

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

BRISBANE

..DATE 09/05/2011

..DAY 17

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 10 A.M.

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COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Callaghan?

MR CALLAGHAN: The first witness is Superintendent Patrick Ryan who is to give evidence via telephone, I understand.

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PATRICK JOHN RYAN, CALLED:

WITNESS: Good morning, Pat Ryan speaking.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Ryan, do you have a Bible with you?-- Yes, I do.

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I'll get my associate to read the oath to you?-- Thank you, your Honour.

PATRICK JOHN RYAN, SWORN AND EXAMINED VIA TELEPHONE LINK:

MR CALLAGHAN: Superintendent Ryan, it is Counsel Assisting speaking. You can hear me okay?-- I can.

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Can you tell the Commission your full name, rank and station, please?-- Yes, my full name is Patrick John Ryan. I'm a Superintendent of Police attached to the Redcliffe Police District.

You have prepared an eight page statement for the purposes of the Commission; is that correct?-- That is correct.

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And you refer - or you're aware of the Redcliffe District Disaster Management Group extraordinary meeting on the 3rd of February 2011 - it was a debrief - a flood debrief?-- Yes, I am. I am.

Yes. You were present for that?-- I was. I chaired that meeting, yes.

I tender the statement and the minutes of that meeting.

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COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 307.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 307"

MR CALLAGHAN: I just have a few questions referable to your statement and that material. Firstly, can I ask you, you set out in your statement details of the training that you've received relevant to disaster management?-- That is correct.

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Was there any training or advice given to you following the amendments to the act in 2010?-- No, I haven't received any training since then, no.

All right. At page 3 of your statement you note that during this event in January, the District Disaster Management Group was jointly located with the Local Disaster Management Group at the Caboolture Council's offices. Were there any issues with that - any difficulties?-- Just a couple of minor difficulties. The Council location worked very well for the group, but just with regards to getting our own separate space and area, the groups were basically in a large room that was partitioned off. The DDMG felt that we needed to be in a separate area, just a bit more distant from the LDMG, just for our own meetings and conferences and teleconferences as well.

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That's one of the things, I think, that has been identified as something which might be improved; is that right?-- That is correct. It was noted in our debrief minutes as well.

Yes. And what's actually going to happen?-- At our debrief minutes, the Mayor of the Moreton Bay Regional Council - Mayor Sutherland - advised us that there was a - Council were looking at purchasing land at North Lakes and constructing a purpose-built facility at that location for both the DDMG and the LDMG. The location at North Lakes is on higher ground, it is fairly central to the whole of the Moreton Bay Regional Council as well, and having a purpose-built facility to handle such disasters would certainly be beneficial to both groups.

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All right. Given the place in which you were located, you were in a position to assess the performance of the LDMG in January. What do you have to say about the way that operated?-- I felt the LDMG operated fairly effectively. The incident that occurred on 11 January came upon us fairly quickly due to the severe rain depression that came across, and I think we received on the 11th of January in excess of 404 millimetres of rain in a short period of time. The LDMG stood up fairly quickly and started to manage the incident and calls for service that were being received. As with any incident, I suppose the initial set-up stage is certainly the most crucial where you've got a lot going on and a lot of requests coming through and becoming situationally aware is probably one of the big issues of any group to manage. The LDMG had good technical support there, they had staff there to log events, they had separate areas where they could meet as well, which they did as a group to address a number of issues that were impacting on the area with respect to the flooding of local roads and the impact that was caused by the emergency alert that was sent out earlier in the morning.

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I was going to ask you about that, because that's something that was discussed at the debrief too, wasn't it?-- Yes, it

was.

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Can you tell us how that alert actually came to be issued?--
Yes. Each morning, the State Disaster Coordination Group had a teleconference with all DDCs across the state to give them a briefing in relation to the flooding events right across Queensland. At the meeting on the 10th of January, which my counterpart, Inspector Jones attended, we were advised that there were no specific issues that were going to impact on the DDMG for the Moreton Bay Regional Council. The rain falls that we had up to that stage weren't impacting on the area that significantly or creating any major problems; however, in our teleconference on the 11th of January, we were advised that the severe rain depression that had come across the coast was going to have a significant impact on the creeks and streams in the Burpengary/Narangba area. In that teleconference we were briefed by Hydrology and the Bureau of Meteorology that the significant rainfalls would impact on our area quite significantly. We were given exemption to leave the meeting at that stage, but the SDMG advised that, look, we needed to get an emergency alert out fairly quickly to advise residents in our area of the rises in the creeks and streams, and they advised that they would arrange for that alert to be done through Brisbane. Having regard to the incident in Toowoomba, the severe flooding that occurred there fairly quickly, I agreed to that alert being sent out by them and I immediately proceeded to Caboolture to take up my role as the DDC for the DDMG for Moreton Bay.

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So, the alert went out and I think it went out in these terms: "Immediate flash flooding warning from SES for Caboolture, Burpengary areas. Very high water levels in rivers and creeks. Seek higher ground NOW.", with the word "now" in capital letters; is that right?-- Yes, that is correct.

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So, who actually drafted that?-- That would have been done by the SCCC in Brisbane.

All right. And you're aware of the response that that caused in the community?-- Yes, I am. It did create a fair bit of angst, especially with respect to telecommunications. People who were living in - who were working in Brisbane and had their homes in that area immediately left work and started to travel back to their homes and were making telephone calls to make alternative arrangements. It caused basically a meltdown of our communications - telecommunications. I think in excess of 5,000 calls were received in one period of time. It also caused people travelling from Brisbane back to Caboolture and the Narangba areas, due to the fast rises in the creeks and streams, trains weren't able to get through to Caboolture and people were actually let off at Morayfield. This caused an issue there with a large number of persons being - disembarking off the railway and no alternative arrangements being made to accommodate them at that stage.

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Just getting back to the emergency alert though, and with a view to this - what can be done about this sort of thing happening in the future, obviously it lacked local - or

specific local context, if you like. It was just a general warning and pretty vague in terms of what it required of people?-- Yeah, that is correct, and another thing it didn't identify was any evacuation centres that people could go to, but inquiries that are made with regard to the alert, we were limited to 160 characters, which would present a problem with regard to how much information could be included on the alert at that stage. So, that's an issue that we identified in our debrief and something that we need to basically look - map our areas that are likely to flood and have alerts drafted up for those areas for future events to basically inform the community what actions they should take and where they can go for safety.

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When did you become aware of the wording of the alert?-- After it had gone out.

And I suppose, again, looking forward, if there is a situation in which the State group has to put one out urgently, but it lacks local knowledge, if you like, what role should the district group have in interpreting it or qualifying it or following up on the alert?-- Well, I think we need to basically read the alert - have a look at the draft of the alert before it does go out to the community, but in this instance, whilst the alert did create a fair bit of angst amongst the community, it did ensure that people did move to higher ground and we didn't - there was no loss of life in our area, thank God. When you look at the circumstances of Toowoomba, you're going by the situations as they're occurring at the time, so the rainfall event that occurred at Caboolture and Narangba was basically a one in 100 year event. I don't think the flood levels in those creeks and streams have been that high in over 100 years.

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No. I can see there were exceptional circumstances in this case, but, looking forward, you'd agree that such a message should be filtered at least through the district group before it is issued?-- Yeah, I do, and I believe that as a district group we need to have a number of drafts formulated for the future for those areas that are likely to be impacted by such events, and that they be used as a template, basically, for future messages to be sent out.

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All right. Well, just getting back to the performance of the LDMG. I think the one on page 5 of your statement, your take on things is that the local Council was fully resourced for logistical support and provided it in a timely manner?-- Yes.

And, overall, your assessment of the event is reflected, I suppose, in the last paragraph on page 8, that it was a low-key event managed within the local area; is that right?-- Yes, that is correct. I must say that since taking over the role as the Disaster District Coordinator for the Moreton Bay Regional Council, we have been tested with a number of events. We had the significant storms that impacted on The Gap and Brisbane. An area at Albany Creek was affected in our area that we had to respond to. We also had the oil spill which impacted on our local area as well and, prior to this event,

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we'd undertaken a number of training exercises with respect to co-ordination centres, the establishment and running of co-ordination centres, and I think, having been tested previously, and having that co-ordination centre training and having people trained how to run those events certainly ensured a smooth operation of this - and management of this incident.

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Can I ask you about some interactions that you might have had with the Somerset Regional Council, which is not in your district; is that correct?-- Yes, that is correct.

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Nonetheless, some services were performed by you on their behalf; is that right?-- That is correct.

Were you aware of when or if their Local Disaster Management Group activated?-- No, to give you a situation, prior to the amalgamation of councils, as the Disaster District Coordinator for Redcliffe, I was responsible for three councils: Kilcoy, Caboolture and Redcliffe. With the Council amalgamations, they all now come under the Moreton Bay Regional Council and I've lost the areas of Kilcoy and Moore, which fell into the Somerset area. During this event, the officer in charge of the Kilcoy police station sent a request through to the LDMG requesting some services. We were advised that he needed to process those through Somerset and we received information to the effect that he had done this, but had received no response. We were in a position to respond to those requests. I immediately contacted my counterpart, Superintendent Garth Pitman at Ipswich and spoke to him in relation to this matter. He advised me at that stage that the - they were having difficulties with the Somerset LDMG and that it hadn't stood up at that stage, and I advised him that we were in a position to respond to the request and he thanked me for that offer and asked me if we would do that. We did attend to the requests that were made by the officer in charge at Kilcoy and we subsequently advised the DDC at Ipswich of what we had undertaken.

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And just in terms of the sort of support which you did provide, tell me, did you actually task the SES to any tasks in that area?-- Not from my recollection - from the DDMG perspective. We did undertake a medical evacuation. We did undertake a food resupply. We further undertook - there were medical staff at the hospital that had been working long hours and we had to rotate them through the Caboolture Hospital, so we transferred staff from Caboolture Hospital to Kilcoy, and brought staff that had been working there for long hours back to Caboolture as well.

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I was going to ask you about that. How did you actually do that?-- Through the DDMG. We tasked - we had helicopter services that were available at Caboolture that we had identified, and we arranged for those services to - engage those services to facilitate that request.

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And what about the resupply to Kilcoy, which I think was on the 12th? What was actually done there?-- It was a resupply

to campers in the Neurem Creek area. They had run out of food, so we had got a list of supplies from them. We restocked the store that was in that area for the campers, and also there was a medical evacuation that was undertaken by the ambulance services re: a woman who had run out of her medication and was becoming severely ill.

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You mentioned Neurem Creek. I was going to ask you about that, too. Are you aware that there was a request for the evacuation of a seven year old from the Neurem Creek Bush Retreat?-- I can't recall that request. I know there was a sick woman at that Neurem Creek Retreat that we did medically evacuate.

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You can't recall anything - a matter of a request for a child?-- No, not from my recollection, no.

All right. You talk, I think, about evacuation centres in your statement and note how there were some informal ones that sprung up into action?-- Yes.

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I think you say that's a procedure that worked well?-- Yes, I think the - you'd normally find in incidents such as this that church groups and other community people establish such centres to assist people in their local areas, and they certainly do work well.

There was one such centre that materialised at Woodford, wasn't there?-- Yes, that's correct.

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Something like over 70 people ended up staying there?-- That's correct.

They sent a request for bedding at some stage. Do you recall that?-- Yes, that request - yes, I do.

And it's suggested that they were told to send people who needed bedding to Burpengary?-- From my recollection, they indicated that there was a short supply of bedding at the centre and that arrangements were made to facilitate extra bedding, which was done through the correctional centre out there at Woodford.

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Yes. Did you organise that?-- My - Superintendent Michael Brady who was in the centre at that stage, he arranged for that.

Right. He was in the - which centre? The-----?-- The DDMG centre on the 11th.

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Okay. All right. Thank you. They're the only questions that I have. Can you just hang on the line for the moment?

COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell, do you have any questions?

MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Ure?

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MR URE: No questions, thank you.

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing, thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Ryan can be excused, can he?

MR CALLAGHAN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Ryan. You're excused. We can end the connection now?-- Thank you, your Honour.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Jason Renwick.

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JASON SCOTT RENWICK, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name, rank and station, please?-- My name is Jason Scott Renwick. I'm a Sergeant of police and currently the officer in charge of the Woodford police station.

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Mr Renwick, you have prepared a seven page statement for the purposes of the Commission; is that correct?-- That is correct.

You are being shown that now?-- That is my statement.

Yes, I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 308.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 308"

MR CALLAGHAN: Perhaps just by way of introduction, although we have a fair picture of it, can you just tell us a bit about Woodford, especially in terms of access in and out and especially when water levels are raised?-- The main thoroughfare through Woodford is the D'Aguilar Highway which runs east from west, from Caboolture through to Kilcoy. We also have access from the Sunshine Coast hinterland via Kilcoy-Beerwah Road.

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Are there some low-lying areas there which create issues?-- There are. Kilcoy-Beerwah Road is susceptible to low-lying areas and localised flooding, as is the D'Aguilar Highway. It can get cut at a number of points.

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And apart from cutting roads, there are obvious issues with inundation of properties; is that correct?-- That is correct.

You have still got a copy of your statement there?-- Yes.

Can I pick up at paragraph 10 and, in particular, on the topic of an emergency broadcast message which had been sent. Were you aware of - or did you have any notice that this warning was coming?-- No, I did not.

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Did you have any idea where it came from?-- Only in the nature of the warning came from the Emergency Broadcast Centre itself.

Yes. But nobody contacted you to give you any further information?-- No, they did not.

Can you just give us an indication of the manner in which

people responded to that warning?-- The police phone switch at Woodford Station immediately started ringing continuously. We had people coming into the police station inquiring about where to go, what to bring with them, how long did they have, similar instances like that.

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It was a fairly overwhelming response, I take it?-- It certainly was, and then the local shop owners were ringing up and wanting to know what were they telling people who were travelling through, and the like.

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Paragraph 11 you go on to record your contact with the LDMG. Can you just tell us about that?-- I originally made contact with the Caboolture District Office and was referred - was informed that an LDMG was set up and given a phone number to contact.

What happened there?-- I spoke with acting Senior Sergeant Peter Thompson and made inquiries in relation to that text message that had been sent out, and if there was any further information that it could be provided.

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And was there?-- No.

And you indicate in paragraph 11 that the LDMG couldn't provide any information to you about an evacuation centre?-- That's correct.

What did you do then?-- As a result of the localised flooding issues that were apparent to myself and the number of persons that had become dispersed in the area, I contacted Mr Michael , who is the secretary of the local community hall, and asked him to activate an emergency evacuation centre at the hall and open it up.

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How did you know to contact him? Is this something that had ever been discussed before?-- It is just part of the local network system that, you know, local police have within their communities.

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So there had never been any specific communication between you and Mr Wallis with a view to planning an evacuation centre?-- No, there was not.

You just knew that that was space that was available and that he was the person who could open it up?-- It was a resource that was available that was in the right location and had the necessary stuff that we needed, and Wallis was the one who ran it.

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I think at paragraph 13 you note that there were, by the end of the night, 72 people, six dogs and a guinea pig there; is that right?-- Yes, and a guinea pig.

It went up to a peak of 90 people at the height of the evacuation; is that right?-- That's correct.

We understand Mr Wallis was very busy obtaining things and

organising things, but what were you doing? I mean, you were doing this as well. You were both working together on this; is that right?-- Mr Wallis was in charge of the evacuation centre. I was the only police officer left in the Woodford area, so myself, together with QAS and QFRS were responding to evacuations at first instance, plus over at the evacuation centre and co-ordinating that. 1

That meant you were out and about doing lots of different takes, I take it?-- Wearing many hats, sir, yes. 10

How were you staying in touch? How were you communicating?-- Mobile phone.

Is that your phone or a work phone?-- That's my own personal mobile phone.

Paragraph 15, you talk about a request for bedding. Can you tell us - give us your take on what happened there?-- As the day progressed, it became apparent that we had a number of persons displaced overnight. I contacted the LDMG or the DDMG, because they were both cofacilitated at that stage, made a request for bedding. I again followed this up at 7 o'clock at night and got told that there would be none and I would have to move my evacuees to a place at Burpengary. 20

And that wasn't practical?-- Woodford to Burpengary was under water.

And I suppose worse than being impractical, it was potentially dangerous?-- Yes, sir. 30

Well, what happened then?-- We made ad hoc arrangements that evening and Mr Wallis was tasked with sourcing bedding, which he got from the Woodford Correctional Centre.

Are you aware whether he made a request through the DDMG to do that, or do you know how he actually obtained it?-- I think it was - I know the request was made through the DDMG, however I believe that it was facilitated once again through local contacts. 40

Again, in your statement, if we move perhaps to paragraph 21, there's an issue about communication with the DDMG and the need for an evacuation of a child from the Neurem Creek Bush Retreat. Can you tell us about that?-- We - I'd received information in relation to some health concerns re: a seven year old female at the Neurem Creek Bush Retreat. I conveyed this information to the DDMG, asking that she be evacuated because of a medical condition. At the same time - at the police station we had formed a forward command cell. The officer in charge of the QAS was also present. He relayed the information off through the QAS through a fax. I had no response until the next day that the DDMG contacted me and asked me for an update on her status; however, she had been evacuated that afternoon by QAS. 50

Do you know how they did it?-- With a helicopter.

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And do you know what the medical complaint was?-- It was a heart condition.

All right. Well, Woodford clearly has the potential to become isolated in situations such as this. It's clear enough that the whole response to the event would have been easier if there had been in place which could have been activated?-- Yes.

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So you'd see a need for what you've described I think as the ad hoc arrangements to be formalised?-- That's correct.

And you also made a point in paragraph 22 about the desirability of resources being pre-deployed to the area. Would you care to elaborate on that?-- Only - only that if we're looking at these issues, it maybe a point to look at in the past resources are limited and you can't have resources everywhere but we should look at perhaps identifying key areas where we can pre-deploy resources and have them housed for these situations.

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All right. You give the specific example of a flood boat?-- A flood boat one - would be one good resource because Woodford eventually opened up from the east so you could travel as far as Woodford from Caboolture or from Brisbane, however you couldn't travel any further. You couldn't get to Kilcoy, Nanango, Kingaroy because of floodwaters. So if stuff was at Woodford we would be able to source for the west.

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All right.

COMMISSIONER: What other resources do you have in mind?-- Madam Commissioner, there would be a whole - SES would be one, an SES at Woodford, so that you can move further west.

MR CALLAGHAN: Was there any SES presence in the district once it became isolated?-- Once - when it was isolated there was none. However when we opened up we used an SES flood boat on the Wednesday to access an isolated area.

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But there was no SES capability once the roads were cut?-- No, there's not.

They're all the questions I have, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Could I just get it clear. When you talk about pre-deployment, do you mean that, "We've got a wet season coming up, we'll get a flood boat here" or just that there should always be a flood boat at Woodford? What are you thinking of?-- Madam Commissioner, such as the area that it's subject to localised flooding over the year. Perhaps it would be more prudent to pre-deploy resources there that can look forward - further towards Kilcoy. The Kilcoy Creek goes over several times a year. Local areas around there are isolated by water. It might be prudent to put resources as far west as Woodford with a view of looking further west to support them.

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And when you talk about the SES, where's the nearest SES group to you?-- Madam Chair, all I can speak with any authority is to get the flood boat, the boat driver lives in Redcliffe and the other one lives at Shorncliffe and they have got to bring the boat from Bribie Island.

Is that the only thing you want the SES for or are there other-----?-- Well, there are - there are many resources that can be used in the SES.

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But there's no local brigade or group?-- No, there's not.

And are Redcliffe and Caboolture the nearest?-- That - oh, well, Kilcoy, but the problem is Kilcoy is flooded on their side.

All right. Thank you.

MR CALLAGHAN: Sorry, I did have one more question and that was to refer you to paragraph 20 of your statement where you identify issues with communications between emergency services. Could you elaborate on that for us, please?-- Being in a small station, the only resources I really have to utilise are the axillary firefighters and the QAS which we did quite effectively during the operation. However the only common channel that we share through our communication network is a simplex channel which does line-of-sight. So the topography of the area, there's a lot of mountains and things like that, so there's no shared communication channel for these operations where you can talk from - from the police station to a fire truck, or from one end of the road to the other end of the road if there's a small peak in it.

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COMMISSIONER: What do you need, VHF or UHF or what is it that would sort that?-- Madam Commissioner, that's technology that's way out of my-----

Mine too, that's why I was hoping?-- Yes, so I can't assist.

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MR CALLAGHAN: You can tell us the problem, but not the solution?-- I don't know the solution, sir, sorry.

Right. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr O'Donnell?

MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

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MR URE: No questions, thank you.

MR MacSPORRAN: No questions.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. I think that you can be excused. Thanks very much for your time?-- Thank you, Madam Commissioner.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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MR CALLAGHAN: I call Michael Wallis.

MICHAEL SHANE WALLIS, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name, please?-- Yeah, my name is Michael Shane Wallis.

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Mr Wallis, you've prepared a four-page statement; is that correct?-- That is correct.

You're being shown that now? That's it?-- Yes, thank you.

Yes, I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 309.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 309"

MR CALLAGHAN: By way of introduction, I suppose you're not part of any formal disaster management arrangement or had no awareness of any disaster management plan?-- None whatsoever.

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But you are secretary of the Woodford Memorial Community Centre which manages the Woodford hall; is that right?-- That is correct.

And that's apparently why you were contacted by Sergeant Renwick?-- Yes.

So all that you did then to organise the hall as an evacuation centre was done on your own initiative?-- Yes, with the assistance of some local people who acted as volunteers.

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All right. You had no training or expertise in what's involved?-- None whatsoever. Very fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants, I'm afraid.

All right. But there were a lot of things that you did arrange or at least that were arranged for the centre, such as

a nurse; is that right?-- Yeah, that's correct. I was aware of a local nurse whom I know personally that was on leave, and I contacted her and she came to the hall to be on standby, and then an hour later a lady who was cut off from getting home to her house came to the evacuation centre and she was a nurse as well so we were very fortunate.

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A psychologist?-- Yes, a local psychologist heard that we had people staying at the hall so she rang the hall and, yeah, offered her services for free on an oncall basis. So as soon as we detected someone getting a bit edgy or whatever, we rang her and she came, drove in from out of town.

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And was there a bit of that, people being distressed?-- Yes, there was quite of, yeah, angst and, yes, upset.

And so this person volunteered their services?-- Yes, volunteered her services. She was a Queensland Health employee.

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I see. There was a chaplain?-- Yes, the local church rang and asked if we'd like a chaplain on standby. He was also on an oncall basis, so if we needed someone to talk to the people we rang local Pastor Steven Thomas and he came in.

And again his services were used?-- His services were used just - just about all day everyday.

All right. There was also a chemist who was involved?-- Once the local doctors found out that Woodford was going to be cut off, they all left town leaving us with only the QAS and the QFRS and Jason the local policeman. The local chemist Greg Mynit lives away from Woodford but operates a business in the town and he has a house attached to his chemist that he uses as, like, a storeroom. So he offered his services to actually stay overnight, sleep on the floor for emergency-----

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So he came in when the-----?-- Prescriptions and stuff. Sorry?

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He came in when the doctors left?-- He was still there. He didn't run.

He didn't - okay. What about grocery supplies, that that was something else that was organised?-- We were very lucky. The local Christadelphian Church in Caboolture use our hall for their meetings on on Sunday. Once they heard that we were in a little bit of strife they contacted a local group in Caboolture that sent - it started off they were going to send us two pallets of groceries and it ended up 16 or 18 pallets of groceries turned up at the hall. So we were quite overwhelmed. They sent a fleet of seven trucks.

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COMMISSIONER: How did they get through?-- Being a truck they could get through. The water wasn't coming up as high at that stage so. And it was towards the end of the emergency, so the road was open or passable to Caboolture, but certainly not passable further west.

MR CALLAGHAN: What about communications including Internet communications, what did you do in that regard?-- The Woodford hall is a resource of the Moreton Bay Regional Council and it is a hall but it has no resources. We have a kitchen there which is capable of making 200-plus meals but we had no phone line, no Internet, no washing facilities as in washing machine or dryer, no TV, no radio. So when OIC Jason Renwick asked me to open the hall, I explained to him that the hall was by no means prepared for such an event. Yes, it is a nice strong building and it is a nice dry building, and there's plenty of room and there's plenty of toilets, but as for resources such as communication to the outside world, very, very, very limited.

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So what did you do?-- I rang Telstra and I've got to say that for the first time ever Telstra stood up. I rang - made phone call at 8 o'clock, at 9 o'clock we had a landline installed into the hall and the hall was over 23 years old or 24 years old, never had a landline there so we had to do it from scratch. So I was most impressed.

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COMMISSIONER: Where did the technician come from?-- Caboolture I believe.

MR CALLAGHAN: And what about Internet?-- Nothing like that. After the Telstra technician was there I said to him, "Is there any chance of us getting a broadband account?", and he said, "No, not this quick", and quite a few hours later a guy from Telstra Countrywide turned up and I don't even know where he came from or how he found out about it, but he dropped us off a mobile Internet connection that just - you know, just purely mobile just plugged into a phone line, and that's how we talked to the outside world via Facebook and Twitter and stuff.

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All right. You organised some television; is that correct?-- That's correct. The local Retravision donated a television to the hall so that the people - as you can imagine, 40-odd people in a hall wanting to know what's going on in the outside world. Things were getting a bit jittery so the local Retravision donated us a television. Then we discovered that the hall didn't have a workable antenna so I made a phone call to one of the local antenna installers and he sent a technician out and installed an antenna at the hall at no cost to anybody.

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And perhaps finally on this topic of equipping the hall, what was the story with bedding?-- I rang the local - I'm sorry, I'm unfamiliar with the terms, the district management wherever they were in Caboolture, and I asked for some bedding because we had people rolling up at the hall and nothing for them to sleep on. They asked me what was my SES member number and I said, "I'm sorry, I'm not a member of the SES", and they said, "Well, we can't really help you. No"-----

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Did-----?-- No to the bedding. So through some local contacts, I got put through to the local correctional centre

where I'm known - and not for that sort of reason - and arranged some bedding. The only trouble was we couldn't get the bedding out because the prison gets cut off when the water comes up. So I rang the local Councillor and he organised a Moreton Bay Regional Council dump-truck to actually go to the prison, put the mattresses in the back, drive back through the water and drop them at the hall.

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So you actually had to make the approach to the prison?-- Yes, very unofficially I might add.

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Sure. But then the Council - once you'd sorted it out-----?-- Yep.

-----the Council helped?-- The Council facilitated it then, yes. And we've since facilitated the loan of those mattresses until the end of this rain, so.

All right. We heard from Sergeant Renwick who told us how many people ended up being housed there, people and animals. Was there some register maintained of who was there and-----?-- Yes, yes, sir. A comprehensive register was kept of the names of the people, where they lived, where they were travelling to, yeah.

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And did you maintain that?-- Yes, I have maintained those records and any medical conditions that they had, so we had two diabetics, so that was - yeah.

All right. What - you say you're asked about your SES number and you weren't one, have you made inquiries about setting up a local SES or getting an SES presence in Woodford?-- When the Mayor eventually visited the evacuation centre, the Mayor of Moreton Bay Regional Council, he asked me for - if I could have one thing what would it be, and I said our own SES group equipped to deal with that sort of an emergency because we get cut off both ways and we're the little hill in the middle. So, yes, as Jason said, a flood boat is, yes, a necessity.

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And any other feedback about the likelihood of an SES presence there?-- I have contacted SES 11 times with list of names of the local people that would be willing to join the SES. I have received one e-mail back confirming the receipt of my letter and that is it.

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Okay.

COMMISSIONER: How many people do you think would join up?-- I have a list of 28-----

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Okay?-- -----which for Woodford is a lot considering it's the same people in the same committees doing the same things in the community, to have that sort of a response is quite overwhelming.

MR CALLAGHAN: And if I could take you to paragraph 16 of your statement. You've got some - you share some thoughts about what the Council needs in this sort of situation?-- Yes, I

believe that the Council needs to have a dedicated representative that looks after Woodford, someone with local knowledge, not just someone, "Oh, you can be it because you haven't got a job." We need someone there with local knowledge so that when we're talking about creeks or rivers or properties or outlying district that he knows and understands what we're talking about, not someone at the end of a phone looking at a map on a computer because I believe geographically we're pretty remote and when the water does come up it just cuts us off from everywhere no matter which way we want to go, we can't go anywhere. So we need to be organised so that we can spread out from Woodford, not wait for someone to come to Woodford to spread out.

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Your needs being very different from others in the same district-----?-- Correct.

-----at Redcliffe or Caboolture or whatever?-- Yes. We have a Local Council depot at Woodford, but when the water comes up it gets cut off, so we're between a rock and a hard spot.

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All right. Thank you. They're the only questions I have.

COMMISSIONER: Yes?

MR HUGHES: I have no questions Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

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MR URE: No questions, thank you.

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing, thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, very much, Mr Wallis. You're free to go?-- Thanks very much for your time.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Peter Hackney.

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PETER JOHN HACKNEY, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name and occupation, please?-- Peter John Hackney, medical practitioner.

And Dr Hackney, you're the author of a four-page statement which accompanies a much lengthier submission which has been made to the Commission; is that correct?-- Yes.

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Yes. That's just being shown to you now?-- Yes.

And I should perhaps clarify that as well as the submission, I think you might have just been shown some minutes of a meeting of the North Pine Residents Association meeting of 7 February 2011?-- Yes.

Yes. All right. I'm content all of those as just one exhibit, Madam Commissioner.

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COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 310.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 310"

MR CALLAGHAN: Dr Hackney, as president of the North Pine Residents Association, you represent the views of approximately 41 members?-- Yes, that's right.

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And how long have you actually been President of the association?-- Only since the beginning of this year.

How long have you been a member of the association?-- Since October last year.

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All right. You've lived in the area for a long time?-- Not really, no, since July 2009.

All right. In your submission you provide an overview of the flood events as they unfolded in so far as they affected your members. On page 11 of the submission, I think you provide a short summary of the damage which was done in your area; is that correct?-- Yes.

That's specifically properties in Whiteside. Just familiarise this: is that the area of the North Pine district?-- North Pine Residents Association confines itself to the area of Whiteside.

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I see?-- So it's mainly a couple of streets: Vores Road, Grant Street and Whiteside Road.

Importantly, apart from the damage, you make the point on page

11, I think, that it was something of a miracle that no-one was killed in that area; is that correct?-- Yes.

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And you describe the circumstances of an 86-year-old having to wade through five feet of water?-- Yes, that's correct.

Were you personally familiar with that incident or-----?-- No.

That's something you've been told about?-- Yes.

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Something that happened near to where you live?-- Yes, only a couple of hundred metres from where I live.

All right. And you have also described some of the severe emotional impact that people have suffered as a result of-----?-- Yes.

-----these events. And in summary would it be right to say - well, it's probably fairly obvious - the damage both physical and emotional was as a result of the rapid rise of the water combined with the lack of warning-----?-- Yes.

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-----about that. And those were concerns which were ventilated at that meeting of the 7th of February?-- Yes.

And the things that you feel must be improved are explained in the submission, but I'd like you to just elaborate on them a little for us. One major concern that is expressed is about the North Pine Dam and its lack of flood mitigation capacity; is that correct?-- Yes.

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And you make the point that the area directly downstream from the dam is a densely settled urban area?-- Yes.

And at the meeting of 7 February, there was a representative from Seqwater there?-- Yes.

I think he's recorded as Jim Cruse, C-R-U-S-E?-- Yes, Pruse, P-R-U-S-E.

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P, yes?-- Yes.

And, in essence, what you were told was that there was very little in the way of flood mitigation capacity offered by the North Pine Dam?-- Yes.

That Seqwater is obliged to keep the full supply level very close to the top of the dam?-- Yes.

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That is not something that they can change?-- That's correct.

And they advised you to take that up with this Inquiry?-- Yes.

And then as to the question of lack of warning I think you make the point in your statement, paragraph 3, that there was great confusion about the early warning system that's supposed

to be in place?-- Yes. Well, I've - you know, I have never heard of it in the couple of years that I have lived there, and many other residents have never heard of it. I have never been approached by SEQ Water, never been approached by Moreton Bay Regional Council as to this register. I was unaware of its existence and many people were unaware. Some people apparently did receive warnings of water releases via SMS messages, but there doesn't seem to have been any effort to make sure that that register is comprehensive or that everyone is aware of it. And also SMS messages are - the reception of cell phones in the area is erratic so I don't think that's a very safe way of doing it.

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This is something - as you say you've only been there for a couple of years?-- Yes.

This is something obviously that the members of your association wished to have expressed through you?-- Yes.

Members have been there for much longer?-- Yes, yes.

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All right. Was this something ventilated at the meeting on the 7th of February?-- Yes. There were many people wanting to know why we weren't warned about the much larger than normal release of water or warned at all, and the SEQ Executive Director Jim Pruse said that he believed it wasn't SEQ's responsibility to do that. That they notified the Council of water releases and it was their responsibility to notify us. The representative of the Council I'd spoke, Mr Bob Miller, he said that he - he was aware that there was an arrangement to warn residents but he didn't feel that this was a council responsibility, that it was done as a sort of a favour or service and he - he thought that, you know, it was up to us to sort of follow it up and see what we could make of it and I - you know, I was disappointed by that.

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Well, I was going to ask you about that. I think the minutes aren't paginated, but on the third page of the minutes if you can turn those up? If you go to the last paragraph of that page, is that - does that record some of the exchanges that occurred on the topic?-- Yes.

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And the Council - I think there were two Council representatives there; is that right? There was a Bob Miller and a David Dwyer?-- Yes.

And I'm not sure which one is recorded as responding in that paragraph, but as recorded it's said that, "The Council's got a very robust process"; do you recall that being said?-- No, I can't - I can't recall those exact words, no.

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All right. I just wondered even if you don't recall those exact words whether that reflects something that was said by the Council, and if so, exactly what they might have been getting at by saying that the process was robust?-- Well, my recollection was that Mr Miller didn't know the details, you know, of the plan and I think he was generalising that he felt, you know, it might be or should be robust, but I don't

think that he knew the details of it at all.

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It does appear every time he has asserted something was being done, the minutes at least record dissent?-- Yes.

It was the feeling of the meeting, I take it, that they weren't doing much at all?-- That's right. This meeting was a public meeting. It didn't only - there weren't only members of the North Pine Residents, there were quite a few other people there and people were, you know, fairly upset and angry.

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Right. Just on the topic of the releases from the dam and the water you might get and the effect that they might have, there was an issue about Wylie Bridge; is that right?-- Yes.

You raised the question as to whether repairs to that could be expedited?-- Yes.

And you understand that in fact an announcement has been made about that?-- Yes.

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That it's going to be demolished and a new bridge constructed?-- Yes.

That Young's Crossing, that seems to be - the suggestions we have had is that it's fairly easily inundated, is that your experience?-- Yes, there's - the dam can release water through its gates but it also has some release valves and as soon as any of the gates are opened, there's five gates, that Young's Crossing is inundated. So it really, I suppose, is a - a restriction on the ability of Seqwater to release water that they've got to be mindful every time they make any, you know, meaningful release of water, they block road. At the moment the dam is releasing water through one of the relief valves and the water is flowing briskly just underneath Young's Crossing.

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On the last page of the minutes, Councillor Dwyer records some comments about a recommendation that Council apply to the Minister for assistance. Are you aware of anything happening in that regard?-- No.

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Hasn't been any further feedback to your association-----?--

-----about that? All right. I suppose before we finish off on the question of warnings that you might get, have you had any further feedback from the Council about what system might be in place in the future or how residents affected by floodwaters might be warned?-- No, I had no contact from Seqwater or from the Council, and I - last week I rang the Council and inquired about getting on the register and I haven't - no-one's got back to me but that was only short notice, but my neighbour inquired about three months ago and hasn't received any reply.

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Is this on a register of people to be warned?-- To be notified, yes.

COMMISSIONER: What do you think would be an appropriate means of notification? I know that you say in the past that people had rung up?-- I think it would probably have to be landline phone, or even - there's so few people involved in our association area - there's probably maybe about 20 houses that, you know, are at risk of being inundated by a very, very large release. So, I think if they were able to send somebody around to knock on the doors.

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MR CALLAGHAN: The other thing - or the other issue that you raise is the proposition that at certain times, certain residents ought to be allowed vehicular access across the dam wall; is that right?-- Yes.

Can you just elaborate on that for us, please?-- Vores Road comes off Dayboro Road and it goes down into a dip and that dip floods when there are large releases from the dam, and then most of Vores Road and Grant Street, all the residents are cut off, and we feel that this seems to be happening regularly now. It's happened probably maybe six times in the last year and a half, and that - residents, you know - particularly in an emergency situation should be able to cross the dam wall, because that's the only way out of that little - that area when Vores Road is blocked.

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And how many people would we be talking about?-- There are about 40 houses, so probably, you know, 150 people, perhaps.

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This was raised at the meeting on the 7th of February - on the sixth page of the minutes, it seems that the question was raised. The only thing that's recorded there is a blunt, "No." Was there any further discussion on that?-- No.

Or any reasons provided to your association as to why that couldn't be done?-- No.

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And all that's sought is access for those residents and for emergency vehicles in emergency situations?-- Yes.

You don't want to turn it into a freeway?-- No.

All right. Just excuse me for a moment. They're all the questions I have, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell?

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MR O'DONNELL: Thank you. Is it right that within the North Pine area, there were about 15 houses flooded in the January 2011 flood event?-- In our residents' area, yes.

About 15 houses?-- Sorry?

15 houses?-- 15? There were seven houses inundated where water actually entered the houses, and there were about another, I think, 11 houses where water entered the properties, but there were seven houses where water entered the properties and two houses where the inundation was almost complete and houses were covered.

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Sorry, let's get this right?-- Yes.

There were seven houses where the water entered the house - was above the floor boards?-- Yes.

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And about another - how many houses - properties where the water entered the property but not the house?-- I think it was about - there was a total of 20, so there'd be another 13, yep.

Was yours one of those?-- The water entered my property, yes, but nowhere near my house.

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Not your house?-- Yeah.

Okay. And you say in your witness statement - this is in paragraph 3 - you didn't receive a flood warning-----?-- No.

-----before that occurred. Sticking to paragraph 3 in the third sentence, you say, "Residents are supposed to be advised by an SMS message from the Moreton Bay Regional Council." You see that?-- Yes.

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Now, were you told that by the Council?-- By Bob Millar - yeah, by the Council - not in any official way, but at a meeting, yes.

At a meeting on the 7th of February?-- Yes, that's correct. I didn't know anything about it until then.

All right. What's Mr Millar's position within the Council?-- He is a councillor. He's - you know, he represents our area. He represents the area that we live in.

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So, he's an elected official rather than a paid employee of the Council?-- Yes, that's correct.

All right. Do you know if he has any role in the Local Disaster Management Group for the Moreton Bay-----?-- I don't know.

Right. So, was the information that you received on the 7th of February that what is supposed to occur is that Seqwater, who operates the dam, when it is making substantial releases is to give notice to the Council and it is the Council's responsibility to give notice to residents who might be affected?-- Yes.

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And you say you didn't receive notice?-- No.

Do you know has the Council adopted any system since

the January event to give notification to residents who might be affected by dam releases?-- I'm unaware of it.

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Have you made inquiries?-- I rang up last week to ask about the register, and I was told that someone would get back to me and I haven't heard from them yet, and my neighbour inquired some months ago and no-one has contacted her yet.

Do you know the position of the person you spoke to?-- No - no, I don't. Just the person who answers the phone - reception, I suppose, at Council.

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All right. We've got a Mr Martini coming along very shortly. According to his witness statement there was a door knock system and an electronic message sending system. Do you know anything about that?-- No.

Excuse me for one moment. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dunning?

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MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Ure?

MR URE: Just one matter, Madam Commissioner.

MR URE: Mr Hackney, have you had the opportunity of seeing a statement by Mr Martini which has been given to the Commission?-- No.

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All right. I understand that. He says in a statement, which no doubt will be tendered shortly, dated the 4th of May 2011, that - and I'll just read a short passage to you - "A public meeting was held on 7 February 2011, details of which are contained within the submission to the Flood Commission of Inquiry, Dr Peter Hackney, on behalf of the North Pine Residents Association. MBRC has developed a series of polygons of affected areas based on certain flood events. Depending on the scale of the event, the amount of residents/properties affected varies. The outcome of the meeting was that MBRC would develop a database of affected properties based on the number of flood scenarios. This has been done and will be discussed in June 2011 with the MBRA." Have you had any communication to that effect?-- No.

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That would be a step in the right direction as far as you're concerned?-- Yes, yes.

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Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms O'Gorman?

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

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MR DOLLAR: I don't have any questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Callaghan, do you wish Dr Hackney excused?

MR CALLAGHAN: May Dr Hackney be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Dr Hackney. You're excused.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Anthony Martini.

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ANTHONY BRENDAN MARTINI, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name and occupation, please?-- My name is Anthony Brendan Martini, and I'm the Director of Engineering, Construction and Maintenance with Moreton Bay Regional Council, and I hold the position of Executive Officer with the Local Disaster Management Group.

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Mr Martini, you're the author of two statements, I believe. The first is dated the 4th of May 2011, the second is dated yesterday, the 8th of May 2011; is that right? I tender those statements.

COMMISSIONER: The one of 4 May will be Exhibit 311 and the 8th of May will be 312.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 311"

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 312"

MR CALLAGHAN: Do you have copies of those in front of you?-- Yes, I have.

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Can I pick up on the first one, the 4th of May, and page 1 of that statement and the first bullet point there? You say that the Moreton Bay Regional Council's Consolidated Disaster Management Plan was developed in conjunction with EMQ and so on. Can you tell us what was EMQ's role in the development of that plan?-- EMQ assisted the Council officers developing the plan and providing some expertise in terms of areas where Council might not necessarily have had that. So, they provided some guidance as to what was required to fit with the State plan, and then also reviewed the document after it got to a certain stage, as did the LDMG and the DDMG.

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How did that actually work? Were they - did they come out and sit down with someone and make suggestions?-- Yes, they did.

Or was it the case of drafts going back and forth or-----?-- Initially they assisted officers with some of the drafting and then subsequently reviewed that at the end of the day when the draft had reached its finality.

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And I think you say also that the plan was reviewed by the LDMG and the DDMG as well?-- Yes.

How did that process actually work?-- The DDMG - the LDMG received a copy of the plan - each of the members of the LDMG

- and the process was for each individual member to review the plan and to make comments at a subsequent meeting, and that was the same way the DDMG received the same plan and the DDMG had the opportunity to review the plan in terms of any queries, any questions it may have or any points of improvement, any of those, which, if they were there, would take it on board and include it in the draft which went to EMQ for final approval and to the Council for adoption.

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You said there was a meeting at which the LDMG shared their views about the draft plan; is that right?-- That's my understanding, yes.

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Presumably that's minuted?-- I would assume so. Can I - if I can, I wasn't engaged at the Council at that stage. That's my understanding as I've been advised.

And likewise was there a meeting at - of the DDMG, or was it just sent to them?-- I was advised it went to the DDMG. I can't be clear that there was an actual formal meeting of resolution, other than the DDC did sign it off.

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You can't tell us, though, whether there was any actual feedback, any suggestions or-----?-- I'm not aware of any feedback.

And, likewise, from EMQ, I suppose they were involved in the process itself, so their feedback would have been picked up-----?-- Yes, that's right.

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-----as you went. All right. Before we move on, are you aware of the concept of the Guardian software?-- Yes, I am.

And does the Council use that?-- It does now. It didn't during the event. It didn't have it.

Why not?-- No particular reason realistically. They were considering it. There was a - through LGAQ previously, about a year ago, there was consideration that LGAQ would, on behalf of the councils in South-East Queensland and Queensland, put a proposal to, I think, NDRRA scheme or NDRS scheme for funding. That didn't eventuate. As a result of that, Council went and considered its options and purchased the software.

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So, it had purchased - when did it-----?-- After the event, and certainly since the January event the software has been put in place and training conducted.

Were you - or was Council in receipt of a warning from any source as to the prospect that the wet season, which has just passed, was going to be a particularly severe one?-- Certainly there was a lot of media advice in terms of - I can recall, I think, the Bureau discussing with Cabinet and subsequently there was some information circulated, so certainly those sort of things we were aware of, yes, but nothing more formal than that.

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When you say there was information circulated, was

that-----?-- Via - via, I suppose the metropolitan papers and those sort of things, yes, and the TV obviously.

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But Council didn't receive any official information through the disaster management channels or from the State Government that you're aware of?-- Not that I'm aware of.

COMMISSIONER: Does Council maintain any sort of communication with the Bureau of Meteorology?-- Nothing formal. There are points of contact that officers have with officers at the Bureau, but there's nothing particularly more formal than that. Since the event, we've had a meeting with the Bureau to discuss our close relationship with the Bureau going forward, and certainly that's ongoing. We haven't got to a conclusion on that yet.

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What does that mean, you haven't got to a conclusion yet?-- Sorry.

You would like to have a relationship but they're not interested or how does it work?-- It is more about largely what that will entail and what we would - in our perspective, we would like a number of people that we can talk with directly and they would also talk with us if, for example, there was dramatic change to previous advice of weather forecasts and those sort of things, so we could be, I suppose, more aware of changes, and also to understand that the systems we operate, which is somewhat based on the BOM systems of alert, that we have those fully functioning, and we cannot extract any other information from them.

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MR CALLAGHAN: One issue that does seem to arise is that a lot of people who might have been involved in the disaster management response were away on leave at the time of what occurred?-- Yes, that's correct.

And it would seem to follow - well, I don't know, were any special arrangements put in place - any contingencies put in place about getting people back from leave during the wet season?-- If I can talk about the people who were away? Certainly - and in terms of the contingency planning of some of those, certainly our elected officials - they were in recess from about the - I think about the 14th of December through to the 18th of January. The three elected officials, as it turns out, that were, in effect, a part of the LDMG were either not available on the day overseas or uncontactable. Other members of the LDMG largely were available but were cut off from the roads and not being able to get there at short notice. Certainly the fellow from Energex advised us that he couldn't because he was committed elsewhere. So, with regard to other staff, we had a number of people trained that we could run an LDCC and we were reasonably confident that we had the numbers, but, again, when we called for them - because we set the centre up in Caboolture and we operate three offices at Caboolture, Strathpine and Redcliffe - they were cut off from getting to that LDCC. We had a number of staff who were trapped - well, not trapped - were on the Bruce Highway for a number of hours on that day - up to five hours in some

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instances. So, we had enough people, it was a matter of getting them there, which was the problem on the day.

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And that's one issue in your Council area, isn't it, that the whole constituency can divide up into different isolated islands, if you like?-- Certainly that's the case, and one of the things we have looked at, and Council has approved funds, is to set up a dedicated LDCC, because we didn't have one at the time. We set up an LDCC where the event is or largely is. So, there's time involved in terms of setting it up and getting it operational. We will set up a facility at Strathpine within the next month or so - certainly by the end of June - and that will be fully operational, just turn the lights on and go in there. The computers will be there, all the information will be there. And what we learned from this experience is that we wouldn't require people to travel up and down the highway or anywhere else. We would operate maybe from three centres and we'd have to run a number of centres or LDCs, if you like. So, that will be a challenge for us in terms of how we make sure that happens, because the lesson learned - we had people that we badly needed in the LDCC on the 11th of January, but they were, in effect, unavailable to us because they were largely on the highway for a number of hours, and that was during the peak of the event.

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And you make the point in paragraph 22 of your first statement, I believe - sorry, your second statement - the statement of the 8th of May - that setting up the LDCC at the same site as the DDMG was extremely difficult?-- Yes, for a number of reasons. On the day, the DDMG were also somewhat constrained getting to that facility. So, what might have happened the following day, which I think Mr Ryan spoke about this morning, there was opportunity to get nearly a full DDMG and an LDMG the following day. On the 11th, I recall - when we first established - there may have been two members of the DDMG and probably six or seven of the LDMG.

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So, did the LDMG actually activate?-- Well, it was activated. It was activated to set up, but, in essence, there was very few members there.

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Mmm. So, in so far as the LDMG was operational, is that just recorded in situation reports?-- Yes, that's correct.

There's no actual minutes of LDMG-----?-- I would have to check that. Certainly a group met that was loosely the LDMG made up of those members to talk about what was going on and what we needed to activate regularly.

All right. Looking to the future, do you have a sense of how, in the future, a number of LDCCs would work, which regions they would cover, that sort of thing?-- Yes, in principle, they would have to cover the three major centres and probably the two major depots, just in case. On the day, on the 11th of January, the Redcliffe centre, in effect, was isolated as well. It was cut at Mango Hill and also Old Bay Road through Deception Bay. So, anyone trying to get into Redcliffe from the Bruce Highway was - during the day - not all the time - at

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some parts of the day you could get there. Similarly Caboolture was through the traffic jam, and points of the incident from the 9th to the 11th of January, blocked at King John's Creek, which is just slightly north of Caboolture. Certainly Caboolture, in a major event, as other people have said, becomes a sea of islands, if you like, so Caboolture can be isolated and, similarly, Strathpine. With the incident that occurred on the 11th of January, Gympie Road through Bald Hills was cut on the low right. There's a two level road. The low road was under water and the high road was under threat and the Wiley Bridge was cut. So, the main thoroughfare through Strathpine, Lawnton and Kallangur was cut, so the three centres can be isolated. So, we'll have a dedicated centre out of Strathpine, we'll have to have a facility and arrangements to work out of the major depots at Petrie and also Caboolture, as well as those offices.

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You've acknowledged, I think, that there are aspects of the Council performance which have highlighted the need for improved performance in future events; is that correct?-- That's correct.

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One of the most important issues that we're confronting on the basis of what a number of people have said is the issue of communication, and you identify, I think, in your statement, a number of ways in which it is proposed that the Moreton Bay Regional Council is going about the improvement of its disaster management service generally, but, in particular, communications. Can I address specifically the question of warnings. What - first of all, whose responsibility do you see it as being to warn about releases from the North Pine dam?-- We have a - Council operates a warning system at the moment, but it is a warning system only for where Young's Crossing is closed or going to be closed through a release - a minor release of water. So, there's probably about 40 or 50 people who are on that list, and that list, in its various forms - and what I mean by that is previously people were physically rung up and advised that there was going to be a release from the North Pine Dam - but, again, this is a very minor release, which I think Dr Hackney spoke about previously, where Young's Crossing Road is isolated and it's more a burden for traffic as distinct from anything else. People are advised in the immediate local area that - immediately downstream of that area so that if they have any pumps or equipment, they can have a little bit of time to go and put those into higher ground. So, that's what that warning system has been before. There hasn't been a warning for a major release like what occurred on the 11th of January. Someone has to do it - and certainly one of the actions for us is to sit down with Seqwater and work out a process so there's not a lag between them advising it's going to happen, us processing something and someone getting told. So, there has got to be a more instantaneous effect, so that will have to be an agreement, as I would understand it, with ourselves and Seqwater. On the day of the 11th of January, we did try and get an emergency alert through EMQ about the releases as we were advised by Seqwater. Unfortunately it took a while and, as I understood - or I asked EMQ after this event, the reason

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why our alert took a period of time to get approved was that EMQ has a process where, if there's anything that's already prearranged, you know, there's a message that's already there, they can obviously sign that off in the future - sorry, in the past, and we can utilise that in the future. But the other issue is that the area, or the polygon of effect, they have to also look at that and examine that. Now, that was one of the reasons, as I was aware, that it took so long. We - the fellow representing EMQ and the LDMG, the senior police officer, Superintendent Brady, and myself drafted the release with the polygon from our flood engineer, and pushed that through to EMQ. So, that would have provided a number of people downstream of the dam with warning - not advanced warning, but warning that largely major releases were occurring.

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I'll come back to that, but you say the process of working out how it's going to happen is going to involve you sitting down with Seqwater. Is that happening, or is there a proposal on foot, or where is it at?-- No, we'll commence that discussion. Nothing has been done yet. What we have done is worked on the issue that the community raised at the public meeting, as I think has been spoken about. We have got a number of - depends upon the scale of the event. The properties can range from 20 to 1300. We need to work out with the community how that can be best done. As Dr Hackney just said, an SMS, in his words, wouldn't be the way to go. Our ability to door knock 1300 people would be severely limited, so we need to work through how we can best do that.

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So, you are aware of the issue but nothing-----?-- Certainly not formally at this stage, no.

Nothing has been started?-- No.

Well, on the question of the wider alert, you're aware of the warning which we have heard was issued by the State Disaster Management Group, which was, in very broad terms - and which caused a bit of a panicked reaction - you know the one I'm talking about?-- Yes, I do.

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When did you become aware of that?-- Roughly about quarter to 12 on the 11th of January, and then another one was sent roughly about quarter past 12.

And were you aware of the reaction that it was causing?-- I was aware of the reaction in the room, and I was certainly - as the event, as time went on, I was aware of - well, what effect it had on the community, and also on our communications.

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All right. So, was anything done to - attempt to follow up warning with some greater specificity or clarification?-- Nothing in a formal sense. It was certainly discussed at the DDMG debrief, and certainly on the day the QPS officers were looking to find out why it had been sent and, as I understand on the end, it was very busy. I don't know if there was any conclusion drawn on that day, but-----

Ah-----?-- Sorry.

No, you finish?-- Certainly we haven't followed up anything more than with the DDC following the debrief in terms of, you know, the language that was used, and also that we were also aware of it before it went out.

Well, looking to the future, how would such a situation be managed from your perspective if there was a general warning from a higher group, if you like, be it state or district level, which you at the local level felt the need to clarify-----?-- We would go back up the chain through the DDC, and ask as to why it was sent and probably try to think about how we might be able to mitigate that either - I don't know another message would necessarily assist, because my understanding of the day - and again this is my understanding - circulating on TV during the day was a repeating message that went after the quarter past 12 that was repeating the same message. So, it's our ability, I suppose, to communicate with media groups and outlets and say that maybe it's not correct and this is more the appropriate message. So, we would be using - going up through the DDC and maybe through the State to try and correct that message.

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The-----?-- If I can, sorry, I think at the day - sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. 1

No, no, please?-- On the day putting out a number of messages about the same matter, we were concerned that it might create greater confusion. One of the concerns we had when we were drafting the release for the North Pine Dam was to ensure that the language was reasonably unemotive and to try to get the message out so that, you know, it was reasonably clear. Putting out a lot of messages with a reasonable style that we - it happened to quarter to 12 and quarter past 12, we didn't think it was going to be of any great assistance. 10

You're talking there about the message that you were drafting but never actually got to send?-- Correct.

Was that because the peak at-----?-- By the time the approval through EMQ had come, the system had peaked, yes. 20

Right. Well, what about road closures then, what is the best way of communicating those to the public?-- Council has a road closure or road condition report that's on its web page, and that is sent to, if I can - sorry, I don't have the paginations, but on my third page there's a - of my statement on the 4th of May, it talks about a number of outlets. There's about 30. Most of them are media outlets and some are obviously internal to the Council where road closure reports get disseminated, and in some instances, you know, someone like ABC radio picks it up and adds to it. Things like Young's Crossing has been an habitual road that gets put on to that release. So it's on the web and it gets sent to all those agency to circulate those roads that are closed or impassable, or passable with care. 30

As long as we're on that page, can you go up a bit and there's the first bullet point on that page and then the third paragraph you say, "In addition the ability to provide information was limited following the release of the emergency alerts where communications were hampered." Are you talking there about the - just the volume of traffic or what?-- By communications being hampered, sorry, I meant in the LDGM room or in LDCC, our mobile communications were affected for probably a period of two to three hours where very few calls were coming in and going out. Our Internet - a number of agencies had people with laptops and AirCards and a lot of their Internet was very, very intermittent and if it was working it was very slow, and they were the issues we had. Largely we lost mobile communications for a period of time. 40

Do you know why that was?-- All I can - all I - no, I can't tell you, but all I can correlate it with is the amount of phone calls coming through the call centre after the emergency alerts were sent out. 50

Yes. Maybe just the sheer volume of responses to that emergency alert?-- Yes.

Clogged the system?-- Yes.

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All right. You have heard the evidence that's been given this morning, have you?-- Yes, I have.

You heard Sergeant Renwick, I think he indicated that he had contacted the LDMG but couldn't get information or couldn't get the information that he was after; you're aware of that?-- I heard that, but I'm aware of who Mr Renwick might have contacted. I can only assume that he might have contacted the LDMG QPS representative, but I don't know, I can't say.

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You heard Mr Wallis talk about the evacuation centre which sprung up at Woodford?-- Yes, I did.

The Council has a memorandum of understanding with the Red Cross as regards evacuation centres; is that right?-- Yes, it is.

And is there a requirement under that memorandum that you supply the Red Cross with a list of centres every 12 months?-- I don't - I can't recall the exact terminology of the MOU but I think that would be a reasonable thing.

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Well, in some form, I'm not suggesting - incidentally I don't have a copy of your memorandum in front of me, but I have seen others where that seems to be a fairly standard sort of requirement. Is that something that Council actually does?-- We have an MOU with the Red Cross. I don't know that largely we list the emergency centres because what I will say in the emergency centres if I can, Council doesn't list - well, currently on its web page following the 11th of January event there are 15 centres listed on the Council's emergency web page. Prior to the event the emergency centres weren't listed. There is a range of centres that could be, I suppose, used as an evacuation centre given an event that sits off-line, it's not published anywhere.

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I was going to take you to that in your second statement, paragraphs 30 and 31 addressed this issue and you identify the two issues. In paragraph 30 you note that in your view publishing the location of these centres can be dangerous, but in the following paragraph you note it's now been done anyway?-- If I go to the first paragraph, we go to that. Certainly, yeah, there is a concern about publicising the evacuation centres only in that what might have been fine for the 11th of January might not be fine for another event. And certainly different events such as a fire or a cyclone might require completely different evacuation centres. The concern is to ensure that the public gets information that it can utilise. What sometimes happens in events also is power is lost so can the Internet. People might rely on what they might have seen six months ago which might not be the evacuation centres for the particular event that might be underway. So there's some dangers in those sort of things, particularly, you know, if people just say, "Well, it's always been a town hall" - sorry, "a community or a school building, we'll just go to that", it might well be they're being placed

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in danger if they do that. That's the concern. The Council, though, decision was that the wet season was still going, people were concerned that they didn't know where appropriate evacuation centres were. What we did with the 15 centres has been on the web page now, we looked at the map that we developed after the 11th of January event in terms of where the floodwaters went and the height of those, and these 15 centres cleared the floodwater and had a reasonably clear route to access them in terms of main roads and those sorts of things, so that's what the decision were made on. Certainly those centres and the presence of these centres being listed on the Council's web page will be subject to a further review of the Council.

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So this is just a temporary measure?-- That's my understanding, Council might have another view.

I haven't actually seen the web page but does it, do you know, make clear that these are the wet season and that people should check-----?-- I can't recall the words but they have - the nominated centre shows a map and then its says the status, if it's closed or open, and all of them are closed with a red dot.

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All right. Just getting back to the system with the Red Cross though. There is, as you say, an MOU with them. Is there any process of audit or review, whatever you want to call it, in order to ensure that you are complying or can comply with that which is required of you pursuant to the MOU?-- I cannot honestly say I recall or understand that. The MOU we have is now 12 months' old. There is a Red Cross representative on the LDMG. We did use the Red Cross cross that day down at the Strathpine Community Centre. So I can't talk about an order, I don't know.

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No, I suppose what I'm getting at is that it's not so far as you're aware the responsibility at the moment of anyone in Council to check to see that the things that the MOU requires are in order?-- No, I would suggest that the Disaster Management Coordinator has that responsibility.

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Yes?-- So I would expect that person would make sure that that's been audited, but we would need to follow up and make sure that's happened.

Okay.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Callaghan, I'm thinking of taking a morning break. Does that suit?

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MR CALLAGHAN: Yes, it does.

COMMISSIONER: All right. Well, we'll come back at five to.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 11.39 A.M.

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 11.55 A.M.

ANTHONY MARTINI, CONTINUING:

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COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr Callaghan?

MR CALLAGHAN: Mr Martini, can I just tidy up a few things? You have your second statement there, the - sorry, yeah, the second one, 8th of May, paragraph 42. You say you received information that the river system had peaked and given a forecast which didn't match with the reality. From whom did you receive that information?-- It was via the State Disaster Centre - or centre meeting the previous day - or on the Monday at 11 a.m. There was a ring-around of all the councils at that stage who were affected. When it came to our area we asked the Bureau, had the Bureau there and also a hydrologist, what the situation was the three systems in Moreton Bay, that being the Stanley, the Upper Caboolture and Upper Pine systems, and we were advised that they had peaked and the forecast-----

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COURT REPORTER: Sorry, the forecast?

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WITNESS: Sorry.

COMMISSIONER: The forecast for the following day was?-- The forecast was 50 to a hundred millimetres over the next 24 hours, being the 11th January.

MR CALLAGHAN: Okay. Thank you. Whilst we're there, I think your second statement has some annexures. Can you turn up annexure 6? Page 33 if that helps. Last bullet point on that page you say, "Working on the Woodford model", does that mean you're following in the footsteps of Mr Wallis, if you like, and working on the sort of thing that he did at that centre?-- Yeah. Look, I think what Mr Renwick and Mr Wallis achieved was remarkable and certainly we'd be looking to try to set that up and formalise that for the western areas of the municipality that are easily cut-off and probably have similar situations, and I nominate some of these being Mt Nebo, Mt Glorious, Mt Mee and Belthorpe areas as well as Woodford.

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So something similar with-----?-- Very similar.

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Yeah, okay. Thank you. And would that be something that would be incorporated into the Disaster Management framework in a formal sense?-- Yes.

How would that happen?-- It would be a formal plan of actions and responsibilities in discussion with those - those group

those community groups and/or police and fire representatives. 1

So that would just be something part of the Local Disaster Management Plan-----?-- Yes.

-----but targeted specific areas?-- Yes.

I see. Can I turn then to the interaction, if any, that you had with the Somerset Regional Council during these events? We've heard Mr Ryan speak earlier about some of the intersection by the district group. Did the local group perform some functions for the other local group which was having trouble?-- I was aware of probably two - two particular matters, and when the local - sorry, the police member on the LDMG came to us about particular matters, he believed at that time that he thought they were within the Moreton Bay region where they were assets in, if you like, roadways and those sort of things in Somerset. We did try to assist where we could but we had most of our manpower out where it was. There was a number of roads I think in - it was either Sandy Creek Road, I think, where there were a number of bridges cut out from memory. Other than that, there wasn't really anything much brought to our attention. The QPS through the local - member in the local disaster management group was managing that thought DDMG. 10 20

All right. The SES was, no doubt, active in the region during this event. How did - how did they get deployed? Did the LDCC have much to do with that?-- On the day of the 11th of January, the SES controller was in the LDCC and he was tasking the various - there's six groups in Moreton Bay Regional Council, six SES groups that come under Moreton Bay Regional SES banner, and he was tasking those through to his deputy controllers, of which he had two, and his six group leaders. 30

All right. Did the situation at Woodford receive any attention from the SES, do you know?-- I - I can't recall. I know in the previous days that the SES was involved there. On the night of 9th of January, the QPS, SES and ourselves were in contacted. The highway been cut, the D'Aguilar Highway. There was concern that there were some people on the western side of the river and they were looking to resupply them. The controller had organised a flood boat for the following day, being the 10th, to do two things: there had been, I believe, on the 9th four kayakers had been caught on the - to the west of Caboolture. There was one - the first thing was to bring them back across the river. And to also provide some supplies if that was required. My understanding is the controller drove through the D'Aguilar Highway to the Woodfordia turnoff on the morning of Monday so there wasn't, you know, the river had receded at that time. What other actions he took in - or the SES took in Woodford I'm unaware. 40 50

So even though he was in the LDCC, the controller was - the local controller was in effect just calling the shots and letting people know what was happening?-- To my mind he was, yes.

All right. Are you aware of any move afoot to set up an SES in Woodford?-- One of the resolutions follow the event from the Council was to investigate setting up an SES in Woodford. Really nothing has further proceeded than that at the moment because there are a number of actions that we're working on.

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What can Local Government do to assist or speed up that process?-- Certainly take the matter up with EMQ and probably conduct a meeting with relative, I suppose, community leaders in Woodford to see if there is an interest in terms of setting it up and it would be a viable unit. There has been previously a unit in SES - sorry, Woodford but it has been disbanded for lack of interest.

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Does Council provide facilities or-----?-- In all the other six units that Council has, it provides buildings and plant and those sorts of things, yes.

Speaking of plans, I might just take this opportunity to tender the Disaster Management Plan and the Evacuation Subplan for the Moreton Bay Regional Council.

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COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 313.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 313"

MR CALLAGHAN: I have no further questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell, do you have any questions?

MR O'DONNELL: Yes, thank you. Your releases from North Pine Dam on or about the 11th of January, can I get an idea of how many homes they flooded; that is, where water would enter across the floorboards of homes?-- I don't have that exact detail, but I heard what Dr Hackney had said. I can't tell you the exact number here.

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All right. So your best information is what Dr Hackney said?-- Well, I don't know it to be any different. It was about this number. I don't have the exact detail.

Let me ask about relations between Seqwater and the Moreton Bay Regional Council for the moment. Prior to the January 2011 flood event, there was an emergency action plan which Seqwater had produced and circulated to, amongst others, the Council; are you aware of that?-- I remember receiving something for Seqwater.

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Can I show you a document, please? Just take a moment to look at that, please. Do you recognise the document?-- No.

You haven't seen this before?-- I can't recall, no. Not saying I haven't seen it, but I don't recall it with any great knowledge.

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Let me try to prompt your memory a little bit?-- Sure.

If you look - there are page numbers in the bottom right-hand corner. I'm looking at page (i)?-- Yes.

You see it says, "Distribution, authorisation and revision status", then it nominates a number of agents. See number 8 is the Moreton Bay Regional Council?-- Yes.

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And the position is "Local Disaster Response Coordinator"?-- Yes.

Is that you?-- Not - not - well, at the time it would have been, yes. Not now.

So at the time - just putting a timing on this, at the very foot of the page in the footnote there's a date September 2010?-- Yes.

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Does that assist you?-- Yes.

If you look on (ii): revision status, the original was issued in October '08; revision 1, August '09; revision 2, September 2010?-- Yes.

Does that ring any bells with you?-- Not really.

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If you turn through the body of the document to Appendix A, document called "Contact Register"?-- Yes.

You have to put it side-on to read it. You see it lists an agency down the left-hand side?-- Mmm.

Then officers of that agency and contact details?-- Yes.

And it's got "Seqwater". At the foot of that page, the Flood Operation Centre, flood engineers?-- Mmm. 10

And then on the next page, second item down, the Moreton Bay Regional Council, and we see your name proudly displayed as the fourth officer of the Council to contact?-- Yes.

And they're your work and mobile numbers as at September 2010?-- Yes.

So, does that suggest you might have been involved in the - involved in the document or involved in the giving of information or assist in compiling the document?-- Not necessarily, no. Certainly I was a contact point in that situation, but I wasn't involved in putting together the document or any comments that I can recall. All I would say by that, in the terms of the revisions, there was - the first two revisions, I wasn't an employee of the Council at that time. The last revision, September '10, certainly I was an employee of the Council at that stage. I still don't recall providing any critique or anything of the plan. 20 30

You don't recall seeing the document?-- Not really, no.

Right?-- I'm not saying I haven't, but I just don't recall.

Right. Just sticking with that contact register, the name Ed Hamill I'm interested in. He was an officer of the Council?-- Yes.

During the January 2011 flood event?-- Yes. 40

What was his position during the flood event?-- Local Disaster Coordinator.

Sorry?-- Local Disaster Coordinator.

Right. Thank you. If you wouldn't mind going back to the body of the document and look at page 4 of 14. It's headed, "Agencies and Responsibilities", and it sets out the responsibilities of Seqwater, Seqwater Flood Operation Centre, and then the Regional or City Council?-- Mmm. 50

Which would include Moreton Bay Regional Council?-- Yes.

Does that reflect your understanding of the responsibilities of those agencies during the January 2011 flood event?-- That's my understanding.

And it was during the January 2011 flood event?-- Yes.

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Thank you. Commissioner, I haven't really proved the document through the witness.

COMMISSIONER: It probably isn't contentious, is it, Mr Callaghan?

MR CALLAGHAN: No, it can be tendered.

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COMMISSIONER: So, you want it tendered?

MR O'DONNELL: Yes, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Exhibit 314.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 314"

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MR O'DONNELL: Then if it can be brought up on the screen, Exhibit 23, which is the unredacted flood event log, opened at page 23, please? What I'm going to show you is some extracts from a document called "flood event log", where some communications between the Flood Operations Centre and Moreton Bay Council have been recorded, and see if I can prompt your memory as to those events?-- Sure.

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This is on the morning of the 11th of January?-- Mmm.

COMMISSIONER: It's on the screen.

MR O'DONNELL: Thank you. I take you to an event on the 11th of January at 9.16 a.m.; can you read that?-- Yes, I can.

It suggests that someone called you, couldn't get you, but left a message about, "Very large inflows from the North Pine Dam has resulted in steep gate openings. Flood downstream can be expected." Does that ring a bell with you - such a message?-- No, it doesn't. I recall a conversation early afternoon where I got another call, I got a call from Seqwater, advising that there were large outflows, and that was the time we looked at setting up an emergency alert. I don't necessarily recall that one.

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You don't recall the one at 9.16?-- No, no.

All right. If you go to 11.59 a.m.? It suggests that someone called you, left a message?-- I certainly recall that one.

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"Outflow from North Dam will exceed 2,000 CUMECS?-- I certainly recall that.

You recall receiving the message?-- Yes.

That outflow of 2,000 CUMECS would suggest to you that

flooding below the dam would occur?-- Certainly there was a lot of water being released, yes.

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Can I take you to some of the other messages while we've got this page open? Go back to 9.17 a.m.. "JT called Ed Hamill." Now, he's one of the gentleman's names we saw in the Emergency Action Plan?-- Yes, it's certainly different spelling, but it's the same person, yes.

"Informed that very large inflows into North Pine Dam had resulted in steep gate openings. Flood downstream can be expected. Strathpine Road (Old Gympie Road) to be flooded within the next hour." Can you recall receiving advice from that gentleman, Ed?-- No.

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To that effect?-- No.

Do you know if any action was taken following-----?-- I'm not aware of any.

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-----any such advice?-- I'm not aware of any.

If you look at 10.45, "JT advised MBC" - Moreton Bay Council - "Ed Hamill of current situation." Do you know if there was any action taken following any advice around 10.45 that morning?-- No, I'm not aware of it.

11.19, "JT called Ed" - H-A-O-L-D. Must be a misspelling?-- Yes.

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"Advised North Pine still rising. Current releases to exceed 2,000 CUMECS?-- I can recall the conversation before the next call to - well, the call to me at 11.59. I can recall a conversation between Mr Hamill and myself at that stage, yes.

Tell me about that conversation?-- It was something along the lines that we had received advice from Seqwater that water release was increasing from North Pine Dam - that sort of advice. I don't know if he quoted a figure. Certainly the conversation I had later with Seqwater spoke of up to potentially 2,800 cubic metres per second could be released.

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Was any action taken following that 11.19 communication?-- Not directly. As I said before, it was largely around the - the conversation at around midday. We then looked to draft an emergency release.

So, that was following the 11.59 conversation?-- Yes.

Or, sorry, the message left?-- Yes.

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Right. So, can you just detail for me what action was taken following that 11.59 communication?-- There was discussion about - with the flood engineer, the QPS, and the local disaster coordinator and myself in terms of examining what effect that flow might have and what areas may well be affected. The police then instigated a door knock, which I believe they've provided information in terms of E-mails in

terms of which areas were door knocked and which areas were highlighted at that stage. So, there was a door knock of areas around, I think, Torrens Road and Lake Kurwongbah and that area by the police through Petrie police station.

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When did the door knock occur, to the best of your knowledge?-- I don't know. I understand that the police provided those E-mails to the Commission.

So you don't know when the door knock commenced?-- I can't say exactly what time it occurred. I was present when Superintendent Brady rang the Petrie Police.

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What about the people in Grant Street, Whiteside?-- I don't-----

Any communication with them?-- There was a polygon, if you like, that was developed, where the area was - at that stage was thought to be affected from the modelling from the advice we had, and that was the area initially that was door knocked by the police.

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Sorry, let's get this straight. The area door knocked by the police, as you understand it, included Grant Street, Whiteside?-- No, there was an area developed by the flood engineer that we spoke with with the police, myself and Mr Hamill. I can't say to you at this stage if that included Grant Street. There was an area that was in and around Torrens Road. Now, whether that includes Grant Street, I don't know, but certainly there was an area given that needed to be door knocked and forewarned of water that was being released, and the possible effects it may have on them.

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So, you don't know the precise area door knocked?-- Not here now.

Nor the time of the door knocking?-- No. But certainly the police, as I understand, kept those records and provided that to the Commission.

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The flood engineer you referred to in your last answers, that was a Council engineer?-- Correct.

You also say there was an emergency alert that was drafted?-- Yes.

But, in fact, not sent?-- Yes, that's right.

You've also said in your evidence before the morning break that you would prefer to see a more - prefer to have communications with Seqwater regarding more instantaneous means of communication. In fact, there was no relevant delay in terms of the communication from Seqwater to the Council about the releases from the North Pine Dam on this occasion, was there?-- What I would perhaps - what I meant by that was that we had an arrangement between the two parties where, if a similar arrangement is to occur - like a release like that - that we have agreed text - or agreed messages in terms of

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their content, and that that is sent out more or less at the time of advice by Seqwater. So, we'd like to look at, if the situation was going to be reoccurring, what would be a suitable text or, if it's limited to 160 characters, what that would be, or what a number of those would be, and have them rearranged, and also have them pre-approved if necessary through EMQ so that the instantaneous thing with that will be, "Well, this is the message that's pre-approved, please send it.", because there was a delay, but I think that largely MBRC and Seqwater really need to work ly together on this.

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So, are you talking about a means of electronic text message?-- Given that if it is going to be a major release from North Pine Dam, it will affect a number of people. Like I spoke earlier - or it was mentioned earlier - we've done some work following the public meeting with the North Pine Residents Association, and depending upon the scale of release, that could affect anywhere between 70 properties and 1300 properties. Now, that's things that we've worked on and obviously Seqwater is not aware of at this stage. Certainly we'd like to talk with Seqwater about that and we have slotted in a meeting with the North Pine Residents Association some time in June after we've vetted all these polygons and those sort of things. But they're the sort of things that we need to have agreed and accepted so that they can be released instantaneously, rather than have a lag of an hour and a half or two hours that might have occurred on the 11th of January.

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In terms of communication from Seqwater to the Council, I'm suggesting there was no lag on the part of Seqwater to the Council?-- Okay, and what I'm suggesting is, as we go forward, that largely its-----

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No, no, please answer my question?-- Sorry.

Do you agree or disagree with that?-- We received a phone message, yes - messages, sorry, yes.

A number of messages?-- Yes, yes.

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There's no lag on Seqwater's part?-- I'm not saying anything with regard to Seqwater, I just think that, together, the Council and Seqwater need to work together on agreed messages that may come into play if there's any further major releases from North Pine Dam, so that those texts or EA messages can be, if you like, jointly agreed and then released, because we'll be relying on, as we are, the information from Seqwater. So we'll be looking then to say, "Well, that will affect this certain range of the community.", and we would then be looking - if we're going to send an emergency alert or text out, be sending it to that range of community people, or broader. So, it is a matter of working through those and having some sort of an agreement between the parties so that that can happen with both parties' agreement.

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That's something that you could do on your own?-- Yes, we can. But we're looking for some partnership from Seqwater.

Seqwater will give you notification of what releases are occurring from the dam, but it is for the Council and the Council's internal officers to work out what range of residents will be affected and then to institute a means of giving notification to those residents, surely?-- I don't necessarily know if I agree with that. Certainly, if we start considering how much - what water releases may be from North Pine Dam and the scale of them, we could do - we could do the ultimate modelling and say we need to go and send an emergency alert out to the whole of Strathpine and Lawnton and Kallangur, and we don't necessarily want to do that. We want to basically understand how we can best, I suppose, send a message to the people who need to see the message and - we need to send out a message whom it is appropriate to warn. What happened on the day is a number of people got an emergency alert - and this is divorced from the SEQ matter, if I can, and what that did was cause a lot of confusion in the community, where a lot of people were ringing in to the Council and saying, "Are we affected by these emergency alerts?", when clearly they weren't. We want to do that the same thing or have the same thing in place with releases from the North Pine Dam, so that we understand - we can go and model those, but we would like to work with Seqwater, and we've written to Seqwater about the matter in terms of looking to work together to model what happens upstream and downstream in advance of releases, so that largely we can provide relevant, pertinent information to those who need it.

Thank you. Nothing further.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dunning?

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

MR URE: I have nothing, Commissioner.

MR MacSPORRAN: I have no questions.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Callaghan, do you wish Mr Martini excused?

MR CALLAGHAN: Yes, commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Thanks, Mr Martini. You're excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Paul Heymans.

PAUL HEYMANS, ON AFFIRMATION, EXAMINED:

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the commission your full name, please?-- My name is Paul Heymans.

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Mr Heymans, you originally provided the Commission with a submission dated the 6th of April 2011; is that correct?-- That is correct.

And subsequently, with a two page statement signed on the 13th of April 2011; is that right?-- That is also correct.

Yes. I tender those.

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COMMISSIONER: The submission and the statement will be Exhibit 315.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 315"

MR CALLAGHAN: Just going through the material that you've submitted, Mr Heymans, your first point, I think, is the proposition that during events such as these, nothing is normal; is that right?-- That is absolutely correct, sir.

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You identify the fact that expectations might have been framed by reference to similar events, previous flood releases from Wivenhoe, et cetera, which had all gone under the Geoff Fisher Bridge?-- They had all been under the bridge, yes. It was a complete surprise to many people, myself included, when the flood release went over the bridge and kept on going.

40

Eventually you were cut off in every direction?-- Five kilometres between the edge of one side of the flood and the other side on - Fernvale State School.

Can you try and give us reference to other events or other flood releases. Can you give us an overview of your experience, knowledge of road closures in this area, just as a general-----?-- There had been no previous road closures in that area due to flood or any water releases from Wivenhoe in the 10 years that I've lived there - the 11 years I've lived there.

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It's never been an issue before?-- Never been an issue before.

Your next - or one other point that you make in your statement and submission relates to the whole question of the warning that was received, and you refer, I think, to an SMS alert that you received at 8.21 p.m. on the 10th; is that right?-- That's correct.

And you set out in your submission the text of that warning. Are you aware - well, I mean, it says that it came from the SES, but why did you get it?-- It just came through the mobile phone network.

1

All right. Nothing that you'd done to-----?-- Nothing I had done to initiate it, no.

All right. Now, what was your reaction to a warning expressed in those terms?-- Well, my own reaction, "Was I'm glad I'm living on a hill."

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What was the reaction of others that you have spoken to?-- It was largely ignored.

With the result that those who did ignore it and stayed where they were, or many of those, had to be rescued; is that right?-- That's correct.

And you describe the efforts of some struggling against the surging flow of water?-- Yes, that's correct.

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Are you aware of particular experience - experiences of others in that regard?-- Yes, I am.

And you also describe the need for tractors and so on to get people out of where they were?-- A number of people had to be rescued with tractors, yes.

Your point being - or I think you submit that multiple lines of communication should be used in order to deliver such warnings. Can you elaborate on that?-- That's correct. I mean, in our area, all communications operated by the authorities fail. There wasn't a single communication apart from the SES - from the SMS message that we received from the SES. And in my subsequent research I realised that not everyone is connected to the Internet so you actually need a considerable community education so that those people who are receiving communications transmit them through the community fairly quickly. So in order for a communication system to be robust, it needs to be perhaps transmitted by the people in authority, but then the community needs to pick it up and run with it.

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All right. You also provided a bit of information about the role of the Rural Fire Brigade in your area. Can you explain the significance of that organisation during these events?-- They were absolutely crucial. Their response, as I think you'll be hearing on later on today, was quite magnificent. The role of the Fire Brigade is fighting fires, but they responded to this flood in an extraordinary way, and the entire community responded in quite an extraordinary way.

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All right. Well, you described how there was a group - how many people who were isolated are we talking about?-- We estimated 450 all together.

This created a need for all sorts of things, food included?--

We needed food, we needed accommodation, we needed medical - medical supplies. There was a whole range of facilities that we needed. And Wivenhoe Pocket Fire Brigade actually organised - they had actually one person who was responsible for each: somebody was responsible for accommodation, somebody who was responsible for getting food in, somebody who was responsible for medical supplies and so on and so forth.

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And this was all the Fire Brigade?-- This was all organised by the Fire Brigade and the local community, yes.

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So far as you're aware did you receive any official, by which I suppose I mean Government, assistance apart from that?-- Not until well after the flood event was over. To be fair, nobody could get in.

Well, I think you've referred, didn't you, to a helicopter-----?-- We did request a helicopter drop from the SES for food supplies but it wasn't forthcoming.

20

Did it - was there a private-----?-- There was also a private helicopter, a gentleman by the name of Dick Kerriman used his private helicopter to bring in supplies. I believe the supplies were funded by the Bendigo Bank.

I see. Were you aware of how that came about?-- It came about through one of my neighbours used to work for the police force in the emergency services and he had some very good contacts and was able to make contact with Mr Kerriman who was actually looking for a role in the flood and was very eager to be of assistance.

30

So was just - it was a private approach to a private-----?-- It was a private arrangement, yes.

Nothing-----?-- He made four trips.

Four trips?-- Yes, at his own expense, yes.

What about the SES, were you aware of any support or efforts that were being made by the SES to assist your community?-- We had no input from the SES during the flood. I believe that our chief fire officer, Mr Graham Peall who is appearing later, was in communication with them but I don't know the content of that.

40

All right. Well, the next issue or one other issue you raise is the whole question of communications which were obviously difficult for everybody including the police apparently. Can you tell us what you know about that? I think we'll be hearing from Mr Rumbelow later-----?-- Yes.

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-----but you talk about a conversation that you had with him?-- Yes. It's my understanding that the police were also without communications, they had no back-up communications, so once the electricity and the telephone lines were cut they had no Internet, no telephone, no - their radios didn't work because they didn't have back-up generators, they had nothing.

And on the subject of communication with police or emergency services, you also speak about a triple O call which I think you made; is that right?-- I - with great difficulty I made a triple O call and was referred back to the SES who referred me back to triple O. We were trying to organise rescue of some neighbours who had become cut off. Their property was surrounded - completely surrounded by water and it was getting quite late in the evening and I eventually managed to get back the triple O and who said they would get back to me and they got back to me five days later.

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Right. So what actually happened to the situation?-- We managed to get them through out using kayaks.

Kayaks. All right. And who got back to you five days later?-- It was - I don't actually recollect his name. It was a inspector from the Missing Persons Unit in Toowoomba.

You also address the whole question of your local disaster management group and I think make the point that the Mayor and the CEO had responsibility for the dissemination of information but they were both cut off?-- That's correct. According to the Local Disaster Management Plan the CEO and the Mayor are responsible for communications with the community, but they were both cut off.

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And there was no back-up plan?-- And no back-up plan.

You also make some observations about the use of Facebook and Twitter?-- That's correct. The community was able to communicate with each other. The authorities weren't able to communicate with the community, but the community knew what was going on and had fairly robust communication system going very quickly. Within an hour we were - we were able to get out information.

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And the question you pose is if the Council was unable to update their own website, why not use Facebook-----?-- Precisely.

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-----in that situation?-- It was used in Christchurch, it was used in the Japanese tsunami.

All right. And finally the topic you address is the question of public education. You make the point, I think, that you heard something about what John Oxley had seen 180 years ago, whether it's accurate or otherwise, I think you - you wished to demonstrate that we've only got a couple of hundred years of recorded data relating to situations such as this, and you identify the fact that the Somerset Regional Council Local Disaster Management Plan provides for a "On-going public awareness program", which seems to amount to some pamphlets in the foyer of the administration building; is that right?-- The Disaster Management Plan specifically refers to leaflets in the library and the foyer of the local Council, yes. I've asked several local people - or quite a large number of local people if they'd ever seen the leaflets and the answer was no.

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In any case your point being that the plan should go much further than that?-- Absolutely.

Yes. All right. Thank you. They're the only questions I have.

MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

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MR URE: I have nothing.

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing, thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Mr Heymans. You're excused?-- Thank you.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: Madam Commissioner, I call Constable McCoombs

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DANIEL THOMAS MCCOOMBS, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Your full name Daniel Thomas McCoombs?-- Yes.

And you're a constable of police?-- Yes.

And you're presently stationed at Marburg Police Station?--
Just recently moved back to Lowood.

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Okay. And during the January flood events you were stationed
at the Lowood Police Station?-- Yes.

And you've made a statement for the Queensland Flood
Commission of Inquiry?-- I have.

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

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And that's the statement you made for the Queensland Flood
Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 316.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 316

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MS WILSON: Now, have you got a copy of that statement
there?-- Yes.

I'd like to take you to a couple of matters that you raise in
your statement. If we can go to paragraph 7 of your
statement, and this is - you're referring to the 11th day of
January this year?-- Yes.

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And paragraph 7 you state that Fernvale effectively got cut
off and it was cut into two?-- Yes, Fernvale was cut off from
outside areas, and also Fernvale itself, the suburb was cut
into two, yes.

What I'm interested in is where, at paragraph 8, you say, "At
this time the police radio was not reliable." Now, what is
the reliability of police radio at usual times without any
flood events? Is it good?-- In Fernvale suburb itself, the
police vehicle radio is fairly reliable, but hand-held radios
is very intermittent depends where you are.

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Okay. And on the 11th day of January, police radio in the car
was unreliable?-- The car was unreliable also.

And also the hand-helds?-- Hand-held was useful, hand-held
didn't work at all.

And the only communication that you had back to the police was by your mobile telephone?-- By a police station, yes.

Okay. If we can turn the page, we're talking about paragraph 11 myou were informed that the Fernvale Future Centre was a possibility evacuation centre?-- Yes.

What information did you have about the evacuation centres that were going to be established?-- Previous to this meeting with the Council member?

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Yes?-- None.

None. What information did you get throughout the flooding events about where the evacuation centres were?-- From time to time I met with council staff just in passing and through questions - questions posed to them I learned about where the centres were.

20

Did you have - did you get briefed at any point in time of saying, "These are the evacuation centres. This is where you should tell the residents to go"?-- I was informed by, I'm not sure what informed me, but at some point on the Tuesday I was informed that the school was a possible evac centre as well as the Future Centre. I can't recall who actually informed me of that.

Was that just through word of mouth or was that through official communications?-- That's through word of mouth.

30

Okay. And you pick that up in paragraph 13 because you were saying as you were driving around people approaching you and asking you where to go as they were concerned they would be flooded. And is it one of your issues that you couldn't provide that information to these residents?-- Yes, we weren't advised ahead of time where we could send people.

And, in fact, that is one of the issues you raise in your statement at paragraph 23. You regarded it as the most pertinent issue that you discovered during this crisis was a need for a preplanned evacuation system for residents to an evacuation centre for them to attend?-- Yes.

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And how do you envisage that to be? That that should be on the Internet where residents should be able to access where the evacuation centres are?-- I think it could be educated ahead of time, perhaps through local council meetings, perhaps actually informing the residents that if a situation like this arises. Maybe the Rural Fire Brigade siren could be sounded, if that sounded, you head to the school or wherever they want to set it up.

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Okay. But certainly as a police officer you would have expected to know where the evacuation centres are so that you could communicate that to the residents?-- Yes.

And so is that a channels communication between the police and

the LDMG?-- That should be set up, yes.

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You also refer to, in the issues that you address in your statement, about communications were poor. You say at paragraph 24, "Communications were also poor during the floods which hampered our ability to respond as quickly as possible." What do you see that - what do you see the solution to be in relation to those communications?-- I'm not an expert in communications so just our radio network I think needs to be improved. Even in normal situations - as I said, our hand-holds sometimes don't work in normal situations. So when disaster comes up we need a reliable source of communication.

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At some point in time during this flooding event, there was a loss of communication because the power went out for landlines, did that affect you at all?-- Power went out in Fernvale, yes.

And did that affect the communications that you were able to get with the police station?-- Lowood had power on the whole time so our police station could contact me via their landline. I had a mobile phone.

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What about the fact that the power was out in Fernvale, did that affect the ability for you to communicate in any - in any shape or form with any persons?-- Didn't affect me, no.

Okay. If I can take you to paragraph 26 of your statement, and that is where you state that you were impressed with the operations conducted by the Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade?-- Yes.

30

And in particular you state that the way that they organised all the logistics concerning the evacuation centres. Can you particularise what logistics they organised in relations to the Fernvale - in relation to the evacuation centres?-- So basically clean drinking water, food for the people of Fernvale. I'm not sure how they organised it. So all your basic necessities of life.

40

Okay. You contrast that with other evacuation centres where you were required to arrange through the Disaster Management Group such services as food and water supply?-- We were - yes, so in particular with Lowood they would contact the station and say maybe, "We're short of drinking water", we would then submit that request to Disaster Management for them to organise water, but we didn't have to do that with Fernvale. The rural Fire Brigade organised that.

Okay. Thank you. I have no further questions for you.

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MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

MR MacSPORRAN: Just one matter, Constable. In terms of the issue of communications, that has been a matter that has in some parts been addressed, has it not, the difficulty with communications?-- "Addressed", what do you mean by that?

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Do you know a gentleman by the name of Ian Bell, the officer in charge of Radio and Electronics in Toowoomba?-- No.

Do the police cars in that area have a - have some paperwork to assist you with some of these difficulties with communication?-- Some paperwork, no.

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Maps and manuals to assist you to change channels when you are having difficulty with making communications?-- It lists the channels that are appropriate for your areas, yes.

And is there a list of channels that you might have to change to in certain areas within your police district?-- Yes.

There is a difficulty in that district because of the rugged terrain, isn't there?-- Yes.

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There are a number of radio towers in that area, a number of separate towers?-- I'm not sure where the towers are located.

What I'm suggesting to you is there is a procedure where you are to change channels as you pass from one area to another to enable you to have a better line of sight communication with a tower to enable you to use the radio?-- There is a number of channels but they're all very similar in nature. So it's not like one challenge is - is a lot better than the other. You can change channel but you get the same result.

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Okay. But there is a procedure to instruct you to change channels when you move into a different area?-- No, our channel in Lowood division is channel two. If that channel is not working correctly there's another channels that you can try, but we stay on channel two, that's the best radio reception in our area.

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Now, your means of communication are, firstly, your police radio, that's one means?-- Yes.

Secondly, your hand-held radio?-- Yes.

And, thirdly, what, mobile phones?-- Yes, each-----

Are there any other methods?-- -----car has them. Sorry?

Are there any other methods?-- No.

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Mobile phone coverage, is that through Telstra?-- Yes.

And is that in certain areas within the division functional?-- Yes.

All right. And it seems from your statement, although you have had difficulty, you were able to communicate from time to

time?-- Yes.

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All right. Thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you very much, Constable McCoombs, you're
excused.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: I call Senior Constable Rumbelow.

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DARREN JAMES RUMBELOW, ON AFFIRMATION, EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Is your full name Darren James Rumbelow?-- Yes.

And you're a senior constable of police?-- Yes.

And you're presently stationed at Lowood Police Station?--
Yes.

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And you have been stationed at the Lowood Police Station since August 2010?-- Yeah, about that, yes.

Okay. And you have made a statement to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry in relation to the flood events of January 2011?-- Yes.

Can you have a look at this document, please? Have you signed that document?-- Yes.

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And that's your statement that you have made to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes, it is.

I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 317.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 317"

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MS WILSON: Now, Senior Constable, have you got a copy of your statement there with you?-- Yes, I have.

I wish to address some matters that you raise in your statement. If you can go to paragraph 14 of your statement? Now, this is where you refer to - it was at that stage that you realised that this event was bigger than the normal isolated flooding or just water release from Wivenhoe. Can you tell us when it was that you came to this realisation?-- It was about 7.30 p.m. on the Monday night, the 10th. Until then there was some flooding over Forest Hill-Fernvale Road. I just put that down to dam releases. It wasn't raining at this point. I was then tasked from there to attend the, I think, it was 70 Schimkes Lane or Schimkes Road at Clarendon. The initial report came through was to the effect of a family trapped there with rising floodwaters. I started making my way there. As I was on Clarendon Road, I basically came around the corner, found the "Road Closed" sign and saw that the water was over I think it's Watson's Bridge which is probably three or 400 metres short of where I wanted to get at 70 Schimkes Lane. Obviously I was aware that I couldn't get through there. About the same time as I pulled up, the phone rang and it was a senior sergeant from an MIR.

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MIR being?-- Major Incident Room.

XN: MS WILSON

1551

WIT: RUMBELOW D J

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Yes?-- At the time I was a little bit surprised. I was trying to assess what was going on with the river. I wasn't aware at that stage that there was anymore than just a bit of isolated flooding in a couple of usual spots. And he - the senior sergeant was asking me about this job and I said, "Look, I've just - just gone off there now. I can't actually make it through there. I was just about to ring the informant." I then took his number and I - I rang the informant in the job which was someone at the address. I spoke to them at that time. They then told me that they weren't flooded, that they - they'd heard of a wall of water coming from Grantham which was a sort of common theme that the members of the public had sort of raised.

That was a rumour that was going around in the community?-- Yes, yes.

That it was coming towards Lowood?-- Yeah, and the rumour that I had heard at that stage was a wall of water coming from Grantham. My understanding of the, sort of, lay of the land from there I found that a little hard to believe that there was a lot of open space between Grantham and Lowood, and they were just concerned and inquiring about that. I asked them if they were at any risk at that stage and they said, "Oh, no, but we are close to the creek." From what I could see, the Lockyer Creek at that stage, while it was over the road, it certainly wasn't to the limit of the bank at that point, and I then rang the senior sergeant. I only wrote that number on my hand at that time because I was sort of in the process of pulling up and grabbed the first thing I could, wrote the number down, I rang him back, he answered. I advised him, I said, "Look, there's nothing in this job at that stage. They were just wanting to know where a wall of water was coming." I then said to him, "Is there because I'm hearing it from a few people?", and he said, "No, there's no wall of water coming from Grantham." That was pretty well the extent of our conversation.

You talked in - just in your evidence just then that it was different from the usual flooding, or you talked about the usual flooding. What is the usual flooding that this area experiences?-- I'd - over the, I say, six weeks as a rough figure, prior to it there had been fairly heavy downfalls. There'd been some - on occasion there'd been a couple of occasions where the water had flooded over the Brisbane Valley Highway at Fernvale between the school and the service station a few inches, nothing more than, sort of, minor inconvenient stuff. Jensen's Swamp is an area near the, sort of, intersection of Brightview Road and Forest Hill-Fernvale Road, that area, sort of, backs up fairly regularly and covers Jensen's Swamp Road. A few other little spots around there that occasionally get water over. It's usually a very minor. Might cut a road off for a couple of hours. It's-----

In paragraph 14 you say that, "This event was bigger than the normal isolated flooding" - that's what we've just discussed - "or just water release from Wivenhoe Dam." In the time you have been at Lowood station, have you experienced when water

has been released from Wivenhoe Dam and has caused flooding?-- I'd experienced some water released from the dam. The area of Forest Hill-Fernvale road right near Lowood, it's near the sewerage treatment works, is basically you have got the dam in the north, the Brisbane River, for want of a better word, runs pretty well south directly towards Lowood and then turns to the east, and then there's a stretch there between Lowood and Fernvale. I have been tasked there to a job, I'm not really sure when, but sometime I assume in early January where an area of the land there had - that the water had risen up and there was some cattle stranded. I managed to locate the owner and he got them off before they were washed away. That sort of area rose up and down. That's the, sort of, most easiest viewed area that we sort of use as a bit of a gauge. You'd see the river up one day, some of the crossings, twin bridges and stuff like that would be under at various time.

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Do you ever get provided with information about when there has been releases from Wivenhoe Dam and expect there might be road closures?-- There was. There was some information passed on, yes. Usually through our OIC, he'd send out an e-mail to us.

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And, sorry, who sends that e-mail?-- The officer-in-charge at the time. So I do recall a couple of e-mails coming from Sergeant Douglas in relation to that.

If I can now take your attention to the evacuation of the aged-care facility, and you address that at paragraphs 20 of your statement and onwards. Now, this is on the 11th of January?-- Yes.

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You attended an aged-care facility and this aged-care facility needed to be evacuated?-- Yes, yes.

Were you aware whether there was any preparations for the evacuation of the aged-care facility or did it happened very rapidly?-- We - it happened rather rapidly.

Okay. Was the decision made upon your arrival or was it made a short time before you arrived?-- I'm not exactly sure when the decision was made because we'd worked later the night before and one of the other officers, Constable Griffin, couldn't return to Coominya, Coominya was cut off. He stayed at my house that night. Because of - by that stage late on the Monday night we realised that this was possibly something that we might be called back early in the morning for. I think we were both meant to start at 2 p.m. And because often we're on on-call, we - I have a radio at home. I heard - about 6.30 in the morning I heard the words something about "evacuating the old folks' home" at which point I checked if Constable Griffin was awake. I said, "I think they're going to need us. We might want to head in." At that point we got to the police station. Sergeant Munn who was the actually OIC at the time basically just said, "We're going to have to evacuate the" - there's a creek that runs down the side of Lowood from some hills and it goes around the back of the retirement home.

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And in your statement you have described that small creek at that point in time as a raging torrent?-- Yes, it was certainly larger than usual.

And the aged care facility that you're talking about had 29 residents?-- I believe so, 29.

And three were bed-ridden?-- Yes.

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Was there an evacuation plan that was being followed upon your arrival?-- I believe - myself and Constable Griffin, we actually took my personal car down there because we figured we'd need every bit of car space to get whoever we could out. We got there first, Constable Griffin and I went out the back and we noticed that the water was exceptionally high - raging. At that point we sort of just made a decision that between us and the staff at the hospital, that this wasn't a safe place to keep people who are bed-ridden, and I think we just basically made it up as we went along. I just said, "Well, we'll get everybody down to this area." I was aware that fireies and ambos were on their way. QFRS showed up with a couple of fire trucks - more so for the manpower to lift people. There were actually three ambulances available which was - straightaway. We said, "Well, let's get the three ambulances here, we'll get the three bed-ridden people in the ambulances and get them up to the high school." Then we started moving the other 26 people to a function - a sort of a hall right next to the door. We made sure that Constable Lauchlan, I think, stood at the door with a manifest of everybody and as they went out she ticked them off to make sure that we knew who was leaving and then hopefully the same was being done at the other end.

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You said "get them up to the high school". Did you know that that's where they were going to be evacuated to?-- Yeah, that was opened up as an evacuation centre the night beforehand.

Were you aware whether the high school had the facilities to cater for residents from an aged-care facility?-- Not really. I was aware that - I'm not sure exactly how I became aware, but at the time I was aware that - I think I overheard a couple of the nursing staff say that they were taking some stuff up to the - to the gym. At that stage it was a case of, "They can't stay here. They've got to go somewhere and we'll get whatever we can up there."

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And when you say "taking some stuff", the bed-ridden patients obviously would require beds?-- Yes.

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How were they taken up to the high school?-- I'm unsure if - I'm not exactly sure. I know that later there were mattresses and blankets and stuff up there. I don't know how it was done at that stage. I actually left the hospital. Pretty well as the evacuation started, I left the hostel to go and take care of something else.

Were you aware how long these residents remained in the high

school?-- There was - I'm not 100 per cent sure. I know that there was - it was at least one night. I remember going down there at a night-time and there was still hostel staff there keeping an eye on them. The hostel staff just rotated their shifts, looking after them. They put a section aside at the side of a gym with the hostel patients there.

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MS WILSON: Commissioner, would that be a convenient time?

COMMISSIONER: Yes. 2.30 all right?

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MS WILSON: Yes, Commissioner.

THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 1.03 P.M. TILL 2.30 P.M.

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THE COURT RESUMED AT 2.29 P.M.

DARREN RUMBELOW, CONTINUING EXAMINATION:

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms Wilson?

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MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. Senior Constable, if I can take you to paragraph 28 of your statement, and that deals with a rescue of two men-----?-- Yes.

-----that had been stranded on a bank. They got caught in rising waters, and had gone into those waters and one of them had been electrocuted?-- Yes.

The matters that you raise in relation to that relate to helicopters and the availability of helicopters?-- Mmm.

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If I can take you to that? You needed a helicopter to get them from the bank and back to the Lowood High School?-- Yes, yes.

Well, more than that, you needed a helicopter to get them from the bank and then get medical attention, didn't you?-- Yes.

Now, the first helicopter that arrived was the Westpac Rescue Helicopter?-- Mmm.

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Did you organise that helicopter?-- No, at that stage I believe QAS staff were liaising with air communications to do that.

Okay. And you state that the helicopter arrived but had to leave a very short time afterwards because of fuel issues?-- Yes, they landed in a paddock next to us and one of the-----

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Sorry, I couldn't quite get that?-- They landed in a paddock next to us.

Yes?-- One of the QAS members spoke with them and came back to me and said they can't assist at this stage, they're out of fuel, but they're sending another helicopter.

And the next helicopter that arrived was from the New South Wales rural fire service?-- Yes.

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Do you know who deployed this helicopter?-- No. I believe that was from QAS member speaking to the Westpac, Westpac then advised us at that stage that - I'm not sure exactly how it occurred, but I do recall at the time expecting another helicopter along soon which was the - turned out to be the New South Wales Rural Firies.

Now, did that come up from down south of the border or was it

stationed in Queensland at the time?-- No idea.

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Okay. Now, they rescued the two men, but took them to the Lowood High School?-- Yes, the men had been rescued by two civilians in a canoe and taken to the far bank, because they couldn't actually get them in the canoe and it was the easiest option at the time. They then had made their way back to a house - one of the rescued men to their house. The guys in the canoe then paddled back to us and said, "They're not well." I think it was probably a bit of an under-estimation of the condition of the older guy that had had the heart attack from the electrocution.

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He had been electrocuted and had had a heart attack?-- Yes.

And he needed urgent medical assistance?-- Yes.

Now, why didn't he go back with the New South Wales Rural Fire Service Helicopter?-- I'm not totally sure. Part of the problem was that from there, I had no visibility of the actual scene. When I arrived at the scene, there was two gentleman launching a canoe - one of them was an off-duty fireman. Once they disappeared behind a house that was submerged in water with trees, I had no visibility of the scene, I had no communication with them. They were just in shorts and T-shirts in a canoe. Some time passed, probably about half an hour, the only thing I could do at that stage was use the PA to reassure them on the vehicle. At one stage I then had to go a fair distance through Lowood to another side of the flood waters to try and see if there was anybody still there. For all I knew, they could have been washed away by that stage. At that point, I saw the canoe coming back and returned and that's when the helicopter's arrived. The SES tried to deploy a boat but couldn't make it through there because of the power lines.

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The issue that you raise in paragraph 49 which feeds off this issue is you say that the use of the helicopters after dark was also a major point of concern for you, and that is because you couldn't get a helicopter to come and take these men to hospital after dark?-- Yep.

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You tried with the Australian Defence Force?-- Yes. Once they were lifted to the school, I attended back at the school and the QAS staff took them off the helicopter and we tried to set up a sort of a triage in the high school gym. My impression at that stage is that they were probably hypothermic and needed some Milo and they'd be fine. It was pretty quickly after that the QAS staff realised that one of them was in a fairly bad way. By that stage, the helicopter had left. I don't know why or how that happened. In hindsight, it would have been a lot better to have used a helicopter to take them all the way to hospital. I think it was just an under-estimation of their condition until the ambos really had a chance to assess them, which was done at the evac centre. Once that occurred, it was pretty well on darkness at that stage. One of the paramedics approached me at the evac centre and said to me that he couldn't get through

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to the QAS Coms to try and get a helicopter back to collect them, and asked me to try. I attended at the SES where the LDMG was. I asked them - or I told them, "We need a helicopter as soon as we can as we have a guy in a bad way." It was then I was advised by SES that none of the rescue choppers could fly at night. I contacted Ipswich Coms - Police Coms - QPS Coms - and requested that they - advised them that we had a critically ill person and requested that they try and contact ADF or see if there was anything they could do to assist.

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And do you know the outcome of that?-- I didn't get virtually any real reply in relation to that.

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The ultimate outcome was that these two men were transferred to the Ipswich Hospital via a four-wheel drive - Queensland Ambulance four-wheel drive?-- Yes.

And it took in excess of two hours?-- Two of the QAS staff loaded both of them into a Landcruiser and drove out through Lowood-Minden Road through Minden, through a - went through flood waters, a landslide nearly took them out, and, yeah, it took - from what I've heard - two hours.

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On the topic of helicopter evacuations, the next day, on the 12th of January, you worked with the Rescue 510 from EMQ. Your role was to assist Rescue 510 to perform helicopter evacuations and you were to provide the local knowledge about where to go?-- Yes.

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There was a list of people that needed evacuations. You prioritised them and then directed the helicopters to go in accordance with your list?-- Yes.

Now, the part that I wish to take you to is that the helicopter needed refuelling?-- Yep.

Returned you to the Lowood police station, and the helicopter went to Amberley. You were expecting the helicopter to return?-- Yes.

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And, in the meantime, you had received a job to go and assist an elderly man at Mahons Road who was awaiting collection as a result of a medical emergency?-- Yes.

And you were expecting the EMQ helicopter to come back and then you could perform that task?-- Yes.

The EMQ helicopter never came back?-- We saw it approaching the police station and then at the last minute it turned away and headed west. They had my personal mobile number at that stage to give me a call. As it turned out, they rang me on approach and said - left a message stating that they had been diverted to an urgent matter, gave me a number to ring back and said, "If you still need us, give us a call back." It was about - pretty well at that moment that we lost a fair portion of the mobile communications and it took about two and a half hours for me to actually get that message, which was just

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unfortunate.

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So, you just put that down to an unfortunate-----?-- Yeah.

-----an unfortunate coincidence of you losing your communications with your mobile phone?-- Yes, they rang me, they left a message, saying give them a call back, and unfortunately I didn't get it for two and a half hours.

You, in relation to this task of assisting this man, utilised a Channel 10 helicopter?-- Yes.

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How did you get the Channel 10 helicopter?-- I - there was myself and Constable Carter were in the two helicopters. Constable Carter had left in the Westpac. I obviously knew where this guy was. I'd spoken to him and I was wanting to get there to get him out of his house. He was an elderly gentleman with emphysema and oxygen was running low and he also had a back injury - a pre-existing back injury - and at that point I was sort of fairly worried about how we were going to get him out, and I went to walk out the back of the police station and a Channel 10 reporter came to get some information, at which time I decided to say, "Well, how about you get me a helicopter?" He tried to ring Channel 10 to get it authorised, couldn't get through on his mobile. I said, "Well, we've got landline.", and next thing I knew I was talking to the Regional Operations Manager at Channel 10, and just requested a helicopter.

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A helicopter came?-- Yes.

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You went up in the helicopter, you located where the man was?-- Yes.

And then through helicopter communication - the radio - you could - you contacted the Westpac helicopter?-- Yes.

And the Westpac helicopter winched the man to safety?-- Yes, they went to rescue him.

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Is there any issues that arose in your experience in dealing with the helicopters during this event of the inability for the helicopters to communicate with the police station?-- Yes, I mean, there was a - the problem being we had no real communication with them. The only way that we - that I knew of that we could communicate with the EMQ helicopters, for instance, was a phone number on a whiteboard that we had. At one stage mobile phones were pretty well useless. Later - it would have been the Wednesday - later on the Wednesday, we lost the station phones for some period of time - I'm not sure how long. I only know that because we had detectives that live in the area that couldn't make it to work who came in to help out by answering phones and, in the end, they said, "Well, there's nothing we can do. We can't even answer phones because the phones are dead." We lost computers, we lost virtually all communications except for the odd ability to use a mobile phone. Without that, we had no communication, no radio communication.

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Are you aware, in usual circumstances, whether there is an ability for police - QPS - to communicate with personnel in rescue helicopters?-- No, I wasn't - I'm not aware of it - how to do it, no.

Not aware of it. Whilst on the topic of communications, if I could take you to paragraph 35 of your statement, and that's where you state that during this time, you became aware that, "In addition to the loss of mobile communications, the Lowood police station was now also without landlines, power or computers. Mobile phones were working intermittently, but most of the time, a message would appear stating something similar to 'network busy'."?-- Yes.

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Can you tell me when that occurred?-- The mobile - the mobile phone first became a problem for me - I'm not sure when it occurred, but it was when the EMQ helicopter - that would have been Wednesday morning, the 12th, some time - I'm guessing around 9, 10-ish when I had the issue with the helicopter with the mobiles. That continued for a couple of days. The - at some stage, on the Wednesday, 11, midday or so, we lost all phones and computers at the Lowood police station. I'm not 100 per cent sure why, but I just know that they didn't operate. As I say, that became apparent when the two detectives who had come in to help us weren't able to do too much because they were there to answer phone calls for us, and we weren't getting any or weren't able to make any.

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So, how were communications made between the police station and officers on the ground?-- We had Constable McCoombs at Fernvale. I don't know if we did have a great deal of communication with him. Other than that, we had myself and Constable Carter in the helicopters. The only way we had communication was at one stage - I think it was on the Thursday - I used - the helicopter I was in there rang my personal mobile which I'd left on the desk at the police station. We had - my personal mobile was left lying around the station for a while. I assume that was used a bit - and that was only when we could get service.

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For taskings of police officers on the ground, how did that occur? Did you have to keep on coming back to the police station to get the next task?-- That's pretty well how I got my taskings, yes.

Paragraph 48 of your statement also picks up on communications, and that refers to, "Many of the emergency agencies operate on their own communication systems." And, "Once the technology was affected, then many of these emergency agencies could not communicate. What are you referring to when you say that these emergency agencies operate on their own communication systems?"?-- We didn't have radio contact, that I'm aware of, with the likes of SES or rural fire brigade or even the auxiliary firies, obviously. Just no radio network that is compatible with each other.

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Is it usually compatible with each other?-- I'm not aware of

it if it is.

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You are not aware that it is, or you are not aware that it is compatible? Are you saying that you don't know?-- My understanding of it is that we can't communicate. There might be a way that we can, but-----

It is not easy?-- I wasn't made aware of any way that I could contact the firies or ambos or anybody other than QPS.

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Okay. And that's in the everyday - today, that would exist in the Lowood police station that you cannot contact the firies or the ambulance?-- Yes.

Now, if I can take you to evacuation centres, and you raise this issue in paragraph 45 of your statement. You say that of the three evacuation centres that had been originally set up, only the one at the Lowood High School was open. Do you know whether three had been originally opened?-- No, the other two were never opened.

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How did you know of the existence of the other two?-- On the Monday, the 10th, about 7.30, after the Schimkes Lane incident-----

Yes?-- -----when I became aware that it was obviously a major incident unfolding, I contacted Constable Griffin, I started making my way back to Lowood. We arranged to meet somewhere to discuss the incident that was unfolding around us. On the way back there, I toyed with ideas in my head as to what we needed to do. One of those was start evacuating around Lindemans Road and areas closest to the river. My first thought was where to evacuate them to, and the only place I knew of with a large enough facility would have been the Lowood High School. When I met Constable Griffin, he advised me he'd spoken to one of the SES people from the LDMG, a Matt Pinna, and they had basically advised him of the same thing, that we're going to have to start evacuating Lindemans Road and go to the high school. It was at that point that it was told to me that the CWA hall at Lowood, the gymnasium at the high school and the Tarampa State School would be opened as evacuation centres. Then, from then on, that was the information I was giving out. I know other people received the same information from other sources. I was later tasked during the week to follow up with a questionnaire of the people running the evacuation centres for things like did they have adequate security, what resources did they need, et cetera, and at that time I was tasked to go and speak to the high school, the CWA hall, and the Tarampa school, and I advised them - I said, "Well, those two - two of those never opened at all." I remember driving around late on the Monday night and advised QPS Coms by radio and saying, "Well, the CWA hall isn't active. There's no-one there."

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Before the events, were you aware of the evacuation centres that may be available?-- No.

Is that important information for a QPS officer on the ground

working to know the evacuation centres that may be available?-- Yes.

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And since then have you been told where the evacuation centres are that would be available?-- Not formally, but I would take it that the Lowood High School was probably one of the better places to use.

In paragraph 45, you give the example that one family went to an evacuation centre early in the morning. It was closed, and then they went to the Lowood High School, and then on talking to an SES member, they were advised to return home, and at 8 o'clock, that house was flooded and needed rescue by yourself?-- Yes.

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Did they then go back to the Lowood High School?-- No. No, at the time, I was in a four-wheel drive fire truck, single cab truck with two firemen and myself. The family in question were two adults, two kids and two large dogs. We didn't have the room to put them in the truck. My - a good friend of mine is a neighbour on the uphill side of that road, and at that time we were of the opinion that we were required elsewhere than to be there, so I just made my way to their neighbour's place - my friend's place - and said, "Can you look after these people for us until they can either get to the evacuation centre or we can get back here?" They ended up staying at my neighbour's place until later that day when the water receded - to their neighbour's place, sorry.

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In paragraph 45, you say that the issue of evacuation centres needs to be addressed?-- Yes.

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How do you say it should be addressed?-- That some place is nominated as an evacuation centre that is then not only put out to the public so they're aware - which in this case the three places were - but then to make sure that there's actually facilities there when people show up. I understand that there's limited resources sometimes, but in this case, a family made the effort to go to an evacuation centre and no-one was there.

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And finally, Senior Constable, at paragraph 52, you say that you would have thought that due to the nature of the flood events upstream, that you would have been advised of the need to take some action regarding rising flood water when you commenced your shift; that is, when you commenced your shift on the 10th of January?-- At 4 p.m., yep.

And you didn't get provided any such information?-- No.

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Thank you. I've no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Who did you think would tell you about something like that?-- A lot of those thoughts are probably based on hindsight, ma'am, and with the benefit of hindsight, I know there was an incident to the west on Lockyer Creek - I know that the Wivenhoe Dam is approximately six kilometres to the north of our town, and in between our town and the

Wivenhoe Dam, the Lockyer Creek meets. As I said, in hindsight, if there was an incident to the west in Lockyer Creek, that water has got to go somewhere. I'd hope that, from this, someone will learn that if that's happening to the west, we might want to notify people down river from it to give them a bit more warning.

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Do you have in mind who that would be - who should bear that responsibility?-- Not really. Not that I would pinpoint with any real accuracy or expertise to be pinpointing.

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All right, thank you.

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell?

MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

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MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

MR URE: No questions.

MR MacSPORRAN: Thank you, Commissioner. Senior Constable, just a couple of matters concerning communications. You have available to you, don't you, the landline at the station itself?-- At the station itself.

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You have the vehicle radio?-- Yes.

You have the handheld radio?-- Yes.

And you have mobile phones?-- Yes.

There are a number of radio towers in the area around Lowood to facilitate radio communication?-- Yes.

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A number of different towers, I mean?-- I believe so.

Does the handheld radio operate off the same tower as the police vehicle radio?-- I have no idea.

Does each police vehicle have a mud map and some manuals that tell you when to change channels, depending on which area you are in throughout Lowood?-- Yeah, there's a book in each vehicle's glove box which has a list of people pretty well everywhere that we would be and what channels to be on in those areas.

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Could you just confirm this for me, if you would: Channel 2 relates to the Mt Stradbroke tower, which is to the south of Minden Range, to the south of Lowood?-- I'm not overly familiar with exactly where the towers are, but channel 2 is the main channel we use.

Is the main one?-- Yes.

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The Mt Brisbane tower, which is the Somerset Dam area, north of Lowood, channel 86?-- Sounds familiar, yes.

The Mt Glorious, which is east of Somerset and Lowood, channel 74?-- Mmm.

And the Mt Perseverance, which is to the west of Lowood and north of the Lockyer Valley, that has two channels, 94 and 39?-- Yes, I'm not familiar with those two, but-----

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In any event, the manual which is kept in the glove box of every vehicle, tells you when to change channels to at least optimise your chances of getting communication?-- Yes.

Now, did you understand that since these events - in fact, late in April this year, there was discovered to be a fault in the Mt Stradbroke channel 2 tower?-- I wasn't aware.

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Have you noticed at all whether the reliability of the communication on channel 2 has improved recently?-- I haven't actually noticed a great improvement, if any. The handsets are virtually useless, even - I went to a job recently and - a house very close to the police station - and the handset wasn't operating there. I'm yet to use a handset with any confidence.

What about the vehicle radio? Any improvement there that you've noticed?-- Vehicle radios have areas where poor - we often receive quite well-----

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Yes?-- -----whether we can transmit is another issue. Sometimes between Lowood and Fernvale, along Forest Hill-Fernvale Road is very scratchie. I've noticed in the last week or so, they - it is very scratchie at best. Some parts of Fernvale are hit and miss whether we can get through or not.

Right?-- Other areas - Coominyah, I've had issues out there. I've been told sometimes that my handset is not working, I should use the car radio. At other places - at which time I've advised them that I'm on the car radio.

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Have you had the experience of being able to receive on the car radio, but not being able to broadcast so you've used your mobile phone, for instance, to communicate in response?-- Yes.

All right. So, you've been able to communicate, but it is not an ideal situation?-- Nor a cheap one, no.

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Right. You do indicate, though, in your statement, that you were able to communicate in one form or another throughout these events?-- For the most of it. There was periods when mobile phones - the station phones, everything - as far as

technology type - that side of phone communication went down, and then we were limited by the radio coverage as such. It did compound the problem, but-----

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It seems then in the peak of these events, the mobile coverage wasn't operative, it seems, because of congestion. You were getting a "network busy" signal often?-- Quite often. I heard - you probably know more than I do about it - but I heard that one of the mobile towers was disabled which caused some dramas. That could be part of it. A lot of the time we get a "network busy" signal, which is probably attributed to the amount of people that are on their mobiles at a time like that, contacting friends and relatives-----

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In any event, do you have a copy of your statement there?-- yes.

Just very quickly, you do indicate the ability to communicate in these paragraphs, don't you - paragraph 8, that last sentence there?-- Yes.

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Do you recall what that - was that on the police radio, the car radio or-----?-- Some of the communications at that time - I parked my vehicle as a road block. At that point I was a couple of hundred metres, I believe, from the intersection, and when I was on foot, I was virtually just around the bend, I could hear on my handheld radio that - and I was getting received on car radio - so every time I was watching the water, I was making sure that people weren't walking in the water, et cetera - I'd have to run back to the car. I believe later in the evening I resorted to using the mobile one at one stage to discuss it at length, partly because reception wasn't fantastic and partly because it was a lengthy conversation. I didn't want to tie up the radio for a protracted conversation.

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Anyway, you refer to that topic you're now talking about at paragraph 10, having to go back to the car to respond on the police radio?-- Yes.

And paragraph 12, you were contacted by the police mobile telephone in the vehicle?-- Yes.

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Paragraph 13, you telephone someone at the Schimkes Road address?-- Yes.

Paragraph 16, you were contacted by telephone by the acting OIC, Sergeant Jacqui Munn?-- Yes, she rang my personal mobile on that one.

You had that with you?-- That was in my pocket, yes. I'd actually just pulled up and stepped out of my car to evacuate someone and my phone rang.

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So, you had a police mobile kept in the car, and you had your personal mobile with you as well?-- Yes.

Thank you. Paragraph 22, you were receiving broadcasts over the police radio. And paragraph 23, although you've had trouble getting through, you did get through on the - to police communications at Ipswich on the handheld radio?-- On paragraph 23?

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23?-- No, I didn't get through to QPS communications on that one. I asked the QFRS to notify them, because I couldn't get through. That was - bear with me, I'll just-----

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Okay. Do you see the first sentence there at para 23?-- Oh, sorry, yes, that's probably poorly worded by my part.

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Was that early in time perhaps?-- Sorry, at the - that was - sorry, that's in reference to at the - we were still at the hostel and at that stage we were out of the vehicle, the handset - yeah, we had scratchy communication. We got through to advise them that I was aware of the job. It was later when we got - when I was in the fire truck I then couldn't notify QPS communications that I was with QFRS and we were off at the Nine Stone Gully Road job. I asked QFRS to relay that information but I found out later that that never got through, but everyone was pretty busy.

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I see. In para 29 in terms of organising the helicopter. You again were able to call Ipswich communications on the car radio?-- Yes.

Paragraph 33 you there, I think, use the station landline?-- Yes, that was after the mobiles had-----

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And then para 35 you again raise that point again about the difficulty with the mobile communication receiving the network busy signal?-- Yes.

So your concern - that seems to indicate that you had - you were able to communicate from time to time. Your real concern was about the reliability of the whole communications issue. You needed to understand that you had - you could get in contact if you had to, not that your chances were reasonable but not guaranteed?-- Yes.

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And you'd expect that to be looked at in review of these events to see what can be done to improve the communications in that area?-- I'd hope so.

Thank you, Commissioner.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Yes, Ms O'Gorman. Mr Dollar?

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MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. May Senior Constable Rumbelow be excused?

HIS HONOUR: Yes, thanks, Senior Constable. You're excused?-- Thank you.

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WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Paul Siljac.

MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name, please?-- Paul Antony Siljac.

Mr Siljac, you provided a 31-page statement signed the 6th of May this year; is that correct?-- That's correct.

That's been shown to you now. It's a statement with one annexure which is a map?-- Sorry?

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It's a statement with one annexure which is a map?-- That's correct.

Yes. I tender that.

HIS HONOUR: Exhibit 318.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 318"

MR CALLAGHAN: In that statement, Mr Siljac, you record the responses of the Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade of which you are the first officer to the flood events in January; is that correct?-- That's correct.

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And in terms of Rural Fire Brigade capability, do you - have you had - or has your group at least had much training, if any, in relation to flood operations?-- Not flood responses, swift water rescues, that sort of thing. We've had select personnel who have had access in training in emergency management set-up for the processes of how to handle an emergency which can be used universally, but not anything specific to flood response.

No. So that sort of training could equally be deployed during a bushfire?-- That's correct.

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As I say, you record a number of things that you did and that your brigade did. Were you receiving any direction from anyone in the organisation higher than you or was it all pretty much on your initiative?-- The majority of it was on my initiative or from the information that we'd received and we are responding to our best judgment. The - we were - I was getting direction from QPS, QFRS Fire Comm, QAS and SES, mostly in respect to letting me know of a house that needed inspecting or a property that needed it, or can we get to this place or that place, so we were responding to those directions as being the only response team in the area.

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That's more providing you with information than actually telling you what to do?-- That's correct.

09052011 T(2)08/RFC QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY
Yeah. Okay. Can I take you - have you got a copy of your
statement there?-- Yes.

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I just want to take you to some specific parts to it. Can we
start on page 5, paragraphs 17 and 18, where you describe the
situation where there was a lady on oxygen who had no power to
run her oxygen machine; and you speak in paragraph 18 of
requesting a helicopter drop for oxygen. From whom were you
making that request?-- That request was made through Fire
Comm. Something I did not add in here, her family had also
called triple 0 and - for the same sort of support, but I had
no response.

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Fortunately she was able to get through until Thursday
apparently?-- Yes. An amendment on that, though, I'd like to
make-----

Yes?-- -----as more information comes clearer too, it was
actually on the Wednesday morning that I responded, not on the
Tuesday as noted in my statement so I'd like to amend that.

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All right. So it's in paragraph 17, that should read, "On the
Wednesday, the 12th"?-- That's correct.

Okay. We'll note that. I'll provide you with a pen. Still
on the Wednesday then, can I move you forward through to
paragraph 41 and following where you note that there was
little warning of the fact that releases from the dam were
going to create a whole new flood event for you?-- That's
correct.

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And that 43 I think you note that for some people, all that
could be done in those circumstances - or 44 I think it is -
that all that could be done was to get their children out?--
Well, that's what they reported to us, that all they could do
was really respond. We were given no notice of the dam
release.

All right. The first you heard of it was from other community
members who were-----?-- Just witnessing the waters rising,
that's correct.

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The effect of it. Okay. Well, you detail the community
efforts which followed. For example, you've drawn attention
to the fact that the manager of the local Woolworths
recognised you as a management team and, this is at paragraph
51 I think, and basically said to you, "What do you need"?--
That's correct.

Why was that he was able to recognise you as the Disaster
Management team? Was there some pre-existing relationship
there or - either with you or with the RFB or-----?-- No, no,
we at one stage we made contact with the Woolworths seeking
supplies and saw the manager and made contact and basically he
was just very happy to oblige the community and help out in
any way he could.

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I'm sure that's right, but there was no reason why - I'll

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start that again. Was it the fact that you were the only
people who were actually, sort of, providing disaster
management that led him to recognise you as being the people
to deal with?-- Oh, yes, there was - apart from people
helping themselves, there was no other organisation within
town.

1

All right. Can I ask you then about paragraph 76 where you
introduce the concept of Rapid Damage Assessments. Can you
tell us about those?-- The Rapid Damage Assessments was
something I learnt during the flood event and that was - we
were doing it in a less formalised method initially and that
was basically - Rapid Damage Assessment means to sweep your
area, to identify those areas where hazards are occurring,
know what's going on, using a map, quarterising, and then
ensuring that all areas are safe, checking what's been
inundated, is there anyone else out there that needs
assistance, and getting a summary of what assistance is
required. It was when - on the Friday I believe, I'm hazy on
the exact date on that, we had a Rapid Damage Assessment Team
from QFRS come out to Fernvale and they showed us a bit more
of the formalised method in making that happen in a far more
efficient way and we utilised that system and the user forms.

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And this was the first such training in this-----?-- Yes.

-----technique that you'd ever had?-- That's correct.

And did you find it useful?-- Fantastic.

Yes?-- We're already training other - other members in it.

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You'd regard it as a compulsory part of Disaster Management
training?-- I have taken it on in my brigade as compulsory
for us all to be aware of how to utilise it.

And you'd suggest it to others no doubt?-- Absolutely.

All right. Over the page then to - over two pages, the bottom
of page 22, the challenge of drinking water. This was a big
issue for you, I gather?-- Sorry, what challenge was that?

40

Paragraph 86?-- Oh, drinking water. Yeah, we - because the
town water was compromised and we didn't have a lot of clean
drinking water, we had a lot of properties run off power and -
to run water pumps and that sort of thing. We needed - or
tanks were completely lost or inundated, drinking water was a
major issue and we were - it was something we had to keep on
top of to ensure that we had stocks.

You talk about getting helicopter drops so where were they
coming from?-- We received them. We - the first thing we
knew about them was we could hear the chopper coming in and we
knew something was going on, so we sent a team out to meet the
helicopter. We weren't advised that it was incoming.

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You say in paragraph 88 that you'd been asking and asking and
asking for it. Who were you asking?-- We asked through

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whichever official channel called, whether it be we asked
through Fire Comm, a request was made through LDMG,
whichever - SES, whichever official channel listened to us.

1

So whoever you were in touch with basically?-- Absolutely,
just - we tried to make sure it was well known that we needed
water.

And in paragraph 90 when you talk about being in touch with
Queensland Urban Utilities-----?-- That's correct.

10

-----again is this a communication that you're making
directly?-- That was actually initiated by Queensland
Utilities contacting us.

All right. And what was the nature of that contact?-- It was
by a mobile phone call. They contacted us and we spoke to
them and said, "Listen, you know, we need" - well, they called
us to say, "We understand you need water. How can we help?
And much do you need?"

20

And did you receive any supply drops or provisions other than
water during this period; do you recall?-- We did, provisions
in the way of food. I mean, we got I know that there was some
stretcher beds brought in for use, but in the way of food and
water and the basic utilities, it was supplied just locally
through resources that we could.

Yeah, probably thinking of what you've said in paragraph 110,
and I think what you're telling us is that the other-----?--
Oh-----

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-----supplies you got were sourced locally?-- Locally, that's
correct.

Okay?-- Well, in all fairness, there's no - we didn't have
road access there until Thursday.

No, no, I understand. Can I take you back then to paragraphs
91 through to 96 and specifically to the topic of the contact
that you had with the LDMG and what you observed about the
manner in which it was functioning and generally share with us
your experiences in that regard?-- We felt very isolated out
there, lacking support. I would have liked more - more
guidance, I guess, on what needed to be operated and there
wasn't a lot forthcoming. I'm aware that everyone was very
busy in an emergency situation, and it was a very broad-scale
situation so resources were spare [sic]. The - I had basic
contact with the LDMG and the occasional contact with ICC.
They would say, you know - I know ICC asked, "What do you
need?", and I'd say, you know, "Water, counselling support
staff, that sort of thing", but there was no real direction.
I asked for an IMT team to be sent out to Fernvale to assist,
but just resources wasn't available. It's a little bit of
confusion exactly how the structure worked, who reported to
who regarding to LDMG to ICC to us on the ground, and exactly
who to report to. This is in mind that I'm getting phone
calls from multiple different services directly.

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You just mentioned the concept of counselling and that was something that you mentioned in paragraph 106?-- Mmm-hmm.

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When did the need for that emerge, do you think?-- That emerged increasingly day after day as the event unfolded. There was a lot of trauma just from the great scale of the event that took place, people needing support, people having lost, you know, their properties and they - they would come in and just grieve to whoever would listen, and a lot of the people weren't skilled or trained to that. We needed people in place to - to deal with those people coming in to grieve.

10

And eventually you make the point in 108 that the Red Cross made it out there, but I take it the need was - was there well before they arrived?-- Oh, yes, absolutely.

All right. Just finally, I think, you have made some comments about the SES, paragraph 100 and following, and in essence I think you've expressed surprise and disappointment with the support that you received from the SES. Can you elaborate on that?-- I was expecting, I guess, a little bit more organisation and rapid response. They took considerable amount of time to - to set up and get going and reacting to the situations considering that we had already done many of the RDAs and handed quite an extensive list of properties that had been affected or needed further assistance over to them and they were only operating off the back of that list to us. We had strike teams that came in and were waiting for the - for direction off the back of the SES. They would go, "So where are we headed and we would go and do that", and it just wasn't forthcoming to the point I'd end up saying, "Right, let's send these teams out here and here and here."

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30

How many do you have in your brigade?-- Well, we have about 35 members.

All volunteers?-- All volunteers. Everyone is a volunteer.

And do you have any sense of what the SES capability in the area is?-- Well, the SES is - the local SES group is at Lowood. I'm fully aware that they could not get through to us. I was very aware of that so I wasn't expecting that sort of response, but once the roads opened up and we had the 50 SES turn up I was expecting a bit more activity. Yeah, there was just no-----

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COMMISSIONER: Where were those SES from? Were they local or not?-- They had come from all over. There were people from Victoria to the point where they were up here knowing that the floodwaters were heading to Victoria and knew that they would have to go.

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MR CALLAGHAN: And that was part of the issue, I think, that you express in paragraph 100 is that because they weren't local they took a bit of education?-- It's not so much the local information, we had that local information, we handed that all over in a package to them and I was there to assist

and to work with them on that, and we were constantly going to them saying, "What do you want done? We're ready to go. Give us some information." It was just a matter of them getting themselves organised. They were there for quite a while. To be honest I'm not sure what they were doing-----

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Okay?-- -----setting up.

In paragraph 84 you express a desire to be involved in the Disaster Management Plan. How do you envisage your involvement in that or the RFB's involvement in that process? What would you like to see happen?-- Well, we need to be aware of what the Local Disaster Management Plan is. We're going to be a responding unit at some point in time. We are the only emergency service in Fernvale and this has highlighted the fact when we get isolated we are going to need to react and support the community and help where we can. We need to know what resources will be available. We need to be involved in that plan. We've tried to be involved in the past, but there just doesn't seem to be much communication at about the local area action plan.

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20

What did you try to do in the past?-- We made contact to say, "What is the" - "What is the plan? Tell us what the plan is", but there does not seem to be any desire to disseminate that information.

Contact with the Council or-----?-- Through our Rural Fire Group, it's been raised on several occasions that we need to have more information. Council's usually represented there and it's basically - it seems to be a management body, the LDMG, to us, the impression we've got that it's a management body organising which resources would do what, take on what responsibility, but when it comes to the event when the event unfolds we need to know, you know, what's more localised, what's - you know, who does what.

30

So you want to be involved in the-----?-- Absolutely, we need to be involved if things are going to actually happen.

All right. No further questions. Thank you.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell?

MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you.

MR URE: No questions, thank you.

MR MacSPORRAN: Nothing, thank you.

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MS O'GORMAN: No questions, thank you.

MR DOLLAR: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Siljac, thank you very much. You're excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

1

MS WILSON: I call Janet Carpenter.

JANET ANNE CARPENTER, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MS WILSON: Is your full name Janet Anne Carpenter?-- That's correct.

And you reside in Fernvale?-- I do.

And you resided in Fernvale - in the Fernvale area for five years?-- I have.

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Now, you've provided a statement to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry in relation to the flood events of the 10th and 12th of January this year?-- Yes.

Have a look at this document, please. Is that your statement that you've provided?-- Yes.

And attached to that statement is an e-mail and some photographs?-- Yes.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 319.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 319"

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MS WILSON: Now, your house, is that a highset or a lowset house?-- Lowset.

And where about is - whereabouts is it in relation to the Brisbane River?-- It's a couple of kilometres from Savages Crossing. It's directly behind the pub if anyone knows.

Directly behind?-- The pub.

The pub. The Fernvale pub?-- The Fernvale pub.

50

Okay. And where is its nearest watercourse?-- There's a small gully, very insignificant, doesn't have a name, that runs across the back of my property. It runs into Ferny Gully, which then runs into the Brisbane River at Savages

And during rain events, not the rain event that we're talking about in January this year, does that gully have water flowing through it?-- Yes, it takes quite a lot of rain to make it run, but it drains basically the eastern side of the highway. It - a couple of times since October, it's flooded to the extent that there's been water on the Banks Creek Road which it goes underneath the culvert.

And prior to the January 2011 flood event, had you had - received any water onto your property?-- No.

10

Now, I want to ask you some questions about road closures due to flooding waters. How often are roads closed in the Fernvale area thus isolating the community?-- I've never experienced total isolation of the community before. Sometimes roads are closed, but you can usually go another way.

Okay. And which roads are those?-- Um-----

20

Are there some that just always flood, that always will close?-- No, it depends where the flooding comes from. So if I was going to Brisbane and I can go through Pine Mountain, I can go through Glamorgan Vale, I can go through Glamorgan Vale and Marburg, I can go through Lowood, basically go west and then east, or directly down the Brisbane Valley Highway.

The roads that are closed, do they have any relationship, to your knowledge, with releases from the Wivenhoe Dam?-- I don't know.

30

There's no-----?-- I don't.

You haven't been able to get any connection for that?-- No.

If I can take you to paragraph 22 of your statement, and on paragraph 22 you're referring to the 10th day of January of this year. And you're referring to, "There was still no specific warning for the Fernvale region from the Bureau of Meteorology or elsewhere"; do you see that?-- Yes.

40

Now, this is a theme that you repeat on a number of occasions during your statement about the generalised nature of warnings?-- Yes. We could figure out for ourselves really that there'd been a flood in the upper Lockyer and if you're in the lower Lockyer that water was going to get there some time, so it's fairly redundant to give us a warning unless it's going to be more specific about which areas it's referring to.

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Well, how specific would you want it to be?-- Well-----

To be of any assistance to you?-- The Lockyer and Brisbane Valleys is a big place. At the time on the radio there were warnings being issued in, say, Ipswich that people in these streets of these suburbs should be prepared to evacuate, which

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is very, very specific. I didn't hear any warnings, for
example, relating to Fernvale, Lowood, Glamorgan Vale which
was quite badly flooded, Marburg.

1

And one of the issues that you raise in relation to what you
call the generic warnings is you didn't know whether it
applied to Fernvale or not?-- No, no, I didn't.

But, however, you decided to be prudent on this occasion and
self-evacuate?-- Yes.

10

Now, at paragraph-----?-- I felt a little embarrassed about
it.

Well, at paragraph 25, you discussed that there were no
evacuation points that you were aware of at the time?-- No.

Did you go seeking that information from anywhere about where
the evacuation points would be?-- I looked at the Somerset
Regional Council's website, I did a Google search. I didn't
actually physically go looking.

20

So you went onto the Internet to see where any evacuation
point could be-----?-- Yeah.

-----and you couldn't find it?-- No.

You drove to Beetson Drive, you say, which was the highest
point you could access?-- Yes.

And you say that you found a - a lay-by and stayed there for
the night?-- Yes.

30

What do you mean by that?-- Beetson Drive runs along the top
of a ridge and it then becomes a dirt road and at the point
where the bitumen and dirt road meet, there's a - like a
cul-de-sac.

Right?-- I was seeking high ground partly to get mobile phone
reception.

40

And you spent the night in your car that night?-- Yes.

Okay. The 11th of January the next day you returned to your
house?-- Yes.

There had been water, you say, through the shed and some had
come up to your house?-- Yes.

But not into the house?-- No.

50

Now, at this point in time you're actively seeking information
from the Internet?-- Yes.

What sort of information are you seeking?-- Oh, anything
really. What was happening with Lockyer Creek, what's
happening with the dam. I knew that we had a lot of rain and
it was still raining.

So, you had been seeking - you sought information from the Bureau of Meteorology website?-- Yes.

Any other websites that you looked at?-- Media websites, the Council websites, Somerset, Ipswich, Lockyer.

And one of the issues that you again raise was that there were no warnings with any - that were specific to the Fernvale area?-- No. There was some hours elapsed between the floods in the Upper Lockyer and the first flood at Fernvale, so there was time, I think, for a warning to have been issued.

10

You were needy for information, and you went to the Fernvale Futures Centre?-- Yes.

To try to find some information?-- Yes.

And what had been set up at the Fernvale Futures Centre?-- Not - well, the - I now know it was the rural fire brigade who set up an emergency centre there. They didn't really have any more information than what I'd already gleaned.

20

At paragraph 35, you say that due to the lack of warning, you feel that you were complacent regarding your flood preparations. You talk about in the previous paragraphs about that your neighbours sandbagged but you didn't?-- Yes. I thought if there was real danger, we would have been warned.

Now, in the paragraph 36, the afternoon - by that afternoon, the power had been turned off?-- Yes.

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Now, you had prepared for that, in that you had a battery-powered radio?-- Yes.

And were you using that to try to get information about the weather conditions?-- Yes. I was listening to regional ABC radio and the local stations in Ipswich.

Did you receive any information that could assist in your flood preparedness?-- No.

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Now, at paragraphs 37 to 43 of your statement, it describes the water inundating your house?-- Yes.

It can be said from reading those paragraphs that this inundation occurred very quickly?-- Yes, yes. Around about 15, 20 minutes.

From 15 to 20 minutes from-----?-- From water pooling on the ground to waist-deep water in the house.

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Okay. Now, you again evacuated and drove to the same lay-by on Beeston Drive that you had spent the night before?-- Yes.

And again you did not know where to go, but you just went where you thought higher ground would be?-- Yes.

Now, in your statement you provide, you talk about the warnings that you - well, you did not receive?-- Yes.

1

You say that you received no - on the 11th of January, you received no warning regarding flash flooding?-- No.

And, at paragraph 48, you talk about that you were seeking it using different means?-- Yes.

You had your battery-powered radio?-- Yes.

10

The Internet?-- Yes.

And the television?-- Yes, and the mobile phone.

And the mobile phone. And from none of these sources of information - possible sources of information - you received any warning?-- No.

You state that you believed that the Somerset Regional Council needed to get more information out to the Fernvale community. What information would you feel would be relevant to the situation that you faced?-- A preparedness checklist, instructions on what to do in the case of an emergency, what sorts of provisions you should have on hand, where to go, who would be in charge, that sort of thing.

20

And is it your view that for the next wet season, this is the information that would be helpful-----?-- Yes.

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-----for residents in the Fernvale community?-- I believe so, yes.

You talk about a preparedness checklist. Is that to check off all the matters that, as a resident, you should cover off?-- Mmm, torches, batteries, candles, petrol.

Okay. And information about where to go, you said?-- Yes, and who - who to talk to.

40

Did you take any attempts to talk to any person - you talked about going to the Fernvale Futures Centre?-- Yes.

Anywhere else that you tried to-----?-- No, there wasn't anywhere else to go. The roads were all flooding.

Thank you. I have no further questions?-- Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell?

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MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Ure?

MR URE: Just a couple of matters, thanks, Madam Commissioner. My name is Stuart Ure. I appear on behalf of the Council. I just want to ask you some questions about disaster response. Is it fair to say that there's a thread running through your statement that suggests that your view is that the Council really didn't do enough by way of disaster response?-- Yes.

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Is that a fair comment? I just want to put some things to you. In paragraph 57 of your statement, you say that, "The original response to the floods was that of a community effort.", and you talk about a "makeshift emergency response centre at the Fernvale Futures Centre". Well, Ms Carpenter, were you aware that that centre was, in fact, opened and set up by the Council on the morning of Tuesday, the 11th, as a formal centre?-- Yes - well, by makeshift, I mean there were people sleeping on the floor, sort of thing.

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All right. Paragraph 67 of your statement, you say, "The rural fire brigade managed to pull a community response together with the assistance of the operators of Zanows Quarry. They used quarry trucks and machinery to help people in need." Now, that was removing household waste that was decomposing and putrefying?-- Yes.

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And also removing ruined furniture, items like that that had been taken out of houses?-- Yes.

I suggest to you, Ms Carpenter, that, in fact, the Council had approached Mr Zanow and contracted with him on a commercial basis to carry out those things?-- Okay.

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Were you aware of that?-- No, I wasn't.

All right. You suggest in paragraph - or in paragraph 68 and 69 you deal with the fact that the ADF provided assistance to you - "A significant amount of military that were there distributing food and water and asking residents who needed assistance."; see that?-- Yes.

You note in paragraph 60 that the Council had, in fact, been seeking ADF assistance, don't you?-- Yes, I heard that after the event.

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Well, I suggest to you, again, that the presence of the ADF, as you record in paragraph 68 and 69, was as a consequence of the efforts of the Council; were you aware of that?-- I wasn't at the time.

All right. In paragraph 70, you say, "In the week following the floods, the region had access to Centrelink officers, and also officers from the Department of Communities." Again, I suggest to you that those people were there as a consequence of activities of the Council. Were you aware of that?-- No.

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And, finally, paragraphs 70 - well, in 71 and 72 you say you saw someone wearing a Somerset Regional Council badge but it was unclear what they were doing, and you didn't see or hear from the Council for approximately three weeks thereafter.

Were you aware that the Council had, at times, up to eight Council staff in the Fernvale Futures building, and they were there assisting until the centre ceased to operate on the 25th of January 2011. Were you aware of that?-- No, I didn't have any cause to go to the Fernvale Futures Centre much.

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Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask, you didn't think of evacuating to there?-- It's quite low as well, so-----

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So, you just didn't think it was safe?-- Well, it didn't occur to me.

Okay?-- And I also wanted to let my family know I was safe.

Any further questions of Ms Carpenter?

MR DOLLAR: No.

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COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran or-----

MR MacSPORRAN: Sorry, no, no.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No, thank you.

MS WILSON: May the witness be excused, Madam Commissioner?

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COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you very much, Ms Carpenter. You're excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MS WILSON: I call Graham Peall.

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GRAHAM MICHAEL PEALL, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MS WILSON: Is your full name Graham Michael Peall?-- It is.

And do you reside in Wivenhoe Pocket?-- I do.

And you have resided there for approximately 22 years?-- 22 years exactly.

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And you are the chairman and first officer of the Wivenhoe Pocket Rural Fire Brigade?-- I am.

And you've made a statement to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- I did.

Can you have a look at this document, please? Is this your statement that you've made?-- That's my statement.

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I tender that statement.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 320.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 320"

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MS WILSON: You've got a copy of that statement in front of you?-- I have, thank you.

Just a couple of matters that I wish to take you to in relation to that statement. You talk about, in paragraph 3, that on 10 January this year, an automated message was received at about 10.20 p.m., advising residents in low-lying areas to move to higher ground?-- Yes.

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Do you know who sent this statement?-- No, I don't. I don't. It came out - I can't remember actually if it came out on my mobile phone or the fire pager, but it did come up, and with that, it instigated me to make a few phone calls to check on how things were.

And you checked with the fire warden?-- I checked with the fire warden, because he's actually down the bottom of the Pocket - Wivenhoe Pocket sits sort of down below the dam wall and it is encompassed by the river down one side and the highway up the other side, so we are, in fact, a pocket.

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You were told by the fire warden that there was really nothing to worry about at that point in time?-- He had been monitoring the river down the bottom because the Lockyer Creek actually feeds into the river just about the end of Shines Road, and we've had cases before where Lockyer Creek has actually flooded and cut off Twin Bridges and that and they've

let no water out of the dam. So, we're very aware of what can come out of the Lockyer, so, yeah, made a few strategic phone calls. People that live down that end of the road, they actually weren't there. Rang Mr Scully, and he had been monitoring the river heights, and I said, at that stage, I think in that - in that automated message, they were talking about a seven metre wall of water coming down the Lockyer, and Rob had been monitoring the levels, and I said, "If we were to get seven metres of water hit us, bang, how would we be?" He said - his opinion was at that stage that we had 15.

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15?-- We had 15 metres of gap before the water got up to where it was going to cause us any drama.

Some people responded to that automated message and went to the fire station; is that the case?-- Went to the fire station. I've since found out that there were other people that did go to other areas as well, like, up near the dam wall, that type of thing, so they thought they would be safe up there.

20

So, these are residents you're talking about?-- Residents, yes.

And were they acting on that same automated message that you received?-- They were.

And the people that you refer to in your statement, they went to the fire station, but the fire station wasn't open?-- No, it wasn't open.

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Okay. Now, in your statement, you discuss helping assist in evacuations on the 11th of January?-- Yes, indeed, yes.

And if I can take you to paragraph 15 of your statement, and that talks about the 12th of January?-- Yes.

And that a meeting was called for 8 a.m. on the 12th of January?-- That's correct.

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Now, why was it necessary to have a meeting with the residents on the 12th of January?-- To keep everybody informed, to let everybody know what was going on, to make sure that we'd got everybody, to deal with people's issues. Nobody knows the local area better than the locals, so, I mean, we had already evacuated the people, we billeted the people out, so then we got the people together so we could let them know what was happening, what we needed to do, who had issues - medical. I mean, yeah, who had food - who had food issues. Some people were gluten-free type - needed gluten-free-type food, all those sort of things.

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You talk about, "One of the purposes was to discuss how the community would deal with the situation we were in."?-- Mmm.

Can you perhaps just give us a summary of what the community was actually facing at that point in time - the circumstances?-- Well, the community basically was isolated.

So, in Wivenhoe, we don't have any shops, we don't have any fuel stations, we don't have anything like that. So, for us, we needed to be very mindful of what resources we did have on board. We didn't know how long the campaign was going to be. We didn't know how long we were going to be cut off. So, at those meetings we ascertained what people needed medication or had issues, food issues, what people had fuel, what people had generators. We instructed people that we wanted them to stay in their own homes, if we could, make sure they were happy with the people they had billeted, make sure they used the food that they had there first up so that they weren't wasting food, and if they did have food that was going to go off, that - and they couldn't eat - let's stick it into a fridge that we had a generator on so that we could keep it. So, you know, it was all about being self-sustaining.

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And it was discussed - well, it was decided that the rural fire brigade would take the lead in these meetings to show that there was an authorised structure in place?-- That's correct.

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At this point in time, what were your communications like with other government agencies?-- At that stage I had talked to Fire Com via the radio. I mean, the radio communication is, in my opinion - in disaster management, is just one of the most key issues. Telephones can't be relied upon, but radio communication normally is pretty good.

And what was it like during this event?-- Yeah, yeah, it was good. We didn't have any issues. The phones came in, came out. Most of our contact external from other agencies that tried to get us was via the phone. So, we - yeah, I contacted Fire Com, I let them know that the brigade was active, that the brigade was carrying out the evacuations, and that the brigade was actually the lead agency in this case in the Wivenhoe Pocket area.

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Did you have any contact with the LDMG?-- The local disaster management.

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Yes. The Council?-- I did. I did have contact with them.

And when was that contact?-- I'm just trying to think exactly, because the group officer, Mr Bill Dooley - I made contact with Bill, I think it was, to see what was happening - I think that was the morning after the evacuations - and his words to me were that he was trying to get in to the Disaster Management Group to help them, but they weren't letting him in-----

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Okay. We'll come to that in a moment?-- Yep.

But what about a contact with just giving them your status of - the status of the community?-- No.

In paragraph 18, you talk about that after contact with a local emergency base, a food order was sent to the SES as requested. What local - who - which agency was the local

emergency base?-- I'm just trying to - I think it was SES. I remember a lady's name by the name of Sue White, and I talked to a Sue White, and from that I can only - my thoughts were that she was probably with Lowood SES or maybe with Esk SES. In the Somerset region there's Lowood, Esk, Toogoolawah. I think there's the three. I'm not sure what's in the Kilcoy area now. So, I surmised that she was from one of those. She asked me to do up a - I asked for a food drop, and informed her that we had several young children, a couple of babies as well, and she instructed me to do up a list, and I sent it to her - yeah, it was to Sue White - I think it might have been at Somerset - I'm not sure on the actual address - but did that, and then I received contact back not from her, from somebody else, and that was probably the next day when I started to chase it up, you know.

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Well, you talk about that - a food drop - and that a food drop was becoming difficult, as you had to redirect your order and nobody could give you any clear times?-- No, nobody could give us-----

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Just stop there?-- Yep.

Who were you referring to when you were having to redirect your order?-- I received a call from - I received a call from - I'm just trying to remember now - several - I got one from the Ipswich area. There was an Ipswich disaster, because I was talking to a police officer at one stage about food drops, and I was also talking to a local - I think one of the guys from Fernvale actually called as well to ask about - so, we were getting calls from different areas. So, it didn't fill you full of confidence when it came to the fact that you'd already sent this order off, and we were starting to get calls in from other areas, and they weren't from the same area, they were obviously from different levels of disaster management.

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And at this point in time, you can't really particularise who were the people you were talking to, but it just wasn't working?-- It wasn't working, didn't fill me full of confidence.

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So you organised one yourself?-- We started the network and talked and people in our - in our community, as you do, we found out that we've got a lot of resources there, and all of a sudden somebody said, "I can get you a helicopter." I said, "Fantastic."

So you did organise a helicopter to arrive with a food drop?-- Yes, we did.

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Did you communicate this back to anyone with the SES or back to Fire Coms?-- After we finished the - after - he actually did three drops in for us, and he did an evacuation of a 96 year old guy for us as well, and, after that, I then contacted the group officer, Mr Dooley, and said, "This helicopter is at your disposal if you need it.", and I think at that stage he went to the local disaster management and got in and, yeah, they performed wonderful tasks.

You talk about Mr Bill Dooley, who was your Esk rural fire brigade leader, and you state that once he was allowed into the Disaster Management Base at Esk, "contact with him provided food parcels, fuel and other needs". Is that in relation to the helicopter, or is that in a more widespread application?-- As it pertains to me, you would have to talk to Mr Dooley as to what he actually did himself, but he was able to organise fuel for us once that - at that stage, he was able to tell us how we would get to the fuel station, which roads were open. Also he said that there were some food parcels up at Esk for us, and when the roads were open, we actually drove up there ourselves and got them.

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You were not given any instruction by your local council or any government agency on evacuation plans?-- No.

And that is one of the issues that you raise, is that in the event of a future incident involving an impending natural disaster, you believe that the emergency services people need to be warned first?-- I do. I think if we would have been warned that that EPROM was going to go out or that message was going to go out, we probably would have been at the fire shed waiting for people.

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You further state that you consider that there was inadequate information provided to the community in relation to road closures, evacuation points, water storage, food supplies and medical supplies, and that you sourced this information?-- We did. We had people sourcing - quite incredible when you have community meetings, people come up and there's a whole raft of information comes in. It's just a matter of ascertaining what is actually true and factual, and what isn't. When we had these meetings, people came up and said, "This road and this road is open." Unless the people had actually driven the road themselves, we didn't encourage them to go out and do that. We actually encouraged the people to stay put in the Pocket unless they had to go somewhere for a fairly important reason, because the last thing we wanted was to have more people on the roads creating havoc, because all these sort of things were still fresh and new and nobody actually really had a handle of what the conditions of everything was.

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In terms of where you say that there was inadequate information provided to the community, what are you seeking, that a package of information is provided to the community, or that it is better available and easier to access on the Internet or like?-- Well, from my point of view, say from emergency services point of view, if - say, for instance, if they wanted to utilise the rural fire brigade in the Somerset region, that that was utilised to channel the information out so the brigades would then be putting the information out. That would come out of the Local Disaster Management Group, and it would be fed down the line like that. I think in all honesty they probably tried to do the best they could, but just didn't have a handle on what was the best way to do it, and, from my own personal experience, I honestly believe the rural fire network with their radio communications would have

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been able to do that.

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And the final issue that I wish to raise is that you say that, "The Esk Local Management Group didn't use the local knowledge, as from the rural fire service, who has expertise in these situations." What do you mean by that?-- They didn't allow those chaps into that room until after the - I think it was the Tuesday or the Wednesday. So, I mean, that local knowledge that was there on what brigades were there, what people were in these areas - you know, that type of thing. So, after those people were allowed in, I'm led to believe that everything went well.

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And so then you say it was only after Mr Bill Dooley had access to the management group that things started to happen in your area?-- Our area was pretty well self-sourced and done, but I'm talking about wider areas of stuff that was done. There were areas where people - we went up to Northbrook Parkway which is actually in our brigade area, but we were tasked there by the Disaster Management. So, through Mr Dooley, these things came in, and then they were given out to the brigades and the brigades went and fixed them up for them. So, it was better utilisation of the resources available to them by utilising that network.

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Thank you. I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr O'Donnell?

MR O'DONNELL: No questions, thank you.

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MR DUNNING: No questions, thank you, Commissioner.

MR URE: No questions.

MR MacSPORRAN: I have nothing, thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions, thank you.

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

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MS WILSON: May the witness be excused?

COMMISSIONER: Yes, thank you for your time, Mr Peall?-- Thank you very much.

WITNESS EXCUSED

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MS WILSON: I call Tony Jacobs.

ANTHONY JOHN JACOBS, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MS WILSON: Can you tell this Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry your full name?-- My name is Anthony John Jacobs.

And you're the Manager of Operations for the Somerset Regional Council?-- That's correct. 10

Can you explain to me what that role entails, being the Manager of Operations?-- The Manager of Operations, Director of Technical Services, Shire Engineer, it depends on which Council you work for, but basically I look after all of Council's construction and maintenance activity, their landfill, parks and gardens, any outside works.

You are also the Local Disaster Coordinator for the Somerset Regional Council?-- That's correct. 20

Now, you've made two statements and provided them to the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry. Can you have a look at this first document, please? This is a statement that was made pursuant to a requirement from the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry?-- Yes.

And this statement is dated the 5th of April 2011?-- Yes. 30

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 321.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 321"

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MS WILSON: And you have also made a further statement, also made pursuant to a requirement from the Queensland Flood Commission of Inquiry, and this statement is dated today, the 9th of May 2011?-- That's correct.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 322.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 322"

MS WILSON: Another document that you have also done and provided to the Inquiry is a Summary of Events. Are you aware of that document?-- Yes.

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Can you have a look at this document, please? And this is a dot point summary of events relating to the flood events in relation to the Somerset Regional Council?-- Correct, or relating to me.

Relating to you and the work you did with Somerset Regional Council. Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

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COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 323.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 323"

MS WILSON: The Somerset Regional Council has a Regional Disaster Plan?-- Correct.

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Now, upon the amalgamation of the Esk Council and the Kilcoy Council, there was a Disaster Management Plan that was consolidated into the one plan?-- Correct.

Can you have a look at this document, please? Now, that's a Disaster Management Plan that was completed by the Somerset Regional Council?-- Correct.

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Now, when was that done?-- In 2008.

Upon amalgamation?-- Yes, after amalgamation, the Council - if I could just clarify? I've been in this role since January 2009, so this was actually done by my predecessor, but I'm aware of the activity. Council commissioned a consultant to look at the two plans and amalgamate them into one Shire-wide plan.

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Okay. So perhaps if we can then confine the questions to when you started your role. Does this plan get reviewed and updated on a yearly basis?-- There's different levels of review. There was a like a desktop review in 2009 where - oh, sorry, all the members of the committee were given a copy of it once it was adopted by Council. So in 2009 they were asked to have a look at it again and make any comment to an LDMG meeting if there was any issues with it.

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When it was consolidated into the one plan, were you aware, you may not be because of when you started your role, whether EMQ had any role in that - in reviewing it at that point in time?-- No, I'm sorry, I'm not aware.

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Okay. Now, you were aware that the Disaster Management Act was amended late last year?-- Yes.

Did the Somerset Council's Disaster Management Plan have any revision taking into account those amendments?-- No, it didn't.

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Okay. Madam Commissioner, I tender that Disaster Management Plan.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 324.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 324"

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MS WILSON: Is it the case that the short time period between the commencement of the amendments of a Disaster Management Act and the flood events limited planning initiatives in relation to the Disaster Management Plan?-- Very much so.

And what about training? Training of your staff in relation to the implementation of a Disaster Management Plan?-- Training of myself also. In the changes, sorry, as in we - I received confirmation last month that I - my nomination as LDC was accepted by QPS and I've also received a schedule of the training that's required as part of the LDC training, and only the one module was delivered before the flood event.

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Okay. And that's in relation to you who is the Local Disaster Coordinator?-- That's correct.

And what about the other staff who had to work with the plan, do you know whether they had any training?-- There's one staff member who is very familiar with it, the SES controller who was a Council employee, but, no, no other staff would have been very familiar with it.

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What about in terms of the Somerset Regional Council's preparation and planning for the 2010/2011 wet season?-- I attended a number of - a workshop in Ipswich held by the District Disaster Management Group. I also was involved in

some telephone conferences with State Disaster Group with the warnings preceding the season to advise that it was going to be a very wet season.

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Okay. So you've had advise it was going to be a very wet season. What steps then did the Somerset Regional Council do to plan and prepare for a very wet season?-- Other than provide for sand bagging materials if it's required, there's very little we can do.

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Well, what about providing information to residents about possible evacuations, what to do in a disaster, that type of information?-- I had noted that in some of the submissions. Our position was all that the LDMG members were given advice on where the evacuation centres were and we thought that was the most logical because people go to the police, they go to the SES or the Fire Rescue when things like this happen, and they were aware of where those predetermined spots were.

And did the Somerset Regional Council have predetermined spots?-- Yes, we did.

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That they were going to use for a flood event?-- In general, not specifically flood, but just before Christmas the SES controller and myself sat down and went through - we have a huge list of public halls which are all basically identified as being possible places, and we went through and picked out five in the major centres and that was communicated to an LDMG meeting late in the year.

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Now, in November 2010, Kilcoy and Fernvale experienced some levels of flooding?-- Kilcoy did. Did you say November?

Yes?-- Yeah, no, Kilcoy did. There wasn't a great deal in Fernvale. We've had flows in Brisbane River, but it didn't cause flooding in Fernvale.

Well, let's just focus on Kilcoy then?-- Yes.

So Kilcoy has experienced some flooding in November last year?-- Yes.

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Now, did that - did that activate more preparation in terms of the Somerset Regional Council for flooding events?-- No, Kilcoy suffers frequent flooding and it's not flooding of the town or of the people, it's only inundation of timber bridges and a low causeway on the western side that isolates town for shorts period of time, and Council accommodates travellers and people that can't - are stuck in town.

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One of the issues that's been raised is the information being provided to the residents about flood events; warnings. Now, the Somerset Regional Council utilised a SMS system?-- Only for a very select area of the region.

Okay. Perhaps if we can go to that now. Now, there's communications - there's two levels of communications that I wish to discuss: one, the communications that you received

from Seqwater about releases from Wivenhoe Dam, and; two, the conveying of that information to residents of the Somerset Regional Council. If we can stick to the first - the first level that I'm talking about. What information would you receive prior to the flood events of 2011 from the operators of the Wivenhoe Dam in relation to releases?-- Okay. I would receive a phone call from the Flood Operation Centre advising me of changes in releases, and that - that phone call would then be confirmed with an e-mail shortly after or at the same time.

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And that e-mail would be coming from Seqwater, is that the case?-- Would be from the Flood Operation Centre to Council's e-mail address.

Okay. If I can take you to an e-mail chain and ask you to comment on a couple of matters, and the e-mail chain that I'm asking you to comment upon is an e-mail chain between Seqwater and the Somerset Regional Council in December - 24th of December 2010. Have you seen these e-mails - this e-mail chain before?-- Only today when it was given to me as part of the submission. I hadn't seen them prior to this.

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I can see, though, on some of these e-mails you were cc'd in?-- Yes, on a couple of them I was, yes.

Yes. Well, if I can take you to the e-mail from John Adcock at Seqwater to Susan Pitkin on the 24th of December at about 11 a.m. in the morning. Now, I understand that Somerset Regional Council were going to issue letters to residents so they could provide contact information to the Council so the Council could contact them providing information?-- That's correct.

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And this e-mail chain, it discusses that issue with Seqwater?-- Yes.

And they had some input into the content of that letter?-- That's correct.

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If you could see - you go to page 2 of this e-mail chain and this is the e-mail that is from Susan Pitkin to John Adcock and you were cc'd into it, and you - it's stated there, "In the short-term in the event of being advised of flow releases likely to affect bridges, et cetera, Council will send an SMS message to those affected landholders for whom we have contact details". Do you see that?-- No, I'm sorry, I can't find that. I'm on page two, but I'm-----

At the top of page 2. It starts, "Thank you for your e-mail"?-- Yes.

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The next line down and it talks about in the short-term?-- Yes, yes.

And then it discusses that, "In the New Year Council will write to every landholder east of the Brisbane River requesting their contact details"?-- That's correct.

Now, Council did that?-- I'm not aware, it's not in my area. The CEO, I believe, was doing that. I couldn't confirm whether it was done or not.

Okay. Well, then have you got any information about the use that the Somerset Regional Council made of SMS alerts?-- Yes, I am.

Okay. Can you tell me about that?-- Okay. When Seqwater advises me of a change which is going to impact one of the bridges in the Brisbane River that cuts off access to the eastern side of the river, I contact the SES controller who was the keeper of the mobile phone contacts that we have and he sends the text message to those communities. There's three communities on the eastern side of the river that are cut off whenever there are certain releases from the dam.

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So that is east. What about the west?-- To the west we have no system.

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And is the Council going to implement any system for the west?-- Not that I'm aware of.

Now, you say you contact the SES controller?-- Yes.

Do you have any consultation about the wording of those SMSs?-- No, they're just done between - just on my direction.

So you contact the SES controller and say, "We need to put out a message that states", what?-- Basically what Seqwater has advised me, that there would be releases of a certain quantity and that they're likely to affect this bridge and that bridge for a period because Seqwater usually gives me good advice on estimated times.

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And the contact register, where did that - where does the Council get the contact register from?-- That was where we had made - we'd been approached by people who just made contact and the SES controller had a number of phone numbers and I believe this letter was to try and offer that service to anybody. The CEO was going to write to the mailing address of every ratepayer in those three communities.

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To the east?-- To the east.

But that wouldn't be provided to the west?-- No.

Now, in terms of isolation, the - during the flood events, the many towns in the Somerset Regional Council were isolated?-- Yes, that's correct.

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Kilcoy was isolated between the 9th and 14th of January?-- Yes.

Fernvale, Lowood, Esk and Toogoolawah was isolated between the 10th and the 13th of January?-- That's correct.

The Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer were isolated at Fernvale between the 10th and 13th of January?-- Yes, they - yes, that's correct. 1

And the usual Local Disaster Coordination Centre in Esk was flooded on the 10th of January?-- That's correct.

Now, you address the issue of the extent to which the Somerset Regional Council prepared for the isolation in your first statement at item - at - sorry, in your second statement at item 3. You were asked the extent to which Council prepared for the isolation that occurred between the Council area, and particularly those areas of Kilcoy and Fernvale, et cetera. Your response to that was that Council maintains four depots across the region?-- Correct. 10

Further in the next paragraph you go on to then say Council also supports four SES units at various - at various towns. Is that enough to prepare for isolation that occurs within the Somerset Regional Council?-- We thought so. We've experienced numerous flood events at different times and it served us pretty well in the past. 20

Taking into account of what occurred in January 2011, it clearly wasn't enough. That's the case?-- There could be more, but the issue will be Council wouldn't be able to build anymore depots, it will be whether they can form anymore SES units.

Well, the question - the question is what can be done in the future to cope with isolation that occurred in Somerset Regional Council as it occurred during January 2011?-- Some of the things we've discussed since this event is things like trying to equip - better equip our remote coordination centres, things like Fernvale Future Centre suffered from the loss of power and not having a generator was a major problem to them, not having a fixed radio system other than phone lines was a problem to them. So we're looking at those sorts of things. 30

Now, from the responses that you provide in item 3 of that second statement, the - the focus on that was the Council had four depots and also that there were four SES units. Is the SES the primary means of achieving localised responses? Is that how the Council is on the ground to achieve a localised response?-- Council can respond using its workforce in its plan, but it tends to be focused towards construction because that is what Council is about. Emergency services, the Queensland Rural Fire Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, and the SES through EMQ are the disaster management type structures on the ground, and Council coordinates those resources. 40 50

Okay. So it's - the LDMG coordinates those resources?-- Yes.

So does the LDMG deploy the SES about to where - to which task they should perform?-- The concept of the LDMG is that the task should come into the LDMG, and then the LDMG issues those

out to the response agencies. How the agencies deliver them is not our, sort of, control, but we then get that feedback in and make sure that jobs are tasked, completed and finalised.

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Okay. So let's look at the situation that occurred in January 2011 where tasks were coming into the LDMG. Who did you task them out? Which agencies did you task them out?-- Right. The LDMG has a representative from Queensland Fire and Rescue. The Queensland Rural Fire Service operates under the Queensland Fire Rescue so we could task Queensland Fire and Rescue and then they would task whoever they felt to complete. The SES has their local controller on the LDMG, Queensland Police have a representative on the LDMG and so does the Queensland Ambulance Service, as do the two local hospitals. So depending on what the task is, the Incident Management Team in the main LDMG coordination centre then allocates a task to one of those agencies.

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If I can take your attention to Kilcoy, and Kilcoy was isolated between the 9th and the 14th of January?-- Correct.

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However full activation of the Somerset Regional Council's LDMG did not occur until the 12th of January; is that the case?-- Yes, correct.

Why was it that it didn't activate when Kilcoy was isolated?-- The LDMG activates the coordinator response. Kilcoy was some flooded roads and the police and, I believe, the Queensland Fire Service set up an incident centre at the fire service headquarters in Kilcoy, and as there was no other external agency requirements the LDMG was purely a watching brief, it wasn't activated.

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So the LDMG didn't get to become involved in relation to those flood events?-- No, the Mayor and I met on the Sunday and discussed issues and met at the Lowood SES depot and it was decided to have the meeting on the Monday, but unfortunately the isolation had occurred on Monday morning. We had to cancel that meeting.

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The Somerset Regional Council experienced a loss of communications?-- Yes, we did.

And that was on the 10th and 11th of January?-- Correct.

There was a loss of electricity and e-mail server in the LDCC on the 10th of January?-- The LDC was - the planned LDCC was actually inundated and became inoperable. So it was inoperable well after the event was in stand-down mode. We had to create a stand - or, sort of, a secondary coordination centre and that had power back on late on the Tuesday.

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There was loss of mobile phone and landline coverage?-- In Fernvale/Lowood area, yes.

Okay. Now, if you can go to your second statement and if you can go to item 10 in your second statement. You state that Council did not receive any warning after the State Disaster

Centre telephone link-up on Monday 10 January?-- That's correct.

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What was the warning that you received from the State Disaster Centre on this date?-- It was a phone hook-up and as part of that hook up the Bureau of Meteorology gave a report on the predicted rainfall until the end of the event and they predicted I think my memory was 50 to a hundred millimetres of rain for the next two to three days.

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And did the Somerset Regional Council take any steps in relation to such a - to such information?-- That information didn't - didn't cause alarms within our area.

The effect on warnings about releases from Wivenhoe Dam are discussed in item 10B to E. If I can take you to this series of an e-mail chain and it's the e-mail chain is between you and Rob Drury from Seqwater, and it's dated from the 11th of January and the 14th of January - sorry, it's not an e-mail chain, it's two e-mails - or two e-mail chains. Now, if I can take you to the e-mail that is - that you sent to Rob Drury on the January the 11th-----?-- Yes.

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-----which you discuss - which you say, "Can I confirm my calculations"; do you see that e-mail?-- Yes.

Now, you're also reporting on the situation that you have with communications then where you're saying you've lost power at Fernvale so your home e-mail is not working, "but luckily work is back on line. However when my laptop and phone go flat, I will be out of touch"?-- Correct.

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Your laptop and phone did go flat?-- The laptop went flat. The phone I could keep by travelling in the car I kept it operational, but I couldn't receive calls, so it wasn't working.

Because of the communications-----?-- Yes.

-----blackout that we have just discussed?-- Yes.

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So what steps did you take to keep in contact with the Seqwater from the 11th of January?-- From the 11th to the 13th when we returned to Esk, I wasn't able to make contact other than the odd time that I'd get reception like this.

What about - I'm sure that there were - were there - there would have been other facilities in the area that you could have made - you could have used to make contact with Seqwater?-- Not that I was aware of. There was no landlines and no mobile connections and we couldn't get out of Fernvale.

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Did you have - you had no contact with any other agency from the 11th of January for a couple of days?-- From the Tuesday morning through to late on the Wednesday.

What about meetings with the SDCC, did that occur?-- No, not on the Tuesday.

Were they aware of the lack of contact that you - that you were suffering?-- I'm not aware.

Did you convey that information up through the Disaster Management Plan to the DDC?-- Until the Wednesday we weren't able to get out. We - we couldn't get effective communication out. It wasn't until the Wednesday that we were able to get to Lowood and that's when we were able to get back on the phones again and that's when we started to get some meaningful organisation.

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And on the 14th of January you send an e-mail, I think that's behind that-----?-- Yes.

-----where you said that you've received your phone messages, "however having been huge problems with communications in Lowood and Fernvale and have not been able to return calls"?-- Yes, that was - I received from - you'd get some messages not on the Tuesday we received nothing, but on - on later times I would get the missed call thing through and they'd leave a message and that's when I sent this to let him know.

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Now, Commissioner, I tender those e-mails.

COMMISSIONER: What about that previous series?

MS WILSON: Yes, I should tender those as well.

COMMISSIONER: All right. The earlier series will be 325.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 325"

COMMISSIONER: This one will be 326.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 326"

MS WILSON: In your second statement, if I can take you to item 7? That talks about the SMS warning - an SMS warning?-- Yes.

I just want to be clear about the origins of this SMS warning. That was sent to residents living adjacent to Lockyer Creek on Sunday, the 9th of January?-- Correct.

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Do you know who sent that SMS warning?-- No, I don't. I'm assuming it's - I'm assuming it's EMQ, but I don't know.

The EMQ had no consultation with the Somerset Regional Council in relation to that warning? And the Mayor was made aware of

the warning by one of the recipients?-- Yes.

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And that's how you became aware of it too?-- The Mayor rang me, yeah.

Now, you state there that no further warning was considered necessary?-- We had no further information to add to it and people along the Creek had received it through the SMS system.

So-----?-- They had already been warned.

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I just want to know the basis of why you state that no further warning was considered necessary?-- Because the people affected had already been warned through the SMS system.

And you thought that would be sufficient and didn't need to be - well, I'll stop there. Did you know the extent of who received that SMS warning?-- No, we just assumed it was the residents in the affected area.

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And you made no inquiries to the extent of who received that warning?-- No, I didn't.

If I can take you to your first statement and if I can take you to paragraph 21. And this advice that you're providing for the future?-- Yes.

Suggestions for the future?-- Yes.

You state there that, "There was a loss of communication at a crucial point in the flood." You state that, "A more robust early warning system needs to be put in place." What do you have in mind when you say "a more robust early warning system"?-- Preferably something that's remote, that doesn't rely on communication between entities.

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Are you aware whether the Somerset Regional Council has made investigations to whether that could occur?-- Yes, I have.

Okay. And what - what is the result of those investigations?-- I've had contact with a company that deals in such warning systems. They're investigations it for us. We've given them a map of the Shire with the different catchments in the different town centres and they are going to come back to us with some advice as to whether it's possible or not.

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Is that discussions that you have had with a group called Greenspan?-- Yes, I think that's the name.

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And they provide SCADA systems which allows for the user to control equipment including warning sirens, storm water diversion and gates and pumps?-- Correct.

What is being envisaged perhaps for Somerset Regional Council?-- On a rough scale some rain gauges, some stream depth gauges, and then a telemetry system from those gauges to wherever the alarms need to be raised, and then audible sirens

was what they recommended as being a likely solution, but we haven't yet got that back from them.

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And where would that be a likely solution for?-- That's the problem. We have 14 centres and numerous rural areas along the Lockyer Valley so it would be required in a number of centres.

And has the Council particularised which centres they are in a priority?-- We've named them all to try and get a big picture of what's required. We haven't prioritised yet.

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And how long would this take? If the Council went down this path, how long would it take for these warning systems to be put in place?-- Assuming that funding is not an issue?

Yes?-- I believe they're fairly - you know 12 months was - that sort of time frame.

There's communities like Glamorgan Vale-----?-- Yes.

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-----that were isolated?-- Yes.

And the residents there have formed a community group. Are you aware of that?-- I have had an e-mail from one of the submitters to the Commission, yes, and had a conversation on the phone.

Are you aware whether the Somerset Regional Council is engaging with these groups to talk about the issues that occurred in this - in their regions?-- This specific case I offered the gentleman if he lets me know when he has his meetings, I'll turn up.

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Sorry, I didn't quite hear you?-- The gentleman that contacted me, Mr Hannah, I just told him if he lets me know when he's having his group meeting I'll turn up.

Are you aware that they're considering putting in gauges to provide extra warning to their community?-- I read that in his submission. I read that in his submission.

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And what is the Council's response in assisting those communities to - when they're doing their self-help to provide these gauges for themselves?-- I don't think that's my call, but I couldn't see Council having any issue.

And whilst it might not be your call, that would - what would - do you have any idea what the Council's view would be on funding - assisting with funding in relation to those community-driven programs?-- No, I wouldn't be able to answer that, I'm sorry, I don't have that knowledge.

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While we're talking about Glamorgan Vale, various communities set up their own - during the flood events set up their own evacuation centres, et cetera. Are you aware whether the Somerset Regional Council is going to involve them in a future Disaster Management Planning?-- I think there's some work to

be done in making sure that the agencies let their subgroups understand what's involved because I think a lot of this knowledge is there in those rural fire - sorry, in the organisations. It just hasn't got to the grass routes. So, yes, there's work to be done by Council and the agencies.

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And how would envisage that to occur? Would that be formally referable in the Disaster Management Plan or is it something that would occur on an ad hoc basis?-- I think it's training of those groups to get to understand what's in the plan.

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But what about communication by the LDMG to these groups directly during a disaster event?-- I don't see that as happening. The communication should be with, for instance, in the rural fires, it should be with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, and then they should be communicating with their subgroups because otherwise if we start communicating with their subgroups, it gets out of control.

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But what about a community like Glamorgan Vale? There's some residents who, when they get isolated, they band together?-- They would-----

Get local knowledge back up through the disaster management structure?-- That we can deal with, I believe, through - again, if the phones were working and they had SMS to us, we could probably do something for them, but we haven't gone down that path far enough yet.

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There are other matter in item 21 in terms of the future, which I'll address - I'll come back to - but if I can just take you to a few more matters before I come back to that? In relation to the Bureau of Meteorology warnings, in that first statement at item 7 - and if I can take you to 7A - I apologise, it's your second statement at item 17. 7A in your second statement. You refer there that Council did receive general warnings from the Bureau of Meteorology updates of the state disaster telephone conference, and these warnings were to expect widespread rain. We've already talked about that. Are you suggesting there that there was a lack of area-specific information from the Bureau of Meteorology which could assist the Somerset Regional Council?-- Yes.

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And is that something that the Somerset Regional Council would like to see that is more specific information in relation to your area?-- Yes.

I'd like to take you to the issue of evacuation centres in your region?-----

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COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask you, Ms Wilson, how much longer do you think you might be?

MS WILSON: Another 15 minutes, Commissioner. I might be some time.

COMMISSIONER: All right. Perhaps we should adjourn until the morning then. 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

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THE COMMISSION ADJOURNED AT 4.32 P.M. TILL 10 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY

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