

# Transcript of Proceedings

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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

EMERALD

..DATE 25/05/2011

..DAY 29

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 10.02 A.M.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms Wilson?

MS WILSON: I call Alan Mann.

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ALAN JAMES MANN, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MS WILSON: Is your full name Alan James Mann?-- Yes.

And you reside at Theresa Street, Emerald?-- Yep.

And you have made a statement for the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes.

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Can you have a look at this document, please? That is the statement that you made for the Inquiry?-- Yes.

I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 475.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 475"

MS WILSON: And also this morning you were shown two maps and you were asked to identify the location of your house on these maps?-- Yes.

Can I show you these documents, please? Now, the first map - and if you can just - sorry, put them both down please - the first map, if you see the one that shows the flooding - do you see the flood map?-- Yep.

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And that is a flood map that shows the flooding of 2008 and 2010. And you have marked your residence, the location of your residence, with a red cross?-- Black cross, but yes.

Black cross?-- Yes.

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Madam Commissioner, that map has been shown to the parties and I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 476.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 476"

MS WILSON: And another map that you were also shown this morning, if you can have a look at that, and that is more of a - that map shows the house blocks in your street and the location next to some drains that you refer to in your statement?-- Yes.

And you have marked your residence on that map? Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

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COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 477.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 477"

MS WILSON: Now, if you could just take out your statement, which is the one - that's it. Now, in your statement you refer to an industrial development that occurred, and you state that prior to the flood the council approved an industrial development on the western side of the Gregory Highway?-- Yeah, that's-----

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Is that prior to the 2010/2011 flood?-- Yes, it has been an ongoing development in that area.

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And you state that this area was low-lying natural watercourses and they were filled and the land was built up to construct various other watercourses, is that the case?-- Yeah, I believe the land there was filled during development and the natural watercourse has been changed and now it diverts it back down the hill into a drain that can't handle it.

Now, you have expressed two concerns with this development, the first being the inadequate drainage channels. Can you tell us about that?-- The irrigation channel that was built - I am not sure when, but years ago - it runs behind our area. That seems to wear all the drainage water from everything west of the highway nowadays, and a northern industrial development has added to that. Water used to go through that area further north and cross the highway and down through flatter country but now it is all diverted back through that channel.

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Now, you are looking at that map which I have described as the land block map which indicates the blocks of land on the street when you are giving that evidence. Can you hold that map up and show us to what you are referring to when you are stating that?-- The area-----

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Can you show it to the Commissioners, if you can?

COMMISSIONER: Just turn around and point?-- Just all the northern development. My house is there.

MS WILSON: And the issue with the drainage channels that you have raised, can you show us where that is?-- These are these channels running to the north of us.

COMMISSIONER: And if you could do the same thing, pointing that way?-- These channels here. My house is here.

MS WILSON: Yes. And you have also raised issues with culverts. Can you tell us what that issue is?-- Yeah, where that drainage channel goes under the highway, the water just cannot get away, they are way too small. When all that area fills up with water, like I say, the water from everything west of the highway, and in these flood events from south Emerald coming through Blacks Bridge and right up Creek Street, get to that area, those culverts can't get the water away, the water backs up, and I think that's a big part of the flooding. I have, after '08, sent a letter to council with these concerns. They said they would submit to the Main Roads about that. They did believe they were too small.

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That's in relation to the culverts?-- To the culverts.

Yes?-- But I since did write a letter back in asking to see that submission but I got no reply.

Okay. What about the concerns that you had with the drainage channels; have you had any correspondence with the council - discussions with the council in relation to that?-- Yep. My letter that came back from the council then basically disagreed with my concerns and said the drain was adequate.

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Now, your house, it was flooded in the 2010/2011 event. What about the 2008 flood event?-- This much.

Okay. What about the 2010 flood event?-- A metre.

Okay.

COMMISSIONER: What was the earlier indication? What would you say that was?-- Oh, half an inch.

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Thanks.

MS WILSON: So half an inch in 2008 and a metre in 2010/2011?-- Yeah.

Okay. Now, on the 29th of December last year you were monitoring that drainage channel that we have just been talking about and you - could you see the floodwaters rising on the 29th?-- Yeah, around that time the drain was filling up, and on the morning of our evacuation, the 30th I think it was, the water was coming up the street out of the end of Baker Street drainage pipe.

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Now, you received an evacuation alert, is that the case?-- Yes, text messages were sent out.

And who did you receive this evacuation alert from?-- The text messages were sent via the council, but other than that - we didn't have our phones on us all the time - word of mouth, basically, from residents in our area.

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And when did you receive that evacuation alert?-- That would have been - it is around the 29th, 30th.

Okay. And when did you evacuate from your house?-- I am pretty sure it was the 30th, about 7 o'clock in the morning.

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Okay. Perhaps if we can look at your statement and we can see if that clarifies the matter. In paragraph 8 you say that on the 29th of December you were at home, you were monitoring the drainage channel. Then you go on to say, "Also around this date we received an evacuation alert from the council."?-- Yeah, I stated there it was around that date.

Okay. So you can't offer any more comment on that?-- No, there was too much going on to remember the exact day.

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Then you state that at around about 7 a.m. on the 30th of December you could see the council putting up "road closed" signs?-- Yep.

At the end of Baker Street?-- Yeah. Halfway up Baker Street, yep, to the south.

And that was about 300 metres away from your own house, was it?-- Yeah.

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And it was at this stage, was it, that you decided to evacuate?-- Yes.

And where did you go?-- Across to the central town, to Burns Avenue.

And did you have some family there, did you?-- Family, yeah.

Some of the matters that you raise in your statement is that "The council have failed to maintain waterways and drainage channels that are filled with silt and vegetation." Where do you say that these drainage channels and waterways have been filled with silt and vegetation?-- Mainly referring to the said channel behind our area. I have seen, over the years of living there, that the vegetation in it is getting overgrown. There has been very little maintenance that I have observed ever go into it and the drain at the end of our street that runs into it is never maintained.

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And the other issue that you raise is the development that we have already discussed and that has - you say that that is in an area that was once natural drainage and now causes water to flow back into town?-- Yeah.

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Is that the development that we just discussed?-- To the north, yep. In the 2008 floods I could actually stand on the railway crossing on Munro Road, and in the water - you could

see the water trying to run to the north but it just kept backing back because it couldn't go there because the land's been filled and the drainage isn't adequate now to take that extra water away.

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You state in your statement that the lack of infrastructure to mitigate flooding is your main issue. Is that lack of infrastructure the matters that we have just discussed here today?-- They were my points, yep.

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No other infrastructure that you are referring to when you state that?-- I am sure there could be a lot of infrastructure around town but they were my main two points, yep.

Your concerns is the area that is directly adjacent and near you?-- Yeah, the channel and the highway crossing, yep.

One of the other matters that you raise is in relation to warning, and you state that, "Some of the farmers out west who reported significant flooding was ignored." How are you aware of such matters or such warnings being provided?-- Just people telling me that they have been rung up by farmers out west and saying that the farmers have called in.

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Was that members of the council who were rung up by farmers or just other people that you know?-- Other people told me, yeah, people that were helping me clean my house out said they had warnings and those people had also rung into the council telling them of the events out in their areas and obviously wanted their concerns given to the public, I suppose, to who and where the information was coming from. So I think there is - there has got to be a better conduit for that information to get out.

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And you didn't have any direct knowledge of these warnings; it is just what people told you, is that the case, when they helped you clean out your house?-- Yes, and what I have heard on the radio. ABC radio was pretty good.

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Okay. Thank you, Mr Mann. I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Mann, can I just ask you when you talk about vegetation in the irrigation channel, what are you talking about? What's building up there?-- Grasses and weeds, yep, and trees.

And trees?-- There is some trees, yeah.

Okay. Thank you. Mr Ambrose?

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MR AMBROSE: We have no questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Ure?

MR URE: I have no questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Rolls?

MR ROLLS: I have no questions, your Honour, but in so far as Mr Mann raises issues of planning that might be of concern to the State in the later part of the hearing, my client would like to reserve its position in relation to those matters.

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COMMISSIONER: Ms Ms O'Gorman?

MS O'GORMAN: I have no questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MS WILSON: I have no further questions. May the witness be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, thanks for your time, Mr Mann.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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MS WILSON: I call Peter McGuire.

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PETER JOHN ERIC MAGUIRE, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Is your full name Peter John Eric Maguire?--  
That's correct, yeah.

And you are the Mayor of Central Highlands Regional Council?--  
Yep.

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And you prepared a statement for the Queensland Floods  
Commission of Inquiry?-- I did.

Can you have a look at this document, please?-- Yeah.

That is your statement?-- Yep. I can't see the signature,  
but, anyway, that looks like it, yep. Yeah, no, that's it,  
thank you, sorry.

And attached to that statement are various documents that are  
referred to in that statement?-- Yeah, that's correct, yeah.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 478.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 478"

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MS WILSON: Now, you have got a copy of that statement in  
front of you?-- Yep.

If I can take you through various matters that you raise in  
that statement. The first matter that you raise is in  
relation to the assessment of the adequacy of the Emerald  
community's response during the flood events. And one of the  
issues that is raised is following the 2008 flood event, what  
the council has learnt for the 2010/2011 flood event?-- Yep.

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Was there lessons learned in the 2008 flood event?-- Oh,  
there certainly was. Following the 2008 event, we had a  
number of flood information sessions around the - and this was  
under the former Emerald Shire - around the region and during  
that - those sessions, certainly one of the big things that  
came out of it was the community's concerns about lack of  
information and communication with them during that flood  
event.

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Was that one of the main issues that was being raised by the  
community, was it?-- That was one of the main ones. I mean,  
there were other issues, certainly, about where flooding goes  
and those sort of things, but certainly the warning stuff was,  
in my view, one of the most critical issues that were raised.

So taking on such a criticism, and concerns of the community,

what did the council do to better prepare itself to give warnings and better communication to the community for the 2010/2011 flood event?-- We weren't doing it just to prepare for 2010/11 event, because we didn't know what was going to happen, but, you know, we certainly did - the new council - so we got amalgamated in March 2008 and the new council made a decision then to employ Emergency Management Coordinator, so that was one position that was put in place and filled and also a communications manager to help with the issue of dealing with communications generally but also during a flood event. So that was some of the things. We also chased up a number of issues to do with, you know - well, weather radar was one thing that came out of it and certainly a number of other issues were addressed. But in my view that was a couple of the - as I said, from the previous information centres we had, the communication was the big complaint people had.

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You state that council experienced forced amalgamation during this time and in many ways was preoccupied with this. What do you mean by that in terms of disaster management planning?-- Well, in some cases some of the stuff may well have been - I don't say set aside, but, I mean, there were other issues that we had to address at the same time, so as well as trying to address all the issues to do with amalgamation, we were trying to deal with issues to do with the disaster in Emerald and other stuff around the regional council area. So we became a large 60,000 square kilometre shire and we had a number of issues to address from the amalgamation point of view as well as trying to address some of the issues following the disaster that affected Emerald in 2008.

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Some of the issues that you had to address in relation to the amalgamation also would have impact in disaster management over such a vast area-----?-- That's correct.

-----is that the case?-- Hence, we employed an Emergency Management Coordinator, communications person, and started doing some of those other things that we took on.

In your statement you refer to a Disaster Management Coordinator. Is that the same as the Emergency-----?-- Sorry, Emergency Management Coordinator we call that person. We have also got - we have an Emergency Management Coordinator and under the Act we have to have a Disaster Management Coordinator, so now we have a Disaster Management Coordinator and an Emergency Management Coordinator, as well as - you know, then the structure under the SES and all that sort of stuff.

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I am interested to know how the Emergency Management Coordinator fits in with the LDMG and disaster management structure that is put in place by legislation. What does the Emergency Management Coordinator do that is different than the Local Disaster Coordinator, the LDC?-- Well, the Disaster Management Coordinator in our structure is our - who you will hear from next, Bill Wilkinson.

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That's the Local Disaster Coordinator?-- That's the Local

Disaster Management Coordinator, then we have got an Emergency Management Coordinator, who is a gentleman called Glen Bell, who was with Emergency Management Queensland until January this year. Previous to that we had another person doing that role who resigned due to family reasons and we had to refill that position.

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What does the role of Emergency Management Coordinator do?-- He is a lot involved in the SES and working with EMQ and a lot of training with the SES personnel, as well at the moment doing a lot of the stuff, and we're trying to get clear roles for the - I call them subgroups, but the local area coordination groups, whatever people want to call them, our subgroups, to sort out their clear roles and responsibilities during a disaster. But, you know, there is all sorts of stuff to do with training, with SES training, to do with the disaster management plan, and any - you know, any updates we have to do to that. All those sort of roles.

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Is the Emergency Management Coordinator a full-time position?-- It is.

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And it is a paid full-time position?-- It is a paid full-time position.

You referred previously that it had some connection to EMQ; is that the case?-- No, sorry, the person we actually employed-----

Went to EMQ?-- No, came from EMQ.

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Okay?-- But they do work with EMQ, because EMQ help a lot with the training of SES personnel, so they certainly work with EMQ, that role does.

Now, you raised various matters that the Emergency Management Coordinator takes on. If we can look at them one by one, first of all SES. Can you tell us about the funding that the council provides the SES in this region?-- I can give you some overall figures, because I checked it three days ago, two days ago. So the overall funding for us for disaster management, including that EMQ salary - sorry, the Emergency Management Coordinator's salary, some capital stuff we're doing in various areas, including new ESU shed at Rolleston, which is partly funded by other sources, but it is about half a million dollars in this year so far.

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Is that the 2010/2011 budget?-- 2010/11 budget this year. Last year - I could get those figures but, I mean, it may well be the same sort of figure. But, as I said, that includes salaries as well.

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In terms of salaries for SES personnel-----?-- No, SES personnel are all volunteers, but in our proposed new structure, we're talking about having a - an SES coordinator role and there was talk of having that person paid some remuneration to fulfil that role.

When you refer to proposed new structure, can you explain that proposed new structure to us?-- Well, the proposed new structure is in draft form and it hasn't been put to an LDMG meeting yet. I got a copy of it this morning because the Emergency Management Coordinator has been working on it, but it is to set in train especially the roles and responsibilities of the - I keep calling them subgroups, but of the local area groups that - you know, Councillor Nixon chairs one, Councillor Brimblecombe of Capella chairs one, Councillor Bell chairs one in Blackwater, and Councillor Bolger will chair one at The Gemfields.

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When you refer to proposed new structure are you referring to the new structure to have sub LDMGs or LECCs?-- Whichever term you want to use, yeah.

We will get to that in one moment, but if we can just work through the SES?-- Yep.

There was a restructure, wasn't there, in terms of the structure of the SES?-- That's right.

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Can you tell us about that?-- Yes, so the structure - that is still being set in place. So we had previously the SES groups operated in Blackwater, Rolleston, as the ESU as well, Springsure, Emerald, Capella, Gemfields. So they all had their own SES coordinators whatever - I forget the proper terminology now - but what we decided to do was bring them in under one overarching, if you like, SES controller, and then have deputy controllers under them and then other people attached under them. So the proposal was to have, you know, one person who would be remunerated partly for that role I mentioned before and then all the others working out underneath them.

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What are the advantages to be seen to having such a structure?-- I guess it is part of just the council amalgamation process, and, you know, understanding that a council our size now can probably provide a lot of extra resources for some of these smaller areas, and if we were not amalgamated now, I would suggest we probably wouldn't be able to. For example, I suggest if we weren't amalgamated, none of us would have an Emergency Management Coordinator, may not even have a Communications Manager, because - you know, because of the old size previously. So they are some of the things to come out of the amalgamation.

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In terms of the advantages, though, do you see it - do you see it having some benefit having a local coordinator who has an overarching responsibility for the groups in the areas?-- Well, we are still setting the structure up but I think it will have some advantages and that person-----

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What are they?-- I think that person will work with the Emergency Management Coordinator and with EMQ with either setting up the training needs of each of the SES subgroups - I call them subgroups - but each of the SES units, so there is a lot of that stuff can happen. And just the coordination role,

helping with the coordination generally. In a disaster, though, I would suggest, if there is a disaster happening for example in Rolleston, the ESU controller down there will be the person, I suggest, on the ground making the decisions, but, I mean, some of that stuff would have to go through that other person as well and we need to be clear on - sort out some of those roles and responsibilities to enhance that draft paper.

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So the deployment of the SES members on the ground will still be the responsibility for the coordinator of the SES group in that area?-- Yes, and in the last event that coordinator sent people to Rolleston if it was needed and he brought people in from The Gemfields when needed to help with the Emerald thing. So that makes it, you know, easier for people - they are able to provide relief to those people as well in some of those other areas.

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Now, was this structure in play during the 2010/2011 flood event?-- We were just starting to set it up.

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And did it have any impact? Was it operational or-----?-- Oh, I think it was operational, but, I mean, and all the people - in some cases the people are still acting in positions until we - and we have had to sort of - still trying to sort out a lot of issues to do with it but people are acting in positions and still doing their roles, but it was in place and we did call people in, for example, from The Gemfields to help in Emerald here so, you know-----

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And the Local Coordinator role, that will be a paid full-time role?-- SES?

The overarching role?-- It will be remunerated but - there has been figures talked about but it won't be a full-time role at this stage. Some local authorities, as I understand, have gone to a full-time role. That's something we can consider down the track but at this stage it wasn't planned to be a full-time role.

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Now, the other matter that you raise was the subgroups, whether it is a subgroup of LDMG or LECC. What do you see the purpose of these subgroups to be?-- Well, in the 2010 event, as Councillor Nixon indicated yesterday, she looked after a lot of stuff over near Springsure, Rolleston. So I think for us sitting in Emerald, if we're cut off, it is better to have the local people with the local knowledge running - running the situation as it occurs over there. So we had an event in - I think it was late 2009, just after the amalgamation, where a storm went through Blackwater. The LDMG didn't get activated, but myself and my council CEO went down to Blackwater and didn't interfere with any of the operational side, but the SES, and the fire and rescue, and the police, and that all did their roles down there with us in the background we had, you know, subgroup meetings down there. But they ran the event, essentially, instead of the overarching group being called in to Emerald to run an event that happened 80 kilometres away.

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In terms of establishing the subgroups, is the council going to formalise in establishing terms of reference?-- Yes, that's part of that paper as well.

And what do you see - why do you see you need terms of reference?-- I think to make everyone's role clear, and to see if we can sort out some of the - some of the issues to do with, for example, getting authorisation to, as Councillor Nixon said, getting a helicopter instead of coming to us and us having to go to EMQ, or DDC, or State disaster, whoever we might have to go to, then they should be able to make those decisions on the ground and let's sort out the paperwork later.

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So, you support Councillor Nixon's view the LECC should have some power to be able to do that on the ground?-- I do personally, yes. I wouldn't say that's the view of everyone in the LMD and, in fact, the Queensland Police Service and others involved in disaster in the State may have problems, even the EMQ, I don't know, but, I mean, that is just where we see for an area our size in mileage distance-wise for us to - a better way to run it.

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How would the LDMG have any role in that decision making process of the LECC chair?-- I think they would come to us and we would say yes, give it a tick and do it. What I am saying is we will Iput in the paperwork-----

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COURT REPORTER: I am sorry, you are going to have to slow down.

COMMISSIONER: We've give them a tick -----?-- Give them a tick, tell them to go ahead and do it - sorry, mate, I talk a little bit fast.

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Then we will get the authorisation-----?-- We will get the authorisation and-----

I think you said from the DDC?-- From the DDC if we have to, yep.

MS WILSON: And when do you think this process of formalising this structure will come into place?-- The proposed terms of reference etcetera are going to the next LDMG meeting which is next June - next month sometime.

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So-----?-- Can't remember the exact date.

Before the next wet season?-- Yes.

The structure will be well and truly in place?-- I would suggest it will be.

What about training for the - these members to know and appreciate their roles and responsibilities, is that also being proposed?-- There has been discussions held with members already and there is more proposed to be held so everyone is clear on their roles and responsibilities.

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Who will deliver such training?-- It will be done through the council organisation, through - the Emergency Management Coordinator would be involved and certainly EMQ if they have to be involved are certainly the best ones to do that training.

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Out of the lessons learned from the 2008 floods, you stated you, "Employed the Disaster Management Coordinator and we talked of the roles and responsibilities of that position." Also, a communications manager was employed?-- Yes, that is correct.

What are the roles and responsibilities of the communications

manager?-- Basically to handle just that, communications with the community. So we print, for example, you know, quarterly newsletters we send around to the community. We also, you know - part of the role is updating the website, involved in updating the website, putting information out, doing press releases or whatever for myself and any - just any communications matter that pertains to the council.

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Is the communications manager a position set up to assist in disaster management or is it just a communications manager to work with council on a wide range of council issues?-- It is not just to do disaster management but that is part of the role. It is a combination.

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Was that function lacking in the 2008 floods?-- We didn't have one at all. I was it.

What improvement did you see by having the communications manager in this flood event?-- Well, we were able to send out daily updates. We started - I think there is copies of these - from the 3rd of December for that rain event - then subsequent to that we - when that completed we started doing more leading into Christmas, posted them all on the website and emailed out as well so there were briefing notes from there or whatever. We were able to try and let the community know, we posted it on the website, all information we could as far as the disaster went, went on the council website. I think there is figures in some of the documentation we had over 200,000 downloads of some of that information off our website.

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The website, the information that is posted on the website, does that include information for all regions of your council area?-- Yes.

Does it include matters, for example, of evacuation centres?-- Where they are, what to do?-- No, the other document that has been tabled is the red document to do with the disaster booklet. That is being reprinted for our whole Shire. That was originally printed for the Emerald area, started by the former Emerald Shire Council.

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I think that red document is attached to the statement, attachment G, and I think I can see it in the bundle of documents?-- Yes, there is - it is there.

That was produced after the 2008?-- After the 2008 flood event for Emerald and Gemfields residents. It is on our website as well and being re-done now to send to the whole community.

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So all residents in this - in the council region - will get a document that will assist them to prepare and respond to disasters and in particular, it deals with floods?-- Deals with floods, fire, yeah, disasters.

And-----?-- Sorry, the other thing we should look at doing is and I understand other councils send a DVD or CD out to people

and that is probably a way to get information out to people.

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Have you spoken to other councils who do that?-- I think Rockhampton has certainly done it so it is something we should probably look at.

When do you expect this information to get to the community?-- This is due to be sent out shortly. I am not sure of the timelines but it is being reprinted because as you can see it is for the Emerald and Gemfields so it is being reprinted for the whole Shire.

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Another document you refer to, not attached to your statement, is the Regional Roundup. I will show you that document?-- Yes.

Now, that was Regional Roundup, Summer 2010, when was that sent to the residents?-- End of December.

Was that sent to all residents of the council?-- It was sent through the Australia Post system to go to all mailboxes through the whole regional council area to all addresses.

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At page 6 and 7, the emergency kit checklist and disaster planning and flooding is addressed?-- Yeah, that is right.

Is this a one-off piece of information or will that be an annual event to send that out to residents?-- I would have thought we would do that annually and that information would also be in this booklet as well. It should be one and the same. I mean, we would look at doing it every preceding - every Christmas, I suppose you would say.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document noted as the Regional Roundup.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 479.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 479"

MS WILSON: You refer in your statement to the use of SMS texting. Was that used in the 2008 flood?-- No.

You state in your statement it was positively received by members of the community?-- It was, it was actually SMS texting and voice messaging. The voice - so the people got SMSs and their home phone should have rung at the same time as well so you get a message over the phone as well.

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You were in Court yesterday when Councillor Nixon gave evidence?-- Yes.

One of issues out in that area is the lack of mobile coverage?-- Yes.

Is that something that the council has been working on with other government agencies?-- We can only make representations to Federal Government and Telstra to try and improve communications in those areas. That is certainly a problem out that way.

Is there any other tool the council considered to use for warnings in those areas where there is a difficulty with telecommunications reception?-- Certainly all the information that we had we emailed out to all our council staff and Councillor Nixon was forwarding her stuff on to a council staff member in Rolleston who was then forwarding that on through their network as well. So, I mean, once you lose your mobile phone coverage or you don't have mobile phone coverage, that is obviously a real problem especially in isolated areas. Except for driving or flying out to see people or whatever, I mean, it is a difficult - would be a difficult process.

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In some respects you rely on the local knowledge of the LECC chair or the members of the LECC to be able to disseminate that information to the residents in the area?-- That is correct.

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COMMISSIONER: Could I ask you - answer what you were going to answer?-- Hence our proposal to have authority for those people to go ahead and do a lot of stuff so it is not coming, for example, from Emerald so that Councillor Nixon can disseminate information or whatever and they don't have to keep referring back. They have the local knowledge and know the local people there and who to contact.

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With the SMSs, were they coming from the LDMG?-- We had to send to the State Disaster Coordination Centre a map of the area, that we wanted included in that. I tabled that with my submission, a copy of the map. We then set - had to word the message which could be no more than 160 characters and then we sent that through the DDC to the State disaster people and they sent the SMS out.

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Did it always come out exactly as you set it out?-- Yes.

Thank you?-- Sorry, they may come back, may come back and recommend a change but we had to try and get the wording so it made sense to people. That was one of the difficulties we had because of the limited number of characters you could actually include in the, you know, in the SMS.

There has been a suggestion in another area that because of that limitation, really the SMS did no more than alarm and cause confusion. Did you have any problems like that?-- I think people appreciated the fact that they got information but, you know, we also put the stuff on the website and that. So I mean, I had people - I had people - one lady told me only last week that she didn't appreciate getting it because it woke her up when she was in America but she did get the message. She didn't really mean, like, she was joking but, I mean, people overseas - I had a guy in Thailand ring up, he

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got the SMS and I got someone to go to his house to lift his stuff up. People overseas, because it was only in that area, if you were visiting here, though, and your phone bill went to - sorry, if you lived in Emerald and your phone bill was going to a company in Brisbane then you don't get them. That is one of the things they are trying to-----

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To try and get the location base-----?-- Yes, to get the location base.

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MS WILSON: One of the issues that you raise is the matter of resupply. You state that, "Considerable use was made of fixed wing helicopter aircraft, including army Blackhawks, to resupply the region. Resupply was a difficult area with our response lacking at times." What do you mean by that?-- Well, the time lines, like, understanding our area and every single road was closed so everything had to fly in. So, first our people had to get the orders off, for example, if I can use Woolworths in Emerald as an example, and then other organisations had to set up, tell them what they wanted, if they could get it, you know what I mean, through them, but all the roads were closed so you could get it to Emerald, then we had to fly it from Emerald to Comet which is only 30k away because you couldn't get across the Comet River so, you know. The same with the Springsure situation; you get it to Emerald and it had to go to Springsure and for Rolleston it had to be taken to the river and boated across. So, I mean, it was just a difficult area for people trying to coordinate it. We had Councillor Nixon trying to coordinate the fodder drop - not the fodder drop, the food resupply for properties around that area and other staff in the Duaringa area trying to organise resupply for people there. It was just a - I mean, plus we need - and we have, once again, more information going out to landholders, rural landholders, to tell them the policy and how to best make - so they know the process. And then also shopkeepers, because some of those, for example, would get their resupplies out of Rockhampton but it was cut off so they had nowhere else they could order. We were trying to get it out - Brisbane was cut off in the end, too, so it was hopeless, it was coming out of further south and trucked up if you could truck it up.

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So when you are saying you wanted to tell the landholders?-- Yes.

What process are you wanting to inform them? What are you wanting to tell them?-- Wanting to tell them the process to go ahead - how to go ahead in an event and make orders through the LDMG for what they need. For example, you can get fresh bread and milk but you can't get a carton of smokes or a carton of beer. I mean, that is not an essential supply. Just sorting out those and that they need to fax it into wherever, whether it is to the council office in Duaringa and people there will organise it and just letting them know the process to go ahead and organise the resupply for themselves on the outlying properties.

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Could you have a look at this document which is the

Responsibility Flow Charts For Isolated Rural Property Resupply. Have you seen this document before?-- It has been tabled as a council - part of our disaster stuff. 1

Is this the process that was followed in the flood events of 2010/2011?-- This is - this was new. The resupply policy was new as of November from my memory for the State so this would have been, because the EMQ people were heavily involved in the resupply stuff so they would be following that policy. 10

That sets out the local and district and State contacts and responsibilities involved in all levels of government. We talked about the role of an LECC or sub LDMG. Where would that fit in with the resupply policy for what you are proposing, for what has been proposed or considered?-- I think it just - it is basically part of the LDMG and so it has to feed in through there but I think, you know, we would be saying you go ahead and organise it and, like I said, we have to tick it off. Like, ring us up and say, "I need to do resupply of five properties tomorrow. The stuff is coming in" da da da, and we would say, "Yes, get a helicopter." 20

Would you expect the chairs of the LECC like Councillor Nixon to organise that resupply through EMQ?-- Or council staff but I mean, Councillor Nixon was in Springsure on her own, a lot of people were away. That happened a lot of places but certainly it could be council staff but certainly the chair of the, you know, the subgroup, I keep calling them - sub-chair but the chair of the subgroup would be one of the people you would have organising it. That, and it could be working with the local policeman. 30

Would you be encouraging the local residents to communicate directly with the subgroup or the local police person who would be on the subgroup?-- That is right. That is what I am saying. That is why I say we need to set the proper guidelines for the property owners so they know to make contact with the local council office in Springsure or Duaringa or wherever to order their supplies and then, you know, people can coordinate - a lot of the properties - you could do it - five properties in one hit, for example, you know what I mean, depends on the size of the helicopter obviously. 40

Do you think that would a more efficient process than working with the landholders or the residents working with the LDMG directly?-- In an event we just had I don't think the LDMG themselves would have had the people to do it so I think the subgroups are the ones we need to have involved in it. Once again, they have local knowledge. 50

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document which is the Responsibility Flow Chart for Isolated Rural Property Resupply.

COMMISSIONER: Who produced it? I am a little unclear.

MS WILSON: Central Highlands Regional Council.

Now, council worked with an independent local hydrologist?--  
That is correct.

That is Mr Cavanagh?-- That is it.

Was he employed by the council or did he just come and do work  
with the council?-- He came in and did work with the council.

On a consultancy basis?-- On a consultancy basis and  
subsequent to that his company submitted an invoice and, I  
don't know, don't know the exact figures but, yeah, were paid  
for that service.

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Why does the council see it as important to have a hydrologist  
working with them?-- Well, we worked on the basis of - I  
think I used the term consensus. So, I mean, with people's  
local knowledge and there has been a bit said about not taking  
any notice of local people. Well, I mean, local people were  
phoning in, you know, local property owners and so to that  
person, to Jeff or myself or to Bill Wilkinson or other  
councillors about how much rain that we have had and we would  
have a discussion between the local hydrologists, SunWater  
hydrologists, in some cases DERM hydrologists and Bureau of  
Meteorology hydrologists about where we would expect the  
levels to get to.

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You refer in your statement to this consensus view?-- Yes.

Why was it necessary to have a consensus view? Why couldn't  
you just work off the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts and what  
the levels would be?-- I think the Bureau, like, take a bit  
of notice of the local circumstances as well so, I mean - in  
2008 we didn't have the gauging stations that we have now so,  
I mean, there was a lot of - a lot of, I suppose, different  
views and a lot of phoning in as well at that time. I think  
just to work together to come to a consensus view that  
everyone agrees that this is the level it is going to get to.  
I think, I mean, I have said and people criticise me for  
saying that but as far as I know hydrology isn't a perfect  
science necessarily, like predicting rainfall, like, you know,  
everyone agreed on an - after looking at all the information  
with flows going past stations and that sort of stuff and came  
up with a predicted height.

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You stated that you - on working through this flood event you  
had more gauges to assist in assessing information than in the  
2008 flood event. Are more gauges proposed?-- There has been  
whatever the number is, extras put in but there is another -  
already some approved, as I recall, for some areas to go in  
and Bill will be able to talk more about this, but one more is  
proposed at least in the Nogoia system around Bandi Creek which  
is where people believe there should be one more in the Nogoia  
system and certainly one in the Comet system to cover  
situations that occur in Rolleston and further north from  
there.

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When you are referring to the consensus view, was it the case

that the information that you were getting in was a combination of data from measuring gauges and also information from rural residents phoning in and saying, "The height of the water is here" or X or Y?-- Yes.

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And working out what that would mean for any given community?-- That's part of the process the hydrologist used. I mean, I am not an expert but I sit and listen to them and I mean when they are talking about the likely, how much more flow is likely to come as a result of having - if there was any more rainfall so a lot of that stuff was part of it.

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Were you getting the local information about the levels of the water through the subgroups or farmers or rural residents phoning this information directly to the LDMG?-- People phoned in directly to, as I said, myself, Jeff Cavanagh, Bill Wilkinson, other councils would have got some information. I have to say - and I think it wasn't much use telling me because I don't really and truly know much about hydrology so, I mean, but, I mean, those people certainly do so that's why, you know, more of the point was having those people passing the information on when they had the discussion over the phone twice a day.

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Were you a part of this consensus view?-- I was sitting in the room listening to them, yes.

How much weight was placed on the local knowledge in coming to this consensus view?-- I would suggest between BOM and SunWater, a fair bit of, you know, a fair bit of that was taken into consideration.

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Now, was that taken into account where there wasn't measuring gauges to assist?-- I think for the Nogoia system it was pretty good, except one did stop working at some stage, I can't remember the time but I think the one at Rainbow, it got covered in water - more water that - went over the top of it so - but so that was a bit of a problem. But otherwise I think, you know, that is how it worked.

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You refer to the consensus taking into account the views of BOM, the local hydrologist you had, Mr Cavanagh, and SunWater and DERM - was DERM-----?-- DERM a couple of times because they, yeah, but I - they weren't involved on a daily basis.

A member of SunWater is also a member of the LDMG?-- That is correct.

Was that the case in 2008?-- Yes, they have always been a member of the LDMG, yes.

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And-----?-- Sorry the member of-----

-----SunWater?-- -----is not necessarily a hydrologist but on the LDMG.

On the LDMG?-- Yes.

The hydrologist who was assisting you, was there a hydrologist assisting you from SunWater?-- Yes. SunWater hydrologist was involved in it, yes.

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This was not the same person who was the SunWater representative on the LDMG?-- No.

You said that there always has been a SunWater representative on the LDMG?-- That is correct.

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Now, did it assist having a member of SunWater as part of the LDMG?-- Certainly does because they, I mean the Fairbairn Dam is a facility that is operated - owned by SunWater so their knowledge of the operation of that is certainly, you know, vital to the LDMG, to the Emerald community.

You are getting communications from SunWater, were you?-- They were part of the discussion. They would come in and we would sit on the phone and ring BOM hydrologists, further - up in the morning and late in the evening - to provide further information to the community.

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Who are the designated communication points between the LDMG and SunWater?-- The designated-----

Who are the parties that would be talking to each other about information in relation to-----?-- Bill Wilkinson, Jeff Cavanagh.

Yes, and the representative of SunWater, who would they be talking to when SunWater provides information?-- The name of the person?

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Yes?-- It would be a couple of local guys here. Neil Farrell, Ian Grayson, would be working with them and then they have other hydrologists in Brisbane. The hydrologist actually in Brisbane, that would be their people.

What sort of information were you receiving from SunWater?-- Well, basically some of the information that you get when - on the flows of water coming - going into the Fairbairn Dam, so that sort of stuff.

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Have communications between the LDMG and council and SunWater improved since the 2008 event?-- I don't think we really had a problem in the 2008 event but it is all, you know, the guys who work at the Fairbairn Dam are local people. They are part of the community.

Did you have any issues with the information you were getting from SunWater?-- No, no.

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Now, council has engaged consultancy firm Kellog Brown & Root to undertake an audit of data from both the 2008 floods and these most recent flood events to assist in the development of the Flood Plain Management Study. What are you hoping to achieve by getting a Flood Plain Management Study?-- They were actually engaged as part of that to help us with our

strategic planning for our new planning scheme for the Shire as well. They have to address issues to do with, what's the planning policy - 103 - I am not sure, but there is a State planning policy we have to address to do with flooding so that's part of that process, so, I mean, once again, there is a lot of information out there but we need to consolidate it into a, you know, that's part of what they are doing and then we have C&R also doing more work with us over the whole catchment as well to try and, you know, get some, I suppose, well, a lot of the flood stuff, better information for all of us.

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So you are hoping to get these consultancy firms to analyse the data from both the 2008 and recent flood events and from that, that will assist in future land planning, is that the ultimate goal?-- Certainly the ultimate goal. If you look at what happened in this event, the western side of Emerald had the potential to have water over the whole town. So you know from a land planning point of view, from a planning point of view that is a big problem.

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"Both these consultancy firms will also consider issues such as the effect of urban development and structures on the flood plain and review the impact of levees and structures such as bridging and rail infrastructure." There is a number of issues that arise in relation to that. In relation to the impact of levees, what are you referring to in relation to that?-- Well, I guess they are more looking at the potential to put levees around the community. That would be some people propose - there are people out there who have ideas of how to mitigate flooding in the area, in the township, so I am looking at a lot of those issues, including the possible direction I suppose you say of the levees.

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What about the impact of levees that have been erected by mining companies; has that been looked at?-- Well, that would be part of it, but those levees are further downstream. So, I mean, people will look at them, but, you know, they are 30 odd kilometres away - 20, 30 kilometres away from here, so some - and they should be looked at because some people suggest - and I don't know whether it is right or not - that those levees there force water to back up. Now, I don't know what the real situation is but that's one of the situations that people will look at.

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And is it an issue that you have engaged these consultancy firms to look at?-- Certainly part of the issue, yeah, yeah.

Now, were you in Court this morning when Mr Mann gave evidence?-- Yes, Alan, yep.

And you heard his views about the impact of the industrial development?-- Yep.

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Now - just one moment, Madam Commissioner. Perhaps if the witness could have a look at Exhibit 477?-- Yep.

Now, this is a map of the SunWater channel running from Hospital Road in behind the State Government offices. Now, you heard Mr Mann describe and state where he lives, and you have heard the issues that he has raised in relation to the development, the impact of the development and drainage channels. Is the council considering these issues when it is undertaking such a review?-- All those issues would be addressed in those two studies. As far as I am concerned, that's part of the process we will be going through to look at. All those concerns - and people are - because we have had a flood information session already in Emerald - in March I think it was - so there were a number of issues raised there, and they will form part of what people will be trying to address to look at if those things that have been indicated by Mr Mann, and plenty of others in the community, are having an impact on flooding.

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The issues raised by Mr Mann can be summarised by two matters, the first being the drainage channels, and is that a part of the review that is being undertaken presently?-- Well, it will be, but the drainage channel isn't ours, it is SunWater's infrastructure.

But you are looking at the impact?-- It will be all looked at, yes.

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The second is the issue of culverts. Now, is the council considering any action in relation to the issue of the culverts that have been raised by Mr Mann?-- We have got the culverts raised by Mr Mann and other culverts in the community under other infrastructure - that's a Main Roads road where that culvert goes, so we need to address that with them, and there are other culverts in other parts of the town that people have raised concerns about as well, going under, for

example, the railway line, that need to be looked at as well, to see if they are having potentially impact on causing, you know, more flooding than what people, you know, expect.

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And whose responsibility will that ultimately lie in relation to those culverts?-- Well, I guess the infrastructure itself - the culverts that Mr Mann refers to are Main Roads. It is on their road. But I am not saying we wouldn't work with them if there needed to be work done. The same as we would work with SunWater if we needed to look at something to do with that LM1 drain.

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You can see on the map proposed hazard reduction burn along the SunWater channel. Are you aware of that?-- That happened last year. I don't know the exact month but in consultation with council and SunWater.

What was the purpose of that?-- Just to get rid of some of that - I don't know what the study called it-----

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Vegetation?-- Vegetation but there is a particularly high stuff - I just forget the name of it.

Particularly?-- Some of the vegetation is a particularly high type of vegetation.

Yes?-- I just can't think of the name of the stuff, but yeah.

Mr Mann has referred to - described it as trees. Are they quite that-----?-- I wouldn't have thought they were trees.

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Smaller than trees, but quite large?-- They grow reasonably tall. It grows reasonably tall and people could have a look at it up at the drain.

In terms of the issue of culverts, it may ultimately be a Main Roads issue, it may be something that the council has to look at. So how is the council moving this forward?-- Well, I think what we will do is wait - we expect to have this floodplain studies and that finished by the end of this year, and if we get information beforehand that some of these things are having impacts, then we certainly would have to talk to Main Roads earlier than that.

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There is a section in your statement that is under the heading "Complaints Made", and that is at page 7 of your statement, and it responds to some of the issues that have been raised by members of the public. And if we can go through some of those issues? The first issue that is raised is the matter of warnings transmitted via text. You go on to state that, "These warnings via text or email on the council's website were sent to residents only after all facts and circumstances had been discussed by the Bureau of Meteorology hydrologists, SunWater and local group representatives and a consensus was reached", and we have already discussed that process. Is that a complaint that has been made by the residents, that it took too long and you're answering that by saying that there was a process that had to be undertaken?-- Some people suggested

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that we knew earlier than what we did about particular heights, and so, for example, if I came out and said the river was going to get to 17 metres at the Nogoia River down there and it got to 16, then I am an idiot. So, hence the consensus used. So I am taking the best advice off people that know more than I do. I mean, it was just a comment, you know, about that, that people need to understand that, you know, we are working off the best information that we get and, hence, sending out the SMSs - and, as I said before, it is very, very difficult in 160 words to get, you know, precise information out. Hence, the briefing stuff was also put on the website.

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And you state that, "The message conveyed had to be relevant, and hence the reference to the 2008 flooding event." So that would be relevant to people who were here in the 2008 flood event but may be less relevant for people who were not?-- And I think I acknowledge that in that, too.

We have heard other suggestions to ensure that these messages are relevant, and that relates to flood mapping, and having zones; for example blue zone, red zones or whatever. Is the council considering any option like that so that it can warn the residents "if you are in the blue zone", for example, "then expect flooding"?-- If you look at this booklet, there is a map in the middle to do with Emerald but we have since taken it out because that was in relation to the 2008 flood. The 2010 was different again.

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So-----?-- So because 2010 flood was affecting the whole of the western side of the Nogoia River.

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So can any assistance be provided by the council to particularise it so that residents know how that flooding will affect their own house?-- We have got - there has been a lot of work done by Bill Wilkinson and others about - and starting to work on some trigger points, so there are some heights that people will be made aware of and could in fact be put into this booklet so that they know that when the Vince Lester Bridge gets to such and such a height, this is going to have an impact on potentially, you know, whichever areas. So that would be certainly part of what we would be working towards for Emerald, and we need to look at it for other communities that get potentially flooded in the council area as well, including Rolleston.

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You state that more information was able to be made available on your website and via emails than the 2008 event. Had there been lessons learnt in the 2010/2011 event to ensure that communication is made even better still to the residents?-- Ideally from this event, if we can get the hydrology, so to speak, that information right, I would be hopeful that we could get, for example, three days' notice, at least, in Emerald for residents. But if we can't get that right, hence, you know, some of the infrastructure needs that we may need to look at.

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If you can get the hydrology right-----?-- Sorry, I shouldn't get into hydrology. I think they get it right but what I am

saying is get it, you know, better than what - if it is possible with more stations in place, you know, than what we currently have. 1

So is an answer to that more stations and more gauges to be able to get more information?-- There is one more - one more station planned, as I said earlier, on Van Dyke Creek, and according to everyone that will help us immensely again. So, you know, hopefully if that gets - well, when that - I am going to say when because it has definitely got to go in, that can help and improve that part of the whole process, you know, to develop the warnings to residents. 10

And are you - would that, you envisage, be able to give you more numbers that you could then convey to the residents or are you going to interpret that to how that will actually affect the residents?-- Well, I would rather - I would like to be able to say three days ahead that the Vince Lester Bridge is going to get to 16 metres and then we know it is going to impact on everyone on this side of town and we have got to get people out. At the moment, we can't get them out if - once everything closes. So, I mean, it is all just part of that - about being preparedness process. 20

And with more gauges you are hopeful that you will get that three-day warning?-- I would be hopeful. I mean, it won't necessarily be myself that's going to be doing that, but it is for future generations even - you know, future councils, future LDMGs. 30

You talked about another one going in. Will that satisfy the requirement for three days' warning - two or three days?-- As I understand it, it will go a big way towards helping. 30

Have other gauges also been considered to go that extra step?-- We have just added a number since 2008, so there has been 30 odd upgrades done and a new warning system put in place. So, you know, but if people come back to us - and it may well show up as part of the studies that have been done at the moment. They may come back and say, "You probably need to put in a couple more", so, you know, we will put them in. 40

In the complaints that have been made, one of the issues is the matter of levees out at the Ensham coalmine, and you state that that is being, as we discussed before, addressed by the consultancy firms. When are you hoping to get this review back?-- Well, the plan is to have the stuff back by December, I think I put it in there, so it should be by the end of this year, we hope, but if we get interim stuff, then we need to start looking at it as well. 50

The matters that you have asked for review, have you put - have you asked for a stage process that if there are any matters that could assist in flood preparedness that you do get an interim report?-- From both of them I think we were due to get some in May or June. I just can't remember exactly.

What will those matters consider?-- Well, they will just be a progressive report, I suppose you would say.

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Madam Commissioner, would that be a convenient time?

COMMISSIONER: Just before we break, though, can that be provided on to the Flood Inquiry?-- Yeah, anything we get we can send it on to you.

Yes. We will come back at half past.

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THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 11.14 A.M.

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THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 11.34 A.M.

PETER JOHN ERIC MAGUIRE, CONTINUING:

MS WILSON: Now, in relation to the lessons learned in the last flood event, you have particularised some of those in your statement. Some of those we've already covered but if I can take you to a couple of additional matters? You state that as was the case here, the Mayor of the council should be the chairman of the LDMG. Why do you say that that is an important combination of roles?-- Well, let's just - I mean, obviously a personal opinion but I just think that as the public spokesperson for the council, that you should have a role in the disaster - I mean, in 2008, if I can go back to there, I was the Mayor but not chairman of the LDMG. So, I mean, I was actually away at the time when that disaster happened, but that's another story, but, I mean - so I just think that it just makes more sense for the Mayor to be involved - heavily involved in the coordination of the disaster so that the message that you are trying to get out through the media, the communication message, is, you know, the message that you want to get out as the disaster group and the council as in the Mayor, so, yeah.

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How did you working as the Chairman of the LDMG work with the Local Disaster Coordinator? Was that a closely-affiliated role?-- In the last event?

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Yes?-- Yes, yeah.

Has it been ever considered that the LDC should be the Chair of the LDMG?-- I think under the legislation the Chair of the LDMG has to be a councillor. I think that's right.

You refer to the matter of preparedness, and that refers to training for LDMG members, SES and council staff, and you say that such training is essential. Where do you expect that training to come from for all of those roles?-- Certainly for the SES members from EMQ. I think EMQ certainly have a role for training - well, for every group, I guess. And local government, certainly the larger ones could probably be involved in that - like, obviously are involved in it but, you know, help work with EMQ and other State agencies if you have to, you know, to work with that training and, you know, make sure you get people skilled up, you know, for example in boat operations or, you know, that sort of stuff. So I think it is just - everyone needs to be involved and it is important for everyone. It is important for the local disaster people, it is important for the State disaster people, and then important obviously for the SES members and, you know, everyone involved.

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There has been some training provided to council staff for the

Guardian software?-- Yeah.

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Have you had any training in relation to that?-- I think I did a few hours. So I wouldn't say - personal opinion, I don't think it is - I've got 500 staff, council staff, and I think there is a lot of things Mayors don't need to do, especially touching computers maybe and Guardian system, but, I mean, I am not saying I shouldn't, and probably because if I get a request for something - in the last event I was handing it through staff that were sitting in the operational room.

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And finally if we can go to the infrastructure development that you suggest, these are works that you have identified that would assist in any future flood event?-- There has been issues raised about - and we're all aware of how Queensland was completely cut off and - so besides the local area, in the Rolleston Springsure area it was discussed yesterday about the road there and the necessity to look at fixing up that highway, that access for those people around that area, and it is an important traffic link for heavy transport, it is an important link for tourism, and then for the resources sector, all these highways out here are important. So there seems to be a focus on the Bruce Highway, which is fine for people up the coast, in south-east Queensland, but to have the situation that occurred in Queensland where you couldn't go anywhere, and you couldn't get supplies out of the south-east corner, was ludicrous. So, hence, the situation that - what - not just myself and a number of Mayors is saying is let's look at fixing up with some, you know, decent amounts of money - and I don't think it is five billion dollars, like they are talking about with the Bruce Highway, but some decent amounts of money to fix up the inland routes to get access - and, for example, if Brisbane is cut off again, then you can get access from the north - to the north from Melbourne, Adelaide, whatever, with essential supplies.

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You have identified three areas-----?-- Yep.

-----that could have improvement in relation to infrastructure. The first is the inland route you just discussed. Have you had any communications or discussions with the State agencies that would be responsible for such improvement?-- I have certainly written to the Premier, to the Minister for Main Roads - Transport and Main Roads and the Chairman of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority about those matters.

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Has there been any response to that?-- One response back that I am aware of at this stage.

What is that?-- That those matters will be looked at by the reconstruction - possibly looked at by the Reconstruction Authority, basically.

And is that the same for the works that you have identified for Rolleston and access for West Emerald to east?-- The three proposals were put in the same letter. I actually - sorry, can I say I wrote the letter to the Premier expressing my concern people were focusing on infrastructure and not about people's welfare. This letter was sent, I forget, six weeks ago and but, so, while I wrote the letter I took the opportunity to include some infrastructure I wanted in but I would be very concerned about people's mental well-being in our community.

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Thank you, I have no further questions.

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MR AMBROSE: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Rolls?

MR ROLLS: No questions.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Ure?

MR URE: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much?-- Thank you very much.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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MS WILSON: I call William Wilkinson.

WILLIAM FRAZER WILKINSON, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Wilkinson, could I warn you in advance that the reporter takes down typing manually every word you say so-----?-- Slow is down.

-----bear that into mind. Thanks very much.

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MS WILSON: Is your full name William Frazer Wilkinson?-- Yes, it is.

You are the Local Disaster Coordinator for the Central Highlands Regional Council?-- That is right.

You provided a statement to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- I did.

With that statement there are some attachments to that document?-- That looks like the correct one.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: That will be Exhibit 481.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 481"

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MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner there are a number of documents I wish to tender through Mr Wilkinson. If I can show you these documents. There was also briefing notes to the Central Highlands Regional Council Recovery Group?-- Yes.

And that was conducted on the 8th of February 2011?-- That would be correct, yes.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: 482.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 482"

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MS WILSON: There was a report by yourself as the Local Disaster Coordinator done on 3 January of this year 2011 - 3 February?-- That is correct, yep.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: 483.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 483"

MS WILSON: Now, there is also a Central Highlands Regional Council response to the DDC debrief and a table of issues done. Now, this is undated. Can you give us any idea when this table of issues was done?-- That would have been at one of the DDC review meetings after the flood event. I would have to look up my diary to see what date that was.

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Did you do up a table of issues?-- Yeah, basically the DDMG sent out a proforma asking everyone to review, so everyone came into the meeting and we worked through what sorts of issues at that stage we thought from a council perspective would help.

Then that issue, that document was then forwarded to the DDMG?-- We presented it at the DDMG and discussed it with the rest of the DDMG.

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MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: 484.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 484."

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MS WILSON: The Central Highlands Regional has a Local Disaster Management Plan?-- It does.

Now, was this the plan that was in operation during the flood events of 2010, 2011?-- That's the current updated plan being reviewed at the moment.

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Was that the plan in operation during the-----?-- Yes.

When was the last amendments that have been made to that plan?-- I am not sure. I have only been with the council for 12 months but I think it was done probably about 12, 18 months ago.

There were legislative amendments that affected Disaster Management Plans. Were there any updates to that plan in response to those amendments?-- I have to go through the LDMG minutes to see when it was ticked off but all the amendments made to it were ticked off. I think certainly before middle of 2010 before we went into the season, yes.

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Were they in response to the proposed legislation?-- No. Well, basically the couple of changes that happened as a response to the legislation, there was a need for an XO at a Local Disaster Committee Group so I was nominated as the Local

Disaster Coordinator so we put that paperwork through. Our membership list was adjusted to identify who the different roles were.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 485.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 485"

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MS WILSON: Now, the Central Highlands Regional Council has guidelines for the resupply to isolated properties. We have seen one document associated with this but the guidelines are - state the protocols, is that the case, in relation to resupply of isolated properties?-- Yes.

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Can you tell me when that document was completed?-- Okay, the resupply guidelines from a State perspective were altered probably in, I am not exactly 100 per cent sure but certainly by November I became aware going into the flood event, on the 3rd of December, that the resupply guidelines had been changed and I don't think that was a sensible thing to do, the State changed that mid-season. We were fortunate enough to have the support from EMQ regionally and Glen Bell came out and assisted us in that initial event and Glen was able to help us work through some of those changes, and since then Glen has been working with Local Disaster Management Group to try and develop something that simplified for people to understand who to go to so that the chain of communication can work effectively.

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Okay. Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: What is it actually called again?

MS WILSON: The sorry, Central Highlands Regional Council Guidelines For Resupply to Isolated Properties.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you. That is 486.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 486"

MS WILSON: Now, the Central Highlands Regional Council also had a Flood Recovery Plan?-- Yes.

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If you can have a look at this document, please. As I understand it, it was done up on 18 January 2011?-- Yes.

Can you tell us the purpose of that document?-- What do you need to know about that?

What is the purpose of it?-- Basically there are a couple of phases in a disaster. You have your mitigation, your preparedness; response; and then you have recovery. This document documents the way in which council runs its recovery program. We have a chair of that. We have a number of leaders representing different components so the economics and the environmental and infrastructure, and that group is tasked to help the community move forward with recovery.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 487.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 487"

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MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, may the witness see Exhibit 476 which is a flood map referable to the 2008 and 2010 floods?-- Yes.

The document is in front of you?-- Yes.

When was that document done up?-- Look, I have been - that was probably reproduced February/March - I have been working on mapping the flood line in town.

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What's the importance of mapping the flood line?-- Well, two things. It is important to document exactly the extent of where the water went to be able to share that information with the general public about the way in which water flowed and where it went and what extent it got to. As part of what goes with that is a series of surveys about flood heights as well so that council is in the process of doing its flood plain modelling, as Peter has been referring to in the KBR and C&R, and all that data will help those guys, those hydrologists, actually look developing and transferring appropriate information.

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That document particularises both the 2008 and 2010 flood levels. Is there any significance to look at both those flood levels and see if there is any relationship between those?-- Absolutely. The purpose of me putting the two together was to look at the difference in terms of how that western water in particular had behaved compared to - in 2010 compared to 2008.

Thank you. Now, in terms of planning preparation, you particularised various matters which the Central Highlands Regional Council undertook to prepare for the wet season. One of the issues that you raise is the Guardian training sessions that you had. Council using the Guardian software?-- Yes.

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How long have you - has the council been using this software?-- Well, council after the 2008 - that was one of the decisions that council made was to go with the Guardian

software.

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Can I stop you there? Why was that? Why did you see the need to go to Guardian software after the 2008 floods?-- I wasn't there with council at the time when they made that call but-----

Why do you understand that to be the case?-- Basically the - to manage the incident control room a lot better, to understand what requests are coming in for help and assistance, to document how quickly you have respond to those requests. Guardian is a very good system in the sense the jobs come in, you can log them, you can task them to the police or you can task them to the Fire and Rescue or task them to the SES, you might task it to a member in council to attend to and then somebody is able to monitor whether those tasks have been dealt with properly and quickly. It also gives an accurate database to be able to review the flood event and look back in time and say what sorts of requests did we have? What was our response? What can we do better?

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Is there any advantage, do you see, in sharing such information with other neighbouring councils?-- I would think - if all neighbouring councils were using the Guardian system I think that would value-add to how we might communicate. Because, if you think about our Shire, our Shire occupies pretty well - well, I have a small map here that perhaps might help if you need to have a look at it. The Shire boundary doesn't follow the catchment boundary so on the western side it covers pretty well the Comet and the Nogoia but on the eastern side we are only part of the Dawson and we are part of the Mackenzie so you have a different Shire sitting up here and a different Shire here, and the ability to coordinate information across those particular catchment boundaries makes sense.

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How would the Guardian software system assist in that process?-- Well, the guys who are developing and continuously evolving the Guardian system have got a mechanism that, in effect, now would allow us to have it in our central control system but also if we had a subgroup working, say, at Rolleston or Springsure that we can have them working on the Guardian system feeding in - and it is conceivable we can actually have a note for another council if we needed to. I believe that would be possible.

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There has been a suggestion that there is great advantage of having an ICT system, a communication system, that was compatible between the State and the local governments and compatible statewide. That is, that at any one point in time anyone who has access to log on to this system and can see the status of various matters and would be able to look at requests for assistance, for example. Do you see any advantage for having an ICT system compatible that bridges State and local governments?-- I get a bit concerned we might get lost in bureaucracy in the process of managing it. I think we are best at the local government interface because in the incident control room and in the response, the agency

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representatives are located in the room and the communication system should be working. At best, I would have thought probably local, regional, but I don't believe it is needed to go to the whole world in terms of other people trying to look at what was going on at the local level.

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If the witness can be shown Exhibit 484. That is the debrief that you did for the Rockhampton DDMG. Have you got that with you?-- No, perhaps I can look at it, if that is okay.

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One of the issues you raise in that debrief is the request for assistance?-- Yes.

To particularise the issue, you state that it is difficult to track where RFAs, requests for assistance, were at?-- Yes.

Would it be of assistance to LDMGs and LDCs to have a software system that could track the request for assistance so that the LDMG knows when to expect an outcome for these requests for assistance?-- Okay. Some context about that was that we were making requests for assistance but having trouble tracking exactly where they were.

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Can you give us an example to help us understand?-- We might have asked for something to do with an aircraft or something like that and headed off to DDMG and they were acting on it but the communication about where it was in the process was just not coming back. Look, I think the learning out of the discussions in the incident control room during the event, and conversations at the DDMG during the event, they rectified that by the time they got to Rockhampton - the flood happened in Rockhampton. So I think the process self-evolved and improved and I think there was better communication coming back from DDMG about where things were at. In relation to your question about software, if there was anywhere I think it would be nice to see that it would be good if it could fit within the Guardian system so it goes out through Guardian and comes back through Guardian.

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Would you be hoping Guardian could be extended or the software extended so the requests for assistance could be tracked so you know where they are?-- Absolutely.

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Thank you?-- Some of those modifications are possibly already being looked at by QIT.

One of the initiatives that council did in relation to the preparation for the flood event was establish a car park at the top of Emerald Downs Hill approximately five kilometres to the north of Emerald on a private property. Were the residents advised they could take their vehicles to this location?-- They were.

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Can you tell us when they were advised of it?-- I have to look at when the briefing note went out.

The point is were they given sufficient warning for that to occur?-- I guess there is two things that were happening. We

were still working through with the hydrologist, BOM, SunWater and Jeff and his team what peak flood would be. I would imagine the advice to take the cars up would have happened on the 29th, late on the 29th or early on the 30th, when we knew what the final figure was going to be, that was actually going to inundate town. I would have to get back and look at that.

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Did council envisage this initiative before the flood events or was that something that evolved?-- Something that evolved.

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Free transport was provided back into town?-- That is right.

On what transport was that? Did council have buses?-- Council just ran a bus to get the people backwards and forwards. It evolved because when we had the final figure - we were using maps where we had the road heights of every street. We had a figure at Vince Lester Bridge of 16.2 we were working towards and we were extrapolating what we thought might get inundated and figured it would be appropriate to try and see some of those cars protected.

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And this ties into the consensus view that the LDMG took in relation to hydrology advice. Can you tell us how that came about? Did that occur in 2008, that there was a consensus view?-- I wasn't in the response phase in 2008; I was invited by council to participate in the recovery team. So I was environmental recovery program leader in 2008. From what I understand, and certainly my observation as a member on the street, it was the first big flood that council had ever faced. People were getting their information from different sources. Council's communication, perhaps, at that time wasn't as effective as it could have been in terms of one point of truth. So in 2010 there were two things we tried to do. In December the 3rd, certainly post all the information we had been given by BOM, EMQ about the season. I was in regular contact with BOM and also SunWater when we were having flows, and Geoff, and on December the 3rd when we had that event, we didn't have a need, but to get the guys together to have consensus because it happened so quickly and it was not as big, but we got consensus by me talking to Geoff and SunWater and also BOM for that particular event. When this next big event happened, we had been watching - well, I had certainly been watching the rain, Geoff had been watching the rain, and I guess BOM had been struggling with everything that was happening around the State at the time. The first thing that morning after the heavy rain in the southern part of the catchment we were in contact with each other at about 5.30, 6 o'clock in the morning asking SunWater to crank their models up. Geoff had already done some modelling. We got the executive together, came in and we simply decided to make sure that we got both local knowledge and the State advisory knowledge together, sit down, talk about it. So we did that first up and we continued that process. And I think it worked very effectively, because the local knowledge is able to feed into the guys in Brisbane about figures and amounts of rain that they may not necessarily have, so those guys are able to play with their models a bit as well.

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And when you are referring to Geoff, you are referring to Geoff Cavanagh?-- That's right, C&R.

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I am sorry?-- From C&R Consulting.

From C&R Consulting. And that was a hydrologist that the council had got on board as a consultant. Do you know why it was seen for the need to get a hydrologist on board to work with the council?-- Well, post our recovery issue in 2008 when the groups were doing their reviews, we had a flood warning network group established to look at what went wrong with the communication, what we could do better. Geoff has a tremendous amount of knowledge in the district because he has been in the water industry so long, he is very knowledgeable of the land models up there, he is passionate about water and played an important part in 2008. So from a local perspective, Geoff has put a lot of time into trying to share his knowledge with council and help council during these sorts of events. The information that came out of 2008 was we needed a better alert system, and hence the reason to go

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towards a gauge network, we needed a better radar, and we certainly needed to be able to communicate with the public what was coming and when it was coming and how big it was going to be. So-----

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And in terms of the better alert system and a radar, steps were taken to achieve that?-- Yes.

And they were in play for the 2010/2011-----?-- Absolutely.

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-----flood events. You referred to the sources of information that were taken into account in coming to a consensus view, and one of those sources that you referred to is a local knowledge. Where is that information coming from, local knowledge, and what type of information is being provided to the LDMG?-- Okay, I suppose one of the strengths of the local approach to managing disasters is that you're making use of the network and the network is quite extensive in terms of when you get all the agency people in the room, including councillors, and council staff, and companies like Geoff, the SunWater people and whatnot, so those people have their own feeder networks talking to different people and different people talking to them. So by having a consensus, you stepping into the room that morning, the first thing we did was put everyone that we thought would have some practical knowledge, some information that might make us make a more informed decision, and that's why we went about it that way. So local knowledge from Geoff's perspective - you know, Geoff would have had contact with some of the landholders up in that part of the world, they would have rung him, he would have rung them. I had contact with particular people. People would have been ringing the chair, Mr Maguire, the CEO, other councillors on the executive. So all of that information, I guess, was sitting in the room at a time when we were talking with BOM and SunWater about the predictions.

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The information that you were getting from rural residents or landholders, was that in effect just explaining the conditions that they were experiencing on their properties?-- Yes, we had information coming from guys saying that it was the biggest flood that they had seen in their lifetime in that part of the world. There was a mass of water.

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How was that information then put into the pot, so to speak, to achieve the consensus view? I mean, that's not based on any gauges; it is just based on "the biggest flood I have ever seen". Is any weight put on that?-- Well, I think there is two things. I mean, the guys have got models and in those models those guys obviously plug their figures in in terms of rainfall. They certainly - the system, I think, currently relies heavily on water measured at the gauges at Raymond and Craigmore, and, look, I would have to say that my experience with BOM, SunWater and Geoff, once the water has gone through Raymond and certainly once it has got to Craigmore, their prediction of what it is going to go over the spillway is normally within five centimetres - five to 10 centimetres. It is not much different to that. So when the water has gone through Craigmore, you have captured 86 per cent of the

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catchment, it is a very accurate gauge, it is a calibrated gauge. The guys have got the system from there down. Going up above that, I think the local knowledge and that's where Geoff's company has played an important part - has been to look at just how that catchment has behaved in terms of what water was actually going to arrive at those gauges, yeah.

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The persons involved in coming to this consensus view were Mr Cavanagh, as you have explained, a representative from the Bureau of Meteorology. Was that done by a teleconference?-- Teleconference, yes.

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A representative from SunWater?-- Yes.

Who was that?-- It would have been Robin Boon or Neil Farrell, one of those two.

And who-----?-- Or both sometimes.

I should ask who were you speaking to from the Bureau of Meteorology?-- Oh, Peter Baddiley, Jimmy Stewart, Geoff Perkins briefly, Jess Carey. Look, we were - personally from my perspective, I was talking to those guys on a pretty regular basis for a month and a half.

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You also say that DERM was indirectly involved. Can you explain that to me?-- In the catchment, the system of gauges that we have, DERM own some of the gauges and manage some of those gauges. SunWater own and manage some of those gauges, and then council's alert system is sitting - in a number of situations piggybacked off those particular gauges. So you have an alert system hanging off the same sensor that has already been there in play for sometime because another agency has had it. That's a much more cost effective way of getting an alert system than actually duplicating the pipe work and putting pipe work down into the stream. So places like Craigmore, that's a DERM gauge. SunWater have the headwater at the Fairbairn Dam. SunWater also have the headwaters at Bingebang and Bedford downstream. So DERM supplies its information to BOM. Normally the data is supplied once a day, it is not realtime. So some conversation, when floods are happening, would happen between the likes of Geoff or myself or BOM probably to discuss with DERM, "Well, look, you know can you check your gauge, what it is reading, to see if there is any variation as between the alert and the TM gauge."

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To come to a consensus view effectively takes into account differing views. Were there differing views?-- Look, I think there were some different views to start off with. There is no doubt about that. I think we were probably still trying to get - one of the challenges with floods is that it is not a perfect science. You are trying to get your head around the rainfall and then what run-off has actually been generated, and then for a catchment the size of Fairbairn Dam, it is 43 per cent the size of Tasmania - sorry, the whole of the Nogoia catchment. If you were looking at the Fairbairn Dam, it is 25 per cent of the size of Tasmania. So understanding how much the catchment did actually receive, that sort of rain and that

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intensity, and then trying to model it through, the guys run their models - and the models aren't instantaneous; you can't just plug a figure in and get a figure out five minutes later, they normally take, I don't know, an hour to run - so all we did was Geoff, "From your data and your information, what are you thinking?" BOM would say, "Well, we put the figures in and this is what we're thinking", and I think early on SunWater - and this is no criticism of SunWater - they are not in the - their system was reliant on understanding what water will generate at Craigmore and once the water gets to there those guys are pretty good predictors - well, very accurate predictors, but before that their prediction of just in fact how much water will generate there is a little bit rubbery.

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And were those skills ultimately taken into account so the process - did SunWater become involved when it hit the gauges that they well knew about - I mean, did SunWater provide modelling previous to those gauges or-----?-- Oh, yes, no, absolutely. The first - and, look, as Mr Maguire said, the first thing that morning Robin - when I contacted Robin, he was talking with Rob Keogh in Brisbane and they were running their models to look at what they could come up with and we certainly got - I got an update from Robin on a daily basis and I also - you know, council also received an EAP, what they call an Emergency Action Plan report once daily based on what their predictions were.

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And also SunWater was in the room in relation to getting - talking about the levels and coming to a consensus view?-- Yes.

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Did this process take longer-----?-- No.

-----the fact of coming to a consensus view? Did it take longer having to refer to all the parties and come to an ultimate view?-- Well, I mean, if you were talking about - no, it would have taken probably - most teleconferences were 30 minutes or less.

Okay?-- And the decision was made within that time-frame.

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The information provided from SunWater, that was obviously used in the discussions to determine hydrology that was relevant. Was information provided by SunWater to the LDMG? You have referred to Emergency Action Plans. How often did you receive communications from SunWater in relation to the releases and other type of information?-- In terms of the releases?

Yes?-- Basically - well, the dam's a water supply. It doesn't have any floodgates on it to actually release any water in advance of or even during an event, so it is a fixed spillway and a fixed embankment. So their reports simply report what they understood was at Craigmore or Raymond and what their anticipated height was at the spillway.

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And how often would you receive that information?-- Daily.

And how did you receive that information?-- Electronically. 1

Is that via email? Was there any telephone contact?-- Absolutely. Robin Boon and I spoke generally most mornings around about 9 o'clock after he had run his models and, you know, I would imagine, without conferring with Mr Cavanagh, but I am sure that Mr Cavanagh was having conversations with those guys as well during the day.

So the information that you received by email, that was twice a day?-- From SunWater? 10

From SunWater?-- No, once a day.

Once a day, sorry?-- Yeah. Well, maybe towards the end there might have been a revision. I would have to get back and look at the final - the final thing. There might have been two came through on the same day.

Did SunWater give you information about the flow out of the dam?-- That's basically what their report would say. They would say that we got this at Craigmore, this is what we expected to be at the spillway, which will be this amount. 20

Was there additional information also given via the telephone conversations that were had between representatives of council hydrologists and SunWater?-- Probably not. It was more just a verbal process that we maintained constant contact, and had a conversation about, I think still going as you think they are. 30

There is also a SunWater representative on the LDMG. What contribution did the SunWater representative make on the LDMG?-- During - in the-----

During the flood event, yeah?-- Well, we didn't actually have a SunWater representative inside the incident control room. During this event, basically we had the Disaster Coordination Group, which is separate, and the LDMG met separately to that. That was a learning from 2008, that we tried to separate things and keep things a little bit smoother. 40

Why is it important to separate those?-- Because there are - you don't need people inside the disaster control centre to be distracted by discussions and conversations about, you know, the capacity to take a truck here or do something there, and - yeah.

Who would be inside the disaster control centre?-- Well, there were representatives from police, fire and rescue, Emergency Management Queensland, SES, so all the emergency groups were represented. 50

And the LDMG?-- Oh, well, there were members of the LDMG in there, yes, members.

But what members were of the LDMG that were not in the disaster coordination centre?-- Well, we-----

Or was it just two separate meetings?-- They took place sitting side by side. So there was communication going between the two, but when the LDMG ran a meeting, it ran it separate to that room and then there was just communication between the person in the room and the LDMG.

I am just interested to know what additional members were in the LDMG that were not in-----?-- At the LDMG meetings we would have had the full LDMG, and there would have been advisory. So the LDMG is made up of core members, as well as advisory members and then a selection of executive from the council. So the advisory members would be the people that would be in addition sitting in the-----

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And one of those members was a representative from SunWater?-- In LDMG, yes, that's right. So people like Ergon, Queensland Health, SunWater - I would have to step down through them but those - mines, there were some representatives from the mines.

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And did it assist having a SunWater representative on the LDMG?-- It has always been a situation where they have and we certainly still have them as a member on the existing LDMG today, yeah, absolutely.

Well, did it assist?-- Well, I think it has because it maintains the network and the relationship so when we're having our meetings they are there, they are talking, they are reporting about what's happening. We're discussing things with them.

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In relation to the consensus view, was the consensus about the flows and heights of the dam or was it about the flows and heights in town? What were you looking at?-- Well, both BOM and SunWater - and I guess even Geoff's company, there is a reasonable - well, certainly SunWater has done a reasonable sort of modelling exercise to give a bit of a correlation between what the dam is and what the Vince Lester Bridge would be.

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And did any one of these persons that we have gone through and discussed, did they have access to a model to determine the heights of the water in town?-- How do you mean? I am not clear what you-----

Well, was there any model available?-- Okay, the data we had, the 16.05 that it went to or even at 16.2 there was no flood record in town. So we were trying to extrapolate what 16.2 would actually do in town because we had some data at 15.35 from the 2008 flood. We were trying to extrapolate that upwards.

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If I can take you now to the measures taken to train and equip the SES. Now, it is stated that during 2010 that council implemented a restructure of the SES groups to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Why was it seen that there was a need to undertake such a restructure to improve efficiency and effectiveness?-- Two things: council, as Mr Maguire was

highlighting, was going through an amalgamation process, so we have had four shires come together into one. Under the old arrangements each shire had its own local controller and a deputy local controller and it may have had one or more group leaders in different units. Part of the amalgamation process was to try to move towards building that one big family, getting one local controller, three deputy local controllers, and then maintaining the group units the way they were with group leaders. The deputy local controllers - we split the region up into three geographic areas, one for central north, so that included The Gemfields, west Emerald, Capella and Tieri, the eastern one was Duaringa and Blackwater, and the southern one was Springsure, Rolleston. Part of the reason for that is, as Peter explained, I think the geographic distances, the creeks that get cut, the size of the catchment, yeah.

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So the restructure took place in 2010 and was operational during the flood events of December 2010 and January 2011. Were you here yesterday hearing the evidence of Councillor Nixon?-- No, I didn't hear it all.

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You heard the evidence this morning of the Mayor, Councillor Maguire, about when the flood events hit these small communities, the SES really just performed by themselves. Was that anticipated as a consequence of the restructure? Did you expect that to occur or did you expect it to be more one big family, more unified?-- Oh, look, I think - I think, to be fair, my comment about the SES, they did a tremendous job, they really did. The nature of the way the floods unfolded in the community and the situation the shire was in going into the floods with the roads cut, Rolleston had been isolated extensively, and we were in constant contact, for example, with Lionel Jackson who is the ESU leader down there-----

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To be clear, I am not concerned with whether - questioning whether the SES did a good job; I am just looking at what would be the most efficient system to establish the SES groups in this area. Now, the SES groups - we have heard from the SES group in Rolleston that - how it performed. How do you think - after looking back on the 2010/2011 flood event, how do you think that new restructure actually worked?-- Well, I think the unit performed the way that - the whole process of having those subgroups and those - you know, we can improve our local disaster response and whatnot in those particular districts, but I think the way it behaved exemplifies the reason for having those subgroups in each of the parts of the catchment. They did-----

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But is it a good example of having one overarching controller?-- Well, I think, yes, we should still have one local controller and I think we still should have three deputy local controllers. We didn't have them all in place. We had our local controller appointed only at the end of November. We had one deputy local controller appointed but we were still going through an application process when we went into the floods. If - if - the groups and the units function well in their district, the role of the local controller is to look at

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are we actually getting the resources to those units, are we sharing it, are we backing up, are we looking at does Joe need a break, do we need to get another unit down to give you some relief. So, to me, that's the role of the local controllers and the deputy local controllers and if you don't have that overarching capacity you won't be looking at it with that helicopter view. 1

How did that perform, using the helicopter view, in the 2010/2011 flood events?-- Well, that's certainly how we were trying to do it but I wouldn't say it was 100 per cent effective as it could because it didn't have time to bed itself down. I mean, change takes time. The structure had only just been changed one month before the floods. 10

And can you tell me - I don't know whether you know - what's the membership of the SES in this region?-- Well, it has jumped up since the floods. There would be probably - I think at the time of the floods there were 27 active members in Emerald, eight active members at Gemfields, eight at Springsure. I would have to check - hold on - it has jumped up to 47 at Emerald since. 20

Can you give us any other indication of the numbers in the other areas?-- Two secs I will. So, yeah, before the event we had, sorry, 12 active at Gemfields, 27 at Emerald, eight at Springsure and 20 at Rolleston. We have now got 12 at Gemfields, 47 in Emerald, nine in Springsure and 20 in Rolleston. 30

Now, if we can now go to the matter of evacuation centres, you state that evacuation centre details were provided to the public along with a map of illustrating location of evacuation centres and likely inundation areas. When you are referring to such details, you are referring to the region around Emerald?-- That's right. 40

And when were these evacuation centre details provided to the public?-- Well, the briefing notes that are in the submission there - I would have to step through them but the information was provided in the briefing notes that went out as soon as we knew that we were going to need them. 50

One of the matters that is raised is the evacuation of aged persons. You state at page 9 - and perhaps if I can take you to that - at xxi, that "A survey was undertaken of aged person units at risk of inundation at .8 metres above the 2008 flood height." So when was this survey undertaken?-- As the flood event was unfolding. 60

And was that identified as a particular risk that you had to address, was the evacuation of aged care facilities?-- Well, certainly with - we have some elderly people in units and places like that that we actually physically took to the Emerald Ag College, but the Avalon aged care persons home, there are a number of people there that, you know, are fairly debilitated in their capacity to move around. When we had the final figure, or we were clear that we were going to have 16

point something, there was a request certainly to look at the hospital, and certainly to look at the aged care unit, and then we sat down and we put some people on the street to do some surveys to look at what the floor heights would be because we didn't actually have the floor heights of those buildings and made an assessment based on the 2008 flood data and the road and elevation data that we had, and we then spoke with the director for aged care, aged Blue Care in - I would have to look at what his name was but we spoke with him about the situation. We worked through with the Queensland Ambulance about how long it would actually take to relocate those people. We also took steps to commandeer a motel floor, which was the Meteor, who were very helpful and receptive and talked about moving their residents upstairs so that we could move the tenants in. By the time we had all those things in play and we got the data - the data suggested that it would be touch and go - we spoke with the director and he said, "Well, I am happy to run with your assessment." We decided to leave the aged care people where they were and that we would actually put more sandbags and provide more SES support there if it looked like it was needed because between us we agreed there would be more stress associated with moving those people over the space of four hours than there would be leaving them where they were.

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Has the issue of evacuation of aged care facilities been one that had been considered by the LDMG in its flood planning and preparation?-- Possibly not as well as it could have been but it certainly has been addressed now.

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How has that been addressed now?-- Well, we have surveyed all the floor heights in town.

Of all the aged care facilities?-- At the hospital, police station, all of the facilities, we have undertaken extensive survey of floor heights.

Do you have trigger points then?-- Working those up - so our next LDMG meeting in June, which is in the next couple of weeks, we have got a list of heights. We won't - I mean, there will be some stuff we will put publicly in the media, on the web page about road closures, so we would expect a 15.1 or 14.4 the Vince Lester will be closed, at 15.1 this will happen and that road will close so the public does know about access routes.

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Will that be up on the website now?-- It is not but it will be.

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So, it is always there and then the public will have to transfer what they are being told and look at that, what-----?-- It - well, to me it would be an additional piece of information for the public to say, "Look, whilst we are indicating when you should evacuate and when you should act there is some other information, anything can go on out in the flood kit, there is some other information there that you can make your own decision about your evacuation routes and timing as well.

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Now, if we can get back to the issue of the aged care facilities and the work done since the flood event. You referred to the fact that the council has undertaken a survey of these facilities to understand the levels of flood that would have to occur for inundation to take place. I interrupted you so if you could continue?-- What we have done is taken the floor height as part of the data set that will be looked at with the hydrologists when they are doing their hydrology studies so they can actually look at the risk of those particular locations.

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Evacuation of aged care facilities, though, does have some lead in times because it takes some time, as you discussed, to undertake such an evacuation. Has that also been factored into any further planning and preparation?-- Certainly, it is an activity of the LDMG. We are going to be looking at our evacuation plan and strategy and that will include not just aged care people but even the issue like Mr Maguire said, if we are going to get a prediction that says that Emerald is going to go to 16.2 or 16.3, we know we actually are going to bring forward some of the other actions in the community about either shifting property and as you say, some of the aged care people or the disabled people etcetera. So, look, I think our modified evacuation plan before the next summer season will have a much more defined document that helps people understand when we are going to act at certain points.

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The trigger points that you referred to, are they placed on predictions or are they based on actual levels?-- We have got - the trigger levels are positioned at the Fairbairn Dam and at the Vince Lester Bridge point. What we will end up with is a list that says when the Fairbairn Dam - if you are on solid road between here and the Fairbairn Dam once the dam gets to 2.8 metres we might know that, "John, your house is going to have water in it or you won't be able to get out of your property."

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How much warning would, say, John in that example be provided once you know there is a trigger point over the dam, would you particularise it at a certain level? How much warning does that provide a resident?-- Well, there is two separate things. One is the warning about the depth going to come.

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Mmm?-- The second is knowing what depth is going to affect a person. The trigger points in the list we are developing is about when it is going to affect certain things and property. The warning is about trying to get an additional rain gauge, sorry initial river gauge at Van Dyke and improve our ability

to say well we are going to call it early and say it is going to be 5.7. If people know it is 5.7 and know their house is going to be affected at 3.5 they know they have to start acting straightaway.

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How it is proposed the council would be able to disseminate this information in information that is easily understood by residents in this community. That is certainly a challenge the LDMG will be working through in the next couple of meetings to piece that together so it becomes a simple document for people to know.

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Has there been any suggestions to meet that challenge?-- No, I suppose the last meeting we were still working on capturing some of the flood height data and some of the anecdotal data from residents. Now we have that it is certainly on the agenda for the next meeting to sit down and say, "This is the trigger point information we have and what does that mean and how should we share that with the public and what is the best way to do that?" So our manager of communications and other people in the room will sort through that. I don't have a clear picture accept at the moment it just sits in the form of - it is not a very big bench, sorry-----

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Which document are you referring to?-- Sorry, what we do have at the moment is a list that says Vince Lester Bridge, a height; Fairbairn Dam spillway, a height; then a description and an action. Then we are trying to put the AHD as in the actual survey data, document that so if I move on or Glen or someone else in the council moves on the record is there for future people.

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In relation to evacuation centres and where people should go, we spoke previously about aged care facilities and the challenges that arise in relation to the evacuation of those such persons. Has the council considered about where persons from aged care facilities would be evacuated to that would have the appropriate facilities to handle such and event?-- Certainly, in that particular event we looked at the Meteor Hotel because it was all flat floor and they had a capacity to run a vitamiser and those sorts of things because it had a full restaurant sitting on the ground floor. In terms of future strategies I don't believe we made a firm decision about how and what we would do but we would be guided by the appropriate health authorities and ourselves. I guess at the moment the ag college would probably be the best option in my mind given, you know, the fact it is on high ground and given the convenience and the comfort of the facilities.

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If an evacuation of an aged care facility does have to occur, bedding often has to be provided?-- Yes.

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Has that been taken into account?-- Certainly the ag college that's one of the benefits, we are fortunate in Emerald in that you have a number of rooms that - and whether it is fortunate or not, I guess often these floods seem to occur over the summer Christmas period when the students aren't actually at the college so often the rooms are empty.

As part of the planning and preparation in this area you state that, "Contact was made with QR and QR National prior to the floods about getting access to passenger carriages and these to be prepositioned in a region or preferably even in Emerald." Why is that an important part of the planning and preparation?-- At 14.4 metres the Vince Lester Bridge goes out and in 2008 the rail was an important transport route to get people from the east and west. In 2008 the rail bridge was not closed, it continued to operate so it became a way for people to travel from here, get across to the other side, catch a plane, go to Brisbane and business could still proceed. Unfortunately in this event the period, the railway bridge actually got cut, but certainly our strategy leading into it was it was an integral component in 2008. We knew that if the Vince Lester went out we probably would be very reliant on the rail bridge. What happens, I probably need to produce a map but - actually the little map here might do the trick. What happens is that Emerald gets broken into three. So we have a western - I am looking upside down, sorry - that's the Nogoia River trunk stream, so water flowing that way, eastern side is high ground, on the western side what happens is that we end up getting cut at this drain----

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Can you show it to the Commissioner as well?-- Sorry, Nogoia main trunk stream, this is the eastern side of town, the high ground, this is the western side that is lower. Lm1 drain gets cut here going north, Lm1 drain here gets cut going west and where the water comes through New Street here it actually isolates our ability to go out through there. Effectively you end up with three islands, you have an island on the southern side of the railway line, an island in the middle of town and an island sitting on the northern sign. Often the island on the northern side, whilst they can go to higher ground on Emerald Downs Hill, in 2008 we Retreat Creek was closed so effectively they got up there but couldn't go further north. So, the importance of the railway line is that these things here cut the town after the railway bridge and we are in flood here so the railway bridge becomes an important exit point in and out of the town.

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Now, there was - that was considered by the council before the wet season. Did that occur, that you were able to get access by rail in these floods?-- One the dilemmas we had is we weren't - we had the flood event on the 3rd of December and I guess that certainly really shook us up a little bit. We had been to the warnings and briefings with EMQ and the season was certainly wet. We were concerned that going into the Christmas period that if we had another one of those events the community may be in trouble. So, we were talking with Queensland Rail about getting carriages out. Unfortunately their carriages don't reside in Rockhampton and they don't sit here locally in Emerald. Our railway lines are predominantly used for freight and a lot of it predominantly coal freight from here east, so the notion of trying to get carriages up, we went through the protocol - Queensland Rail during the year split into two separate groups so there was a bit of an issue there about getting access to a decision from which party was

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responsible for which, but we worked through that and certainly tried again to get carriages into town. After of the 3rd, the problem was the railway line was cut between Rockhampton and Emerald and we couldn't get carriages across from Rockhampton. So we were faced with - if the rail line is a major exit route we might need to use other types of carriages hooked up to the train if we had to get people out.

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Are all of those issues being considered for planning and preparation for the next wet season?-- Absolutely. Look, I think we are probably a little better informed this time to say we know at that particular level that the rail bridge is going to go out. So if we are going to have a - we will certainly have two things, if we get the - that's our intention is to get the gauge in at Van Dyke and I will explain why that is important to you if you like. We get the lead time in the warning, we know what is going to go over the spillway because the guys have the model pretty right now for the Nogoia, if we know it is going to go to that sort of height the railway line is not going to be an exit route or it may be an exit route depending on which particular height it is going to go at. If we know it is only going to go at 4.4 at Fairbairn Dam and stay at that and unlikely to go more after that, the rail would become a fairly important route. If it is going to go more than that the rail line is going to be cut, it is obviously not an exit route and if it is going to be at that height we probably have more serious decisions earlier on about evacuating more people out of the centre of town.

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Perhaps now might be a good opportunity for you to tell us your view on the importance of that gauge?-- If I just show you - there is a couple of maps here I am happy to leave with the Commission. I will just pull these out and there is a catchment map. If you look - this is a graphical representation of the terrain in the Nogoia catchment, the brown being the highest part of the catchment and the blue being the lower part of the landscape. When I pass it to you, you will probably be able to see the creeks and that in it. Effectively we have Craigmore sitting - I can give you another map showing where they are sitting - but sitting down here upstream of the dam and we have Raymond sitting back up here. Raymond effectively collects this part of the catchment but there is a big sectional catchment here called Van Dyke and Cona Creek that come in here. One of the dilemmas that the hydrographers first experience is trying to guesstimate what is coming from Van Dyke independent of Raymond and often they can't confirm that until it gets to Craigmore. So if we can confirm what is coming out of Van Dyke as well as Raymond I think we probably would increase our warning time by anywhere between 12 and 24 hours.

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In terms of more gauges - I tender that map.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 488.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 488"

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MS WILSON: You referred to another map previously. Can you refer to that map again?-- This map here?

It was the one of the catchment and the boundaries?-- Yes.

I should tender that map as well.

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COMMISSIONER: Sorry you are tendering?

MS WILSON: I tender that map that Mr Wilkinson was referring to.

WITNESS: This here?

MS WILSON: The topography map and this is a map that Mr Wilkinson referred to in his evidence which was the catchment boundary.

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COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 489.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 489"

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MS WILSON: One of the matters that this council has considered is the affect of flooding on roads thus isolating landholders and accordingly, it has been determined that, in certain circumstances landholders can fix the road so they can get access. Can you tell me how this works? How this process works, so if a road is prohibiting access by a landholder then they are allowed to fix it to be able to gain access?-- Well, technically probably under the Local Government Act it is not something that, you know, local governments would normally encourage to happen, you know, in any normal situation because you want to try and maintain some sort of standard of what is done on the roads and look after the assets but when you look at that map there and you look at the isolation and I guess Gail possibly talked about it yesterday, the isolation of some of those properties, we couldn't get to them. I mean, we couldn't get to Rolleston. The people from Rolleston couldn't get south. The people in the bottom of the Arcadia Valley couldn't get out. So - but those guys are still needing to obviously get around on their properties to check fences and check stock and even to just check if their neighbours are okay because that is how the bush system works, the guys look out for each other. So the council decision to free up an ability for local landholders to undertake a bit of road improvement work around their place so they actually can physically traverse around was a sensible ones in my mind given the nature of the season.

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How was that process undertaken?-- I think council made a

decision - there was guidelines there but basically the advice was they took photos of the road before, describe what the problems were, and it was really only minimal work to allow them to get down the road and, I mean, I don't have some of the photos here in front of me but certainly can supply them to the Commission that there are sections of road where they were, you know, waist-deep, washed out, and land slipped bits over the top of them and things like that.

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Have you any of the before and after photos of this is what it was before reported by a resident and this is what the residents did to be able to gain access?-- I personally don't but I am sure that Bill Turner and the guys of council would have some of that.

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That would be good if we could be provided with that. Then the landholder or the person who does the repairs to the road is then compensated in some way?-- Look, I would have to talk that through with the council but certainly that was the intent that they would be able to do some work and council would look at how they would recover some of their costs, I guess, under the National Disaster Arrangements.

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Do you know whether landholders have been compensated for such work?-- I can't answer that at the moment.

Then there is the issue of quality control you referred to?-- Sure.

How does the council ensure that?-- I think, you know, our civil operations group will be out and checking and working their way around the roads and doing their own assessments and talking to the landholders. I would have to refer that question probably to Bill Turner and his department to answer.

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Finally, if we can return to the matter of evacuation centres. You state that, "The timing of the evacuation and relocation of patients from the Emerald Hospital by Queensland Health was made too late and made it difficult for emergency service personnel to get patients out of the hospital." Can you explain that to me?-- Graham Reeves from the police asked me at - I can't remember what time it was, I have to go through my diary - about checking the floor of the hospital because they were concerned about the flood so when we undertook the survey for the aged care persons we undertook the survey on the hospital floor as well. It was, to put it in context, it was a reasonably accurate survey, enough to give me confidence that the floor of the hospital would not be inundated and in my mind, even if the floor, lower floor of the hospital had been inundated, I believe they could have moved their patients upstairs. I don't believe the hospital was that full with patients. But, look, I guess the mayor and I were on - we just had the conversation with Blue Care, the Director of Aged Care, then we had the conversation with Queensland Health and we were just about to advise them we thought they were safe and they said no, we are making our own arrangements to get everyone out. At that stage water was starting to get into the car park and by the time they were trying to pull the

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patients out, you know, it was in water and it was going into the night. They sent some patients to Blackwater and sent some to Springsure. My view at the time, and my view even now, is it was an incorrect move. They should have left the patients there.

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How can that decision making process be made more efficient so if a decision is made to evacuate then it is made sooner?-- Two things we needed to - we now surveyed the floor of the hospital for the hospital and we certainly will work through providing that data and discussing that with them. It was probably about 10 centimetres off going over the emergency, their generator pad out the back that runs the hospital. They probably were experiencing some issues with the sewerage and certainly I spoke with our water and sewerage guys to say, "Well, look, is there some scope to look at putting some improved component of the system so the hospital is a bit more resilient to a bit more depth of flood water," but, yeah, we have all these plans to work through still in the next few months to get the data. I guess from my perspective being flat out capturing data in town as well as some of the other towns flooded but we certainly got it and will work through it with them.

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Evacuation centres were predetermined?-- Yes.

Did the residents know where to go before they were given warning to go to an evacuation centre?-- I would have to say in our flood booklet that goes out we haven't that specific information listed in there.

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Is that information that you think the residents should know ahead of any flood event?-- Certainly the briefing notices that went out informed people where to go. I think they were quite clear about where they had to go. Our documentation that goes out to residents probably in future should include those particular facilities so it is absolutely clear for everyone.

The council had a memorandum of understanding in place with Red Cross?-- Yes.

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Did that work well?-- Absolutely, they do a fantastic job.

We spent some time talking about gauges. There has been suggestions for more gauges to assist in flood warnings in the Rolleston area. Has that been considered by the council as well?-- Yes, in 2010 before this season we put a submission in for funding and we were successful. We had two gauges to go in upstream of the Rolleston township, two river gauges plus an additional rain gauge. That is still on schedule. We are working with BOM, they are due either in late June or early July, and we will look at trying to get those installed.

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When would you be expecting for those to be installed?-- We certainly want them in before next wet season provided that the season - you know, I don't believe it is going to continue wet through winter but if it did become a wet winter it would

make it difficult to put those in but hopefully weather will be with us.

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MS WILSON: Thank you. I have not further questions, Madam Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Ambrose?

MR AMBROSE: We have no questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Rolls?

MR ROLLS: I have no questions.

MS O'GORMAN: I have no questions.

MR URE: I have nothing, thank you.

MS WILSON: No re-examination, may the witness be excused?

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COMMISSIONER: Thanks very much, Mr Wilkinson, you are excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, that's all the witnesses that are going to be called in these hearings. May we adjourn to Brisbane tomorrow at 10 a.m.?

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MR ROLLS: Before the Commission rises there is one matter I wish to raise. That is; Peter Maguire gave evidence of a letter he had sent to, amongst others, the Premier. Since he has given that evidence - he said he got a response - since he has given that evidence I was informed or instructed on 19 May this year the Premier did, in fact, write to Peter Maguire and either myself or Mr MacSporran would be seeking leave at the forthcoming hearings in Brisbane to tender a copy of that letter.

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COMMISSIONER: All right.

MR ROLLS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: We will adjourn until tomorrow at 10 a.m. in Brisbane.

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THE COURT ADJOURNED AT 12.55 P.M. TILL 10 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY AT BRISBANE