



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE  
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 08/03/2011

**Statement of**

Name of witness: DAMROW, Stuart William

Date of birth: [redacted] Age: [redacted] Occupation: Labourer

**Police officer taking statement**

Name of police officer: FORD, Catherine

Rank: Constable Reg. no.: 21434

Region/Command/Division: Southern Station: Taskforce Galaxy

**Statement:**

Stuart William DAMROW states:

1. I am a 50 year old farm labourer. I live at [redacted] at Ma Ma Creek 4347 with my friend Samantha THOMSON. I have lived the Lockyer Valley my whole life. I moved to Ma Ma Creek in 1972. My contact numbers are [redacted] which is the Group Officer mobile and [redacted] which is my personal mobile.
2. I am the Group Officer for the Gatton Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) Group. I have been a member of the Rural Fire Service when I joined the Grantham RFB in around August 2000.
3. I was the Grantham RFB First Officer when I first met Danny McGUIRE. Danny joined the Grantham RFB around 3 or 3 and a half years ago within a short period of time after moving himself and his family to [redacted] Grantham. I also know Danny McGUIRE is also known as Garry JIBSON but he uses Danny McGUIRE for everybody. I also met his [redacted] year old wife Llync CLARKE-JIBSON and their children [redacted] year old son Garry JIBSON, [redacted] year old son Zac JIBSON and [redacted] year old daughter Jocelyn JIBSON at the same time. I became friends with the family and got to know them really good.

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Date: 27/4/11

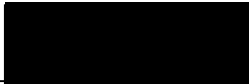
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4. I can remember that I was in High School in 1974 when the water flooded through Grantham. The water from this flood would have been right up on the verandah of the Pub as far as I know. At the intersection of the Gatton Helidon Road and the Gatton Clifton Road the water went over the toilet and the house there then. Back in 1974 everyone sort of had a chance to get away because the water didn't come in a great wall it came up more slowly.
5. The Ma Ma Creek joins the Lockyer Creek at Armstrongs Road. When the Ma Ma Creek is high it pushes and spreads more water back into Grantham.
6. On Boxing Day of 2010 the water came up at Grantham and then dropped down. I know this because I was talking to Danny McGUIRE on the phone. I didn't go into Grantham because I was flooded in to my own place because the Ma Ma Creek was over Avis Bridge on Lilydale Road and the cement crossing on Winwill Road.
7. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 the water would have been up in Grantham again because the Ma Ma Creek at the Avis Bridge was the highest that I have ever seen it. I actually rang up triple O and asked for the police. I told them that it was the highest that I have ever seen the water and that the low lying areas below would be in trouble with the height of the water. I also told them that I thought a vehicle that was in my backyard might float down the creek. I took a few photos of the Ma Ma Creek on this day. As far as I know they came out and sand bagged and evacuated a few people on this day along the Gatton Clifton Road at Lower Tenthill. I had some people ring me up and told me that they lived in Grantham and that they had not seen the SES or the Police around to help them which they thought was strange considering the amount of water.
8. On New Years Day the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011 it flooded in Grantham again. It was Garry JIBSON's birthday and they were having a party for him at 1346 Gatton Helidon Road. Danny rang me and told me that it was flooding again and that the bridge in Grantham for Sandy Creek was over and he had blocked the road with the Grantham 51 truck. Danny had permission to keep Grantham 51 truck at his residential address because it was decided

  
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**CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: DAMROW, Stuart William**

through the Brigade that it would be better to have the trucks spread out so they could respond to any incidents. If they were left at the Station at 1 Christopher Street Grantham there would be no access to the trucks if Grantham flooded because you get cut off.

9. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 the Ma Ma Creek was again flooding over the Avis Bridge on Ma Ma Lilydale Road. There was a car out the front of my house and the bloke and his wife were talking to me. They told me that there was about 300 people trapped out at the meatworks that couldn't get home. I went over to Stanbroke in Grantham 41 fire truck to see if I could help them out. When I got there the cars were just leaving and heading towards Helidon. I was talking to the Manager who was on the side of Carpendale Road where there was water over the road. He was trying to slow cars down before they hit the water over the road. I received a phone call from Danny. He told me that he was having trouble in Grantham pulling cars out of the flood water. I went down the Gatton Helidon Road and came down towards his place. The water was over the bridge of Sandy Creek on the Gatton Helidon Road. I was also talking to Danny over 35 repeater VHF. Danny said he was towing a Blue Care bus with 8 elderly people in wheel chairs on the bus through Grantham towards Old Toowoomba Road. I got onto Fire Comms for him and got Fire Comms to get onto the Police as they would need another vehicle near Old Toowoomba Road to transfer the people because their bus was flooded. I went across the bridge through the water into Grantham and met up with Grantham 52 Peter INGOLD which was on Harris Street. I spoke to Peter and he said he was checking the people in the houses along Harris Street to see if they were alright. I left Harris Street and started heading towards Old Toowoomba Road along the Gatton Helidon Road. I saw the first house on the left on Armstrongs Road the water was starting to lap into the house. Peter INGOLD in Grantham 52 was behind me so he went and checked that house. I didn't go because I was in a little truck and I wanted to get out before I swamped my truck. When Peter INGOLD went to check the house on Armstrongs Road he pulled off the bitumen and got bogged. Danny had just picked up two people from the Grantham Shop who were diabetics and needed their insulin. When he had these people in the Grantham 51 truck he got called to go and help Peter in the Grantham 52 truck as he got the truck bogged when he stopped to check the house at Armstrongs Road. Danny pulled Peter out and then headed along the Gatton Helidon Road towards Gatton following me to make sure I got my truck out. As far as I know Peter stayed in Grantham with the Grantham 52 truck. When I got out of the water I started heading to the Lockyer Valley Council Chambers to see if anyone was there. On my

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way there I stopped to talk to someone in a Fire Service vehicle. He told me that he was heading out to Grantham to check on the flood waters. I told him that his car a Hyundai looking sedan would not get through. Both of us went back to the Council Chambers. Danny actually took the two diabetic people to Robert Street in Grantham via the Gatton bypass because that was the only access by that time.

10. The Fire Service officer and I went and had a chat to the local disaster management people and they said that they needed to know what was going on at Grantham. I told them that I would get a hold of Danny and his medium Grantham 51 truck and take the Fire Service officer for a look of the area.
11. After Danny dropped the diabetic people back to Robert Street Grantham he came back to the Council Chambers via the Gatton bypass and picked up the Fire Service officer and me.
12. We left to go to Grantham. The SES was actually out there. There were two of them in a boat and they looked inexperienced. They got stuck about a kilometre or so along the Gatton Helidon Road from the Old Toowoomba Road end. From what I remember the senior Fire Officer said we had to go and check the place and the SES couldn't get in with their boat.
13. Danny continued driving the Grantham 52 truck towards Grantham along the Gatton Helidon Road. On the way he told us to take our seat belts off in case we got into trouble in the water.
14. We drove around the streets and talked to a couple of people who were still in their houses and made sure if they were ok. I could see the water marks on the buildings were actually higher than the level of the water by this time so I knew that the water was starting to drop. We headed back to the Council Chambers and the senior officer said to me that because I had all the local knowledge that I should brief the local disaster management group. I told them what was going on out there at Grantham and that the water was actually dropping. I talked to the SES controller who was part of that group and he told me that he only had 4 SES people available to respond in the Gatton area. I talked to the Mayor as well and told him that he

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should be more proactive and that they needed sand bags and volunteers just in case. With the SES controller and the Mayor organised to do the sand bagging the next day.

15. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 I went out to the Council depot on Tenthill Creek Road and helped fill about 300 sand bags. As we were filling the sandbags the SES came and got some and so did Danny so we might have done more than 300. We put them on pallets so they could be forklifted if needed. A few times during the day I went in Grantham 41 a few times to check the water levels of the creek in Grantham. Danny also did the same in Grantham 51. At one stage Sam and I went to Danny's house and had a cup of coffee. Danny's wife took our shirts and put them in the dryer and gave us dry shirts. A few pallets were put on the back of a council truck and left behind the Council Chambers. This was because it was Friday and the depot was closed over the weekend. In the afternoon after we finished the sand bagging I went down to the Council Chambers and talked to one of the members of the local disaster management group and they told me that they had closed down their control and that they would not be opening back up unless it was an absolute emergency.
16. On Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2011 it was a pretty quite day I think.
17. On Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 I had a few phone calls. The acting area director for Rural Fires Ipswich, Peta MILLER-ROSE, called me and she gave me the phone number for the DMO which I think is Duty Manager Operations South East Region. Both of them told me that the Rural Fire Service had nothing to do with floods and if anybody needed assistance with floods they were to be given the main SES phone number. I actually contacted the South East Fire Comms Centre and I told them what Peta MILLER-ROSE had told me that we were not to help with emergencies relating to flooding. My conversation with Fire Comms would be recorded on their tapes as all phone calls and radio communications are all taped. Fire Comms then later sent a page that stated "HUT: GATTON GRP, ANYONE WANTING ASSISTANCE WITH FLOODS TO BE GIVEN SES PHONE NUMBER 132500..STUART". I know this was the exact message as I transferred it to my personal mobile phone number

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18. At about 2100 I got a page from Fire Comms that stated "HUT: GRANTHAM RURALS. ANYBODY FROM GRANTHAM RURALS CAN ASSIST FF MCGUIRE WITH CLOSURE SIGNS 3/4 IN GRANTHAM TOWNSHIP PLACID HILLS END. CONTACT F/COM FOR INFO".

19. After receiving this I contacted Fire Comms and then responded to Old Toowoomba Road with Sam. Grantham 52 had already left before the page with Peter INGOLD and Vivienne JAMIESON onboard. When we got out there Grantham 52 had already driven into the flood waters. I had a chat to the Police and asked them what they wanted. I was also talking to Council employees who were out there. Because our job was actually to assist by stopping people driving around the road closed signs and into the flood water which was well over Gatton Helidon Road at that time. After talking to someone from the Council they actually brought a truck out with a couple of pallets of sand bags as people from Grantham were asking for sand bags to stop flood waters coming into their houses. I cant remember where the information was coming from if it was from Danny, or the Grantham 52 truck or the Police. A Council truck turned up with a couple of pallets of sand bags at the Old Toowoomba Road end. I had been on the phone to a Senior Officer with the Fire Service, he told me that the job out there had nothing to do with the Fire Service and anything that we did was as community volunteers. Because the Council truck only had a driver I got another Rural volunteer to go with me and the driver of the Council truck, one because of safety there was only the truck driver and two to assist with sand bagging. I took a UHF and a VHF radio and my 2 phones with me just in case we got into trouble and so we could talk to Danny and also the others at the Old Toowoomba Road road block. We proceeded down the Gatton Helidon Road towards Harris Street, while we were driving along I noticed that Grantham 52 was behind us. As we drove further into the flood waters past the shop the truck driver said it was getting too dangerous it was getting too deep and running too fast. I agreed with him. He started reversing back down the road towards the shop. At this time Grantham 52 drove around us and kept heading towards Harris Street along the Gatton Helidon Road. It appeared to me that they drove off the edge of the bitumen, it was dark at this time. They told me over the VHF radio that they were floating and because of the depth and strength of the water I then rang Fire Comms and notified them that I required Swift Water Rescue as I had a truck with 2

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people onboard that were in trouble in flood waters. We reversed down to near Armstrongs Road where we turned around as it was too dangerous to go back up to where Grantham 52 was. We then went back to near Old Toowoomba Road to safety out of the water. I set up an Incident Control and I had an Incident Log running which I had Sam helping with. I have not seen this document since that night.

20. Fire Comm responded Helidon Auxiliaries 678A which came via the Gatton Helidon Road at Helidon. Swift Water came from Toowoomba which I think was Station 311. They actually came down the bybass because they didn't think they could get to Grantham 52 from the Helidon end because he told me he wouldn't drive Grantham 51 through as it was too deep and too fast. The SES actually came out and brought a boat out. The Police were there. The Queensland Ambulance Service showed up. We had several fire vehicles with the Swift Water and a Council Representative. We had a Channel 9 news cameraman all at the Old Toowoomba Road road block. While the Swift Water blokes were there trying to get down to Grantham 52 there was calls from the other side where Danny was from the Helidon Auxiliary crews who needed assistance to rescue a family from Harris Street.

21. I know Danny later got a call to attend a medical emergency at Robert Street. Danny actually took Grantham 51 and got to the persons in need of assistance. He took them out to the Gatton bypass along Phillips Road but then ended up having to meet the Queensland Ambulance Service vehicle at Withcott because they wouldn't come any further.

22. When Danny came back he was with the Helidon crew and met up with the father of the other family in Harris Street. The SES again did not seem to be able to do anything with their boat trying to get in from the Old Toowoomba Road end. The Swift Water rescue teams rescued Peter INGOLD and Vivienne JAMIESON. The SES got onto another boat from Laidley and they got in via the Gatton Helidon Road via the Helidon side. The Laidley SES boat with different SES people got up to and rescued the 5 people from Harris Street.

23. By this time the water was actually getting high around the houses on Railway Street and at Danny's house. As far as I know Danny went to Railway Street as with the Helidon

  
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Auxiliaries checking if people wished to evacuate. I spoke to the Police who were on scene and asked them if we could force evacuate and they told me "No, it was only voluntary evacuation". As far as I know they went and talked to the people and everybody wanted to stay except for the 5 who were rescued who I believe stayed with friends or family.

24. At about 0400 hours on Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 I closed the job down. When I left the Police were still there and I wasn't needed for the road block anymore and the incidents were finished there. I went into Gatton and stayed there for a couple of hours. I left Gatton at about 0800 hours to go home and I was able to get home because Ma Ma Creek had dropped to under the Avis Bridge. I tried to get some sleep which was interrupted on several occasions by phone calls.

25. Danny was one of these calls he rung me and said he had a phone call to go and remove Grantham 52 from where it got stuck the night before. He told me that Peter INGOLD had asked him to tow Grantham 52 home. I wasn't real happy about that because it should have been left where it was for insurance. Danny told me that the Acting Area Director Peta MILLER-ROSE told Danny him that he shouldn't have towed it and asked him who asked him to shift it. Danny told me that he had left Grantham 52 in his driveway and left the tow strap attached to Grantham 51 which was also in his driveway and that he was going to try and get some sleep.

26. At 1554 hours I received a phone call from Danny. He called me on the Brigade Secretary mobile phone [REDACTED] from as far as I know one of the phones that he lost in the flood. He told me words to the effect of "My neighbour asked Llync to get me. The water from the Lockyer Creek is going across the farms on the other side of the road over towards Stanbroke. I am getting the family into the truck and I am getting out of here. The neighbour is getting out too." It sounded like he was on the phone to triple 0 at the same time. I know he had 2 phones. That was the last I heard from him.

27. Just after this phone call I grabbed Grantham 41 with Sam and I got across the Ma Ma Creek Avis Bridge which was just starting to go over. I contacted Fire Comm via the phone and

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**CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: DAMROW, Stuart William**

advised them that I had a crew of 2 available. They told me to stay where I was that I was not needed. I then rang the Acting Area Director Peta MILLER-ROSE and I told her that I was going to go into the SES to help out and she told me to do whatever I could do to help.

28. I then proceeded down the Gatton Clifton Road. While going past the Wells Road intersection I looked over towards the Grantham township and I could see a wall of water going across the farms. It was a bit hard to tell how high it was from the distance but I would guess a few metres. When I got to the Gatton Helidon Road intersection I could see that there was a lot of cars and a lot of people near the bridge and in the park some people were walking along the waters edge. Sam and I tried to get all the people to move because of the wall of water we had seen coming and because of the height of the water in the Lockyer Creek at that point. There were approximately 50 people there. I argued with them and no one wanted to leave. I then decided it was unsafe to stay there and started heading towards Gatton. I asked Samantha to phone Triple 0 and ask for Police. Samantha notified them of the situation. On our way to Gatton we passed several police cars in a big hurry. I was told later on that they evacuated all the people in cars as well as the house beside the park at that intersection. As far as I know they just got out with their lives. One person who stayed in the house near the intersection and I believe was later rescued by helicopter from a neighbouring house. After seeing how high the water got I believe that if the Police had not had moved these people on near the bridge and park that there could have been a lot more people dead.

29. I went into the SES in Gatton and tried to help them set up a control in there. A few fire vehicles were running around the place and I got them stationed at the SES. The volunteer fire fighters were manning phones and taking messages and all that sort of stuff. I then went over to the Gatton Auxiliary Station by myself. I met up with Fire Personnel who were trying to set up an incident control at their station. Once the control had been set up we moved the SES and the Rurals over to the Gatton Incident Control Centre (ICC) on the corner of North and William Streets.

30. I stayed in the ICC to assist with local knowledge. While there I received a phone call from the Fire Comms Centre about the whereabouts of Grantham 52. I advised them that Grantham 52 had been offline since Sunday night when it was submerged by floodwaters and that

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Grantham 51 would have been the vehicle that they were looking for. They had lost contact with Grantham 51 early that afternoon.

31. After that I received a phone call from the Regional Manager South East Region, Ewan CAYZER, who told me that Danny and his family were missing.


32. Later on that night I received a phone call from the Urban Area Director for Gatton, David CAWLEY, who told me that he had found Danny and his son Zac and that he was coming from Helidon back to Gatton with them.

33. I met David, Danny and Zac at David's office in North Street.

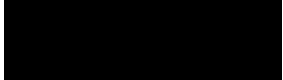
34. Danny told me "I lost Llync, Garry and Jocey, they are definitely gone". Zac was pretty quiet.

35. I stayed with Danny and Zac at the office and looked after them. I wrapped Zac in a fire blanket.

36. The Police later came and picked the 3 of us up and took us to a motel in Toowoomba. Danny later told me the story about what happened. He said words like "I tried to drive out my driveway with the family in the truck and then the wall of water hit us before the truck hit the bitumen. The water spun the truck 360. It was a massive wall of water. I pushed Zac out the window into a tree and told him to climb. I could see that Llync was trying to get her window down. Llync told me that a drum had hit the side of the truck. I tried to grab Jocey but I got sucked out of the truck and got washed down and I managed to grab the last tree. I could hear all the screaming coming from the truck and then it went quiet. I was hoping that it would get dark so Zac wouldn't be able to see into the truck from his tree. I didn't want the helicopter to find Zac in the tree because I was scared the down draft would push him out of the tree."

  
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37. I stayed with Danny and Zac for a week or two in Toowoomba helping them organise everything that they needed as neither of them had anything.

[REDACTED]  
Stuart William DAMROW  
Justices Act Acknowledgement

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| Justices Act 1886  |  |
| I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that: |  |
| (1)  | This written statement by me dated 08/08/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 11 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and        |
| (2)  | I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false. |
| [REDACTED]   | Signature  |
| Signed at Gatton this 8 <sup>th</sup> day of March 2011                          |  |

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