

# 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

IPSWICH

..DATE 20/05/2011

..DAY 26

THE COURT RESUMED AT 10.02 A.M.

COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson, you might just take the appearances for this session of the Inquiry. So you appear again.

MS WILSON: Yes, Madam Commissioner. My name is Wilson, initials E S. I appear as Counsel Assisting.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Flanagan?

MR FLANAGAN: Flanagan, initials P J, Senior Counsel, with Ms Brien, initial J, of counsel, instructed by Clayton Utz and we appear for the Ipswich City Council.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: My name is MacSporran, A J, Senior Counsel. I appear for the State of Queensland with Mr J Rolls and Ms J Brasch.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Pomeranke?

MR POMERENKE: May it please the Commission, my name is Pomeranke. I appear for Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority instructed by Allens Arthur Robinson.

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod?

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MS McLEOD: Yes, McLeod, I appear with Ms O'Gorman for the Commonwealth.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Are those all the appearances?

MR DOLLAR: If it pleases the Commission, my name is Dollar, initial L, counsel instructed by Holding Redlich and I appear on behalf of SunWater.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Thanks, Ms Wilson.

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

On Wednesday the 12th of January of this year, the Bremer River peaked at over 19 metres. This flood event is now recorded as the third largest flood in the history of Ipswich. The flood peak in 1974 was only marginally higher.

Whilst the history books will always record the height of the river, the depths of personal loss and tragedy that such flooding causes, along with the strength of a rallying community, will often be left to the susceptibility of memory.

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It has been said that some in the Ipswich community did not think what occurred in 1974 could happen again, comfortable, perhaps, in the belief that Wivenhoe Dam would save the city from similar catastrophe.

In January of this year, nearly a third of the Ipswich City area was flooded. Thousands of homes and businesses were devastated by a disaster of 1974 proportions, the result of large scale flooding in the two major river systems which runs through the Ipswich area. Two major rivers flow through the Ipswich area and flooding in both caused inundation.

The City of Ipswich itself is located on the Bremer River. Part of the Ipswich CBD and areas adjacent to the Bremer and its tributaries were inundated. The Bremer meets the Brisbane River at Riverview.

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The flooding that occurred at Goodna, Riverview and Redbank, some of the worst affected areas, was the result of flooding in the Brisbane River. No two floods are the same and the January event was, in many ways, different from 1974, but as occurred in 1974 and in 1893 before it, the flooding of the Bremer River was influenced by backwater from the Brisbane River. The topic of the impact of releases from Wivenhoe Dam has been the subject of previous evidence heard in Brisbane. There will be some comment today about the challenge of predicting the impact on Ipswich of flood events in these two major rivers. Although the local authorities were on alert for the impending event, the scale of the January flood took them by surprise.

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On Monday the 10th of January this year, the Bureau of Meteorology predicted a moderate event in Ipswich which on the council's mapping would impact a relatively small amount of properties. By Monday afternoon, the Bureau of Meteorology was predicting a major event. On Tuesday morning, it was expected that a few hundred properties would be affected.

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Then in only a matter of hours, from Tuesday morning to Tuesday afternoon, the predicted peak of the Bremer River increased from 12.7 metres to 22 metres, meaning the situated escalated from a manageable event which would not require significant evacuations to an event of 1974 proportions, potentially affecting more than 6,000 properties. It should be noted in this context that Mr Peter Baddiley from the Bureau of Meteorology will give evidence in Brisbane next week.

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Today, the Inquiry will hear evidence of the effect that this rapid escalation of predicted flood heights had on the response in Ipswich. The authorities and the community had to scramble. This rapid escalation of predicted flood heights affected the warnings that could be provided to the community and it created an urgent need to establish evacuation centres.

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Warnings and evacuation centres are two issues, as well as others, that will be considered today.

The Commission has received statements from residents who say they received little warning. In addition, the issue has been raised about the usefulness of the flood warnings that were provided. Comment has been made that warnings referable to

gauge levels or predicted flood heights may be meaningless to members of the community who do not understand the consequences of such information and suggestions have been provided as to how such warnings can be conveyed to the public more effectively.

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The issue of evacuation routes and evacuation centres is of particular relevance in Ipswich. For example, Mrs Marjorie Berghofer, who has provided a statement which will be tendered later today, was evacuated from Riverview Gardens Retirement Village on the evening of Tuesday 11 January. She was taken to the council central evacuation centre at Ipswich Showgrounds and then transported to another centre at the Ipswich Regional Community Church where there were not enough beds. She did not sleep that night.

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The merits or otherwise of centralised evacuation centres, issues surrounding evacuation of residents of retirement villages and management and resourcing of evacuation centres will be considered.

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The Inquiry will further examine the issue of unofficial evacuation centres. These centres are sometimes referred to as organic evacuation centres, and you can understand why. They are not the result of predetermined planning but rather these centres often just grew from within the community as a result of basic need. For example, unofficial centres arose in Goodna, Riverview and Redbank run by community leaders, pastors and school principals. The Inquiry has received statements from two pastors who ran such centres and we will hear evidence from one of them today, Pastor Paulo.

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The Redbank State Primary School also operated as an unofficial evacuation centre. The principal of the school, Mrs Colleen Engel, will give evidence of her role at the centre during the event. Sadly, Mrs Engel lost her brother Robert Bromage, in the January flood. The vehicle Mr Bromage was driving was washed away at the Karrabin-Rosewood Road. Mrs Engel has provided a number of suggestions for the Inquiry to consider.

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We will hear evidence from the Ipswich Local Disaster Coordinator, referred to as the LCD, Mr Trace, and the District Disaster Coordinator, referred to as the DDC, Superintendent Garth Pitman, about the lessons they learned from the January flood event.

Mr Trace, as the LDC, will give evidence about how the Ipswich community, the Ipswich City Council, State and Federal agencies responded to the flood events in this area. He also provides suggestions as to what could be improved or reviewed for the future.

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As the Ipswich DDC, Superintendent Pitman was responsible for the Ipswich and Somerset areas. He will be asked about issues in Ipswich and Somerset and, in particular, about his role in responding to the isolation and the loss of power of communications that occurred in the Somerset area.

The view has been expressed properly that the lessons of the 2011 flood event should not be lost. The evidence that is heard today of the experiences of the community and the insights the authorities have gained may assist the Inquiry in formulating recommendations for its interim report on matters associated with flood preparedness which is the Commission's immediate task. This report is due on the 1st of August this year to enable recommendations to be implemented before next summer's wet season.

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To that end, we will examine any practical or legislative changes that will contribute to a more effective response by government agencies.

There are other issues of importance to the people of Ipswich, such as land planning and insurance, and the Commission will focus on these issues later this year.

Madam Commissioner, may we now adjourn for a short period before we call the first witness?

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COMMISSIONER: We will adjourn briefly.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 10.13 A.M.

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THE COMMISSIONER RESUMED AT 10.18 A.M.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms Wilson?

MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, I call Jennifer Beattie. Madam Commissioner, this evidence will be taken by telephone.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

JENNIFER LEE BEATTIE, SWORN AND EXAMINED VIA TELEPHONE LINK:

MS WILSON: Is your full name Jennifer Lee Beattie?-- Yes.

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Are you the manager of Gailles Caravan Park?-- Yes, I can only just hear you.

I will speak up. Have you been manager of that caravan park for about 11 years?-- Yes, 11 and a half years.

And you have provided a statement to the Queensland Flood

Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes, I did.

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Have you got that statement there?-- Yes, I - it is on my laptop. I have it in front of me.

Is that statement true and correct?-- Yes.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 438.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 438"

MS WILSON: Now, can I just take you through a couple of matters that you have raised in your statement?-- Yes.

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Your property, that is your caravan park, has approximately about 100 to 120 residents?-- Yes, I am the manager there, not the owner by the way.

Okay. And those residents are made up of permanent residential-----?-- Yes.

-----and the occasional non-permanent?-- At the time of the floods they were all permanent people, yes.

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If I can take you to paragraph 3 where you refer to discussions with the SES coordinator?-- Yes.

You say that these discussions occurred - first occurred a few years ago?-- Yes.

Can you give me some estimate about when that was?-- I can't remember exactly. Because I have left - I have lost virtually all my records except what was on a USB stick in the floods, otherwise I would have been able to tell you exactly. But it would be probably - probably three to four years ago when he first approached us. He rang us by phone. He did call in one day to see me but I had several telephone conversations with him and he, you know, made the arrangements to - you know, to put the text messages on our phones, my husband and myself on both our phones.

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Can I just stop you there? You talked about text messages?-- Yes.

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That is you would receive text messages, is that the case?-- Yes, yes.

Who would be receiving those - sending the text messages?-- I understood it was coming from the SES - well certainly that they would organise to put those text messages on our phones.

And the text messages were in relation to?-- Any flood

warning, yes.

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Okay. Now, the discussions with the SES coordinator, they were about where to go in - where to go when the caravan park needed evacuating?-- It was a full evacuation plan and basically he explained that they would make an evacuation point for us if we had to be evacuated, and he said Bundamba school, and during those first discussions I had with him I said to him that the Woogaroo Creek would stop us getting to Bundamba School, which it does, but at that stage I had never actually seen the creek in flood. Then as time went on we had twice that creek has flooded between - between those discussions and this flood in January this year, that creek has twice had a minor flood. Neither of them come over the caravan park. One come up to the top of the bank, the other one come a couple of metres below the bank. So there was no worry that we had to evacuate, but if the first one had have come any higher, we would have had to have thought about it.

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Okay. So the Bundamba School-----?-- Yep.

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-----that was on the other side of Woogaroo Creek-----?-- Yes.

-----and you wanted an evacuation point on your side of Woogaroo Creek?-- Yes, I said somewhere high.

Okay?-- Well above Woogaroo Creek, and he said, "Well, in the case of emergency, any school is open as an evacuation point", and I said, "That's fine. Camira school would be our closest school", and I said to him, "May I have the phone number of the headmaster of the Camira school?", and he was absolutely horrified and said, "No, the chain of command is that we will - the SES will inform the police and the police will organise it."

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Okay. So the Camira school, that is within walking distance from your park?-- Yes, it is, yes.

And it is easily accessible from the caravan park?-- Yes, yes.

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And you talked - you just referred to before the chain of command?-- Yes.

And the chain of command that was discussed between the SES controller and yourself?-- Yes.

That was - when was that discussed - when did that discussion take place?-- Well, it would have to be around about two years ago.

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Well, you talk in your statement around the end of 2009?-- Yes.

There was a cyclone threat?-- It may have been a little earlier in 2009 than that - look, I can't remember exactly - but it was - I am pretty sure it was some time during 2009,

there was a cyclone threatening to come down the coast and, you know, the weather wasn't really good, and I thought, "Okay, I want this problem sorted out. I want to know what happens if we have a flood."

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So when you are talking about the chain of command, you are talking about who do you call; is that what you wanted to know?-- Yes, I was told that I had to ring the SES controller in Ipswich and that that was the way it was done. I had both a landline number, which I believe is somewhere in his office at the council, but I am not exactly sure where his office is, but it is in Ipswich, and a mobile number.

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And then the SES controller-----?-- Yes.

-----they would then ring the police; is that the process that you were told?-- That's what he told me was the procedure.

Okay. Now, you wrote down this evacuation plan or process-----?-- Yes.

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-----in a handbook so that it could be followed if you were there or not?-- Yes, yes.

Okay. So, now-----?-- As well as me giving full verbal instructions to my assistant managers, it was written down. If they forgot anything, it was there in front of them.

Okay. Now, if I can take you to the 11th of January this year?-- Yes.

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You were not at the park; you were on-----?-- Yes.

-----holiday then?-- Yes, yes.

On the morning you checked the Bureau of Meteorology website?-- Yes.

And you couldn't see any warnings-----?-- No.

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-----that were applicable to your park?-- We were supposed to leave for holidays on the morning of the Monday, the 10th, and we didn't leave until about 3 o'clock that afternoon, and because we thought, okay, well, this is flooding - you know, by that time it was a problem, I think, in the Lockyer and we heard - so we thought okay, so we looked and there didn't seem to be there was going to be any problem with flooding in our section - you know, down that far in the river.

Okay?-- And so we went on holidays - oh, darn - and then we looked at the website about 6, 6.30 on the Tuesday morning.

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Yes. And that's where we talked about that there was no warnings?-- Yes.

But you did decide to return to the park because later that day you spoke to the assistant manager?-- Yes, we left - we rang the office at about 8.30. We were still - I think I have



looked at the website again before I rang. Anyway, I rang her about 8.30 and by that time - it was two or three metres below the creek bank but it was starting to rise.

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Okay?-- And so we had a bit of a think about it. We hadn't paid for our room because we had arrived late the night before, so we waited until the office opened before we left.

Okay. Now, you decided to return to the park?-- Yes.

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But in the meantime the assistant manager followed the chain of command?-- Yes.

As you understood it to be?-- She did.

First of all she called the Ipswich SES?-- Yes.

Then are you aware what resulted from those phone calls?-- Yes, she could not get any answer from either of the numbers for the Ipswich SES.

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Then she called the State SES?-- Yes.

And are you aware what occurred as a result of calling the State SES?-- They told her that they couldn't help.

Then you say she called the Ipswich City Council?-- Yes.

And are you aware of the result of that conversation?-- She was told that there was no real emergency in our area and to leave the line free for people in a more serious situation.

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Okay?-- She couldn't make them understand how serious the situation was there.

Okay. And then she made contact with the Goodna Police Station?-- Yes, yes.

And the police organised a bus to evacuate the residents?-- Eventually. Eventually. When she first started - well, she started to ring them mid-morning, and they told her that, you know - I don't know the exact words they used, obviously, but the intimation was that they hadn't yet received, you know, the go-ahead to do it. That is our understanding of why they didn't come immediately. They did eventually just do it.

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Was the bus full of residents who couldn't independently leave the park?-- Yes, yes.

So other residents may have left the park earlier?-- Yes. The only people who were left, like, by that time, by mid-afternoon, people had come back because being workers, you know, they weren't there, they'd come back. Basically, by the time the majority of people got there, the water was inside all their caravans. So it was hardly anybody got anything out. And some people - you know, people were helping those who didn't have vehicles and taking them away, but the people that went on the police bus were people - aged people and

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people on disability pension.

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Okay. And they were taken to the Shiloh Church?-- Yes.

The Camira school, that was not open to your knowledge?-- Well, it was never mentioned. So, obviously the Shiloh Church is a wonderful organisation and I should imagine, knowing the area, that the police would have just contacted them and that would have been that.

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Now, did you receive any SMS text message?-- Yes, about-----

When was that?-- About 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

And what was the contents of that message thereabouts, the effect?-- Just to say that - you know, that the flooding was occurring in - was going to occur in the area.

And do you know who that SMS message was from?-- No, it doesn't say who it is from.

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By that time the caravan park had been essentially evacuated?-- Totally - totally covered by water by the time any - in all the caravans except maybe half a dozen at that stage.

And can you tell me what was the height of the flooding that the caravan park experienced? How high did the water come?-- It went totally over the top of my residence which is a two-storey building.

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Thank you, Ms Beattie. I have no further questions for you?-- Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Flanagan?

MR FLANAGAN: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

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MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing, thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Pomerence?

MR POMERENKE: No questions, thank you.

MS McLEOD: No questions, thank you.

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. May Ms Beattie be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you very much for your time, Ms Beattie. We will end the connection now. You are excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: I call Reginald O'Dea.

REGINALD THOMAS O'DEA, ON AFFIRMATION, EXAMINED:

MS WILSON: Mr O'Dea, is your full name Reginald Thomas O'Dea?-- It is.

You live in Brisbane Terrace, Goodna?-- I do.

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You made a statement to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- I have.

Can you have a look at this document, please. Is that the statement you made?-- Yes.

Is that your statement?-- Yes.

In your statement you refer to a submission that you also made to the inquiry, the Commission of Inquiry?-- That is correct.

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Can you have a look at this document, please? That submission is attached to that statement, Commissioner. I tender that document as the one exhibit.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 439.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 439"

WITNESS: Yes, that is-----

MS WILSON: That is your statement with your submission. Now, Mr O'Dea, I am just going to ask you some questions. That is your evidence in your statement?-- Mmm.

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I am just going to ask you some questions about some matters that are raised in your statement, okay?-- Right.

Now, you have lived in the Goodna vicinity all your life, haven't you?-- That is correct.

You were there in the time of the 1955 floods?-- Yes.

The 1974 floods?-- Yes.

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And you were there also this year for the 2011 floods?-- Yes.

Now, one of the issues that you raise in your statement is the issue of evacuation routes?-- Yes.

Now, in your statement you refer to in 1955 flood residents were able to traverse the railway line to get out. Where are they coming from? Where are the residents coming from in relation to the evacuation route?-- Well-----

Are they coming from Brisbane Terrace?-- Well, that would take a bit explanation.

Okay?-- The way the floods-----

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Yes?-- -----right? If we consider, it would be best understood if I tell you what happened in the night of '74.

Okay, well, I am just wanting to know - I am interested in that but in terms of evacuation routes you said that in 1955 residents were able to-----?-- Hang on.

-----traverse the railway line to get out?-- Hang on.

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And trains become electrical and the gates were closed so that evacuation route wasn't available?-- That might have been a bit of a slip up there by someone.

Okay?-- But this will apply, the 1955 only went to about 10 metres.

Right?-- When we are talking about the '74, the '31; '31 went to about 12.2; '74 went to about 18.5. It is how it occurs, it sneaks in through Woogaroo Creek behind the people. Now the river bank at Goodna is a levy bank. Meaning, that the bank is higher than a large area of Goodna.

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Yes?-- And the people actually in the houses look up to the bank. So, this - to those that have never been flooded before would be looking out the front.

So you say they see the bank and they see security?-- Exactly.

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Then they don't understand how the water travels and comes behind?-- It happens without them knowing and in the night of '74 there was great panic.

Okay, now, have you got your statement just in front of you?-- Yeah. Which statement is it?

The one that is - that one there?-- That second one.

Yes, I take you to paragraph 22. Now-----?-- Yeah.

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-----that paragraph states that, "Between the 8th of January and when the flood happened on the 11th I went to the police station early one morning."?-- Yes.

You went there, you were trying to get some support for your escape route?-- Well, yes, and to find out just what their feelings were about coming floods.

Okay. Okay?-- The coming flood.

Yes?-- Like people of our age were certain there was going to be a flood, but anyone new to the district they were a bit hard to tell.

Okay?-- Inform.

What was your suggestion for the evacuation route that you were suggesting to the police when you went to see them?-- It was about this evacuation route. You would have to understand the geography of the place, I can talk it.

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Let's just - if we can go through it slowly about the evacuation route. There was a development, wasn't there, that was nearby?-- Yes.

That's where you thought would be a good place for an evacuation route?-- Oh, well, I know how that was done in '74 and I was depending on the SES, which didn't come, of course but, look, I was just wanting to make sure they were aware of our escape route up there and what I wanted to know was what was being done to warn these 200 people - it was actually just behind the police station.

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Mmm?-- But the police station was shut.

Okay. Where did you suggest would be the escape route? You said, "I wanted them to know about the escape route there," what were you talking about?-- Oh, I was then - well, I am trying to convince town planning to restore this - what had been a previous escape route and I need all the support possible because you are getting into tough ground here.

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Yeah?-- Don't think it is tough for me but it could become confusing to you.

Okay. You refer to in paragraph 23 that you thought a lot of the police would not have witnessed a flood or been aware of the potential for the area to flood and become isolated. You see that?-- Yeah.

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That's what you were talking about there. You went down there and said, "Listen, what are you going to do when the flood comes."?-- Yes.

Because you were convinced a flood would come, is that what you are saying?-- Yes.

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You say some people refer to this as the Wivenhoe Syndrome?-- Yes.

Tell me about that?-- The Wivenhoe Syndrome is, and it is mentioned in this book here.

That book you just referred to, what is that book?-- This book is the Proceedings and Symposium of the January '74 flood

and on page 5 I could read this out if you like. This  
Mr Shields, I will try and to condense it for you-----

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The Wivenhoe Syndrome is essentially - we can sum it up to be  
a belief some people in the community had that Wivenhoe Dam  
would stop anything like this from happening again?-- That is  
right.

That was a feeling you felt was in the community?--  
Definitely feelings about that, they were hard to convince.

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Because you had lived through these floods you didn't have  
that sense, did you? Is that what you are saying?-- Well,  
yes, but it is commonsense, like you want me to enlarge and  
qualify that further.

Yes but - yeah?-- In this book here I can show you that in  
1893 experts say that 20 per cent of the rain fell in front of  
where the Wivenhoe Dam will stand. In 1974, 45 per cent of  
the rain fell in front of where the Wivenhoe Dam Mall is being  
constructed. All we have to say then is; what if 100 per cent  
falls in front. No mitigation.

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Yes. Thank you, Mr O'Dea. They are the only questions I have  
for you. That book that you refer to, are you going to supply  
that to the Commission so we can have a look at that?-- Well,  
I am willing to help in whatever way I can.

Thanks, Mr O'Dea. Thank you?-- All right.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Flanagan.

MR FLANAGAN: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing except to perhaps reserve this  
point; that the issue of the change in the escape routes to  
the evacuation centres being as a result of development that  
occurred since would seem to be more appropriately dealt with  
in the planning issues which appear in the other term of  
reference so I don't intend to deal with it here at all.

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COMMISSIONER: It is something that will probably emerge  
again. Mr Pomerence".

MR POMERENKE: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod.

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MS McLEOD: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

MR KELLY: Could I announce my appearance?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Kelly.

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MR KELLY: Kelly initial D instructed by Minter Ellison for Energex Limited.

COMMISSIONER: Do you have any questions of Mr O'Dea?

MR KELLY: No, your Honour.

MS WILSON: I have no further questions. May Mr O'Dea be excused?

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much for your time, Mr O'Dea. I am not sure what we can do about this book but perhaps at some stage my staff can talk to you about getting a copy made of it?-- It can be got off the internet, your Honour, I know a person who got it.

It can be got from the internet?-- They told me they got it.

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If you wouldn't mind giving that website address or we can get the details of the name of the book I am sure we can track it down on the internet if necessary then. Thank very much for your time?-- Very good.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, I call Paulo Paulo.

COMMISSIONER: Ms Pierce you you might get the details of the book from Mr O'Dea.

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PAULO PAULO, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Can you tell the Commission your full name please?-- My name is Paulo Paulo or Paulo Paulo as most people refer to me.

What is your occupation?-- I am a full-time pastor as well as I work casual at a job.

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To which church are you a full-time pastor which?-- The church is called Riverview Good News Church. We are affiliated with Christian Life Churches International.

You prepared a statement for the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes, I did.

Can you have a look at this document, please? Is that your statement?-- Yes, that is my statement.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 440.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 440"

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MS WILSON: Pastor, that is your evidence but if I can take you through a couple of matters raised in your statement?-- Yes.

On the 11th of January you state that your wife received a phone call from the office of the Ipswich City Council's Deputy Mayor?-- That is correct.

It was from the office, not from the Deputy Mayor?-- No, it wasn't - yeah.

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Your understanding of that phone call was to prepare for flooding?-- Mmm.

Riverview Community Centre may be used as an evacuation centre?-- That is right.

What is your connection with Riverview Community Centre?-- First connection is I am the Vice President of the Management Team, management committee that runs the centre and it is run by Riverview Neighbourhood House. Our second connection is we have a church there so we rent off - we rent the building for our services and different programs we hold.

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You have a key to the centre?-- Yes, I do.

Can you tell me what facilities are available at the centre?--

There are different offices, there is obviously a big playground. There is room downstairs and there have - it is all facilitated for showers and it has a kitchen.

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How many showers have you got?-- There is about four showers, two in the mens room and two in the ladies room.

Are there bathrooms there?-- No, just showers.

Just showers?-- Sorry, and washing up and-----

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Toilets?-- Toilet facilities, everything.

Cooking facilities? Are there cooking facilities?-- Yes, there is a big kitchen as well.

Now, you say that you went to the Riverview Community Centre about 7 o'clock?-- That is right.

At that point in time had the Riverview Community Centre been opened up?-- What it was, if I can just take a step back.

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Certainly?-- The phone call that we received was from the Division Three counsellor's office to say that we might need the community centre to be opened up and just get ready, it might need to become an evacuation centre. As I was looking, the water was sneaking up our back space where the Kalamafoni Bridge is the water was coming up quickly and I said to my wife, "I don't think we should wait until it floods," but we - "because we will be cut off. Why don't we go?" I rung up the other two ladies and I said, "What do you think? Should we open up?" They said, "Yeah we should go down there now." When I got there the other two ladies were already there opening up.

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That was around about 7 o'clock?-- Yeah, around about seven.

What about evacuees, were there any evacuees there that the point in time?-- Not at that point.

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In your statement you state that you and others went around and warned residents that night by walking, driving around the streets?-- That is right.

What was the extent of - how far did you go to provide this warning to residents?-- Okay, on the other side of Riverview we are divided by the motorway so another guy and myself went across the motorway to the residents, just the back of the Riverview Gardens. My wife, I said in my statement that my wife went around to the gardens to see if she needs help there because she is a nurse and she used to work there, and she rung back and said, "They are evacuating," so she went there and, of course, we just - the residents near there and as much as we can down that street saying that if the Gardens is being evacuated then the river must be coming up along the Moggill ferry area.

50

Do you know where the Gardens were being evacuated too?--

Yes.

1

Where were they going?-- I think they were going to take them to another nursing home in Kenmore somewhere. That's what I heard, anyway, from my wife.

When you say you went or state you went around warning residence, how did you do that?-- We walked.

Knocked on doors?-- We just knocked on doors and just say - we told them who we were, because it was pretty late by this time. It was about 9 o'clock. We told them who we were and the Riverview Community Centre was available if they need to be evacuated and also there could be a flood coming.

10

What was the knowledge of the people you were telling about any impending flood. Were they aware there was going to be any flood?-- The only think they were aware of is what they saw on tv. Otherwise they were very casual about it. They didn't know anything much.

20

Now, the Riverview Community Centre operated as an evacuation centre from 11 January to 22 January?-- That is right.

You state you received no assistance in the preparation for the flood by and Federal, State or local government agencies and that is because it happened so quickly?-- Yes.

From the time of asking whether it could be opened up to the centre actually being opened up was a matter of, what, nine hours or so, was it?-- That is true.

30

There was really no preparation at all in relation to setting up this-----?-- I understood that question to be I thought You Know previous preparation but in case of a flood.

Yeah?-- That is what I-----

You received nothing from any of the government agencies, - local state or federal about what to do?-- That is right.

40

In a flood?-- Yes.

Now, if I can take you to the flood event and the assistance that government agencies provided you during the flood event. First of all who operated and managed the centre during this time from the 11th to the 22nd?-- It was myself and a lady named - do I - can I name names?

A lady named Kerry Silver, she is the coordinator for the Neighbourhood Watch. Another lady, Christine McDonald, she is a secretary of our management committee and she also works for the Riverview Neighbourhood House at the centre.

50

Did you get any assistance from any government agency in relation to the managing and operation of the centre? I know you say in your statement you got some supplies and resources but what about assistance in actually the management of the

centre? Did you get any assistance from any government agency or organisation?-- In how it is run and should be run?

1

Yes?-- No, we didn't. We just did it - just the three of us.

Just working it out as you went along?-- As we go along.

What about input from police?-- We never saw a policeman. Maybe a day after the flood they turned up to look for some people that might be, you know, missing and then on the 22nd when they turned up there was - there was an incident but all the time we never saw one policeman there at all.

10

What about assistance and support from the Ipswich City Council? You say in your statement that you got some food, beds and bedding?-- Yes, that is right.

Who organised this?-- Our counsellor did that.

Do you know how that process was undertaken, how it came to be that you received these supplies from Ipswich City Council?-- I think it is because Kerry Silver is Victor Attwood's receptionist and she just utilised a lot of her connections with the council as well and I believe Victor just, you know, supplied all these, I don't know where, how, how they did it or-----

20

Were you aware the Ipswich City Council knew you were operating a centre there?-- Yes.

30

How did you know that?-- Because Victor was there. He turned up on the first day and most of the days he was there to see how it was going.

Now, what about any assistance from Red Cross? Did anyone ever tell you, "Look Red Cross can operate and manage evacuation centres."?-- Yes, we did - there was a representative of Red Cross that turned up with Joanne Miller and we just had a talk but it was more to how were we going to place the families and the other ones that was living at the centre at the time.

40

In your statement you say that - it says you received assistance from emergency services, I think SES you are referring to, for generators, fuel and spotlights all arrived?-- That is right.

Who requested these?-- I just assume that was - they came, know, they just turned up because we were operating there and they offered these things because we didn't have power or lights or anything like that.

50

Your statement refers to the fact that there was federal - the Federal, State and Local members all assisted with resources and obtaining resources?-- That is right.

Your statement also refers to you had 80 people sleeping at the centre during the flood event?-- Yes.

When was this? Was this 80 people from the 11th to the 27th or was this really the peak time?-- This was the peak time.

Was that 80 at one time?-- Yes, there was. I wouldn't say that is the overall.

The number of people that slept there?-- The number of people that were there over that period.

10

What was the - at any one time, what was the largest number of people you had actually sleeping in the centre?-- I think there was about 60.

Was that at the early stages of the incorporation of the evacuation centre?-- The first week, yes.

How long did you have this amount of people in the - let's say 60 people sleeping there?-- I would say approximately about a week, a week and a-half.

20

Those numbers for a week or a week and a-half?-- That is right.

Where did these people eventually go?-- They were - they were - they found houses for them, all through the - they were trying to work out, some of them found families and moved on to their families but most of them, the majority of them they found accommodation.

30

You were providing meals as well as?-- Yes, that is right.

Three meals a day?-- Yes.

Where did you get the resources and the supplies to provide these meals?-- The first week or the first few days a lot of people as well as staying there - and a lot of people from the area, because we had no power, there was a power cut. So they emptied all their fridges and brought it to the centre because we had generators going, we had fridges going, and they put all the food in the fridges and from that we cooked whatever is there and we just fed everybody with that.

40

Thank you, no further questions.

MR FLANAGAN: So, may I take you to paragraph 13 of your statement? On the ninth line of paragraph 13 you say that, "Victor Attwood paid for a cold room to store all the perishable food, provided bedding, beds and much more." You see that?-- Yes.

50

Without taking away from the excellent efforts of Counsellor Attwood, were you aware of the daily contact that Kerry Silver and Christine McDonald had with the Ipswich City Council Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- Sorry, was I aware of that?

Yes?-- Yes, I do.

1

Did you know that both Kerry and Christine were in daily contact with the Local Disaster Coordinator Centre in relation to resources?-- Yes.

It wasn't actually Counsellor Attwood who paid for or provided the storeroom, even though he visited the centre on a daily basis, the cold store to store the food that was brought by the various evacuees to the centre was actually supplied by the Ipswich City Council through the Local Disaster Coordinator Centre, did you know that?-- I just thought well if Victor is there, he is the representative of the council so that's why that statement was made.

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So can we understand your statement in this sense: when you say that Councillor Attwood provided a cold store for all perishable food, that he provided bedding, beds and much more, that we should take that as a reference to the Ipswich City Council providing those resources to this evacuation centre?-- Yes.

And through the Ipswich City Council, do you know that it acted in this particular emergency situation through the Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- Can you ask that-----

10

Yes. Did you know that the Ipswich City Council at this stage was acting through an organisation called the Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- No, I didn't know that.

And you, yourself, didn't have the daily contact, as did Christine and Kerry, with representatives from the Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- I knew of it but I didn't know the details.

20

Did you know that they contacted the centre on a daily basis to source resources such as bedding, food, water and, indeed, a cold store?-- Mmm, yep.

Yes, thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing.

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MR POMERENKE: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod?

MS McLEOD: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Kelly?

MR KELLY: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson?

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

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you, Pastor Paulo. You are excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

COMMISSIONER: Was Pastor Paulo's statement tendered?

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MS WILSON: It was tendered.

COMMISSIONER: All right. So it was Exhibit 440, thank you.

MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, the next witness that I propose to call is Colleen Engel. Colleen Engel's brother, Robert Bromage, died during the flood events and a victim impact statement has been prepared by the Bromage families and I ask that it be read.

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COMMISSIONER: I will ask my associate to do that.

ASSOCIATE: Our brother/husband/father/uncle, Robert Gregory Bromage died as a result of his car being swept away on Campbell's Crossin, Karrabin - Rosewood Road on Tuesday 11 January, 2011 during the floods.

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He is sadly missed.

Robert was just 50 years of age at the time of the accident and was the youngest of eight brothers and sisters. He had suffered much ill health over the past sixteen years and this seems such a cruel way to be taken when life was looking up a little for him.

Robert was estranged from his family at the time of the accident and his death is impacting very heavily particularly on his son and daughter. He had not met with his children for some time and there had been no reconciliation with either of them. This is heavily weighing on his children's minds. His son is having great difficulty coping with his father's death and not having spoken with him recently, given that he was about to contact him. He blames it all on himself for not making the contact which is heartbreaking. His daughter was just weeks away from giving birth to her third child at the time of the accident and Robert's grandchild will now never get the opportunity to meet him and to know him, or be part of his life.

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Perhaps one of the hardest issues for all the family to deal with, has been all the 'stories' about how and when Robert died and not knowing the full facts around his death. And we guess that we never really will. While we will get some closure about certain facts when the report of the investigation into his death is released at the end of the month, it has been a very upsetting time for all of us. It has been hard to believe that Robert would drive into a flooded crossing when he always was adamant about not playing / driving in flooded areas. Did he see it or did he really try to cross? Was there a wall of water that rushed down and hit his vehicle or was it just deep water on the road? Was the road signed or did he just ignore the signs? And the questions just go on....

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And how long was he in the water? It appears that he was submerged in the creek for something like 27 hours. Twenty seven hours! It does not seem possible. Why? When we identified his body at the mortuary and spoke to the reporting officer, he assured us that Robert's body was not in the water for 27 hours. While his death was consistent with drowning, the deterioration of his body was not consistent with this length of time being in water. But we find out, now that we have more facts, in reality, he was. It is a nightmare for us to think that he may have been alive in the car for some time and could not be rescued before he succumbed to drowning. This has been very hard to deal with.

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While it took some time for the family to attend the identification of Robert's body (Monday 17 January), the local paper, The Queensland Times, published Robert's photo (taken from Facebook) and wrote a story about his death on Saturday 15 January. I guess that some of us were still holding out hope that it wasn't Robert that was really drowned in the car. How could they do this! I personally rang the paper to talk with the editor of the article about the story but was only able to leave a message. No one returned the call! Very wrong and very unprofessional and very upsetting to the family.

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While we are very thankful to the tow truck drivers who tried so hard risking their own lives to try to recover Robert's body and the vehicle on the Tuesday morning without success, our heart goes out to them for the trauma they must have gone through. Knowing that he was down there somewhere in the creek and not being able to pull him out and then having to go off and leave him there and help someone else affected by the floods. And to go back and retrieve the car and the body on the Wednesday, it must have been difficult Thank you for your honesty in talking with us and making time for our family and for attending our brother's funeral and wake. It gave us great comfort.

30

One of our brothers works at Bradken Engineering which is located beside the creek on Karrabin - Rosewood Road where Robert was drowned and he finds it very difficult to work at this workplace now. He can look out the window and see the spot where Robert was located and is haunted by the fact that his brother was lying in the creek dead and undiscovered there for so long. He also has to use the crane from Bradkens that was used to retrieve Robert's car with his body inside. Sincere thanks to the Management at Bradken Engineering, for their on-going support for him and other members of our family and their staff who also have been affected and their willingness to provide whatever assistance that may be needed.

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Our thanks also to the police, support workers, friends and strangers who have given support, comfort and counseling to each of us in your own way.

No amount of rules and procedures can foretell how people will react or behave in certain circumstances. We have to accept what has happened has happened and not afford blame on anyone or anything. We just want to know the facts, the real facts.

Know that you are loved, Rob and always will be in our hearts and minds.

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COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson?

MS WILSON: Thank you.

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COLLEEN FLORENCE ENGEL, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MS WILSON: Your full name is Colleen Florence Engel?--  
That's correct.

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You provided two statements to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes, I did.

And your first statement was dated the 20th of April 2011?--  
That's correct.

And you have also provided an addendum statement?-- That's right.

And that was signed today?-- Yes.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender those two statements.

COMMISSIONER: The statement will be Exhibit 441 and the addendum 442.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 441"

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 442"

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MS WILSON: Now, at the time of the floods, you were the principal of the Redbank State Primary School?-- That's correct.

If I can just ask you some questions about the evacuation centre that was set up at the Redbank State Primary School?-- Yes.

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The Redbank school is an ideal evacuation centre, isn't it?-- It is absolutely ideal. It has excellent facilities and is in a position, particularly, within the community that doesn't lose power. So it is on the emergency line, so we don't lose power and we have water as well.

So you're on a separate electrical circuit?-- That's correct.

So whilst others that you could see could lose power, the school always remains with power?-- That's right, yes.

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And you also have very good cooking facilities?-- We just had a new building completed in about October under the BER project, Building Education Revolution, which was a large resource centre. We hadn't received any furniture in there yet, so it was very large open space. We have separate shower, we have separate toilets, we have separate cooking area. So it is absolutely ideal as an evacuation centre.

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Now, the school facilities have been used in times of emergency before?-- Yes.

For example, hail storms?-- Yes.

And on those occasions you were living on site?-- For about 10 years I lived on site.

At the school?-- Yes.

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When the school was used on those occasions, was it just for a very short term?-- Yes, it has always been for a short term.

Hours-----?-- Since I have been there.

For hours just to get out of the hail storm?-- Yes.

To stay the night? Have people ever stayed the night?-- I think I had an emergency family that wanted some accommodation one night but that was not a problem, yes.

50

Before the wet season last year, leading up to the wet season, had you been notified that the school may be used as an evacuation centre?-- No, not at all.

And you found out that the school was going to be, or was being used as an evacuation centre?-- Three days after it was opened I had a call from the data company who was going to

install some electrical equipment, and they asked were we able to come to Redbank school - because I had been there almost every day until Christmas. Even though we were on holidays, we had a lot of work still being done, and they said, "Can we use the school still to do the work?", and I said, "Yes. Why? I can be there." And they said, "But it is an evacuation centre?" I didn't know it was an evacuation. It had been running for nearly three days and no-one had rung me.

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And so then you went to the school?-- Absolutely.

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How many people were being accommodated at the school when you went there at that point in time?-- By the Friday there was - during the day we catered, right till the end, we closed, for up to 100 people for lunches because we supplied food to all the people who came to help and clean out the houses and other businesses in town. So we provided the food for those. But overnight there is probably - probably when I came there is still probably 40, 50 people.

20

Staying the night?-- Yes.

I should ask you when actually was the evacuation centre opened to your knowledge?-- To my knowledge it - how it came about, one of the local people had gone down to have a look at the water on the Tuesday - no, sorry, on the Wednesday morning because Tuesday night there was a lot of rain. From talking to the locals there was probably 220 millimetres of rain overnight within the 24 hour block and the water was coming up on the Wednesday morning and she said, "Hey, something needs to be done here." So she then saw one of the local people who have a key to the Redbank School of Arts hall and asked would they be able to open that, and that was refused, and they were told that it was to be the school, the school should be the evacuation centre. So that person then came and found the groundsman who lives near the school and then he went across and opened up the school.

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Okay. And can you - that date was?-- That was on the Wednesday morning. The first person arrived about-----

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Is that the 12-----?-- 9, Wednesday morning.

On the 12th?-- On the 12th.

When did you arrive?-- On the Friday.

The 15th?-- Yes. But I should say even though no-one - there was - because I was to start preretirement leave - I am actually retired now but I was starting preretirement leave on the first day of school, so the groundsman rang the new principal, and got approval to open the school and then he in turn rang our district director who was aware that then the school was opened.

50

Did you know where you were getting the resources from?-- We got - all the resources - everything came from the community and out of our own pockets.

Were there any mental health issues that-----?-- Yes, absolutely. When I got there on the Friday, there was obviously a couple of people who had mental health issues, and we just dealt with them the best that we could and helped support them. I had one lady who needed to have her own little locked room and we were able to provide that for her so that she felt safe and okay.

Who was operating and managing the school as an evacuation centre?-- No one in particular because I arrived late. Well, I was responsible for the resources, absolutely-----

10

When you say the resources what do you mean by that?-- I mean the school as a whole.

Yes?-- That is my responsibility.

Yes?-- But in the meanwhile, we had three particularly very talented and well - very skilled people and they were able to manage it. Basically, I think one person managed the food and those type of issues, the other person managed the people, and my groundsman was able to manage any issues that came up. So together three very capable people took that - there was no - there was no order of command.

20

The Red Cross arrived on the Sunday?-- When the person looking after - when - looking after the - basically the people side of it, we were advised that the other evacuation centres were closing and that probably we should close. So we thought, okay, well, we haven't got a lot of people, but we had been arranging, and people helping each other finding accommodation, and we had those people that desperately needed some support, and we had some others who still couldn't find somewhere to go. So that person then got in touch with Red Cross and they came out immediately. But they didn't know that we were a centre. In fact, I don't - I know all levels of government knew we were a centre because we had representatives from all members from the local, State, Federal visit the centre during the time that we were there, but we were not a registered centre, and when we requested some food drops and that, we were told no, because we were not a registered evacuation centre. So we had no support from anyone but ourselves.

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And who were you requesting food drops from? How was that process being undertaken?-- Basically it was who you know and who we could get to support. Much of the support came locally. There is a lot of very generous people in Redbank and they are very much community-minded people, so within our own group we were able to go and find someone or get someone, ring someone for help.

50

And when you tried to put these requests through government agencies, you didn't get much support?-- It wasn't I who did that, it was the person looking after the food, but she got several knockbacks for support.

And do you know who was being contacted? Which government agencies?-- No, but I know she mentioned that through the police they requested a food drop and they said no because we weren't an evacuation centre.

1

Now, one of the recommendations that you have made in relation to evacuation centres is a suggestion of putting systems in place for the establishment of a local evacuation centre. You say that it should be operated by council, but involve a local disaster committee. How do you see that to work?-- I see council as having the overall arching plan and that our local committee - we need a local committee because Redbank is an island when floodwaters come, we can't get out anywhere. So we can't have people coming in, we need to look after ourselves. We have the abilities and resources there to do that, but that committee needs to manage the centre, a local community, but with the guidelines of the council.

10

So you are envisaging that a local disaster committee come from the community?-- Absolutely.

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Residents in the community?-- Yes.

Each with their skills?-- Yes.

That can provide-----?-- Yes.

And that operates within the guidelines of the Ipswich City Council?-- That's correct.

30

On a Local Disaster Management Group?-- There is also other issues like emergency management. They need training. So that should come, in my view, from the council or from some general committee that looks - they need regular updates, they need to be - they need to be current. We can't have lists that you can ring and that person is not the person anymore. So you need to know more than your local community.

So is your idea effectively that this local disaster committee, who would run the evacuation centre, would have an updated manual-----?-- Yes.

40

-----of contact details-----?-- Yes.

-----and processes and systems-----?-- Absolutely.

-----to be followed in such an event?-- Yes. And, in fact, the local - there is a group of local people who have already met and are looking at how they can do this but I believe the overall structure should come from council.

50

Now, if I can take you to your second statement? You provide some recommendations and suggestions to be considered in relation to the death of your brother?-- Yes.

Your brother died as a result of his vehicle being washed off Karrabin Road?-- Yes.

I am not going to go through all the matters that you have got in that statement because that's been tendered but if I can just take you to a couple?-- Yes.

1

One of the matters that you raise is signage on roads?-- Yes.

You say that one of the issues in relation to the signage, when signage is put up along flooded roads or crossings to advise the community that the road is not safe to cross. So it is an issue you are wanting looked at that signs should be put up-----?-- Yes.

10

-----to say that this road is not safe to cross?-- Yes.

And it is a question about when that occurs?-- Yes. As my brother works at the Bradken Engineering, they were advised that morning early that the creek was going up. I don't know if that was almost uncrossable then, if there was any signage put up and whose duty of care it would be to do that. We have heard the police were there at the site when Robbie actually went into the water, but I - we don't know that for a fact yet.

20

Another matter that you raise that ties into this suggestion is a community education program?-- Absolutely.

Statewide?-- Yes.

And that is to include advice or information on crossing flooded roads?-- The whole issue around that, knowledge as well. Often we don't give children credit of what they are capable of. They need to have knowledge of their community, and at schools we can do that, but it needs to be more than schools. It needs to be a general education program for adults as well as students, yes.

30

And also to raise broader community education issues to be distributed before the wet season?-- Yes.

For example, what to do when you have to go to an evacuation centre; is that what you are looking at there?-- And the knowledge about what to do and where to go, absolutely, but also the safety aspect and the health aspect.

40

You raise a suggestion about the features and design of the actual road?-- Yes. Well, I have driven that road again - during the floods, the bitumen was all washed away on that crossing, and it certainly has been upgraded now and there are signs that have been put up now, but it is still almost a blind corner, and when you drive around you drive down into it. I would question whether a person who doesn't live locally would be able - would know about that road. To me, it is not - it doesn't feel safe driving it.

50

I have no further questions, thank you, very much.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Flanagan?

MR FLANAGAN: Thank you. May I just refer to your evidence that a request to a government organisation - I think you said the police - was made for a food drop but was refused because the Redbank State Primary School was not a registered evacuation centre?-- That's what I have been told.

10

Do you recall that evidence? Yes. Was the person who looked after the food aspect at this evacuation centre, her first name Maxine?-- Maxine didn't look after the food, Tracey looked after the food.

Was there a person there in the evacuation centre called Maxine?-- That's correct. She was one of the other key persons.

All right. Were you aware that Maxine was in contact with the Ipswich City Council Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- I imagine she would be. I didn't speak to her much because she was very busy doing things but I know she has contact to the council.

20

Do you have any personal knowledge of her making or being contacted by the Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- No, I don't.

Do you have any personal knowledge of actually food drops being made to the Redbank State Primary School in terms of food drops for the evacuation centre by the Ipswich City Council?-- No.

30

You don't?-- No. There was food - mainly - there was food from the community and there was food from friends, for example Muffin - whatever they are - Muffin - but there were - there were people who kept on coming bringing us food, yes.

And the people who are coming and bringing you food, do you know where they came from?-- No. Because there was so many at different times and because we were feeding so many people.

40

You are simply not in a position -----?-- No.

-----to dispute that the food drops were actually being made by the Ipswich City Council through the Local Disaster Coordination Centre?-- Not to my knowledge. There hasn't - that has not been mentioned.

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Are you in a position to say or do you know it was actually the Local Disaster Coordination Centre that directed the Red Cross to the Redbank State Primary School?-- My understanding is Maxine connected - arranged for that, so she probably arranged it through-----

The council?-- Her connection, yes.



Do you know what Maxine's connection to the council was?--  
Maxine was a - did work for Paul Pisasale when he was a  
member.

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Yes. Thank you very much?-- Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

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MR MacSPORRAN: Thank you, Commissioner.

Ms Engel, in terms of the circumstances surrounding the death  
of your brother, you are aware, I take it, that there is a  
separate - that is separate to this Commission of Inquiry - a  
separate investigation being undertaken for those  
circumstances?-- Yes, I am, yes.

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And in due course it will almost certainly be the case that  
you will be provided with a report summarising the results of  
that investigation?-- Yes, and that's what we look forward  
to.

And it may be the case, depending on the Coroner's decision,  
to hold an inquest - that is a public hearing - into those  
circumstances?-- Okay.

And that if that happened, you would have - or your family  
would have the right to seek leave to appear at those  
proceedings and ask questions of various witnesses if there  
was to be an inquest held?-- That hasn't been explained yet.

30

I see. That's a decision, I should add, for the Coroner, not  
for this Inquiry. It is a separate matter altogether?-- Yes.

But it will ultimately look into those matters?-- Uh-huh.

Just in terms of that area, can I suggest this to you: that  
there were - there was signage at that area indicating the  
road does flood and giving depth markers on the road at the  
time?-- Well, I know that the new signage has been put up.

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You think-----?-- I am not sure that that was there prior.

Okay. Your information is that the signage - well, there are  
signs there now?-- Yes.

Whether they are different to what was there before?-- May  
have been.

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Or whether they are totally new but you speak of what's there  
now?-- Yes.

Were you aware there had been an evaluation of that area of  
roadway and the speed limit had been lowered to 60 km/h  
through there?-- No, I was not aware.

That was last year, 2010?-- Okay. Because there was, to our knowledge, another car that had gone off at that same spot prior.

And can I suggest to you, you probably don't know anything of this, but there is currently being undertaken an audit of aspects of that section of roadway?-- Oh.

By the department?-- That will be good.

10

And you make a number of recommendations in your statement - your second statement in paragraphs 11 to 16, inclusive - concerning what you would like to see happen in respect to that area?-- Yes.

To avoid another incident such as what happened to your brother?-- Yes.

Can I indicate to you that my instructions are - that means those instructing me have told me, informed me-----

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COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran appears for the State Government, in case that wasn't clear?-- Okay.

MR MacSPORRAN: Yes. That the department is aware of those recommendations you have made in your second statement?-- Okay.

And is prepared to take them into account and look at them when they consider what should happen with this section of roadway?-- That's excellent.

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COMMISSIONER: Which department, Mr MacSporran, are you referring to there?

MR MacSPORRAN: That's the Main Roads and Transport.

COMMISSIONER: All right.

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WITNESS: That's excellent.

MR MacSPORRAN: All right, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Pomerence?

MR POMERENKE: No questions thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod?

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MS McLEOD: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Kelly?

MR KELLY: No questions.

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MS WILSON: I have no further questions, Commissioner. May Ms Engel be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Ms Engel.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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COMMISSIONER: Did you want to take the morning break? Is there a time - what's the position?

MS WILSON: This may be a convenient time for the morning break.

COMMISSIONER: All right. We will come back at quarter to.

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THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 11.28 A.M.

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THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 10.45 A.M.

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MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner, I call David Greenwood.

DAVID NOEL GREENWOOD, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Can you tell us your full name, please?-- David Noel Greenwood.

You are employed by River 94.9, a radio station?-- That is correct.

What is your role there?-- I am the General Manager.

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Now, you prepared a submission that has been signed and-----?-- That is correct.

That should be in your statement to the Commission?-- That is correct.

Can you have a look at this document, please? Is that the document that you prepared for the Commission?-- Yes, it is.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: That will be Exhibit 443.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 443"

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MS WILSON: I see you have a copy of that in front of you?-- Yes.

There is a couple of matters, if I could take you to them, that you raised in that document. The first is on that second page under the heading "Background"?-- Yes.

You state there that as early as September/October last year the long range weather predictions clearly indicated a major weather event. Where were you getting that information from?-- We have, as I put in my submission, we have an IT consultant who works with us and he is a weather buff. He is a storm chaser but along with that he has a whole lot of computer software in that jargon I put in my submission. He monitors the weather fairly closely. We don't accept it as listener advice but internally because of the number of promotions we do as outdoor events, it is always handy to know what the weather conditions are going to do. It just happened

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soon after that that I think one of the television stations interviewed a long range forecaster as well who also prophesied we were going to have a major event over the January/February period.

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Now, with that in mind the radio station made contact with the local SES in October?-- I do it once a year but specifically I talk to our local manager of SES and as we did last year-----

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That is 2010?-- Sorry, I will go back a year.

2009?-- We ran a recruitment program as part of the community service where - and we did it this year - where we did talk about the possibility of a major weather event.

You state in your submissions that you arranged a full schedule of no charge announcements seeking additional volunteers for the SES?-- That is correct.

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Over 30 new members signed up?-- I believe so from memory, yes.

Now, one of the initiatives that the radio station did was to encourage listeners to have a battery powered radio?-- That is correct.

Why was that? Why did you think that was necessary and important?-- Well, I suppose I am of the generation where portable or transistor radios, as some will remember them, were in vogue and it was part of our life. As technology has changed and electricity and computers probably are the norm today, battery operated appliances, particularly with listening devices like radios, are probably not the in vogue thing. So with the possibility of a weather event I went to the local electrical retailer, they did an exceptional deal with a battery operated radio supplier and we did a no charge schedule again to sell radios very cheaply in the event of a major event coming.

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Do you know whether that was successful?-- I believe so.

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Have you got any idea of numbers?-- No, I haven't. I can find out for you.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: That might be helpful, Mr Greenwood. What was the local retailer?-- A local retailer was R T Edwards and the supplier was Teac.

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MS WILSON: Can I take you to page 7 of your document, please? There on that page and the following page you provide suggestions from what you have experienced and observed during the flood event?-- Yes.

You say that, "Radio's role need to be highlighted to all stakeholders as a primary source of pre-event and ongoing

critical event information as the event unfolds." Did you have any dialogue with any of the stakeholders in relation to providing up to date information to your station?-- Yes, I did. Obviously the SES. I also, through the SES contacted the Natural Disaster Committee we have here. I asked Terry if he would arrange for us to be involved to put a reporter or our news guy into the centre to be available to release information that was pertinent to our audience. I am talking Ipswich now not the other areas we cover. The thing really evolved. We have the contacts for most of the - in fact all of the areas but in terms of getting local reports we normally can get information fairly quickly by ringing somebody in the know. As the thing evolved from January 10, it just became chaotic right across the region to get accurate factual information. We were relying very heavily on a lot of our - what our listeners were supplying.

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One of the themes that comes heavily through your document is the use and the importance of the use of radio as a means of communicating information?-- Yes.

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One of the issues that you raise is that organisations and stakeholders need to have updated comprehensive radio contact lists?-- That is correct.

Did you find this an issue these organisations didn't have updated radio contact lists?-- I suppose I have been in the business probably a lot longer than most because I started when I was 14 years of age and I have grown through it, and in the early days we didn't have computers and I don't want to age myself now but in the early days when we had to ring the Weather Bureau we spoke to an actual forecaster to get the weather forecast. With the way technology has gone in our radio station everything is on a computer. We have many many screens, one we have BOM on board and instant weather forecasts etcetera. In the days of email you lose that personal contact so when a disaster happens or a natural event such as this, it is very hard for somebody at the other end who is not of my generation to pick up a phone and say, "We have a major problem here. This is my phone number, I will give you any information you want at any time." We didn't get any of that. We were getting bombarded by emails with a very limited number of staff. In fact, we get through our news room - I did it purposely to find out - we are getting something like 600 emails a day, up to 600 emails a day through our news division just with news releases, news reports, including notifications of road closures and whatever and it gets to be humanly impossible. So if there is a major event that has to go over the top of that you need phone calls in those sorts of disasters and for us to try and find people. We were running the station 24/7 with four full-time on air and two backroom people as well for about three or four days.

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Madam Commissioner, I have no further questions.

MR FLANAGAN: Mr Greenwood, have you got your statement in front of you?-- Yes, sir.

May I take to page 4 and the last paragraph on page 4 that commences with the words, "Limited official information."?-- Mmm.

You will see six lines down you state, "We were bombard with calls to say that the given call centre number for the Ipswich City Council wasn't being answered after being told it was the number for all inquiries." ?-- That is correct.

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See that?-- Mmm.

I don't dispute you were bombarded with calls in that regard. But, you don't have any personal knowledge that the Ipswich City Council Call Centre took over 5,000 calls on the 11th of January 2011?-- No, I won't know that. I knew they were busy because the calls we were referring to you or sending to you they were coming back to us very quickly.

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Exactly. In any event, you can't dispute that over 5,000 calls were actually received and answered on that day by the Ipswich Call Centre?-- No, I don't doubt that at all.

That represented an increase from the ordinary business calls or during business hours, of 450 per cent. You are not suggesting for one moment that the number that people were ringing was out of order, for example?-- No, I am not at all.

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Can we take it from your statement there that it is completely consistent with the Ipswich Call Centre being inundated with thousands and thousands of calls. May we take it-----?-- I will take that. May I make a comment on that?

Certainly?-- I think if you were at that level, and I have no doubt because we knew there were people there, but we were still getting emails in relation to help wanted, if you have offers of help. We were still being directed to push more and more people to that phone number.

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Yes?-- If you had that sort of traffic may I suggest there might have been - and I know in South-East Queensland everyone was inundated but the reality was that the listeners were getting more and more frustrated.

Yes and we don't dispute that for a moment?-- No, no, we are on the same page.

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COMMISSIONER: Sorry, what do you say Mr Greenwood? Ought there have been an email to you from the council saying, "Tell your listeners."-----?-- We were getting, I didn't bring all the emails with me - when I say all we were getting half a dozen, 10, from the council about certain information that was being let out during the flood period. The phone number, the contact at the bottom of that for people to respond was 38106666 and they were still using that number.

So they should have just told you it wasn't going to work and there is no point telling the listeners that?-- It was vital information they were sending out but I can understand how people were frustrated when they ring that number after we were telling them - see our role is to tell people where to go and if they are making a call and not getting satisfaction they get a bit angry about that.

MR FLANAGAN: But you wouldn't dispute that when I talk about 5,000 calls being received, I am talking about 5,000 calls being answered so that whilst calls were being answered clearly the system couldn't cope with all incoming calls?-- Certainly.

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If people were put on a waiting list they may have become frustrated by not being able to get through to the number?-- No, I am not disputing that.

May I take you then to page 5 in your statement and if you see the third full paragraph starting with the words, "On the Tuesday 11 January 2011." "In Ipswich as the flood waters rose, despite making many calls to a variety of local officers we could not advise listeners of designated evacuation centres." See that?-- Yes.

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Can I ask you, do you recall what time on Tuesday the 11th of January 2011 you were referring to there?-- Yes, we started looking for evacuation centres because listeners were ringing from as early as 6.30, 7 o'clock in the morning.

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In the morning?-- We didn't get notification officially, it would have been around 11 o'clock.

Do you accept by 2 p.m. that afternoon at least the Ipswich Showgrounds had been identified?-- We had that identified earlier than two but it was after 11.

The - when you talk about the flood waters rising on 11 January you accept that the peak flood in Ipswich wasn't until between 1 and 5 p.m. on 12 January so that we are still talking about something in the order of 24 hours notice at least?-- Mmm.

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Do you accept that?-- No, maybe I have the wrong date there. That would be - that must have been, I am sorry, in my report that should have been Wednesday I think, the day the floods hit Ipswich.

Which -----?-- Is that correct?

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Would you accept from me the Ipswich Showgrounds opened as an evacuation centre on 11 January 2011 and evacuation centres were actually being opened on 11 January 2011 in anticipation of a warning from the Bureau of a possible peak on the Wednesday at the Bremer River of 22 metres?-- No, well my report is right. But what we were getting was calls from people on the Tuesday.



Right?-- Looking for evacuation centres.

Can I take you then to the final paragraph of page 5 and there you talk about one of your radio journalists who had been attending in the actual Disaster Coordination Centre?-- Yes.

You state there that he was asked to leave by the responsible counsellor. You make this observation, "This took away any opportunity to provide official information." See that?-- Yes.

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Can I suggest what happened was this: that the journalist was actually asked to leave the room, the actual coordination centre room where decisions were being made, discussions were occurring in relation to what was to happen but he was actually asked to vacate that room but was given an office directly beside that room and was kept fully informed of ultimate decisions of the local disaster coordinator by someone, that is the media liaison officer, informing him of the decisions. Do you know that for a fact?-- No, I don't.

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Do you know that this particular journalist was actually given a room beside the coordination room?-- No, I - well, no I wasn't aware of that but I am aware that the comment was made - another journalist had arrived and the comment was made, "It may seem like we are favouring you," we weren't in there for competitive reasons and the inference was the journalist had to leave. I can't speak for the journalist today but he felt that he was being asked to leave.

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All right. But, from your own knowledge you don't know that he was actually moved to a room beside?-- Not a room, no.

You don't know that. You don't know that he was actually kept informed of every decision as it happened by the coordinator?-- I will say I don't know.

Right. In any event, you knew that information was being given out to the community through the Mayor's office and through the Mayor himself?-- What sort of information?

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In relation to flood peaks, in relation to evacuation centres?-- No, I can't say that be true. We could not get any official comment. The normal person who we deal with in the media matters was he himself involved in the flood issues.

Yes?-- And normally, in a normal day's operation, we can ring him at any time and receive any information. If he doesn't know it he will speak to the responsible counsellor and get it back to us.

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Can I finish on that which was my last question to you; to your knowledge the ordinary Ipswich City Council media officer you usually dealt with was himself affected by the floods?-- That is who I am talking about, that is correct.

And was unable to be on duty because of that?-- That is

correct.

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Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: Nothing thank you.

MR POMERENKE: No questions, thank you.

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MS McLEOD: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

MR KELLY: No questions.

MS WILSON: I have a matter to raise for completeness. Attached to your statement and referred to in your statement is River 94.9 flood coverage which provides all the flood coverage provided by River 94.9?-- Yes.

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Also there was attached a River 94.9 air check?-- The air check was of that weather expert we had who was a private forecaster.

Right?-- Which was asked for to - supplementary to my original submission.

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Can you explain what the air check is?-- Well, an air check is taken straight off air, various segments of interest to the inquiry.

Madam Commissioner, for completeness these should be attached to the - that exhibit.

COMMISSIONER: All right, you want that as part of Exhibit 443. That will be.

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MS WILSON: I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Greenwood.

MS WILSON: I call Paul Tully.

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PAUL GREGORY TULLY, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Is your full name Paul Gregory Tully?-- That is correct.

You are a counsellor for Division 2 in the Ipswich City Council?-- Yes.

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You made a statement for the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes.

Could you have a look at this document, please?-- Yes.

Is that your statement?-- That is my statement.

In your statement you also refer to your submission that you also made to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- That is right.

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Is that attached to that statement?-- Yes, it is.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 444.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 444"

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MS WILSON: Now, Division 2 comprises the suburbs of Goodna, Gailes, Camira, Bellbird Park, Augustine Heights and Redbank?-- That is correct.

You have also been the chair of the Ipswich City Council Planning Development Committee from 1995 to 2011?-- That is right.

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Your statement and submission addresses a significant number of issues. If I can just take you to a couple of those issues?-- Yes.

One of the issues you raise in relation to warning systems?-- Mmm.

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This is particularly raised in your submission-----?-- Yes.

-----where you state that, "The Q100 notional flood level and the Port Office gauge methodology provide an alert system which is impossible for the average member of the public to understand."?-- Yes. I believe that's so, particularly that the Q100 is often referred to - regularly referred to as the Q100 level whereas in fact it is a statistical probability of 1 in 100.

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Yes?-- That creates confusion in the community that there is longevity between floods in itself, and using the Port Office gauge at the end of Edward Street, which my research has shown that's been operating since about 1839, from what I have been able to find, bears very little relevance to people upstream when they quote a figure such as 5.45 metres at the Port Office gauge. That means very little for the people of St Lucia, Jindalee or Goodna.

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Okay. And what you're wanting is information that will tell your residents "when this happens, my house will be flooded."?-- Well, yeah, there is two issues there. One is the availability of warnings, and, secondly, how those warnings are provided in a meaningful way to the community. And even if the Port Office gauge is used as a measure for flood levels upstream, that my suggestion is that a warning system could be adopted similar to cyclones or bushfires, for example, a 1 to 5 category, where a category 5 would be catastrophic or extreme, and that flood warnings could be provided on that basis, so that the last flood that we had would clearly have been a category 5 flood. The standard emergency signal could be used at that time. I think there is a very real understanding in the community with the State emergency signal, which is authorised by the Bureau of Meteorology, combined with the description of the flood level, for example, category 5, that people would understand that a lot more readily than, you know, a figure based on the Port Office gauge. I might also state the opportunity is there, which I have referred to in my statement, for flood levels to be categorised similarly so that individual suburbs, or parts of cities or towns, that the flood levels could be mapped from a category 1 to a category 5, so that that could be related to the warnings which are given as well.

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So flood mapping could be done, based on the floods that occurred, to include the information that has been received from the floods that occurred in 2011?-- Absolutely, yes.

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And houses could then be particularised; "you are residing in a category 5 area. That means when a category 5 flood comes, your house is in danger or could flood"?-- Yes. And that could be depicted on maps, it could be shown on boards which are in local shopping centres and things like that. With the internet, of course that opportunity would be available for people to be fairly clear that, for example, if they are in a category 3 flood area and the category 3 flood is predicted,

that they would be affected, but people higher up wouldn't be. It is a very simple system. In fact, it is something that the public would relate to much more readily. As they do with cyclones, in a category 5 cyclone is coming, people seem to understand that very readily, whereas with floods even if the warnings are given, they are not very precise or they are not readily understandable.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Tully, can I get you to slow down a bit, because the reporter has to take down everything you say?-- Sorry.

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If you could pause perhaps from time to time, thanks?-- Sorry.

MS WILSON: Are you aware that the Ipswich City council has been invited to be one of the pilot regions for implementing the existing coastal evaluation framework to a flood in river environment?-- Yes, I am but I am not aware of the detail.

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And that's using a colour coding system?-- That could be-----

Based on risk assessment?-- And that would be, I guess, if it was - you know, could be extended to a number of categories. Would be very similar to what I had in mind.

Now, in relation to boats?-- Boats?

Boats. You say, "Police in all known flood areas should be provided with boats for use in all future flood emergencies"?-- Yes, I think boats or jet skis, perhaps, it has been suggested to me, you know, jet skis might be a more manoeuvrable craft. We had a situation in Goodna, it was in Woogaroo Street in Goodna, a family was trapped in their homes, and I was there in a boat at about 8.30 on the Tuesday night and they were trapped in their homes and had an elderly person. They ended up being able to get out but their house was looted about an hour or two later. I think the opportunity is there in known flood areas, not just in Goodna but elsewhere, that a boat or jet skis, you know, which Queensland Police have already, police lights, and so on, on them, that they should be able to be there. When the police evacuated, for example, Goodna at about 5 o'clock on the Tuesday afternoon, two police vehicles were trapped on the river side of Goodna, like north of the railway line because the last underpass closed very quickly, and they drove up behind the Goodna Railway Station and subsequently they had probably five or six metres of water over them. If the police had other water craft there available they could have continued their work in the flood area.

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So one of the main reasons that you see that police should have boats is for an enforcement issue?-- One is enforcement, one is the continued evacuation. A lot of people - there was a group of people near the Royal Mail Hotel near there and Layard Street, Goodna - 11 people, I believe - who were evacuated by the SES after midnight. So people tend to linger in their homes. One person I know is a part-time greyhound

trainer. He wouldn't leave his property in Woogaroo Street until perhaps 10 or 11 o'clock on that night until his animals were protected. So a lot of people still won't move even if they have had the warnings from the police.

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Now, SES have flood boats?-- Yes.

Wouldn't it be the case that SES have the flood boats and perhaps if there is a need for more flood boats, they are the appropriate organisation to get those flood boats?-- I think there is an enforcement issue with the police and an evacuation issue. The SES are there hopefully to take people out of their homes if they are still there, or if people have been cut off, but I would see an enforcement issue with the police. The situation was that once the floodwaters rose on the northern side, the river side of Goodna, north of the railway line and the Ipswich Motorway, the police basically were confined to the southern side. Part of that area that was flood free, of course, and they weren't in a position to be able to move back into that flood area. So I see both from an enforcement point of view and, you know, community liaison point of view it would be advantageous for them to have some craft available.

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Your submission raises the issue of evacuation routes?-- Yes.

And you state that appropriate mapping should be prepared for use by the police and other emergency services that depicts evacuation routes?-- Yes. The situation was in 2011 there was no-one - the SES didn't exist in 1974 and there were no police officials who were there in 1974 and a lot of people in the community didn't - weren't aware of which roads would be cut off in which sequence, and the evidence of Mr O'Dea earlier about the water coming back - like, I saw for the first time at 8 o'clock on the morning of the Tuesday, the 11th, water was actually flowing up - flowing backwards, like a gully line, into Evan Marginson Park from the Brisbane River. Well, that's something I hadn't seen previously, but the water did eventually, as the previous witness said, come up Woogaroo Creek, and then come back the other way and trapped people. So I think that lack of knowledge can now - you know, the internet has changed everything, so the opportunity is there for those evacuation routes to be - and the timing of the likelihood of what roads would be closed in what sequence - and I am specifically talking about Goodna where there were two creeks traversing the suburb to the west and to the east and there were only - once those two creeks cut off Brisbane Terrace, there were only two underpasses at Goodna which were available and that last one closed finally a bit before 5 o'clock.

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And in your submission you refer to the sequence in which evacuation routes close and the approximate time between closure?-- Yes.

So you were expecting - or you would want information to be publicly available that this is the sequence of roads that closed, so you know which roads will be available at some

approximate time?-- Well, in the event of a Brisbane River flood - I am not talking about floods coming the other way, or downstream flows, but at Goodna I went across Goodna Creek to the west on the boundary of Goodna and Redbank at about 8 o'clock and there was no water across the road. I had gone to Ipswich and I came back at 12 and that road was blocked by floodwaters. Also Woogaroo Creek. I - also at Goodna which also crosses Brisbane Terrace. I have never seen Woogaroo Creek close that particular road, Brisbane terrace. It was obviously blocked in '74. And that only left two escape routes about 500 metres apart at Goodna under railway underpasses.

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What about taking into account that often no two floods are the same. So floods may be different. If evacuation routes are published, then people may rely on those evacuation routes, the flood may be different and it could be putting people into danger?-- Okay. If we're talking about a Brisbane River flood, the old timers in the area, the people like Reg O'Dea, who gave evidence earlier, and other people I have spoken to who have been through the 1955 flood and the '74 flood and the 2011 flood, they will say at Goodna that it all happened in exactly the same sequence, and one would expect that that would occur because the evidence about the natural levee bank which Mr O'Dea gave and the way in which the two creeks are positioned, with the water rising - water always finds its own level, so as it continues to rise, the sequence of events, I would think, because water finds the same level, in almost all probability be the same.

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Can I ask you your view on this, and that is about evacuation centres?-- Yes.

The Ipswich Showgrounds is anticipated to be used as a centralised receiving evacuation centre?-- Uh-huh.

And evacuees go there and they will be registered and transported elsewhere. Have you got a view as to the efficiency of this system?-- That probably wouldn't work in the Ipswich eastern suburbs, because of the number of creeks, so Goodna Creek, Woogaroo Creek, Six Mile Creek, Bundamba Creek, getting people there would be, in most circumstances, impossible. There may be a route through the back of Redbank Plains into Ipswich. I would have thought that it would be more appropriate - and some of the evidence earlier talked about the - or the statement that you made about the Brisbane River flooding and the Bremer River flooding affecting Ipswich. It would need to be up in the eastern suburbs that it would be more appropriate for people to go directly to an evacuation centre, which was either formal or informal, rather than having to go into Ipswich which might be impossible.

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Have you got a view about the recognition of those unofficial evacuation centres - and we refer to them as organic evacuation centres - and how they should be set up and work with the LDMG?-- Absolutely. I think they work exceptionally well because of the people who are involved, whether they are school principals or pastors or community leaders in those

places. In fact, I think even if you had a regimented system of formalised evacuation centres, if it was to be another 37 years before we have this sort of flood again, you will probably find those organic centres would pop up at schools, and so on, simply because of the desire of the community to help people around them. And you know when - I found, you know, the ones that I saw and the principal one was at the Shiloh Christian church, they work excellently because people knew what they were doing. They didn't need a whole regimented routine or manual, you know, to go through.

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But it would assist, wouldn't it, if a manual was provided and it could be - the structure could be organised within the Disaster Management Plan?-- Absolutely. And I think that certainly wouldn't do any harm, but I don't think, you know, we should become so obsessive about saying, "Oh, you can't operate as a centre." There was one set up at - an organic centre at St Augustine's College at Augustine Heights and they were told to close from a State Government official - I believe the State Health Department, they weren't authorised, which I find a little strange. Everyone was trying to help, people were taking others into their homes. Everyone was trying to help. And there is no reason why a church or school shouldn't be able to help equally. But, yes, that would be right. If there was a manual or a procedure - although I suspect after 20 or 30 or 40 years, those manuals are not likely to be read very much. Impossible almost to be read, you know, if there was a flood actually occurring.

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But you would expect them to be updated-----?-- Hopefully.

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-----with the relevant information?-- And combined with that is the degree of complacency in the community. Over the last 30 or so years that I have been on the council, I have not - and I have spoken about flood - the '74 flood and the Wivenhoe Dam probably to over 1,000 people, people who talk about it, mention it. I haven't struck one, except Mr O'Dea, who said - who hasn't said - they have said universally, "It won't happen again." There has been a strong belief in the community that the '74 flood would not happen again because of the Wivenhoe Dam.

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Thank you, Madam Commissioner. I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Flanagan?

MR FLANAGAN: I have no questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

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MR MacSPORRAN: Thank you, Commissioner. Mr Tully, just one matter, during a flood event like this there are often roads are closed to prevent people driving through them?-- Uh-huh.

And that is the responsibility of various bodies who undertake that work, don't they?-- Yes.

And those bodies are called - or come under the banner of being routine road maintenance providers. Have you heard that terminology?-- No, I haven't.

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You are aware of the area of the Karrabin-Rosewood Road?-- I know the area but not in intimate detail. It is some - probably 20 or more kilometres from the area I represent but I do know the road.

Can you tell us whether or not you know whether it is the Ipswich City Council's responsibility, as a routine road maintenance provider, to close that road in a flood event?-- No, I don't know.

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There would be somebody in your council who would have that responsibility?-- In our engineering services department, absolutely, yeah.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Pomeranke?

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MR POMERENKE: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod?

MS McLEOD: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Kelly?

MR KELLY: No questions, thank you.

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

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Tully. You are excused.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: I call Mr Anthony Trace.

ANTHONY KEITH TRACE, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Is your full name Anthony Keith Trace?-- Yes, it is.

And are you employed by the Ipswich City Council as the Business Support Manager in Engineering Services?-- That's correct.

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And are you the Local Disaster Coordinator of the Ipswich Local Disaster Management Group?-- That's right.

And you have held that role since November 2010?-- That's right.

And you held that role during the December 2010 and the January 2011 flood events?-- That is correct.

20

Now, you have made two statements. The first was dated the 6th of April 2011 and you are going to be shown some documents. That's your first statement?-- That's correct.

With attachments?-- That's correct.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 445.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 445"

MS WILSON: You also made a second statement to the Commission of Inquiry and that's dated the 10th of May 2011. Can you have a look at that folder, please? This document in front of you?-- That's correct.

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Now, that statement follows in paragraph numbering from the first statement?-- That's correct.

Okay. Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 446.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 446"

MS WILSON: And in those statements you refer to a submission made by the Ipswich City Council to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- That's correct.

And I refer you to this document. Is that the submission that the Ipswich City Council made?-- Yes, it is.

Did you have any role in that submission?-- I was involved in interviews that made up that submission.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: The submission will be Exhibit 447.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 447"

MS WILSON: Now, can we just make sure that you have in front of you your first and your second statement and your submission? Have you got them?-- Yes.

20

Easy to refer to them?-- I do have those.

Now, first of all, if I can take you to the Disaster Management Plan?-- Yes.

Ipswich City Council has a Disaster Management Plan?-- That's correct.

And I will just show you this document. That is the Ipswich City Council Disaster Management Plan?-- Yes, it is.

30

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 448.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 448"

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MS WILSON: Now, the council is currently undertaking a revision of that plan?-- That's correct.

And that is due to the events that occurred in January and - December and January?-- We were actually undertaking that review prior to the event in December/January because of the changes to the legislation in November.

50

So the plan that you were working with in December and January, did that not include the amendments that had been made to the Disaster Management Act?-- In terms of the roles of the Local Disaster Coordinator and that, no, it didn't.

So that has been amended. But also are you looking at systemic issues from what occurred during the flood event and how that can be done better?-- Yes, we are.

And that review has received Commonwealth funding under the NDRP?-- That's correct.

Now, who actually is doing the review?-- We've started the review. EMQ has actually started the review for us. So they are looking at that from a whole disaster framework point of view to make sure it is consistent with other areas and also to identify to us better practice.

10

So they will be looking - it is looking at it in two ways: the first way to see that it is in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Disaster Management Act?-- That's correct.

And, further, to see if it can be amended to better prepare and respond and recover in disaster events?-- That's correct.

And taking on what has occurred in December and January and seeing what worked well, what didn't; is that how it is going to work?-- That will probably be the next stage of the review. They will probably focus on the first two and then as the review continues we will bring in the learnings that we've got from the January event.

20

So the first - I can understand the first part of the review, that is just to make sure it requires that it meets the requirements of the legislative standard. What's the second part that will be done in the review?-- The second part is they will identify better practice for us, say things like the Coastal Evacuation Plan.

30

Yes?-- It is one of those things that we're already starting to look at.

Okay. And the learnings will come at a different stage?-- That's right.

Have you any idea when that process will begin?-- Well, the EMQ review is the first start of that phase. We've set up a strategic advisory group to overview the plan review. That includes members from the LDMG. We're also looking at whether or not we get community members and that involved in the process as well.

40

Have you undertaken steps to capture the information and the learnings from these flood events?-- Yes, I think our submissions that council and myself have done have captured - highlighted several of those, but also we're looking at the other submissions from the community as well.

50

Now, one of the objectives that you state is to develop a more user-friendly, operationally-focussed Disaster Management Plan. You are wanting it to be more clear, concise and action based. Why are you - why is that necessary to get it down into those steps of being action based?-- Well, I think it is - one of the examples I can give you is around the evacuation centres. One of our views is that we actually create local

area plans, so areas like Riverview, Redbank and all those  
sort of areas can have a specific plan they can actually refer  
to in the case of an event.

1

You refer in your documents to operational subplans?-- Yes.

And that you will be wanting to implement operational  
subplans?-- That's correct.

Is that the operational subplans that relates to  
communities?-- No, the subplans are centred around the  
functions undertaken under the Disaster Management Plan,  
things like the coordination centre evacuation planning, the  
recovery phase. They are the subaction plans. We're actually  
looking to implement another raft of plans around the local  
area plans. So the local disaster plan will sit over the top  
and the local area plans will sit underneath that.

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Okay, well, perhaps we will get to that in just a moment but the operational subplans, that is just a dividing up the issues that really need to be addressed, for example, evacuation centres?-- That is correct.

Also part of the disaster management plan will be looking at the specific areas and drafting up plans for those areas?-- That is part of the project.

10

What is the term you referred to?-- Local area plans.

The local area plans, they will sit within the Disaster Management Plan?-- Yes.

Can you give me an example of how you see these local area plans to work? Take an area and tell me what you are wanting to do in relation to instigating a Disaster Management Plan for that area?-- Probably one area we could talk about is, say, Rosewood.

20

Yes?-- Which is a particular township. It has a tension basin within that township that protects it from water flows. The idea would be we would actually look at Rosewood as a separate area and determine an action plan, so identify evacuation centres, establish community groups to actually run the event in case we are not there so the local SES, the local police, get those people involved so Rosewood itself would be self-sufficient.

30

Would you - this would be documented in the plan?-- That would.

So everyone would know their roles and responsibilities?-- Correct.

Members of the community, would they be a part of the disaster management in that area?-- I would definitely think so. I think that has been proven throughout the January event.

40

Is one of the aim you are wanting to achieve is that in areas that are isolated they have a structure and process to work through to assist in disaster management when the council can't physically get there?-- That's the idea. Also the contact numbers and all that sort of stuff so they become visible to us earlier on.

How would that work with the LDMG? Where do they fit into the process of the LDMG? Does the LDMG have communications with these local action groups?-- That is correct.

50

Supplying information up and down the line?-- That's the idea.

Therefore they could be - they can make requests for assistance that could be processed through the Disaster Management Plan?-- Or through the system.

Through the framework?-- Yes.

1

Have you been in Court this morning and heard some of the evidence?-- Yes, I have.

Some of the issues that have been raised is the ability to get resources and supplies if you are not a part of the official Disaster Management Plan framework?-- Yes, I have heard those.

10

Have you any comment on that?-- From my point of view during the event we didn't distinguish between council or LDMG opened centres as to organic centres at such. Anyone who asked for assistance we made every endeavour to get assistance to them.

But it may have been the case they didn't know where to ask or who to ask; could that have been an issue?-- It could have been. Considering we have the triple 0 number that can be called as well as the 132500 number for the SES, I think there is avenues for people to contact us.

20

Why do you need these local action plans to set these up in these communities if it worked well enough this time around?-- I think it can be improved. I think the plan ties in people with roles and responsibilities with an event. Given the local people who is in charge or who can take charge, who has the keys, who can - what numbers to ring for supplies and that sort of stuff.

You, in your statement and submission, provide suggestions about requests for assistance?-- Yes.

30

We will get to that in a moment. But, the issue of request for assistance - well, you had issues with requests for assistance through the Disaster Management structure?-- That is correct.

With the local action group you would expect for them to have the same problems with requests for assistance?-- In what ways?

40

Well, it has to come through the LDMG?-- That is right.

The LDMG would process it up the line?-- No, the aim under the framework is the LDMG is the controller of the event and will try and source those -----

Will try and source it?-- Yes.

If it can't then it has to be processed up the line?-- That is correct.

50

Are you wanting to formalise these - these local action groups so they can be a part of the Disaster Management Plan so request for assistance can be processed more efficiently?-- That is right.

Would you say the fact they were not a part of disaster

management structure, that requests for assistance were not processed as efficiently as it could have been?-- I would say there was no difference in terms of between official and non-official.

1

So - and the local action group, putting them in the disaster management structure will just formalise it?-- That is right, in terms of how the evacuation centres are set up, who is running those and all that sort of stuff. Especially where we can't get to them in the initial stage.

10

It is proposed that the revised Disaster Management Plan and the operational subplans will be put on the Ipswich City Council website?-- That is correct.

You are wanting people to have access to this information?-- Yes.

To see the information and be able to make decisions based on this information?-- Correct.

20

What about the issue of putting up a list of evacuation centres?-- In terms of?

On the website?-- Yes, we can do that, yes.

We will come to evacuation centres in a moment and I will pick up on that line when we come to evacuation centres?-- Okay.

In relation to the information and control and access, the - you refer in your statement to the Australian Interservice Incident Management System, AIIMS?-- AIIMS, that is correct.

30

Is that what it is referred to as? And you say, "That this is a control system designed to enable the seamless integration of the activities and resources of multiple agencies when applied to the resolution of any emergency situation." ?-- Yes.

It is a computer software?-- Well, not it is more an operating framework.

40

Okay?-- So it breaks down your incident team into planning, operations, logistics and admin.

Now, during the flood events did the Ipswich City Council have this system in operation?-- We tried to structure our coordination centre along those roles. We have one group of people actually planning the event, getting the information together, another group doing the operational actions and then a logistics arm making sure we had the resources to actually do those activities.

50

But to be fair, you had limited training in relation to the operation of the structure?-- That is correct.

You attended some training in December?-- Yes.



Who provides that training?-- The AIIMS, there was two - it was approached twice, once was with EMQ the other with QPS.

1

But the training in December did not descend into the detail of how the system operated?-- It wasn't indepth training.

Have you attended more training since then?-- I haven't at this stage but plan to.

The Guardian software, are you aware of that?-- Yes, I have seen it several times.

10

Does the Ipswich City Council use the Guardian software?-- No, we don't.

Are you looking at it to use it or?-- Yes, we are. We are considering it.

What do you see are the advantages of using it?-- One of the advantages of it is it is a common ICT system that all the agencies can actually use so police firies and all that to help process the requests for assistance.

20

Yes?-- And enable us to also track those requests and find out which ones are still outstanding. It also allows us to graphically map it, where the requests are coming from probably one of the bigger advantages is that it is starting to get legs across a lot of the other local government authorities.

30

Would that mean that you can then communicate through this software system with the other local government authorities?-- Yes, also provide them with support.

That's the next question; why is that of assistance? Why is that good that it is getting legs?-- Well, because what - I think one of the biggest disadvantages we have at the moment with the framework is we don't have the common ICT system across all agencies so we have disparaging data sets and information that we are having to - that we can't see all in one place.

40

Well, that's one of the issues that you raise; is that the present Information Communications and Technology Systems which you called ICT is largely incompatible?-- That is right.

That the disaster management across the State involves reliance on a number of different and largely incompatible ICTS. Is that from different levels like local - it is incompatible between different councils?-- Yes.

50

The local governments can't access information at the State Government level?-- That is right, it is both up and down, up and across the system.

Yes, and that is one of your suggestions that you push quite heavily in your statement?-- Yes.

That the disaster management within the State should be able to communicate with each other and it should be compatible communication systems across all levels of government agencies?-- That would be an advantage for us.

You refer in your statement to the EMQ Disaster Management Portal Site?-- Yes.

Is that - your understanding of that site is the DDMG, the DDC, the LDMG and the LDC would be able to log on to the portal site and access and extract relevant information?-- That is correct.

10

So, this site, you say, is still under development?-- That is right.

Is that crossing the bridge for having compatible information across all agencies?-- It does allow you to share information so in terms of flood mapping or manuals or whatever, but it doesn't take into account requests for assistance or the actual operational activities you are undertaking during an event.

20

So what you are wanting is to have a system where the Ipswich City Council can log on to an information software that can be accessed by all State Government agencies saying, "This is what we need or this is the status of where we are at."?-- That is correct, things like requests for assistance we can see where they are at within the system. Also in terms of our sit reps and those sort of reports. They can be accessed by State simply by going on to a common system instead of the current process of us having to generate those on a regular basis. Because we are keeping the system up to date I would see those reports being available across at the press of a button.

30

That, in your view, would make for more efficient disaster management?-- Definitely, it would take away some of the administration activities that go on during an event.

40

Which brings us to the procurement process. That ties into an integrated information system?-- Mmm.

One the issues that you raise is that you want the procurement process to be reviewed?-- I would like it to be sped up, yes.

The process is that a request for assistance is issued by yourself and that would go to the DDC?-- That is correct.

50

The DDC then passes it on to the State level?-- Yes.

We talked about it before, you would only process it up to the State level if at local level it cannot be satisfied?-- That is correct.

You regard this as a cumbersome process?-- It is a slow process. It is also a bit frustrating when you can't actually

know where your request is at therefore you can't plan contingencies around, you know - I suppose bedding was a good example during the event when that was actually going to get to our evacuation centres. Because we didn't have those time frames we were unable to make other plans or undertake other activities.

1

Did it create any logistical difficulties? It might be a cumbersome process but did it actually create any logistical difficulties?-- In terms of receiving items-----

10

Yes?-- Well, it did slow down the process.

One of the matters that you raise is that because of the procurement process the Ipswich LDMG limited its requests for assistance during this process ?-- That is correct.

Are you saying the LDMG actively looked elsewhere rather than using the procurement process through the disaster management structure?-- We actually looked at our own contacts, procurement contacts, Coles, Woolies and those and we actually went direct to those people to get supplies as we required them.

20

It is the case that the LDMG should be trying to source resources before its processed?-- That is correct.

So is it the case you were just working within the system?-- Well, the issue was we were unable to get those from our local suppliers so we actually went to State distribution managers and those sort of - that level of organisations.

30

I see?-- To get access to the logistics we required.

Can you give me an example for that?-- Probably Coles Woolworths are probably two good examples.

So you couldn't access the food supplies in the Ipswich area through Coles or Woolies?-- That is right.

40

What did you do?-- We actually put requests through to those people to provide us with required items that we needed.

Through the Ipswich or - through the local Coles or Woolworths?-- No, we actually rang the State distribution directly.

Did they process your request?-- Yes, they did.

Is it the case that that processing really should go up the disaster management structure?-- It is probably a point of whether you class it as the LDMG being, itself, capable. To me that's the avenue we are, sort of, pushing down the line now. We are actually talking to the State Government agencies the procurement arm to see if we can actually tag into their contracts directly. From an LDMG point of view we can go direct to their suppliers.

50

Did you just find it a quicker way to access resources than using the disaster management structure?-- Yes.

1

Now, within the Ipswich City Council the procurement officer is looking to develop a process where you - whereby you can directly access the States procurement processes and contracts to support local requirements in a disaster event?-- That is what I said.

How is that going to work within the disaster management structure?-- In terms of the LDMG?

10

Yes and the DDMG and the DDC?-- Well, the procurement manager is part of the LDCC, he is part of the logistics arm for that coordination group so it would be through him we would be making these requests or using the contracts we have available to us.

This process would be effectively sidestepping the Ipswich DDMG, wouldn't it?-- The?

20

This procurement process of just going and accessing directly-----?-- That is correct because we have created our own capability at the local level.

So if the Ipswich City Council needs a resource, it can't get that resource locally, it will then just have a procurement process directly to a State level with a contract to be able to obtain that resource?-- We will have state suppliers, we won't necessarily have to go to the State itself but we are looking to get access to the suppliers themselves.

30

State suppliers, can you give me an example of State suppliers you would be looking to go to?-- I couldn't give you one off hand.

Have you consulted with the Ipswich DDC in relation to that?-- We have discussed that with the DDC.

Have you commenced discussions with - you say - you state you commenced discussions with the relevant State Government agency to establish such a strategy?-- That is still undergoing.

40

Which relevant State Government agency have you begun these discussions with?-- The State procurement arm we are-----

Sorry, I didn't quite pick that up?-- The State procurement.

Where is - at what stage are these discussions?-- They are still ongoing at this stage.

50

One of the other issues that you raise is in relation to helicopters?-- Yes.

You state that an issue for future consideration is the arrangements and processes for the procurement and deployment of helicopters. You provide an example that medical

evacuation was required from the Karalee evacuation centre?-- That is correct.

1

You couldn't source a helicopter?-- No, we couldn't.

Where were you trying to source a helicopter from?-- We actually spoke to the QAS and the firies and we also ended up putting in a request through to the DDC for a helicopter.

The evacuation you state only occurred when a helicopter landed to resupply an evacuation centre and then a police officer coerced the helicopter pilot to take - to evacuate the patients?-- That is right.

10

One of the issues that you raise is that you found this frustrating because of the location of Ipswich to the Amberley Air Force base?-- That is correct.

Is it the case that you are wanting to be able to directly contact the Amberley Air Force base to be able to get helicopters?-- That would be the optimum way to do it.

20

But you realise there is a procurement process?-- Yes.

And a resourcing process that must be followed?-- That is right.

Have you had any discussions with the government agencies how this can be - whether this structure can be reviewed?-- Yes, we have. We actually discuss it at the disaster - the Disaster Management Group debrief.

30

Yes?-- Because Amberley falls within our boundaries we actually have a 24 hour window where we can actually go direct to the base.

Perhaps you can explain what your understanding of that is?-- My understanding is for the initial 24 hours of operation we would require the helicopters for we could go directly to the base. After that we would need to have the formal process in place to continue after that 24 hour period.

40

The formal process in place would be taking it to the DDMG level which would take it to the State level?-- We would probably go through the DDMG to get the Air Force to help us at our level.

If I can take you now to the SES?-- Yes.

The Ipswich City Council funds a full-time SES coordinator?-- That is correct.

50

You state that part of that role includes ensuring sufficient SES volunteers are maintained, the numbers?-- That is correct.

How is that done to ensure the numbers are always at an adequate level to be able to service the needs?-- The local

SES coordinator takes every opportunity to promote the SES. There is also State programs that are in place for volunteers. Also there is, you know, local support from 94.9 to try and generate volunteers as well.

1

Have you any idea how many volunteers the SES has in this region?-- It is around 200 currently.

Is that maintained around about that number? Has that been the number for some years now?-- It has been around the 150 to 200 mark.

10

If I can take you to paragraph 119 of your statement. That is where you refer to matters that - in relation to the SES that you believe require further consideration?-- Yes.

See that?-- Yes.

Can I take you through those? You state that there would be a benefit of having in place a Memorandum of Understanding between EMQ and the Ipswich City Council as to the responsibility in coordinating and directing SES?-- That is correct.

20

Why do you state that a Memorandum of Understanding is required?-- It would clear up some of the boundaries or some of the issues we had during the event in terms of directing the SES.

Can you give us an example of one of the issues that need clearing up?-- One of those would be because of the extent of the event some of the SES resources were looked at to be used elsewhere.

30

What do you mean "elsewhere"?-- In terms of another area that was impacted by - like Somerset or Lockyer, even further up north to Rockhampton as well.

Continue?-- Sorry, so those resources were identified to go up there to be used or to relieve the SES personnel up there. We actually asked for them to remain down here and there was a bit of back and fro to maintain our staff.

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What was the result of that?-- Our SES crews remained in Ipswich because of the threat to Ipswich.

What do you - what would you want the Memorandum of Understanding to cover?-- To clear up the control and command framework.

50

Okay?-- Also the funding mechanism as well for SES.

We will come to that. The funding mechanism is the Ipswich City Council funds out of its own pocket the SES controller?-- That is correct.

And also provides some resources to the SES on an annual basis?-- Yes for depots and a good size fleet.

Can you tell me what that is - what cost that is to the Ipswich City Council?-- Not off the top of my head I can't. It would be, say, three-quarters of a million dollars at a guess.

You are wanting for that Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the funding and support arrangements?-- That is right.

10

What more information are you wanting? What more clarity are you seeking?-- We are probably looking for some funding assistance from the State in terms of the SES to come up with a funding sharing agreement. I know other local governments have looked at going down that line already.

That issue feeds into the final point you raise at 119 is, "Whether the optimal model for SES operations and arrangements is a State based model or a local government one."?-- That is correct.

20

What are you envisaging; that the Ipswich City Council operates and manages the local SES here?-- That is one option.

Without any assistance from the State?-- That's one expectation. The other one is the State takes over fully the SES function.

So then the Ipswich City Council doesn't provide the resources we have gone through?-- That is correct.

30

Doesn't the blended model work?-- I think it works very well but given there is a shift throughout the State of local governments moving away from their support of the SES I think it would be opportune time to actually tie down that relationship between the two entities.

What do you mean there is a shift away from local government supporting the SES?-- Some local governments don't financially support the SES in their local areas.

40

That's a council by council decision?-- That's right.

I see from your statement that - is it the Ipswich City Council's view that it is unnecessary to support the SES because if you didn't you would have to pay for those resources anyway in terms of if there was a storm and assistance was-----?-- We would have to create those resources. To me our SES is the frontline or initial response group.

50

In terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, would you be wanting the SES to be deployed by the LDC?-- By the LDMG, yes.

By the LDMG ?-- Yes.

So not to go through ENQ but rather the LDMG determines what task the SES should do?-- I think it has got to be a combination because ENQ is looking across the whole of State scenario. To me it has to be a partnership.

1

But when you are looking at a disaster event like the flood event in January?-- Yes.

How can the SES - how can that resource be best used?-- Definitely through the LDMG.

10

That the LDMG you state should be deploying those resources of the SES?-- Yes.

That's saying, "There is a job in Rosewood, SES should go out to that job."?-- Well, coordinating it. The SES, even locally, receive their own requests and they send their crews out to assist people.

Would that create an extra burden for the LDMG, resourcing burden? There would be, obviously, more staff required?-- Not necessarily. The SES have that function built in locally to handle that. It is more around the prioritisation of some of those requests. It is the ability of the LDMG to direct.

20

So any task though, that the SES is requested to do would have to come through the LDMG under your structure?-- No, they would still be doing it.

Then if the-----?-- It is the higher priority stuff where we need the SES to do particular high priority stuff, they are the ones we would be asking them to do.

30

I understand that?-- Yes.

If there is a matter of urgency where you need SES assistance?-- Yes.

You want to have the ability to be able to deploy the SES to that task?-- That is right.

40

But to do that don't you have to understand the - what the SES is undertaking at any given point in time?-- Definitely.

To do that you need to be able to have an understanding of where SES crews are deployed and what they are doing?-- That is right.

All that would have to come through the LDMG to gain that proper understanding?-- No, the SES has that view of where their operations are at.

50

Right?-- We are able to see those.

You are able to see those?-- Yes.

At any given time you are able to see where the SES crews are?-- Yes.



Within the LDMG?-- That is right so.

Before we leave the SES, issues raised with the SES, the 132500 SES contact number?-- Yes.

You state this number went down for some hours on the 10th?-- That is correct.

Calls were diverted to the Ipswich City Council Call Centre?-- That is correct.

10

Do you have any idea why the reason, the reason why the number went down?-- No, I don't. We were asked for assistance at the LDMG meeting on the morning of the 10th; whether or not we had the resources to actually play the back up role for that number.

Do you see any role in the SES number, contact number being permanently transferred to the LDMG?-- No, I think it plays a separate role. It is - to me it is there for the minor events, it picks up all those sorts of events.

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Madam Commissioner, I am about to start a new topic. Would that be a convenient time?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, is 2.30 all right?

MS WILSON: Yes.

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THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 12.58 P.M. TILL 2.30 P.M.

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THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 2.30 P.M.

ANTHONY KEITH TRACE, CONTINUING:

MS WILSON: Mr Trace, if I can take you to the issue of the information that you received from the Bureau of Meteorology? In your statement you refer to the fact that you were concerned at the delay during the peak of the crisis as to the information that you were receiving from the bureau?-- That's correct.

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And that you had to - this refers to the 11th day of January - and that you had to ring the bureau during the day to get updates?-- That's correct.

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When you rang the bureau, did you get any further information?-- I rang the bureau at 2 p.m., just prior to the afternoon LDMG meeting, and was told that levels were 16 metres - expected - predicted heights were 16 metres at the David Trumpy and 15 metres at Moggill and that the dam release levels were surely to be revised.

So was that any additional information that you - than from when you were provided in the morning?-- At the 9.39?

30

Yes?-- No. It is - the dam releases had been reviewed was the additional piece of information.

You state that it would have assisted if you had received additional Bureau of Meteorology warnings during the day?-- Yes, it would have.

Would that have just given you more additional planning time?-- That's right.

40

At paragraph 193 you say that your belief is that "everyone concerned responded extremely effectively but it would have been much better for everyone if the response could have been effected in a more orderly fashion." What do you mean by that, "by a more orderly fashion"?-- I was - I suppose what I mean is information being available a lot earlier for us.

Right?-- Allowing us more planning time and more time to source resources.

50

So that's the same issue that I raised just prior to that. "An issue for the LDMG was the ability to interpret the bureau information; that is, modelling the theoretical impact of the bureau predictions are not a precise science." You refer in your statement about the fact that you are dealing with two rivers?-- Yes.

And trying to work out how the impact of these river levels

would impact the areas around Ipswich and in Ipswich, and that it created problems for the hydrologists at the council?-- In terms of determining what a possible impact zone was going to be for us, yes.

1

Have you had any discussions with the bureau about whether this could be done better?-- In terms of the 19 metres, 18 metres?

Well, dealing with the impact of two rivers and having to deal with how these two heights-----?-- No, we haven't spoken to BOM about that as yet.

10

In terms of your hydrologist that was working with the council?-- Yes.

Has there been any issues that have been outlined about how it could be improved?-- Yes, we are looking at ways to improve our spacial mapping, because that's how we do it, we have got 150 predefined flood map levels that we overlay to find out what the impact area is. We're looking at improving on how we do that particularly on how quickly we're able to produce impact data.

20

In terms of the information that you were receiving from Seqwater, you state that the "Ipswich City Council found the dam release situation reports issued by Seqwater as quite uninformative and lacking in detail insofar as any impact on the residents of Ipswich was concerned." What further information do you require from Seqwater to address those concerns?-- Well, Seqwater reports on all bases about volumes of water being released, not about impacts to river heights, and it is that impact to river heights is what we really need.

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And that also is requiring the input from the bureau then, isn't it?-- Of course.

So it is more the interaction of that information and getting a better end result?-- Yes.

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So is there any more information that Seqwater can give you than what they gave you?-- Probably in terms of their 12 hour and 24 hour planning activities that they were looking to do, whether or not they can give us more information in terms of what their possible release programs would be so then we could do some what-if scenarios.

Now, you were here this morning when you heard Councillor Tully give evidence?-- Yes.

50

And part of his evidence covered the issue of the information that is actually given to the community is somewhat meaningless if it refers to gauge heights and river levels?-- Yes.

Because what the community need to know is will my house get flooded?-- Exactly.

Now, the Ipswich City Council is working with a pilot program based on the Coastal Evaluation Framework, and that is a program that works up north, like Cairns and Hervey Bay, dealing with coastal inundation by storm surges and water?-- Yes, that's correct.

1

And the concept that is being explored is having zones - coloured zones so people can understand if they live in the red zone that you will expect some flooding?-- That's right.

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And different zones, different heights?-- It gives - it would give the LDMGs the ability to actually interpret a 19 metre flood in terms of what zones and what messages they can send out to people. So they can say we believe that this flood is going to be a red zone flood, so people will know if they are in the red zone that they need to take action.

Now, you're working with the pilot program. So what does that mean; are you going to do a small subsection of a community to see how it works or is it going to be put in across the Ipswich area?-- We have - we will have to do it on a small area first to make sure that it works first, given that we have got two rivers and multiple tributaries that we have to factor into this equation, it is not just simply a storm surge coming on to a coastline.

20

And that's another one of the issues, is putting this program that has been developed up north dealing with storm surges in a river flooding environment?-- That's right.

30

But what happens if it doesn't flood in the next year or two years? Then would it seem that the pilot program didn't work or it is not necessary?-- I think it will always be necessary. We have really got to work on how we get messages out to our community and we have got to make sure they are done in a very fast and easy to understand way.

In terms of that, the Ipswich City Council provides flood mapping to the community?-- Yes.

40

There is a one in 20 development line which is available to the public for free through on line - that's on line?-- PD Online, yes.

There is a 1 in 100 flood line and that's also available to the public on line?-- Yes.

There is the Urban Stormwater Flow Path Areas, also available on line?-- Uh-huh.

50

And there is flood line overlays which are indicative and subject to further detailed assessment and that is available to the public for free on line?-- That's right.

There is also the 1974 Historic Flood Layer and this information is available for areas within the former Ipswich City Council geographic area. That is not available on line; it is available to public upon request of council and payment

for a fee?-- That's right.

1

What more information does that 1974 Historic Flood Layer Map provide than the other material that is available on line?-- The '74 Flood Map Line shows you the extent of the '74 flood. So it indicates what land was underwater during that event.

And why is it the case that that is not available free on line like the other resources that you provide?-- I do not know.

10

And do you know whether the Ipswich City Council is exploring making that information available on line for free?-- I do not know.

In terms of getting the information to the public, you talk about that the media reports are quite Brisbane centric?-- Yes.

And that "consideration should be given to the means by which regionally-focussed television coverage may be achieved when the area is not serviced by a local television station." Have you had any thoughts how that can be achieved?-- Well, one thought I do have is around having a Memorandum of Understanding with some of the commercial channels to actually give us guaranteed air time for the LDMG Chair or the Deputy Chair to actually have air time after LDMG meetings to get the message out to people.

20

There is a local radio station-----?-- Yes.

30

-----which provides information to the community. That also is a source that is used by the Ipswich City Council?-- Oh, definitely.

But you are just looking for additional information through-----?-- Yes.

-----television?-- I think we have really got to use as many channels as we can to get messages out to people.

40

What about directing this issue as a matter of community education; that is, informing the residents that information about flooding, or other events that are affecting the Ipswich area, is available on this radio station?-- Yes, we did that. We also put them on towards our website as well, that they could go there and get the information they require.

But one of the advantages of radio is it can be battery operated. So when electricity is lost, which means that you can't get television, you can't get access to the internet, there is going to be a constant source of information coming through to the radio?-- That's correct.

50

And is it stressed to the Ipswich residents that radio is a very good source?-- Definitely. In any displays that we do, that is highlighted to them.

As part of the Disaster Management Plan Review, it is stated

that "Steps will be identified to expand the current community education program to enhance community reliance."?-- Resilience.

1

Resilience. What are the current community education programs that you've got?-- Currently we - SES coordinator visits schools, we take advantage of any community event that is on, speak at those, and also any Ipswich City Council event, we have displays at those events.

10

So that's the present community education?-- Yes.

What is being considered that is in addition by the Ipswich City Council to those measures?-- It is actually rolling out those local area plans, when we get them up and running, getting people to understand what are the risks of their areas, I think that's the key piece, but to me it will come out of the review of the Local Disaster Management Plan.

Has the Ipswich City Council identified the areas where those local action plans will be instigated?-- I think they were identified during the event quite clearly.

20

And has the Ipswich City Council particularised them in saying these are the areas that are going to put in these community action plans?-- Not at this stage, no.

Would Karalee be one of those?-- Karalee would be one of those.

30

An SMS text was used on the 11th of January?-- That's correct.

And do you know who issued that?-- That was issued through the State Emergency Warning System.

And did the LDMG contribute to that SMS text?-- Yes, we wrote the draft for it and we approved.

You raised concerns with the amount of time that it took for this SMS message to get out to the community?-- Yes.

40

And the reasons that you provide for that delay is set out in paragraph 186 - and perhaps if I can take you to that? They are effectively three concerns. The first is due to the impact of the changing information as to the flood peak. Well, there can be really no control over that?-- That's right.

The second is because of the time taken to convert the flood information into lists of potentially impacted streets. Can that be done better?-- Yes. That's what I am talking about with our spacial database, is being able to turn the flood map information into these lists a lot quicker.

50

And the other reason that you provide is due to the series of approval and logistical processes required to be undertaken to enable the emergency alert to issue. How can that be done

better?-- Well, really it comes down to having predrafted messages that are approved. So, in essence, all we're doing is inserting, you know, the peak time and what we expect the peak levels to be, and down the track whether it is a red zone or yellow zone event.

1

Is that something that you work with EMQ to be able to have those predrafted messages ready to go and you can insert the relevant information?-- Yes, we're working on that at the moment.

10

That would also work with community education to educate the community as to what to do when you get one of these messages?-- That's right.

Is that being envisaged by the Ipswich City Council as a step to be undertaken?-- Definitely.

If I can take you now to the evacuation centres? Now, the Ipswich City Council favours a centralised approach to evacuation, that is you have the Ipswich Showgrounds being the central reception point and then an evacuees would be registered there and then transported to other evacuation centres?-- That's right.

20

That was the process that the Ipswich City Council was using in these flood events?-- That's right, for this event, yes.

Now, you state that this didn't work as sufficiently as you would hope for?-- No, it didn't.

30

Because the media had listed the evacuation centres and people just went directly to those evacuation centres?-- That's correct.

So this is the point where we picked up before when we were talking about evacuation centres and the publishing of the names - the locations and names of those evacuation centres?-- Yes.

40

Now, you said that you were - you were for the publication of those locations and names of evacuation centres?-- It depends on which model we go with. If we stick with the centralised model, then it should be those centralised evacuation centres that get advertised, but if we go for a more widespread open of all evacuation centres, then I would expect all of those to be advertised.

And is that something that is up for consideration by the Ipswich City Council of which model you are going to use?-- Definitely.

50

The problem that you can see with the centralised system is that people may not be able to get to the Ipswich City - to the Ipswich Showgrounds?-- That's right.

And the natural reaction of any person is to go to the evacuation centre that is closest?-- That's correct.

And that can't be held secret because word of mouth will get out, "there is an evacuation centre up the road", they will just go there?-- Well, it is a learning I had in human nature, that people want to stay close to their impacted home.

And is an answer to this then just having a better data processing system, that if you go to one of the community evacuation centres close to you, that information can be processed and it can belong to a uniform data?-- That's one of the ways. To me, it comes back to those local area plans where we can activate those in multiple areas.

10

And the local area plans, we've talked about that as a concept. If this did occur, when would it be implemented by the Ipswich City Council?-- As soon as we could.

And what does that mean?-- I would hope by the start of the next storm season, but I can't give you a definite time-frame at this point.

20

The issue of evacuation of aged care facilities, you raise the issue of residents of aged care facilities and nursing homes being left at evacuation centres without proper medication and other medical necessities. Since the flood events, have you been able to discuss this issue with the aged care facilities to better understand each other's roles at evacuation centres?-- No, we haven't at this point in time.

Is that something that Ipswich City Council is going to do?-- I think it is something we definitely need to do. I think it needs to be Statewide.

30

How do you see that that would have Statewide application?-- I think what occurred in Ipswich occurred in other areas as well. So the need for these facilities to have business continuity plans, and also a very good understanding of what needs to happen during events, I think needs to be consistent across all agencies.

40

But some of these aged care facilities have their own evacuation plans?-- I understand, yes, they do.

Is that something they should be involved with the LDMG and the EMQ in relation to-----?-- They should be consistent so we both - we understand where they are going to and what resources they need to bring with those - with the people.

So that is a matter of communication that needs to occur between the Ipswich City Council and these aged care facilities-----?-- Yes.

50

-----to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities?-- And also I think it is part of community education as well.

Is that a process that Ipswich City Council is going to undertake before the next wet season?-- I think we need to



undertake that, yes.

1

So you are going to do it?-- Yes.

In terms of evacuation centres and Red Cross, at the time Ipswich City Council did not have a Memorandum of Understanding with Red Cross?-- That's correct.

But you are seeking to establish a Memorandum-----?-- Yes.

10

-----of Understanding? There seems to be some confusion in the roles and responsibilities which the council had envisaged for the Red Cross to perform?-- That will be correct, yes.

You state in your submission that "there needs to be a clear and direct line of communication with the Red Cross and if operational support of evacuation centres is to be delayed or compromised for any reason, this needs to be known immediately and backup arrangements put in place." If there was a Memorandum of Understanding with Red Cross or any other agencies, that would alleviate those concerns that you have raised in relation to those issues?-- They should. It really comes down to what's the scale of event and where their resources are going at that particular point in time.

20

Is it the case that - was it the case that Ipswich City Council thought that was a State responsibility to organise Red Cross to come in?-- No, we - we knew we had to ask for Red Cross to come in and assist us.

30

And it would assist if - with this Memorandum of Understanding, you believe that could happen more efficiently and quicker?-- Gives more guarantee of the resources available and sent to us as a priority.

You state that "Red Cross is taking steps to increase its local volunteer base and to provide enhanced skills training." How are they doing that in the local area?-- In the local area they are doing community education programs and looking for more volunteers.

40

And that is to assist in operating evacuation centres?-- Well, all aspects of the operations.

And we talked about these local action plans about these communities?-- Yes.

Would one of the processes that would be involved in running evacuation centres, would that be to contact Red Cross and to get Red Cross in?-- That would be part of that process, yes.

50

One of the other issues that is raised is the activation of non-affected LDMGs. So the Ipswich LDMG could be activated but you're stating that non-affected LDMGs in council regions beyond the Ipswich area should also be activated?-- Yes.

What is the utility in that?-- Well in terms of processing of requests for assistance, and all that, part of the process if

we try and get another local government to assist us, it has to go through their LDMG. If they are not up and operating at that point in time, then it just slightly delays that request.

1

And how is the best way for councils to receive assistance and resources from other councils? Is it through the Disaster Management Framework or is it directly from a council-to-council point of view?-- My current feeling would be council to council or even through the LGAQ.

10

Is that a C-to-C Program?-- Yes, extension of that.

Is it the case that you see that it shouldn't go through the Disaster Management Framework?-- No.

Why is that?-- Again, it comes back to that local capacity to actually look after ourselves. So if we're able to get the resources ourselves, that's where we need to start.

And if you are able to get your resources yourself from another council, then you shouldn't be prohibited from just making that contact directly-----?-- That's right.

20

-----rather than having to go through the Disaster Management Framework?-- That's correct.

And you just think that would be a more efficient way?-- It would speed up the process definitely.

But what about the looking at it from a State perspective, that the State should know what councils are able to resource other councils at any given point in time?-- Yes, there is that overarching view that needs to be had by the State, yes.

30

And that's an important - that's an important issue, isn't it, to be able to maintain that information?-- Well, it is part of that resource management, isn't it.

And if councils were going to be making contact with other councils then the State may lose that important asset of information?-- On a common ICT system, we would actually have that stated within that system that we were using those resources.

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So bringing back to all the parties would know what's going on?-- Yes.

Ipswich has contacted Gold Coast City Council, Gold Coast City Council are providing two personnel-----?-- Yes.

50

-----Gold Coast City Council has ten other personnel that could be provided to any other council?-- Exactly.

The issue of boundaries, the Ipswich City Council states that from a coordination perspective, problems arise from the Ipswich LDMG and the Ipswich DDMG being responsible for geographic areas identified by reference to local government boundaries, whereas other support and emergency services, for

example Queensland Police Service, EMQ, QFRS, have their areas of responsibility identified by different boundaries?-- Yes.

1

Now, does that create an issue?-- It does when we're looking for resources from those agencies.

So if you were looking for resources from the QPS?-- Department of Communities is probably a better one.

Department of Communities, yes?-- Because of the size of their - you know, our local one goes all the way out to St George, out that way.

10

Right?-- We had floods on at St George at the same time, so they had their people spread from one side of Queensland to the other.

So what's the answer to it?-- I am not quite sure. To me, the boundaries for all the agencies need to be similar, is my thought.

20

So you are wanting - you would be seeing the Department of Communities to have a smaller boundary that would fit the LDMG boundaries?-- Well, whether the DDMG boundary is-----

Is the same?-- Is the same, you know, so that the resources would match with the area.

But the problem that it creates is delay in being able to access resources?-- The differences inbound Rees?

30

Yes?-- Well, it is the fact that the resources get so widespread.

That those resources are just simply not available?-- That's right.

So why would changing boundaries make those resources available - more available?-- Well, in fact, your resources are then held for that particular area. So whether it is the Ipswich district or whatever, they are quantified for that area.

40

Finally, you refer to a competency framework, and that is you consider that "development of a Statewide Disaster Management Competency Framework needs to be established." When you are referring to a Disaster Management Competency Framework, what are you referring to?-- I am talking about the skills and competencies that people need from an LDC all the way through to a planning officer in the LDCC. That those skills are quantified and we're able to send people away for training courses that match up those skill sets.

50

So if you are the LDC, you will get this training and that will provide assistance in how to be an LDC?-- If I am an LDC, across the State I am getting the same training - every LDC will get the same training.

Is that presently the case?-- No, not to my knowledge, no.

1

And who would you see as the best agency to be able to deliver that level of training?-- I would think EMQ would be the best person to do that.

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

COMMISSIONER: You will go last, Mr Flanagan?

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MR FLANAGAN: Thank you, your Honour.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: Thank you, Commissioner. Mr Trace, can I take you firstly to the issue of request for assistance?-- Yes.

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The system as it currently exists, or as you understand it to exist, requires the Local Disaster Management Group to source supplies?-- Yes.

It is only if that group can't source its requirements that it then refers it up the line to the district?-- That's correct.

If the district can't source it, it goes up to the State level?-- That's right.

30

The difference of opinion may be as to whether at the Local Disaster Management Group you are confined to sourcing supplies or requirements within your local district or whether you can source it from anywhere as a local group. Do you see the distinction?-- Yes, I do.

And you have alluded to it by saying that whilst you couldn't source supplies, for instance, from Coles at Ipswich because it was flooded, you could source supplies through Coles at State level or Woolworths at the State level through a contact someone on the ground had?-- That's right.

40

You see that as going outside the protocol for the local group to source within the local area?-- No, I think it is an extension of it. I think what I am talking about is us actually expanding our capacity and recognising that we need to expand our capacity.

Yes, it may be a difference of interpretation but it may well be that the current protocol permits you to do as a local group what you in fact did; that is to source supplies outside your local geographic area Statewide, for instance, if you are able to?-- Yes.

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If that was the case, you would be happy with that?-- Yes, we would be.

Because it would accommodate what you see as a current limitation on the protocol?-- Well, it is just the timeliness of the protocol is the issue, yes.

1

All right. You have also said that that can be - just confirm - that can be an issue of causing significant delay if you have to go through the district and then State system?-- Delay. It is also the knowledge of where a request is actually at.

10

Right?-- That was one of the biggest issues. Because we couldn't see where a request was, we couldn't take other actions.

Yes. But you would expect someone within the organisation would be able to say where a particular request was at any given time?-- I would hope so, yes.

And if the electronic system goes down, you can still use phone communication, for instance, to keep tabs on where a request might be in the system?-- That's right.

20

And that was the instruction you were given during the course of the electronic system going down?-- Well, that's what we did during the event, was - because we don't have the electronic system in place at this stage, we were using telephone calls to chase up requests.

And that was entirely appropriate in accordance with the system?-- Yes, it was, but very time consuming.

30

All right. If we can take an example of the setting up of an evacuation centre at the showgrounds?-- Yes.

You sent a request through for provisions to enable that to happen?-- Yes.

And I think it is in your appendix 22 - do you have that bundle of material handy there? I think it is the second statement. It is appendix 22 to your second statement. I am sorry, it is the first one. Do you have that? Now, I don't know if they are arranged in date order but I am looking for the one - this is on the 11th of January?-- Yes.

40

There is an email chain, I think, which starts at 12.50 p.m. on the 11th?-- Uh-huh.

From Brooke de Jong, is it?-- Yes, that's right.

To you. "We require a number of resources to establish an evacuation centre. The first is at Ipswich Showgrounds", is that right?-- Yes, that's correct.

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Then there is attached to that email a long list of requirements?-- A shopping list, yes.

Shopping list, including a category for human resources and

then physical resources and a long list of equipment  
required-----?-- Yes.

1

-----as you expect to set up the evacuation centre at the  
showgrounds?-- Correct.

Now, that went through the system, did it not, that request?--  
Yes, it did, after discussions with the DDMG - or DDC, I  
should say.

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So it goes at 12.50 from Brooke de Jong to you, on forwarded  
to you to the DDC at Ipswich at 1.23?-- That's correct.

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Your message there is "approval by DDC. Red Cross have been approached and are to provide support. Please advise", and so on. So, the request is at 12.50, the approval seems to have occurred at around 1.23 ?-- That is right.

1

In between those two emails you had discussed this with the DDC?-- Yes, as to what was the priorities on that list that we needed.

The DDC superintendent was Garth Pitman?-- I think I was talking to one the XOs. I think it was Dave Preston or Robbie Gudger.

10

As a representative of the DDC superintendent?-- Being on the coordination system for the district, yes.

Then the official approval is the last email in the chain, 10 minutes later at 1.33, where it is noted that approval has been given to activate the Red Cross for the centre?-- And the resources, yes.

20

And the resources?-- Yes.

That is a fair examples, is it not, of the speed at which a major task like that was initiated?-- Well, approval as you can see is very quick.

Yes?-- In terms of the bedding and that, that didn't arrive until three or four the next morning. The speed is getting the goods on the ground is the issue.

30

But, of course, dealing with that evacuation centre, one of the difficulties with that was that it was announced to be the evacuation centre before it was opened, wasn't it?-- That was one issue, yes. We had people arriving before we were fully set up, yes.

So the DDC gets advice to approve equipping it after it has been announced through the media as being the evacuation centre?-- That is correct.

40

That was one of the difficulties in terms of resourcing the centre for use as the evacuation centre?-- Well, no. In terms we had people - all the media release said - means we had people turning up there looking for refuge.

You would expect that to happen once you have announced it to be an evacuation centre, wouldn't you?-- That is right.

Ideally you would like to do it the other way around, wouldn't you? To have it approved and resourced as an evacuation centre and then announced for use by the public?-- In a perfect world yes, if we had time in an event.

50

Immediately after that you did seek to source some beds?-- That is right.

Again, you went through the DDC?-- That is right.

His response to you initially was, "Have you got any bedding you can start the process with such as blow up mattresses and the like?"-- Yes, we looked to source those sorts of options.

You came back to him with a negative, you couldn't source any of that material; is that right?-- Back, yes, but we then did other searches for initial bedding as such.

10

Yes, then he went ahead to organise it through his avenues and was able to organise 140 beds by about 10 or 10.30 that evening?-- I don't think they arrived at the centre until well after midnight.

That is your recollection, anyway?-- That is.

Can I take you to the issue of the helicopter event? I think your evidence was you sought to have a helicopter for an evacuation from the Karalee centre?-- That is correct.

20

Can I have you look through that bundle in appendix 22 and can I suggest that the only request for a helicopter from you was in respect of a need to deliver first aid equipment to Karalee school?-- No, there was definitely one helicopter for evac.

Okay, this one I am referring to, try and check it for me if you wouldn't mind, it is on 12 January at 11.15?-- Yes, that's that one there, yes, one for medical supplies, yes.

30

In respect of that, do you recall the circumstances of how that was dealt with?-- No, I don't.

I suggest this to you briefly: it was sent back to you with a request for further information as to what sort of supplies you needed and in what circumstances?-- Yes and they were supplied to the DDC.

Their request was actually met the next day by 4-wheel drive, not helicopter?-- That is right, because the water had started to fall at that point in time.

40

The water had started to fall?-- That is right.

Some of the roads with 4-wheel drive access had become available?-- Yes, it opened up a couple of routes across private properties.

Do you say though there is another request in the bundle that deals with this other helicopter request?-- I don't think it is in this bundle. I couldn't see it.

50

Would there be a form, an official form like this for that request?-- That would have been.

In any event, your evidence was you, I think, that you would like to have a direct line as it were, to the Amberley-----?--



It is more around having the ability to take advantage of Amberley being in our local area.

1

Yes, but you understand, no doubt, the fact that there was a strong demand throughout this entire period on all those air assets?-- Definitely, in this event.

Whilst it is true to say Amberley is in your district and very close to the source of the problem you had, there were many others, including Grantham etcetera, who needed air assets on an urgent basis as well?-- That is correct.

10

There needs to be someone, somewhere, who is aware of the entire resources: First, if they are available and the need for those resources wherever and the ability to prioritise those requests?-- That is true, yes, that is correct.

That might not be someone in your position who has very good knowledge of what is going on in your local area but no real knowledge of what is going on outside that area?-- If the event is inside our area then I would have that knowledge as to what is going on.

20

If it is the only event?-- If it is the only event and that is where I see the advantage of us tapping into the Amberley Air Base.

The issue of boundaries you mentioned, are you aware there is an ability since the amendments to the Act to have the disaster area boundary declared separately?-- Yes.

30

Isn't that a way around the problem you have spoken you? You can have, depending on the size of the event you can have the boundary declared to encompass that entire area as one disaster area to be managed and then set up your control centre accordingly to deal with the whole area so declared?-- That is one way but it still doesn't get around the fact that individual agencies have different boundaries and their resources can be spread across those boundaries which is different to where the impact is.

40

That would then be a matter for the person in control of that disaster area as declared to coordinate those individual resources, would it not?-- That is an option, yes.

That would meet, on the face of it at least, your concerns?-- Yes.

If it was able to coordinated?-- If you were able to coordinate the resources, yes.

50

Before we leave appendix 22, can I ask you to look at one other one which was the 15th January, a request by yourself for resources from the Gold Coast City Council?-- Yes.

Do you recall that one?-- Yes, I do recall that.

What was that about? What was involved in that?-- That was for the crews for the asphalt - that was for the start of the clean up process. We were looking for crews to pick up debris etcetera.

1

All right. Was that actioned, that request?-- Yes, it was.

In a timely way?-- There was a bit of a delay in the fact that we had to go through - we couldn't go straight to the Gold Coast, we had to actually go through the system to get it processed. That did cause a bit of delay. That is in the recovery phase which is-----

10

Less urgent?-- Still urgent but-----

Not as urgent?-- Yes.

Right. That is all I have.

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MR POMERENKE: Mr Trace, counsel assisting asked you some questions about the information you get from the Bureau of Meteorology?-- Yes.

And from Seqwater?-- Okay.

You understand, I take it, that Seqwater provides information as to the releases from the dam and some incidental matters like affects on bridges downstream?-- That is correct, yes.

30

That information goes to the council and also to the Bureau of Meteorology?-- Yes, that is true.

The Bureau then incorporates that information into its modelling and then provides you with further information about river height?-- That is right.

That's the information you get from the Bureau?-- Yes.

40

As far as you rely on information about river heights you are relying on the information from the Bureau about that?-- Yes, they are the legislative authority for that, yes.

Just so I understand your suggestion in relation to the information that is coming from Seqwater, is it that you would like to be provided with information say 24 or more hours in advance of what the releases might be over that period?-- More giving me that forward view so we are able to do some scenario planning over - do we need to open more evacuation centres. Is it possible the river heights will be going up further.

50

But river heights is really something you rely on the Bureau for?-- That is right. There is a general view if you open the gates more than - there will be some expectation of river height.

Could you go to attachment AKT21 to your first statement please? If we can start at the first page the attachment. I

will only take you to a couple of these. Could you look at the heading "Wivenhoe Dam" about two-thirds of the way down the page?-- Yes.

Could you read for me, please, just to yourself, the second paragraph under that heading?-- "There has been significant rainfalls in the Lockyer Creek catchment"-----

10

To yourself would be fine. That is the paragraph?-- Yes.

Have you read that?-- Yes.

You see that Seqwater is telling you when the gates will be opened, that is after flood levels in the lower Lockyer subside. This is an email being sent to you on Thursday?-- Yes.

20

They are telling you that Wivenhoe releases during Saturday may be as high as 1500 CUMECS and continue for a couple of days?-- Yes.

That's on Thursday, giving you information through to Saturday and a couple of days beyond?-- That is right.

Is that the sort of information you think you need?-- Well, in terms of that being the single event that's a good start. We would also like to know what could possibly happen a week out.

30

A week out?-- Well, in longer time frames.

I see. So, in answer to counsel assisting you mentioned I think 24 hours. We see that you are being given information that covers not only 24 hours but perhaps four days?-- Right, yes.

40

You are now saying you want information that goes beyond even four days, perhaps even a week out?-- Well, the more information we have the better we can react to it.

Undoubtedly true but there has to be a limit on the reliability of information that extends out that far, would you accept that?-- I accept that.

You would rather have reliable information rather than guesses as to what might happen in future?-- That is correct. In terms of the 6th is a very planned day. More around like the 10th, the 11th, what other plans?

50

We will come to that. The attachment 21 to your statement are the emails you got from the duty engineer in the Flood Operations Centre?-- That is correct.

You also got emails from Rob Drury from Seqwater?-- Yes, we

did from time to time.

1

Do you recall that?-- Yes.

We have the references to Mr Drury's statement. I hope that these might be able to be brought up on the screen for you. The first comes from attachment five to Mr Drury's statement at page 29 of that attachment?-- Yes.

Is that one the emails you received from Mr Drury?-- Yes, it would be.

10

Thursday 6 January?-- Yes.

If we look at the heading about halfway down the page, "Wivenhoe Dam. Gates will be open in the next 24 hours."?-- Yes.

So in addition to the situation reports that are attachment 21 to your statement you are getting additional information from Mr Drury?-- Yes.

20

Via these emails?-- Yes.

Could we go to page 173 in that attachment, please? Could you just confirm for me that's another one the emails you got from Mr Drury on Sunday the 9th?-- It is to my address, yes.

Did you read it at the time?-- I - no, I don't have any recollection of reading that.

30

Did you ordinarily at this time read the emails arriving at your email address?-- Yes, I would be.

So why do you think that you didn't read it?-- I can't remember that email exactly but I would say, yes, I probably did read it at some point.

If we could go to page 394 of the exhibit. If you just confirm for me again this is another one of the emails you received from Mr Drury on Monday day the 10th, 3.27 p.m.?-- Again, it has been sent to my address, yes.

40

No reason though, you wouldn't have read it?-- It would be depending on what was occurring in the LDCC at that point in time but very likely I read it, yes.

There is one more of these emails I want to take you to. If we could go to page 446, please. This is an email from Mr Drury to you on Tuesday the 11th at 6.38 a.m.?-- Yes.

50

Is that an email you received at the time?-- It is to my address. I wasn't on call at that point in time.

Do you see that as we get towards the bottom of the page, the third last paragraph on the page, you are being told five radial gates are currently open at the dam releasing about 2750 CUMECS into the Brisbane River?-- That is right, yes.

Then the last paragraph suggests that, "If further rainfall occurs dam releases may need to be increased further and this may result in river flows in the lower Brisbane River

approaching or exceeding 5,000 CUMECS."?-- Yes.

This is suggesting, isn't it, that the situation is escalating at this time?-- Yes, that would be correct.

10

Do you remember being aware that the situation was escalating at this time?-- No, I don't.

At 8.21 on the Tuesday morning Mr Malone from the Flood Operations Centre called you; do you remember that?-- No, I don't.

You don't? You don't remember receiving a call from the Flood Operations Centre at 8.25 on Tuesday morning?-- No, I don't.

20

Being told releases were being increased to at least 3,700 CUMECS?-- I don't off-hand, no, I don't remember that conversation.

Ordinarily, you were receiving emails about releases?-- Yes.

And the Flood Operations Centre was concerned at the time to alert you to the increase in releases that were occurring that morning?-- Yes.

30

Mr Malone says he called you at that time. You don't remember it?-- I don't remember it at that time.

Can I ask you please to go to your statement at attachment AKT5? I wanted to ask you some questions about format of your own situation reports?-- Yes, all right.

AKT5 are the situation reports from the December event. I think on the bottom right-hand corner of that document you should be able to see some page numbers ICC005.1938 I think is the first one?-- I found those, yes.

40

Could you turn please to about half a centimetre in, it is ICC005.1952?-- Yes.

Under the heading "Transport" at the bottom of the page?-- Yes, that is right.

The information that you are including in your own situation report there relates to the releases being made from the Wivenhoe Dam and the bridges being expected to be re-opened?-- That is right.

50

That's information you got from Seqwater?-- In terms of - yes, that is.

You thought it was useful enough to include in your own situation report?-- Yes, we did, yes.

This information that you are getting from Seqwater is actually useful for you?-- If does give a view of what is happening at the dam, yes.

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms McLeod.

10

MS McLEOD: Mr Trace, my name is McLeod and I appear for the Commonwealth. Mr Trace, you make the point that ideally the Ipswich City Council will receive an indication or forecast of predicted flood levels as soon as possible in the event of an emerging disaster?-- That is right, yes.

On the 11th of January, with the rapid escalation of these flood levels, that made the task very difficult for you in terms of your response?-- That is correct.

20

The flood predictions that are and were on the 11th - that occurred and the flood levels that occurred on 11 January were impacted upon by, in one part, the very heavy rain in the Bremer River catchment, that and the previous day?-- That is right, yes.

They were also impacted upon by the significant releases from the Wivenhoe Dam which caused some back flooding from the Brisbane River up the Bremer River?-- That is right, yes.

30

As we know, the releases from the Wivenhoe Dam had escalated significantly on the 11th of January in response to that very heavy rainfall in the dam catchments?-- That is correct, yes.

On the 10th of January the Bureau were warning through the afternoon and through the evening major flooding at Ipswich during Tuesday and in your statement you refer to the predictions of 12.7 metres at least for Ipswich?-- That is correct.

40

That's the number you were aware of on the 10th on the afternoon and evening?-- That is right.

I want to just start there because the warning - let's take the 6.12 p.m. on Monday 10 January. In your statement you refer to predicted flood peaks a number of times?-- Yes.

In fact, the Bureau warning don't talk about peaks, do they? They talk about expected levels that will be reached with high rises possible throughout many of these warnings on the 10th and 11th?-- That is a peak, is it not?

50

Well, no. A peak suggests that is as high as it will go. Let me take you to the warning for the 6.12 p.m. on Monday 10 January as an example. The predicted river height for Ipswich reach about 12.7 metres major - so that is described by the Bureau as a major flood. "During Tuesday afternoon

quicker rises and higher levels are possible depending on further rainfall tonight." Do I understand it that you interpret the reading or the forecast reaching a certain level as a peak for the river?-- Yes, I do.

1

In fact, you would accept that if the warning says "quicker rises and higher levels are possible" that is an indication it will reach a certain level and may go beyond that?-- Yes, it could.

10

When you are planning in response to the Bureau forecast you would certainly take that into account, would you not?-- The additional rainfall?

Well, the view that is expressed by the Bureau that higher levels are possible?-- Yes, I would consider those, yes.

Now, that warning incidentally also notes that the Wivenhoe Dam is providing significant mitigation of upper Brisbane flood, river flows from the Bremer and Lockyer catchments combined with the releases from Wivenhoe Dam are expected to increase levels in Brisbane overnight through Tuesday. That would also impact on the flows to the Bremer River, the backflows?-- I expect so.

20

Do you understand - take a step back - the flooding in Ipswich comes from the levels of the Bremer River measured at Moggill and Ipswich gauges?-- that is correct.

The measurement at Moggill gives what is called a tail water dependant rating or a measurement of the backflow as well?-- I am not aware of that.

30

From about 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 11 January there was very intense rainfall persisting over the catchments for the Bremer and Brisbane Rivers?-- Yes.

Between midday and 3 p.m. there was the highest three hourly rainfalls were more than 100 millimetres in those catchments. Are you aware of that?-- Yes, I am.

40

Could I just canvas with you your sources of information? You receive the Bureau issued flood warnings which are updated at least twice a day and sometimes with additional flood warnings being posted by the Bureau?-- During events, yes.

In between the issuing of those warnings the Bureau posts updates on its website?-- That is correct.

On the 11th in your statement you said you noticed some of those updates during the day?-- Yes, on their meteograms, yes.

50

You were also aware of the severe weather warnings and forecasts for very heavy rainfall on those days?-- Yes, we were.

You also have the reporting of the - or the automatic

reporting of the heights at Moggill and Ipswich as they come through?-- That is right, yes.

1

You also - those heights are also noted as whether they are rising or falling so the actual readings are reported by those stations through to you as a figure that is rising or a figure that is falling?-- That is correct, yes.

You also have the benefit in the flood warnings of a narrative description, for example, the one I have just taken you to, which might say "the Bremer River is expected to reach a certain level, higher levels are expected." A narrative of that nature?-- Yes.

10

In between those warnings does the Ipswich council or the LDMG have the benefit of direct communications with the hydrologists at the Flood Warning Centre?-- Yes, from time to time we do contact them.

20

You also have the Enviromon gauge reading and any alerts that may be triggered by those readings?-- That is correct, as to what is happening in the streams, yes.

As has just been discussed, you have the Seqwater situation reports?-- Yes.

The Ipswich City Council, does it not, has access to the registered user section of the Bureau website which has rainfall analysis and forecasts and things of that nature?-- We have access to that.

30

In addition to calling the Flood Warning Centre, you know that you can fax or email someone within the centre for updates?-- Yes, we are aware of that.

Of course, you have the benefit, if you have time to listen to them, of the media updates posted throughout the day?-- Yes.

Now, your concern, as I understand it, is that there seem to have been sudden leaps in the predictions that you didn't learn about in a timely manner?-- Correct.

40

Can I take you through those? At 4.07 a.m. on 11th January the flood warning was predicted for Ipswich, "expected to reach about 12.7 metres, higher levels are possible." Again, there is this issue-----

MR FLANAGAN: I'm sorry, I think my learned friend means 10 January not 11 January.

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MS McLEOD: No, 4.06 a.m. on 11 January.

MR FLANAGAN: Sorry.

MS McLEOD: Sorry, 4.06 A.M. on 11 January the forecast was for the "Bremer River at Ipswich expected to reach about 12.7 metres on Tuesday afternoon. Higher levels are possible." As



we discussed before, that doesn't tell you that that is when the river is going to stop rising, that indicates that it is possible that it will rise beyond that?-- Well, it is giving the indication, yes.

1

At about 6.12 a.m. or shortly thereafter, you had the Seqwater advice you were just taken to noting the extreme rainfall and you agreed that reflected an escalating situation?-- Yes.

10

At approximately 8 a.m. you say you were following the Bureau website and observed levels of 14.7 metres?-- Yes, that is right, just before the LDMG meeting.

Just before the LDMG meeting?-- Yes.

At 9.28 the prediction was for 16 metres with higher levels expected?-- Yes, 16 metres, yes.

So in that short period of time the river has gone from 12.7 metres, 14.7 metres to 16 metres at Ipswich with higher levels expected. That is the information you have as at 9.28 a.m.?-- Yes.

20

Now, a change in more than a metre height from 14.7 metres to 16 metres obviously had a significant impact for you in terms of the response that you required, the extent of flooding in your community?-- Yes, that is correct.

I take it you are not asserting the Bureau didn't give you have the information about that rise as soon as possible or they didn't publish that information as soon as possible, you are just saying that rise it would have been nice to know as soon as you could so you could react sooner?-- Exactly.

30

The next issue is the prediction of the 18 metres provided on 11 January. Is it your recollection that you had no update on the 9.30 a.m. prediction of 16 metres until sometime in the middle of the afternoon?-- That is right.

40

Did anyone from the Ipswich City Council attend the State Disaster Coordination Centre teleconference at 11 a.m. on the 11th?-- Not that I am aware of.

If you don't attend that meeting is there a mechanism for the; Local Disaster Management Group or council to obtain relevant information provided during those meetings?-- Not that I am aware of, no.

Had you or someone from the council attended that conference then you would have heard Peter Baddiley's advice to the coordination centre updating the height for Ipswich of 18 metres plus for overnight Tuesday. I take it you would agree that would have been very useful information to have known around 11 a.m. that morning?-- It would have been. I would have expected an email or fax from BOM stating that heigh

50

Do you recall receiving a phone call from Mr Baddiley and Mr James Stewart, or Jimmy Stewart, a senior hydrologist with the Flood Warning Centre, at approximately 11.45 a.m. on the 11th?-- No, I don't.

Have you read Mr Baddiley's second statement, his supplementary statement?-- No, I haven't.

10

I will just read to you from his supplementary statement and ask you whether you remember this conversation or whether you know about it: "Following the SDC briefing" - this is paragraph 76 of Mr Baddiley's supplementary statement - "at 11.45 a.m. Mr Stewart and I spoke with Ipswich City Council regarding the updated prediction of Ipswich of 18 metres plus tonight, ie Tuesday night, with further rises on Wednesday." Just pausing there, you don't have any recollection of this conversation?-- No, I don't, no.

20

If Mr Baddiley's note is that of a work mobile number of yours, is it possible that your work mobile number was answered by somebody else around 11 o'clock in the morning?-- It could have been, yes. The phone was in the LDCC.

The phone was?-- Yes, my phone.

Okay. And does a Mr Teet work there?-- Mr?

Teet, Andrew Teet?-- Thiess?

30

Thiess, is it?-- Yes. He is one of the hydrologists, yes.

And you may not have asked him but does anybody, to your knowledge, have a recollection of a call from the bureau at 11.45 a.m., approximately, on the 11th of January?-- No, I have checked with the hydrologists and other staff in terms of that time period between 9.30 and 2 o'clock and, no, there was no phone call received.

40

Okay. And have you checked with Mr Thiess?-- Yes, I have.

Okay. Now, the phone call lasted eight to nine minutes, according to Mr Baddiley, Mr Stewart, and they said that "Ipswich would see 18 metres plus tonight with further rises on Wednesday." So you have absolutely no recollection or no-one passed that information on to you?-- No.

Okay. "The advice was given to the bureau that they made predictions based on the bureau prediction plus one metre for the Bremer River." Is that what you were doing at the time in terms of your planning?-- In terms of planning, yes, we were building in a factor of a higher impact than what was being predicted.

50

Right. And was it plus a metre?-- That sounds about right, yes.

Okay. So if Mr Baddiley and Mr Stewart recall that, that is consistent with what in fact you were doing at the time? 1

"Mr Baddiley asked what advice the bureau should give to the media and was directed - asked to direct people to the website - this is the council website - and also asked to say 'if you live close to a stream, you should self evacuate.'" Is that consistent with the advice that you were asking be given to locals?-- Yes.

Okay. Although I understand the website did go down at some point?-- Yes, that's right. It did go down for a few hours. 10

Now, it may be, given the rapid escalation of flood levels and everything else everyone was attending to, that this is a call that somebody within the centre, including Mr Thiess, just doesn't recall occurred?-- That is possible, yes.

Okay. If the bureau officers are correct in their recollection of the conversation, then someone within the LDMG had those 18 metre plus predictions at 11.45 on the 11th, 14 to 15 hours ahead of the river reaching that level?-- I would have still expected BOM to send out emails and faxes in the way they have been doing all their previous updates to their heights. 20

And if there was a special call communicating that to the LDMG, then obviously there has been a breakdown in the passing on of that communication internally? You would accept that?-- That would be possible. 30

In a perfect world you would get that information from a number of sources?-- Yes.

Okay. When you called the bureau at 2 p.m., is it likely that you called on your work mobile?-- Yes, it would be.

Okay. You didn't speak to Mr Baddiley or Mr Stewart, did you?-- I don't remember who I actually called at the BOM.

Okay. Do you remember whether you spoke to a hydrologist or not?-- Yes, it was a hydrologist. 40

Okay. Do you know whether they read to you from the flood warning that morning at 9.29 a.m.?-- I am not aware that they read from that.

Can I ask you to look at the Ipswich City Council submission, schedule 5, page 35? This is the compilation of the various information you were given by the bureau and the various things you observed about river heights. Do you have the Ipswich City Council submission?-- Which section was that, sorry? 50

It is schedule 5 which is a chart which looks like this?-- Yes, got that.

And I am looking at page 35. Perhaps if we go back to 34 to start the sequence. You will see on page 34 at 9.29 you have

got the reference to the predicted height for the Bremer of 16 metres, major flooding?-- Uh-huh. 1

And the height at Moggill of 15, which is moderate for Moggill?-- Yes.

And there is the narrative set out which notes that high levels are expected there. Do you see that? Then over the page, if we turn to date and time, 3 p.m., there is a reference to predicted height of 18 metres at Bremer and 19 metres at Moggill, but a phone call at 3.13 p.m.?-- That's right. 10

Now, the phone call at 3.13 p.m. gave you the height of 22 metres, didn't it?-- Yes, it did.

So where do the 18 and 19 metres come from if not from the phone call earlier that day?-- If my memory serves me right, that came off the website of the BOM at 3 o'clock. 20

When you compiled this chart, did you have all that information in front of you or did somebody else compile this?-- Someone else compiled this.

Okay. And the figures would have been taken from what?-- It would have been taken from the information we had in our logs.

Okay. So if the information for 18, 19 metres made it into the log, are you able to say what time they first made that into the log?-- Would have been 3 o'clock. 30

Just because that's the time of the entry in this chart?-- No, because I checked the BOM site because our message was just about to go out to the public.

Okay. But you don't know if that was actually posted on the BOM site or if that came from somewhere else?-- The-----

The entry-----?-- The 18 metres? 40

Yep?-- I know it was on the - from the BOM site because I looked at it myself.

You looked at the BOM site at 3 o'clock?-- That's right.

Your phone call at 3.13 was - and you got through to Mr Baddiley, did you?-- It was one of the hydrologists, yes.

And you were informed that the level was 22 metres?-- Yes, that's correct. That's in my statement. 50

And that was due to the significant increase in releases from Wivenhoe?-- That's correct.

If you turn over a few pages from that schedule to schedule 6, the EAS message that went out at 4.20 p.m., that's an email from you? Do you have that page?-- Yes, I do.

And that refers again to 18 to 19 metres?-- That's correct.

1

So that was presumably based on the information pre 3.13 p.m.?-- That's right.

Okay. A couple of pages over from that is a media release of the 11th of January. Do you have that?-- Yes, I do.

And this makes reference to - do you know what time this went out?-- No, I don't.

10

Okay. It refers to the Mayor making statements that "we're likely to see levels similar to the dreadful 1974 floods." So at Ipswich in terms of the Bremer flood that means around 20 metres, exceeding 20 metres?-- That's right.

And the quote by the Mayor is, "At this stage the Bremer River in Ipswich is expected to reach 17.2 metres between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. tomorrow, nearly two metres below the 1974 level." So do you know when and where that information about 17.2 metre reaches came from?-- No, I don't.

20

Okay. Certainly, that media release must have been after 9.20 or the 9.30 bureau warning?-- I would assume so, given the heights.

And possibly it was issued after the 11.45 a.m. phone call with Mr Baddiley conducted by Mr Baddiley and possibly Mr Thiess?-- I couldn't say that for certain.

30

All right. The final issue of concern leads - is the lead-up to the prediction of 22 metres. You are aware that Seqwater advised at about 1.30 p.m. on the 11th of the increased releases to peak at around 6,675 CUMECS, and around that time the bureau were asked to consider a scenario of around 9,000 CUMECS releases. Were you aware of that?-- I wasn't aware of that, no.

Were you aware of the first number, the 6,675 increase?-- No.

40

By 3.13 with your telephone call to the bureau, you did know about the 22 metres plus warning?-- That's correct.

And that was confirmed in the warning that was issued shortly after that, isn't it?-- That's right.

Okay. Now, you've got no reason to suggest that the Ipswich City Council - that there was a delay in the bureau getting the Ipswich City Council the new prediction of 22 metres, have you?-- No, not at all.

50

The result of that 22 metre prediction was that Ipswich had about 22 hours' warning of that 22 metres?-- Sorry?

The result of that 3.24 p.m. warning of 22 metres flood levels at Ipswich-----?-- Right, yes.

-----was that effectively you had about 22 hours' advanced

notice of that level?-- Um-----

1

I will just remind you, it peaked, in fact, around 19.4 metres on the 12th of January?-- That would be correct then, yes.

Which was still a very tight turnaround for you given the extent of that flooding-----?-- Definitely.

Now, if I have suggested, as I have suggested to you, that you did have warning at 11.45 on the 11th of January of 18 metres plus for the Bremer River, that would indicate a significant leap in the flood levels from around 9.30 but you wouldn't maintain your criticism of the timeliness of warnings by the bureau, would you?-- If that information was available, no.

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Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr Kelly?

MR KELLY: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson - sorry, Mr Flanagan. You are the main player here.

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MR FLANAGAN: Thank you, your Honour. You were asked some questions by Counsel Assisting as to the time-frames for future decisions. Do you recall those questions?-- Yes.

Are you aware of the Flood Recovery Working Group that's been established by the Ipswich City Council?-- The one that's currently working, yes.

40

And that Flood Recovery Group is made up of a number of persons which include the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, the Chair of the City Works Committee, the council's Chief Executive Officer, and other council officers?-- Yes.

And you are aware that the objective of that working group is to have decisions made in relation to flood preparedness before the next wet season?-- That's correct, yes.

50

Now, in relation to that working group, at the time of the flood event you were the local disaster coordinator?-- That's correct, yes.

And in the post analysis stage that the Ipswich City Council is undertaking, you are contributing to the decision-making process, is that correct?-- In terms of the recovery?

Yes?-- No.

1

Not in terms of recovery, in terms of future planning?-- Yes, sorry, yes.

But just to be clear, whilst you will be giving input into that decision-making process, the actual - ultimate decision-makers are not yourself?-- That's right.

They would include the council itself?-- Of course.

10

Yes, thank you. May I take you then to a few topics, and I will avoid any topics that have been covered by Counsel Assisting and, indeed, I will avoid other topics covered by other counsel. Can I take you to paragraph 195 of your statement, please? Just assume for the present that neither the Commissioner nor the Deputy Commissioners are locals to Ipswich. Could you tell the Commission exactly where the David Trumpy Bridge is located?-- The David Trumpy Bridge is located in the centre of town. It is roughly 16 kilometres from the junction of the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers.

20

All right. Now, when you talk about the impact of the Moggill peak on the Bremer River, you are talking about the backup effect of the Brisbane River on the Bremer River, is that correct?-- I am talking about the Moggill.

Yes?-- Talking about the level of water that is in the Brisbane River at that point in time.

30

Now, to your own knowledge the backup effect from the Brisbane River on the Bremer River, does that go as far as traditionally the David Trumpy Bridge?-- Yes, that's our - from a planning point of view that's our assumption point as how far it goes up.

Right, thank you. May I take you to Mrs Engel's statement, which you have read, in particular paragraph 13? Can you give the Commission just a brief outline of what involvement the Local Disaster Coordination Centre had with the organic evacuation centre at the Redbank State Primary School?-- In terms of the Redbank State Primary School we became aware of that roughly on the 14th, that it was an evacuation centre. It went on to our list of evacuation centres to contact in terms of resupply and also in terms of what services were required by the community. From investigations we have made, I have found we've made up to at least eight phone calls, the LDCC, but we believe there was more phone calls made from other council phones.

40

What resources were supplied by the Ipswich City Council to that organic centre?-- We supplied water and food, also generators, lighting were the main things.

50

Right. May I take you to another topic then? You recall that Mrs Beattie and others have given evidence of difficulty in getting through to the Ipswich City Council's Call Centre?-- Yes.

Are you aware of what type of Call Centre that is?-- Yes.

Yes. Can you tell us what sort of Call Centre it is?-- Well, it takes mode of phone calls. During the event it had over 5,000 phone calls on the 11th. When people phone in, if they are not answered straight away, they are put into a queue and then they are answered in a process.

And in relation to the 11th of January, how many employees of the council were working at the phone centre answering calls?-- I am not sure. I do not have that knowledge.

10

No, thank you?-- I do know that resources were bumped up during the day.

It was bumped up during the day?-- To meet the requirements.

Thank you. May I just ask you some questions about Energex? You have read the statement of Mr Arnold, is that correct?-- Yes, I have.

20

Now, in one of your exhibits, if we see it - LDMG4, which is Exhibit AKT4. We're looking for LDMG4. In relation to that minute, if you scroll down you will see there that it was recorded at the end of the meeting that an invitation will be extended to Energex. Do you see that?-- Yes.

Can you - do you recall that being recorded in the minutes?-- Yes, that is recorded in the minutes. I remember the conversation.

30

Can you tell the Commission what discussion took place in relation to that entry in the minutes?-- The discussion around that was the need for us to find out the information from those two network providers as to what was the impact on those networks and what was the likely impact to our community.

All right. Now, had Energex been invited to attend the LDMG meetings?-- Yes.

40

Subsequent to this request being made to Energex, did they commence to attend these meetings?-- They have attended previously but not in terms of this event, no.

Thank you. May I take you then to LDMG7 in the same exhibit? Could you go to the heading that is marked "Energex"?-- Yes.

Could you read the entry out to the court, please?-- "Redirection of resources, advised to make safe Brisbane. 30 crews available."

50

Do you have any independent recollection of the discussion that took place in relation to that entry in the minutes?-- Yes, I do. There was a fair bit of discussion around the redirection of resources.



Was there a representative from Energex at this meeting?--  
Yes there was.

1

What was said by him?-- Virtually along those lines, that their crews were being sent - or redirected into Brisbane to make safe Brisbane. Yeah, because floodwaters were still rising in Ipswich, as such.

Thank you. May I take you to paragraph 9.61 of the submission of the Ipswich City Council? Part of that submission is that 4,000 Ipswich homes had their power cut in circumstances where they were not actually inundated?-- That's correct.

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We can accept, can we not, that Energex may make decisions in relation to cutting power to houses that aren't inundated because of safety issues concerning their own infrastructure?-- Yes, we can.

But you wish to make a point, as I understand it, about the cooperation or coordination between the Ipswich City Council and the Local Disaster Management Group and Energex, is that correct?-- That's correct.

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What is that point?-- The point is we need a closer working relationship. We really - from a going forward point of view, we really need to be aware of what their plans are, and also the LDMG needs to have some input into what the priorities are about what comes back on line and when. Probably one good example is the Karalee area. Even after the waters had come down, the evacuation centre out there was still feeding up to 500 people because the surrounding residents, who weren't affected by the flood, had no power to actually do their own cooking. So that put an impact on our resources at the Karalee - our need to resupply the Karalee evacuation centre.

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Thank you. Can I show you Pastor Paulo's statement and take you to paragraph 13 of his statement? There is an impression given there that a number of cold store food supplies, water supplies and bedding were supplied by an individual councillor of the Ipswich City Council. Can you see that?-- Yes.

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Can you tell the Commission what in fact happened in relation to the supply of resources to this organic evacuation centre?-- Once this evacuation centre was identified to us, on a daily basis we were calling this centre, determining what their shopping list was, as such, and then resupplying them in the afternoon. Some of the items I know we supplied was water, food, we gave them bedding, there was cold room, a generator was required because they were one of the areas that was impacted by the Energex cut-off. Also, we arranged through the LDC as well with Department of Communities for Red Cross, as well as Lifeline and those assistants to actually go to that centre there and help the people there.

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In any event did you, as the Disaster Coordinator ever, distinguish between giving supplies to organic evacuation centres as opposed to official Ipswich City Council centres?-- No.

May I take you then to Mr Greenwood's statement? And if you go to page 5, the final paragraph which deals with an allegation that a radio journalist from River949 was requested to leave the coordination centre which is alleged by Mr Greenwood to have taken away any opportunity to provide official information. Do you see that?-- Yes, I do.

Can you tell the Commission what happened?-- At the - I wasn't there at the time when the journo was removed from the LDCC but he was given an office - actually my office, which is next door to the Rosewood room, which is our LDCC, and access was provided to him, to members of the LDC from time to time to give him updates.

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Now, the actual media officer for the Ipswich City Council was himself affected by the floods?-- That's correct. He worked remotely.

Yes, he worked remotely but he wasn't present during this event?-- No, he wasn't.

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But the Ipswich City Council appointed an acting media officer at the coordination centre, is that correct?-- We had an officer in the centre.

To your knowledge did that media officer keep the radio journalist up to date on the decisions as they happened by the coordination centre?-- As I am aware, yes.

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Thank you. That's all I have for Mr Trace.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Kelly, there was some issues about Energex there. Did you need to ask anything?

MR KELLY: No, I have no questions.

MS WILSON: I have no re-examination. May Mr Trace be excused?

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COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Trace, you are excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: I call Superintendent Pitman.

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GARTH STUART PITMAN, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Is your full name Garth Stuart Pitman?-- It is.

You are a Superintendent of Police?-- Yes.

The Ipswich Police District Officer?-- Yes.

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And the Ipswich District Disaster Coordinator?-- Correct.

Now, you performed the duties as the Ipswich Disaster District Coordinator throughout the flood events in December and January?-- I did, yes.

And you made a statement for the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- I have.

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

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Is that your statement?-- Yes.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 449.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 449"

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MS WILSON: On 25 March this year there was a debrief for the District Disaster Management Group and minutes were taken?-- The debrief for us, I think, was the 2nd of March.

The document that records that debrief may have been done on the 25th of March?-- Yeah.

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

Is that the document that records the matters that were discussed in the debrief?-- Yes, it is.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 450.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 450"

MS WILSON: Now, Superintendent, if I can take you to the flooding that occurred in the Somerset Regional Council?-- Yes, yes.

On the 10th of January, the Ipswich District Disaster Coordination Centre was activated and that was to coordinate the response and support of the Somerset Regional Council?-- Initially, yes.

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Later that day, you were notified that the Somerset Regional Council main offices and the LDCC had been inundated by water and they were attempting to relocate in Fernvale?-- Yes.

How did the DDMG step up and assist the LDCC in this event of their offices having to be relocated?-- Well, we were in communication with them, but physical assistance, we were not in a position to render any at that stage.

Why is that?-- Because we had our own policing matters and other matters from the Toowoomba overflow to our comms room impacting on our facilities at Ipswich at that time.

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So did that inhibit the support that you could give to the Somerset Regional Council at this point in time?-- It did put limitations on it, and at that time we weren't specifically asked for any specific assistance at that time.

But at that point in time that you knew that the LDCC for Somerset Regional Council would be struggling because their offices had been flooded and they needed to relocate?-- Well, we knew there was, I think at the time, about four inches or 100 millimetres of water through it, so that was an impact, and we had some police there because that day was also a fairly significant police response to some evacuations in the locale as well. But at that time - at that particular time we weren't under any specific requests or anything that they necessarily needed.

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Okay. If I can take you to the loss of communications of the Somerset Regional Council suffered, they did not have contact with other agencies from Tuesday, the morning of the 11th, to late on Wednesday. Is that your recollection of the time that they were off the air?-- At least.

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At least. Could the Somerset Regional Council communicate with the DDMG during that time?-- I was not able to have contact with those that I needed to be talking to at that time, no.

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So is it the case for at least 24, up to 48 hours you did not have contact with the Somerset Regional Council LDCC?-- Directly, that's correct. We did have - where there were police at the different parts, different locations, we had some interaction at those points but that was at that level.

Now, that raises various issues. If you weren't in contact

with them because of loss of communication, you were aware that no other agency could contact them?-- I am aware that in those localities where the Toogoolawah Police, the Esk Police, the Lowood Police, we were able to have communication in those locations with certain members of the council that were in those locations, but it was disparate.

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But the disaster frame work works from an LDMG level up to a DDMG level up to the State level and you had lost your contact with the LDMG?-- As a body, yes.

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Disaster management, would you agree, is not possible without communication?-- Correct.

So what did the DDMG do to ensure or to step in to ensure that all things, all of the matters required of a disaster management of that area were being done?-- We did the best situational analysis we could from the police and the communications we could obtain during that period of time.

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What does that mean?-- We were able to get certain information where we had police on the ground and able to interact with council officers or council facilities and we were able to at least try and compile as best a situational analysis as we could.

Well-----?-- We didn't know everything. We knew parts. We knew pieces. We knew it was in all different quadrants of that area and, of course, access by road was almost impossible across the region etcetera and some of our radios had - we were fairly good with radio but certainly phones were a problem so we were doing the best we could.

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During this period the Ipswich DDMG still maintained communication, still had full communication with other agencies?-- You are talking about-----

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The Ipswich DDMG. You were being able to get information from the Bureau of Meteorology?-- Yes.

Being able to get information from Seqwater?-- You are talking about information in relation to Somerset Dam?

Yes?-- Yes but there was an issue that the specifics for that locale were caught between what happened in Toowoomba and Grantham and some of the broader information, like specifically what we needed to know in that location, was given in a broader term, usually.

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What do you mean given in a broader term?-- There are certain dams, there is certain rivers and creeks etcetera that were covered - it was more about the main dams and about the main rivers. Some of these localities were affected by the local stream or the local creeks etcetera. That was not easy to obtain.

Okay. The issue, though, of warnings to the community. This information from the Bureau of Meteorology, information from Seqwater, you are aware that Somerset Regional Council had lost communication?-- Yes.

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They couldn't access this information?-- I am not aware of what access they did or didn't have.

You assumed - you were working on that basis, weren't you?--

We were working on the basis that, yes, it was probably very limited.

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So, then does the DDMG have a role to step in at that point in time and take over disaster management in a situation like this where LDMG has lost communication?-- Well, we were there to manage and coordinate. Take over, take command, they are far bigger terms in my opinion.

For example, warnings to residents. That usually comes up from the local level to a district level then to a State level. Were you getting information that should have been conveyed to the residents of Somerset in terms of warnings?-- Yes, there was some information there.

10

Did the DDMG take the initiative to issue those warnings themselves?-- No.

Why is that?-- Because our capacity wasn't there to do much more than where the police were positioned. We could get information to them and they could disperse that information but greater capacity than that we did not have.

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What about getting through EMQ an SMS text warning out to residents?-- We did with EMQ Police 2 but by that time we were - we had the two local council areas in flood impact, both Ipswich and Somerset by that stage.

I am just interested in this proposition: that when - like what occurred in Somerset Regional Council. The LDMG lost communication?-- Yes.

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What role do you see then for the DDMG to step in and assist in the disaster management in that area? Do you see no role, some role?-- I see us trying to access what we can access and get the information we can get but we - we are limited in that it is - the DDMG is a group of agencies with their own particular responsibilities and particular areas. There is no particular resource made because it is a DDMG, that it is just for all things that need to be done. So, I think we have to be careful here that everyone is still playing their roles and they gather together as a coordinating body called a DDMG, but there is not necessarily a resource that is purely available capacity to then do whatever is needed, that isn't done by some other method.

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The LDMG during this period had a limitation-----?-- Yes.

-----to be able to play its role?-- Yes.

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So I am just wondering what happens within the system when it occurs? Do we just wait for the LDMG to come back on line or do we ensure disaster management is occurring in that region?-- We ensure as best we could with DDMG those parts that could get access to their representatives etc. We tried to play a coordinating and managing role with them. It is true, it is very very limited and there is no capacity that comes with the title.

So, is the answer to that when a local an LDMG goes off line because of loss of power or communication you really are limited to what you do, you just have to wait until they come back on line?-- You are limited to what you then can assess is available or you can assess as to what you can activate. Trying to get road access when you can't get road access, trying to get phone communication when you can't get phone communication. But, for example, Telstra and Energex were at the DDMG and played an excellent role in trying to do an assessment and a timeline and what resources could be put in place to get us an ETA on when we would have those capacities. That is all happening behind the scenes in amongst this difficulty that Somerset were facing.

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What was the capacity of the DDMG to be able to get people in there through helicopter access to be able to make better assessments ?-- Almost nil.

Why is that?-- Available resources, helicopters, etcetera were quite heavily committed to a whole range of activities. It was for us to request that and there were several requests put in across different needs and we were able to get helicopter access on occasions.

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Is it the case, superintendent, that if this situation had occurred in the Somerset Regional Council, had occurred in isolation then there would be a different approach to disaster management. You would be able to get people in, fly people in and assist?-- I think the ability to concentrate those resources would be a lot better.

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The Somerset Regional Council lost their communication, their offices had been inundated?-- Yes.

They were - could only be seen from the sit reps coming up they were struggling with the event?-- Yes.

Now, the structure for requests for assistance. That must come up from - LDMG must try to be able to satisfy the request and if it cannot it will come up to the DDMG. ?-- Yes.

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The DDMG was getting requests for assistance from that area bypassing the LDMG and you were putting it back down to the LDMG, were you aware of that on occasion?-- I wouldn't be aware of that as such. There were a number that were facilitated and provided but even then getting them through as communication and getting them responded to as an activity there were difficulties for anyone who said, "Yes, we have the resources, now we will get them there." They were struggling.

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It is difficult when those requests are put back down for the LDMG to request back up to the DDMG?-- Yes.

Is that just a circular process?-- It can appear to be so with some matters but on the basis that there was limited ground assessment as to what we could get in and what we could assist them with, yes, I would say we were probably in that



cross wires really, yes.

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In your statement you refer to the fact that the Somerset Regional Council and the Ipswich City Council have a different capacity and capability?-- Yes.

That raises two concepts. One, the capabilities which is really a matter of resources and two, the capacity which deals with the ability to deal with disaster management. To resolve the issue of the capacity to deal with disaster management; is that really just a matter of greater training and greater commitment to disaster management or is that a matter of resources?-- I think it is both. We are talking about Somerset Council's geographical area being sliced and diced by the flood events that occurred and quite quickly on the Sunday, which was our first encounter with them, and Monday was the Esk scenario and then that continued over the remaining days and, yes, at this point in time their sheer numbers of resources of people, human resource, was quite limited and that was sliced and diced the way it was.

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Now, we are looking at these two different councils before the disaster events. Is it that they start at different levels. They have different capacities and different capabilities to deal with disaster events per se? Not while we are in it but before we start it looking at the capacities, looking at their capabilities. Are they just at different levels?-- There are different levels, yes.

Now, that is an issue that can occur across the State because some councils will always be better resourced than other councils?-- Yes.

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But we have to be able to deal with disaster management. Despite the differences that may exist, how can we ensure that all councils can properly respond to disaster management?-- I do take the point but I think training - and I am talking about operations training and situation response training will always be a life blood to these, even with limited capacities, it is always good to know those who are on the ground can do almost anything required of them, given that's a tall order. But I think also the reserves of road signage, for example, we discussed that, you don't want to have 1,000 spare signs but road signage aspects. There is some physical infrastructure that would assist so there is some, in my opinion, some reserve that would have been good to have. I just don't know how much you need until you need it sometimes, do you.

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What do you see the role of a DDMG and the DDC when you see a local disaster management group just not coping because the events are just beyond them. What do you see the role then of the DDMG to do?-- I think it is to make sure we brief up, that we are putting the situation distinctly and with great clarity to State disaster, to let them now this is the situation.

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Now, in what happened, what occurred in the Somerset Regional Council because of the events that occurred there, did you

come to that point, that the Somerset Regional Council were just not coping?-- We came to the point it was beyond their capacity, yes.

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Then how, when you get to that point, how do you fix it, how do you resolve it quickly?-- I think the point we were at was that the information from BOM and from the hydrologist was the time period we had to try and cover. One of the excellent things that Somerset Regional Council did was they were able to activate some air helicopter support resources and under the funding arrangements they activated them in I thought - as best they could and once that was activated from information and resources they could acquire in their own patch or their own locale, that did assist tremendously and that was something seriously valuable for lessons - for learning.

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Do you see that the DDMG has ever a role when you see the LDMG are not coping in various areas because it might be isolated patches for the DDMG to step in and direct the LDMG to direct their resources in a better way or more efficient way?-- Yes, I do.

20

Now, we have heard that in the Somerset Regional Council they, to assist in their disaster management, two personnel from the Gold Coast City Council joined them. Do you have a view about other councils assisting councils struggling with the disaster event?-- Anyone who can assist in a meaningful and appropriate way is a great resource.

Well, we have heard evidence about a fly-in arrangement, about the possibility of a fly-in arrangement, people with disaster expertise coming in and assisting a Local Disaster Management Group. We heard evidence about two persons from the Charleville region coming down and assisting the Lockyer Valley. Do you have any view on that?-- I would be open to that being understood and being able to be actioned, yes.

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How can that best be actioned? What's the processes that can be best actioned? Do you have a view on that?-- I think for us it was knowing what was able to come from outside of our resources and what best use we could make of it. So, I think it is - at that point in time, it was really about a 48 hour, 72 hour period of time, if they are not fundamentally available in that time frame then it is probably the criticality is passed but there is still benefits of having fresh legs and fresh eyes in that space and especially experienced and trained fresh legs and fresh eyes.

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Were you involved in suggesting or requesting that further personnel come in from outside councils?-- I was involved in the information flow and we did our part in the information flow but the issue was that there were council to council discussions, there was matters that were needing to be done and we didn't cause any difficulty with that. In fact, we were supportive of it but we didn't actually specifically do any activities to see it come about as such. It was happening between councils and we were there to support it.

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In relation to the Disaster Management Structure, we have heard evidence of the dual structure that Assistant Commissioner Gollschewski established which addressed disaster management and normal policing under his command. This involved two superintendant, superintendent Andy Morrow was responsible for Toowoomba and Superintendent Allan McCarthy was appointed Acting Chief Superintendent for the southern region which included Ipswich. How did you fit into the structure as the Ipswich DDC?-- Well, Acting Chief Superintendent McCarthy and I had a number of discussion. I kept him briefed on any exceptions, for example, but he was there to be briefed. He was there to offer assistance, etcetera. He did that on a number of occasions but I - then I was still DDC and performing all those functions.

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Did you see any benefits in having this structure?-- I did think it made a plainer chain of command, it made a direct link whereas when you are trying to be in command and at all the meetings and across all the issues that would become enormous burden given the disparity of locations with all the activity happening in a region and Acting Superintendent McCarthy, because he had background having been in the region for many years was quite an excellent resource to at least have there for reference and things.

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We have heard evidence this morning about the request for assistance. The - Mr Trace raised issues with the procurement process. Are you aware of those issues that have been raised in relation to the procurement process?-- From this morning, no.

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You weren't-----?-- No, not-----

That the - within Ipswich the procurement officer is looking to develop a process whereby the LDMG can directly access the State's procurement processes and contracts so as to support legal requirements in a disaster event. Are you aware of that?-- In those words, no.

Well, are you aware of the concept?-- Yeah, yes.

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What do you think of the concept?-- I haven't given it that much thought really. Certainly at an LDMG level some of the requests for information - requests for assistance can be fairly routine grocery type items and certainly accessing them - I don't know it needs a lot of protocol. Certainly district-wise and State-Wise there are a number of items that are best processed through that chain of command I would think.

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Is there any benefit of having an electronic tracking system at a district level?-- Definitely.

Why is that?-- Because all of the good work done by an LDMG and all of the good work in speedily processing a matter in the DDMG going into a State disaster coordination centre, shifts change, people are rotated, etcetera, if - we, in fact, did not have the electronic tracking situation existing and it

was difficult and hard work for all concerned, not necessarily to get at least the piece of paper up the line but to get the communication and the effectiveness of the result back or traced or tracked throughout that process. It did prove to be a difficult scenario and at times a distraction to other matters that were running a lot better.

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And more efficient if you could have a tracking system?-- Very much so.

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If I could take you to your debrief in front of you, page 19?-- Yes.

There are some matters I wish to address. At page 19 it is stated that, "It was evident the Somerset Regional Council did not have the capability to complete RFAs during the peak response period."?-- Is that because of the enormity of the events they were dealing with?-- Yes.

So how are RFAs, requests for assistance, processed?-- The communication we had was by phone and we were just taking it over the phone from them. For example, Kilcoy and Moore came under the police district of Caboolture but it is under the district disaster area of Ipswich. It was isolated and a police officer from the Caboolture district was isolated in that locale so we were able to facilitate through - able to get phone connection with himself and we processed them as RFAs that he would request, we would do the documentation and put them up, so we just had to make the best of a significantly difficult situation.

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On page 19 you also refer to the - well, it is also referred to the forced assistance, that is agencies also identified the forced assistance which were not specifically requested by LDMGs but provided at State and department level. You put an example of bedding?-- Yes.

Besides just from the double up does it create any other logistical problems?-- I think it does because when you try to communicate with someone about a specific matter I cannot imagine how many RFAs they were getting at State Disaster Coordination Centre level. Our one or two or five must be just a piece of straw in a big straw stack I imagine.

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In terms of your disaster management in this district does it create logistical problems?-- It can yes.

What?-- Because of the timeliness of needing to know the stratus, yes.

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That gets back to the tracking of RFAs?-- And the communication that is consistent and done on time, yes, it does.

If I can take you to page 17 of that debrief? You refer to air operations?-- Yes.

It is stated there, "The tasking of air assets during the

event was a concern due to the last minute change in requests for air assets being transferred from EMQ to the police operations centre Brisbane."?-- Yes.

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Can you explain what you are referring to there?-- We were trying to see what air assets given, of course, Amberley is close by and there was air assets there etcetera, and with Somerset there was some matters we were trying to make sure what other available resources we might have for the Somerset area and it did move from what EMQ had some coordination and it moved to the State Disaster Coordination Centre taking over that aspect of it and that was a matter that did raise some concerns with us at the time.

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You go on then to say that how these assets were requested changed a number of times?-- Yes.

Was it you having to go to different agencies or just the form you had to fill out or what?-- The information that had to go forward, yes.

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What information was required?-- Yes.

One of the recommendations that you provide, that is provided in that debrief is at page 21. That is that, "It is requested that consideration be given to the development of standard air operations protocols especially in the south-east of the State for use during major disaster events."?-- Yes.

What are you referring to when you are referring to the development of standard air operations in a practical sense?-- What exists before the disaster scenario should stay consistent throughout the disaster scenario.

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You are just looking at the protocols, which agency you contact?-- What we are trained or briefed or we put in our documents shouldn't change. If it does change we need to have a clear understanding that all parties are still going to benefit from what is the change in protocol. At this debrief we had a particular officer from the ADF from RAAF and made a very wonderful statement about air assets being available and we had to indicate that is very nice to know.

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What does that mean? It is very nice to know or can we have access?-- This person hadn't been with us throughout the journey but was the person to represent the ADF RAAF at the debriefing. He wasn't someone who had been throughout the whole process. It was a very good clear comment he made but having been in bunker, as I call it, during this period of time it wasn't quite that straightforward or plain.

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In your statement at page 7 the interactions with the ADF are raised?-- Very good.

It is stated that, "The deployment of ADF personnel and resources during the initial stage of the flood was problematic."?-- Yes.

It then goes on to refer to the aerial resources. When you are referring to the initial stages can you give us a time frame, what dates you are referring to?-- The ADF were at the table the whole time at the DDMG meetings. On the Thursday I think it was they were activating a whole series of ADF resources to come and be of assistance to local councils.

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When you say Thursday, what Thursday are you referring to?-- I am referring to the first Thursday, so that would be the 13th.

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Yes?-- They had visited us on the Wednesday, they were at the table on the Thursday and by the Saturday they were aiming to have their resources, their facilities, their trucks, their machinery available and that was aimed at all sorts of assistance but unfortunately their area of their boundaries were much in keeping with the Ipswich City Council boundaries and weren't necessarily automatically for the whole District Disaster Area which would have excluded Somerset initially at least.

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Is the case that the assistance that you have been provided for the Ipswich area, Ipswich City Council, you got no complaint about that?-- No.

But it is the greater area of including the Somerset that wasn't included in the process, is that what you are saying?-- Yes, initially that wasn't - the briefing that the officer in charge had was it was for the Ipswich City Council area. We said we are a district disaster, including Somerset, and we needed further follow up and there was some assistance given later.

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How quickly was that resolved?-- A matter of days.

Then support, air support, could be given to the Somerset Regional Council area?-- There was ground support.

Ground support?-- That is what the ADF representative had at his command.

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The issue of road closure signs?-- Yes.

That is that signage put up along flooded roads to advise the community the road is not safe to cross; whose responsibility is to put up those signs?-- Well, the local councils have that resource and are able to deploy that signage and do so in the normal business with different activities they have at different times.

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What about if they are State roads?-- I believe that is still the case.

That the - it is the - that should be coming through the councils?-- They have the physical resources as such.

So do the police engage in this issue?-- Yes, yes.

When do the police put out signs?-- We indicate where signs are needed to be placed.

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That's the question I was wondering; what stretches of road are identified and how they are identified. Is there a process that takes that into account?-- We have a process where there is danger on the road or whether there is water across the road etcetera to indicate signage is needed at these locales etcetera.

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Then would you-----?-- We put that request through.

To?-- To local council who were - both Somerset and Ipswich were both excellent at that effort but, of course, it was saturation upon saturation.

Thank you, I have no further questions.

MR FLANAGAN: No questions, Commissioner.

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MR POMERENKE: No, thank you.

MS McLEOD: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

MR KELLY: No questions, thank you.

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MR MacSPORRAN: Superintendent, just a couple of issues. Dealing with the question of Somerset Regional Council when their offices become inundated and they couldn't function and you lost communication with them. I take it, though, they - the LDMG continued to function as a body in its local area. I mean you lost communication with them as a group but were you aware they continued to function?-- As a single group they weren't able to operate as a single group but when we were able to make contact and follow up with a number of them, yes, there was a number of components pulling together and activating a series of activities, yes.

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Yes?-- So I think it was the best they could do in those circumstances.

Now, you mentioned you maintained communication so far as that group through the individual police stations where there were officers communicating with you as DCDC?-- And on the ground.

And on the ground?-- Yes.

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What about the other services within that LDMG? Did they relocate to different premises to maintain the role they were playing?-- Well, we had - that was the - from the interaction, that was the status at Fernvale and Lowood. From information from Esk that was - that a number of them had relocated in that locale, and I think they were the two main areas that still had a functioning and operating type part of the puzzle.

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So, in essence, they continued to operate but they simply couldn't operate as a single group, which is the ideal situation?-- Yes.

All right. Now, in terms of requests for resources, the system is set up so that the local - the LDMG is first tasked to resource or use its resources to obtain supplies until they cannot go any further and then it goes up the line to the district, then to the State. Is that the way it works?-- Yes, yes.

30

Now, if the local group is able to access supplies outside their locality, say Statewide, are they encouraged to do that as well without involving the district and State?-- Well, I - I wouldn't necessarily get involved in what they needed to do or what they were able to access to get that resource. If they can do it, unless it is something that they need to query or discuss with me, or to put up, I would be quite - that would be appropriate and relevant, I think.

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Now, under the current arrangements, the LDMG is encouraged to use its own initiative, is it not?-- Yes.

And that's using its local knowledge as well as the resources of those that are on the group?-- And in the Ipswich scenario, I believe they did an excellent job in the best they could, because the DDMG doesn't have a warehouse of resources, and from my understanding, the State Disaster Coordination Centre did have information and access to certain locales and resources that they were able to access, which was fantastic. For me, I - I did raise the issue at one of our meetings that I think some dispersement or some distribution of certain - the central resources should be seriously considered, either for that - that flood season, or that cyclone season, or that event season without trying to make it a massive scenario, but it would have been good to have some resources available - readily available as opposed to process driven and then possibly available in the time location.

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Yes, because the necessity to process requests takes time?-- It does take time and effort, and for me one illustration I would make is that setting up evacuation centres, it would be good to know that there is at least a start-up kit available of some of the essentials as opposed to an evacuation centre; now, what do we have to do and where is all the infrastructure or resources coming from.

Yes. I think on that topic there was a - a good example, perhaps, is the resourcing of the Ipswich Showgrounds as an evacuation centre. The approval went through very quickly to set it up and resource it, but then the supplies had to be located and sighted at the showgrounds?-- And that took time and effort and Ipswich City Council personnel that were at the scene did some excellent work to prepare what they could prepare, and some of the bedding, et cetera, did come from a facility in Brisbane and was able to be got to the locale, but Ipswich City has the extended Centenary Highway, thank goodness, so we could at least get to Ipswich because the Ipswich Road and the new roadworks still weren't completed and it was cut off for a number of days, but you could at least get through the extended Centenary Highway to Ipswich and therefore to Toowoomba. So that - when the Ipswich Motorway - I think it finishes next year - we will at least have more of a flood-proof access to and from. That was fantastic to have the Centenary Highway extension at least able to get that access to and from resources in a Brisbane locale.

Yes. And I think you make the point in your statement that that's another issue that needs to be addressed to plan to have resources available, taking into account likely road closures through the flooding?-- Well, I would like to think that in a disaster management plan, councils, LDMG and DDMGs and State Disaster could at least indicate these roads are fundamentally flood proof.

Yes?-- Because it would be good to know that there are some veins in this body when it comes to a disaster.

Given the size and magnitude of these events, were things, in a general sense, done well, however, in terms of disaster management?-- There was some excellent examples on the Thursday. We were about four days into it in Ipswich, and Somerset had been a bit longer. There were 17 people around the DDMG meeting table for our efforts, and I happened to ask how many in the room had had flood inundation to their homes, or isolated from their homes, and 12 of the 17 put up their hand. Now, they were there every day and they were doing the very best they could every day, and I think that's very impressive. Some of the efforts that were done, yes, it didn't necessarily start out with everyone knowing exactly what to do day one, but there was some impressive efforts across impressive activities under extreme circumstances, and they should be commended for that because this - you won't read all of this in a book. Some of this you actually have to experience and see how it happens, et cetera, and I think our - to be fair, the disaster management plans of the future,

this locale at least will have some very serious pages in them because of the lessons learned, and the perspective we now have; a living memory of this, not a '74 story that we heard.

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Yes. And were there examples of the community as a whole stepping up, as it were, and taking on responsibility quite outside of the official disaster management arrangements?-- We had - the peak of the 20 odd evacuation locales or centres, et cetera, we got to about 1,700 that were recorded using those for that couple of days. We have no numbers to indicate how many had been able to be facilitated by neighbours or friends or family. We know there would have been a sizeable number of people accessing informal and locality-specific resources. That's - I wish we could have the metrics on that because it would truly show the impact across the board. But we at least show the impact that we could at least measure and have metrics on.

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And that's the sort of response you hope will occur but you can never guarantee will until the event happens?-- Yes.

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All right. That's all I have, thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson?

MS WILSON: Just one matter of clarification, Madam Commissioner. In relation to the Somerset Regional Council losing access to communication, is it the case that between the 11th and the 13th you wouldn't have been aware whether the Somerset Regional Council was functioning or not?-- I had information from the Esk Police, who were in contact with certain components that were still in their area and I had contact with the Lowood Police, and I think that's where the Mayor, Graeme Lehmann, was based for a period of time. So we had - we had enough communication to know that there were activities occurring in parts, at least, but no overview, no, I had no overview.

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Or - so you knew that they existed?-- Mmm.

But as to the level of functioning, you had limited idea?-- Had limited idea, yes.

No idea?-- No, we had limited idea. For example, we knew the status of water supply at Lowood, we knew the status of power supply at Lowood, Esk, Toogoolawah and Moore. It was a mishmash but we were trying to piece it together with our on-the-ground troops, and, yes, the council aspects were at least featured in it but, yeah, they weren't - they weren't together at any point for that period of days.

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Did you know whether the residents of the Somerset Regional Council were getting warnings?-- I did know that from police, SES, and where we had at least that contact, there was

information and warnings to the best that I was told but I know that's only still partial. It wasn't complete, no.

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Thank you, Madam Commissioner. I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Superintendent Pitman. You are excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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COMMISSIONER: Ms Wilson, I understand there are a number of statements from people not required for cross-examination.

MS WILSON: That is the case.

COMMISSIONER: I will just give each of those a number and you can tell me if I have missed any at the end. The first is Alan Morris. That will be Exhibit 451.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 451"

COMMISSIONER: The next is Brad Strong, Exhibit 452.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 452"

COMMISSIONER: Phillip Fitzgerald, Exhibit 453.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 453"

COMMISSIONER: Martin Schultz, Exhibit 454.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 454"

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COMMISSIONER: Edward Bradley, Exhibit 455.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 455"

COMMISSIONER: Vivian Stanbury, Exhibit 456.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 456."

COMMISSIONER: And Marjorie Berghofer, Exhibit 457.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 457"

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. We have no further witnesses here today.

COMMISSIONER: All right. The Commission will adjourn to 10 o'clock at Rockhampton on Monday.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 4.40 P.M. TILL 10.00 A.M. ON MONDAY, THE 23RD OF MAY, AT ROCKHAMPTON