

**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

**Date:** 13 October 2011

**Name of Witness:** Carl Stuart Peterson

**Address of Witness:** [REDACTED] QLD 4170

**Occupation:** Formally Area Director, Moreton, Brisbane Region,

**Division:** Emergency Management Queensland  
Department of Community Safety

**Telephone:** [REDACTED]

I, Carl Stuart Peterson, formally the Area Director for Moreton, Brisbane Region, Emergency Management Queensland, Department of Community Safety state:

- that I was employed as an Area Director in Brisbane Region from July 2009 to May 2011;
- that, before that, I held several appositions in the (now) Department of Community Safety with Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) and the Business Support Services (BSS) Divisions. These included: acting Director, State Emergency Service (February 2009 – June 2009), Principal Coordinator SES Equipment (February 2007 – February 2009), Principal Coordinator Disaster Operations (January 2006 – January 2007), Principal Coordinator Counter Disaster Operations and SES Support (December 2004 – December 2005), acting Assistant Director SES and VMR Support (February 2004 – December 2004) (EMQ), Policy Analyst, Senior Project Officer and AIRS Implementation Manager QFRS (1998 – 2004), and Regional Information Management Officer BSS (1996 – 1998);
- that I was an active SES volunteer in Eastern Group, Brisbane SES Unit from May 2009 – January 2010;
- that I ceased employment with Emergency Management Queensland on 6 May 2011 and commenced employment with the Moreton Bay Regional Council as its Coordinator Disaster Management on 6 June 2011.

**1. My role and position within Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), including information about my direct supervisor and the person to whom I report in a disaster.**

- a. Whilst I was employed as an Area Director in Brisbane Region I reported to the Regional Director Brisbane Region. From July 2009 to May 2011 I reported to the following

This is page 1 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

**Witness** [REDACTED]:

**JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:** JP (Qual)



persons who acted in the role of Regional Director Brisbane Region (approximate dates) – Mr. Eddie Bennet (July 2009), [REDACTED] (August 2009 – July 2010), Mr. [REDACTED] (August 2010 – January 2011) and Mr. Michael Shapland (February 2011 onwards).

**2. The SES unit within the Moreton area including details (if known) of any paid SES members within the Moreton area.**

- a. The SES unit within the Moreton Area is the Moreton Bay Region (MBR) SES unit.
- b. Moreton Bay Regional Council pays an honorarium to the local controller. During the time of the disaster this was [REDACTED] until his resignation on 28 January 2011. The role was then managed by [REDACTED] deputy local controller, until a new recruitment process was finalised on 28 February 2011. [REDACTED] acted in the role until he was appointed on a three year contract to the position in July 2011.

**3. The adequacy of current SES volunteer numbers (including any issues with recruitment and retention of members), level of training and equipment and resources available to SES units within the Moreton area.**

- a. Current numbers for volunteers are considered adequate. As at 6 October 2011 MBR SES unit has 304 active members. At the time of my employment with EMQ this number was approximately 240 - 260 members on the books.
- b. Numbers of SES volunteers was considered adequate based on functions agreed for the MBR SES unit and the numbers required to be trained in those functions. Overall, the MBR SES Unit met its target for numbers of volunteers however not its target for numbers trained in the functions of flood boat and land search.
- c. The MBR SES unit is supported by the Moreton Bay Regional Council with the provision of nineteen vehicles for its six SES groups. This is a considerable number of vehicles for a SES unit within Queensland. The unit has four floodboats and EMQ is providing two additional floodboats in 2011/2012 along with further floodboat operator training.
- d. Recruitment is not an issue for the unit however retention of members at the group level is an issue. This can be put down to the adequacy of the leadership, the administrative burden in managing the volunteers, changes in the rules and regulations regarding training requirements, personality clashes amongst volunteers, adequate, practical and available training and difficulty in attracting volunteer trainers.
- e. Training issues most affect the volunteers. Initially volunteers can expect to attend a range of basic core-skills courses that are a pre-requisite for others. Due to the lack of core skills trainers some volunteers within the unit not receive training to make

This is page 2 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

Witness [REDACTED]:

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:

J P (Qual)



community member within the first 12 months (normally this should be finalised within 3 months). I understand the lack of core skills trainers is now being addressed by EMQ.

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

a. Ordinarily, requests for assistance for flood and storm related issues are passed through the 132500 number. At the time of my employment these would be passed to the Brisbane regional duty officer EMQ who then distributed them to the appropriate local controller.

b. I understand that newly established procedures enable these to be entered directly by Queensland Government call-takers at Smart Services Queensland (SSQ) into the 'Request for Assistance Online' (RFA Online) system. These requests are then monitored through RFA Online at the State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC). In Moreton, notification of a RFA is given directly to the responsible group leader via email and telephone call.

c. At the time of the 2010/2011 floods the MBR SES Unit local controller had access to a BlackBerry telephone to assist in managing these requests for assistance. Since the 2010/2011 floods Moreton Bay Regional Council has issued additional BlackBerry telephones to the two deputy local controllers and the six group leaders that form the executive of the MBR SES unit.

d. Other than when I was undertaking the role of regional duty officer I personally played no role in the management or prioritisation of ordinary requests. Requests for assistance, other than for flood and storm issues, such as a request from the Queensland Police Service for support to a land search, were made directly to the SES unit. As regional duty officer my role was simply to pass requests for assistance to the local controller for actioning.

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

a. My authority for, and role in, the tasking and deployment of SES members stems from the draft EMQ Roles Guide. This includes the "responsibility to coordinate, support and manage the provision of SES resources across boundaries in consultation with respective local governments".

b. In practice, this generally only occurred when I was undertaking the role of Regional Duty Officer, which meant speaking to the Local Controller and Moreton Bay Regional

This is page 3 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

Witness [REDACTED] :

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for  
Declarations:

JP (Qual)



Council and arranging for the identification and availability of volunteers to deploy to other parts of the State.

- c. The tasking of the volunteers, once deployed, was a matter for SES local controllers and group leaders, or the appropriate Incident Management team formed to undertake that role.
  - d. During large deployments to other areas of the State, as a region we would receive requests from other regions/local governments through the SES State Operations Centre, coordinate the call for volunteers to meet requirements, plan and communicate the logistics of the deployment through a deployment instruction, form (and ensure the equipping of) the deploying taskforce, ensure an liaison officer from EMQ or the SES deploy with the deploying taskforce, ensure that the taskforce return is managed, and that a debrief takes place after deployment.
  - e. Under the current legislation and guidelines the command of the SES is the responsibility of the local controller and my job was to support them in undertaking this responsibility.
  - f. The declaration of a disaster situation made no difference to my role in tasking and deployment of SES members, as no special powers were used in relation to such deployments.
6. Whether any SES members within the Moreton area were deployed to another area/region during the 2010/2011 floods and, if so, the process by which this occurred and my role in it.
- a. SES members were deployed to other areas/regions during the 2010/2011 floods. The table below shows the details.

Dates	Location	SES Volunteers	Notes
28 Dec 2010 - 1 Jan 2011	Dalby	2	Flood boat operators
29 Dec 2010 - 2 Jan 2011	Dalby	2	Flood boat operators
2 - 6 Jan 2011	Emerald	19	Flood cleanup
15 -19 Jan 2011	Fernvale	23	Flood cleanup
22 Jan 2011 - 20 Mar 2011	Grantham	150+	Numerous task forces support to search.

Table 1. Brisbane region cross-boundary deployments - 2010/2011 floods (table supplied by EMQ).

- b. A number of volunteers from the MBR SES Unit also deployed to the Brisbane Area to support cleanup operations in Brisbane on 15 and 16 January 2011.
- c. Following the deployments above and the impact of TC Yasi, Brisbane region SES filled a further 257 places in seven taskforces deploying to Cairns and Townsville between 4

This is page 4 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

Witness

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:

JP (Qual)



February and 2 March 2011. Eight EMQ regional staff (including myself) deployed as liaison officers or in other roles to support the cyclone cleanup.

- d. My role in this as either Brisbane regional duty officer or Area Director was to support the coordination of these arrangements and deployments. See further response to question 5.
7. Whether there are any SES units in the Moreton area with more than one Local Controller, and, where this is the case, a description of:
- the history of this arrangement and how it works in practice (in view of the combined effect of sections 84A and 85 of the Disaster Management Act 2003);
  - how SES members are tasked and deployed in that unit;
  - the person ultimately responsible for that SES unit during a disaster;
  - how communications are coordinated among the various local controllers for SES unit during a disaster and the process of communicating with the local disaster coordinator;
  - whether or not this arrangement is considered effective and/or whether or not it may be subject to review or amendment.

These questions do not apply to the Brisbane Region or the Moreton Area.

8. The nature of my contact and coordination with any Local Disaster Coordinator, Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Local Disaster Management Group, and other EMQ officers during the 2010/2011 floods.

- a. During the 2010/2011 floods and TC Yasi I was involved in the following deployments or activities:

Dates	Location	Notes
26 - 30 Dec 2010	Brisbane	Regional Duty Officer
2 - 9 Jan 2011	Dalby/Condamine	EMQ liaison officer/member to Western Downs Regional Council LDMG and Dalby DDMG
11 - 14 Jan 2011	Caboolture	EMQ liaison officer/member to Moreton Bay Regional Council LDMG and Redcliffe DDMG
15 -19 Jan 2011	Fernvale	Assisted the MBR SES unit Local Controller with a deployment to Fernvale
4 - 10 Feb 2011	Innisfail	SES liaison officer for taskforce deployment to Cairns, then Incident Controller/Logistics Coordinator Innisfail SES Depot/Sector

Table 2. Deployment activity for Carl Peterson

This is page 5 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

Witness [REDACTED]:

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:

JP (Qual)



- b. At other times I provided support through the coordination of volunteers from Brisbane region, provided logistical support through the purchase and provision of equipment or supplies, continued managing my day-to-day Area Director duties or was on leave for fatigue management.
9. Any instances, during the 2010/2011 floods, where EMQ's requirements or expectations of the SES differed from those of the Local Disaster Management Group or Local Disaster Coordinator, and how these issues were managed.
- a. There were no issues within my area or personally experienced by myself whilst on deployment.
10. The Government (State and State/Commonwealth) funding programs accessed by SES units within the Moreton area in the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11, and their role in all aspects of the funding application process and administration of this funding.
- a. This information has been provided in the statement of Regional Director Michael Peter Shapland, Brisbane Region EMQ.
11. Whether or not issues have been raised with me directly by SES members about the level of funding provided by the State Government, including any suggestions by SES members about how the funding arrangement could be improved.
- a. Only in general discussion has the issue of more funding been raised by SES members and that is for the provision of more or better equipment. Also, Moreton Bay Regional Council councillors have mentioned that the SES should be renamed to better reflect the fact that they believe local government provides significantly more funding than the State government. Each local government within Brisbane Region has, at one time or another, made general comment about the small size of the annual grant given to Councils to support the SES units and groups. Other than a general increase in the level of funding no other specific suggestion has been made to me.
12. The results of any assessment or debrief within their area relating to the performance of the SES units during the 2010/2011 floods.
- a. Individual deployment and group debriefs were undertaken by SES members and suggestions for improvement were made by various elements of the MBR SES unit. An internal debrief session was conducted with the MBR SES executive on 27 January 2011. The information collected from this debrief was included in a regional SES executive debrief held on 3 March 2011, which covered collectively SES operations in support of the Queensland Floods and deployments to TC YASI.

This is page 6 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

Witness

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for  
Declarations:

SP (Qua)

Reg.No

JUSTICE

b. The debrief lessons identified have been provided in the statement made by Brisbane Regional Director Michael Peter Shapland.

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

- a. Structure. There are three parties involved in the management and support of the SES - local government, state government (through Emergency Management Queensland) and the SES volunteers in their groups and units. It has become apparent to me that the SES volunteers do not identify themselves with either local or state government. Accordingly, there exists a 'tension' between the volunteers and the two levels of government that support them. Whilst there exists this 'us and them' mentality within the SES, the current negative culture experienced by the volunteers and staff will have a detrimental affect on the professionalism of the service and affect the ability of the service to retain its volunteers. A well funded SES comprising volunteers and paid personnel would go a long way to changing this culture.
- b. Funding. The SES is reliant on 'election commitment' funding to provide for adequate supply of equipment or training. This election commitment funding usually, but not always, continues on into base funding for the organisation. The SES does not have a secure funding source of its own other than through consolidated revenue, election commitment funding or grant applications. The provision of a guaranteed level of funding, such as through a levy, would give greater certainty to EMQ and the SES and allow for a more sustainable and strategic decision making and planning process.
- c. Command and Control. The SES manages well in small scale events that can be commanded at the local level by an SES group or unit. In larger scale events there exists a lack of clarity over who should take over control in such circumstances. This has led to confusion and caused much angst between the organisations charged with trying to help the affected community. The adoption of a more professional model of command and control as shown in other states and territories could be an improvement. New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia all have paid officers above the level of local controller. These paid officers are also identified as part of the SES, not as a separate organisation supporting them, in the case of EMQ. In larger SES units, a full-time paid local controller position, and paid administrative and training support for that position, should be considered. Smaller units could be modeled along the same lines as QFRS auxiliary stations where the leadership (Captains and Lieutenants) are provided with a more substantial allowance/honorarium to undertake their role than is currently received by SES executives from EMQ.

This is page 7 of a statement comprising 8 page/s.

Witness

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for  
Declarations:

JP (Qual)



Justices Act 1886

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

- (1) This written statement by me dated 13/10/2010 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 8 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make it knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating anything that I know is false.

..... Signature

Signed at *Strathpine* this *13<sup>th</sup>* day of *October* 2011

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

Witness [REDACTED]:

JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for  
Declarations:

*JP (Qual).*

