEY: Q. One of the suggestions that has arisen in
7 the context of some feedback via LGAQ is that the
8 registration and insurance of vehicles can create confusion
9 about ownership of those assets. Is that something you can
10 comment on?

11 A. Yes, it can and I guess EMQ might have contributed to
12 the confusion some time ago. There was an effort for EMQ
13 to actually own some of the SES assets, so to hold those
14 assets on our books. When I took over in this role, that
15 was very concerning for me. We had no budget for
16 depreciation, we had no capacity to manage those assets and
17 we had a very mixed arrangement.

18
19 Previously or historically, equipment that would fall
20 into the category of an asset was always dealt with by a
21 grant process to local government, so that the asset would
22 vest in local government, would sit on local government's
23 accounts and the ongoing operational expenses would be met
24 by local government. I have reinstituted that as a policy
25 position for EMQ.

26
27 We do have a budget to meet the registration and
28 insurance costa of vehicles and I absolutely can see that
29 that might cause confusion. Well, if the asset is
30 registered through the State, then the State actually owns
31 the asset. If that's causing any level of anguish in local
32 government then I am happy to look at an arrangement.
33 Perhaps we can provide that money by way of grant as well
34 rather than do direct registration.

35
36 Q. On this topic, I just want to turn back to the MOA
37 because there are some passages in there that relate to it.
38 Under the heading Equipment in section 5.1 on page 7, one
39 of the obligations undertaken by EMQ is to determine with
40 local governments the agreed arrangements for registration
41 of vehicles and to determine the most efficient and
42 cost-effective means of insuring all vehicles. That leaves
43 the whole issue pretty open-ended.

44
45 However, if you go further into the MOA under Local
46 Government Undertakings, in section 5.2 under the heading
47 Support, one of the things that they take on board is the

1 provision of or access to registered and insured vehicles.
2 What ultimately is contemplated by all of that?

3 A. It may be a clumsy way of describing it. The first
4 part that you mentioned is by agreement, to determine whom
5 will be responsible for the registration and insurance of
6 the vehicles. I think one of the drivers of that is that
7 local government can get access to concessional
8 registration and we can't, so it may in fact be cheaper for
9 them to do it. Also, I think there have been occasions
10 where we have both registered the same vehicle. So, I
11 think it was simply to avoid the confusion and the
12 inefficiencies that that might cause.

13
14 I think the second element is around - the vehicle,
15 the asset, is vested in local government but it's for the
16 purposes of the SES, so it's just to ensure that local
17 government makes the vehicle available for SES activation
18 as is required. So, they don't think that it just simply
19 becomes part of the council fleet.

20
21 I guess the other point is that that document is the
22 starting point for a negotiation. So if any of those
23 issues --

24
25 Q. You would expect that to be ironed out in the local
26 arrangements?

27 A. Yes, and LGAQ were party to the construct of that
28 document as well.

29
30 Q. What hope is there for a consistent position on that?

31 A. I think, as I previously said, striking an agreement
32 with 73 councils is going to get you certainly, if not 73,
33 a significant variety of outcomes.

34
35 Q. I have heard the expression used in relation to the
36 European financial crisis that it's like herding cats.

37 A. Yes.

38
39 Q. The only other thing I wanted to raise arising out of
40 the EMQ input was that in major operations where there is
41 deployment outside of a home base, if you like, using a
42 combination of State-owned and additional council
43 resources, there are complex cost recovery arrangements.
44 Are you able to, perhaps, interpret what that might mean or
45 explain what they might be referring to there?

46 A. It may be the NDRRA arrangements, Natural Disaster
47 Relief and Recovery Arrangements. They're jointly

1 Commonwealth and State funded. They are designed to meet
2 the cost of responding to asset damage, and some other
3 things, as a consequence of disasters. I am struggling to
4 think of what they're actually referring to. Can I just
5 have a look at that?
6

7 Q. Sure. It is that paragraph there. It seems to be
8 referring to it in the context of insurance and
9 registration, and things of that nature.

10 A. Yes. It may have something to do with - see, the
11 usual costs of an operation, so your sunk costs, are not
12 recoverable but additional costs are. So, if there is a
13 confusion about ownership for a vehicle that goes outside
14 one council area and into another, who makes the claim;
15 that might be what they're getting to.
16

17 MR McGARRITY: Q. So things like fuel, perhaps?

18 A. Yes, but even, you know, is there a cost associated
19 with the vehicle. I'm struggling to come up with --
20

21 MR BAILEY: Q. All right. We will just move on to the
22 topic of local controllers. Question 56: What are the
23 arguments for and against local controllers, in particular,
24 being paid?

25 A. There are a number of local controllers who are paid
26 by local government.
27

28 Q. I suppose we are getting at the idea of a full-time
29 salaried position rather than honorarium?

30 A. Yes. It would appear that the purpose of making the
31 payment is more - I certainly don't mean this to be
32 gratuitous, but it's more about the role undertaking the
33 administration of the issues that sheet back home to
34 council in terms of their obligations, their governance,
35 their administration. So, for the bigger councils that
36 provide substantial financial support, they obviously want
37 some level of control around that, as is entirely
38 appropriate, and the paid controller often, I think, spends
39 much of their time in that space.
40

41 MR McGARRITY: Q. So that is non-operational?

42 A. I'm not saying it's absolutely. I'm sure --
43

44 Q. But the --

45 A. But I think that there is a significant element to
46 that. There is then the issues of employment because the
47 local controller is employed under a role description that

1 we provide. There is some opportunity to negotiate, for
2 there to be some variation in that, but that role
3 description describes the role of local controller, not the
4 role of someone administering or managing assets and other
5 things on behalf of council.
6

7 I think there then becomes the opportunity for some
8 confusion as to what the role is and how the role is
9 fulfilled, and potentially becoming an instrument of local
10 government rather than an instrument - as designed, mutual
11 obligation/mutual benefit - between the State and local
12 government.
13

14 Now, that is certainly not the case in all
15 circumstances and there are a number of paid local
16 controllers who are absolutely wonderful and a number who
17 probably fulfil their roles to council very well.
18

19 The other thing about paid controllers is that you are
20 going to absolutely end up again - if we were to go down
21 that path, Carpentaria Shire, Paroo Shire, Bulloo Shire are
22 not going to have sufficient for a paid local controller to
23 manage an SES in their patches. All of the indigenous
24 councils in the Cape, and so on, would probably be in the
25 same boat and certainly would not have the financial
26 capacity to meet that cost. So, you would end up again
27 with a multispeed system. There are big councils, there
28 are medium-sized councils and there are very, very small
29 councils. It's not to say that you can't design an outcome
30 but it would probably be a complex and, again, potentially
31 confusing outcome.
32

33 Is there, in fact, two roles here? Is there a role of
34 being the volunteer local controller for the SES and, in
35 some instances, is there a role of administering and
36 managing councils' contribution and councils' financial
37 commitment? Do those two things necessarily need to be one
38 and the same? For example, the Gold Coast have previously
39 had a paid local controller; they now have a volunteer
40 local controller and a paid administer.
41

42 MR BAILEY: Q. Of SES council assets?

43 A. That's right. So, the administrator does all of the
44 paperwork, completes all of the financial requirements, all
45 of those sorts of things.
46

47 MR McGARRITY: Q. What is your view on that model?

1 A. In my opinion, that's probably - may be better.

2

3 Q. May be better than having a full-time paid --

4 A. Than having a full-time paid local controller. What
5 you then start to get is "I'm a paid controller", "I'm a
6 volunteer controller but I have the same volunteer
7 responsibilities." It's, again, a little inequitable. I
8 don't know that we can arrive at an arrangement where
9 everybody is paid. Even if we were to pay people
10 part-time, that again brings an obligation and it brings a
11 whole range of HR issues. Many of those local controllers
12 who are volunteers may not be able to commit to what is
13 necessarily required under a paid arrangement. A number
14 would not want to be paid.

15

16 Q. If there were a suggestion that there should be some
17 paid controllers or there should be consideration of paid
18 full-time local controllers in some areas, what type of
19 factors would need to be considered by a local government
20 to determine if they should have a full-time local
21 controller?

22 A. Their capacity to pay.

23

24 Q. Aside from that? Are we looking at number of
25 activations or are we looking at the number of people --

26 A. I don't think so. I don't think that's a
27 consideration at the moment. I think it's a risk decision
28 based on protecting both reputation and interest. I
29 actually have a role description for a local controller, if
30 that would be of any help? I might have already given it
31 to you (handed).

32

33 MR BAILEY: Thank you. We have Business Management
34 Directives, Volunteer Executive Appointments BMH 14.0.

35

36 THE INTERVIEWEE: One of the attachments to that is a role
37 description.

38

39 MR BAILEY: Q. Do you have any comment on the fact that
40 local controllers are performing functions that involve
41 statutory responsibilities, given that they are volunteers?

42 A. Yes, they're volunteers but they apply for the role
43 and they apply for the role in the full understanding of
44 what comes with it and they are selected on the basis of
45 merit. So, no, I don't have a concern. People are going
46 in, at least, with their eyes open as to what the
47 requirements of the role are.

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MR McGARRITY: Q. I just thought of something, if we could flick back to the previous discussion about local controllers. If some local governments are of the view that they probably do require a full-time local controller, do you have a position on whether that should be totally funded by the local government, given that it is their decision, or should that position be either fully State funded or in some way State funded?

A. No, it should be funded by local government.

Q. Completely?

A. Yes.

Q. Because they have made the decision --

A. I have no requirement for a paid local controller.

Q. Anywhere around the State?

A. No. Therefore, if local government, as I say, have assessed the risk and they believe they need an employee, then I think that is their call.

MR BAILEY: Q. Just moving on to question 59, and I think we have touched on this already: Should there be only one local controller for a local government area? There has been some discussion to that effect already. Is there anything you would care to add to that?

A. Again, I think our conversation was around it's not so much what you call them, it's around do you have a consistent structure to deal with it, and are the roles, responsibilities and obligations of those various roles clearly understood and common across the State. I think it's less about what they're called and more about having a common approach to it.

MR McGARRITY: Q. Just from your experience, is there the potential for some conflict in particular areas where you may currently have four or five local controllers but there may have been a determination that we'll just have one local controller? I'm thinking here about cultural issues, which you have referred to in the past. Is that something that you think might cause problems?

A. It's potentially a bit of a storm in a teacup. We have talked about the Toowoomba example and certainly a number of people did have their noses a little out of joint. I think that will probably blow over in time. I'm hopeful that it won't become an entrenched and endemic

1 position, and that people will understand that the role
2 hasn't really changed at all, it's just the name that
3 they're called. I think if we were to go down that path of
4 making some changes that did impact on some people's roles,
5 that it's something that we can manage, maybe without --
6

7 Q. Incidentally, just on the Toowoomba point, do you know
8 if their controller is --

9 A. Paid.

10

11 Q. -- paid? Is it?

12 A. Yes.

13

14 Q. Full-time?

15 A. Yes.

16

17 MR BAILEY: Q. Just in relation to the transitional
18 arrangements under the Disaster Management Act, it provided
19 that if there was an SES unit in existence before, it
20 continues to be in existence; if there was a local
21 controller, there's still a local controller. It has
22 effectively preserved the status quo.

23 A. Yes.

24

25 Q. How do you get out of that? Where does it go from
26 here, or is that just an open-ended transitional provision?

27 A. No, I don't - well. I don't believe that it's
28 open-ended.

29

30 Q. One of the comments made - sorry. If you will just
31 bear with me for a moment. In relation to SES units, for
32 example, under section 173 of the Disaster Management Act,
33 subsection 1 says:

34

35 *This section applies to a group of SES*
36 *members who immediately before the*
37 *commencement were an SES unit for a local*
38 *government area.*

39

40 Subsection 2:

41

42 *From the commencement, the group continues*
43 *as an SES unit for the local government*
44 *area as if established under new section*
45 *84(a) until the unit's establishment ends*
46 *under that section.*

47

1 So, is there anything being done in terms of --

2 A. No.

3

4 Q. -- ending the establishment?

5 A. Not at this stage, no. Again, I guess we are also
6 waiting for any recommendations that come. I mean, we
7 didn't want to move - put a position on the table and then
8 have a different position next year. So, I guess we're all
9 in a little bit of a hiatus in terms of some of those
10 bigger structural and strategic issues.

11

12 Q. Just moving on to the final topic heading, Equipment,
13 question 60: Is it reasonable for SES vehicles to be
14 fitted with audible and visual warning devices to identify
15 them as emergency personnel?

16 A. I'm assuming that this has come not from visual
17 warning devices but, specifically, blue and red warning
18 devices. Audible? I don't believe so. The SES vehicles
19 have no need for sirens on them at all. Red and blue
20 flashing lights? That's a matter that is at the discretion
21 of the Queensland Commissioner of Police. A request has
22 been forwarded to him some time ago. The determination was
23 that they saw no proper reason why the SES should have blue
24 and white flashing lights.

25

26 They do have orange lights. I understand that in many
27 areas orange lights are probably on more vehicles than they
28 aren't, particularly in the mining parts of the State, and
29 that everybody has become attuned to orange lights.

30

31 Q. Tow trucks and traffic management vehicles and --

32 A. That's right, yes. But there is - I mean, they are a
33 visual warning device, they do attract attention. A lot of
34 the stuff that we do where warning lights are needed is
35 also done in conjunction with Fire or Police and they have
36 their lights as well.

37

38 MR McGARRITY: Q. The status quo is sufficient, as you see
39 it?

40 A. Yes. It's not one that I am going to fight to the
41 death for.

42

43 MR BAILEY: Q. Has EMQ conducted an equipment audit and
44 replenished supply in preparation for the 2011/2012 wet
45 season?

46 A. Yes. We have looked at - each SES unit has a small
47 holding of things so that they can make an immediate

1 response and those things have been replenished. Do I have
2 a Statewide audit of every SES unit and the equipment they
3 hold? No, I don't.

4
5 We do have a series of caches and stores around the
6 State and all of those have been replenished. I can tell
7 you that we have in stock 11,169 tarpaulins, 260,375
8 sandbags, 47 ladders, 67 generators and 119 chainsaws, as
9 the key items of equipment that are in addition to
10 equipment that has been issued. So, this is ready to be
11 deployed immediately.

12
13 We also have arrangements with the Commonwealth and
14 other jurisdictions to borrow or acquire additional, so we
15 don't hold everything in stock but have arrangements where
16 we can rapidly access it, if needed.

17
18 MR McGARRITY: Q. Those equipment audits in the regions,
19 are they conducted by area directors?

20 A. Yes.

21
22 MR BAILEY: Q. The caches are at Beenleigh and Townsville,
23 are they?

24 A. No. We have just acquired a major facility at Ormeau/
25 Beenleigh, and we are in the process of attempting to
26 purchase or build - we are yet to decide - in Townsville,
27 so that doesn't exist. But each of the regions have got
28 caches of varying sizes that they hold stock in. Some of
29 them are quite significant. It's a small warehouse or one
30 of those double-doored facilities in a multi warehouse
31 facility.

32
33 MR BAILEY: I think that's everything we wanted to cover.
34 Thanks for your time, Bruce.

35
36 THE INTERVIEWEE: It was a pleasure and I hope it has been
37 useful.

38
39 MR McGARRITY: Yes.

40
41 THE INTERVIEWEE: We are very supportive, obviously, of
42 getting an outcome from what has been a very extensive set
43 of deliberations, and so on. So, if there is anything,
44 even informally, if there is just clarification - I hope
45 I'm not speaking out of turn.

46
47 MR [REDACTED] No, no, not at all.

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THE INTERVIEWEE: I am happy to deal with things. If there is something that requires clarification, I would rather deal with it and get it done than have it go through into recommendations and be misunderstood, or what have you. So, I am happy to make myself available at any time.

MR [REDACTED] Can I just clarify a couple of things which I think Bruce indicated he would try and get to you. I think one was the funding criteria of the assessment team.

MR BAILEY: The non-recurrent assessment team rules.

MR [REDACTED] Those rules or criteria.

THE INTERVIEWEE: Who is on the team and what are the criteria.

MR [REDACTED] And I think you were going to continue your search for the work, perhaps done in 2007, for the estimate of what might be total State funding of the SES. That's assuming - subject to you locating anything.

THE INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I don't think it will answer the question of total State funding. I think the question was asked more about can we make an assessment of what we believe the council contributions are, but that will be the lion's share of it.

MR [REDACTED] Bruce can just channel that to me and I can pass that on.

MR BAILEY: Thank you.

AT 12.55PM, THE INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.

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