

Transcript of Proceedings

Issued subject to correction upon revision.

THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE C HOLMES, Commissioner

MR JAMES O'SULLIVAN AC, Deputy Commissioner

MR PHILLIP CUMMINS, Deputy Commissioner

MR P CALLAGHAN SC, Counsel Assisting

MS E WILSON, Counsel Assisting

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1950

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDER (No. 1) 2011

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

TOOWOOMBA

..DATE 28/04/2011

..DAY 11

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 9.33 A.M.

1

MR MacSPORRAN: Commissioner, I've managed to obtain some instructions overnight and if it's convenient to the Commission, I would like to place those on the record now.

COMMISSIONER: Yes.

10

MR MacSPORRAN: Every State employee and member of volunteer services is entitled to receive legal representation by Crown Law. It is entirely a matter for the individual employee or volunteer as to whether they avail themselves of that benefit. Additionally, there are, within each of the agencies concerned, legal departments able to assist individual employees and volunteers in providing information to the Inquiry. As to whether the individual employee or volunteer avails themselves of this assistance is entirely a matter for them. Accordingly, Crown Law has into objection whatsoever to the Commission directly approaching any proposed witness for an interview or information. We simply ask that Crown Law be advised should that occur. The employee or volunteer would then have the option of having Crown Law present if desired.

20

Crown Law doesn't have, and has never had, any desire to hinder or delay the work of the Commission. At the direction of the Premier, all State employees will be advised that every public servant is to assist the Commission of Inquiry in every way possible and provide any information requested. In that regard, an email message was sent by the Director General of Premier and Cabinet last night to have that advice distributed throughout the State. The code of conduct in no way prohibits or seeks to restrict the right of a public servant or volunteer expressing a personal view as to the flood events we're concerned with in the Commission of Inquiry.

30

Finally, all State employees will be advised, as is the fact, that no State employee will suffer any prejudice by reason of providing information to the Commission of Inquiry.

40

Commissioner, those instructions have been formalised in a letter to the Commission and I should, for completeness, tender that. I can indicate the letter has attached to it the email that went last night from the Director General to advise all staff of the matters I've outlined.

COMMISSIONER: That will be very helpful. Exhibit 156.

50

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 156"

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Ian Heggarty.

IAN ROBERT HEGGARTY, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name, please?-- Ian Robert Heggarty.

Mr Heggarty, you live on Murphys Creek Road at Spring Bluff; is that correct?-- In the vicinity of Spring Bluff, yes.

10

You've prepared a statement for the purposes of the Commission; is that correct?-- That's correct.

A five-page statement dated originally dated 3 March 2011. You may have amended it since then; is that correct?-- That's correct.

I'll show you a copy of that. That's your statement?-- That's correct.

20

I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: That will be Exhibit 157.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 157"

30

MR CALLAGHAN: I just want to ask you a couple of questions arising from the statement itself, which is now evidence before the Commission. Paragraph 7. You begin that paragraph by saying you cannot comment on the response of the emergency services, "as I did not see any of the services for eight days." Is that 8 days from the 10th?-- Eight days from the 10th.

And what did you see when you finally saw something in the way of an emergency service presence?-- There was some SES personnel walking down the creek searching the creek. That was about the time that I had first contact with volunteers.

40

But that was the first contact that you had with anyone, I suppose, was it, after the floods?-- I believe the day before we had contact. One of our neighbours came down the creek.

Certainly the first you saw of anyone in authority?-- Yes.

50

Now, you have also supplied the Commission with some video footage; is that correct?-- That's correct.

I will see if we can get that played.

VIDEO PLAYED

MR CALLAGHAN: Can you just describe what we're seeing, Mr Heggarty?-- Yes. That's Murphys Creek. That's around about 30 metres from the landing at the house, and I'm looking down on it and that's - obviously it's water running down there, and you can see it carrying sticks and flowing around our power pole after the power pole was knocked over.

At about what time was that taken, that clip we've just seen?-- Just bear with me for a moment, please. That would have been around about 1330 hours.

10

On the 10th?-- On the 10th.

Thank you. Now, what are we looking at now?-- Well, that's when the creek got my attention. That's the beginning of the water - the floodwater coming down. What got my attention was the speed of the water.

So what time is that?-- Sorry to hold you up there. Look, I started taking those photos at around about 1300 hours.

20

So it's a sequence from that point onwards, is it?-- That's correct.

Thank you. And that's the footage which is, I think, part of Exhibit 152.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Callaghan.

30

MR CALLAGHAN: It's already been tendered.

Thank you, Mr Heggarty, I have no further questions.

MS McLEOD: No questions, thank you.

MR GIBSON: No, thank you.

MR MacSPORRAN: Mr Heggarty, just a couple of matters. You answered some questions about paragraph 7 of your statement?-- Yes.

40

About the response of the emergency services. You were isolated on your property because of the floodwater over the causeway. You couldn't get out safely?-- It wasn't just the floodwater over the causeway. The end of the causeway had been washed away, and the water was running through the washout and it was quite dangerous.

You stayed at home, as it were. You couldn't get out?-- That is correct.

50

But you weren't - you wanted it made known you weren't in danger where you were?-- That's correct.

You put the sign up?-- Yes.

And you did understand that the police had been out checking

all of the addresses in your road?-- That is something I wasn't aware of for quite some time afterwards. 1

You've found out later they had been out checking the houses?-- They never checked our house.

No. But - sorry?-- Sorry. The only thing was that it was nearly a week before I got over the creak, and when I got over the creek, I found blue police tape wrapped around our letterbox. 10

You understood later perhaps that the neighbours had told the police who were checking in your road that you were okay?-- That's correct.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Any re-examination?

MR CALLAGHAN: No re-examination. May Mr Heggarty be excused? 20

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Heggarty, and thank you for that footage. You're excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Steven Jones. 30

40

50

STEVEN JOHN JONES, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

1

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name, please?-- Steven John Jones, 146 Dolleys Road, Withcott.

Mr Jones, you are the Major of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council?-- That's right.

10

You're aware, of course, of the existence of the Disaster Management Act?-- That's right.

And you're aware that the Act requires the establishment of a Local Disaster Management Group?-- That's correct.

And of course we can read the Act ourselves, but I'm interested to know what you understand to be the functions of a Local Disaster Management Group?-- In our plan, which I guess you have got a copy of - I've got a copy of here - the roles of each of the bodies in that involved in that plan are listed. The overall plan is, of course, to coordinate the emergency - the response to the emergency situation that is in place. Various organisations are represented, and their roles are clearly defined, and our plan was in fact revisited on 6 January this year.

20

We'll come to that. But as you know the Act requires that the group - that there be a chairperson of the group?-- That's right.

30

And for the purposes of the Lockyer Valley Local Disaster Management Group, that's you?-- That's correct.

What do you understand the responsibilities of a chairperson of an LDMG to be?-- Obviously to, you know, facilitate the meetings of the group, to be involved in the coordination of the activities of the group, and to make sure that the group functions, meets its responsibilities in terms of meetings, et cetera, et cetera.

40

The Act requires that the chairperson of a group appoint a local disaster coordinator?-- That's correct.

For the purposes of the Lockyer Valley as at January of this year, who was that?-- Gerry Franzmann, our engineer.

What was involved in the process of appointing him?-- Gerry has been a long-term employee previously of the Laidley Council prior to amalgamation. He has had experience through many flooding disasters in Laidley. He is the director of the engineering services area of council, and council felt it appropriate that he be given that role with his experience.

50

Was it a council decision, or was it your decision?-- No, any decision that's made, obviously the CEO of the council would recommend to council and council would decide. Now, in the case of that circumstance, I think it was 23 February that

application of the plan took place, and I'm fairly certain that that - I haven't got the detail in front of me here, but I think that would have included the appointment of Mr Franzmann.

1

That was 23 February this year?-- That's right.

But as at January?-- Well, what happened was that the plan was actually put in place as a result of a flying minute type situation on 6 January, and it was ratified at the meeting on 23 February 2011.

10

Well, we'll come to that too. What's your understanding of the requirements for a Local Disaster Management Group to meet? How often must an LDMG meet?-- Under the present arrangements, I believe it's at least every six months.

You're aware that in the Act there is a provision which allows a district disaster coordinator to give a local group written directions?-- Yes.

20

You're aware of that provision?-- Yes.

Have you ever received any directions from a district disaster coordinator?-- Not in my knowledge.

Do you have any understanding what - I'll ask you: what is your understanding of the reason for that provision?-- Look, I think it's if in fact that person considers that there's anything that the group has done which isn't compliant with the legislation, then he has the option to request that be done through a written request.

30

Well, for example, it's the fact - as at January of this year, how often had your Local Disaster Management Group met in the preceding twelve months?-- It had met in August and again, I think, on about 23 October. I think it was 23 October.

September?-- September, was it? Yeah, I'm just not sure offhand.

40

And of course the Act requires the preparation of a plan by the Local Disaster Management Group. That's correct, isn't it?-- That's correct, yes.

And how often must the effectiveness of the plan be reviewed?-- On an annual basis. And we've obviously had a plan for some time, and I think it was the result of that change in plan that was presented on 6 January.

50

We'll go through that process in a moment. But say that your plan hasn't been reviewed on an annual basis as is required, just getting back to the role of the district disaster coordinator, would you perceive it to be his responsibility to chase that up?-- Well, I think the - it's quite obvious that he has the capability of giving a direction to do it in writing if it hasn't been done. Now, you know, obviously, you know, the relevant body, the council, would endeavour to do

such if they hadn't done it, and if it was - obviously had gone over time, then I believe it would be - he would have the ability to request that they do it.

1

That's right, he's clearly got the ability to do it. I'm just interested in whether you have an understanding as to whether there would be any obligation on him to do it?-- Look, I think that it would be in everyone's interest that all parties, including the party preparing the plan, and that party who has the ability to direct them to do it, in other words, a monitoring role, make that initiative to have that done.

10

Accepting what you say that it's in everyone's interests, it's perhaps a bit of a grey area as to whether it's anyone's responsibility in particular?-- I guess it is a grey area; however, I guess if they have the ability to do it, it would suggest that they then have the ability to make that move.

It would suggest that. But it doesn't seem to be a requirement; would you agree with that?-- I agree with that, yes.

20

All right. And I suppose, just to round that out, is there any other - are you aware of any other requirement for the local group to report to anyone else about the manner in which they are complying with the requirements of the Act?-- Well, we certainly do report through to Emergency Management Queensland on a regular basis. We have a regular reporting mechanism, you know, be it be written or verbal, and their staff are obviously in contact with us continually, and I believe it's our responsibility to certainly inform them as to what's happening.

30

Again is that a responsibility that stems simply from your belief, or do you understand there to be an actual written requirement?-- I'm not sure there's a written requirement, but I believe it to be an ethical thing to do.

All right. Now, you're aware that under the Act there are certain guidelines that are issued?-- Yes.

40

What do you understand to be the significance of those guidelines?-- Look, I think, you know, they are obviously an important framework under which, you know, the whole plan and its operation can operate.

Is that the limit of their significance, that they are a framework, or do they have any more force than that?-- Look, I think they do certainly, you know - the Act overarches all this, and obviously there's legal requirements to fulfil those needs.

50

So do you perceive yourself to be, as the chair of an LDMG, obliged to give effect to the guidelines, or are they just guidelines?-- No, I think that it's important that in your - in whatever role, a chair included, that you would operate within those guidelines.

Has your council ever provided specifically in its budget for disaster management expenses?-- Yes, and I can't quote the figure. The relatively modest amount of money of \$5,000, I think, might have been in the last budget. I do need to impress, though, I think it's important in our size council that when you look at budgets in the larger councils, where they have large, dedicated areas or divisions that handle this type of thing, they will naturally have a large specific budget. Naturally a lot of the activities which are conducted within our council are conducted with persons who have got multi facets to their work, and that wouldn't necessarily be directly illustrated in the budget. So the modest figures that sometimes are in the budget are for relatively specific things to that area, where some of the work components would actually be covered in other parts of the budget.

1

10

That \$5,000 what would that have been allocated for?-- Offhand I can't answer that specifically.

Generally?-- It would have been generally for perhaps training, perhaps some resources. It wouldn't probably have included the labour cost of people involved in the training. It may well have been for a specific course or something like that. And I say that very loosely, because I haven't got the detail with me.

20

But that is a line item in the council budget?-- Yes.

Well, can we turn to the plan itself. I'll show you a copy of a document, and you can identify that?-- Yes, that's right.

30

What is it?-- Sorry?

What is it?-- That's the Lockyer Valley Local Disaster Management Plan.

I'll tender that now.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 158.

40

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 158"

MR CALLAGHAN: Did you say you had a copy of it?-- I would have a copy here, yes.

50

Can you either turn that up, or we can provide you with one?-- I've got one here.

Have you got a copy?-- Yes, I've got one here.

Thank you. Can we just trace the history of this document. There are two dates on its face; that is, "date last revised, 6 January 2011"?-- That's right.

And then I think ratified, or however you termed it, on 23 February 2011?-- That's right.

Is that right?-- Yes.

But prior to that, how did the document actually come into existence?-- Look, it goes way back. Prior to amalgamation both the Gatton Shire and the Laidley Shire both, of course, each had local disaster management plans. With the amalgamation in 2008 they were brought together, and obviously this is the latest product of the bringing together of those plans and the one that we're working under. It's probably important that I do mention the fact that whilst it says here "revised on 6 January", that was during that Christmas period, of course, when council was not normally meeting as it normally would. And the meetings were, of course, changed because of the flooding situation, and it was ratified in the council - the ordinary council meeting of 23 February.

10

20

Just one step at a time. When were they brought actually brought together the two plans?-- It would have been post amalgamation. I haven't got that date with me.

So this document existed in some point - in some form post amalgamation, but prior to 6 January; is that right?-- Yes, there would have been a prior version of it. I haven't got a copy of it.

If you turn the page to page 5, there's a table there with version - fields for "version", "date prepared by" and "comments"?-- Yes.

30

Version 1.0 doesn't have a date and doesn't have any entry as to when it was prepared. Are you able to shed any light on that?-- I would suggest - and, you know, perhaps someone more on the operational side of council may be able to answer it better. But I would suggest what happened was the two previous plans, the Gatton plan and Laidley plan, would have been kept in vogue operating side by side until the amalgamated form, which may well be this one. Which is similar to what's happened in other areas of council, for example, with the planning situation on the shire plans.

40

The first version, whenever it was prepared, was prepared, obviously, under the Disaster Management Act 2003. And when was amalgamation?-- 2008. March 2008.

Right. So the first version could well be - the first version recorded there could well be simply the Lockyer Valley one pre 2008?-- Sorry, can you just repeat that again?

50

There's no clue here as to whether the first version was an amalgamated one or a-----?-- What, two separate ones?

-----pre-amalgamation one?-- I can't really answer that. I can't recall if it's two separate ones or an amalgamated one.

Moving to version 2.0, which is this version, I take it?--
Um hmm.

1

This document?-- Yes.

It's said to have been prepared in January 2011 by M Brennan.
That's Madonna Brennan; is that right?-- That's right.

Who is she?-- She is one of our administrative people in the
council. She has overseen the preparation of it. I must
state, though, that whilst this was revised to its final form
at 6 January, work would have been continuing on that for many
months prior to that because it's quite a large task.

10

Who was doing that work?-- Madonna Brennan was part of that.

What part was she?-- She would have been coordinating it.
Justin Fisher and one of our young engineering staff was
involved in that, and I know Gerry Franzmann also, the
coordinator, would have been involved in it.

20

All right?-- The extent to which each took part I would have
to take further advice on.

Okay. What actually happened on 6 January? I think you used
the phrase "flying minute" before. Is that what you were
talking about?-- The CEO could probably answer that better,
but I believe what happened was a final draft was completed,
it was circulated amongst councillors, and then it would have
been part of a council report to the council meeting in
February.

30

40

50

Yes, but what actually happened on the 6th of January?-- Oh, it would have simply been a day that they came together to do that, they came back to work I guess, after Christmas.

1

Who's "they"?-- Well, Madonna Brennan and those - the staff that were working on it would have probably returned to work after the Christmas break on that day.

So it was just a matter of the document being printed that day?-- Put together - yeah - well, the final form that's sent around I guess, because there would have been many months of work go into it prior to that.

10

Sure. On the - just excuse me for a moment. I'll show you a collection of documents which are Disaster Management Group meeting minutes covering quite a period of time but I'll hand it to you as one bundle. You probably have got a copy yourself, have you?-- I would have, yeah.

I'll show you the collection first off. You recognise those documents as minutes of Disaster Management Group meetings?-- Yes, I - yes, I do, yes.

20

Yes, I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 159.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 159"

30

MR CALLAGHAN: And they demonstrate that there was a meeting on the 23rd of September 2010; is that correct?-- That would be correct, yes.

And was that the last meeting that you had prior to January of 2011?-- Look, without doing a lot of research here, I believe it would have been, yes.

40

That meeting was attended by, amongst others, the name you mentioned earlier, Mr Justin Fisher. That's correct?-- That's correct.

And as you're aware, Mr Fisher had prepared a minute on the 14th of September 2010. You're aware of that minute?-- Yes, I think - I think so, yes.

Yes, all right. Well, I'll show you a copy of that. This is a document authored by Mr Justin Fisher on the 14th of September 2010. Do you recognise that?-- Yes, I do.

50

Yes, I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 160.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 160"

MR CALLAGHAN: Relevantly, I'll read the second-last paragraph on page 112: "Since amalgamation, little work has been done to improve Lockyer Valley Regional Council's disaster response capability. There have been no LDMG meetings for 12 months. The Local Disaster Management Plan requires updating. There are no Local Disaster Management Plan subplans for emergencies where council is the lead agency and there is no dedicated Disaster Response Command Centre." You are aware of that?-- That-----

10

You're aware that that's in the document?-- I'm aware that that document - that that's in that document, yes.

Were Mr Fisher's concerns discussed at the meeting on the 23rd?-- I'm sure they would have been.

20

Do you not recall any of the discussions?-- Look, I do recall discussion. I can't recall the detail of it.

Well, was there any action taken as a result of the discussion to review the plan?-- Yeah, look, actually, there was and it was - it was prior to that time. What I probably need to say is that a change happened in July of that - at that year. Prior to July, the emergency services or the emergency response-type area of council was handled under a chap by the name of Harold Karl. He was taken over under the new arrangements with water, the QUU, and the emergency area then went over to the engineer area of which Justin Fisher was part. He wasn't part of any discussions which occurred prior to July. Now in June of that year, a month before the period we're talking, I actually attended a disaster management conference put on by the LGAQ which was - it may have been - late May, I think actually, in Home Hill. At that conference there was much discussion on the changes that were coming in terms of the legislation and the need to upgrade things, the need for councils to take a different position because Emergency Management Queensland was going more into a support-type role. When I returned from that conference we did have much discussion on it and there has been significant work carried out within council from that time to this, and much of that was as a result of that - what was said at that conference.

30

40

Well, in June you were aware then of the need to review the plan; is that right?-- That's right, and we would have commenced work very soon after that.

50

But none of this work is documented; is that right?-- Look, I'm not sure whether - what documentation there is with regard to that. The council may have documentation, I'm not sure.

Well, you recall being interviewed by Commission staff in relation to these issues on the 7th of April?-- Yes.

2011?-- That's right.

I'll show you a copy of the transcript of that interview?--
Yes, that's it.

Have you seen a copy of that transcript?-- Yes, that's it.

Yes, all right, I tender that.

10

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 161.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 161"

MR CALLAGHAN: Do you have a copy there? You've been aware since then of the interest of this Commission in the existence of any records relating to what was actually done by the council in relation to disaster management from June of last year onwards?-- Yes, they - I'm sure they were - any that we had should have been provided.

20

We'll tender the extent of the documents with which we've been provided. There are the ones that you already have. There is a document headed "Lockyer Valley LDMG Evacuation and Welfare Management Subplan". I tender that. I'll show you that first. Do you recognise that?-- Yes.

30

I'll tender that.

COMMISSIONER: 162.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 162 "

40

MR CALLAGHAN: There is then a document, the first entry of which is, "LDMG reactivation of centre". It appears to be some sort of running sheet or running log for the Lockyer Valley LDMG?-- Right.

I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: 163.

50

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 163"

MR CALLAGHAN: And that relates to events of January, doesn't it?-- That's right.

And then another document which relates to requests for assistance made by the LDMG, again during the events of January this year?-- Right.

I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: 164.

10

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 164"

MR CALLAGHAN: And then a series of situation reports prepared and submitted by the LDMG to the District Disaster Management Group between December 2010 and January of this year?-- Yes.

Yes, I tender those.

20

COMMISSIONER: 165.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 165"

MR CALLAGHAN: I'd suggest to you that is the extent of documentation with which the Commission has been supplied relevant to preparation and performance of disaster management by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council between June of last year and January of this year?-- Right.

30

As I say, you've been aware of the interest of the Commission in any other documentation. We haven't been provided with anything else. As far as we're aware, that's the extent of it?-- Right.

40

Do you accept that?-- Well, our staff, I'm sure, would have provided you with what they were asked to provide.

With anything else?-- Yes.

If it existed?-- I would hope so, yes.

Yes. Well, so would we. The upshot of that is that there is no indication in writing of anything being done by way of attention being paid to Disaster Management Act requirements from June of last year through until January of this year?-- Right. Well, I know - I think it's in - in my statement that I gave on the 7th of April, I'm sure it's in there or in my other statement, I certainly discussed the issue of, you know, the work which was done, the verbal discussion between Gerry Franzmann and others at council on how work was progressing.

50

Yes?-- The detail of that work, I don't have any - any documentation on but I certainly was aware that they were moving towards an update of that plan.

1

Well, it was being talked about?-- To - well, I thought it was of a higher level than that.

It wasn't so high that it ever actually got to be written down though?-- Well, I guess the issue is though, that was produced on the 6th of January and for that to be in that form on the 6th of January, the first - which would be the first work day back after Christmas, there needed to be quite a bit of work done for that to actually be produced.

10

Well, the difficulty we have is in not knowing that, we don't know how different this is, I suppose, from the version 1.0 and we don't know who did what in terms of how this document was prepared. Would you agree with that?-- I can see - from your point of view, I can see that, yes, and I obviously, at the operational sort of side of council, wouldn't have that knowledge at hand that the operational people would in putting that together. But it would - there would have needed to be a significant amount of work done for that to be put together by the 6th over that holiday period.

20

At the meeting on the 23rd of February where it was actually adopted and when you signed off on the front page, what was the nature of the discussion, if any, which led to that occurring?-- To the sign off?

30

Yes?-- Well, obviously everyone would have - the councillors would have had a copy of that to read. Any discussions or concerns that they had, they would have been able to discuss those with us. I had looked at the document and I was quite satisfied with it as well.

Okay?-- And I believe it would have been ratified in the meeting of the 23rd as a motion of council.

Yes, that would be in the council - that would be in the-----?-- The council meeting, the ordinary meeting of the 23rd of February.

40

All right. You mentioned your original statement previously. I don't think we've actually tendered that yet. I'll just get a copy of that shown to you. That's the statement that you originally prepared in relation to this matter. I'm not sure I have an accurate date for that?-- No, I'm not sure exactly what date that was.

50

Undated statement?-- That's the document anyway.

Okay, thank you. I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 166.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 166"

1

MR CALLAGHAN: I suppose the final word on the documentation for this period is that there was nothing written down in response to the concerns expressed by Mr Fisher on the 14th of September. Would that be true?-- I - I can't recall having seen anything written. I know that the issue was discussed. I can remember the discussion on the topic and I can remember much talk on - on how we were going to move ahead to this ultimate plan which we've got now. I can't recall any documents having been produced as a direct result of - of those comments on that document.

10

Thank you. Can I ask you a question about the use by council of software related to disaster management and in particular the Guardian software. Do you know anything about that?-- I don't personally, no.

20

Do you know whether council - do you know what Guardian software is?-- I do. I have heard it briefly discussed. It is not something I'm familiar with. Some of our - our staff could probably answer that much better for you.

Do you know whether the council uses it?-- I'm not aware.

Where do you know about it? What's your source of knowledge?-- Just a little bit that I heard at one of the conferences or meetings, that was all.

30

Was it something that was suggested by someone at EMQ or somewhere else that could be used by councils-----?-- I think it was suggested at a conference or a meeting quite early in the piece. It may have been that one at Home Hill, I'm not sure, where there was some discussion on it. I know I did actually - some of our staff did actually mention it. How they've - they've looked into it, I'm not sure.

What about the concept of warnings by way of text messages, is that something you're aware of?-- I am - there has been a lot of discussions in recent times of course and I am aware of that.

40

Yes. Well, had there been any discussion about those things in the lead-up to the wet season just past?-- Look, actually, there was a discussion in a council meeting, I can't give you a date - some time ago - as to whether or not council would move forward with some of the possible systems of using that. Council did have some discussion on that at the time and they decided at that particular time not to go ahead with it. I think they were wanting more information on it. And I think it's - it's certainly something, you know, in looking forward that, as was mentioned in here yesterday by some of the police officers, I think it could well be an important part of some warning system but not the total system.

50

The things which were being discussed by council, was that,

can you recall, in relation to the early warning network?--
There was - look, I can't remember - I just can't actually
recall - it was as a result of a proposal or some sort of a
request from council did we wish to be part of some
commercial-type arrangement and I can't remember who that was
from or exactly what it involved.

1

Well, were you aware that there are at least two different
message alert or two different means by which text messages
can be sent and the one that I apprehend you're talking about
the commercial arrangement, the early warning network is one
of them?-- Yes.

10

The other is the message alert system. Were you aware of
that?-- Yeah, look since that time, obviously, there's been
some discussion on it. At the meeting, I know that there was
some discussion - that there were an alternative - there was
an alternative and council was concerned as to whether the
commercial arrangement or the other arrangement was to be the
preferred option. What work they've done on researching that,
I'm not sure.

20

I'm sure it was, as you say, discussed by council. Was this
something ever canvassed by the Local Disaster Management
Group?-- I can't recall it. There may have been discussion
offhand but I can't recall it.

Well, as we know, the events of January the 10th unfolded on a
scale and at a speed which were quite unparalleled and we have
much evidence of what was happening during that event, but I
would just like to focus now on the response. The first
reaction of many, of course, was to make a triple 0 call. Do
you have any sense of how those were handled?-- Look, I've
had feedback. Obviously, it was an exceptionally busy time
and I - I've had comments made, but in the main, the majority
that I had responded to me were that they were fine.

30

Did you make triple 0 calls yourself?-- Look, I can't recall.
I may well have. I'd have to check the telephone records to
be sure of that. I know I certainly made one on the night
before and I may have made one on the 10th as a result of
talking to Mr Warburton. I just can't recall. It was all
quite busy at that time.

40

I understand. What about contact with your District Disaster
Coordinator, Mr Schafferius? When did you first make contact
with him on the 10th, do you recall?-- Yes, look, I was in
constant contact with him, you know, through a number of days.
I would have first been speaking with him very soon after the
actual circumstance occurred on the 10th and at that stage I
was at Withcott and I was either at Withcott or I had just got
to Gatton. So it was within a very short time of the actual
disaster having occurred.

50

I understand what you're saying but can you give us, broadly
speaking, a time of day at which you would have first made
contact with him on the 10th?-- It was - it would have - I
think it was about 2 o'clock when it occurred, somewhere

around that, at Withcott. I would imagine I was talking with him probably within the next hour, hour and a half, two hours at the most. 1

Okay. Well, one concern which has been repeatedly expressed is the availability of helicopters at this time?-- Yes.

Was this something that you discussed with Mr Schafferius, do you recall?-- Look, my initial discussion with him was about the situation which had occurred at Withcott, because that's where I was at that time. Of course, there wasn't necessarily the immediate need there for helicopters. When I had got then through to Gatton and further discussions occurred, it was evident that the disaster had struck Grantham and those places. There was discussion with - with the situation with regard to helicopters and he was most helpful with - with those discussions. All the way through I found him very helpful and he was obviously trying to deal with the thing as best he could. I guess the situation was, too, as the evening went on it became dark, the weather was bad and the chance of using helicopters was reducing. 10 20

No, we understand that. I'm just interested in how they came to be mobilised in the first place. In the minutes, some of which - in some of the minutes which have been tendered, and I'll take you to them if I have to but at a later stage, a few days later, council is recorded as looking at getting its own helicopter for a specific purpose. This is after the real height of the emergency of course. Was that something that you initiated?-- Well, what would have happened, we were actually - to set the scene, we were actually using helicopters right through from Boxing Day because we were delivering food and so forth to people who were stranded from Boxing Day. So the particular occasion on which you're referring, I'm not sure if it was in regard to those operations or whether it was to actually try and take people out of situations of evacuation. 30

No, the one I am referring to is certainly after the 10th, so it is not that. But just as a general - what I'm exploring is this concept of the council getting its own helicopters?-- Yeah, well----- 40

Something that the council was doing at an early stage you tell me?-- Yeah, well, we had been doing that, as I said, for some time at that stage. I think, primarily, that the helicopters that we used were for survey work to find out, you know, the extent of the disaster. They were for delivering foodstuffs for people that were stuck. I'm not saying they didn't take anybody out, because they probably did at the same time. I know on about the 11th or 12th when the evacuation of Forest Hill was occurring, there was much discussion with helicopters and I know our coordinator, for example, was very - very keen to have people moved by helicopter and he certainly would have been in discussion with people up at the district committee and I'm not sure who he would have been speaking to. 50

When you say your coordinator, you mean your local disaster-----?-- Mr Franzmann.

1

What I'm asking is, was council retaining the services of helicopters directly or was this all going through the disaster management framework?-- Look, I'm not sure of what the actual arrangement was. It was dealt through - David Fraser was certainly aware of it from Emergency Management Queensland. He was involved in some of those discussions which was prior to the 10th of January. I remember having a discussion with him at the Withcott Sports Centre about this issue and he'd certainly assisted council's coordinator. I personally, I don't - can't recall having actually gained any helicopters but I know, certainly, our coordinators would have.

10

Well, can I ask you just a couple of questions now about - specifically from your perspective as chair of the LDMG, first of all about the SES. How were they brought into operations?-- I'm sure the initial contact around the 10th of January scenario I guess we're talking about.

20

Yes, I am talking about the 10th of January?-- Yeah, they were actually activated the day before. I think-----

How?-- It would have been our coordinator would have been in contact with, I guess, the person from the SES.

You don't know that specifically?-- I don't specifically but he would be able to provide that.

30

What about the Rural Fire Brigade? Were they-----?-- How were they engaged?

-----brought into the operations of the Local Disaster Management Group?-- They have a representative on that Disaster Management Group, yes.

Yes?-- With regard to the 9th and 10th of January and specifically with Grantham, they were already there on each of the occasions that I went out to Grantham.

40

Yes, but how were they, if at all, brought into the fold, as it were, of the Local Disaster Management Group? How were they coordinated, from the 10th onwards?-- I'm not - oh, from the 10th onwards. Obviously we had representatives of the fire service there as part of the committee and they did the liaison with their people. Prior to that time, I'm not sure how they got coordinated because, as I said, they were already there on most occasions when I attended.

50

Well, the Local Disaster Management Group, when did it start operating?-- It was initially - sort of post Christmas, its first activation was on Boxing Day, the 27th. It was then deactivated for some time and then reactivated prior to the 10th, probably around about the 9th when the flooding commenced in Grantham.

We have seen the minutes which are a complete set, I take it, of the minutes of the LDMG. They would seem to record - well, the first set of minutes I think we have is from the 13th of January. So was it meeting prior to that but just not being minuted?-- Informally. It was - it met, actually, within the - the key members of that group were actually there in the council chamber within an hour or two of the event having occurred. And there was-----

1

On the 10th?-- On the 10th, yes.

10

All right?-- When I say the key members, there would have been representatives from the major agencies there and most of those representatives stayed within our confines right through until the 13th when things become more formalised, and some of them even set up office in our building.

The document which is headed "LDMG Reactivation of Centre 11.35 a.m.", it doesn't really identify itself any other way, do you have a copy of that one?-- I may - I may not have a copy.

20

Look, I'll put a copy in front of you. I'm just not sure what exhibit number that is?-- I may well have one but by the time I find it, it is probably easier to go this way.

30

40

50

Can you just tell us what that is?-- That would have been a series of activities, you know, of Paul's communications, whatever, that occurred post 11.40 a.m. on 6 January 2011 with regard to flooding which was occurring. Because we had several events, of course, from Boxing Day through to-----

I understand. And this, as you say, seems to kick off on Thursday, 6 January?-- That's right.

10

But can you tell me who would have created this document?-- Look, I can't tell you the exact person. It would have been under the direction of Mr Franzmann. It would have been some of the staff.

Is this the extent of the record that we would have of whatever the LDMG was doing at this time?-- It's likely to be.

You were the chair of the LDMG. If there was anything else, you would know about?-- I believe I would.

20

I mean, can you, for example, interpret, just on that front page, the entry at the bottom of the page "1.05 p.m."?-- Yes.

"Steve Jones"?-- That letter is in relation to the comments over the page.

Right?-- Which at 1.05 p.m. I was referring - commenting to them about a washout beside a power pole in front of the service station which I was concerned about, because it may have had consequences if the power pole had actually fallen over. So all those comments there, those dot points - there's four dot points under that "1.05 p.m." they all relate to the conversation I had back to the office at that time.

30

All right. What about the entry at 1.20 p.m.? How are we to interpret something like that?-- What that was, they are two staff members which I understand were called to the office or to the area where the staff were gathering there to assist. Brad Domrow is the director of the community services area, Nick was his assistant, and they were being brought in to assist.

40

You would agree it's very difficult for anyone to interpret?-- I do. Certainly a lot more detail would be most helpful.

All right. Well, while I'm showing you documents, can you have a look at the draft evacuation plan.

COMMISSIONER: Was that last document part of an exhibit?

50

MR CALLAGHAN: I'm sorry, I think we're just getting the exhibit number turned up.

COMMISSIONER: Is it the running log?

MR CALLAGHAN: It's 163, and the evacuation plan, I think, is 162.

If I could get you to have a look at that. That document - sorry. Do you have a copy of that?-- This is the-----

Draft evacuation - the evacuation plan?-- I'm not sure that I do, actually.

We'll get you a copy if you don't have it?-- No, I don't think I do.

10

Evacuation and welfare management subplan?-- Yes, I do have a copy, sorry.

What is that?-- That was one of the documents which was effectively a draft, I suppose you'd say, based on information which was provided to us by government, and it is yet to have the detail of some of that information of evacuation centres and so forth put into it.

It's yet to have any detail put into it?-- Yes.

20

It's effectively a pro forma which has been provided by someone else, and there's absolutely nothing useful in there, is there?-- It's as provided, in my brief overview of it, from the government.

Yes, it's as provided for you, the local authority, to fill out?-- That's right.

And that simply wasn't done?-- That's correct.

30

So that meant that on 10 January this year there was no actual evacuation plan in place for anywhere in the Lockyer Valley?-- In this format there wasn't. There was the informal arrangement whereby we had for many years considered one particular evacuation centre. And I do agree that that needs to be significantly updated for the future, in that collection type points for people to be evacuated to be identified and an evacuation centre be formally recorded in this type of document. But it wasn't at that date.

40

And are you aware of what the guidelines to the Act have to say about-----?-- Well, yes, exactly, that the - you know, it's something that should be put in place. It was an issue that council had a lot of discussion on, and for good reason, which, if I have the time, I'd be happy to discuss.

I'm sorry, say that again? There was something council did for good reason?-- We hadn't completed this work for a particular reason, and I would be happy to give an outline of that if you would like.

50

Well, you'd better?-- The reason was that it was considered that the most effective evacuation centre would be the Gatton hall behind the Shire office. The reason for that is that facility has everything there. There was auxiliary power there all set up. There's a commercial kitchen, there's showers, toilets, the whole lot. We always considered it best

if possible to get as many people into one evacuation point as possible. Very helpful in terms of missing persons and the like.

1

Can I just ask you to slow down a bit?-- Sorry. However, in the case of evacuation or in the case of an emergency, there needs to be specific points where people can gather and go to. To set up any number of evacuation centres is quite difficult, because you have to make sure that all matters are attended to, and in particular the missing persons issue is a big one. Now, the facility at Gatton, whilst it might be very good in terms of evacuation, it's obviously not possible for everyone to get there in the first instance. So we would like to in fact in the future identify points - different points for different types of disasters where people can actually gather and then be transferred from - to a larger, well equipped evacuation centre. And there has been quite a bit of discussion between council officers, myself and others, about this principle and how we would like to put that into place. We've given a huge amount of thought to it so that we can do it in such a way that would work. And we would have heard yesterday - or we did hear yesterday in this room a lot of discussion about evacuation centres and how people simply sometimes won't go to them, how they want to go to where they are comfortable to. And that was one of the concerns that we've had in previous circumstances where we have had to evacuate people, and that did occur in 2002 and 2004.

10

20

But none of that is an excuse for not having a plan, is it?-- I guess that the guidelines suggest that we should have that in place, and it's important that it be put in place.

30

And all of that would have been done if you had even just filled out the pro forma, wouldn't it?-- Oh, exactly.

I mean, it provides, for example, and appendix with listing of possible shelter locations. Not necessarily setting up an established evacuation centre, but just providing for a list of possible locations?-- Well, if that had been filled in, yes, it would be in writing. The discussion that I mentioned before was verbal and not in writing.

40

And if it had been in writing, it could have been published and made known to everyone in the region - published on the internet and elsewhere?-- Could have. In some ways I guess that it was fortunate that that didn't occur, because some of the places that had been suggested as collection points or evacuation centres were themselves isolated by flood waters, and people could have been in danger in travelling to them.

50

Of course. But it's a least better to give people options, isn't it?-- I guess so. However, when I just spoke before I mentioned the point of for different disasters, different types of points-----

Yes, and different options?-- And in our discussion up to date - in the verbal discussion up to date we hadn't considered that, you know, to the extent that we have now. We now have

flood lines which suggest floods impinge on places that we never thought they did before, and I believe heretofore we can actually produce a much better document. 1

I'm not interested in having it all judged with hindsight. You would least agree that the way forward is for a proper plan to be prepared and-----?-- Oh, most definitely.

All right. We do though, subject to what I've just said, have to review what actually did happen. So what decisions were made as regard evacuation centres from the 10th onwards?-- Okay. Well, in regard to the disaster of the 10th, the principal centre was the evacuation centre at Gatton. There were a number of centres that were set up outside of that area. They weren't council centres; for example, people were at the Postmans Ridge hall. That wasn't actually in fact an evacuation centre. We know there were people housed and looked after at Murphys Creek - that was a community initiative - because of the isolation, and council weren't able to get into there until about Wednesday or Thursday. The official council centre was Gatton. 10 20

We'll come to Murphys Creek in a moment. But who made these decisions about where people were actually to be kept?-- At the council building the key players in the local disaster meeting were there in attendance most of the time: the coordinator, Mr Franzmann; various other members of council; there was a police officer there most of the time; there were other key members there. The discussion - many of these discussions were had with that group. 30

Who made the decisions?-- That group.

You were the chair of that group?-- That's right. That's correct. And there was consultation between those members, and it was considered that that was the most appropriate thing to do.

So as chair of the group, was it finally your decision to publish the whereabouts of evacuation centres?-- The coordinator assisted in that process. There was discussion between those people. He assisted - obviously, it's a bit of a moving situation with some of these things. As the floodwaters rose, they were cut off and we had to change the position, and so the advertised positions had to change at times. 40

I understand that it would have been a team process of consultation and so on, but I am interested in the process by which a final decision was made and communicated - and how it was then communicated?-- Communicated by various means, and the short term means, the immediate means, was by radio. There were a lot of radio messages. In fact, I think you probably have been provided with a log of that type of stuff. Various radio stations that information was disseminated through, and as I said, some of those centres did have to change as the weather changed. 50

What about the supply of evacuation centres, how was that organised?-- The? 1

The supply of essentials?-- Okay. One of the main reasons that we selected first of all of the Gatton evacuation centre was the availability of the materials that you just mentioned.

Where were they available from?-- In the case of Gatton, the bedding and so forth was brought in from the university. We already had auxiliary power hooked up there prior to the event occurring. After Boxing Day we had the evacuation centre and our main building outfitted with emergency power. Our various officers of the council undertook to obtain certain supplies that were required, foodstuffs the likes, and they were brought in. There were people----- 10

Can, I stop you there. Because there's two aspects of that I want to explore before we go on?-- That's fine.

The bedding, for example, you say you got that from the university?-- The university. 20

What were the actual mechanics of getting it?-- Okay. The job was - the coordinator took charge of obtaining that material. He contacted Brad Domrow, who is one of our - the director of our community services section of council. He then made contact with local organisations, one of which was the University of Queensland. They were able to supply the bedding. A local transport company went out and obtained that bedding and brought it in. 30

So the LDC contacted someone in your council?-- That's right.

Who then contacted the university?-- That's right, contacted various local suppliers and contacts.

Specifically just sticking with the bedding situation?-- Yes.

And the university, in effect, out of their own goodwill, supplied the bedding; is that right?-- That's right. 40

And are they ever - in that sort of situation, is someone like that ever compensated, or is that just something that they do?-- We have had that - an arrangement with the University of Queensland before. This has happened before. It's something they have always done to help people out, and it's the sort of cooperative arrangement that you get in these local, rural type areas.

That's why I fastened on it just as an example of the sort of cooperation you need. But you also need that line of communication?-- We have some lists and contacts for various things. Bedding in this case was one we were discussing. And obviously with the number of students they have at the University of Queensland, they have quite high supplies. 50

I was going to ask you about that that list of contacts. That's obviously something that's going to be very important

in this sort of situation. Where do we find those?-- Look, I'm not exactly sure whether the coordinator has a formalised list. I guess he may - he probably well does have. I know the directors in our council all have contacts that they deal with on these matters, because we do deal with them on these matters on other fronts.

1

You would accept that there's an obvious importance in there being a document or some sort of permanent record of that sort of thing in the event that the LDC, or whoever has all of this knowledge, is not himself around to share it. Do you agree with that?-- I certainly do agree with it. I guess in agreeing with it, though, there is another point that I guess I should put on it, and that is many of these organisations we deal with, there are frequent changes in the people involved and they need to be updated. And also I think the local knowledge thing is huge, because when these situations occur, very often you have requirements that you may not have had a requirement for before, or even anticipated in an emergency, and then the local knowledge really does kick in.

10

20

I think that's my point. That when there's a situation that can change very regularly, it's important that there be a record, albeit one that's continually updated; you would agree with that?-- I guess, you know, a classic case in this flood was the height of this flood actually caused needs that we've never anticipated before. And so not only do we need the list you've mentioned, and not only do we need it updated, but I think we also need some initiative as in how we fulfil those other needs that aren't listed.

30

Sure. No argument about that. Can I take you to the minutes of the - that collection of minutes of the LDMG. It's Exhibit 159. As I say, they record a meeting, I think, on 18 September 2009, and 23 September 2010, and then 13 January - I'm sorry, 12 January 2011. It's the one on the 12th that I would like to take you to. That's the one at 5 p.m. on the 12th. Sometimes the group met more than once on the same day; is that right?-- That could be correct, yes.

40

Okay. Just as a general - just to give us the general feel or how all this was working. Where were you actually meeting?-- Generally in the council chamber in the council building.

And were there any issues with that?-- Look, I think it was actually quite successful, because obviously you've got access to computers and all that type of thing in the building. Generally I think it worked reasonably well.

Who took these minutes?-- They would have been taken by one of our administrative people, I would imagine.

50

You don't recall?-- I don't recall. There's too many meetings in a short period to recall the detail of that.

Was there a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting available at the subsequent meetings?-- Generally I think there was, yes.

They weren't actually ratified until March. I accept you had better things to do than ratify minutes?-- I think, to be perfectly honest with you, in those occasions where we had several meetings in a day, it would have been virtually impossible to have prepared minutes available at the next meeting.

That's what I'm interested in. Because obviously when you're looking at coordinating a response and different people are attending different meetings at different times?-- Yes.

10

There's an obvious advantage in having a record available as soon as possible?-- Yes.

And I understand there may have been other things to be done. But the problem is illustrated, I would suggest to you, if we look at the meeting on 13 January 2011 at 0900, the apologies there include yours, as chairman of the group?-- Yes.

20

Mr Moon's as deputy chair?-- Yes.

And Mr Franzmann's, the LDC?-- That's right.

So there are obvious difficulties in having a meeting without the chair, the deputy, or the LDC?-- Yes.

But it was going to be important that you know everything that had been decided at that meeting. I think you had another one at 5 p.m. that day?-- That's right.

30

Would that be right?-- On some of these days there were two or three. And the other thing - I haven't read the detail again of these minutes - but what happened in some of these cases, sometimes the committee actually come together to have discussion between some of the more external partners, for example. I can't recall any of the detail of this one, but with the water supply issue, the interconnection with power and communications and so forth, at times there were discussions between those persons involved in the committee more so than the wider emergency situation.

40

Even so, I would suggest to you that it's important in these sort of circumstances that there be at least one person providing some overall leadership and continuity to the whole process. And I understand that you were very busy doing many things during this period, but can you say, for example, why you weren't present at the meeting of the 13th at 0900?-- Look, I cannot recall. I would have to go back and look at our detail in my diary. I'm not sure. But generally there would have been - one or more of those persons who were absent at the meeting would have been at the meetings. I'm not sure-----

50

The records will speak for themselves, and you may well be right. But what do you say to my suggestion that it's undesirable for the chair and the deputy chair and the LDC to be absent from any meeting of the LDMG?-- Look, I think what

you are saying is absolutely right and I would agree with it. I guess the difficulty when you're having three meetings a day, having all parties present is difficult. There must have been good reason why on this occasion we couldn't all be there.

1

All right. You did actually get some help from the Charleville Shire at some stage?-- Yes, that's correct.

How did that actually happen?-- What happened was our coordinator, Mr Franzmann, had been working very long hours for some time. He for personal reasons did need to take a break, and so council, through our CEO, made inquiries about a person we could get to replace him. It was obviously important that we got someone who had some sort of background in dealing with a flood and an emergency of this type. He made the relevant inquiries. I think that might have been through LGAQ or Emergency Management Queensland, one of those places. One of those bodies recommended that we approach Charleville because they had had that experience and they had recommended that we get a member of their staff to come down and assist us.

10

20

It was obviously helpful?-- It was.

That's why I'm interested in how that came to be effected. You think it might have been LGAQ or EMQ?-- The CEO did discuss it with me at the time. I can't remember who he actually made the Inquiry of as to where he would obtain a person with that type of qualification. One of those types of bodies did recommend Charleville, and he made those inquiries through there.

30

It was just something that happened as a result of his initiative, if you like?-- That's right.

Not through any specific operation of the disaster management plan?-- Not really. We had discussion - look, Gerry was working very hard. He needed, as I said, for personal reasons to take a break. He had spoken to me about it. I had spoken to the CEO, and the CEO looked for a replacement.

40

During this period you're aware that there were a number of police working in and around the region, and it's been suggested that one thing the police had to deal with was some very vocal negative opinions regarding the council and a strong perception by residents that they were not getting answers to their questions. Are you aware of that suggestion?-- I've read that in one of the statements.

50

It's suggested there was catcalling at public meetings. Were you aware of that?-- Look, I attended most of the public meetings.

Yes?-- In general terms -I mean, we're dealing with people who have been displaced from their homes, people who have lost loved ones, people who are emotionally very distressed, and I think generally the people actually at those public meetings I

attended did in fact perform quite well. I think obviously they did have needs, and with so many needs with an emergency so big, it's obviously difficult to settle all those in the short period. As time went by and things became more organised and more staff and resources were brought in, I think a lot of those needs were satisfied.

1

You are obviously familiar with the statement that I'm talking about?-- I've only read it once, but yeah.

10

I will get you to - give you the opportunity to comment on the suggestions that are made in it. The officer concerned complains that he was unable to rely upon the LDMG in meeting critical community requests within required timeframes. Most notably these were for personal protective equipment and water trucks. Do you have a response to that?-- Look, I would probably deal with the two things separately. With regard to water trucks, we heard here yesterday in the Inquiry the issues with water. This disaster was a major issue - there was a major issue with regard to the supply of drinking water. The mains were broken in several places. Articulation was taken out. Forty per cent of the shire, I suppose, lost its articulated water supply. So the demand on trucks was huge-----

20

I would just ask you to slow down a bit?-- Sorry, I'm a bit deaf in one ear. It was huge, and what happened was we simply had all the local trucks that we could possibly obtain in use. I know that the - Brett Schafferius did assist us greatly there in obtaining trucks from elsewhere, and I think some even came from the defence forces. But to keep in mind the amount of water that we needed to move was huge, you know, the number of trucks that was physically required, it wasn't just a few. It was a very large number working 24 hours a day, and that was a very big resource to find. Far greater than what would be available locally. In terms of protective equipment, we did also have issues. Yesterday we heard about the issues with the road closures. It was difficult to get supplies of material in. In some cases there weren't sufficient supplies even within the bigger suppliers in Brisbane to get them here, and there were some difficulties in obtaining those things.

30

40

All right. The other complaint - one other complaint was in relation to the ability to advise people in Grantham about severe storm events, both practical safety reasons and to manage the obvious community fears that might have been associated with such a thing and being told a text message wasn't possible if the storm was less than a category 3 cyclone. This would appear to be in communication with the LDMG. What do you have to say about that?-- When we look at our plan in regard to any of that information from the Bureau of Meteorology, on page 2 of the plan it's quite clear that yes, it is our job to disseminate that to the public; however - it might be page 10 to 14, actually. Page 10 to 14. It's quite clear under the "Responsibilities" there it says, "Issue local flood warnings and information", but further down it states that that information has to be provided to us. And council would always be very careful about how it would put

50

out any information if it wasn't provided to us, and I think
it was the Queensland Police that suggested they were the
agency. It might be page 18.

1

Sorry, where are you looking?-- I'll just find the spot here.

10

20

30

40

50

It's Exhibit 158?-- Yes, on page 11.

1

Yes?-- Under "Queensland Police Service", "Flood. Supply of meteorology" - "Supply of Bureau of Meteorology information to the local authority". And on page 10 under "Lockyer Valley Regional Council", the "issue of local flood information and warnings".

Just on there, just while you're on page 10, "Organisation: Lockyer Valley Regional Council", responsibility, "Storm and tempest: Collection of information. Issue of local information". Isn't that what we're talking about?-- That is under "Storm and Tempest", yes, but I - if we're refer to the flooding that occurs from the storm-----

10

No, the complaint was in relation to storm warning following the event?-- Right.

There were at least three occasions in which sever storms were forecast which did impact on Grantham and on each occasion the LDMG was requested to formulate a means of advising Grantham residents of a pending thunderstorm. Now, that's clearly, by this plan, a council responsibility and I'd suggest to you, in the circumstances, would clearly have been an LDMG responsibility as well. The complaint is that there was no means suggested by which that could be done and the police ended up wandering around with loud hailers?-- I - I haven't got a copy of that statement here. But that request, was that just in - was it verbal or was it in writing? Have you any idea?

20

The statement simply reads: "There were at least three occasions where severe storms were forecast hours ahead which did affect Grantham. On each occasion I requested the LDMG formulate a means of advising Grantham residents in the event of a pending severe storm"?-- The reason I ask that question was I haven't actually seen any documentation which suggests a formal request of that nature and I-----

30

It probably wasn't a formal request. It was probably an oral request and he recalls being told what I said before, that it wasn't possible. That would very likely be in the category of the many, many things which weren't written down?-- Yeah, well that - that request certainly didn't - didn't come to me, so-----

40

So you're just not aware of it?-- I'm not aware of it, I don't know how the request was made and I don't know why the response, if any, was as it's suggested.

50

What should the response have been?-- Look, quite clearly, on taking into that storm and tempest view of responsibility here, I think that it would be pertinent that council does develop a means of putting out that information because it certainly is important, particularly psychologically, to people that have been affected by this type of disaster.

Well, in a meeting of the LDMG on the 8th of March, sometime

after the events, the minutes from the 12th of January to the 14th of February were accepted and there was a special resolution that it should be noted that the existing Disaster Management Plan has proven its worth during the disaster flood events of December 2010 and January 2011. You were chair of that meeting so, presumably, you - or that motion was carried. Presumably, you supported it?-- Yes, I think I did. 1

Can you just tell us how you feel the existing Disaster Management Plan had proven its worth during the flood events of January 2011?-- Well, I think, you know, when you actually read through the plan, given the enormity of the task that was put in front of us and, as was suggested yesterday, when most of these plans have been developed they certainly - it isn't intended that they deal with a disaster of the nature of this one, probably one of the most significant Queensland has ever seen. And given that fact, I think I - we would have to accept that, you know, the plan wouldn't fulfil every possible nook and cranny that it is supposed to attend because of the enormity of the task. However, given the fact of how it proceeded, I think, you know, there are a number of people involved with our committee that are of the feeling that the plan did, given the size of the disaster and the resources that we had available, did perform reasonably well. 10 20

How exactly though?-- I guess that when you go right through the - what we are supposed to do, there are many of the tasks and many of the things that are put in front of us that we're supposed to attend to that were attended to, not - even if it weren't to the fullest of the level of attention that would have been required. 30

Accepting that many tasks were attended to and that everyone rose to the occasion, what was it about the plan that performed well?-- I think it was - the plan was actually, you know, quite simple and I think it was quite easy for people to work with it and I - I know our coordinator, for example, found it quite - quite easy to use. And at a time of disaster like this, when it's extreme, you need something that is in that - that vein and is workable. 40

I'm just really after a practical example, I suppose, from your perspective as chair of the LDMG?-- Right.

And understanding that the LDCC and everyone else had their own responsibilities. But from your perspective as chair of the LDMG, what was it about the plan, specifically, that worked well?-- Well, I think the way that the - the plan - first of all, the people that were on the LDMG, I think the representatives on there were good across the agencies involved. I think the way that they came together, the way they communicated informally was - and networked was tremendous and that the combined response that came out of their upholding their various parts of the plan to return to the necessities of life was very good. 50

So the informal networking aspect of the-----?-- Or the - and the plan brings those people together in the meeting process

and, you know, when you have a look at some of these minutes that we've been discussing, the number of agencies that were there, the amount of attendance that they had and some of the tasks that they completed, they were quite - quite large tasks.

1

Can I can you about, specifically, the attendance of the EMQ representatives at the LDMG. Who were they?-- Generally, David Fraser attends to us. Bob Bundy has been at some of the meetings at times.

10

But Mr Fraser wasn't there between the 10th and the 14th, was he?-- The minutes would reflect-----

Well, they reflect that he certainly wasn't there on the 12th or 13th?-- Yes.

Nor the 14th?-- And I guess - I guess in commenting, it's an EMQ issue probably more than mine but there were so many disasters occurring across such a wide range of places at the one time.

20

Don't get me wrong, people from EMQ were there?-- Mmm.

I'd suggest there was a Libby Davis?-- Yes.

And Michelle French?-- Yes.

Were attending on behalf of EMQ?-- Michelle was-----

30

So it is not criticism of Mr Fraser not being there, but there were others there. I'm just interested in your perspective of the contribution made by those two people who I have just mentioned?-- Oh, look, they were - well, in fact, all the EMQ people were most supportive and, you know, we've always had a very good arrangement with them where they assist us with information, they try and help us with things and guide us with things and I found it quite good.

What did they actually do? I'm focussing on that period between the 10th and the 14th?-- Certainly provided advice at our meetings. They provided various types of support of information that we required. They certainly assisted in that process - some of those processes like the helicopters. They were very good in providing advice as to things that we need to do.

40

Can you give me an example?-- Just offhand - I know Michelle French, for example, did give us advice with regard to documentation in some of the meetings. I know that she assisted us in gaining information as well.

50

What do you mean advice as to documentation?-- Oh, as to how we could get information or how we could pass information back into government circles, and I can't remember the specific topics.

How to fill out forms?-- Basically, and - and processes of

forms that, you know, we needed to fill in at various times. 1

Well, you're aware that there are a number of - well, there is a number of specific concerns that have been raised by the residents of Murphys Creek?-- Yes.

Can you explain for us or can you relate to us the state of your knowledge about what was happening at Murphys Creek from the 10th onwards, and I don't - just an abbreviated version is all we require?-- Right. Okay. On the day of the 10th I had very little knowledge of what had happened and I'm talking - I'm speaking now from my knowledge at the time. 10

That's all I'm asking-----?-- Yes. I know on the council's position or our understanding as a committee of what happened in Murphys Creek was very limited until after the group of people went in, I think it was in the Emergency Management helicopter, on the morning or - or the 11th and they reported back to council at 7.30 a.m. on the 12th, which was the Wednesday. That was the first information that we actually gained. Now, I would be remiss if I didn't make mention of the fact that that was a concern to us because I have since heard that a fire crew did attend the Murphys Creek Tavern coming down from Toowoomba on the night of the 10th. Now, to my knowledge, I have found no record of that information being passed on to our committee or our council. The first information that we had passed on other than - and I'm excluding Postmans Ridge from this because I was aware of it, a different circumstance. Murphys Creek proper, the first information that came to our attention, and it is in some documents here which you probably have copies of, was at 7.30 on the morning of the 12th. That was the Wednesday morning. We actually had meetings that day and we sent staff out on the 14th - on the 13th, which was the Thursday. Now, the same document will indicate to you that travel into Murphys Creek on the 11th by road was very difficult, hence the reason that they were taken - those people were taken in by helicopter, and the Warrego Highway remained closed until - the Gatton Bypass, the road that they needed to go back to Murphys Creek, remained closed until well into Wednesday the 12th. 20 30 40

That's true, but it does seem to have been open on the 12th. Is that right?-- It opened late on the 12th. And the morning of the 13th, our people went up there.

Was there any reason why they didn't go on the 12th?-- I believe it was - it was purely because of safety reasons. I know that when the - when the highway opened there was much debris and so forth had to be removed and there was still a lot of debris over the bridges and so forth on the way up there. The highway to Toowoomba was still closed. They couldn't go to Toowoomba and come down round Ballard because the Range was closed. 50

I saw in one document, in one minuted meeting that there was transport provided to the Coroner on the 12th. Is that to Murphys Creek?-- I'm not aware of that. It could be.

Not aware of any transport?-- It could have been or it could have been by some special vehicle or there could have been a circumstance where material was pushed off a bridge to make way. But, certainly, I know I traversed those roads on the 12th and the 13th and there was still much debris and it was important that staff be kept in a safe position to do that.

1

It could, of course, be accessed from Toowoomba, couldn't it?-- Down through Ballard but, unfortunately, our people could not travel to Toowoomba because the Range remained closed.

10

No, but wasn't this a case where the District Disaster Coordinator could have been engaged and asked to get someone down there from Toowoomba?-- Well, the police were already down there and they were down there on the 11th. In fact, I think there was an officer stationed there from that time and-----

Well, the police were, yes, but the needs obviously extended wider than the police. The needs obviously extended to all aspects of disaster management?-- I'm - I'm unaware of what formal requests came back for further information and further resourcing into Murphys Creek. I don't know what - I'd have to check with our coordinator as to if there were any requests. I'm not sure if there were. I know that our people went there on the morning of the Thursday the 13th. I actually went there on the 14th. In one of these documents it says that I didn't go there till the 21st. Myself and Councillor Holstein were there on the 14th.

20

30

Yes, but the concern and this relates to the whole disaster management modelling, the District Disaster Coordinator relies on information coming up from the local level. That's correct, isn't it?-- That's correct.

Here was a situation where the District Disaster Coordinator actually was in a position from Toowoomba to get assistance to Murphys Creek?-- That's correct.

40

But that didn't - no request was made from the local level for him to do that and it is a bit much to ask the people of Murphys Creek to do that if their communications are out. Isn't that a situation where the local government really has to be proactive and-----?-- Most - most definitely, if they had been informed. But as I said, it is in my opinion, according to the information that I've got, that our local group wasn't informed until roughly 7.30 or 6.30 on the morning of the 12th.

50

No, I understand that. I understand that, but you obviously had a situation where there was a widespread disaster covering, you know, every part of your region?-- Mmm-hmm.

Here was a part of your region that you hadn't really heard from and didn't it become necessary then for you to make some proactive inquiries about what was happening in Murphys Creek?-- Which is I'm sure what we did and that's why

on the morning of the 12th we received that information. Also, we did have helicopters engaged as I mentioned to you, I couldn't give you the dates and times of those but we did, to have inspections over the shire in total. Now, during that time I know that evidence was found of infrastructure damaged in many places. However, obviously Murphys Creek is a different situation. It's not as densely populated as some of the other areas and I know that that information was back to us also on the 12th. But on the 10th, the Monday the 10th, it would have been too late and too dark to do anything. It was only the 11th and the information was to us on the 12th.

As you say, you went there on the Friday; is that correct?-- On the 14th.

But once there and once the situation was assessed and, in particular, once the communication difficulties were realised-----?-- Mmm-hmm.

-----with the lack of mobile coverage and so on, surely there was a need then to send someone to stay there as a point of communication between people in Murphys Creek and the rest of the shire?-- Well, our - our coordinator was making those arrangements. I know at a later time we did have someone stationed there.

The 21st I think it happened?-- Yes. We did have staff going up and back, to and from Murphys Creek from the day that those girls went up on the Thursday. So there may not have been anyone stationed there but they were going backwards and forwards. I also contacted a former councillor of ours Cam McDonald. I spoke to Cam, who had extensive in the bush, a four-wheel drive, and I asked Cam could he keep an eye on things up there and communicate back with us, which he did for some weeks.

That's, again, just an informal arrangement?-- And he was there most of the day for weeks on end.

Did the community know, though, that he was their point of contact with you, with the LDMG?-- Well, he was certainly stationed at the hotel where people were gathering. We were relying on - or I was relying on our staff to come to and from and also relying on the other emergency services and the likes who were coming backwards and forwards from our committee meetings.

Well, look, can I just wrap this up, perhaps, by suggesting to you that what you did on the 21st of stationing someone there-----?-- Mmm-hmm.

-----permanently was obviously a very sensible thing to do?-- Yes.

That again, with the benefit of hindsight perhaps, it would have been much better if someone had been there from the 14th in that role?-- I agree with that. I agree with that. I think that's a good idea. There was a special circumstance in

this case. The two officers that went up on the Thursday, one - both females, one was an environmental health officer, they were quite aggressively dealt with by one particular gentleman and we didn't want them to be there on a permanent basis. We were obviously very short of staff. I can understand why they were in the circumstances they were in, these people were psychologically quite upset, but obviously we need to be caring for our staff as well. And if in hindsight we had someone who was able to handle it available earlier, I think that would most certainly be the way to go.

1

10

Again, isn't that something that could have been done through the disaster management arrangement? Isn't that a request that could have been made to the DDC, you know, "We have a hostile population here, for understandable reasons. We don't have the staff. Send someone down to be a our point of contact"-- Of course it could, and I think you make a very valid point. However, I think it is also important that we had a specific council person there who could - who up understood the workings of council and could communicate back into our systems to allow things to happen and I think that - that is a problem.

20

There just wasn't someone available?-- We've only - we have a total staff of a little over 300 people. It was at holiday time. Many of those people came back in to assist the community and, obviously, we had people doing all sorts of tasks that they weren't necessarily designed do to try and help out and we certainly didn't want to make life any more difficulty for them than we had to.

30

No doubt many had their own issues and difficulties?-- Many couldn't get out. Many of our staff couldn't actually come to work.

As we know, the hotel became, in effect, the evacuation centre, the shelter, whatever you want to call it. It never had official status in that regard?-- No.

What was the official position as regards an evacuation centre or shelter for the people of Murphys Creek?-- Well, the feeling of the community was that they would have preferred an arrangement where people were all evacuated to one large centre where things could have been provided in a more efficient circumstance and victims could be - or people could be identified with those who with missing much easier. The problem with Murphys Creek of course is the topography made it difficult for a lot of those people to travel into the bigger centre and, as was mentioned yesterday, a lot of people wouldn't want to leave the area where they lived in. Now, the circumstance which does concern me with Murphys Creek and the identification of an evacuation centre will, I believe, soon be overcome because there is soon to be a sizeable community hall built on a site that didn't go under water. In this case the hotel itself was in fact flooded, had water through it, and that is a concern, I guess, with having people in an evacuation centre which in fact itself was affected by water.

40

50

The alternative was the school though, wasn't it?-- That's right. That is another alternative.

1

Isn't that what council would have or the LDMG would have preferred, wasn't that the suggestion?-- Look, that suggestion was made numerous times. However, there was some strong feeling from people in Murphys Creek that they felt psychologically more comfortable in the position that they were in and for that reason the issue wasn't pushed.

10

Well, the school was affected by water too, wasn't it?-- In parts, yes.

I suppose the question has to be asked is that given that they were left, you know, to their own devices for a period of days there and took the initiative, used the hotel in the way that they were using it, wouldn't it have been sensible to build on what they'd already done and give it some official status and support?-- Well, the feeling of that, you know, I certainly didn't have a problem with that. I know that we had some discussion with that at the committee level and I know that the coordinator at the time felt that it was best to be dealt with in the way that it was. Now, in hindsight, whether that was correct, I'm - I wouldn't be altogether sure.

20

I suppose the other point being, from looking forward, is that you want to encourage people to take initiative in these sorts of situations, don't you?-- Oh, most definitely.

You want to encourage volunteers, you want to encourage people who make services and facilities available. You would agree with that?-- Oh, most definitely. I guess the other issue that comes into it as well, wherever you develop an evacuation centre and the evacuation centre is for some time, many days or weeks, it's important that that centre has the basic facilities in terms of showers, that the toilet system can handle the numbers, et cetera. So in the future, that's one thing that I think needs to be very importantly considered. And I think it is also preferable where you have an evacuation centre, if possible that you can have them on council or public land so that there aren't liability issues, et cetera.

30

40

Accepting all of that, as you said earlier, I think, when we were talking about evacuation centres, sometimes you're just going to have to - in effect, you said sometimes you're just going to have to make do with what's available?-- And hence the reason why I favour collection points for people to come together and very well-established evacuation points with all the facilities.

50

In a perfect world that's the way it's going to be done but we're necessarily, when we're talking about disasters, talking about an imperfect world. Coming back specifically to the question of the hotel at Murphys Creek, isn't it - well, there was never any - you raised questions of liability, for example?-- That's right.

Which was and perhaps remain an issue for those who are

running the hotel. Would it not be appropriate in those circumstances where, as I say, they've been left to their own devices for a while, they've got what they've got going, it seems to be doing the job, isn't it appropriate in those circumstances for those in charge of disaster management to in effect support, indemnify, provide to those who have been giving those services?-- I guess once again, though, in the bigger picture, it has to be viewed whether that facility can handle adequately the job.

1

Well, it was doing - I'm not talking about using that facility in the future. I'm talking about the principle of encouraging volunteers, and here is someone who is - or people who are making themselves available. There was no choice because the local government wasn't helping them at that point. They'd done what they'd done. Isn't it right that they should be indemnified, compensated for what they've done?-- Oh, most definitely. I don't disagree with that. I think that's correct. I think it is simply a case of making sure that things are done in the correct way.

10

20

In future?-- In the future.

Yes?-- And likewise, I would just like to make comment there that a similar thing happened in Forest Hill where the town was flooded.

Yes?-- Not with the devastation. A decision was made there that the evacuation centre be in Gatton where all the facilities were provided. The town was evacuated by air. Now, that did have its pitfalls of course as well, but had the thing continued for some days or weeks, all the systems and all the physical things at Gatton would have handled it where they wouldn't have in a temporary situation in Forest Hill. So there's always that option as well.

30

In the absence of any community liaison officer provided by the LDMG or the local government, people like Mr Peter Souter in effect filled that role?-- That's right.

40

You're aware of that. It was left to someone like him to coordinate volunteers and that sort of thing. That really is a role that local government or that the LDMG should have been performing, isn't it?-- Oh, it would have been far better if they were able to do that, yes.

Again, do you just put that down to the fact that there wasn't anyone available?-- Look, I think it was a combination of circumstances, access to the area, people that were available and numerous other things, plus the fact that we had disasters in almost every town and village that we've got. And, in fact, if this were just to be in Murphys Creek, I am sure that we could handle it a whole lot better than we could if we didn't have every town and village in the shire affected.

50

You're aware also that one matter of concern that's been expressed by a number of people from Murphys Creek and elsewhere is the manner in which creeks and river ways or

waterways have been left uncleared?-- That's correct.

1

Do you have a comment on that?-- Yes. I'm most concerned about the fact that they have been left uncleared. It is an issue that I have personally lobbied on since the floods and I am still concerned. And I say that very definitely in that if you go down to Helidon and you have a look at the amount of material that's in the creek there, logs 50 foot long and the like, they - a minor event, they wash down and they get against the uprights of a bridge, we have a decent flow and the bridge is gone. It is the greatest protection of infrastructure we could have to remove that material. We have had numerous discussions to try and obtain money to do this. It is an expensive task. We - to date, we are involved in a project with the Green Army and through the catchments group with Simon Warner. They are trying to clean up the creek. However, the removal of the large material from the creek is a major problem, a major problem for infrastructure and it is very difficult to get anyone to recognise how difficult it is.

10

20

All right.

COMMISSIONER: Whom have you been lobbying and whom do you expect to get assistance from?-- I have spoken to everyone from the Premier down. I spoke to the Premier at the park at Helidon. I have spoken to people across the board. It is a really simple job. Any bushman would have a look at the creek and he would know that you have to take that large material out which could cause problems to infrastructure, take it out on the bank and dispose of it. It is a simple job to do it. We've got all sorts of suggestions how it might be done and how it might not be done but it costs money. I have had it come back to council that council is able to do it, we've been given permission to do some of this stuff, but it costs money.

30

40

50

And you need sizable excavators and dozers and do it properly and not muck around. And if isn't done, I'm sure down the track we as a community will all suffer.

1

So you're saying, essentially, that you can't afford to do it?-- It's a very expensive job. We've got over \$200 million worth of infrastructure damage ourselves at the council, Commissioner, and of course, you know, there's a limit to how much money we can expend. And I guess my concern is not so much for council infrastructure. Yes, if this were to happen what I said, we may lose the odd culvert or whatever. But the infrastructure really endangers the State infrastructure on the main roads, and also there is an issue with regards to silt and so forth moving into Moreton Bay. You've got these large logs, a bit of a flow, and they go down and they literally take out kilometres of bank. It's a serious issue and it's something I'm most concerned about.

10

MR CALLAGHAN: So long as we're talking about council budget and how little you have, I want to ask you about the relationship between local government and the SES?-- Yes.

20

Because we know certainly in some regions the local government seems to provide significant support to the SES. Is that the case in the Lockyer Valley?-- We certainly do in terms of their physical requirements.

You'd better explain that?-- Okay in terms of their vehicles, you know, some of their needs - their physical needs, disposables and that all that sort of thing.

30

Do you provide them with vehicles?-- The vehicles are council vehicles. They are council vehicles. We have assisted them to get special vehicles at times. We have provided them with a significant - we do provide them with a significant financial contribution over a twelve-month period. I guess the one issue - the one thing that we don't at this stage provide - some other western councils may - they actually provide financial incentive to some of the individuals to get greater membership. To date we haven't done that. We'll now be considering it because we need to increase membership.

40

That was my next question, obviously, is as to your perception as to the level of membership - and again this seems to be a State-wide issue, particularly in rural areas. Dwindling numbers of volunteers, is that something that you've been aware of?-- We are aware of it. It's a very serious problem, and it's a bit of a double-edged sword. Because as we move forward, the requirement for training, et cetera, is always being increased by issues of liability. What that's done is it's made it unattractive for many people who may in fact wish to be members. If I can give a simple example of the rural fire service. The ideal circumstance is to have young blokes perhaps 25, 30 years old with multiple skills that you can use in that service. What's happened is it's become unattractive to those people because they don't want to go and spend every second weekend training. They don't want all the liabilities and so forth. If it was a simplistic issue, they'd deal with

50

it. I don't know how we move forward on it, but there needs to be something seriously done because the numbers are dwindling. At the same time, the people that are there, many of them are in that stage of their life where they haven't got the physical capabilities that these young people could provide.

1

Just on the question of the rural fire service, their building was washed away, in effect; is that right?-- Very much destroyed. Vehicles put through the wall, et cetera.

10

The suggestion has been, I think, that it's going to be rebuilt in the same spot. Is that your understanding?-- I guess that's a Fire Service issue more so than mine. I haven't actually seen anything official about how that is being constructed or where it's being constructed. But that would be a fire service issue, because obviously these things started off as very much voluntary type locally-controlled organisations, and they are now much more under the control of the State.

20

There will be a local government dimension to it in some ways though; there would be a question of approval?-- Not on State land. If it was on State land - if it was a State building on State land, it would probably be exempt from local government approval.

I follow. Do you know whether that's the case?-- The land that it sits on at the moment I would only be guessing, but I would say it would be road reserve and thereof the property of the Crown. And obviously the building and vehicles within the building now belong to the fire service, so therefore they would be exempt.

30

That's one dimension which may not be relevant, but the other is just your general interest in supporting a group like that in your region and doing what you could to re-establish it. Do you have a view in that regard?-- Look, the rural fire service and the volunteers that are involved in it have done a tremendous job in our area. We've had two major fires in the last decade. What they have done is fantastic. That was all based on voluntary contributions over many years. It's now moved to a different State-type format, and we would certainly be willing to do whatever we can to assist that and we would want it done in the best way for the local people. Because I think it's really important we remember when these things were built they were put there by contributions of community, not by State.

40

Just out of interest, do you know which councils do provide financial incentive to SES volunteers?-- Look, I think Western Downs may be one. Now that it's an amalgamated council, I'm not sure what the arrangement was. At one time I was quite confident in that area around Tara there were people that were in the SES, I think they may have been actual actually been council employees.

50

Are you aware whether there's any comparable incentive offered

to volunteers with the rural fire service?-- I'm not sure whether that occurred in the same area. It may well have, because the problem in a lot of these smaller rural communities, you've got the same people that are in a number of services. So when you actually have a catastrophe, they are required on a number of fronts.

1

It's clearly something we have to look at. Just in conclusion, Mr Jones, this Commission is very much forward focused and looking at what can be improved, and this is an opportunity for you, I suppose, to reflect upon how the situation might be improved such that some of the problems encountered in January aren't encountered again. Do you have a suggestion or suggestions as to what should happen now in terms of disaster management specifically?-- Look, I think we're really at the crossroads. There needs to be a very much a major rethink of lots of things that have happened, and I think it's really, really important that we take on board particularly the local aspects of that and make sure that whatever we move forward with is adaptable enough to handle a majority of circumstances. I think it's also very important we think outside the square in regard to the size of the event, because in the past we're very much geared up to much lesser events than this one.

10

20

You'd agree, I'm sure, that having local disaster management groups and local authorities comply with the Act and the guidelines would be a good start?-- Yes.

That's all I have.

30

COMMISSIONER: Do you want to take the morning break now?

MR CALLAGHAN: It might be sensible.

COMMISSIONER: Fifteen minutes.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 11.36 A.M.

40

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 11.52 A.M.

STEVEN JOHN JONES, CONTINUING:

50

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod, did you have any questions?

MS McLEOD: No, your Honour.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: No, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Gibson?

MR GIBSON: Mr Jones, you were asked some questions concerning the disaster management plan, and your attention was drawn to the document Exhibit 158 which is dated 6 January 2011. Do you have a copy of that with you?-- I do, yes.

10

You explained the process whereby a flying minute was distributed and then ultimately the document was ratified by a later council meeting in February. In terms of the use of a flying minute, was there anything extraordinary or perhaps even unusual about that procedure being adopted?-- Not at all. It's quite common.

20

The document itself had been the subject of discussion at council level prior to 6 January, had it not?-- Most definitely.

It had passed through various draft stages throughout particularly the second half of 2010, had it not?-- That's correct.

And indeed, prior to the adoption of that plan dated 6 January, there was a disaster management plan dated September 2009 which was adopted following the amalgamation of the Gatton and Laidley Shire councils; is that correct?-- I believe that is correct. I didn't - when I was asked that before I didn't have the dates, and as such I wouldn't like to comment unless I've got the facts.

30

Yes. Do you understand that a copy of the September 2009 Lockyer Valley Local Disaster Management Plan was provided to Commission staff?-- Look, I may have been told that. I couldn't recall that, otherwise I would have mentioned it before.

40

Yes. Perhaps, Commissioner, counsel assisting might be kind enough to produce copies of the disaster management plan dated September 2009.

MR CALLAGHAN: We might need a while to dig that up.

MR GIBSON: While it's coming. We have one copy and one copy only, I'm afraid. Would you look at this document, please, Mr Jones. Could you glance at that document sufficiently to enable you to confirm that that is a copy of the disaster management plan for Lockyer Valley dated September 2009?-- Yes, that is correct. That is correct. As I've said before, I didn't have those dates, and I wasn't prepared to say yes unless I had those dates. But that is the document for the amalgamated council.

50

Thank you. I tender that September 2009 Lockyer Valley Local Disaster Management Plan.

1

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 167.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 167"

10

MR CALLAGHAN: Could I just see the copy the witness has, please? Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Gibson.

MR GIBSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

Mr Jones, your attention was directed also to observations made by Mr Fisher in his report dated 14 September 2010 which was presented to a meeting of 23 September. You commented in relation to that that there had been many discussions and meetings, albeit although not formally documented, in relation to preparations for disaster planning?-- That's correct.

20

This issue was also discussed in the record of interview that was conducted with Commission staff on 7 April 2011, was it not?-- Yes.

Do you have a copy of the record of interview with you?-- Yes, I do.

30

That is Exhibit 161.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Gibson, do you mind if I just check where the Exhibit 167 is, the physical document, so that we don't lose it? I think Mr Jones may still have it.

MR GIBSON: Yes, certainly.

40

COMMISSIONER: We'll just retrieve it. Thanks.

MR GIBSON: Now if you could turn that document, Exhibit 161, up to page 10, please. At about line 42 reference is made to Mr Fisher as the author of the document which is referred to at about line 37, 38?-- Yes.

Do you see? And you explain the situation in the following pages. Could I particularly draw your attention to page 11 from about line 37 on?-- Yes.

50

That explains further a point that you made in response to one or more questions from counsel assisting this morning?-- That's correct.

And then over the page - line 47 at page 11 you continued with your answer to page 12, and you said, "We weren't anywhere near as conscious in those times as we are now, because in my

attendance at that conference at Home Hill I got a better understanding of where the new legislation was heading, what the requirements were, what the changes were in Emergency Management Queensland." Do you see that?-- Yes.

1

Approximately when was that meeting - that conference, rather, at Home Hill?-- I believe it was end of May early June, that period, 2010.

2010. And then you go on to refer to budgetary and staffing matters in the next couple of paragraphs. You return to the topic at about line 38 on page 12, where you point out that at the conference it was explained as to how things were changing and how the council would need to take more of a hands-on role and you say that as a result, we decided that we would have a different focus, and you continue to say, you will see, that we were initiating all sorts of actions?-- That's correct.

10

They were the matters dealt with at the top of page 13. Then finally in this immediate context at the foot of page 13 at about line 46 you say that there have been all sorts of informal meetings, discussions, as you outlined earlier, and a continual process in a council like ours because it's a relatively small council. In terms of council size, you mentioned about 300 employees, of that order?-- That's correct, yes.

20

Is it the case that there are seven councillors including yourself?-- Seven councillors including myself.

30

Yes. And in terms of key management staff, there is the council engineer?-- That's correct.

Chief executive officer?-- That's right.

And how many other key council staff are engaged in - or have been engaged in the discussions to which you've referred?-- Look, there's another - there are another five directors of departments, and many those would have been involved - not in all discussions, but some of the discussions - and a number of managers throughout the department.

40

When you say, as you did at page 14 of the transcript of this record of interview at about lines 1 and 2, that this was a relatively small council and it was a continual process, was that - were those the sort of numbers to which you were referring?-- Well, they were the sort of numbers that I was referring to. In fact, probably in the past referring to less than 300 employees, because in recent times with new legislative requirements that has increased substantially. So in years gone by, there would have been significantly less employees.

50

Yes. Then the point was made by way of question at line 4 that it's informal, so there's not meetings called and there aren't minutes of those meetings, to which you agreed by answering "no". And then by way of description of the informal process to which you've referred, you commented

further at page 14 at line 10. You explain that the relevant manager or officer would discuss matters with you and the CEO, et cetera?-- That's correct.

1

Just read that paragraph to yourself for a moment. Your attention was directed by counsel assisting to what was said to be a lack of formal documentation of such meetings and preparation and planning. Perhaps in hindsight and in retrospect is it the position that in terms of the future, going forward, there's a lesson to be learned in terms of recording of discussions and meetings so as to keep a record to which reference can be made by others at a later date?-- I think that would be a positive thing. Because when you relate it to that paragraph you just brought up, there was some issues there, for example, that may well not be recorded, and that could be quite showing initiative in terms of this.

10

However, what do you say to the suggestion, implied if not expressed, that the absence of documentation reflect an absence or a lack of any activity with respect to the subject. This is before the occurrence of the events of December - 2010, January 2011?-- I don't think - I don't personally believe the absence of any documentation indicates an absence of work on the topic.

20

Now, in terms of communications between - not simply within officers of the council - I'm sorry, I put that very poorly - among officers of council and between yourself and councillors and council officers, the question of communication between those officers and other agencies was also dealt with in the course of the interview, was it not?-- Yes.

30

Could I take you back to page 10 of the transcript. Indeed, perhaps at page 9 at about line 26. You were directed to an issue and to a comment that had been made to the effect that since amalgamation, this is now line 31, and especially in the last 18 months, considerable work has been undertaken by the council in disaster planning, a matter which you had addressed in your statement which was prepared for the Commission and which is Exhibit 166?-- Yes.

40

50

And you referred to the course at Home Hill and also to involvement in Exercise Orko. You say at the top of page 10 that the deputy mayor attended a similar conference to the one. That you attended at Home Hill?-- That's right

1

Then at about line 16 you comment that, "Considerable work has been done post-amalgamation on bringing the management plan together"?-- That's right.

Could I ask you, please, to read the paragraph at page 10 commencing at about line 22. It refers to a lot of work, albeit of an informal nature, including what you describe there as constant communication between the fire brigade, the police and SES. In other words, other agencies involved in disaster planning and management. Does that paragraph accurately summarise the position with respect to those matters?-- I believe it does.

10

Now, in the course of questioning this morning, council assisting suggested to you that there had been no further written material apart from those documents which have been tendered indicating that council had done anything in relation to disaster management and planning since June of 2010. Do you recall that proposition?-- I recall that, yes.

20

Have you had your attention directed to material that was provided to the Commission staff consisting of some hundreds of pages of documents which address steps that were taken by the council since June 2010 in relation to different aspects of disaster planning and management?-- Yes.

30

Now, I invite counsel assisting to produce for our assistance, Commissioner, the bundles of material which have been the subject of discussion during the break. In the absence of any response, the best I can do-----

COMMISSIONER: You might have to wait for the response, Mr Gibson, but you might tell me in the interim what you are describing.

40

MR GIBSON: Yes. Bundles of documents headed "General Flood Planning to December 2010", being one bundle. A second bundle entitled "Flood Planning in December 2010" which includes a list of the steps that were taken during that period and a description of the document in respect of each such step, and behind that cover sheet is a copy of the documents in question.

COMMISSIONER: And you say these were provided to the Commission?

50

MR GIBSON: Yes.

MR CALLAGHAN: I'm told we may have them electronically but I am not in a position to produce the document but I understand copies are-----

MR GIBSON: Commissioner, I accept that course.

COMMISSIONER: I imagine this is an oversight, Mr Gibson. I don't think that Mr Callaghan would have set out to trick Councillor Jones.

MR GIBSON: I am not suggesting anything to the contrary, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: But anyway, you have them there.

MR GIBSON: We do but, unfortunately, because of the circumstances we find ourselves in, they are not going to be presented in an efficient way. Perhaps a couple of folders could be located.

COMMISSIONER: Well, do you want me to give them exhibit numbers now and over the lunch break we will try and tidy them up?

MR GIBSON: Actually, we will create a folder immediately.

COMMISSIONER: So they were two distinct documents. One was planning to December 2010?

MR GIBSON: Yes, Commissioner, two bundles. One entitled "General Flood Planning Prior to December 2010" and the second entitled "Flood Planning in December 2010".

COMMISSIONER: They'll be respectively 168 and 169.

MR GIBSON: Thank you.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBITS 168 AND 169 RESPECTIVELY"

MR GIBSON: Mr Jones, would you look at this document, please. Would you turn up the first page, which is entitled "General Flood Planning Prior to December 2010"?-- Yes, I have got it.

And that lists a number of steps taken from the 10th of June through till to the 25th of November 2010, does it not?-- It does.

Mr Jones, it includes the preparation of a Gatton Flood Study and meeting with consultants?-- That's right.

Relevant to the Disaster Management Plan, could I direct your attention, as we don't have multiple copies of this document, to an entry dated the 15th of July 2010 which identifies a meeting with EMQ concerning the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Disaster Management Plan?-- That's correct, yes.

Were there further such meetings on the 6th of August 2010, albeit specifically with respect to bushfires?-- Yes.

A meeting of the 23rd of September 2010, that's a meeting of the LDMG, with respect to the adoption of the Disaster Management Plan by the LDMG?-- Yes, that's correct.

1

A further meeting on the 26th of October 2010?-- Yes.

Concerning the updated Disaster Management Plan?-- Yes, that's right.

And, of course, that's the document or that's the steps that culminated in the 6th of January document?-- That's right.

10

In addition to those matters there was in July of 2010 a meeting with GHD, they're consultants, concerning natural disaster mitigation program?-- That's correct.

There are references to presentations by the police service and the EMQ with respect to proposed changes to the Queensland disaster management arrangements?-- That's right.

20

The council, through its officers and staff, were involved in the Exercise Orko?-- Yes, it was, for some days.

Preparations for that exercise commenced, as we see from this document, on the 2nd of September 2010?-- That's right.

On the 22nd of September 2010 there was a report to the council on the disaster management Exercise Orko?-- That's correct.

30

There was a further preparation meeting for that exercise on the 22nd of October?-- Yes.

And the exercise itself took place in early November?-- That's correct.

All of these matters are documented in this material, are they not?-- They are.

Now, could I ask you to turn behind the red divider in the volume you have to another sheet entitled "Flood Planning in December 2010". Do you have that before you?-- Yes, I have got that.

40

On the 7th of December reference is made to attendance at an SEQ flood planning workshop?-- Yes.

On the 14th of December, disaster management discussions?-- Yes.

50

On the 22nd of December, an e-mail to the District Disaster Coordinator advising of preparation works in the event of a disaster over the Christmas period?-- That's right.

There is further references to meetings on the 23rd of December. Was that in fact in consequence of inclement weather conditions during that period?-- That's right, in anticipation of what could be ahead.

On the 24th of December there was an executive meeting regarding protocols in the event of a disaster over Christmas?-- That's right.

Similarly, there was e-mail advice provided to yourself, councillors and key staff regarding emergencies over the Christmas break?-- That's correct.

On the 24th of December, the availability of the Gatton Shire hall was addressed should it be required for evacuations over the Christmas period?-- That's right.

10

And on the 5th of January there was a District Disaster Management Group debrief report?-- That's right.

Again, all of those matters are documented in the material behind that tab, are they not?-- They are.

Thank you. The debrief on the 5th of January - now, that document should perhaps be provided do the Commission's associate, thank you. Exhibit 163 is a running log or running sheet with respect to the Local Disaster Management Group. I think you may have a copy of that in a folder in front of you. It's a bundle of such entries. Its first page is headed "December 2010/January 2011 Flood Event". This is a reference to the District Disaster Management Group and council debrief meeting of the 5th of January, is it not?-- That's correct.

20

It is a reference to the same meeting as that to which we last referred in the previous document?-- Right.

30

That meeting was attended by Detective Inspector Schafferius in his capacity as DDC?-- That's correct.

And also by numerous representatives from the council including yourself and Mr Fraser of the EMQ?-- That's correct.

And there had of course been bad weather conditions throughout the period December through to early January?-- That's right.

40

And the purpose of this meeting was to analyse and better consider what had worked well and what required improvement?-- That's correct.

The observations it appears from about halfway down the page under the heading "Discussion" was that, overall, it appears it had worked well because the first dot point is, "Overall good"?-- That's correct.

50

Of course, the circumstances which confronted council and other agencies during the period December 2010 to early January 2011 were of quite a different order and magnitude to those which unfolded only some days after this meeting?-- That's right.

Now, just returning briefly to the Disaster Management Plan, the one of the 6th of January, Exhibit 158, to put some

matters into context - do you have that in front of you?--
Yes.

1

Thank you. The document contains some information under the heading "Community Context" at page 21, if you can turn to that, please. It there notes that the local government area is about 2,000 square kilometres. Is that approximately correct?-- That would be close to correct, yes.

There are some figures here towards the foot of the page and over the page with respect to population. Do they remain accurate or is it evident to you that they're the product of an earlier census, perhaps in 2006?-- I believe they would be from the previous census and I would anticipate the population is about now 37,000, 38,000.

10

About 37 or 38,000 people in that area. The population of Gatton currently would approximate how many?-- Oh, probably about 8,000.

20

And Laidley?-- About six and a half.

Murphys Creek, including surrounding areas, and that would include, I take it, Postmans Ridge, approximately what population-----?-- If you included Postmans Ridge and - and the full area around Murphys Creek, possibly up to 1500, possibly 600 in the township.

And finally, relevantly to this Commission's Inquiry, the population of Grantham?-- The population of Grantham would be in the hundreds, probably five to 600.

30

Thank you. If you turn now briefly to page 55 of that document, there is a map of the council's area. Looking at east-west, it appears that - does it commence its eastern boundary around the Minden area, just west of Marburg?-- Just west of the Minden Range.

Just west of the Minden Range?-- This side, yeah.

40

And it extends further to the west than Withcott but not as far west as Toowoomba of course?-- About halfway up the escarpment.

Approximately what distance is it by road in an east-west direction?-- Approximately, say, about 70 kilometres.

And in terms of the north-south access, is it more difficult to be accurate because of topographical features with mountain ranges and such like?-- Look, it may well be north-south that at its extremity something like 100 kilometres. In other areas it may be down to 50 or 60, or less.

50

It appears that, broadly speaking, Gatton is about halfway between the eastern and western boundaries of the region?-- Gatton would be about central to the higher - more highly populated areas. The areas to the south where I said the - it could extend from north to south up to 100-odd kilometres

isn't populated to the same degree as the rest of the shire.

1

Does its physical location and perhaps its topographical attributes, are those matters of significance in terms of your observations about the Gatton hall being an appropriate, indeed, the best evacuation centre in your opinion?-- Most definitely. All those factors contribute to that conclusion, and obviously the distances that you have mentioned are consistent with distances to evacuation centres in other localities or other local authority areas.

10

Now, can I draw your attention to some other aspects of this document for completeness. First, it identifies the membership of the Local Disaster Management Group, does it not?-- That's right.

At page 8 that membership is identified?-- Yes.

Apart from yourself, the Deputy Chair and the Local Disaster Coordinator, it appears that there are 10 members and 11 affiliates?-- That's correct.

20

Of the LDMG. And those members include, of course, council representatives but representatives from each of the other relevant agencies including, most obviously, SES, QPS, QAS and QFRS?-- That's correct.

It also includes other organisations associated with the utilities provision?-- That's correct.

30

Now, the status of affiliates is identified in the third-last paragraph on the page. That is, they may attend and participate but do not have voting rights. One sees that they cover a broad range of community organisations and other infrastructure providers?-- That's correct.

One of whom is the University of Queensland Gatton Campus?-- That's right.

The organisation to which you referred as being one with which you maintain close contact and provided bedding and other supplies for the Gatton Hall?-- That's - well, that's - that's the reason why that - that affiliate is actually involved in the committee because as I mentioned earlier today, we have had numerous circumstances where we have had to work with that organisation in emergencies before and for that reason that was included in the committee.

40

Yes. So if it be thought that the arrangement whereby you contacted or caused to be contacted the university at its Gatton Campus to provide this support for the Gatton Hall, lest it be thought that that was an ad hoc arrangement, a one-off, was that in fact the case?-- Well, the arrangement that was put in place was on the basis of the information that we have had - have had at our hand from previous - from previous examples of emergencies and of course now, as you quite rightly mentioned, our relationship through this committee with - with the university is quite clear and our

50

Director of Community Services was able to make contact there.
And I think, in fact, some of the information was provided to
the committee as to the availability of materials and
quantities of materials before that contact was made.

1

10

20

30

40

50

Following page 8, the page to which you referred in your evidence, at page 10 and following the roles and responsibilities of each of the primary organisations are further explained; Is that right?-- That's correct.

You took us to page 10, but could I start with, for example, page 16, which addresses the responsibilities of the SES in various disaster events?-- Yes.

10

We might include flood, storm and tempest and search and rescue as all being - as being all embraced by the events of January 2011. You were familiar with these responsibilities and division of responsibilities set out in the disaster management plan, at least in general terms if not specifically?-- In general terms.

Then if we turn back to page 11, there's the - similar breakdown of responsibilities for Queensland Police Service?-- Yes.

20

You drew attention to - again in the heading flood, storm and tempest, supply of Meteorology Bureau information to the local authority?-- Yes.

Rescue, evacuation, and security of evacuated premises?-- Correct.

In the case of storm and tempest, similarly supply of meteorological information, traffic control, crowd control, evacuation and rescue?-- Yes.

30

Under the heading search and rescue, control and coordination?-- That's correct.

Turn back to page 10. With respect to the council, we see again the identification of responsibilities. Looking at those, in fact in the events that occurred from 9 January onwards, did the council confine itself to the provision of - I'll call it the services and facilities identified under the headings flood, storm and tempest, search and rescue?-- Definitely not. There was a lot more - a lot further areas that council was involved in than just those issues that are mentioned. We actually provided backup and significant resources and et cetera to many other areas.

40

Now could I ask you some general questions in terms of community preparation, that is, steps taken by the council to assist the community with respect to disaster events generally. First, is it the case that for many years the council has maintained its own website?-- Yes.

50

And in response to the unfolding events of December 2010, was a decision made to include on that website an emergencies and natural disaster page?-- That's correct.

Was that page included on the website on Boxing Day 2010?-- That's correct.

And did it include details of telephone numbers, contact numbers and such like for different agencies?-- Yes.

Has the council also for some years taken out a page or purchased a page in the local newspaper the Gatton Star?-- Page 2 for many years.

Is the Gatton Star published weekly?-- Every Wednesday.

10

And is it circulated throughout the region?-- Circulated throughout - its coverage area encompasses the entire regional council area.

You mentioned the council has for some time now - some years taken page 2-----?-- That's correct.

-----of that newspaper?-- Yes.

What information is typically included on that page?-- Look, the information varies from edition to edition, obviously pertinent to whatever is happening at the time. But there are contact numbers; frequently there is information with regard to issues, in this case the flooding issues; there may be helpful information to landholders; there may be general information where you can get further details, et cetera. In addition to that we've also had a newsletter distributed since January.

20

Apart from the website and the newspaper page to which we referred, are you aware, but perhaps not directly involved in, the fact that the council maintains social media pages and Facebook and Twitter?-- Look, I'm not involved with it, but I don't know that there's a lot of councillors involved in it, but they may well do.

30

More specifically, as the events of early January unfolded was the media employed as the primary means of informing the population of developing events?-- As the flooding events developed from Boxing Day on, information was supplied through the media. That information that needed to be got out quickly was predominantly through radio, and we would have a log of those - the details of that information.

40

Were you aware that a summary of media releases and website updates was prepared for use in these proceedings?-- I'm aware that work was being done on that.

Would you look at this document, please. We've provided the Commission staff with - could I just see what's being handed up, please. Is the document which you've been handed entitled "Flood Warning Report Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Monday January 10, 2011"?-- That's correct.

50

If you'd just perhaps glance through that to satisfy yourself that it lists radio contacts on 10 January and, on the third sheet, lists website updates?-- Yes.

And on the fourth sheet identifies text messages that were sent on 10 January?-- Right.

1

And does it do the same, set out a similar summary, for 11 January?-- Yes.

I tender that summary of radio and website information on the 10th and 11th.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 170.

10

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 170"

MR GIBSON: Do you have a copy of that document with you?-- No, I don't.

20

I'll provide you with another copy, if I may. The document notes that, "At 4.16 p.m. on Monday, 10 January" - this is about halfway down the first page - "the Bureau of Meteorology warned of moderate to major flooding in Lockyer Creek and surrounding waterways"; do you see that?-- Yes, I can see that.

"Three quarters of an hour later at 5 p.m. the bureau issued a top priority flash flood warning for Helidon, advising of very fast and dangerous rises possible downstream at Gatton over the next few hours"?-- Yes.

30

As appears from this summary, the first contact with the media, being the radio, occurred some 16 minutes after the first of those advices from the Bureau of Meteorology and almost a half an hour before the second of those advices with contact with 4BC radio at 4.32 p.m.?-- That's correct.

It's said there that Hardgrave talks to Jason Cubit of Lockyer Valley Regional Council. Is Jason Cubit, and was he then, the media relations officer-----?-- That's correct.

40

-----employed by the council? Is Mr Hardgrave somebody involved with - a radio announcer on 4BC?-- I believe so.

And then there was within minutes a further discussion - interview between Mr Cubit and ABC Radio?-- That's correct.

Without dwelling on the details, the subsequent pages show numerous radio contacts between Mr Cubit in particular and radio announcers on a number of stations?-- That's correct.

50

Were you satisfied with the response to get information to the community via the radio within 16 minutes of the first advice from the Bureau of Meteorology?-- I think it was - when you read through this article here, it was very comprehensive. And obviously if you go back to 6.31 a.m. on the 10th, there was discussion on the radio then with the evacuation and the

status of Grantham the previous night. So there was quite a concentrated media effort.

1

In addition to those interviews, as we've noted at page 3 there are website updates and it appears that having regard to the fact that there were some updates with the same timestamp, 11.45, that was updated twice. And similarly at 12 midday on 10 January there were a total of nine website updates on the natural disaster page of council's website during that period?-- Yes.

10

And then similarly with the communications the following day, is it the case that extensive communication was maintained between council representatives and media?-- There was for some time.

I should have noted that with respect to the emergencies and natural disasters website, on that page is there information about preparing for natural disasters such as bushfires, floods and thunderstorms and the like?-- Yes.

20

And there are links - it includes links to other government agencies such as the SES, police, ambulance, and so forth?-- That was the intention of the website, was so as the more detailed information could be gained from those sources.

Thank you. Have you been advised that the website was, as the term is used, viewed or hit some more than 5,000 times on January 10?-- I knew it it was a significant number.

30

Would you look at this document, please. Is this a summary of radio interviews - it says prepared by King & Co Solicitors - which span the period 28 December 2011 through to 14 January - I'm sorry, 28 December it should be 2010 - there's a typographical error - through to 14 January 2011?-- That's correct.

I tender that summary of radio interviews, 28 December 2010 to 14 January 2011.

40

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 171.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 171"

MR GIBSON: Thank you. They include, if we look to 10 January 2011 in that same 4.32 p.m. discussion with 4BC, that Mr Cubit advised that people in Gatton and Grantham should be prepared for inundation. It was thought then that water was likely to peak in Gatton at about 8 p.m.?-- Yes.

50

And if you look down towards the foot of the page, at 8 p.m. on 10 January with ABC Radio it was broadcast that an evacuation centre had been set up at the Withcott State School following flash flooding in the Lockyer valley?-- That's

correct.

1

I don't purport to have every such entry, but if you turn to 11 January. At 7.39 a.m. there was a replay of an interview with Mr Flint, the CEO, advising residents of Forest Hills and surrounding areas to evacuate immediately to the Forest Hill hall?-- That's correct.

Similarly residents of Laidley were advised to evacuate to the Laidley depot?-- That's correct.

10

And the advice was to contact - for people to get out if they were in doubt?-- That was the advice, yes.

At 7.59 on 11 January, radio station 97.3 noted that an evacuation - broadcast that an evacuation centre that was at Gatton was almost full. Was it in fact almost full at that time?-- The main building was. We had an alternative at the sports centre where we could have accommodated an equivalent number of people or more.

20

The sports hall is also a large building with the ability to shelter a large number of people?-- In fact, more than the Gatton hall.

Right. And you were reported in that broadcast as advising that people were being sheltered at the community hall and the state school. Was that in fact the case?-- Correct.

Then, and I think finally, in this review on 11 January at 6.55 p.m. with ABC 6.12 radio, it was broadcast by - in an interview with Mr Cubit that Forest Hill had been evacuated and that the council had established evacuation centres at the Gatton Shire hall, Gatton Indoor Sports Centre, and at the Laidley Hospital and high school?-- That's correct.

30

All of that information was correct at that time, was it not?-- Yes.

And did it reflect the intention of the LDMG that evacuations be effected to these larger and more centrally located places?-- It certainly did indicate that. And that came from an experience of previous emergency situations where we had had - persons with medical issues and the likes were sheltered in premises where they couldn't obtain that help. And Gatton, of course, obviously has access to helicopters and close to the hospital and everything else and it's out of flood height.

40

Could I ask you for your comment as to your levels of satisfaction with the level of communication that was able to be maintained with the community through these primarily radio broadcasts during that period?-- I would answer it in two parts to say I am most satisfied with what has been presented, and I think it is extremely important to note that that amount of coverage from a council of the size of ours with the number of towns and villages affected that we did, given our limited staff, was quite good.

50

You mentioned that a community newsletter has been printed and circulated throughout the community?-- That's correct.

1

How regularly is that newsletter circulated?-- I think if I stand to be corrected, but I'm fairly certain there's been about 13 editions since the 10 January incidents. And they have been at least weekly, and they have been centred around changes that may have occurred which the community might be interested in knowing from one edition to the other, particularly with regard to the floods and the information that would be important there.

10

How widely circulated is the newsletter, Mr Jones?-- It's significantly circulated in those areas which were affected by the flooding.

COMMISSIONER: Is this something that has been developed since the flood or-----?-- Yes.

I understand. Thanks?-- But we did have - Commissioner, we did have various communications at a less frequent period during the year. We did put out a couple of newsletters generally throughout the year, some of which may contain information with regard to emergencies. But since the event of January 2010, this has been a specific publication.

20

MR GIBSON: Have you caused a bundle to be prepared of those newsletters commencing from issue 1, dated 15 January 2011, to the most recent issue, which is number 13, dated 18 April 2011?-- Yes.

30

Could you look at this bundle of document, please. Is that a bundle comprising copies of those newsletters?-- Appears to be, yes.

I tender that, if it please Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 172.

40

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 172"

MR GIBSON: Thank you. Now, if I could direct your attention to some operational issues during the relevant period. You had mentioned that the LDMG had been activated - I think it was until 25 December 2010. Or was it as from 25 December?-- No, it would have been activated the day after Christmas, Boxing Day.

50

Right, 26 December. Then it was deactivated in early January, perhaps, as is indicated by the fact of the DDMG meeting, the debriefing meeting, that was held on the 5th. Then it was later reactivated. Was that on the 9th of January 2011?-- Yes, because we had a flooding event in Grantham the night before.

Now, can you tell us thereafter for the next week or two did the LDMG meet regularly, that is, at preset hours?-- Generally it met at 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon hour. In addition to that, on some days there were numerous extra meetings.

Additional meetings. Did it meet daily?-- Yes.

At least once daily. The Commission has received as Exhibit 165 an extensive bundle of situation reports. You may have a copy of that bundle in the volume before you?-- Yes.

10

If you're unable to locate those, we'll provide you with a copy, Mr Jones?-- If I could grab a copy?

COMMISSIONER: Do you want the witness to see the exhibit, Mr Gibson?

MR GIBSON: No, a copy of the exhibit will be satisfactory. If the counsel retains the original hard copy, thank you.

20

Now, there are in total, as I understand it, 19 situation reports spanning the period 27 December 2010 to 30 January 2011?-- Yes.

These were prepared either by or under the authority of a Mr Franzmann; is that so?-- Correct.

Mr Gerry Franzmann is an employee of the council?-- Yes.

30

What position does he hold?-- He's in charges of engineering services - he's the director, if you like - and was the coordinator throughout this event, of course.

He is the local disaster coordinator?-- Correct.

These situation reports are either not referred to or only indirectly referred to in the minutes of the LDMG meetings, but was it the case that they - these situation reports were brought to the attention of those present at the LDMG meetings?-- Yes, and discussed.

40

And discussed. It's fair to describe these reports as comprehensive; would you not agree?-- They are.

And on most occasions there were multiple reports per day?-- Yes, that's right.

Can I take you, for example, to reflect the degree of effort that was put these reports - unfortunately, the volume is not paginated. But if you turn to 9 January 2011, situation report - actually, it's dated number 1; do you see that?-- Yes.

50

It's dated - timed at 2330, 11.30 p.m.?-- Yes.

Signed off by Mr Franzmann?-- Yes.

The next report, although the next day, 10 January, sit report number 2, was timed at 3.15 a.m.-- Yes, that's right.

1

The next report on the same day, 10 January, is 1.30 p.m.-- Yes.

The next report also on 10 January, is at 5 p.m.-- Yes.

And the next report, number 5, also dated 10 January, is actually at 15 minutes past midnight-- That's correct.

10

And we won't belabour this, but the next report, which is number 6 dated 11 January, was at 5.37 a.m.-- Yes.

Does that reflect the degree of commitment by staff to providing the LDMG, the district disaster coordinator, and the EMQ with comprehensive and regular updated reports throughout this period-- I would take it as being very comprehensive.

Each report builds on the previous report, so it's an update of it. So that if we turn to the report of - if we take the report on 10 January, report number 5, purely as an example, by way of situation overview it sets out the weather and observations. Item number 2 is a damage assessment overview, and it includes road closures, et cetera, et cetera. Item 3 is media issues which little figured on this particular report, and then regional reports including a summary of the past 4 hours, item number 4; projected operations for the next 24 to 48 hours, item number 5; and then item 6 is a series of facts and statistics in relation to response-- Yes.

20

30

It goes on dealing with social issues, infrastructure status, economic and environment though the attention to detail in those is not as extensive as in other sections. These reports are directed - were directed to the executive officer of the district disaster management group, but copied or made available to the LDMG for its update and consideration-- That's correct.

40

50

Mr Jones, was there anything lacking as far as you were concerned with respect to the quality or frequency of the situation reports of which the LDMG were aware throughout this period?-- I - I believe they were adequate.

1

And did the LDMG rely on this material as well as other material in, basically, discharging its responsibilities to the community during this period?-- The answer to that is yes because whilst they may have had this information at the meeting, obviously those representatives at the meeting also brought with them varying levels of current information which was coordinated with this information to get significant outcomes.

10

Thank you. Is that a convenient time, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Gibson. Should it be 2.15, Mr Callaghan.

MR CALLAGHAN: 2.15.

20

COMMISSIONER: 2.15, thanks.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 1.00 P.M. TILL 2.15 P.M.

THE COMMISSIONER RESUMED AT 2.15 P.M.

30

STEVEN JOHN JONES, CONTINUING:

COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson.

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. Before Mr Gibson resumes questioning of this witness, we've received a victim impact statement from Daniel David McGuire.

40

COMMISSIONER: Couldn't that wait until we've finished with Mr Jones?

MS WILSON: Certainly.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you. You won't be an enormous amount of time longer, I assume, Mr Gibson.

50

MR GIBSON: No, I won't be.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR GIBSON: Mr Jones, during questioning from counsel assisting, your attention was directed to the minutes of the LDMG which have been received as Exhibit 159. I think in the

bundle that you have in front of you, you may find those documents behind a tab possibly headed, the first page, "Disaster Management Group". If you turn over, you will find minutes or a document entitled "Lockyer Valley LDMG Core Group Meeting, Thursday 13 January 2011" and it is the meeting at 9 a.m., 0900 hours. Thank you. Your attention was directed to the fact that on that occasion there were apologies from yourself, Mr Fraser from EMQ and Mr Franzmann, who was the LDC?-- That's correct.

1

You see that? Attendees included, at the top of the list, Ian Flint. He was and he is the CEO of the council?-- That's correct.

10

Was he acting in the role of LDC in the absence of Mr Franzmann?-- That's correct.

In fact, on that particular occasion, and perhaps it may apply to others as well, were members of the LDMG required to attend meetings of the District Disaster Management Group?-- That's correct, and I know on - it may well be this occasion, Councillor Moon would be in that category.

20

Can you recall whether you yourself were attending a meeting of the District Disaster Management Group on the occasion of the 13th of January?-- I believe it's possible that I was. I just couldn't confirm that, yes.

Sure. But, in any event, it is an example of conflicting obligations as it were-----?-- Yes.

30

-----in terms of some of these times, which was itself a product of the urgency of the circumstances?-- And there were a number of other meetings equally as important as the district disaster meeting which we have been required to attend, and on that occasion it would have been one of those meetings I would have been at.

Now, could I ask you a couple of questions with respect to the Murphys Creek event?-- Yes.

40

Would you turn to a document which has been received as Exhibit 163 and it's been described as the running sheet or running log for the LDMG. The first page is entitled "December 2010/January 2011 Flood Event"?-- Yes.

"DDMG and Council Debrief 5 January 2011"?-- Yes.

You mentioned in your evidence in response to questions from counsel assisting that it was on the 12th of January that you and the LDMG became aware of circumstances at Murphys Creek?-- That's correct.

50

Would you turn to the page entitled "LDMG" and beneath that "12th January 2011"?-- Yes.

Thank you. At the top of the page there is an entry at 7.30 a.m.?-- That's correct.

It refers to a brief by a police officer, Mr Wilce?-- Yes.

W-I-L-C-E. What was his position, incidentally, at that time if you remember?-- The police officer concerned was actually involved with the local disaster committee and was spending a significant amount of time at our - at our premise there in a liaison-type role as well.

So he was providing information as a-----?-- Back into the community.

10

-----communication point?-- That's correct.

He advised of two 20-man teams, one each at Grantham and one at Murphys Creek managing the coronial investigation?-- That's correct.

And also informed you or those present of helicopter and other assets that were-----?-- Yes.

20

-----in place. Then towards the foot of the page there is a note at 7.30 a.m., a meeting involving various agencies and also yourself and council officers?-- Yes.

And, again, there's a reference to the 20 persons to Murphys Creek and to Grantham?-- Yes.

Now, at that point in time, as at the 12th of January, you've provided some information about this but could you give us the picture, was road connection from Gatton, Helidon, in other words to the east of Murphys Creek, available to Murphys Creek?-- At that - at that time on the Wednesday morning the 12th, I think that actually in these comments here it may mention that it was expected that that road would open later that day. The exact time at which it did open, I'm not sure. It was later in the day. And obviously the fact that these people were taken into that area by air would signify that the roads were still blocked at that time.

30

Can you tell us the situation with communication by landline telephone?-- Landline telephone west of Grantham, the bulk of the shire west of Grantham had failed. It failed soon after Monday at varying times according to which exchange the lines were connected to and there were no landline telephones.

40

Did it become apparent that in most if not all instances the failure of the telephone landlines was because of the failure of batteries supplying power to the telephone exchanges?-- I was informed at one of the meetings around this period by a person from Telstra that the failure for both their mobile phone services and their landline services was as a result of the backup batteries going flat and that was in fact an extreme concern because the amount of traffic through those exchanges obviously reduced the loss of - or reduced the life of the batteries.

50

Yes?-- An extremely important fact for future emergencies.

We'll come back to that if we may. You adverted to the situation with mobile telephone communication. Can you tell us, we understand that mobile telephone communication in the Murphys Creek area is perhaps erratic at the best of times. What was the position following the 10th of January?-- Prior to this event there are many areas in the Murphys Creek area and, in fact, many areas in the valley in total, particularly up around Mt Sylvia, where there was no mobile phone coverage at all and in those - some of those areas were affected by flooding of course. With landlines down and either no mobile service or a failed mobile service, effectively, communications by telephone had ceased.

10

Now, apart from the information that you had on the morning of the 12th of January to which we have just referred, did you subsequently become aware that a QFRS unit had entered Murphys Creek down the road from the top of the Range?-- Yeah, I did at a time after the 12th of January find that - or had reported to me that on the night of the 10th of January a Queensland Fire and Rescue team did find its way from Toowoomba down through Ballard into Murphys Creek, and to date I haven't been able to find any detail of that message having been passed on to us.

20

Did you also subsequently become aware that an EMQ helicopter piloted by Mr Kempton had delivered police and picked up people from Murphys Creek on the morning of the 11th of January?-- I actually found that out from reading a copy of that gentleman's statement.

30

Which was quite recently, no doubt?-- Very recently.

Prior to that you were unaware of that fact?-- I was unaware.

So that prior to the 12th of January, can you tell me whether to the best of your knowledge and recollection you, or through you, the LDMG had received any calls or other communication from the police, the EMQ, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, or residents at Murphys Creek advising of the situation?-- To my knowledge and the best of my recollection, I cannot recall any contact whatsoever from those organisations you mentioned to either myself or the committee with regard to Murphys Creek prior to that time, which was early on the morning of the 12th.

40

Right. Your attention was directed to the consideration that perhaps an inquiry could have been made through the Local Disaster Management Group to the District Disaster Coordinator based at Toowoomba to provide information, if any were available, with respect to the Murphys Creek situation?-- Yes.

50

That did not occur?-- That's right.

Can you tell us, briefly, why that did not occur?-- I'm not exactly certain as to why that did not occur. But had that occurred, the circumstances in terms of our knowledge would

have been completely different.

1

In what respect?-- Well, it wasn't, as I said, until the 12th of January that we received that information.

Yes?-- Whilst the highway to Toowoomba was closed, there was limited access for emergencies down through Ballard into Murphys Creek. And alternative arrangements may well have been able to be made.

10

Having regard to the roles of the respective agencies that we've seen in the Disaster Management Plan, had you been aware, for example, on the 11th of January, of the situation at Murphys Creek, on reflection what, if any, additional services could the council, as distinct from other organisations, have provided?-- Like, there's various things that council could have done in terms of taking in equipment. Power supply was out. We had some equipment we could have lent to some of these people over that area. We could have taken in various forms of resources to make their life a little bit more comfortable and assisted them.

20

Would that have been-----?-- In terms of - I'm sorry. In terms of the roads and so forth too, it would have given us a much better situation where we could have looked at safety earlier.

But the roads weren't open-----?-- No.

-----until sometime on the 12th, were they?-- That's right.

30

So how could assets have been placed in Murphys Creek prior to the roads becoming open?-- The only way that they could have been put in would have been to organise them through Toowoomba and have them taken down through Ballard.

I see. Which would, in itself, have depended on the condition of the Murphys Creek Road from the top of the Range?-- That's right.

40

Now, council officers then attended Murphys Creek on the 13th of January?-- That's correct.

I think you've explained that it was considered unsafe, on the basis of the information that you did have, for an attempt to be made to access that area before that time. What then happened after the 13th of January in terms of the provision of assistance by the council or coordinated by the LDMG?-- Right. There was - various council people travelled there and were involved in the provision of equipment, the detail of which I don't exactly have with me. I know for a fact myself, as I said earlier, and Councillor Holstein did travel there on Friday the 14th. We did have - as I said, I had made arrangements with a former councillor who travelled over there and did actually stay in Murphys Creek and was discussing - was in constant contact with me about what he could do and he could assist to provide there. And then on the 21st, of course, a full-time councillor person was placed in

50

Murphys Creek.

1

Could I turn briefly to the circumstances at Grantham. They were of quite a different character to those at Murphys Creek. In your evidence this morning, counsel assisting adverted to some issues that are identified in a statement that we have from Inspector Marcus. One of those concerned the provision of water trucks to the area. You commented in your evidence this morning that 40 per cent of the shire had lost its reticulated water. What percentage of the shire does have reticulated water?-- I just - it would be a bit difficult to exactly say what percentage of the land area. In terms of the population, I'd say 50 to 60 per cent. Essentially what had happened, there had been - well, in fact at one stage almost all the shire had lost its water, because the point where the water is taken from the river down at Lowood was destroyed. The foot valve was actually destroyed, and there was no water able to be pumped into the shire. So at one stage, the entire shire had no water being pumped in. In fact, bottled water and so forth had to be provided. In some areas, they did lose water significantly earlier, and the break in supply was significantly longer. For example, the reservoir at Withcott was the - the line through to there was the last to be repaired.

10

20

What consequence did that have on the demand for water trucks in the region?-- It obviously had a - a huge effect on that. All - even if we used every water truck we had available in the shire, it still wouldn't have been a fraction of satisfying the need. The pipe that comes through from - from Wivenhoe Dam, you know, is a significant sized pipe, main, and with no supply coming through on that, the number of trucks that was required was a huge number. And in fact, just to supply the Withcott reservoir in the last weeks before that line was repaired, there was a large number of trucks, probably 20 or 30 or more, working around the clock for 24 hours a day to try and keep water up to the supply. So you can imagine the demands that were on water truck operators, and it was almost impossible to obtain water trucks at that time.

30

40

I see. All right. Now, before we turn to the recovery stage and scope for improvement of operations in the future, could I direct you to the transcript of your interview with Commission officers, Exhibit 161, if you have it there. If you would turn to page 72?-- Yes.

It was put to you in the paragraph by about line 15 that - emphasising that there was no criticism of the council intended - the assertion was to the effect that after the 10th of January, the Lockyer Valley - and that really means the regional council and perhaps the LDMG - were overcome by the enormity of the tragedy, and it seems as though there wasn't enough expertise or training in disaster management to deal with the recovery operations in the response in that area. Now, you commented in respect of that at about line 34 that you did not agree with that at all and went on to explain at about line 38 that you were comfortable with the way matters

50

were handled, et cetera. Could I ask you, in the light of your reconsideration of these matters, to comment with respect to the proposition that on and following the 10th of January, the council was in fact - or did in fact find itself overcome by the enormity of events?-- Let me, I suppose, first put the point. I suppose - I guess it's the way in which the - I answered - or I take the question. If we - if we asked the question in the light, "Was the council itself totally overcome and unable to provide the necessary resources and act responsibly." My answer is definitely, "No." In terms of the council itself, the resources it had available and the circumstances that was put before it, I believe it did an excellent job and - and performed very well. If we look at the broader situation across the entire emergency and how that was handled, of course this emergency is - is one of the most significant Queensland has ever seen, and it was simply something that any individual council could not handle. In fact, as we heard here in the Inquiry in recent days, it was something that State agencies couldn't handle, and for that reason federal backup in terms of the army and the likes was brought in. I do in that - in that light acknowledge that it was something too big for council. And, in fact, I go a little bit further to state that I think the intervention of those federal authorities at the earliest possible level is a key factor in the future.

1

10

20

Can I deal with a couple of points. In answer to a question from counsel assisting this morning, you commented to the effect that the budgetary allocation for emergency and disaster management and preparation was, I think you said, \$5,000?-- That's correct.

30

Is that in fact not correct?-- I have reassessed that over the break. We had \$5,000 in the budget for a number of financial years. In fact, in this current financial year it is \$65,000, and there is a component in that which is actually for setting up a specific facility for emergencies such as this.

When you say the current financial year, you mean for the year 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011?-- That's - that's correct.

40

Now, with respect to recovery and the restoration and the future of communities, with respect to Grantham, it is an area that's been subjected to repeated flooding, albeit not to the extent experienced in January; is that right?-- That's correct.

Has the council made a policy decision to assist flood affected residents of Grantham with respect to relocation of their residences to different locations within the area?-- Yes. We have - look, within, I would say, a week or so of this event - in fact, it may have been less than that - I met with officials of the Queensland government. We made it quite clear that we wanted to move forward with something that I - to my knowledge hasn't occurred anywhere elsewhere in Australia; that we would try and establish a circumstance where we could allow people to relocate at low, if any, cost

50

to themselves in terms of the land value, and we have been in continuous discussion with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. That is now underway. We are expecting that by June the construction will start and the first houses on that state will be lived in by Christmastime, and I think that is an extremely bold move by council. We bear the financial risk of it, and I think it's something that should be considered in future flooding situations elsewhere.

1

You referred to an estate. To what estate are you referring?-- Council has purchased an area - a large area of land, I brief in the order of 1,000 acres, to the north of the present Gatton - Grantham Township. It adjoins the higher part of the town, which wasn't affected by the flood, and on that higher ridge country, that's where council is involved in the development of this new area for those people to move to if they wish.

10

What financial arrangements are proposed as between the council, as owner of that land, and residents who may wish to relocate to a block of land in that estate?-- Council has developed a scheme and is in the process of refining that scheme whereby virtual lands swaps will be able to be applied for by those residents in the lower area. They could apply for blocks on the higher ground. It would be simply a land swap situation in terms of the value of the land. Their former block would be surrendered, which means it wouldn't be available any longer for people to build on, and would therefore solve problems of future flooding in those areas. It is a voluntary scheme, it is not a compulsory scheme, and there is a lot of interest in it from the locals.

20

30

Thank you. Another initiative that the council has adopted in response to these events is the engagement of an external consultant to assist with the preparation of subplans and other initiatives. Could you tell us about that, please?-- Well, council is obviously keen to - to look to the future, and we believe subplans - subplans in terms of emergency, in particular flooding, a very - are very applicable. We have employed a consultant to do that. Those plans will involve all sorts of actions at the local level and a proposed warden-type system, where a person would be identified and taken on as either a volunteer or a paid person to coordinate those initial local efforts should a flood occur.

40

And does the planning in that regard include upgrading of the control centre?-- Yes. In fact, part of that \$65,000 that I mentioned before that was allowed in this year's budget was for the upgrading of the land that we used for the control centre.

50

You mentioned earlier in your evidence that there was a community hall being constructed or in the course of construction at Murphys Creek and that that hall was on land that was above known flood levels, including the January flood level. For completeness, should it be noted that that hall was being constructed by the Rotary Club?-- That's right.

On land under the council - under council's control?-- It is on land known as the Murphys Creek ground, which is council controlled land, and there is a management arrangement in place with the local Progress Association, and Rotary are involved in the project of financing that new facility.

1

Has a further initiative by the council been - the preparation of what has been termed the Lockyer Valley Community Recovery Plan?-- Yes.

10

This proposed plan has been publicised by way of brochures that are available to members of the community; is that correct?-- That's correct, they have been quite widely spread.

Would you look at this document, please.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Gibson, I want say I don't want to rush you, because in some ways I do. I understand that there are more initiatives. I don't know that they really arise out of the examination by Mr Callaghan. I'm happy to receive any material the council wants to give the Commission, but I don't know that it needs to be explored at length today. Perhaps you could just summarise anything you wanted to.

20

MR GIBSON: Yes, yes.

COMMISSIONER: And provide it in due course.

MR GIBSON: Yes, certainly.

30

COMMISSIONER: Anyway, what is this document and I'll receive it as an exhibit?

MR GIBSON: This is the Lockyer Valley Community Recovery Plan brochure. Mr Jones, is that correct?-- Yes, that's correct.

I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 173.

40

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 173"

MR GIBSON: Thank you. It is - it has been disseminated for public consultation and response?-- That's correct.

It addresses numerous issues with respect to complete recovery development for the region?-- True.

50

And it is in the course of implementation; is that correct?-- That's - it's well on the way, yes.

Thank you. In terms of areas that could perhaps be the subject of further consideration in the future, you dealt with some issues raised by counsel assisting including, among

others, clearing of waterways?-- Yes.

1

I won't ask you to repeat what you've said, but is there any issue in terms of the obtaining of State Government departmental clearance or authority or approval to permit the clearing of vegetation from waterways?-- This has been an ongoing issue for many years and, in fact, some months before this flood event we did actually apply to have such a situation of clearing at Junction View, and we still hold the documentation on where that wasn't permitted, and it is a very serious issue that we need to have addressed. I know that the department make it quite clear that it is possible to get permission to do it, but it needs to be done in a way that's practical, a way that's affordable, and of course I come back to the issue that we mentioned before: the funding for it.

10

To which department are you referring?-- DERM.

20

30

40

50

Would it be of assistance if the approval process was more streamlined than has been the case in the past?-- It needs to be streamlined and practical. It's impractical to try and clean up these circumstances with some of the material that they expect to be left in the creek.

Now, in your statement, which has been received as Exhibit 166, and I understand a copy of which is in your - is that your statement that you have now? Thank you. At paragraphs 35 to 40 at pages 5 and 6 you have identified certain practical matters which you consider would benefit from further consideration; is that correct?-- Yes.

10

One of those you've already addressed at paragraph 35 is the preparation of subplans for particular villages and townships?-- Yes.

You mentioned in your evidence the problems that occurred with the failure of battery backup for Telstra telephone exchanges?-- Yes.

20

Do you have a proposal which you volunteer for consideration in that regard?-- Given the havoc that this matter caused through this whole emergency and the fact that we live in a much more technical - technologically advanced society than we did some 50 years ago, it's about time that a measure of backup generation be considered. There are relatively cheap generators which can be automatically activated, KBR generators, and if they were able to be installed with some of these facilities, we simply wouldn't have experienced anywhere near the problems we did on this occasion. Because it was simply power failure in most cases that prevented the communication.

30

They would be diesel powered generators?-- They would need to be diesel powered. They are relatively simple and cheap machines today, and the automatic activation can be installed relatively cheaply. And I think that's an extremely important measure right across Australia in terms of communication and disaster.

40

Is it your understanding that the diesel fuel capacity of such a generator could be such as to provide lengthier operation than has been experienced with the batteries?-- With the KBR generator that I have been told that's required, the size generator, that the power plant - or the generator is of such a size that the diesel consumption would be relatively minor and the amount of fuel that be could held on-site would in fact be able to keep the thing going for some days and then could be replenished, of course.

50

Is this a matter - without turning to it - that you also addressed in your record of interview with Commission officers, Exhibit 161, at pages 70?-- Yes.

Now, a further issue to which you refer at paragraph 39 of your statement is the provision for more modern technology for

stream gauging and rainfall monitoring?-- Yes.

1

The absence of warning was a major concern, particularly at the foothills of the range at Murphys Creek, Postmans Ridge, but also further downstream; is that correct?-- That's correct.

Subject to technical issues, have you considered the linking of an early warning system through rainfall gauges to perhaps a siren or other arrangement in towns which are likely to be effected by floodwaters in insufficient time to give notice by conventional means?-- I think that's extremely important. And since this event - an event that we didn't really consider up until 10 January could happen - I did do some research. There are a number of systems in place. I know the council up around the Burdekin area has a very advanced system, and it's certainly one that I would like to have introduced here in cooperation with other warning mechanisms; however, I guess the bottom line is cost. And we need to do it and if such systems could be furnished, then I'm sure they could be quite effective in the future.

10

20

The question of evacuation centres has been raised, and you referred to them, and you referred to - I think you used the term "collection points". Do you mean by that assembly areas?-- Assembly areas.

What is the difference in practical terms between an assembly area and an evacuation centre?-- I think if you look at this particular - the magnitude of this event, we had people virtually living in evacuation centres for a number of weeks. The assembly point is more a point where people can go to where they consider would be safe in a given emergency situation and then can be transferred to another place if they are going to be there for a number of days or weeks. And the evacuation centre where they would stay would obviously need to be well prepared and resourced for that facility, where the point they evacuate to would need to be much less resourced.

30

Can you comment about the desirability or otherwise and the feasibility of providing prior notice, that is, a standing notice of the location of either assembly points or evacuation centres for different communities?-- I think that is certainly a very positive thing that needs to be done in a very strategic way; however, I do believe it's important in the identification of those points and centres that people also be given information which will allow them to decide in commonsense terms if it's safe to move to them, or if in fact that particular point or centre is safe. We've seen through this disaster flood levels reach a point we've never seen before, and some points which we would have considered safe in fact were at risk and were flooded.

40

50

Are these issues which council will be considering with the guidance of the external consultant to whom you've referred in relation to the preparation of subplans for each community?-- Yes. We've been very proactive in terms of flood studies, and we've been working on flood studies now for some months, as

some of the documentation you presented earlier would indicate. Within those we will be identifying safe points and safe points which can be linked to the type of centres and collection points that we're talking about. Of course what we do have to consider now is after this flood the points which we considered in previous flood studies as being safe, may well have changed. There may need to be a whole lot more work done to bring that up to date and make those records accurate. But there has been significant work done already, and we feel at the completion of that work we will have some points that will be safe in terms of the 2011 flood.

1

10

The question of - and I coin this term - fly-in squads has been referred to. That is an expert team assembled externally and being transported into a disaster scene. Do you have a view about that?-- I do. I do have a view, and the view is that, you know, I don't believe that there's a lot to be gained by simply gathering together a group of people at the State level. I think it may need to be higher than that. And what I mean by that is local knowledge is extremely important in these disasters, and you see that all through the witnesses that have been through this Inquiry. Their local knowledge has helped people enormously. One of the things discussed in recent days was sometimes we go many, many years between these disasters, and as a result we don't have the exposure to them which would give the people in charge the ability to handle it in the best possible way. Now, my consideration with this is that if in fact such a group was to be formed, I think it should be formed on a national basis, because that way the exposure would be on a more frequent interval and involve a huge amount of local input as well at the same time, because all through this - through this disaster, that was very evident. At the time the defence forces came in, things did certainly move along at a rapid level. And I've been through numerous bushfires before, and there's a reluctance to bring in that level of input, and I think it's a very valuable input.

20

30

Much of this discussion has directed attention to the activities of the council and the LDMG. But could I ask of your experience and your observations with respect to the work done by the volunteers of the SES, the Rural Fire Service and otherwise?-- Look, they have performed an excellent job, an excellent task. One of the comments that I mentioned earlier today was the incentive to get people into those roles, and that's something, moving forward, that I think is very important for the Flood Inquiry. There needs to be incentive for those people in those volunteer organisations to move forward and not only be members, but to become current members and operating members. And I think we need to work on that very seriously, and I think in relation to this disaster we need to thank them greatly for what they have done, because they have done a magnificent job.

40

50

Thank you, Mr Jones. Thank you, Madam Commissioner. I have nothing further.

MR CALLAGHAN: Just two matters. Could I ask if Mr Jones could see - I think it's Exhibit 168, which is the folder of the-----

COMMISSIONER: General flood planning to December 2010; that's what you want?

10

MR CALLAGHAN: That folder has - there's a document tagged there, I think, Mr Jones, which is the disaster plan of 26 October?-- Yes.

I think the copy in there has handwritten on it "JMF's copy"; is that right?-- Yes.

I'm guessing that's Jerry Franzmann?-- I would say so, yes.

Is it?-- I would guess so.

20

Can you tell us anything else about that document?-- It's got "draft" printed on it and the fact that it was last revised September 2009.

Do you have anything else that you can add about that document?-- Not just offhand I haven't, no.

Or even by looking at it?-- The fact that it is the Lockyer Valley copy it, certainly the amalgamated form of the disaster management plan. It's not the separate ones that we spoke about earlier today.

30

All right. Thank you. The other matter was simply to ask about the \$65,000 which you've now recalled is allocated in the budget. What's actually happening with that?-- A fair portion of that money is to be put into the development of a control centre for emergencies, and that work will continue. That was budgeted last - in the last budget, obviously, June/July.

40

And where is that project at?-- Gatton.

What stage is it at?-- There has been some work done. I would have to talk to our IT people with regard to - the work that had been done was in regard to the communications side of things and various upgrades, but we would hope that by the next financial - start of the financial year that project would be completed.

50

Thank you. That's all I had, Madam Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Jones, you're excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: Madam Commissioner, there's a matter that we need to attend to before the next witness is called. May I request a short adjournment?

1

COMMISSIONER: All right. Let me know through my Associate when you're ready.

MR CALLAGHAN: Thank you.

10

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 2.57 P.M.

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 3.06 P.M.

MS WILSON: I call Inspector Michael Crowley.

20

30

40

50

MICHAEL JOSEPH CROWLEY, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

1

MS WILSON: Is your full name Michael Joseph Crowley?-- Yes, it is.

And are you an Inspector of Police and manager of the Weapons Licensing Branch and Administrative Division?-- Yes.

10

Have you made a statement in relation to your role as a community liaison officer as Murphys Creek?-- I did.

Can you have a look at this statement, please?-- That's my statement.

Is that statement true and correct?-- It is.

I tender that statement.

20

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 174.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 174"

MS WILSON: Now, if I would just wait a moment, that statement will come up on to the screen. But at page 5 you say you were appointed as community liaison officer for Murphys Creek and Helidon for the period 16 January 2011 to 22 January 2011?-- Yes.

30

And later on in your statement you state that from your understanding, the community liaison officer role was implemented as a result of community dissatisfaction with the level of information provided to the community to that time. This was then addressed by the QPS in an effective, professional manner?-- Yes.

40

Are you saying there that it was addressed by your appointment as the community liaison officer?-- That's correct.

On 16 January?-- I was telephoned night before and requested to be attending Grantham the following morning.

So prior to 16 January there was no QPS community liaison officer?-- I can't answer that. I don't know.

50

So you don't know whether there was a predecessor before you?-- No.

When you were given that role, were you given the reasons about why you had to be in the community?-- The only information I have been provided, which was a very brief conversation initially over the telephone the night before, was to say that there had been a community meeting and that

people were concerned that they felt they were not getting enough information available to them or in a timely manner and that they wanted someone - two people to come in to take on the roles; one at Grantham itself, and another person at Helidon initially. And then when I arrived the following morning I undertook a briefing. Again it was reiterated that it was felt that the senior executive wanted dedicated people in those roles in those positions and to then include - also to include Murphys Creek and the people of Helidon itself.

1

Who assigned you that role?-- I got a phone call to request me to be there. The actual assignment I would imagine would have come from the district disaster coordinator, so Acting Superintendent Schafferius at the time was the one I met.

10

If I can take you to page 6 of your statement. You say there at the top on that first paragraph that you provided assistance to community members or other groups to access urgent items or matters from Grantham during the exclusion period?-- Yes.

20

Can you provide some more particulars about the assistance that you provided?-- Going back, I suppose, a little bit to put that in context, one of the first, I suppose, contacts I had with the community at the evacuation centre at Helidon was a meeting that was a public forum held with the assistant commissioner southern region, the district disaster coordinator, the forward commander, and a number of the other members of the QPS, plus the other gentleman, Inspector Benjamin Marcus, who was doing that role similar to what I was doing. And from that meeting there was a number of people who were raising concerns about the time taken to access their - be able to go back into their homes back into the Grantham area and those areas. One of those - to help that situation, we actually sat down with the people once the meeting had finished and said what is the issue? What are you after? What do you want? And from there I arranged, through the district disaster coordinator to have some policing resources provided so that we could give people access to areas that were safe - I think that was the major issue there, was making certain the areas were safe, that they had been cleared as part of the search process, and to then collect either some personal items - they might have been medications where they knew where they were, they could direct us to where the medications were. We didn't initially allow any of the people themselves to go back in, but we got searchers to go and access those or those police officers to go and do that. Because in many of the cases, in some of the houses there was no stairways to access the house. It was necessary to climb up to get into the building. And in most cases, the items were exactly where the people said they would be. They were there. And we were able to retrieve those and then provide them back to the people. The other one - areas were to producers trying to access equipment to drain the oils out of tractors and different things like that to be able to just put new oil in there to make sure they would be functional at a later time.

30

40

50

You also say on page 6 that you directed them to where the necessary agency information advice or assistance would be obtained, and then under that you give some examples. One of those examples that you give is advising community groups such as Murphys Creek who were working outside the appropriate legislative network in recovery and directing them towards appropriate agencies for assistance. Can you provide some more detail in relation to that? First of all, there's a couple of issues that I would like to address in relation to this. First of all, you say they were working outside of the appropriate legislative network and recovery - in recovery?-- By that, the group at Murphys Creek by the time I had arrived had established a fairly well coordinated community response themselves in that they were receiving direct assistance from volunteers or offers of community assistance, whether that be through heavy machinery or different articles like that, which were not going through the normal process within the disaster recovery, which would have been the local districts disaster management group and going through at that process. One of the examples of that was a gentleman had offered some heavy machinery to repair driveways, however, he didn't have any fuel for the machinery, and we were trying to access fuel. And the idea for there was to go through the LDMG to source appropriate fuel sources and to recognise the work that these people were doing with their heavy equipment and to make certain they weren't doubling up where other equipment might be coming from a different area to do the same job.

That's when you go in that sentence to say, you directed them towards the LDMG at Gatton for appropriate assistance?-- That's correct.

Are you saying in the example you've just provided you directed the fellow with heavy machinery to be able to get some fuel through the LDMG process?-- Yes, well, not directly the gentleman himself. I was saying through the evacuation centre or the recovery centre that was at Helidon at Murphys Creek. Basically advising them, saying if you want to get this assistance, you need to do it through the appropriate channels, and that was through the LDMG, and gave them some contact details there.

If I can take you to page 9 of your statement. That's where you refer to the fact that Murphys Creek benefitted further from the military expertise of a local community member?-- Yes.

Then you go on. In the next paragraph you say, "The negative aspect of this eventuated from a lack of understanding at local community and council level of assistance available through the State and Federal legislation." When you are referring to the negative aspect, what are you referring to?-- Again it's that ability to access the necessary equipment and resources that they require in the timeframes that they were looking to do. Because they were bringing these - again I'll use that example of the heavy machinery. They had the people waiting to do work, but nobody knew that they were there and nobody had the extra materials, the road base, the fuel, to

enable them to do that. And again to access that they would either have to rely on other community members to donate the resources, or be able to access it through the council. That's why I was saying through the State and Federal process and the legislation through the disaster declaration, then a lot of that equipment would have been - and resources would have been made available to them much more quickly.

1

And your role that you were performing, was your role to go to the LDMG with these requests, or direct the community to the LDMG?-- My understanding of the role was more so to direct the people to the correct resources and to the correct place, rather than trying to take on that effective management or recovery role. Because there were too many resources and too many questions coming from different areas and related to different necessities, whether that be accommodation or whether it be funding. One those was insurance. Where do I go to talk to an insurance assessor? Which we managed to identify some people - or a gentleman who acted as liaison to help people source insurance companies.

10

20

Did you have any communication with the LDMG stating that there are issues here that you need someone here to address?-- No, the only - through the LDMG, I worked through the police incident centre and resource centre within Toowoomba. I had direct telephone number back to them and requested to go through that area through the logistic cell there.

The only request that you were actioning was through the QPS's own structure?-- Correct.

30

Your role there finished on 22 January?-- It was, yes, Saturday or Sunday.

At page 5 you say that you were there from the period 16 January to 22 January?-- Yes.

Was there any reason that you finished up on the 22nd?-- It was just the fact of doing rotations through the place. I had already been working in Rockhampton floods from Christmas until after New Year, then working in the Brisbane floods up until the time I was sent to Grantham. So it was a matter of rotating staff through to allow us to be rested and then to look to where we needed to go elsewhere if need be.

40

The liaison officer from the Lockyer Valley Regional Council was attending the Murphys Creek on around 21 and 22. Did you have any contact with that?-- No. I was advised someone had attended, but I did not meet that person. I wasn't aware whether they had been there or not. I just - somebody said somebody from the council had attended, and that was as much as I was aware of at that time.

50

And when you were performing your role as community liaison officer, were you working out of the Murphys Creek tavern?-- That's where I was meeting the people from there, yes. That's where I was liaising with the people who were running that - operating that centre. We also organised a public meeting

there for members of the Murphys Creek community with as many of the agencies and to explain what was happening and where the events - and particularly the search at that stage with the forward commander came to talk with the community. So we held those all that at that centre.

1

So were you permanently based effectively at the - at that - at the tavern for that time?-- No, I wasn't. I was operating between the Helidon evacuation centre, the forward command post, and the Murphys Creek community centre. But what I did organise with them was that we had - a constable was placed permanently during business hours at the evacuation centre to assist with queries and also a lot of those issues that I spoke about before, about requests for assistance, they could go to that person, then pass it up through the police chain of command. We also did the same thing for the Helidon evacuation centre, where I had at least one police officer there permanently too so people had immediate contact with police. And then if they had an issue, they called me.

10

20

At page 11 of your statement you talk about there was negative opinions expressed to you about the Lockyer Valley Regional Council, and you say this appeared to be resentment in relation to the time taken for the council to respond to requests for assistance. The next paragraph is what I'm interested in. You say in your opinion, the coordination of the council response improved significantly with the integration of the Murweh Regional Council members. What actually improved that you could see?-- From the experience that I had, and a lot of that was also based from what was occurring in Rockhampton, where I worked in the logistics area in the - for the Rockhampton floods at the time. The LDMG was running very efficiently and very quickly, because all the resources were being brought in. Basically as soon as you requested them, they were available going through. But there was a huge difference, and that because there was time available for people to - they knew the water was coming. So in other words, there was time for the LDMG to set up and make resources further available. I think it was the opposite that occurred in the Lockyer Valley in the fact there was the suddenness of the event and then not being able to bring equipment and the resources in as quickly as people would have wanted them to to enable the recovery process to commence in a more faster manner the way people wanted it. And I think that was what I was talking about with the coordination. Once the gentleman from the Murweh Council came in, they had dealt with this quite clearly on a number of occasions and were able to identify straightaway: This is what we need. This is what we need. And then we were able to talk with them and pass over a lot of that recovery work that people were discussing with us to the council.

30

40

50

In terms of Murphys Creek, did the gentleman from the Murweh Regional Council come to Murphys Creek and listen to the concerns of the residents; is that what you are telling me?-- Yes, he did. He came for that evening meeting that we had. We had the gentleman who came along and started to explain the process to the community members to help them understand

what's necessary for them to help coordinate that - the recovery process.

1

Can you recall when that happened?-- I think it was the Wednesday night. So.

The 12th?-- The 16th would have been-----

Sorry?-- -----sorry. I think it was the Wednesday night. I just can't remember what the date was. I need to look at my diary - electronic diary.

10

Did you have much contact with these regional council members from Murweh?-- Only through the public meetings that were being held at both the - at Grantham and also the meeting at Murphys Creek, and I don't think we had one at Helidon where they attended. I'm not sure on that one.

Thank you, Inspector, I have no further questions.

20

MS McLEOD: I have no questions.

MR MacSPORRAN: No questions, thank you.

MR GIBSON: No questions, your Honour.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Inspector, you're excused.

30

WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, I call Peter Souter.

40

50

PETER ALAN SOUTER, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

1

MS WILSON: Is your full name Peter Alan Souter?-- Yes.

And you and your wife own and operate a recreational camping ground called Murphys Creek Escape?-- Yes.

And that's set on the banks of Murphys Creek?-- Yes.

10

You've prepared a statement in relation to describing flooding events on 10 January 2011?-- Yes.

Can I show you this document, please. Is that your statement?-- Yes, it is.

I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 175.

20

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 175"

MS WILSON: And also with Mr Phil Box you've completed a summary of operations report, and this report sets out the response and recovery operations that were undertaken by the community at Murphys Creek?-- Yes.

30

Can I show you this document, please. Is that the document that you and Mr Box completed?-- Yes, it is.

I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 176.

40

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 176"

MS WILSON: Your business that you've been operating on the banks of Murphys Creek you've been operating for twelve months or thereabouts?-- That's right.

And you've been living there with your wife and child?-- Yes.

50

Now, you also have experience working with the Australian Defence Force?-- Yes.

And can you tell me what your rank was in the Australian Defence Force?-- Major. And still is.

How long were you in the ADF for?-- Twelve years now.

1

You are now presently in the Reserves?-- That's right.

The site that you operate the Murphys Creek Escape campsite is on Murphys Creek; that's the case, isn't it?-- That's right.

And it's 50 acres?-- That's right.

How far would that be from the township from Murphys Creek from the tavern of Murphys Creek?-- Between 4 and 6 kilometres from the creek line.

10

On that site that you operate there are some building structures on that site?-- That's right.

There's a residence/reception?-- Yes.

Where you and your wife and child live, and also sheds, a camp facility?-- That's right.

20

Now, the house that you reside in, how far is that away from Murphys Creek?-- It would be - well, before the creek line changed, the house itself would be about 35 to 40 metres from the old edge of the creek.

And on the banks of Murphys Creek, is that where the camping grounds were?-- Yes, that's right. We had 20 powered sites up on along top level with the reception and the building, but then we had a 600-metre long blue couch 30-metre wide campground right on the banks of the old creek.

30

You had video recorder on the day of the 10th?-- Yes.

And you took some images of the rain event that you saw?-- Yes.

Perhaps if I can just show you these images. They will come up on your screen.

40

COMMISSIONER: Is this on Exhibit 152?

MS WILSON: That is the case.

VIDEO PLAYED

MS WILSON: It paused there. There are others, but we'll just wait until we go to those others. We saw images of a fast flowing river going past your residence. Murphys Creek under normal circumstances, how wide would that be?-- Along our campground down the bottom there are places, the majority, where it's 2 to 3 metres wide mostly dry. When we bought the place the year before, it hadn't flooded for 18 months, so it

50

was filled with lantana before we bought the place. But 2 to 3 metres wide with two swimming holes that were considerably wider. But the average width between 2 and 5, I would say.

1

That image, do you recall when you took that?-- That was around 1.45, thereabouts, in the afternoon. We had had quite an extensive draining period with that creek line flooding up and down for the two weeks prior to this day. We'd got campers out the day before, so there was nobody there, so we decided to have a quiet afternoon. I was just sitting in the lounge room and I looked out at one stage and the creek was at its flooded normal over the lower creek line. And then the rain was - had started to fall considerably heavier, and it was only 10 minutes later I looked out and I actually - a wave had broke at my eye level sitting on the lounge room floor. That's when I stood. In that ten minutes the water had come up to there.

10

Perhaps if we can now look at the next image.

20

VIDEO PLAYED

MS WILSON: Now, the water had risen since that last time you took that video image?-- That's right. It's only 2 minutes between the two videos.

30

Two minutes?-- Yes.

Between the first video and that video you took there?-- Yes.

After that video, did you evacuate?-- Yes, we did. That guy is Brad Vaughn, who lives on the hill from us on our side of Murphys Creek. We drove up - grabbed my daughter and wife. We drove up to his place, parked the car and walked straight back down. In that time the water had come up another 2 to 3 metres and gone down about 7 in an hour.

40

Perhaps if we can look at the next image.

VIDEO PLAYED

MS WILSON: That was when you returned. Can you give us some time between the second video and the third video?-- It would be just over an hour.

50

We've got one more video. If you could have a look at this, please.

VIDEO PLAYED

MS WILSON: Perhaps if you can just provide some commentary while this is being played. Again can you give us a time span from the last video that we saw?-- It would only be, from memory, a couple of minutes. You would have to check the properties of them, but not that long between that and the previous video.

10

Taken at the same time when you came back to-----?-- Pretty much the same location. I hadn't moved.

We saw a sign there that I think was your carpark sign. That is where the cars used to park?-- Yeah. The concrete structure that's next to it was a driveway that led down to the lower campground. We used to have issues with people just turning up and driving down there. So that sign was stipulating that visitors who were coming were not to use that driveway. They'd go to the local - to the lower campground, they were in fact to use that carpark that I showed you that disappeared off to the right.

20

And you've also provided us with some stills images. Perhaps if we could look at those now. The photograph that we see here, that was taken before the flooding events of January 2011?-- Yes.

30

We talked about - you talked about - in your evidence about the camping ground near the creek?-- Yes.

We can see a green patch of grass down near the creek?-- Yes.

How wide is that?-- Down this end here, between 30 and 40 metres, restricted to 15 to 20 metres on the bend, and then back to 30 to 40 metres on the far end of the top right-hand side of that photograph.

40

Perhaps now we can look at the next image. This was taken after the floods?-- Yes.

Where was this photograph taken from?-- From the same advantage point as the last one.

And it seems to be that there's a lot of rock there?-- Yes. I don't know if you can see it, but the only remaining evidence of the lower campground is in the centre left of that photograph. There's about a 10-metre strip of green grass. The rest has been stripped back to bedrock, particularly in the far ground (sic), and the actual location of the creek line is totally changed to the left.

50

Perhaps if we look at the next image, please. This image was taken prior to the floods in January?-- Yes.

And that's from the camping ground looking back up?-- That's looking back to the same location that we were standing in your previous previous shot.

1

Yes. And is there any tree here that you would like us to take attention to with reference to the next photograph?-- Sure. Particular notice the large gum on the right-hand side.

Yes. Perhaps if we look at the next photo. This was after the flood events?-- Correct.

10

That gum that you refer to in the previous photograph, can you identify it in this photograph?-- With reference to the arrow?

Yes?-- Just to the left of it.

Okay. Now if I can take you to the report that you completed with Mr Phil Box. In the report, you say that you and Phil Box took on the leadership and coordination role at the Murphys Creek flood relief centre?-- Yes.

20

When did you do that?-- We were flooded in for four days post the flood. On the Thursday we were able to get fuel and some basic supplies brought across using an aluminium boat with abseiling ropes, et cetera, et cetera. On the Friday I went to take that fuel back into the relief centre, and it was then I realised there were 200 to 300 people there and there was no order, but a lot of chaos. And so I went home and got my old command bag and stuff together and went in to try and get some order in there.

30

You talk in the - in this report that the tavern effectively became the evacuation centre?-- Yes.

The local school, you say, was also used as an evacuation centre?-- Yes. It was the originally intended location for the evacuation centre. That's who the managers of the tavern - that's where they were told to direct displaced persons to. The school had been inundated, had no power, and whereas the - and no, let's say, permanent attendants, and so was clearly the wrong place for an evacuation centre to be based.

40

Let's talk about the infrastructure that was damaged in relation to Murphys Creek. First of all, the Rural Fire Brigade. At page 3 of your report you say they had their equipment and facilities destroyed by flood?-- Correct.

Then on page 9 you talk about the critical communication equipment and vehicles were destroyed, rendering them ineffective?-- Correct.

50

Are you talking about the communications in vehicles, or are you actually talking in the broader sense about the Rural Fire Brigade?-- Sure. My comment was in relation to - communications are the critical vulnerability of every operation you do. And because they had lost - had swept away and/or damaged every ounce of communication and vehicle

equipment initially, the initial response of the fire association, the Rural Fire Brigade, was not as it would have been had they had their equipment. Once they had stand-in equipment and communications gear given to them, then they started to operate as an outfit. Yet later in the report, as you see, the stovepiping of the different agencies - maybe you'll cover this-----

1

Yes, we'll come to that in a moment. But if we can just talk about the Rural Fire Brigade. You said, "Their follow-on response was inadequate, as they simply joined the army of emergency service organisations walking the ground"?-- Yeah, correct. Here was no command centre established. Each organisation - even on the day I arrived, the Rural Fire Brigade with some of the urban fire guys were having an O group - an orders group on the front veranda on the front entry to the pub, and the SES were gathered just off to the side doing the same. Then they starburst and went about doing their routines. I knew one of the head guys from the local fire association and said, "Mate, what's going on? Who are you guys reporting to? How is this all sort of functioning?" This was in a period when I was trying to get a feel for how the whole thing was running. I didn't just sort of walk in and start mouthing off. I wanted to try and find out how it was happening. And the direction was they were just targeting what they wanted to target or had been told to target, and that's how it was operating.

10

20

And how could this have been done more effective in your opinion?-- I think what needed to be established was order. Any order - we needed to have the command elements withdraw themselves from the situation so they could get some situational awareness. So it required the SES to have a command element in a command centre. It required the fire brigade, it required the army, it required the police, it required EMG, it required every element that was involved in that search and initial reaction phase to have the information come in to a central location, have it coordinated centrally. Every single organisation operated independent will independent command, independent reporting. And that's why I believe that the Lockyer valley Council were not informed of the true devastation and continued to not be adequately informed for days.

30

40

Why do you say that was the reason why the Lockyer Valley Regional Council weren't truly informed?-- The information was staying within, as I said before, stovepiped within each organisation. So unfortunately, you would have one house door knocked by three or four different organisations in a day, all of them with different - differing or inadequate questionnaires or reasons for attending that location. And it's my belief - and it's only my belief, because I wasn't privy to any structures in place in the Lockyer Valley in the disaster management centre and was not privy to any of that sort of stuff throughout the entire response pretty much. It's just my belief that these organisations, acting independently, the information was not centralised; therefore,

50

proper situational awareness of the entire disaster and the response required to react adequately was not gained.

1

And at page 4 of this report you say that you took on the coordination task at the tavern and put in place a coordination structure and systems to insure that help was able to be provided to residents?-- Yes.

The systems you developed you've stated there. They were developed to deal with a range of issues: from a creation of a database to record offers of assistance and offers of help, down to even doing media liaison. So who developed these systems?-- Look, you know, I don't think any one person could have a finger pointed at them. It really was an amazing community response. There were guys - Ben Lawler, who is an aviation major, was actually in the centre before I arrived. He had arrived there a couple of hours before I did. We then split the roles into he took on the administrative and humanitarian side of things, and I took on the heavy works and the media liaison and the larger oversight of the centre. Under him then came some more guys that came down from Oakey Aviation Base who started to establish the administrative side of things, the databases and those sorts of things that were necessary to try and stop the locals getting door knocked by 5 million people, and we started to gather some information of what's required. Things like who has had their septic totally washed away? Who has had their water tanks inundated with flood water, therefore they are spoiled? Who requires power? You know, all these utility essentials because they are not on town water that, you know, in the four, five, six days up to that with all these emergency service hadn't been captured. Probably been spoken about and informed, but not captured. Then you have people like Shrek Construction closed down his entire construction company for two weeks, and he established the medium works down at Murphys Creek. So when these reports came in from, say, the army of Bunnings volunteers who went out and actually completed these questionnaires, they would be entered into the database, and then we could effectively assigned tasks to be sent out to local plumber Jason Ball to do that stuff; electricians in Beutel Electricians; and that we had a army of small trucks and excavators and bobcats that were coming into the area.

10

20

30

40

50

It was mentioned - touched on before by the inspector that the shortfall in that area was gravel, accessing gravel and stuff like that. At no time was any machinery laying idle. We touched base with these quarries straightaway. We were given assurance that it would be covered under NDRRA and we just operated blindly under that assurance which has now since become a critical vulnerability for these companies and they're only just starting to get squared away now, which is a shame.

1

Just going back to the questionnaire that you put out to the residents?-- Yes.

10

So did you devise a template?-- No, I didn't. That came through Ben Lawler and the guys under that administrative side of things. From what I was doing, it was just too hard for me to get involved-----

COURT REPORTER: Sorry, can I just get you to slow down. Sorry, can you start again?-- Yeah, it was too hard to get involved in that level of administration and still keep oversight of the centre. So we had some fantastic local women that came from local businesses who would start to grab this information and put it through. So the template was designed by the people working alongside and with Ben Lawler, the major.

20

And the purpose of the template was that all of this data could be in a central database?-- Yes, that's right.

30

And then as tasks were done, then that could be crossed off and the next task could be moved on to?-- That's correct.

In your report you talk about that a template is attached. Where has this template gone?-- Yeah, look, we - I wrote this report whilst I was still in the centre and when the liaison officer that the council appointed on the 21st arrived down there, that side of the operation was handed to him. He was given a complete handover of the database. He was handed the database by Ben Lawler's people and he was given the templates, et cetera. Everything that was put on personal computers from my understanding was handed over to him.

40

At page 6 of your report you talk about - you cover the issues that you had to deal with and the response to those issues. I won't take you through all of those issues but I would just like to refer you to some of those. The coordination of government agencies at page 8, and it is referred there as 8D "Volunteer Emergency Assistance". That's when you talk about the stovepipe effect and that's when you're talking about each of these organisations running in parallel but to your view they weren't actually coordinating the information they were getting?-- That's correct.

50

Now, that's when you provide a recommendation that there needs to be a system in place to establish a control centre immediately following a disaster?-- Correct.

Now, in your experience there, in terms of that's just different government agencies about tasks they were doing. What about the information that was being sought from residents, for example, missing persons list? Can you offer us any observations or experiences that you had in relation to that?-- Yeah, I found it quite interesting and it wasn't until after the event that I realised that there was never really a consolidated missing persons or missing persons list and it wasn't revisited on my understanding over any time by any structured government agency, from what I could understand. I still remain vague as to exactly how many people were missing in the area, which is crazy.

1

10

And the residents were often asked on multiple times about the status of them and their loved ones?-- Sorry, I know where you're going here. Yeah, correct. Yeah, look, some people had - as it says here third paragraph down, you know, "There are some houses that were doorknocked 11 times within one week which generated some angst." In fact, it generated a lot of angst.

20

Just in relation to the tavern, the Murphys Creek Tavern, at its peak how many people was it accommodating, not sleeping there but people coming in on a daily basis and seeking food, shelter or just a community - community environment?-- Sure. Again, I can only speak from the Friday and the day I went in there, there would be no less than 300 people in and around that. Now, for a town of 400, 450, you know, and there were no less than 300 people. Now, that included volunteers who had just driven from Redcliffe or wherever, people congregating around. You know, emergency services where three or four organisations had 20 or 30 volunteers there themselves. So, you know, who was there I couldn't tell you but at that stage, and that seemed to be in the - and you would have seen through the media coverage of place that was always a very, very busy and pushed to capacity with all of its systems.

30

Now, you talk about, in your report, that from the 22nd of January 2011 a liaison officer was provided by the Lockyer Valley Regional Council?-- Yes.

40

Did that assist in-----?-- No.

No?-- No. We had - is it Murweh Council that was mentioned earlier? I forget the correct pronunciation. We had two people placed within the relief centre post the head guy from that council coming in and briefing at the community event. They were excellent. There was a Carola Washbourne and a Tim Payne from those councils. They were, in effect, to come in and take over the running of the organisation.

50

Sorry, just pause there. What organisation?-- Of - of the relief centre itself.

Yes?-- Or the rogue outpost. They were going to come in and put some water in here and correct the running of it and that's where it would get its governmental control, its

governmental oversight. Carola Washbourne, in particular, was the person heading it up and she is one of the few - only - I think the only full-time disaster manager in Queensland that's paid from what I understand. She did an assessment of the operations of the centre and informed us that Tim Payne was going to take care of the administrative side of things - that is, all the dockets we collected from the quarries, from the electrical companies that had donated stuff that we were using, generators and so on. And he was going to take that through the NDRRA process with the Lockyer Valley council. He was also filling out the situational reports that were being sent back up to the Lockyer Valley council. Carola was there one and a half days. She then went to the Lockyer Valley council, spoke to her boss and said that she was wasted out there, that she needed to be in the Lockyer Valley Regional Disaster Centre and help them get their operations set aside adequately as Murphys Creek was running itself fine and she could leave Tim there. I don't know what happened in at the local council but that organisation, they sent her and Tim Payne home fairly quickly, maybe within three days.

1

10

20

And what date are you talking about that they arrived?-- Look, I couldn't tell you off my head.

Well, can we benchmark it in relation to the Lockyer Valley Regional Council arriving on the 21st of January I believe?-- Sure.

Was that before or afterwards?-- That was after these guys were there, yep. Now, to get over to the Lockyer Valley council, so then what Tim Payne was doing then was taken over by this young guy that came in from the Lockyer council and, unfortunately, instead of it becoming a hub for the council to direct and to command and control the relief centre, it actually - its sole reason for existence that I can work out there was to start to sort out the NDRRA issues. He was an administrative officer, not of anyone of, you know, any command status, not anyone of any council status, as in councillor. Nobody had the capacity to take over the command and control or even liaison for that centre.

30

40

Just one other point that I would like to take you to. At page 9, one of the recommendations that you give is that you state that the local emergency service, that is the CFA - just to be clear, what are referring you to when you refer to the CFA?-- Country Fire Association, the rural fire brigade.

That you believed that the rural brigade should take the lead on a local reaction to any disaster of this magnitude?-- Yes.

50

Why do you say that?-- I think it's really highlighted in this instance. The councils say they couldn't get within cooe of the place. Local knowledge is - is paramount and these local operators exist in the town. They know every street, they know every road and they know a lot of the people. To wait for an outside agency to come in and develop situational awareness to the point where they can command and control a disaster is too long and if these guys are already

in location and can get together and start to give some guidance and get some situational awareness and at least pass that up to other agencies, I think we're well ahead of where we were as a result of this - this flood.

1

Would you envisage that that local agency of the rural fire brigade take the lead on coordination?-- Yes. Initial stages. I - yeah.

That is the coordination of the SES and matters like that?-- I think that's a double-edged sword and, you know, it is an observation. It would depend on the capacities of the local command. We've heard today through the mayor that SES and organisations like that are struggling because they've got old people, to an extent not - don't have the capacities to command and control, to give leadership. They are simply volunteers who can help fill sandbags and that sort of thing and that's the kind of people we're talking about here. So we need to ensure that if we are going to go down that road, that there are people with the capacity to initiate command and control, otherwise it will descend into anarchy. So it is a double-edged sword. It is an observation. It is purely only my observation. If we had somebody of the capacity to step in at that level, I think it would work. But if we don't - I preface it by saying this: some reaction is better than no reaction. So they have to be empowered to do something instead of waiting for four days or whatever it was for an official, you know, "We can get through now so the council can come down and have a look."

10

20

30

Thank you, Mr Souter. I have no further questions.

MS McLEOD: I have no questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr MacSporran.

MR MacSPORRAN: Mr Souter, I actually missed the start of your evidence in terms of your background. Did I understand correctly that you have a background in the army?-- Yes.

40

So you're in a very good position to objectively assess the performance of various agencies and personnel in response to these events; is that so?-- Yes.

And that, if I may say so, is readily apparent in the report that you have provided and you have been talking about recently. You've also in that report recognised, haven't you, the limitations of certain agencies by virtue of their background and training and the enormity of the events. You've recognised all of those objective features, haven't you?-- Yes.

50

Your most recent evidence about the way to beef up, as it were, the response to make it more adequate would be to have some greater expertise available to assist people who don't have the relevant background and training?-- Yes.

And we've heard some evidence here from members of the Queensland Police Service that have spoken of something of the order of a flying squad of experts who could be rapidly introduced to a situation to assist the locals deal with an event of this sort of magnitude. That's, effectively, the sort of role you played, isn't it, in assisting to coordinate some of the responses from the recovery centre?-- Yes.

Now, I'm particularly interested in your assessment of the performance of the Queensland Police Service in the events as you observed them. Can you just tell us briefly what your view of that is?-- Sure. Again, I can only speak from the Friday. So - and am totally in the dark as to the initial response and search sweeps that took place along the creek lines, et cetera. I am aware that there was a presence in the school of uniform personnel. We were given a corporal or constable liaison officer about 10 or 12 days into the activity and they were very good. They - wherever they could, they would be there every day where they could. Or if we had a grey area of stepping out of our boundaries as which we did very regularly not having any auspice of any sort, they were pretty good to speak as to their legislative requirements, et cetera, et cetera. Other than that, we had daily visits from a federal police and local police officer patrol, and particularly from our business point of view we had a daily visit out at the camping park. You know, so the presence of the police was - was very good and I think that went a long way to reassuring the locals that, you know, they were about and that they were safe in a time that could have turned into anarchy.

Were you able to assess from what you saw and knew of the way they operated the adequacy of the structures they had to perform their roles?-- I wasn't privy to a lot of their structures to be honest. I would say though that it was - it was good that both inspectors - now Maurice, I can't remember his last name.

Is it Poiner?-- Poiner I think, yeah, correct, and the other inspector here were very, very approachable and they were excellent from the start and they didn't - they realised the centre was running itself adequately, even though we were outside of the auspice of disaster management framework, and did everything they can to work alongside that structure because it was working. But other than that, we didn't see or I wasn't privy to the systems of the police in response to the disaster.

You have mentioned, it seems quite appropriately, there was a degree of a lack of coordination between the separate agencies which did hinder the process to some extent and you said, however, that - this is on page 7 of your report in the second paragraph - despite, inferentially, those difficulties, the centre, that's the centre where you were working, was supported by State Government emergency services and community support agencies?-- Yes.

So that seemed to work in spite of itself, did it, from
your-----?-- Yeah, it did. Yeah, it did. Not even in spite
of itself. Look at the big picture of the thing. A lot more
accurate information could have been gathered a lot quicker if
the agencies had have had a streamlined command and reporting
system. What I'm referring to here is that the government
agencies mobilised and situated out of the front of the tavern
there and were very effective in the initial stages of
addressing the needs of the locals, particularly when it come
to Centrelink payments and those sorts of things, which I
think saved a lot of the angst with a lot of people.
Lifeline, the chaplaincy agencies were absolutely outstanding.
They had better situational awareness than some of our -
unfortunately, than some of our emergency service reaction.

1

10

I understand. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Gibson?

MR GIBSON: No, thank you, Commissioner.

20

COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson, any re-examination?

MS WILSON: No re-examination, Madam Commissioner, may
Mr Souter be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, thanks, Mr Souter, you're excused.

30

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Robert Bundy.

40

50

ROBERT FREDERIC BUNDY, AN AFFIRMATION, EXAMINED:

1

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name and occupation, please?-- Robert Frederick Bundy. I'm the regional director for Emergency Management Queensland for South West Region.

Mr Bundy, are you the author of a statement dated the 5th of April 2011, an eight-page statement; is that correct?-- That's correct.

10

I'll show you a copy of that. That's your statement?-- Yes, that's correct.

I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 177.

20

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 177"

MR CALLAGHAN: Can I start by asking you some questions about Emergency Management Queensland or EMQ. We understand that training is an important part of the organisation's responsibilities?-- Yes, correct.

30

And I just wonder if you can elaborate on that a bit. Is it training of organisations, individuals; how is it structured; to whom is it targeted, those sort of issues. Is there a simple answer to that question?-- Probably not a simple answer. We deliver disaster management training to local governments, government agencies, non-government agencies. So it is basically giving a background on how the disaster management system works. We go a little bit further in depth and we run training on coordination centres, how to run a disaster coordination centre, various other aspects such as the emergency alert, the resupply processes. So there's a whole range of different training that goes into it or different areas that get covered.

40

Sticking with the local government level, is that organised within the framework of the Disaster Management Act? That is, is training directed at Local Disaster Management Groups?-- It is, yes.

50

And at local governments?-- Particularly - not all local governments. Those - sorry, not all local government employees. It is directed at local government employees that are involved in the disaster management process. So it is open to others that want to be involved or get an understanding of it. So we would deliver it to councillors, I suppose, in the first instance and then employees that are involved in the actual disaster management process.

But when you say to councils in the first instance, is it - and I appreciate the distinction might be a subtle one?-- Yep.

But is it to the council or to the Local Disaster Management Group, which is effectively run-----?-- We do it to both. We'll do it to councillors to give them an understanding of their obligations under the disaster management process and the arrangements but specifically, I guess, to those councillors and staff who are specifically involved in disaster management process for their respective councils.

10

We understand that the State Government as a whole received a warning in October of last year that this wet season was going to be a particularly severe one. Was something like Operation Orko a response to that or was Orko because of the amendments to the Act, or why did Orko happen?-- No, Orko was - they had run a similar type of exercise, I can't say exactly when, in Cairns six to 12 months prior to that. It's a program of rolling out major exercises to various parts of the region. We were sort of given the second option. The - the actual warning of - that it was going to be a wet season came probably after Orko was certainly planned and we had been working on it for three months on writing the exercise and developing the exercise. So the warnings came probably around the Orko time or afterwards. So it was purely by coincidence. It wasn't reaction to the - to the warning.

20

We'll come back to Orko in a second but what specifically was done, if anything, in response to those warnings received from the Bureau of Meteorology?-- Look, we put our processes in place for staff. We made sure that staff were going to be available over the Christmas break. A lot of them cancelled their holidays. We certainly took the message further out to the District Disaster Management Groups and the Local Disaster Management Groups to be prepared because we were expecting a - a worse season than normal.

30

Well - sorry. Can I just stop you there?-- Yep.

40

How was that message taken out to, say, the Local Disaster Management Groups?-- Just advice given at - at Local Disaster Management Group meetings. There was a number of meetings. Particularly - most meetings, they'll have three - two or three or four, it depends on the council or the group. But, generally, there is always a meeting around the November/December period, early December, usually because that's around the start of storm season traditionally. So we would - we have staff, whether it's myself or one of my staff, in attendance at those meeting and that was certainly to put the message across that we were expecting a particularly bad season.

50

Was any such briefing given to the Lockyer Valley Regional Council?-- Yeah, we've been working closely with the Lockyer Valley for - for a number of months now and they were certainly told. We actually had a meeting with them prior to

the - they had a fairly significant change of staff so we were aware of some issues and the council's - I suppose, a good thing for the council, they were very proactive in trying to be prepared. As I said, they had new players involved in the game and they were certainly doing everything they could prior in the months leading up to Christmas to try and get their arrangements and processes in place.

1

Sorry, when was the meeting at which the specific warning was-----?-- Sorry, I haven't got the exact date. I couldn't tell you at this time. But it wasn't a warning. It was just a meeting where myself and the DDC was present - sorry, the District Disaster Coordinator was present in our office and two representatives from council came up and we just went through some processes on their preparation for the coming storm season.

10

Do you remember which two council members it was?-- Two staff. They weren't council. I couldn't remember their names offhand.

20

Do you remember which staff?-- No, sorry.

Do you know whether they were members of the LDMG?-- Yes.

Was one of them the LDC?-- Yes, at the time, yes. Gerry Franzmann I think his name is, yep.

So that was a meeting which was convened by you in your office in Toowoomba; is that right?-- It took place in Toowoomba. It would have been early December. I couldn't give you the exact date though.

30

Was there any follow-up from that?-- We'd been working with them consistently for a quite a period of time, as I said to try and get their - as part of the results of the exercise that you mentioned earlier, they recognised there was some, I suppose, extra work that they needed to do in setting up their coordination centre and having their processes in place and we'd been working over a period of time with them to undertake that process.

40

Setting up their coordination centre, did you say?-- Yes.

And what else?-- Just so that they have got arrangements in place and the people in place to - to be prepared for if anything happened.

Would those arrangements extend to something like evacuation centres?-- It would have been part of the discussion of that.

50

Well, what was your assessment as to their - as to the state of their plans as regards evacuation centres?-- Without having seen it specifically, I'd say it was still a work in progress.

Well, was it a work that had started?-- Yes.

And how did you satisfy yourself of that?-- Well, they have

identified centres that could be used in their plan and as to what facilities were there and whether they were suitable facilities needed to be further investigated.

1

But did they identify centres to you that could be used for the purposes of the Disaster Management Plan?-- Not directly to me but it would have been incorporated as part of their process.

Just-----?-- Sorry, not directly to me but it would have been incorporated as part of the planning process.

10

It would have been?-- Yes.

We might come back to that. Can we return to Orko. We have an understanding as to what was involved in the operation but how was the success or effectiveness of the operation monitored?-- We had - EMQ had a person located in each participating coordination centre. So there was the five local governments that participated. We had a staff member there to basically ensure that the exercise progressed along in the right pace and also to do some evaluation of the outcome of the exercise, and we also had a staff member placed at each of the three disaster districts that were involved in the exercise.

20

It is probably the evaluation process that I'm interested in. Was there any follow-up to determine what had been learned by particular-----?-- Each council participated in - each local government that participated in the exercise did a review of the exercise and the outcome and - and then looked at steps that they needed to identify from that.

30

And-----?-- Did a debrief, sorry, to put it in technical terms.

Was all that recorded?-- It would have been recorded at - I wasn't participating in every one of those but we had it in our summary of the feedback that we received of the exercise.

40

Do you know if that's one of the documents we've been provided with, the debrief?-- It should have been, yes.

Yes, all right. Thank you. We know that Mr Jones, as Chair of the Lockyer Valley Local Disaster Management Group, was not able himself to participate, although he is recorded as saying that he was kept briefed about what was happening. From your perspective, was there any issue with that, the Chair of the local LDMG not being able to participate in the exercise?-- No, I don't have an issue with that because it is actually - in some cases it is not a bad thing because, you know, the Chair is not going to be there 365 days a year. They could be away, for whatever reason, when an event strikes. So it is actually good opportunity for someone else to step into the role.

50

What other opportunities or training were available to the Lockyer Valley Regional Council between October and December

of 2010?-- Probably no - probably no other opportunities that were requested. So if they needed something, we would have followed through but the exercise was our main one for this year, in preparation I guess.

1

In particular, no - well, let's go back through 2010. What, if any, specific operational training opportunities would have been afforded to a council like Lockyer Valley during 2010?-- The exercise was the main one to look at disaster management. The rest was working through them. We have had staff down there who have been working through them reviewing their plan and reviewing some of those processes but no specific training was involved.

10

You are aware, of course, of the requirements that are placed upon a Local Disaster Management Group by the Disaster Management Act?-- Yes.

To what extent, if any, would EMQ be concerned to ensure that an LDMG had complied with their requirements under the Act?-- We monitor it as much as we can and we then advise them that if there's something we feel is a shortcoming of it, we would advise them that they need to consider this as an option or as a direction to go. So if there was something we saw as a definite shortfall, we'd advise them accordingly.

20

Well, you certainly do that because we know, for example, that Mr Fraser attended a meeting on the 23rd of September and made some suggestions. That's a meeting of the Lockyer Valley LDMG?-- Yep.

30

But when you say you monitor it, how do you do that?-- We have area directors, two area - three area directors in this region and they are designated to specific local governments. Now, they work with that local government and help them work their system with their planning, with their preparation procedures. So the area directors are the ones that are in tune and they know where there may be shortfalls or where there may be some extra work needed and they all work with the LDMGs or the local groups to achieve that.

40

So on the question of monitoring, is that something that's left to the discretion of an area director?-- Yes.

There is no formal requirement for an area director to have a checklist or something like that to make sure that people have reviewed their plans or had their meetings?-- We do do plan reviews but there is no actual checklist, no.

When you say you do plan reviews, again, that's something that an area director might do-----?-- Yep.

50

-----in the exercise of their own discretion?-- Yes.

But whether or not they did it would be a matter for them?-- Yes.

But EMQ is available to offer assistance-----?-- Certainly.

-----to any local authority or Local Disaster Management Group who wanted help in complying with the Act; is that right?-- Yes, certainly.

You'd only have to be asked?-- Yes.

Turning then to the topic of public education, is that part of the EMQ function?-- It is but we're, I guess, limited by resources that we have.

10

Sure. Well, what is your obligation as you understand it?-- Well, we try to get the messages out to the communities. Again, we work with the local governments and try and get messages out through our various avenues that we have. We work with the local media where we can to try and get safety messages or messages out as storm season approaches or other events like that happen. We-----

That's what you do, but what's your obligation? Why do you do that?-- Because with the - it's basically to try and increase community resilience. If people are prepared and can undertake the processes themselves, hopefully if an event does happen then the extent of the damage or the extent of the problems caused will be reduced.

20

That is indeed an answer to my question why you do it, but why do you feel compelled to do it? Is it part of your duty-----?-- It is part of EMQ's role to undertake public awareness, yes.

30

That brings us back to your first response, I think, which was one of - where you referred to the budget that might be allowed for that purpose. Do you feel that that's limited?-- Oh, look, everyone would like more money but we do what we can with what we've got. We have - we undertake things at public events like the shows and that where we hand out brochures to prepare for storm season, prepare for floods. We have - I have staff that actually do discussions for community groups for your Lions Clubs, your Apexes and school groups. They undertake some disaster management work with those and certainly get the public awareness message out through that.

40

I have seen elsewhere in materials obtained by the Commission reference to a document called the SES Get Ready Guide?-- Yes.

Are you aware of that document?-- Yes.

That was something that was specifically prepared for the wet season just past, was it?-- Yep.

50

And was that distributed in this region?-- It was distributed to our SES groups for handing out to the public.

Throughout-----?-- Yes, throughout the region.

Specifically, is there a dimension to the public education which is concerned with the topic of driving into flooded

roadways?-- No, not specifically from our - our view, no.

1

There's not?-- Not a publication. We do do warnings.

No, not publication, but just a - is there a specific aspect of your education function?-- Oh, we do the warnings where we can because we have a lot of - a lot of cases in all these flood events where people do drive through flooded waters and we certainly put out through our connections with the ABC and local media with the WIN television and that here, we certainly use our local media resources to get the message out where we can.

10

That's what I was going to ask you though. There's certainly - one hears those advertisements on the ABC Radio in particular. Where else do you disseminate those?-- Local television stations up here are very supportive on - on getting the messages out coming up to storm season and those type of events. So they've - get the messages out. And EMQ has a media branch which certainly puts out various warning messages. One was recently just before Easter for about hiking and boat safety. So there's a whole range of messages that do get put out through the media outlets.

20

Do you have to pay those for those?-- No, generally they're done for us through their community service I guess.

COMMISSIONER: Given the loss of life from people driving into flood waters, would it be worth a specifically targeted advertising campaign before the wet season?-- Look, we certainly, I think, realise that, Madam Commissioner. We've gone from that step now and we certainly know with the ABC, I actually put a lot of things out on the radio for people to avoid driving through flood waters because it was an issue in this event as it is with a lot of events. So it's just people don't realise the dangers that can be from that so it is a very important point that we have taken on board from this event.

30

Does that mean you think it might be worth it or-----?-- Yes, I think it would, yes.

40

Thank you?-- Sorry.

MR CALLAGHAN: What about evacuation centres? Is it any part of EMQ's function to educate the public as to where they might find shelter in the time of crisis?-- No, that's the Local Disaster Management Group's function for that.

So it is nothing to do with EMQ?-- No.

50

Again, in other material that I've seen in other aspects of the Commission's duty, I have seen reference to some draft evacuation guidelines issued by the EMQ in November of last year. Are you aware of any such thing?-- Yes, they're still in draft format and they're going out again for further consultation with local government at the moment.

So is that a change then in the position of public education about evacuation centres being part of EMQ's function or not?-- Look, I couldn't say it was part of EMQ's function. It is - we have a whole range of guidelines and processes that, as an organisation, we develop for the disaster management process. I mean, that's - that's our role as EMQ is the only organisation in the government that is solely for disaster management. Our role is to develop various guidelines to provide advice and assistance to local governments on what they should consider in evacuation centres, the structure of them, the materials that are involved - need to be involved incorporated into the process.

1

10

How long has the draft been in process, do you know?-- I couldn't tell you.

Obviously, at some stage someone in EMQ thought that evacuation guidelines were something that you should be issuing?-- I think this has stemmed over from - it is specifically targeted at the cyclones structures that have been under debate for a number of years now. So they're trying to put some process involved in that.

20

Are you familiar with the draft?-- I haven't - I have seen it but I'm not - wouldn't say over familiar with it.

Is it, from your recollection, specific to the cyclone-type situation or is it intended to have statewide application?-- It will have statewide application, yes.

30

I understand that EMQ has developed a range of online resources for local governments; is that right?-- We are developing - we've developed a training package for local disaster coordinators which is both - will be delivered by EMQ-----

No, this is - sorry to interrupt you, but what I understand may exist is some range of online resources for local governments which enables them to provide links on their own websites?-- Yes, there is. There is on the disaster management portal. There is links to the disaster management arrangements, the introduction to the disaster management and some packages along those lines.

40

Yes?-- And they can link into those.

And local governments have obviously been informed about-----?-- Yes.

-----this service. Were you aware as to which local governments in your region were using?-- None that I'm aware of, no.

50

None? Not Lockyer Valley anyway?-- No, we - not that I'm aware of, no.

Nor Toowoomba?-- Not that I'm aware or, no.

Was that fact brought out in Orko or any other part of the preparation for the wet season?-- Not specifically, no. We tend to deliver it in sort of a personal basis or on a training-type agenda rather than rely on online packages at this stage in this region.

1

Well, you don't have to rely on it to make it available-----?-- No.

-----for local governments, do you?-- No, we don't.

10

Can I ask you some questions about the SES and can we start with some general concerns which seem to be recurring in this Inquiry. We observed, first of all, that all of the SES are of course volunteers?-- Yes.

They're people of all ages?-- Yes.

And all different physical capabilities. That's a yes?-- Yes.

20

They clearly won't have had the physical training of a professional soldier or a fireman or someone else who might be able to assist in the case of a disaster?-- No.

Well, not necessarily anyway?-- Not necessarily.

There's also the question of the training that's now required to keep someone in the SES?-- Yes.

It is a more complicated exercise these days than it used to be for liability reasons?-- It certainly is, yes.

30

So for those and other reasons, the concern seems to be expressed that the numbers are dwindling especially in rural regional areas?-- In rural and regional areas, yes. In some areas - it goes up and down. It fluctuates. In some areas we're certainly struggling to get members; in other areas we're going quite well.

Overall the trend would be-----?-- Overall the trend would be down I'd say.

40

We've heard that perhaps local governments provide some financial incentive to memberships?-- Yes. It is a - it is a joint cooperation between the State Government and local government.

Tell us about that. Who does it, in your area?-- Yes. Basically, the State Government provides things like - there's subsidies for them but generally locums provide the buildings, certain equipment. We provide equipment, their overalls or their PPE equipment. A lot of the other equipment that they need, vehicles - it is a joint cooperation. Sometimes they can get a subsidy through the government for buildings, vehicles and some office equipment but, generally, the local government supply the remainder.

50

There's no system to this though, is that what I'm picking up?

That it is an ad hoc sort of a thing-----?-- It can be ad hoc, yes. It depends on - they applied for a subsidy so it really depends on, I guess, the initiative of the local government to apply for that subsidy. 1

So that's how it works, is it, the local government applies to the State Government for a subsidy?-- Yes.

And the subsidy then goes to the SES within that local government region?-- For specific things like equipment or motor vehicle - sorry, buildings and motor vehicles, in particular larger items. 10

What about actual payments to the volunteers, is-----?-- There's no payments to the volunteers. It is all voluntary.

I understand that they're not on the payroll, but is there any - do any councils offer financial incentives to individuals to participate?-- Some councils do have their local controller position as a paid personnel. 20

Right?-- Some do offer some sort of remuneration for, you know, the use of their personal phone and some of their time and their fuel. So there are varying amounts across the state. In this region we have one paid local controller and-----

Where is that?-- In Toowoomba Regional Council. The rest are all volunteers, the local controllers throughout the region, and some may receive some sort of small remuneration in lieu of using their own vehicle for certain things and certain phones and that sort of thing. 30

And that comes from the local government?-- Local government, yes. It is purely - there's no direction from us. That's purely a local government thing to look after their volunteers.

Yes. And it just depends upon which local government-----?-- Yes. 40

-----area the particular-----?-- Yes.

-----SES happens to be in?-- Yes.

Well, you have gone some way to answering my next question anyway and that is the relationship between local government and the SES. Again, there's no obligation on the local government to do anything to support their SES or is there? No statutory or-----?-- There isn't - under the Act there is an obligation for local government to have a disaster management capability which includes a workforce and generally they use the State Emergency Service as that capability. That's why they have them. But they also use - their SES does a lot of community work and a lot of other activities, Anzac Day parades, Carnival of Flowers, those sort of things. 50

So they generally use the SES to comply with a different

obligation. There's no specific obligation-----?-- No
specific I guess-----

1

-----on them to support the SES?-- No.

As a rule though, as you say, the local government would tend to supply premises, would they?-- Yes, the buildings and that are generally always local government. We don't - the government doesn't own any of the buildings, so they supply the facility that houses them where train.

10

So, again, there is going to be a variation in what's available depending upon which local government area?-- That's correct.

Another observation that's been made is that as a matter of commonsense, especially regional areas that the SES will be competing with other volunteer services for numbers?-- Yes. Small populations, it's the numbers - there are other agencies that do exist, rural fires, that or the of thing.

20

Yes?-- Yes, that's true.

Madam Commissioner, I am in your hands. I am going to be some time more with Mr Bundy. I'm happy to go on or adjourn.

COMMISSIONER: How much longer? What I'd want to know is would we have a prospect of finishing by 5 or not.

30

MR CALLAGHAN: Touch and go.

COMMISSIONER: I think we will adjourn in that event, Mr Callaghan.

MR CALLAGHAN: That's, I think, okay because I think Mr Bundy is local and that's not an issue?-- No, that's not.

But could I suggest perhaps an early starting time again tomorrow?

40

COMMISSIONER: 9.30 again or earlier?

MR CALLAGHAN: 9.15, would that be suitable?

COMMISSIONER: All right. Adjourn till 9.15, please?--

50

THE COURT ADJOURNED AT 4.32 TILL 9.15 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY