

## ADDENDUM TO STATEMENT

1. I am a [redacted] year old male presently residing at [redacted] Gatton. I am a business owner and operate the [redacted] service station located at [redacted] Grantham. Also operate a floorsanding business, [redacted], from the same address. Between 2000 and 2008 I was elected to the local council and served as a councillor on the Gatton Shire Council.
2. I have previously provided a statement to the Queensland Police in relation to my involvement in the flooding at Grantham on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011. Further to this flood incident I have suffered inundation to my business on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, the 6<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, the 4<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011 and the 26<sup>th</sup> day of December 2010. Prior flooding events witnessed were 2002, 2000, 1999 and May 1996 long weekend being the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest on record. Prior to the events of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011, never has any State Government Representative ever contacted me in relation to any of the listed flooding events. To either gather information, to give information, provide help post event. To plan for future events, develop/implement/advise of any disaster management plan.
3. I have since spoken to a representative from the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry and provided them with information concerning the issues arising from my experience during and after the floods.
4. As a resident and business owner and operator I have prepared and been subjected to flooding for a number of years. The event which occurred on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011 was by far the most severe I have experienced. From experience in prior flooding event's this was not a flood. The Speed, direction, current flows and positions. Even the vibrations in the water were totally different.
5. On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011 as a result of heavy rain in the area, saturation of the soil plus creek and water cause levels I was monitoring the Bureau of meteorology website. Specifically taking note of the water Levels in the Lockyer Creek and Sandy Creek, rate a which levels are rising. Also monitoring the Radar image for rainfall, that was falling at the time but also what was possibly coming. About 1pm on Sunday the 9<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011 I was concerned enough to leave my family and residence and drive to Grantham due to BOM website information. I parked my vehicle up on the Railway yard on high ground as always. The next 2 hours were spent lifting everything possible up minimum 1 meter above floor level, in show room, office and workshop. Plus securing anything not able to be lifted higher. I suffered flooding in and around my business. The flooding at this stage was relatively normal inundation which did not cause damage to my premises. It was concerning me as the weather did not seem to be improving.
6. The water was covering the road at the lower end of Anzac Avenue on this night. I had contact with Danny Maguire from the rural fire brigade sometime during the evening. I had a conversation with him where he told me that he and Stewart Damrow wanted to evacuate Grantham and had made the call to his superiors with regards to this issue. Danny told me that his superiors did not think an evacuation was necessary and that this is not our call and to stand down. This was after I witnessed rural fire service rescue people in a stranded 22

QFCI

Date:

27/4/11

JM

Exhibit Number:

151



seater bus from a flooded street, along with a stranded Police car and officer had to be towed to safety. Then a rural fire brigade vehicle was bogged on the shoulder of the main road through town which was not able to be retrieved until Monday morning and the occupants had to be rescued by the Swift water rescue team.

7. Also on the night of the 9<sup>th</sup> day of January officers from the swift water rescue Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) approached me at my business and after giving them advice and directions to safely cross over to me I had a conversation with them. They asked me questions concerning my situation and awareness of the danger of flooding and checked to see if I had an evacuation plan. I told them that I had been subject to a number of floods and that I would proceed to the rear of my building towards the railway tracks in the event of severe flooding. Once they were satisfied with my answers knowledge and understanding of swift water they then left and attended to the stranded rural fire vehicle occupants.

#### Issues Pertaining to Qld Flood Inquiry Terms of Reference

##### Warning

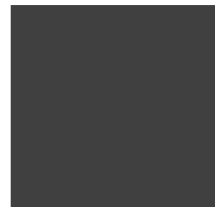
8. On the ~~9<sup>th</sup>~~<sup>10<sup>th</sup></sup> day of January 2011 at about 3.30pm I received a warning via text message from friends at Flagstone creek and Helidon that a significant amount of water was heading towards Grantham. I was up the road from my business at this time monitoring water level in Sandy creek at the railway bridge. I then walked back to my service station. I arrived about twenty minutes later and thought about trying to lift everything up higher than it already was.
9. As this warning was not issued by anyone in authority I did not take it as seriously as I should have or realised the true situation. I was aware that other people received warnings prior to the event but I do not think they took it seriously either. I believe that if this warning came from Police when events unfolded at Withcott and Murphy's creek, residents would have heeded the advice more urgently and giving them more time to evacuate. Residents from Murphy's creek contacted council at 1.15pm (3 hours before it hit Grantham) and reported what was happening. They were transferred to four different people and warned all of them to evacuate people down stream. I am informed that Channel 7 also released media report at 2.03pm (over 2 hours before it hit Grantham) stating police were currently evacuating people along the Lockyer creek. I did not witness any response to either of these reports from any authorities what so ever.
10. Why was there no response to these reports? Why was there no alarm bells with the authorities in the situation that was unfolding from midday onwards? Where was the missing link or break down? Early warning system is required. Disaster management plan required for future.
11. I do not think that there was sufficient preparation for the floods at Grantham in general. Leading up to the event I received assistance from the QFRS who delivered 6 sandbags to me at my shop to assist with possible flooding the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011. I personally made preparations such as making an escape plan from my shop, putting stock, equipment up on benches, switching off mains power and placing my mobile phone in a clip seal bag. Unfortunately though these preparations were not sufficient for the amount of



water received or the force and violence which it came with or the unusual direction which water came from on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011 at approximately 4.15pm.

#### Response

12. As a result of the major flooding that came through Grantham I believe that the response was not sufficient. The water that came through my shop and almost drowning me inside my shop, forced me to the roof of my premises. I remained on the roof during the afternoon and long into the night. From the roof I was surprised to see several media choppers flying around. After witnessing a whole house washed completely of its stumps and almost 1km through paddocks I tried several times to attract chopper crews attention and direct them over to the house as I knew there were people still inside there. Finally one media chopper realised what I was doing and flew to house and spotted people inside. They then stayed there until rescue chopper returned to perform rescue of trapped residents. From where I was, I was only able to see one Queensland rescue chopper on the northern side of town. However was informed later that there were two Queensland rescue choppers there. I watched as Queensland rescue helicopter attempted to rescue countless other people off rooves and other areas but were unable to sav or rescue everyone. The whole time I was on the roof I was thinking and expecting to see help from Black Hawk helicopters or defence force helicopters as Oakey Army base and Amberley Air force base are located in neighbouring Shires (45 minutes by road). As the waters were so strong and the objects and debris so thick at this stage I thought the only way to rescue people was via helicopter. Around 5pm the flow of the water, the current had slowed considerably. Also the amount of objects in the water had decreased and stopped. Again at this stage I was still expecting back up helicopters but now thought it was safe enough for rescue boats to be utilised and deployed by, the SES and QFS swift water rescue teams that were in the area the night prior. However once it became dark the helicopters could not operate and watched as they all disappeared over the horizon with so many of us still trapped on top of our rooves. As darkness fell quickly I soon realized that this would be the last contact I would have with the outside world and possible rescue. This was devastating at the time. What happened to the rest of us being rescued? Why didn't help come from Amberley or Oakey? One of Australia's biggest Black Hawk squadrons is stationed at Oakey Army Base aren't they? Also I have been informed by staff from Oakey Army Base that there were four Sea King Helicopters there at the time of this event and they were running with the crews dressed and ready to deploy and help and were told to stand down that there help was NOT required or wanted. This I believe requires investigating. I do not believe the government had sufficient helicopters in the air to cope with the situation and the ones that were there lacked the capability to operate at night time. Why weren't the Black Hawks deployed? They were used the next day and night in Forest Hill to rescue people, why not for Grantham? Also why didn't the SES or QFS swift water rescue crews deploy boats with an hour of day light left current and objects had settled, other residents in there own boats had already rescued others in town e.g. Rob and Jim Wilkins in there small tinny, Ray Vandjk in his canoe. I was informed several days after the event that a friend that resides in Placid Hills had his Deep Sea Fishing boat reversed up to the water line ready to unhook from trailer and come to rescue people trapped in Grantham still. He told me that he was told by police at the Placid Hills road block NOT to lower boat into water or unhook. Police said, we do not need heroes or people being



stupid. If he disobeyed there direction he would be arrested and possibly have his boat trailer and vehicle impounded as well.

13. I remained on my roof until after midnight on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The whole time I was able to see the never ending glow of head lights of the cars driving to and from the road block at the Placid Hills to see what happened at Grantham and the red and blue flashing light of the police car parked there. The water had calmed considerably but was still very deep. The rain was continuing to fall as the night went on. Wasn't until the lightening started again that I realised I had to try and get off the roof before I was struck and electrocuted on my roof waiting to be rescued. I fell from the roof and have no recollection of how I got from there to neighbours house two premises away, against the follow of water. From there the three of us made it out off the house through waist deep water over to and across the railway line to dry ground and eventually to the school turned evacuation centre. I personally feel that when the event unfolded in Grantham the governments only response was to lock down our town and when the sun went down on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of January I feel that we were all left for dead.
14. As a result of my dealings with QFRS swift water rescue team it became clear that these highly skilled and trained people lacked local knowledge of the area. I think that this was a detriment to them performing there task's and performing to the best of there ability and lost valuable time trying to gather local knowledge. I think and feel that the Government do NOT value local knowledge as it needs to be. I believe that all Emergency services should be able to tap into or lease with local people to assist them in there duties especially if they are not from the local area. The need to value local knowledge. The ability to access local knowledge. Some form of data base for reliable local contacts.
15. The initial response by the government was overall, pitiful. I am aware that it was a very confusing situation and that they may have lacked resources to rescue people. However I felt that the response was way to slow and rescuing those stranded was not important. I felt that the management of the response found it more important to lock down the town. Also I feel not all the resources available were fully utilised and that there was a general state of confusion and disorganisation. The organisation and resources did improve but the critical time was during the first few hours of the disaster. Why did a Mother with two small children who resided in the centre of Grantham have to walk 7.5km out through knee deep water almost 18 hours later on Tuesday morning to get to the Evacuation centre at Helidon?
16. Grantham was then locked down for the next two weeks. There were issues with seeking information regarding Grantham or being able to find an avenue to be able too. The two agencies in control of the situation were the QPS and Australian Army who had to perform the horrid task of search and recovery and I believe were the perfect agencies for that role. However issues arose with the security of our town at night. Why was every door of every dwelling smashed in? No need to be that extreme. I felt that as most did that we were being spoken to and treated like criminals and like we were idiots. I feel this did not change until Grantham was assigned a dedicated officer Ben Marcus I think was his name. Issues with the town being locked down as crime seen. Why then was it ok for some to drive around crime scene during this lock down and not others. Media, Insurance brokers and staff etc.

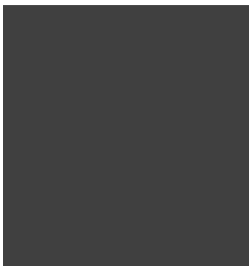


## Recovery

17. The evacuation centre at the school was put together and run by the residents who reside on the Western side of the railway line on higher ground. These people were not directly affected by the actual water however most were at the railway bridge witness to the horrors of what was unfolding and trying to rescue people. These residences I believe are just as mentally scared from what they seen and tried to do as those who were caught in the water. For 5 days we were clothed, fed and cared for by these residents. This evacuation centre was run entirely by the locals with No government assistance for the first week. As this was not a dedicated evacuation centre it lacked essential systems such as working showers, toilets due to power outage, cooking facilities and communication phone mobile or land line. As there was no power generators were required to run water pumps, lights and other essential powered devices. Again this was provided by local resident, there was no government assistance with regards to generators.
18. Why did it take 5 days after the event to have any government help? 5 days before any help came for our kids? Why were we lied to by Deputy Police commissioner in relation to our concerns of security of our town at night? Why was I threatened with being arrested if I approached Qld premier or Prime Minister when they visited? Residents complaining of bullying and standover tack ticks to get questions answered. Re: Concerns Residents Letter. What's the responsibility and role of the two Police Inspectors in Grantham? Issues of having to prove you were affected with all applications for assistance. Why was I the only one that had an exhausted list of all Grantham residents and their contact details? Having Toowoomba Police contacting me for several weeks constantly requesting contact information of residents which I gave freely. Why did the water exit the creek in the position that it did? Was it due to the fact of operations conducted in the creek from a private business? This needs to be thoroughly looked into. I feel that majority of damage to our infrastructure and dwellings were caused by the mismanagement of our waterways. The overgrowth, weeds and debris in our waterways were missiles.
19. Lack of financial assistance from Government has been a major hindrance to the recovery. Why have all funding been set with criteria and means test? The water didn't means test anyone in Grantham. Again constantly having to prove you were affected. Where is the fund from the Premiers Flood Fund that was kindly donated to by the general public for the victims. These people donated this in good faith with no criteria. Why has this not been distributed to the people? Where is the money? When are the people going to receive this money?
20. As a result of the flooding on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 I lost all my tools, equipment, stock and records for both businesses at my place of business. I was insured through Caledon Insurance and I made my claim through my broker Ken Dickson in Toowoomba. Initially I received positive feedback after I put in my Insurance Claim bur after at least three assessors came to view my property, their attitude became less positive. At this stage I am still waiting on advice as to whether I am covered but at this stage it doesn't appear I will be reimbursed for my lost possessions. The actual recovery from the event so far to date is becoming more traumatic than the event itself. We need to learn from this disaster to make our community safer and to have a disaster management plan that actually works. Some form of early warning system, to manage our waterways better and VALUE local knowledge and ability to

tap into this information needs. Dispersment of donated Premier funds needs to be quicker to the victims and a recovery process that actually works that delivers on promises needs to be implemented. Three months on there are only 14 families out of 145 back in Grantham with over half of those either living in caravans, or concrete floors of their sheds or condemned houses. No businesses have reopened. I myself am still struggling to reopen due to dramas of red tape. Every step of the way seems to have more hindrance than help.

21. If lessons are not learnt from this event and procedures are not developed and implemented not only do I fear for myself and my community but also fear for any other small community not only in Queensland but the whole of Australia. I feel the initial response and the way I was treated was as if we were under Marshall Law. This is totally unacceptable not only here in Australia but in any democratic society world wide. I believe the state government gave the same Marshall Law treatment to our local government as we were experiencing. This again I believe hindered the recovery process right from the start. I have to say that I feel nearly every one that has been on the ground from the start to date, from all agencies, departments etc. have genuinely been affected from what they have witnessed and I truly believe that they did mean well and did want to help. However I believe the buck stops with decision makes.



27<sup>th</sup> - APRIL - 2011



27/4/2011