

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN JOHN MCCLELLAND
FOR
2011 QUEENSLAND FLOOD COMMISSION

DEFINITIONS

ABC means Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

BOM means the Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology.

CSA means Community Service Announcement.

DMR means Department of Main Roads in Queensland.

EMQ means Emergency Management Queensland.

Local Radio Queensland means the ABC's Local Radio network in Queensland, which encompasses 612 ABC Brisbane, ABC Coast FM Gold Coast and nine regional ABC Radio stations located around Queensland.

Queensland Floods means the floods that occurred in Queensland in December 2010 and January 2011.

RACQ means Royal Automobile Club of Queensland.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. My full name is Stephen John McClelland.
2. I am currently employed as ABC Local Radio's Regional Content Director for Queensland. I am also ABC Local Radio's Queensland Emergency Coverage Co-ordinator ("QECC").
3. I have worked for the ABC since 1991. From 1991 until 2001, I worked as a radio broadcaster in Tasmania. In 2001 I worked as Regional Content Manager, Toowoomba, until I became the Regional Content Director for Queensland in 2008. I started as the QECC when that role was first created in 2009. The role has been fulfilled by me ever since.
4. As ABC Local Radio's Regional Content Director for Queensland, I provide editorial guidance and direction for all programs generated by the nine ABC Regional stations in Queensland (Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maroochydore, Toowoomba, Longreach and Mount Isa). I am also responsible for:

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- a. coordination of staff and equipment so that all programs have the resources they require;
 - b. rostering;
 - c. technical tasks such as providing a program schedule to make sure programs and news are broadcast at the correct time; and
 - d. planning of large station events and broadcasts.
5. As the QECC, I oversee and coordinate all emergency broadcasting conducted by Local Radio Queensland. This involves working closely with Regional Content Managers, Content Directors and other ABC Managers to provide for the broadcast of emergency warnings and other essential information to the community during emergencies such as floods, tropical cyclones and fires. The peak activity for the QECC role is typically over summer – usually December to April. This is when Queensland is most vulnerable to tropical cyclones and flooding. Part of the role of the QECC is to establish and maintain internal and external relationships that will assist ABC Local Radio in times of emergency broadcasting. This involves educating and briefing staff on their roles and related matters, including the style and manner of emergency broadcasting.
6. Prior to the start of the summer period, the QECC meets regularly with various agencies including the BOM, EMQ, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Local Government. This contact with the agencies is undertaken in an attempt to gain reliable and up to date information (on, for instance, weather patterns) which can then be passed to relevant ABC managers and staff. This assists the ABC in planning where and when to deploy staff to maintain communication with communities that may be affected by emergency events.
7. During the Queensland Floods, I worked 5-6 days per week overseeing the ABC's emergency coverage. On my days off, other managers assumed this role. I was also generally accessible by telephone on my days off, to provide assistance as necessary.

PART 2: ABC STRUCTURE

8. The ABC is a single corporate entity which operates with an internal structure involving a number of divisions. ABC News, ABC Radio and ABC Television are the divisions with primary editorial control over the content of broadcasts. In relation to the making and transmission of broadcasts, those divisions are supported by a number of other units, including ABC Broadcast Operations (which has responsibility for ensuring that the ABC's broadcast signal is distributed to the relevant transmission towers) and ABC National Transmission (which oversees the operation of the ABC's agreement with Broadcast Australia, which owns and operates the transmission facilities used to broadcast ABC services).

9. ABC News is responsible for the content of a number of programs which are broadcast on radio and television, including the hourly radio news bulletins, the ABC News 24 channel, television news, *Lateline*, *Four Corners*, etc. Otherwise, ABC Television is responsible for television content and ABC Radio is responsible for radio content.
10. ABC Radio is further divided into separate areas for each of the ABC's domestic radio networks, namely ABC Local Radio, ABC Radio National, ABC NewsRadio, triple J and ABC Classic FM. (The ABC's International radio network, Radio Australia, is an area within the ABC's International Operations division.)
11. ABC Local Radio is further subdivided by state. As the Regional Content Director for Queensland, I report to the Local Content Manager, Queensland who reports to the 2 Managers of ABC Local Radio nationally. The Content Directors for 612 ABC Brisbane and ABC Coast FM on the Gold Coast also report to the Qld Local Content Manager.
12. Further, the ABC's nine regional stations in Queensland all have a Regional Content Manager who oversees all local operations and broadcasts. The Regional Content Manager answers to the Regional Content Director.

PART 3: ABC LOCAL RADIO QUEENSLAND NETWORK

13. Local Radio Queensland is made up of 11 stations. They are:
 - a. 612 ABC Brisbane: This is the metropolitan ABC Radio station in Brisbane. The broadcast frequency for this station is 612 AM.
 - b. ABC Coast FM, Gold Coast: The broadcast frequencies for this station are 91.7 FM and 720 AM.
 - c. ABC Coast FM, Maroochydore: The broadcast frequency for this station is 90.3 FM.
 - d. ABC Southern Queensland, Toowoomba: The broadcast frequencies for this station are 747 AM and 104.9 FM.
 - e. ABC Wide Bay, Bundaberg: The broadcast frequencies for this station are 855 AM and 100.1 FM.
 - f. ABC Capricornia, Rockhampton: The broadcast frequency for this station is 837 AM. (Please note that Rockhampton also has an outpost station at Gladstone)

- g. ABC Tropical North, Mackay: The broadcast frequency for this station is 101.1 FM
- h. 630 ABC North Queensland, Townsville: The broadcast frequency for this station is 630 AM.
- i. ABC Far North, Cairns: The broadcast frequencies for this station are 106.7 FM, 720 AM, 801 AM, 95.5 FM.
- j. ABC North West Queensland, Mt Isa: The broadcast frequencies for this station are 106.5 FM, 567 AM, 105.5 FM, 106.1 FM and 107.1 FM.
- k. ABC Western Queensland, Longreach: The broadcast frequency for this station is 540 AM.

14. It is usual for all of the stations listed above to present a mixture of local, statewide and national programming.

15. The breakdown of a typical day for 612 ABC Brisbane and ABC Coast FM is as follows:

- local "Breakfast" and "Mornings" programs from 0500 until 1100;
- statewide programs from 1100-1200;
- a national news program from 1200-1300;
- local programs from 1300-1800;
- a national news program from 1800-1900;
- statewide "Evenings" program from 1900-2200; and
- national programs from 2200-0500.

16. The breakdown of a typical day for the nine regional stations is as follows:

- local "Breakfast" and "Mornings" programs from 0500 until 1100;
- statewide programs from 1100-1300;
- a national news program from 1300-1400;
- statewide programs from 1400-1800;
- a national news program from 1800-1900;
- statewide "Evenings" program from 1900-2200; and
- national programs from 2200-0500.

17. All Local Radio Queensland stations, including 612 ABC Brisbane, have the ability to broadcast their own content from the station's local transmitters at short notice. Local broadcasts are transmitted only to that particular station's broadcast footprint (and any other station/transmitter which is taking a feed of that signal).

18. Before a Local Radio Queensland station switches to 'local' broadcasts, the procedure is that there would be a discussion between local staff and the relevant managers to determine what information needs to be broadcast, how often, and to which region (and therefore on which stations).
19. Local Radio Queensland's predetermined broadcast schedule (for any given station) is usually broken only to cover significant breaking stories or in times of emergency. For instance, if there is severe flooding in one particular area of the state, a Local Radio Queensland radio station can interrupt scheduled programming and broadcast emergency information.
20. Each of the eleven Local Radio Queensland stations has its own dedicated website. The websites are updated during emergencies with relevant information which includes, when applicable, weather and road closure information, as well as links to emergency services websites. The websites also utilise and link with social media, including Facebook and Twitter, to receive and publish official information (from agencies like BOM, EMQ, DMR, RACQ) and also information from the community.

PART 4: ABC LOCAL RADIO MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE RELEVANT TO EMERGENCY BROADCASTING

21. The ABC is not an emergency services organisation but the ABC, and in particular ABC Local Radio, has been heavily involved in broadcasting in emergency situations on numerous occasions.
22. ABC Local Radio has a national Manager of Emergency Broadcasting (and Community Development) ("MEB") who oversees the ABC's preparations for emergency broadcasting (including training) across the country.
23. During the Queensland Floods, the MEB, Local Content Manager and the Regional Content Director / QECC (my position) were the managers with the most significant roles with respect to emergency broadcasting. Assistance was provided by the National Manager of ABC Local Radio Regional stations, other Content Directors and the Regional Content Managers.

PART 5: FORMS OF 'EMERGENCY INFORMATION' BROADCAST

24. Generally speaking, 'emergency information' is broadcast on Local Radio Queensland in one of the following three forms:
- a. Warnings – typically these are broadcast in usual, regularly scheduled Local Radio Queensland programs, e.g. as part of local 'Breakfast' and 'Morning' shows). Such warnings include formal emergency warnings from BOM and other official sources, but can include other material as well.
 - b. Updates – these typically involve breaking away from a networked program (state or national shows, sports coverage etc). In other words, the scheduled broadcast is interrupted so that warnings can be read, relevant people interviewed, information concerning any problems with roads can be broadcast etc, and then the scheduled programming is resumed. 'Updates' can occur quite frequently during emergencies (e.g. every half hour or hour) and often last for a few minutes. Updates may be used on stations where it is considered more appropriate to continue to broadcast scheduled programs rather than 'rolling coverage' (see below) of an emergency.
 - c. Rolling coverage – continuous, ongoing coverage of the emergency event. This work usually involves sourcing interviews, reports and updates, and also broadcasting CSAs, warnings, and other items from a variety of in-house and external sources.
25. The 'form' of broadcast used will depend upon the circumstances. By way of example, during the Sydney cricket test match (January 2-6 2011) which is usually broadcast on ABC Local Radio across Australia, Local Radio Queensland chose not to cover the cricket on Day 1 (2 January 2011) in the Bundaberg and Toowoomba areas, instead choosing to broadcast rolling coverage of the Queensland Floods. On the remaining days of the Sydney cricket test match, Toowoomba and Bundaberg broadcast the cricket but also broadcast 'updates' (every half hour).

PART 6: COMMUNITY SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

26. In September 2010, ABC Local Radio managers had their annual seasonal briefing with senior officers from the BOM in Brisbane. At this meeting the BOM stated that a deep la Niña would affect Queensland over summer with the likelihood of up to 6 tropical cyclones and widespread and heavy rainfall affecting the state.
27. Regular discussions with EMQ and the Department of Premier and Cabinet took place prior to the Queensland Floods. This assisted Local Radio Queensland managers to plan for the season. It also assisted Local Radio Queensland to prepare CSAs for broadcast.

28. Prior to the Queensland Floods, Local Radio Queensland generated and broadcast many CSAs to provide listeners with information about a variety of matters including storms, floods and the approaching tropical cyclone season. Due to forecasts received by the ABC from the BOM prior to the Queensland Floods outlining the number and size of potential emergencies for the 2010 / 2011 summer period, the detail of information in the CSAs and the frequency at which the CSAs were broadcast was greater than usually the case. Many of these CSAs encouraged listeners to prepare themselves in case emergency situations arose over the summer period.
29. Most of the CSAs broadcast by Local Radio Queensland, both prior to and during the Queensland Floods, were generated following approaches by a range of Queensland State government departments, agencies and community groups, who would provide information to the ABC and request that the ABC generate a CSA for broadcast.
30. Except perhaps if Local Radio Queensland has been given some other information which seriously calls into question the correctness of information received from official emergency services agencies and police, information from those sources for CSAs is assumed to be accurate. Accordingly Local Radio Queensland is almost always happy to broadcast (or otherwise publish) information from those sources, and to do so as quickly as possible when it relates to an unfolding emergency situation.
31. The usual process when Local Radio Queensland accepts information from an external agency for a CSA is for that information to be adjusted for broadcast (which may require some rewriting where necessary), approved, recorded and distributed to Local Radio Queensland staff for broadcast.
32. Examples of CSAs broadcast prior to and/or during the Queensland Floods are set out below:
 - a. **Storm Threats:** The ABC broadcast multiple CSAs concerning severe storm threats. These CSAs would be generated and broadcast by Local Radio Queensland following the BOM issuing an 'immediate storm threat' warning. Appendix A contains an example of a script used as the basis for a broadcast of such a CSA.
 - b. **Crossing Flooded Roads:** The ABC broadcast CSAs providing information about the dangers of crossing flooded roads (both prior to and during the Queensland Floods). These CSAs were run statewide but were more heavily played on stations in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Bundaberg and Rockhampton. Examples of the scripts used for these CSAs for broadcast about flooded roads are attached in Appendix B.

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In addition to CSAs inflated by the ABC, a number of BOM warning messages broadcast by the ABC also contained information advising people not to drive through flood water.

- c. **Evacuations:** During the Queensland Floods, Local Radio Queensland broadcast CSAs (in Brisbane only) providing information about the possible evacuation and encouraging people to prepare for flooding.
 - d. **Cleaning property after a flood:** Multiple CSAs broadcast – based on approaches from Worksafe Queensland and the Department of Community Safety).
 - e. **Information about electrical safety when cleaning up after a flood:** Based on approaches from Department of Community Safety.
 - f. **Premier's Relief Appeal:** Multiple CSAs broadcast – requests for donations and advice about assistance available through the Premier's Relief Appeal – information from Department of Premier and Cabinet.
 - g. **Mental health advice and assistance:** Multiple CSAs broadcast – information from Lifeline Australia, Red Cross and Beyond Blue.
33. In addition to the 'regular' CSAs, scripts were also produced by Local Radio Queensland and sent to broadcast teams to be used as 'ad-libs' during the Queensland Floods. Some of the underlying information was provided by various government and non-government agencies. The following are a selection of scripts used for broadcast during the Queensland Floods (further examples are in Appendix C) :
- a. "You are urged to remain patient in dealing with the flooding and its aftermath. There is an enormous amount of water across the state with many rivers yet to peak or expected to stay at peak levels for some days or even longer. If you are isolated, this may be the case for many days to come."
 - b. "When you return to your home, be aware that power cuts and the flood water will have affected your food supplies. Qld Health says that there's an increased risk of food poisoning after flooding and their advice is to throw away any damaged food. For more information, you can phone 13HEALTH, that's 134325"
 - c. "If your home or business has been water-damaged, make sure you get an electrical inspection done before the power is turned back on. This needs to be done by a licensed electrical contractor. Extra tradespeople are being sent to some flooded areas to make this process quicker."

PART 7: WARNINGS AND OTHER ANOUNCEMENTS DURING THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS

34. The Queensland Floods affected regions covered by Local Radio Queensland stations at Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Toowoomba and Brisbane. ABC Staff from these stations, as well as the Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns, Longreach and Maroochydore provided 'emergency broadcasts', which included broadcasts of rolling coverage, warnings and updates, during the following times:
- a. Rockhampton – 22 December 2010 to 5 January 2011: covering flooding in the areas of Biloela, Alpha, Jericho, Wowan, Theodore, Emerald, Rockhampton, Yaamba, Baralaba, Rolleston.
 - b. Bundaberg – 27 December 2010 to 18 January 2011 : covering flooding in the areas of Gayndah, Mundubbera, Theodore, Bundaberg, Kilkivan, Gympie, Maryborough, Murgon, Cherbourg, Nanango, Blackbutt.
 - c. Toowoomba – 24 December 2010 to 16 January 2011: covering flooding in the areas of Dalby, Warwick, Chinchilla, Roma, Condamine, Surat, St George, Toowoomba, Murphy's Creek, Grantham, Withcott, Helidon, Gatton, Laidley, Rosewood, Stanthorpe, Killarney, Oakey, Texas, Jandowae, Esk, Kilcoy, Miles, Cecil Plains, Millmerran.
 - d. Brisbane – 9 January 2011 to January 16 2011: covering flooding in the areas of Caboolture, Fernvale, Forest Hills, Rosewood, Amberley, Ipswich, Jindalee, Brisbane.
35. Generally speaking, Local Radio Queensland is in regular contact with BOM and it is common for Local Radio Queensland to broadcast interviews with a senior forecaster at the BOM approximately every 2 to 3 hours. During these interviews it is common for the BOM representative to outline any current warnings and analysis from meteorologists about current conditions and what to expect in the hours and days ahead. The media has a direct phone line to the senior forecaster at the BOM.
36. During the Queensland Floods, such interviews (with a representative of the BOM) occurred much more frequently because of rapidly changing conditions. Interviews with the senior forecaster at the BOM and staff in the BOM's Hydrology section were broadcast. These provided listeners with details of where the rain is likely to fall as well as what it was likely to do once on the ground.
37. While ABC broadcasters were talking to the BOM (forecasters and hydrologists) every hour or so on air as conditions changed, I was also talking to the BOM in my role as QECC. I would ask for briefings about what they were thinking or expecting rather than what was explicitly in the forecast or warnings. This was done to allow Local Radio Queensland to plan and manage

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resources effectively and help Local Radio Queensland decide whether to change coverage (from, for instance, 'update' coverage to 'rolling coverage').

38. Quite apart from the interviews with BOM representatives referred to above, Local Radio Queensland staff accessed BOM warnings via the BOM website at www.bom.gov.au/qld. It is my experience that the number of warnings appearing on the BOM website (and accessed by the ABC) varied according to the circumstances. It was not uncommon for BOM warnings to be issued daily and others at 6 hourly intervals. Severe weather warnings, however, appeared on the BOM website much more frequently (even as frequently as every 20 minutes) during the Queensland Floods. Staff monitored the BOM website for the latest warnings and, to the best of my knowledge, the warnings issued by the BOM were read on air within a few minutes of them being viewed by ABC staff.
39. In addition, during the Queensland Floods, bulletins that were generated by ABC News from the Brisbane newsroom (between 0500-2200 Monday to Friday and 0500-1200 Saturday and Sunday) included current BOM warnings relevant to the Queensland Floods.
40. Another main source of warnings prior to and during the Queensland Floods was the EMQ, which would issue "Emergency Alerts". These alerts were usually preceded by a phone call from EMQ staff to the QECC (or an alternate) to say, for instance, "an EA for Charleville" will be issued in 10 minutes. The script would then be forwarded to me by email. The EAs tended to be about specific flood events and urged people to consider self-evacuating or moving to higher ground if possible. More than 30 EAs were issued during the floods, and they were broadcast on the relevant local Radio Queensland station(s) soon after being received by the ABC.
41. To the best of my knowledge, all flood warnings, severe weather warnings, and thunderstorm warnings issued by the BOM and EMQ in the lead up to and during the Queensland Floods, were broadcast by Local Radio Queensland on the relevant stations within a short time of those warnings being received by the ABC.
42. During the Queensland Floods, road information was sourced from a number of different entities including the following:
 - a. the DMR (through their website and via their phone service on 131940);
 - b. Councils (through local council websites);
 - c. RACQ (through their website); and
 - d. the Queensland Police.
43. Because there were so many roads affected and conditions were changing so quickly, information relied on rapidly became out of date. Therefore regular interviews with DMR, RACQ, council

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representatives and Police officers were conducted in an effort to provide information which was as up to date as possible.

44. On occasion, there were times when the volume of roads which were closed or otherwise affected by flooding meant that particular stations within the Local Radio Queensland could concentrate only on reporting on the major roads that were affected in a particular area (highways etc). In these circumstances, broadcasters would often advise listeners that "for a full list of road closures go to ..." and then provide a list of relevant website(s).

45. Local Radio Queensland stations also fielded many calls from listeners who provided information about road issues. This information was generally checked against information from official sources for verification prior to broadcast (if it was to be broadcast).

[Redacted Signature]

Signed: Stephen John McClelland

Belinda Sanders

Witness: PRINT NAME

[Redacted Name]

Signature:

Date: 29 April 2011

Appendix A

Immediate Thunderstorm Alert Script

Thunderstorms are now occurring in the broadcast area.

Listen out for weather bureau warnings and be prepared for lightning, possibly strong winds, heavy rain and hail and flash flooding.

The SES suggests that you stay inside, well clear of windows, doors and skylights.

If outdoors seek solid enclosed shelter.

Avoid using fixed telephones.

Put vehicles under cover.

Beware of fallen trees and powerlines,

And avoid driving, walking or riding through floodwaters.

Stay updated at the weather bureau's website at bom.gov.au/qld

For emergency help in thunderstorms call the SES on 132 500

And stay listening to ABC Local Radio Queensland,

Your Emergency Services Network.

Appendix B

Don't Cross Flooded Roads (version 1)

You're driving along, and suddenly you realise the road in front of you is flooded.

A quick debate goes on in your head...

I shouldn't cross flooded roads,

But it's probably not deep,

It'll take ages to go around,

I've gotten away with it before.

But I'm at the water now, so I guess I've decided...

It'll only take a few seconds and it'll all be over...

So, instead of waiting until you are in that situation, why don't you make a rational sensible decision now.

This is a risk assessment situation, and when it comes to flooded roads, you can't see beneath the surface. That means that you can't know what state the road is in, how quickly the water is flowing, or how quickly the water is rising.

If you don't make it safely across, the consequences can be, and all too often are, catastrophic. It's an incredibly high risk for a very small reward.

It'll only take a few seconds, and it'll all be over.

So next time you realise you are approaching a flooded road, remind yourself...

I don't cross flooded roads. I don't cross flooded roads. I don't cross flooded roads.

Don't Cross Flooded Roads (version 2)

So... I'm driving along then I see the road in front of me is flooded.

I slow right down....

I hear that voice in my head reminding me...

"I don't cross flooded roads"

But then I'm thinking...

I'm so close to home, and I want to see the kids safe inside, if I go around the

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long way, the weather could get worse.
surely this car can cope with a bit of water,
So I do it.
Afterwards, I think...
I didn't know how deep it was...
What if the engine had stopped...
What if I couldn't get the window down...
What if I couldn't get the kids out?
When I think about it now, clearly and calmly, it's pretty obvious.
It's just not worth the risk.
Next time, I'll remember...
I don't cross flooded roads. I don't cross flooded roads. I don't cross flooded roads.

Appendix C

Examples of scripts used for 'ad libs' and general broadcast during the Queensland Floods

- The Insurance Council of Australia has set up a hotline to help you with insurance queries and problems after the floods. If you have a question about your policy or need help identifying who your insurer is – call the Insurance Council hotline on 1300 728 228
- The flood water is likely to affect some of our ABC Local Radio transmitters over the next few days. If that happens, we suggest you scan the radio dial – on AM and FM, to look for another ABC Local radio station for you to listen to.
- Many roads across the state are closed. When the water goes down, severe damage to many roads will be revealed. The roads will need to be tested and repaired and some will operate with reduced speed and load limits. You are urged to drive very carefully on flood affected roads.
- If you are in a flood-affected area and your water is discoloured, you are urged not to drink it directly. If you have access to bottled water, use that. If not, then boil the discoloured water for at least 3 minutes. Bottled water supplies may be moved into affected areas if water supply infrastructure can't be repaired quickly.
- The Qld government has announced that a range of financial assistance payments are now available for people in communities affected by the floods. You might qualify for Personal Hardship Grants or payments to cover damage to your home or its contents. To find out more ring the Department of Communities on 1800 17 33 49 or log onto www.communities.qld.gov.au
- If you're listening to us in the Theodore area on 855AM, there is a chance that this transmitter will be flooded and go off air. If you lose us on 855AM, please turn to 100.1FM for the latest emergency information from ABC Local Radio Qld