

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 26/05/2011

..DAY 30

THE COMMISSION RESUMED AT 10.00 A.M.

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COMMISSIONER: Yes, Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: Commissioner, Mr Rolls, I think, foreshadowed yesterday there was a letter the Premier had sent to Mayor Peter McGuire. So, I should tender that for completeness now if that's convenient. I have copies.

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COMMISSIONER: That will be Exhibit 490.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 490"

MR MacSPORRAN: Thank you.

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COMMISSIONER: I will just note for the record Mr Callaghan and Ms Wilson assisting, Mr MacSporran for the Crown, Mr Dollar for Sunwater, Ms O'Gorman for the Commonwealth. That's it, is it? I think this is our quietest session to date.

Thank you. Ms Wilson, Mr Callaghan?

MS WILSON: Thank you, Madam Commissioner. We call Dr Mark Elcock.

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MARK STEWART ELCOCK, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

MS WILSON: Is your full name Mark Stewart Elcock?-- That's correct

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And you are a registered medical practitioner with the Medical Board of Australia?-- Yes.

And you hold the position of State Medical Director for Retrieval Services Queensland which is a division of the Chief Health Officer?-- Yes.

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

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Can I show you this document, please?-- Thank you.

Is that your statement with attachments and exhibits?-- Yes, it is.

Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 491.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 491"

MS WILSON: Now, you have got a copy of that statement in front of you?-- Is it all right if I look at my notes?

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Have you got one that you have provided-----?-- Yes, I have.

-----that you have got there? Now, you perform both a clinical role and a nonclinical role with Queensland Health?-- That's correct.

Your clinical role is that you are employed as a clinician of the Eminent Staff Specialist?-- Yes.

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And your role encompasses direct clinical work as retrieval physician performing retrievals with the Queensland Ambulance Service flight paramedics?-- Yes, I do.

And working with the Emergency Helicopter Network?-- That's correct.

Your nonclinical role is to provide clinical governance in operational oversight of Queensland Health controlled retrieval and aeromedical service providers?-- Yes, that's correct.

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Now, you state that Retrieval Services Queensland, RSQ, was intricately involved in the acute flood disaster response from the 26th of December 2010 through to the 28th of February 2011?-- Yes, very much so.

Can you tell us how RSQ was involved in the flood disaster response?-- Retrieval Services Queensland is - I suppose has two functions. We provide the Queensland Health component of what is termed the Queensland Emergency Medical Service Coordination Centre and it's a collaboration between Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Health, and essentially what our staff in there do, we have nursing coordinators and medical coordinators, and they are there to essentially triage requests for aeromedical assistance at a clinical level. So, determinations are made as to the severity of that patient, how quickly do we have to respond, what level of escort do we require to send, which hospital is the best referral and receiving centre for them to go to, and we oversee and task the actual clinical retrieval team that will-----

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Now, sorry, continue?-- Sorry, so Queensland Health looks after the clinical components of that coordination centre, and part, as in Queensland Ambulance Service, then proceed to task the respective aircraft whether that's fixed wing or helicopters.

Okay. Now, Queensland Emergency Medical System Coordination Centre which was referred to your QEMSCC, is that also referred to and known as QCC?-- That is correct. Just to be very clear, it is the Queensland Emergency Medical System Coordination Centre, not the Queensland Health Clinical Coordination Centre.

Did I say Queensland Health?-- No, no, in some of the documents it refers to Queensland Health.

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And is there a distinction between the two, or is it just a misnomer?-- Just a misnomer.

Now, in your statement you refer to EMQHR, which is Emergency Queensland Helicopter Response?-- Emergency Management Queensland Helicopter Rescue.

And you state that, "EMQHR remains with the Department of community service. However, Queensland Health is developing a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Community Service for the use of helicopters for interfacility transfers." Can you explain the purpose of that memorandum of understanding?-- I'm not involved directly in the development of that memorandum of understanding, but it's my understanding that the intent is to move towards a purchase of providing between the tasking agencies and EMQHR.

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The tasking agencies for the Emergency Helicopter Network are particularised in paragraph 15 of your statement?-- Yes.

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And they are Queensland Health, Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue, the District Disaster Coordination Centres, that is around the State; is that the case?-- That's correct.

And the State Disaster Coordination Centre, and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority?-- Yes.

So, each and every one of these organisations are a tasking agency that can deploy a helicopter; is that the case?-- Yes, they can, they can approach individual members of the Emergency Helicopter Network and task them, they task them directly.

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And the Emergency Helicopter Network, can you tell us what that is comprised of?-- Sure. There are essentially 10 bases across the State between the Torres Strait and down into the southeast corner, essentially a contracted provider of Australian helicopters on Torres Strait. There are EMQHR bases in Cairns and Townsville, there is a community helicopter provider in Mackay, a community helicopter provider in Rockhampton, a community helicopter provider in Bundaberg, Maroochydore, another one in Toowoomba, and on the Gold Coast, and lastly there is another EMQHR base in Brisbane.

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So, is it the case that effectively what paragraph 15 of your statement states is that each one of these organisations can

contact any one of those helicopter bases or networks and task a helicopter to perform the service?-- Yes, they can.

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Now, where does QCC under the present arrangements-----?-- Yes.

-----have any interplay with that tasking?-- Well, I think we have to be very clear here that the QCC only tasks those aircraft for what we call aeromedical tasks and those are essentially where - there's two bits to it. The first component is we - the QCC can receive a request from one of the Queensland Ambulance Service regional communication centres across the State for helicopter support in support of triple O community calls for assistance. We through QAS and the QCC have particular criteria, I suppose, that we would use in filtering through to what might be a - put forward as a potential helicopter response, particularly trauma and chest pain. So we would receive a request from those regional ambulance communications centres and a rapid clinical decision would be made as to whether that was an appropriate task to do, and then the QCC would then task the helicopter provider directly to do that. The second component of tasking through the QCC for the Emergency Helicopter Network is for interhospital transfers, and that is of sick and injured - acutely sick and injured patients between facilities, both private and public, and I think one of the things I particularly wanted to stress to the Commission was that interfacility transfers are a vital component of supporting rural, remote and regional Queensland and moving patients to a higher level of care, and there has been some discussion that because a patient is in hospital that that's - that's okay. Unfortunately every hospital across Queensland is not the Royal Brisbane and that people do require to be moved at some times rapidly and with a high level of clinical escort to larger centres to optimise their care. If we don't do that, there would be significant morbidity and mortality associated with leaving patients in smaller hospitals that don't have the capacity to look after them. So, those interfacility transfers which takes up the bulk of the work that QCC does across fixed wing and helicopters, you know, the importance of maintaining that, you know, cannot be understated.

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Would QCC know at any given time where all of the helicopters that are available are?-- That has been the intent and - when the QCC was set up but practically, no, we don't. There is - there is an onus on the provider, the helicopter provider, to inform QCC of their movements and that then is variable.

Now, the tasking of the EHN helicopters by these agencies-----?-- Yes.

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-----as referred to in paragraph 15 is governed by the Queensland EHN tasking guidelines. You state that the guidelines to your understanding has not been updated or endorsed since 2003?-- That's correct.

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

Now, you refer to the guidelines as of 2003?-- Yes.

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Is this the protocol that the EHN is effectively working under?-- Those are the endorsed requirements. They're have many number of draft versions subsequent that have been passed around the agencies to contribute to and comment on, but none of those have been - have been endorsed in any manner, so realistically these are the ones that people can go back to and refer to, yes.

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Madam Commissioner, I tender that document.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 492.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 492"

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MS WILSON: We have head evidence of draft guidelines as recently as April 2011. There seems to be in various - there has been a number of draft guidelines-----?-- That's correct.

-----since these 2003 guidelines, but they haven't been endorsed, and is it the case that the document that is paramount is the document in front of you; that is the 2003 guidelines?-- Yes.

Have you had a look at the most recent draft guidelines as of 2011, April this year?-- Yes, I have. I've had significant input into those.

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Does that provide any fundamental change to the operation and tasking of helicopters of the EHN?-- It - in my opinion, it commences the process for transitioning to what we call single point tasking of EHN assets.

It is clear from your statement that you are a supporter of single point tasking?-- Yes, absolutely.

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And in your view April 2011 condenses the process, is it the case, but doesn't solve the problem that requires single point tasking-----?-- That's correct.

-----as the answer?-- That final draft version that you refer to does not complete the circle, it requires further amendments to transition the whole way to what has been referred to as single point tasking.

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Let's just concentrate for the moment on the present state of tasking EHN helicopters across the State of Queensland?-- Yes.

You state that during a defined disaster event, the tasking agencies that were referred to in paragraph 15 tasked EHN helicopters directly. The main difference between normal daily operations and disaster response is that during a

disaster SDCC and the DDCC also directly task EHN helicopters?-- But that would be the main difference, yes. QPS obviously would be tasking these assets during the time of the disaster as well, but they do in normal operations task them, but the two large components that in nondisaster-type operations that come into play are your State Disaster and District Disaster committees and groups.

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And it is your view that the direct tasking by multiple agencies to the EHN helicopters places or can place the pilot in command of the helicopter in having to go through his or her own balancing equation, so to speak?-- Yes, absolutely, and, I mean, I think I have articulated in my statement that in my opinion and experience, being involved in this over the last 20 years in Queensland, that those decisions, those deliberations around which task takes priority should have come prior to the tasking of the helicopter asset, as we are placing pilots and crews in that position where they have to decide what they think is the most appropriate task to respond to, and some of the statements that I was asked to look at that has demonstrated very well that pilots and crews in the middle of an operation are actually talking amongst themselves in the helicopter and discussing which one they think they should go to, and my thoughts on this - and I think I'm supported across the group that we deal with every day - is that has to go to single point tasking, and those difficult decisions should be made not in committee type sense beforehand, but there should be a single decision maker who decides and then the aircraft is tasked with the job at hand.

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And the point that you raise is that every tasking agency may see its requirements as important, but will only see its operation in isolation without looking at the broader picture and the requirements that are needed around the State?-- Absolutely. I think that we see on - you know, not on an infrequent basis, perhaps once a month, we would have occasions where EHN assets were tasked by other agencies and there is tasking confusion which leads to, you know, some circuitous communication paths which ultimately resolve things but leading to delays in response, and I suppose if those discussions between the tasking is - let's say between the QCC and Queensland Police - were to take place prior, there would be a shared appreciation of each other's requirements, and there could be, I suppose, a collaborative tasking that would be able to then take place that recognise both needs, and then the helicopter crew could go and do that with the additional medical crew, if required, without that niggles at the back of your neck that, "Should I be doing something else?"

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And the tasking of helicopters during the 2010/2011 flood event showed the problems that can arise when a central tasking point does not exist?-- Yes.

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And it was recognised specifically on the 11th of January this year that the tasking of EHN helicopters in response to the flood events that were occurring was problematic and Mark Delaney and you then made the decision then to quarantine the EMQHR helicopters at Archerfield to just do search and

rescue work; is that the case?-- That's correct.

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So you just isolate them out of the pool, they cannot be deployed for any other task, except to concentrate on the search and rescue that is required during those days?-- Absolutely, and I think that in my statement and in the exhibits that I have tendered that in the absence of that overarching quality and robust guidelines for the tasking across agencies, we operationally came to work around that allowed us to optimise the response to multiple tasks, and the one thing I think that - in the absence - in the absence of an over arching group who can see where all the helicopters are, one could argue that perhaps the response on that day could have been better or more - may not be better, sorry, could have been more coordinated by using other helicopters with - you know, other people have mentioned could other helicopters have made a difference. I think that's arguable, you know, whether there would be lots of more helicopters would have been made any different to the final outcome, but I think that by not having an integrated system we didn't - we weren't able to do perhaps as well as we could have.

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Well, let's look at the example that the 11th of January if this year provides?-- Yes.

If there was a single point of tasking, would that have made more helicopters available to be deployed to the Lockyer Valley area?-- Potentially, yes. I suppose you would have to - it would have allowed all those requests from QPS to have been - to have been, I suppose, filtered through the one entry point and it would have allowed that single entity of tasking to then look at what assets were around and at least then give them the opportunity of responding. Given the way weather on that day, I am not sure if other helicopters from other locations on Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast or Toowoomba would necessarily have got in there that day, but if - in my opinion, if we had had a single point tasking that could have potentially been an outcome, yes.

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The example that you provide, that is the events on the 11th of January this year, you state is not just an example in isolation, there are many examples that demonstrate the confusion of tasking helicopters throughout the State?-- Yes.

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You state at paragraph 72 that, "On review, such incidents could have resolved and an appropriate prioritisation decision made between the relevant tasking agencies if direct consultation had occurred prior to the tasking of an EHN asset." Who would that direct consultation be made to?-- I think that if you had a direct discussion between, let's say the QPS officer who was requesting the aircraft and the medical coordinator, the QCC, then who would be two senior people within those organisations, two - not in committee but as in a short, sharp and discussion around what the requirements were, that each other's needs could be taken into account. I mean, there are a number of examples. I mean, one I could give you where early on in the year QPS received - sorry, EMQHR in Townsville received a task to respond to a

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potential flare sighting off Port Douglas, they ended up calling it off Port Douglas. Now, they tasked EMQHR directly in Townsville, the Cairns machine was off line, and as far as EMQHR were concerned they were off line to go and do that task, and that's - under the tasking guidelines that's exactly what you would do. Simultaneously there was a task from QCC for a young male who had just been - arrived at Tully Hospital with critical head injuries who required transport to Townsville Hospital for rapid critical neurosurgical intervention. So, here we have two cases where we have one helicopter, we have two cases that require, on the face of it, rapid, immediate response. Now, the wait on that was the helicopter went and did the flare sighting, but afterwards when we actually discussed with the QPS, the call actually came through to QPS the day before, 12 hours prior, that potentially had been a flare sighting, and if we had that discussion before, QPS were comfortable with another hour or two's delay to move that patient rapidly into Townsville and then go and do the flare sighting. So, I suppose we see examples like that maybe once a month where there are simultaneous taskings of the one asset where if some discussion were had beforehand we think we could better optimise the system response and tailor the response to the requirements of both agencies.

COMMISSIONER: I'm sorry, can I just get this clear, who are you seeing as your single point tasking agency?-- Sorry?

Who does that consistent of?-- Well, at the moment, there isn't one.

No, but what are you thinking?-- Well, I mean, my personal opinion is that we already have - Queensland has a very well developed established system of tasking probably 14,000 aeromedical task a year through the QCC which represents almost 90 per cent of engine hours of the EHN. I think with some tailored resourcing and robust guidelines and, you know, protocols, that additional tasking of that 10 per cent could be put through the QCC. You'd have to have - QPS would need to be involved, you would have to have the whole of government working to make that happen, but, as I said, we have this demonstrated - a system that for aeromedical has demonstrated capability and effectiveness and it wouldn't take much to enhance that a bit further to oversee all of these taskings.

Isn't there a risk that will be seen by other agencies as a QCC grab for power?-- Absolutely, and I think that certainly from my perspective it is not about building empires or, you know, building those castles, it's about enhancing a system that we have got which is actually a benchmark in Australasia in New Zealand and, you know, we have regular visits from overseas of people coming to see how we do it from an aeromedical perspective, and I suppose what I'm suggesting is that you add the other component on to the medical, you increase the training, you increase the tracking resources of that group to oversee the whole component. I see that that is a valid concern of other agencies, but given the current structure of things, there is no other agency that you would

want in power to do that.

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Can you see a perspective that the doctors will be calling all the shots and so their focus will be on medical emergencies, that that's their bias, at expense of other areas?-- Again, your Honour - and I think that that is a valid concern. I would say to them - at the moment I would not have the confidence that we could make that step tomorrow, but I think that there would probably be perhaps three or four people around the State whom the emergency helicopters providers would have the confidence in making those decisions if you were to look at a medical person doing that, I think - but I don't know necessarily the medical person would be the best decision maker. But you would have to have someone who has input from all angles who has to make a decision. I mean, we have heard people saying that there has to be - the people who make the tasking decisions have to have aviation expertise. I would say that you need to have someone with aviation knowledge, but it doesn't have to be an expert on aviation, because at the end of the day you have to - the aviation expert is the pilot that you are asking to do the tasks. So, the last thing you'd want to see happening is an emergency medical dispatcher looking at the weather radar and saying, "It looks rubbish out there, we won't task the helicopters." There has to be an appreciation that the weather's bad and an understanding that there might be limitations on it, but at the end of the day you have to task the aircraft to see if they think it's safe to do it. Similarly, from a medical perspective, there has to be an input there to get across the urgency and the - you know, the relative urgency of why you need to move a person from A to B or you have to send a helicopter to a homestead or a motor vehicle accident, and combining those is difficult, and I think that - but saying that, if you were to structure the filtering system to - in such a way, I think that the number of times you would have to get that to level of decision-making would be very, very, very small.

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Sorry, I don't follow that. Why wouldn't that be the decision-making agency in every case?-- No, I am saying it would be a decision-making - the agency itself - so if you look at the moment Queensland Ambulance Service receives hundreds of thousands of calls every year from triple 0 calls, and they have an algorithmic system which drills down to the most serious patients get the most rapid response. If you were to - whatever system you set up, whether it was in QCC, or wherever, you would have to have a system where all the requests come in and there is a way of prioritising them in a pretty straightforward manner. There is no doubt that a search and rescue response which requires a winch capability trumps everything; that takes absolute priority over everything else. So, you know, you could have that as number one, if that's what comes in that's what you go and do. But with other tasks I think you would have to have a conversation between the two tasking people as to who do we think needs to get the aircraft, which aircraft's most suited to do that, and, again, nine times out of ten that is a very easy decision to make. But ultimately, at the end of the line if there is tasking conflict or disagreement, you are going to have to have one person at the end of the day who has the accountability and responsibility to make that decision.

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Is it one person? What does QCC presently do? What's the decision-making component; one person, two persons?-- Well, QCC at the moment, because it is purely associated with aeromedical, you know, with patient transport, the person who has the authority to task that person is who we call a Medical Coordinator who is a specialist in critical care with aviation and aeromedical background. So they make that call in terms of, "We have two aircraft to choose from, we have one patient to move from A to B, this is the one we use." QAS will then action that and task the aircraft.

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What do you contemplate with your decision-making agency, is it still the single person, or is it a panel or-----?-- Well, you could make that a single person for until up to a certain point, but if there was - if QPS or QFRS had a tasking and they were unable between the two tasking officers from the two agencies to come to a decision as to who was going to get the aircraft, I would say you would have to have an escalation pathway in place that will go to the next most senior person within the organisation. And we do that currently around other complex tasks. And they would be operationally apart from the task and they could have an overview of it and they could say, "Well, we can do this in an alternative way", or "It can wait a bit longer."

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Can I just get this clear as to what you are contemplating? The tasking agencies go their merry way until there is a conflict?-- Yeah.

And at that point it gets referred up?-- At the moment - generally speaking at the moment, once a tasking agency tasks that aircraft, that goes and does - it goes and does the task and everybody else waits.

But I am talking about your model for the future?-- I mean, this is just musings, or, you know-----

No, but it is important, and it is obvious that the situation as it is is unsatisfactory, so if we can think through what you have got in mind - or are you saying it is really not sufficiently formulated for you to-----?-- No, I think that to - as I said, I think we have demonstrated very well the capability to coordinate, you know, 16,000 aeromedical tasks a year, but to integrate into that the additional system issues arising out of QPS, SDCC, those other tasking agencies into that, you would have to change the - not necessarily the structure but you would have to change the algorithms or the protocols that you used to take into account the priorities of other taskings.

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But what I am wanting to know from you is whether you are contemplating single-point tasking, in the sense that one agency tasks everything, or that it is a sort of appeal body where the agencies do their own requests and it is only if there is a conflict that your single-point tasking agency makes the decision as to who wins?-- No, I think that you have all requests through the one entity, which is known across all government departments, AMSA. All requests come into there and that essentially is your receiving house for all requests, and it might be as simple as AMSA from Canberra saying that they have seen a beacon go off wherever, they would like a helicopter to do that. The QCC as an entity, from the dispatcher side of things, a logistic component, could say to them, "Look, we have got three helicopters available for you. Which one would you like to use?", or they could say, "We have got one helicopter that's currently on a medical task, they will be finished in a half an hour, or we have got another one that is offline and we have got one that could be there. Which one would you like to use?" At the moment, all of those tasking agencies have to contact each of those individually to task them. So there is no oversight of which aircraft is actually available and which one is on another task, and no avenues to discuss with those people who they know in the system are about to task the aircraft there and then.

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Mmm?-- So that's the fundamental flaw I see at the moment, is that we have groups of highly-trained, committed helicopter crews - and remember, these aircraft - not all helicopters can do the same thing. These aircraft are highly specific in what they do. So there is increasing pressure on them. And to remove the pressure from the bases themselves and allow those helicopter network providers, I suppose, the confidence that the right decisions are being made before the tasks, to me it is fundamental in moving our system to the next level.

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I suspect there might be a counter argument, that you add a time component, where as somebody can just go and say, "We want that helicopter, off we go", now they go through this agency and there is a bit of discussion perhaps?-- I mean, I think those discussions - as I say, the concern - and I see

where you are coming from - that you might think that that requires five people sitting in a room making a committed decision. It wouldn't be. It would be two people linked together by telephone straight away, "What do you want to do? Let's make a decision. Right, you have the aircraft." Another example, I suppose, to put it into context, after Cyclone Yasi, EMQHR were tasked to move tarpaulins from Townsville to Ingham and they had just commenced that task when ambulance were asked through triple 0 to respond to a young man who'd come off a motorbike just outside Tully versus tree with significant head and chest injuries. Now, to me, again, if - from my perspective, there is no choice there. Another helicopter can move the tarpaulins. The helicopter should be used with the paramedic and doctor response to go to retrieve that patient and bring them to hospital. So at the time we had to use another aircraft that just happened to be transit in Townsville at the time with another crew to go and do that job, and they were the first helicopter and first response into that area after the cyclone. And in my opinion through a central tasking agency you could have those discussions. You could say, "Look, EMQ have requested a helicopter to move tarpaulins from A to B. Ambulance have requested the helicopter to do this. Time critical. You know, severely injured patient to move." We will do the patient first. We will do try and get another helicopter to do this other job, which is important but could be done by another helicopter or could be done later. We have no way just now of triaging any of those conflicting tasks.

I suspect the issue may not be so much the need for a single-point tasking agency, as to who gets to call the shots in the single-point tasking agency?-- And I think that's where the contention has always been, that who ultimately will be responsible, but I think that however you set that up, as long as you have robust clinical and operational governing systems in place that you could go back and review those decisions - I mean, that's the only way really of doing it because ultimately, at the end of the day, someone has to make the decision and it has to be supported by our system to be making those hard calls.

All right, thank you.

MS WILSON: Just taking up from that, under your system it will always be a doctor who is making the decisions of tasking helicopters in Queensland?-- It currently is.

No, under your proposed single-point tasking?-- I - I haven't gone that far in terms of - it would need to be someone - it doesn't necessarily have to be a doctor that does that.

You would appreciate that all the agencies as discussed that you have particularised in paragraph 15 all have skill sets that could come and add to the tasking of helicopters?-- Absolutely.

Would you envisage that all of those agencies are working in the Central Point Tasking Coordination Centre?-- No, you

wouldn't have to physically have them all located there. I think there would be a - you would have to do a number of things. You would have to increase the training of the actual people who are doing the tasking, who are actually, you know, doing the physical thing of calling up the helicopter pilot or getting all the information together. There would be a lot of tasks that could occur through a central tasking model that wouldn't involve the medical coordinator because they wouldn't be medical tasks. But where the clinical component is paramount is that you might have an AMSA request to go to someone who is missing or fallen off a boat, and it is all well to get a helicopter there with a winch capability to pull them out of the water but at the end of the day you are going to have to have some clinical crew there to actually value add, to look after them, and then have an involvement of a clinician somewhere to make the decision as to which hospital is the best one to go to. So these are all sort of - I suppose it is increasing levels of involvement of each of people with the right background and skills for each task. There is no - you can't sit there and just write something that will work for every single case. You have to have the ability to call in people's opinions and advice for each specific task.

So it couldn't just be as simple as this: that QCC is now the single point for tasking? It couldn't just be as simple as that; it is a complete restructure that's required?-- I don't think it is a complete restructure. I would say that I don't have the confidence that you could turn a switch tomorrow and you could do it. I think there would have to be significant education components for everyone who is involved in the tasking of helicopters to allow an appreciation of the other tasking agency's concerns and their priorities. You would also have to put in an enhanced software and hardware that would allow you to track all those helicopter assets at the same time, and have to have a central tracking mechanism so you knew who was on maintenance, who was offline for training. All that sort of logistic components you would have to bolster and add it to the composite at QCC. You couldn't do it tomorrow, and you would have to work through those tasking protocols of which would take priority and at what level would you have to have a discussion between the tasking agencies.

And under the proposed single-point tasking operation, there will still just be one person who has to make the ultimate decision?-- Ultimately, yes, but as I was saying to you, throughout experience if you had the two officers from the respective agencies who had made that initial task having a telephone conversation prior to that tasking of the helicopter, 99 per cent of tasking conflict would be resolved at that level. You would only require that ultimate decision-maker if all of that failed.

So that ultimate decision-maker does not have to be a doctor?-- I don't - I don't think it does. I think it just has to be someone who is ultimately accountable and responsible for the decision, and is able to take on board the conflicting - or the priorities of each individual tasking

agency.

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To move towards a single-point tasking, you refer to the fact that robust guidelines are required. That is not just working with the proposed 2011 guidelines; it is throwing out the book and starting again, isn't it?-- Yes.

Thank you, doctor, I have no further questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

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MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms O'Gorman?

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Mack?

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MR MacSPORRAN: Thank you, Commissioner. Doctor, do I understand you correctly to say that QCC has the capability at the moment to be able to prioritise the requests it gets?-- That's correct.

Because it routinely triages those requests to determine what's needed and how quickly?-- Yes.

And you see that as being a very important aspect to any request that comes in for helicopters?-- Absolutely. I mean - in one of - I think it is Exhibit A, I have provided the Commission with the tasking considerations for aeromedical operations, and in that document on page 2, it essentially articulates how we would prioritise things from an aeromedical perspective. Now, when I talk about protocols or whatever, you know, we would call that a priority one from an aeromedical perspective. You could have priority one from QPS, you could have priority one for QFRS, and as tasks come in, you know, you would make the judgment then as to, "Okay, we have got a QFRS priority one, we have got a QCC medical tasking priority three, what takes precedence?" So that triaging in a medical sense occurs every day in what we do, and it occurs - you know, whether it is emergency department, wherever you work as a clinician, particularly in QCC that triage decision is made. What I suppose I am suggesting is that we take that to the next step of triaging requests from other agencies in a transparent way that they are involved with. As I say, 99 per cent of the time, I don't think there would be tasking conflict, but it would give the network - I suppose it would give government the knowledge that the whole network is being managed from an operational perspective. But even if you were to go to that level, I think you still have to have central - and I am not saying QCC would do this in any way at all, but I think you still would have to have the whole helicopter network overseen by one agency as well, rather than having disagreements with different providers. That all has to come together as well. So to me, looking at this from an

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operational perspective, of flying every week and coordinating and then being involved in the oversight of it, it has to all come together in some manner or form for it to work in a most efficient manner.

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So if you have the QCC structure, if you had extra training for all agencies to come underneath the umbrella of that structure - not that agency but that structure-----?-- Yeah.

-----so that all requests came to a central point and were all triaged so that we knew what priority each of them had, that that same central point would be a point where they would have oversight and be able to monitor where all of the air assets were?-- Yes.

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And what they were doing?-- Yes.

What their capabilities were?-- Yes.

Where they were located?-- Yeah.

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And to be able to choose the appropriate vehicle for a particular task?-- That's correct.

And if all of that was done, you then have information that could be fed to a central decision-maker, whoever that might be-----?-- Yes.

-----whichever agency-----?-- Yeah.

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-----who could look at the information that had been gathered, triaged, prioritised, and make a decision based on that best available information?-- Yes.

And you wouldn't have to be a medical person because the medical priority would be factored in to the processing of the request?-- That's correct. I mean, the difficulty we have got at the moment is that all those tasks come in separate to the providers, and even at the moment if they were all to come in to the one place, there is no-one who has the authority to make those decisions. But if we were to give a person or an officer that accountability and responsibility - when I talk about robust protocols in place, there would have to be, as you said, a system in place that allows them to look at all that information rapidly and make a contemporary decision on their judgment as to which task should go first.

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And each agency could produce, for instance - and they may already have it - a template that an operator could go through to tick the boxes to effectively triage the request?-- Yes.

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And to arrive at a QPS code 1, code 2, whatever, and QFRS, QCC, they all have their own templates, but would result in a prioritisation of individual requests that came in?-- Yes. You could do that but I think you would have to be very clear and transparent about what those definitions were.

Yes. Well, that would be the template?-- Yeah.

There would be a standardised template that the operator uses for a particular request. And, again, that way you have got a standard series of instructions that a decision-maker can use to choose the right option?-- Yes.

And doesn't have to be a medical person or a police officer or a fireman?-- No, as long as that person has the right input and the right knowledge and the right capabilities and takes all those things into consideration making a decision, and that that decision is then, you know, auditable retrospectively, I think that that's - we have to move to that level of system. We have to do it.

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And to use the example you gave of the AMSA request for a vehicle in relation to a sighting of what may have been a flare in the Torres Strait, or a QPS request, I think it was, if that was triaged on a proper template through the agency, you would have understood immediately that it wasn't as urgent as the medical emergency that was competing with it for the service?-- I mean - I think how I would - that might come up as two priority ones. On the basis of the information that's received it may come up as two ones. I think before you went to the ultimate decision-maker, you would have two people who have asked for that aircraft to have the discussion at an officer level, and that's where the details would come out and you would say, "Well, hold on, we can actually hold off a bit longer on this one. You go do that one." Where you need the decision-maker is where both people say that, "It is priority one. We both want the aircraft." That's - you need the decision-maker then at the end of the day to turn around and say, "Well, I accept you've put here that this is critical, you need it for this. I have got a unit that's critical for that, but I am making the decision, this is what we're doing."

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Yes. I suppose what I was getting at is if that request from AMSA or the QPS was triaged properly-----?-- Yeah.

-----the information about it being a 12-hour-old sighting, possible sighting would be in the information, wouldn't it, essentially?-- If you had it all set up properly, yes.

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And that would be relevant to a decision-maker's assessment of the priority as against the medical emergency it was competing with?-- Absolutely.

All right. And the drafts that have been produced most recently as April this year, express a willingness to advance this topic, but what you need is a robust set of guidelines to make it clear that it needs be to be advanced further?-- Yes. I mean, it needs - I mean, from my perspective it needs whole of government support to progress.

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The problem has been identified; it is a matter of how you configure it so that individual agencies don't think that they are being squeezed out-----?-- Yeah.

-----or downgraded?-- I mean, those are valid concerns.

That's all I have, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Ms Wilson?

MS WILSON: The process that you are suggesting will obviously have to take some time because you are wanting a whole of government response. Have you got any suggestions for an interim response to this problem for the next wet season; how there can be a better tasking of helicopters?-- I think that you could have that in place by next wet season.

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That's your hope?-- Yes.

Is there any interim solution in case that it is not in place, or is it just too difficult?-- It is not - no, it is not. I mean, there are some - there are ways at a base level which we do - in some bases do where if they get a call from AMSA that requests a search offshore, that the pilot or the crew attempt generally to phone back to QCC to say, "Look, we're going off to do this AMSA task. Would you like us to take any clinical crew?" So that there are some workarounds that we have at the moment, but you could formalise some of those across the network to say, "If you are tasked by someone else can you let QCC know of your movements?" As I said earlier, that's variable, but if that was to be brought in, that certainly would fill a lot of the gaps that we see on a general operational basis. I suppose the rationale behind the QCC having to know the aeromedical tasks all comes out of previous coronials and previous reviews of aeromedical where there was very aloof decision-making and inconsistent decision-making around the aeromedical component, as to who goes, who takes responsibility of the tasking, which clinical crew goes. I suppose that's why the way that all the guidelines are set up just now with QCC and Q Ambulance and Health is if you want a clinical escort on your aircraft, that has to be approved by the medical co-ordinator. So if there was a process as an intermediate thing that allowed QCC to be made aware of the task, an opportunity to add a clinical crew, as in a paramedic or a paramedic doctor, if required, that would certainly be an intermediate workaround.

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I apologise for the pun, but that would only be a bandaid solution and, really, what needs to be done is the restructure of a single-tasking agency with a whole government response?-- Yes.

Thank you.

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COMMISSIONER: Thanks very much for your time, doctor, and for your thoughts. You are excused?-- Thank you very much.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Gary Taylor.

GARY WILLIAM TAYLOR, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MR CALLAGHAN: Would you tell the Commission your name and occupation, please?-- My name is Gary William Taylor. I am the Assistant Director-General for the Department of Community Safety and I am in charge of the Corporate Support area.

You prepared a five-page statement for the Commission, is that correct?-- That's correct.

I will show you a copy of that. That's your statement?-- Yes, that is.

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I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 493.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 493"

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MR CALLAGHAN: Mr Taylor, your statement provides helpful overview of the scope and performance of various services by the department but it also takes a lot as given, and I just want to elaborate - I want to get you to elaborate on a few things. For a start, can I address the whole concept of integrated communication systems? You would be aware that the review conducted by Deputy Commissioner O'Sullivan in August 2009 found that a major weakness was the lack of integration and compatibility of information and communication systems, and from that finding flowed a couple of recommendations. One was that the State Disaster Management Group commission the department to develop the Statewide disaster management information and communication system building on the alternatives already in place. Does your statement reflect the completion of that task, or was that actually undertaken?-- I think it is a work ongoing, and there is currently a project for an All Hazards Information Management System.

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I see. Another recommendation was that the State Disaster Management Group lead the initiative to integrate and interconnect all of the control centres involved at all levels of the disaster management system in Queensland. Again, is that something that's been done or part of the work in progress?-- I am not aware of that one, but it is from the technology for the disaster coordination groups not to the front line service people, I would imagine.

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All right. Can I get you to explain a few things that you refer to in your statement? One is the Crisis Information Management Systems - or at least you don't refer to that - are you aware of its existence? CIMS?-- I am not aware of that one, no.

You do, I think, refer to the Disaster Management Portal, do you not?-- I do, yes.

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Can I just get a further explanation of its purpose and capability?-- The Disaster Management Portal is an internal communication system whereby the staff and volunteers can access information via this portal and allows them to do status updates on incidents and task tracking, and it does allow district and local management groups to, you know, interact by looking at what's on the portal itself.

There was some evidence about this, I think, in Ipswich, page 2376 of the transcript, where it was suggested that this didn't enable tasks or requests for assistance tracking. Is that not right?-- It just tracks the tasking requests. So it is not an actual tasking model that sort of is used actively for tasking.

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All right. You refer in your statement, I think at paragraph 24, to the fact that there were some temporary disablement of this due to the inundation of premises at West End, is that right?-- Yes, that's correct. We found that the server that module is operating off was unavailable because the power was cut to the West End commercial provider, that his property became inundated.

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So is there - what lessons have been learned or what actions are going to be taken as a result of that experience?-- We now have that running out of our complex at Kedron and it has all the back-up requirements for that complex.

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In paragraph 23 you refer to the total operations mapping. Can you just give us a further explanation of the purpose of capability of this tool?-- The eTOM system is largely a mapping system that incorporates disaster management information, such as damage assessments. It's heavily relied upon e-mails to transfer critical information between key stakeholders, but because it's an e-mail system, it's not a real-time communication system, there can be delays in the transmission and the receipt of e-mail information, and what we are trying to develop with the new all hazards system is a system that is more real time that you can exchange information and it's available to all people at the same time, rather than having to have information that comes in, somebody's got to key it in, and then somebody's got to react to it.

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I was going to ask you that. Is that something that would be redundant after-----?-- It will eventually be replaced by the all hazard system.

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All right. Well, can you tell us a bit more about the all hazard system? I know it's addressed in the Department's submission, page 28, I think, but, again, is this going to provide a common framework?-- We're hoping it will provide a common framework that local government can also access and will be available to all of our staff to access as well.

And where is it at at the moment? Where is the development?-- It's really in the design stage, I guess, and just the conceptual stage, so it's only in the last few months that it's been really starting to come together. So, we have now got a project director and a small team working on that.

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Is that only since the flood that this has been accelerated?-- It started as a concept before the floods, but it's really ramped up since the flood events.

And is there a timetable?-- We're hoping to have this delivered in modules so that it can be available for the next storm season, I guess.

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All right?-- And then it will be built on progressively over a period of time so that we have deliverables occurring on a regular basis in smaller modules, so we are not waiting for a big bang effect to try and produce a new system that will do everything.

So, accepting that it's going to be incremental, is there a timetable? Are there targets that have been set?-- Well, there is a budget of \$6 million which is over the next two years. So, we're sort of moving along that - that basis and hope to have a number of modules available in the next six to 12 months.

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What's concerning me is that, as you know, this Commission has to deliver two reports?-- Yes.

And we're anxious not to be recommending things that have

already been done or are likely to be done at or around the time the report's being delivered. So, one of those reports is due to be delivered in August. Do you anticipate that anything, something, will be done by, say, the middle or the beginning of July?-- I wouldn't imagine we will have anything other than the concept design completed by that stage.

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All right.

COMMISSIONER: Can I just interrupt? Can you explain it to me a bit more? What it's going to involve? How do you bring Local Disaster Management Groups in? What's the advantages?-- Well, at the moment we don't have sufficient information available to make decisions when they're required to be made. So, we need to get the information that can be used by all of the groups so that they know evacuation requirements, what area is going to be inundated, if an area is inundated then how that will affect. Probably better to speak to Bruce Grady who's on after me, he's the driver for the concept of how it's going to work, rather than the technology behind it.

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All right. But you know about the Guardian system that a lot of local councils have for disaster management?-- I have heard of it, but I am not aware of it, because we don't support or operate on that system.

I am just wondering about how the two work together, but Mr Grady is the man to ask?-- I think so, yes.

MR CALLAGHAN: That takes care of my next couple of questions. I have probably only got two other things I want to ask you about. One is you speak about the operation of the 13 25 00 service. There have been or the Commission's had its attention drawn to various difficulties that people have experienced with that service. We have had evidence from people in Chinchilla and Ipswich. I suppose, to come to the point, the Local Government Association expressed its concern about the overload of this system, such that information was not finding its way to the relevant LGA. You don't exhibit in your statement any - you don't acknowledge such difficulties, I don't believe. Were you aware of such concerns being expressed?-- We don't actually operate the 13 25 00 call taking system, it's operated by the Department of Public Works, and they take the calls and they send the information to the relevant commission. So, that's why I haven't commented on the system because it doesn't come under my control.

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Well-----?-- So, the only involvement that my group has with the 13 25 00 is that when they do take a request for information and assistance, it comes to us to put on the request for information tracking system.

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All right.

COMMISSIONER: How is it that calls from the Brisbane metropolitan area are directed to the Brisbane City Council call centre? Where does that fit in with the notion

presumably that SES has something to do with really community service and is really State Government?-- Well, I guess the Brisbane City Council calls that come from that geographic area are going to be handled by the Brisbane SES groups and that's where it goes to the Brisbane City Council call centre to task their own groups.

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So, it's entirely distinct, is it?-- As far as I know. I don't have a lot to do with that because, once again, it's not a system that comes under my control.

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MR CALLAGHAN: All right. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

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

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COMMISSIONER: Thanks very much. You are excused?-- Thank you.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: I call Bruce Grady.

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BRUCE THOMAS GRADY, SWORN AND EXAMINED:

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MR CALLAGHAN: Could you tell the Commission your full name and occupation, please?-- Bruce Thomas Grady, and I'm the assistant Director-General, Emergency Management Queensland.

Mr Grady, you have prepared a statement to which there are a number of attachments; is that right?-- Correct.

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That's contained in two folders; is that correct?-- That's it.

Yes, I tender that.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 494.

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ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 494"

MR CALLAGHAN: Can we start with the concept of EMQ generally? There's no specific reference to EMQ in the Disaster Management Act; is that right?-- That's correct, yes.

So, its functions reflect those of the chief executive under-----?-- That's correct.

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-----the DMA; is that right?-- That's correct.

So, I guess it's a question of what's made of it in those circumstances. Can you tell me this: is there a research component of EMQ function?-- Not specifically. However, we do continually review events that might occur overseas or in other jurisdictions, so that if there are best practice learnings, et cetera, from those things that we can acknowledge them and incorporate them in future policy or whatever.

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That was exactly what I was going to ask you about, was how do you ensure best practice by reference to world standards and there's no - do you have permanent staff allocated?-- There are permanent staff, but it's a component of a small number of staff's role.

In that regard, is there a specific requirement at policy level for the regard to be had in the performance of EMQ's functions to the needs of people with disabilities?-- Not specifically.

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That's just addressed on an individual basis?-- That's correct. In determining the priorities around response, clearly the most vulnerable members of the community are the ones where government responders would focus their priority.

Well, you would like to think they would, I suppose?-- Yes.

Can I ask you about the standing of EMQ or its operational standing during a disaster response? I think you say in your statement at paragraph 9 that EMQ and QPS worked collaboratively to determine and document the roles, responsibilities and so on?-- Yep.

Were these actually documented? Is there a piece of paper which records roles, responsibilities and operational doctrine?-- There's a document for Emergency Management Queensland. I think it is an attachment to the document, but it can certainly be provided. 10

I am specifically talking about division of responsibilities or understanding between you and QPS, not just your general responsibilities, because sometimes there could be an overlap?-- Yep, no, there's a clear understanding that's been negotiated and documented as a consequence of the review into disaster management and the new legislation. 20

Is it an attachment? I may have missed it?-- I thought it was. That certainly outlines - attachment 1 certainly outlines EMQ's role and responsibilities.

Yes, but I am-----?-- But there is no - there's no document attached that outlines Queensland Police Service's role and responsibilities----- 30

Or an understanding between the two of you?-- Not in any of the attachments.

But such a document, you think, may exist?-- It would exist in a number of documents, not consolidated into one.

All right. Could I perhaps ask you to follow it through-----?-- Yes.

-----with that and provide us with whatever documents there are which reflect the understanding between your organisation?-- Certainly. 40

Thank you. You would be aware of - in the evidence that we have already heard there were some issues about the performance of EMQ expressed by the Roma District Disaster Coordinator?-- Mmm, yes.

They have been described by your Mr Bundy as arising from a personality clash rather than a systemic problem?-- I think that would be a fair assessment, yes. 50

That's Mr Bundy's assessment and I am not necessarily taking issue with it, but I am just wondering what investigation or what review there has been of this particular situation at a higher level, if any?-- There's been no specific review of those circumstances. The issues, as I understand them, were dealt with at the time and dealt with effectively.

All right. And again I am not necessarily quibbling with it, but you have taken Mr Bundy just at his word in that regard?-- That's right, that's correct.

All right. Can I turn, then, to the whole question of Local Disaster Management Plans?-- Mmm-hmm.

It's part of the chief executive's function to regularly review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management by local groups?-- Mmm-hmm.

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And in this regard, we have seen a number of submissions and heard various pieces of evidence. For example, there was a suggestion on behalf of the Local Government Association of Queensland that more active review of LDMG and DDMG plans at preparedness is required. I am referring to Mr Hoffman's statement, his first statement, and to the transcript at about page 1984 to 5. You are aware of the suggestions which have made been LGAQ in that regard?-- I am, yes.

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There have been some specific examples offered, for example, by the Gladstone Regional Council. You are aware of those as well?-- Yes, I am.

Okay. Do you have a response to those concerns?-- Look, the issue around the review of plans and - I certainly accept that it is a responsibility under the Act for our chief executive and, therefore, it flows to EMQ to give effect to that. One of the things that I'd certainly like to explore, and some preliminary discussions have already occurred, with the Queensland Police Service is a far more active role by the DDCs in the review of Local Disaster Management Plans. I think that that certainly provides a greater resource capability to ensure that happens on a regular basis, but from a practical sense, the connection or the first connection of the disaster management system is local to district. So, having the district and the locals work together on the review of those plans I am sure would enhance the connectiveness, if you like, of the planning instruments that they both use. Then a role for EMQ - and I guess if we look back at the purpose - if I can take a moment to look at the purpose of the review into disaster management was the role of EMQ was ever expanding and what that meant was that the resource base of EMQ became insufficient to undertake all of the tasks that were being required of it. Therefore, the review, quite correctly, found that we should apply a different set of resources principally to the response phase of disasters which would, therefore, free up some of the EMQ resources to do other things. As a consequence of that, where I see EMQ's role being is to undertake more qualitative assessments of the planning environment around the State to ensure that they are consistent with the State's policy approach to disaster management and that they have undertaken an appropriate level of planning in a qualitative sense.

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Look, I am not necessarily arguing with you that that's a good idea, but at the moment as the statute reads it is your

function to review and assess the effectiveness of plans by local groups. I mean, that's got to start with-----?-- It doesn't necessarily say that we have to do it, it - I think we can interpret that as if there is a policy and a practice in place that ensures that that occurs, that that will be sufficient to meet the requirements of the Act.

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Sure - well, it may be, I don't know, but certainly at the moment it is one of your functions?-- Yes.

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You say that if you make sure that, for example, a DDC is doing that or-----?-- Yes.

That it's understood that the DDC is meant to do that, that would be sufficient?-- Yeah, I mean, I would anticipate that under the environment that I have described, that EMQ would continue to review district plans, the 23 district plans that exist, and that we would undertake a representative sampling of local plans to ensure that those qualitative aspects that I talked about were being met in the planning environment.

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Whilst devolving, if you like, the actual responsibility to ensure that the plan was done and addressed what had to be addressed to the DDC?-- That's right. At an operational level, the DDC would review the local plans and EMQ would undertake an oversighting role, if you like, and I think that in my interpretation that would meet the obligations under the Act.

Can we just perhaps go back a step and, again, I am not necessarily arguing with you that that might be the way to do it, but at the moment it doesn't seem to be - there doesn't seem to be a lot of consistency about the way it's being done; would you agree with that?-- Look, absolutely, I would agree, and that was a key driver of the review and the changes to the legislation, that there was an insufficient resource base, if you like, to undertake those planned reviews on a appropriately regularly basis and with the level of detail that would be required to actually make that review effective.

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And it would seem that at the moment the way in which a plan is reviewed is something which is largely left to an area director's discretion; is that right?-- Correct. There are some guidelines around that, but there is a high level of local input into that, I would agree.

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Which means that there's a variation in the way it's being done at this stage?-- Correct, yes.

What I suppose we would or I would suggest would be important would be some sort of audit process to - I mean, even if it is, as you say, something which might best be done by the DDC, someone's got - there's got to be accountability up the line?-- Yes.

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The DDC might have to make sure that the local group's doing it, somebody has to make sure the DDC is doing to it. Would that be an EMQ function?-- Absolutely. I would envisage that

we would develop, in your words, an audit tool that would be consistent across the State for the DDCs to review local plans, there would be an audit tool for EMQ to review DDC plans, and then there would be a function for EMQ to generally oversight the planning environment across the State. That's what I am talking about on a - probably on a representative sampling basis on, you know, a regular cycle, to ensure that there was consistency through plans from local to district to State.

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That shouldn't take long to do, though, should it?-- No.

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That should be in place-----?-- That could be something that would be in place by next wet season.

What sort of timeframe would you envisage?-- Look, I would think that you would - take probably a month to develop those things, you want to put them out for consultation to the parties to make sure that they were able to execute those things probably for another month or so.

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Okay. Would part of the compliance testing or audit process, whatever you want to call it, be to ensure that community consultation had occurred in the formation of the-----?-- In what regard? Community consultation is a fairly broad concept.

Well, the guidelines suggest that there should be community consultation-----?-- Okay. Yep, absolutely.

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All right. What's the situation, then, if a local government complains as to the lack of recourses to complete a plan as desired or to the standard, say, of a DDC?-- Mmm.

What's their recourse, especially some of the smaller-----?-- Yep. They certainly can ask us for assistance. Our capacity to do that is limited by our resources. Some local governments in that situation have chosen to go with a private consultant to develop their plan. I have to say I am not a great supporter of that because I think that ultimately that abrogates a level of both responsibility and understanding of what the planning - plan actually produces and its intent. So, yeah, there's - I guess there's two methods, one of which I am not particularly supportive of.

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We have heard complaints, for example, from the Gladstone area about the lack of training provided by EMQ or lack of support to local governments. In Gladstone, for example, they complained about late provision of the draft evacuation guidelines and described some of the content of that which they were receiving as tired. Is that the complaint that's limited to that area, or is that the sort of feedback that you have had from - have you had that sort of feedback?-- Not generally. Yes, it occurs from time to time and it occurs on different issues from time to time. I think that's, you know, necessarily a function of having 73 discrete councils with different issues and different levels of capacity and capability.

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You have read the Gold Coast City Council's submission to this Commission?-- Yes, some time ago, but yes.

It specifically made some pointed remarks about the limited availability of operational skills based training provided by EMQ. You are aware of that?-- Yes, I am.

And are you aware that they, as a result, have been doing some of their own training-----?-- That's correct, yes.

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-----for these purposes. Is that something that's coordinated with EMQ?-- Yes. In terms of content, the person who runs that program is actually an ex-employee of EMQ and there is a level of consultation around the content of that training.

Is there consultation but any - I mean, you wouldn't have the final say, I suppose, on anything that-----?-- No.

-----they said?-- No.

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If the content was inconsistent with anything that was being promoted by EMQ, you would have no power to correct that?-- No, no, no power or authority to do so, no.

All right?-- And that's across all aspects of the legislation.

I mentioned the draft evacuation guidelines which were something that the Gladstone Council had concerns about getting at a late stage. Can I come back to my question about - I realise those guidelines contain some reference to people with special needs?-- Mmm-hmm.

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And the need for their concerns to be identified and addressed, but how do we know if LDMGs are actually doing that? Is there some compliance mechanism which can ensure that these needs are being met in the context of evacuation?-- Well, in terms of the review of their planning, certainly it would be a key component of the requirement of their plan to understand where vulnerable members of the community are. I guess, if I can link this to some previous evidence around the All Hazards information management system that's been spoken about, it would certainly be an intent of ours for that system to be able to capture and hold data on a - on a fairly wide cross-section of more vulnerable members of the community and to ensure that that's maintained and updated, so that that's available both at the local, the district level and the State level, because it's a critical component of being able to plan an appropriate response to a community that may be subjected to a disaster.

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So, at the moment it is suffering from the ad hoc-----?-- Yes.

-----difficulties?-- It's done at the local level, and I guess it's - the efficacy of it is a consequence of the relationships and local government may have with key

stakeholders in their community.

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But you'd see that as being standardised and perhaps more easily monitored with the adoption of an All Hazards information management?-- That's right. I'd certainly like to see that, you know, so that there's a general understanding of just the demographics of a particular community, how many aged people, how many people from perhaps non-English speaking backgrounds, that would indicate or drive messaging that could go into there, how many people in a particular community might be receiving assistance from Blue Care or the like, how many people are on home dialysis, how many people are on home oxygen, you know, so on and so forth, so there can actually be some high level strategic decisions made that could be provided to health, to ambulance, other response agencies so they have a far more - can have an earlier intervention and a far more targeted intervention to get people who could potentially be quite vulnerable in a flood or a storm or other event and perhaps get them out of harm's way early or certainly support them early.

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All right. Well, that may be one of the things which is addressed by the authors, the information approach, and you would have heard Mr Taylor refer to that issue to you as well. So, since it's been raised-----?-- Mmm-hmm.

-----you may as well give us all an explanation of it, where it's at, what's proposed?-- Okay. The issue of an information system to support disaster management has been around for some time. It was an issue that was - I think you identified was raised in the review into disaster management 2009 and has been raised previously in other review instruments. Certainly it's not a situation that nothing has been done. The system called eTOM, which is a mapping system which allows us to populate geo-spacially, map with data around damage and - you know, thing like power outages, et cetera, et cetera, allows us to be able to display that spatially, and that's certainly a very valuable tool in strategy and strategic planning for disaster response.

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The part of the puzzle that's always been problematic is to connect the disparate organisations that make up the disaster management system, and in its simplest forms disaster management is on three levels: local, district, and State. Local is 73 different councils who have their own discrete approaches to IT and systems, and so on. District is a much easier area to manage, because that's Queensland Police Service. And State, I guess, is easy to manage as well. Apart from the fact the disaster management also goes across and has an all-agencies approach, so all government agencies are a part of the disaster management system and therefore would need to be linked in to any systems-based solution to that. To further complicate it, we also move outside of government, and there are a whole range of agencies who have a critical role in disaster management; the Red Cross, the electricity generators, providers, you know, government-owned corporations, not-for-profit organisations, all may end up with a role in disaster management. In an ideal world we would like to be able to consolidate the relevant information that they have to assist in the response and coordination of disasters into one place. We have heard evidence about the fact of having to hold teleconferences on a regular basis is problematic; that people spend a lot of time in a teleconference when they would much rather be spending time responding. The reason for that is that it is used not only as a decision-making forum, it is also an information gathering forum. What we are trying to do with the All Hazards System is to avoid the information-gathering component by being able to consolidate that data and then being able to display it in a way that is meaningful to a particular disaster response, that may be geographical, it may be based on a particular issue, whatever the thing that is driving the response to that event. So what we're talking about here is not going to the market and putting in a specification to buy a system. This is about designing an environment where all of those people, vertically and horizontally, can come to a commonplace to be able to provide data that they may have, to be asked for data that they may have but are currently not providing, to be able to manage - I think other evidence has talked about a visibility of request for assistance and where they might be in the scheme of things, provide visibility to those sorts of things as well. So rather than come together to ask questions about what's happening to get better situational awareness, the system, if we can deliver it, will be about presenting the situation and then asking strategic questions about what's the best way to respond, what assistance is required, where that might be, how urgent that might be, and so on.

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I am a bit concerned that you say if you can deliver it. Is there some doubt about that?-- Look, it is a - it is certainly a complex environment. I am led to believe that technically it is able to be achieved - not without its problems. I mean, we will need to ensure that participants in that system are able to comply with a common set of standards and that there are elements of interoperability around systems. For example, Queensland Police Service, whilst there

is no suggestion of an unwillingness to share, their systems have very high levels of security. So it might be that we have to have something to pull data out of their system, place it somewhere else and then connect it to the All Hazards System. 1

You have given us a very helpful explanation as to how complicated it is. What sort of timetable are we looking at? It sounds like it is something that could take quite a while?-- Well, my view is that it is a - it is a project that will never be completed. I think each - every event each year we will learn something, technology and so on will deliver us more opportunities. We want to link social networking into this so that we can interact with the community in a far more engaged way. The police use Facebook and Twitter to great effect during this event. I think there is a fantastic opportunity for us to use those instruments for resilience, to be able to get messages to people. You know, before an event why wouldn't we have, you know, YouTube videos on how to sandbag your house, or whatever the issue may be, so that people can be preprepared and prewarned and they have got access and ready access to useful information, you know, from multiple sources and sources that are becoming almost ubiquitous now on people's ability and willingness to use them. 10 20

And sources that authorities will no doubt be aware of before the next wet season but it doesn't sound like anything that you have described in the All Hazards approach is going to be ready by then?-- Oh, no, I would disagree with that. As I said, this is not about going out and buying a system. 30

No?-- There are a range of things that this architecture, if you like, for a system will help us to deliver, and we're already talking again - evidence I think has been produced to the Commission around 13 25 00 and tasking for the SES. The 13 25 00, calls come into two places at the moment. Brisbane City Council, due to their size and capacity, take the 13 25 00 calls in their Local Government area in their call centre, and the rest of the State comes through Smart Services Queensland. At the moment it is quite a clumsy and cumbersome process to get the data recorded and then to distribute the data. It is basically based on telephone calls and emails. That's not an environment that we're comfortable with. This system is already - sorry, this approach to it has already got us having productive discussions with Smart Services Queensland about a single point of data entry and an ability to be able to then capture and utilise that data. The back end of this that we would like to see is that that data actually has usefulness in three quite critical areas: one is the State Disaster Coordination Centre so we can get a view on what's happening in an event Statewide; certainly the SES who are the task agency to complete those tasks need access to the data; and, thirdly, and I think where the criticism is currently quite correctly coming from, is Local Government so that they can get exposure and a view to what tasks are occurring through 13 25 00 in their particular area as well. So that's something that we're confident that we will be able 40 50

to make significant progress on in the coming months.

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All right. So there will be some incremental improvements along the way before-----?-- The whole program of work is incremental. We're currently going through some work to identify what the technologists call the low-hanging fruit, so those things that we can do now we will prioritise and do them prior to the next storm season, and the things that will require, you know, greater investments in time, effort and money will probably be the things that will necessarily, you know, a longer term and probably target the following wet season.

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Can we get some information from you - not right now-----?-- Yes.

-----as to what you regard as the low-hanging fruit-----?-- Yes.

-----and what the long-term ambitions are, and where the dividing line is, and what sort of targets have been set for the short term?-- Certainly.

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Thank you. Because we are obviously concerned with the situation in the meantime, pending the utopian vision of the whole approach being in place?-- As are we.

In that regard, where does the Guardian software sit in this scheme?-- Look, Guardian is a proprietary system that is designed specifically for Local Government. I mean, I can't make a recommendation around a proprietary product for anyone. However, my observation is that the Guardian software has proven to be very useful for local governments. I would offer that there is probably almost a critical mass of local governments that have been through a process and have identified the value of a product like Guardian. Its particular power I think is the basis of its design is to link into the data that Local Government already hold. So it allows the richness of all that information that's held on ratepayers and geospatial, and what have you, and links it with tasking and information that is relevant to the management of a disaster. So in an ideal world, a system such as that linked into the All Hazards Information Management System is the very model that I am trying to describe in not going out and buying a system, but producing an environment within which multiple systems can coexist to a strategic intent and to a community benefit.

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So the overarching system which you are envisaging would have Guardian or something like it sitting within it?-- That's right.

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And-----?-- We would be able to - sorry, when I say we, the State and District would be able to access data that's held in the Guardian system and then be able to aggregate that data across multiple local governments who may be concurrently affected by a particular event.

Common sense might suggest it would be useful if all local governments were using the same system?-- A single system would certainly be strongly supported.

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All right. Could I turn then to the question of the SES? You would agree that especially during times of disaster, community expectations of the SES are very high?-- Absolutely.

But we're concerned to learn the amount of support they get. Of the EMQ staff - and I think there are about 260-----?-- Correct.

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-----that you mention in your statement. How many of those are dedicated to the purposes of the SES?-- Approximately 80 and that's on a full-time equivalency basis. So the number of people - area directors, for example, will have a dual responsibility to disaster management and to the SES. I don't know whether it is worth - it seems to be certainly - not necessarily in the Commission's eyes but certainly in the community a view that the SES is disaster management, and the SES have a very clear functional role but not a disaster management role. Disaster management is the overall conduct and coordination of the response to an event.

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I understand that?-- The SES are responsible for performing particular functions and tasks.

One thing which we have encountered along the way is a need, perhaps, to define the relationship between the SES and the Local Government?-- Correct.

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The Act provides for agreements between the Chief Executive and the Local Government's setting out the party's responsibility for the SES in the local area; that's so?-- That's correct.

Are there such agreements in existence?-- There currently aren't. We have been in discussion with Local Government Association of Queensland to develop a draft Memorandum of Agreement. That's in its final stages. As late as yesterday we were looking at a very late draft of that, and that document will go out for consultation in the coming weeks.

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Is it envisaged that these understandings will be executed before the next wet season?-- By the very nature of them, being agreements, we can't mandate that they be entered into, although I guess legally they are no longer an agreement, but certainly it is our intention that we will have those agreements in place, with all those councils who are willing, prior to the next wet season.

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We know, for example, that the Mackay Regional Council, I think, imposes a levy on ratepayers to fund their local SES or support them?-- I think disaster management more generally, but certainly a significant proportion goes to the SES.

That's obviously not a standard approach across the State?--

I think they are the only council that overtly applies such a levy. 1

And it suggests, by necessary inference, that they are not getting enough money from the State to meet these needs?-- Correct.

How is that audited again, if you like, or how are the relative needs of various local governments assessed and addressed by EMQ?-- There is no specific program of actively going and undertaking such a task. What EMQ does is provides all of the basic equipment, all of the PPE, overalls, belts, helmets, boots, et cetera, to all the volunteers, provides all of the specialist equipment, so working-at-heights equipment, you know, trailers, flood boats, et cetera. Those capital items are dealt with by provision of a grant to Local Government, so we provide the capital to acquire the asset. The understanding then is that Local Government will maintain that asset and meet its operating costs, so fuel and maintenance, et cetera. 10 20

What about training, though; I mean, that's still the responsibility of EMQ?-- Yep.

How many of those staff who are dedicated to the purposes of EMQ are actually dedicated to the purposes of training?-- There are three to four training officers in each of our regions, seven regions. Their role is principally around SES training but they will do some disaster management training as well, as well area directors. 30

You have exhibited to your statement BG4, which is relevant in this regard - and we understand the effect of that - but is there a training policy? Is there some sort of strategic plan setting out the objectives or what's expected for SES training?-- There is not, but that's certainly an intent. What we have done in the last couple of years is to go through each SES unit and determine the functions that they have agreed. Each unit - not all SES perform the same functions. They, through their council and our Chief Executive through us, will agree on a set of functions that are appropriate for an SES, for example if there is no requirement for flood boat operators, then there is no necessity to have that as a function and that then will drive, you know, the asset program - do they need a flood boat or not, obviously in that case not - and training. Where our next step is to take that is to use those functions to actually drive a training plan. We have developed what we call a Pathways document for the SES which shows if you join the SES and you want to - if you want to achieve particular skills, here are the training pathways that you are required. So some of those are foundation and then you build on those ultimately to be able to complete a function at a particular level. So this is effectively a work in progress but it certainly is an intent and an objective of ours. 40 50

One issue which we have encountered is that there have been complaints made about the nature of training currently

provided. Again, Mackay, I think, specifically expressed concern about the nature of the training, and, of course, in some remote areas the issue of having to travel away for training-----?-- Mmm.

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-----has been canvassed. Will those concerns be addressed?-- Difficult within current resourcing. If I could just address the issue of having to travel, it is certainly not our preference and it is certainly not our intention. My estimate - and I don't have hard data to support this - but certainly from my own knowledge and some recent discussions, it would be in the order of 90 per cent of training to the SES is delivered within their own unit or group. So on site, so no requirement to travel. When there is a more specialised training, which may be where there may be benefits of aggregating, then we do try and hold in a central point training, for example, flood boat, where we might bring a number of people together into a central point with a number of experienced trainers and deliver in one day training to multiple people rather than having to have several days and plus travel moving around a range of remote areas.

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Is it just going to be a resource issue? For example, that concern was expressed on behalf of the Condamine SES that people had to travel away for a number of days to receive training updates? Is that just going to be a continuing issue because of lack of resources?-- Certainly - it is not entirely a lack of resources. Sometimes it is much more effective to train people that way. But, as I say, it is certainly not our preference. We understand absolutely the impacts of time on volunteers, and in this particular environment, this is a skills-based volunteer organisation that do work in relatively dangerous conditions. So the need to have people appropriately trained is a duty of care that we take not because it is a legal responsibility but because it is our absolute commitment to those people to keep them as safe as we possibly can. So it is a function both of resources but it is also a function of it may well be the most effective way to deliver that training as well.

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Could I turn then to the manner in which the SES personnel are actually tasked during operational periods? And, again, I am sure you have been taken or followed the evidence, but this is something which has recurred as an issue in Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Mackay, Ipswich, Condamine. And we have heard that the SES can be activated in a number of different ways, either by government agency, or they can self activate, or then there is the 13 25 00 number?-- Correct.

As I say, I can take you through it all but what is the short answer to the problem, I suppose, especially in times of disaster is there a clear understanding as to how the SES is activated and by whom?-- Yes. For particular tasks, the clarity of who tasks them is clear. For search and rescue, for example, they will be tasked and work to the Queensland Police Service. For storm and flood jobs, they can be tasked by, as you say, 13 25 00 or jobs that may come into the local disaster coordination centre.

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But this is the problem, isn't it, that these things are all going to happen at once during a disaster?-- Well, it shouldn't be because the approach to it should be quite simple, and in our doctrine it should be quite simple as well. And that is, though, if the tasks get aggregated in a local Disaster Coordination Centre and they are tasked for the SES, then they should be provided to an SES incident coordination centre. So all of those tasks come in, the SES then manage their own tasks. Those tasks may well come to them in a disaster event with some priorities, and that's entirely appropriate that the local disaster management group may well set some higher priorities on some tasks or groups of tasks than others. And then it is the role of the SES, through its local controller, to organise itself to complete those tasks. If they require more resources, then that's simply a request up through District to State for additional deployments to be sent to them.

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Well, if we just explore that a little, you would see it if a local disaster management group was activated-----?-- Uh-huh.

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-----the SES should do as it is told by them? Is that-----?-- The priorities certainly should be set by that group. I wouldn't expect that that group would be making decisions about tasking, you know, 1 Smith Street versus 2 Brown Street. Those things should simply go in to a group of tasks that are appropriate to the SES, go to the local controller or their delegate, and then get organised in the most efficient, effective way to deliver them. Now, in a big event, that may be you develop sectors within the affected area and you allocate strike teams or taskforces, whatever you want to call them, to those particular areas, give them a number of jobs that are in that area, and they will systematically work through it.

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So-----?-- It is breaking down getting however many tasks into manageable, bite-sized chunks.

And that is solely the responsibility then of the local controller?-- That's correct.

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And is that - is that written down somewhere for the purposes of the local controller?-- There is certainly a doctrine on tasking, yes. We can certainly make that available.

During a disaster and codifying, if you like, the relationship between an LDMG and a local controller?-- It probably doesn't go to the extent that the issues that have been raised in the Commission, and it is certainly something that we would look to in the future. I guess one of the issues that's occurred here is the number of local - you know, of SES groups that have been activated concurrently, and often within the one Local Government area, and I think that the issue that's arisen here is some confusion about whether resources can get to a particular affected area, I think is one issue, and then the second one is do we actually have enough resources in that area to deal with all of the issues. So, you know, this was a

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particularly chaotic event in terms of its scale.

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Look, it was but as Mr Bundy told us in Toowoomba, command and control of the SES is an issue that's been around for a number of years. He drew attention to the New South Wales model, for example?-- We have to be careful, with all due respect, to that suggestion. In New South Wales the arrangements for disaster management are fundamentally different-----

Oh, quite so?-- -----than in Queensland, and the SES is actually the combat agency for storms and floods.

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No-----?-- So they actually manage - do the disaster management as well as the tasking.

It wasn't suggested that they were necessarily comparable; merely that under that model there is no uncertainty -----?-- Correct.

-----as to who does what?-- Correct.

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Whereas we have encountered repeated examples in evidence here about the existence of such-----?-- Look, I don't resile from the proposition that there are local issues driven by, you know, local arrangements and/or personalities. Absolutely.

It is, to some extent, systemic, though, isn't it?-- It is hard to characterise it as systemic because I think - there may be a systemic issue but I don't think the issue is common to all areas and groups.

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No, that might be so but as long as you have got an understanding that it can be tasked in different ways-----?-- yeah. And I hasten to add that I also think that the issues occur in areas where disasters and events are far less frequent. So-----

Perhaps, but if you can - if people are calling 13 25 00 and for a start getting through - and that's a separate issue - and making a request, but ultimately a local controller is receiving information from an LDMG, you can see they are going to be pulled in different directions?-- Oh, yes, absolutely.

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And the concern would be that there be some clarity, some definitive understanding about what has to be done or what algorithm has to be applied, if you like, to prioritise these things?-- And it may well be - it is not so much a system because the local controller is in all instances in command of their SES team.

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Okay?-- No questions. That's absolutely. When an event escalates and there may be - you know, it may become a little more complex, there may then well be a need for coordination to occur, and in the events that we have had, both through these floods and later on in Cyclone Yasi, the role of EMQ is to provide that level of coordination, so that when multiple teams come together who are not from the same Local Government area, there is an ability to be able to coordinate the tasks

and the work that gets done.

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The heavy responsibility then on the local controller invites the question as to the training that they receive in the prioritisation of competing demands?-- Look - and I don't know that I accept the heavy demands on the local controller. I mean, it is the local controller's responsibility but the local controller will also have the ability to be able to set up an incident coordination centre where all of these tasks come in and that's where the distribution and prioritisation of those tasks occurs.

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But ultimately that's going to be the local controller's call?-- Well, it's going to be their responsibility-----

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Yes?-- -----absolutely, but it's not a function that has to be personally delivered by the local controller. Training - the training environment for the SES will train people to undertake those functions.

Sorry, if it's his responsibility or her responsibility, it is something about which or on which they should receive some training, isn't it?-- Oh, absolutely. Sorry, that's in question. No.

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Specifically, I mean?-- Yes.

It's-----?-- Yes.

It's a training requirement for local controllers?-- Absolutely.

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And do they receive such a training now?-- Yes, they should, yes.

COMMISSIONER: What's the advantage with the local controller setting up an incident control centre? How does that help in the decision-making process?-- Well, that's the mechanism by which - if 100 tasks come in for the SES to do, then the coordination centre will identify how many resources are needed to do those tasks, where those tasks are, what's the logistics to get both people and equipment and so on to undertake those tasks.

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What are the resources that come with the coordination centre?-- There's no resources coming - I am talking about the actual SES response. So, how many people, how many SES volunteers do we need to tarp the 10 roofs in this particular area.

Sorry, I am really not following. You are the local coordinator in Emerald?-- Mmm-hmm.

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You are getting calls from all over the place. You don't know what to do first. Setting up an Incident Coordination Centre, what's that actually going to do for you? What do you get by doing that?-- If you're the SES, apart from information flows, you shouldn't be getting calls from all over the place. The task should be coming to you, either through the 13 25 00, or sometimes from the Local Disaster Management Group. So they should be collected and be provided to the SES as a group of tasks.

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All right. Well, assume that there aren't these untidy extra calls just because you happen to be a local personality and everybody knows that you are the SES coordinator?-- Yes.

Take them out?-- Yes.

So, now you have got all the calls which have come through the

13 25 00 number and everything the LGMD wants you to do?--
Yep.

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Again, how does having an Incident Coordination Centre improve your problems about doing what when?-- Well, when you bring a team together to respond to those tasks, you need to know how many people you have got, what their skills are, what-----

That's what I am asking about. What's your team? Isn't it just your four local SES volunteers or-----?-- Well, it can be, but it can also be a unit that might have 100 members, and we're also talking in this environment about where teams have been deployed from outside your area and come in to be tasked as well.

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In that case, will the local controller be responsible for them?-- No, no, that's - when we - when a deployment would come in, that's when EMQ would come with them and there would be a level of coordination that would sit over the top.

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Okay. I am not really concerned with that situation so much. You are just the guy in Emerald, you have got a heap of jobs to assign and there's you and your four volunteers?-- And you're right. If it's you and your four volunteers and it's a small number of jobs, you wouldn't establish an Incident Coordination Centre.

But it mightn't be a small number of job. You said the Incident Coordination Centre as if that was the answer to all your problems. I am just trying to see on a practical level how that improves anything if there you are with too many requests and a limited number of resources?-- Oh, in that situation, then the SES, their first responsibility is to make a request through the Local Disaster Management Group for more resources. If there's 100 jobs and four members, then clearly it's the responsibility of the State to be able to provide additional SES resources with those skills into that area.

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And the Incident Coordination Centre comes into this how?-- It is simply the mechanism by which those multiple tasks are organised and then the resources are applied to get them done as efficiently and effectively as possible. I mean, the alternative is that you have a group of jobs and somebody comes in and you hand them a job and then the next person comes in and you hand them a job. Now, they may both go to the same area, whereas if you had have given both jobs to the one team, they can have gone out, done the two jobs.

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And local controllers are trained in setting up Incident Coordination Centres?-- Well, the local controller will - will know how to do that. They may not necessarily be an expert themselves in running an Incident Coordination Centre, but they will have people within their unit who are trained to do that.

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Where do those trained to do that - people - come from?-- From the SES. That's part of their training.

Are you saying that each local group will have someone like that or you will send someone? How does that-----?-- Each local group should have people that are trained as part of their training in incident coordination.

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All right. So, every local SES group, you would think, would have a person trained like that?-- I can't guarantee that everyone will, but that's certainly - would be the objective.

I am not sure that I got that impression from hearing about SES groups, but-----?-- Look - and there may well be groups out there that aren't as familiar with that process, but that's certainly in a complex environment the one that works - works best.

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All right. Look, while I have disrupted the flow, can I also ask you who is Smart Services Queensland? What are they? Who are they?-- It's an agency attached, I think, to the Public Works. They're basically the government's call centre.

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If we have another summer of disasters, what's the guarantee there will be enough operators in a call centre to take all the calls?-- I can't answer the question. Certainly during this event there were occasions that that occurred. I mean, to give you an example, 13 25 00 has been in operation for three and a half years and it took its 100,000th call in - I think it was August - I may be corrected on that - but it was August or September of 2010. From December to the second week of February, there were 107,000 calls. So, we took more calls in 10 weeks than we'd taken in the previous three and a half years, so-----

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So is the answer we hope that doesn't happen again?-- We hope that doesn't happen again obviously but-----

All right. The final question: Rolleston has a combined Rural Fire Brigade and SES unit?-- Emergency Services Unit, yep.

Yes. It's an ESU, isn't it?-- That's right.

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How common is that?-- There's four in Queensland.

Where are they?-- One in Tara, one in Rolleston, the other two escape me at the moment.

And is that just because they just don't have the numbers to sustain the two entities?-- Yeah. If the - if locally they have identified that either - it can be a couple reasons, they don't have enough or that they have got the same groups of volunteers perhaps volunteering for the Rural Fire Service and the SES, it's largely the same people, then they can certainly take the decision to come together.

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Is there a downside?-- It's probably more cultural than anything. There's - often locally there can be - you know, "We're rural firies.", verses, "We're the SES.", so sometimes that can be an issue, particularly in rural communities.

If they do that, who gives them their resources?-- Both the SES and rural fire. So, if they were being trained in a skill that was a firefighting skill, all of that - their PPE to do that plus their training would come from the Rural Fire Service. If they were being trained to operate a flood boat, then the SES would provide that training.

Thank you.

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MR CALLAGHAN: Two things arising out of that exchange. I may as well pick up on the concept of membership of the SES in remote areas. Again, this is something we have heard about and this seems to be a concern, that the overall trend in recruitment is downwards?-- Mmm-hmm.

And the suggestion has been made that there be some recruitment drive or some need to look for full-time employees in remote areas, and that sort of thing. What is EMQ's policy or what's the priority with overall membership of the SES?-- If your contention is that the SES is declining in total, that's not the case. It is slowly growing.

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These are concerns that have been expressed particularly in regional areas?-- I would agree with the contention that it is more difficult to raise membership in some rural and remote areas, and I think that's a function of general demographics and perhaps the way industries are growing in the country, a lot of fly in/fly out workers and so on, so there's less of a base from which to draw and I think probably - and I stand corrected on this - but I think the age profile of rural and remote communities is probably getting older rather than remaining stable or getting younger.

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So, is there a strategy?-- Look, we are certainly about to launch a fairly extensive recruitment campaign which will have media and so on advertising to take advantage of a significant amount of interest that's come after events, we find that, events are probably our best - best recruitment. The question about whether we can retain or secure enough resources in all of those regional and remote areas to be, I guess, commensurate with their risk profile, I don't know the answer to that. I don't know whether we will be successful in that, and I know if we can take Dalby as an example, they - it's a town of some 12,000, I think they have got less than a dozen active volunteers, and they have undertaken a range of recruitment activities supported very strongly by their local council, and that's resulted in a net gain of zero. So, I think this is where the benefit of the State Emergency Service rather than local Emergency Services comes to the fore, and I think what we are going to have look very strongly at is a model that makes the SES much more agile in being able to move and to support a small local group and to actually think quite deeply about how that might actually operate, to think about whether there's actually a new function of the SES or certainly a very strong training component of the SES about if you are in a group that has limited resources, then what's the protocol and what's the order in which you should start

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managing a - the raising of a deployment to come and assist your community to respond to a particular event, and then concurrent training with all - everybody else in the SES around what the expectations are if you are to join a deployment and how can we actually connect those two things as efficiently and effectively, and I think that that's - in many ways may be the only way that we can actually properly address the risk in some of these smaller but still substantial communities that have risks and are unable to attract volunteers.

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COMMISSIONER: Can I just ask something there? The councils have looked at a sort of buddy system where you get a little council and big council who comes in to help in times of need. Can you do something similar with SES groups, actually link up particular groups?-- Yeah, and I would have no problem with that, but the problem that it does bring is if you actually have issues in both local government areas and that's your only solution.

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Mmm?-- So, clearly having people who have some knowledge of the environment and - you know, the landscape and so on is advantageous, but taking people from southwest Queensland and dropping them into Cairns, you know, in a tropical environment, there's a whole different range of - ways - you know, and the risks are different as well, and, you know, don't get terribly many cyclones out west. So, the local response is always best and an ability to be able to call on your neighbours is always best, but the circumstances certainly that we faced in December/January were that there was a resource issue almost all over Queensland. So, the ability to be able to bring people from Cairns down to the southwest to deal with a major flooding, you know, occurrence across a very wide area is, in my opinion, certainly one of the solutions that we need to have. We do that, but I think that we probably need to think about doing that much better.

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MR CALLAGHAN: Just before we leave the SES, you've in the earlier exchanges suggested that area controllers should be trained or should be receiving training in the concept of prioritising competing demands. You have also suggested that each group should have someone who can set up an ICC. What procedures are in place to ensure that such qualifications are held by relevant members in any given group? Is there any compliance?-- There's no overarching strategy in place, but each region will look at its SES and its skill base and its risks, and if that's a requirement, then that's certainly a program of training that will be strongly encouraged and provided.

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But it's something on which there just might be some regional variation, according to-----?-- That's correct, and if that fails, if there are - if there is no ability within the SES to either undertake that task of coordination, then certainly we would call - and have done in the past - on our colleagues in Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to be able to come in and assist to provide that.

All right. Can I ask you about the emergency alert system? What I will probably do is just ask you, I think, in Mr Stewart's evidence there was a suggestion that there's a joint working group within QPS and EMQ on this?-- There is.

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What is it actually doing?-- Well, its primary purpose is two-fold. One is to try and truncate the time it takes to actually deliver an emergency alert, probably somewhere between 30 to 40 minutes at the moment from a need to the execution of the - of the messaging, and then on top of that there's clearly whatever time it actually takes to run that campaign and that could be another couple of hours. The other element of it is to better connect the intent of the emergency alert and ensure that that - that is - the intent is understood locally and certainly that there is additional information provided to the local group and the district group around what the risk is, what the alert is, and what the likely consequence of issuing that alert might be, and this is to avoid some of the issues that have arisen around websites crashing because that was the source of information or switchboards being overloaded.

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So, what's the working group actually going to produce?-- They will produce recommendations which will go both to protocols around how the information exchange between the various levels of the disaster management system might operate.

And has it got a timetable?-- Not that I'm aware of, but it's certainly something that's - that has a very high priority to get resolved.

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That's something you might be able to update us about as well?-- Yes.

I will just briefly ask you about EMQ's area of boundaries and staffing issues there, because we have seen as part of our examination of these things that, for example, the area director for Roma is - or offers support to the Roma and Charleville police or disaster districts?-- Yep.

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We have also seen, for example, that Mr Bundy is a member of five different-----?-- Correct.

-----District Disaster Management Groups, which stretched him a bit thinly in January. Is there scope for improvement for addressing the difficulties occasioned by these issues?-- Look, in the past we have addressed that simply by moving people around to augment, so we'd fly some - you know, if the event was in south Queensland we'd fly experienced people from North Queensland down. The scale of this meant - absolutely stretched our resources to the limit and beyond, and our ability to be able to service both the district and local groups was problematic. That's absolutely accepted. My focus was to attempt to support the Local Disaster Management Groups because I think that's where the support is best delivered, and I think that may have resulted in some of the comments by Inspector Stiles and others around the level of support that

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they received but - and the facts are accepted absolutely.

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All right. Can I ask you, now, a concern that was raised in Ipswich where the LDC expressed concerns that the request for assistance process was cumbersome, and when such a request was made no indication would come back as to how long a request might take. The solution in their case was to go to the State supplier and since - well, can I ask, you are aware of the issues that were raised there?-- Yeah. I am aware of the evidence, I am not aware of the specific issue that was the cause of that concern, and we can go back to the previous issues around the All Hazard system and one of the intents is that would provide visibility to all three levels of the system around where a request for assistance might be.

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Is there an issue as far as you're concerned with the local government taking action such as that, going straight to the State-----?-- I think it's probably what they should have done first.

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What they should be doing. You don't have a problem-----?-- Whatever you can solve reasonably within your own boundaries you should attempt to do.

All right?-- When that becomes problematic, either in taking too much time or you are unable to solve it, then that's when it should escalate, and if I could just add to that, one of the issues that a Local Disaster Management Group should look at is, "Should I continue to make requests or should I seek additional resources to resolve these requests on the ground? That way I have got more situation awareness, I have actually got my arms around what all the issues are.", and I think that provides a better ability to manage.

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All right. On that sort of resupply issue, are you aware of the point made by the Rockhampton LDC that the EMQ in Brisbane arranged for a food resupply which wasn't needed and which the LDMG and local EMQ representative did not know about?-- I am not certain of what particular example that is.

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It's referred to in the statements of the Rockhampton LDMG, but you don't-----?-- This may be - I am not certain but I will talk to the issue. Well, what was occurring when the flood hit Rockhampton, because it had also flooded to the west, there was no supply route to North Queensland, so Rockhampton to the north was cut-off by road and rail. We had established a working group with the Australian National Retailers Association, including the major supermarkets and the independent chains, to preemptively look at issues about we would start to resupply north of Rockhampton, which, as you can imagine, is a fairly substantial logistical exercise, and also, if possible, to move perishable produce, product, from the north back to the south to - so it could access markets. I wasn't directly involved, I commenced them but I didn't maintain an involvement all the way through, but I understand there was an issue that there were - that the Retailers Association was making arrangements with the State and there was an assumption, I think, that they were also

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discussing those issues with the locals. That assumption was incorrect. So, when things arrived, I think they arrived without the knowledge of the local group. We have certainly taken that on as a learning. Nobody is going to fix the Bruce Highway in the next few years, so if it floods Emerald to Rockhampton, the issue will recur, and that's something that we will certainly be aware of, both the need to set up and establish at the macro level those supply changes and what is it with need to support them, do we need to secure the ability to move goods by sea, do we need to support them with the ADF with the heavy lift capabilities, a combination of those things, or something different, but there's certainly - and it is acknowledged - that there needs to be very strong connection with a Local Disaster Management Group who can provide us with a very strong on the ground assessment about what their priorities are and what their genuine needs may be.

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All right. Were you present this morning when Mr Elcock gave evidence?-- I heard some of his evidence outside, yes.

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It would seem that there are some seven different tasking agencies for the helicopters?-- Correct.

The need for a single point of tasking would seem to make sense; you'd agree with that?-- I would certainly.

How do you say that should be done?-- I think the way that was described by Dr Elcock is certainly a reasonable one, and one that we as one of the providers of services into that network of emergency helicopters would be supportive of. I think the issue that's at play here is one of situational awareness. I think the decision often is either so difficult that making either call will be right or so obvious that making the right call with the right information is obvious. I think what we are dealing with here is a lack of information or a lack of situational awareness, and the examples that Dr Elcock gave, I think, make that quite clear.

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You don't see a problem - I mean, he seemed to think that such a change could be effected fairly quickly. From your perspective, there's no reason why that couldn't be done quickly?-- Well, he would certainly have our agreement.

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Yes?-- And I think you can make progressive steps towards its full implementation. I think you can make a quantum leap and then refine that as you move forward, but without compromising any clinical outcomes or any safety issues.

All right. And, finally, I just wanted to ask you a question about public education, which is part of your function?-- Mmm-hmm.

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And how you are looking forward and plan to work with local government on this issue? It would seem that there might be a more coordinated approach that could be adopted?-- Yeah. At the moment, it's largely on the basis that EMQ will produce content and provide that at no cost to local government and then local government are able to rebrand that and distribute

it locally. I think the opportunities that are provided, as I mentioned before, with, you know, new tools like social networking and so on will certainly enable us to get much greater reach at relatively low cost. So, I think that's something that we will be exploring very, very actively into the future. The question of engaging with local government, absolutely, you know, many local governments will make application under the grants program to undertake community education programs. Those grants are administered by - sorry, through the EMQ, through a joint working group, and we'd certainly continue to support and promote that, in terms of - I don't know whether the question's going to a more formal model of engagement around this.

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Well, there does seem to be some suggestion that that might be appropriate?-- Yeah. I don't think there's a one size fits all, because risks in different communities are different, but there certainly may be an opportunity to bring councils with similar risk profiles together and to talk through those issues. We have a conference with local government later this year and that certainly, you know, may be an issue that we could canvas at that conference.

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Right. That's all I have, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Dollar?

MR DOLLAR: No questions, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Ms O'Gorman?

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MS O'GORMAN: No questions.

COMMISSIONER: Mr MacSporran?

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MR MacSPORRAN: Mr Grady, does EMQ conduct disaster management training?-- It does.

And what form does that currently take?-- There is an introduction to the Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and there is a program for local disaster coordinators.

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And is there a proposal to advance that in the near future?-- Absolutely. As part of the role that we have under the legislation - new legislation, where training is clearly an issue within our responsibility, we're developing a disaster management framework so that each person who has role or responsibility within the disaster management system has a training program that's applicable to them, and the next stage of that is that we will identify specific functions within that and develop training programs for people who may have a particular role. So if you're a Local Government employee working in a local coordination centre and you are working in the planning cell, then there will be a program of work around how that works, how it integrates into the disaster management system, and what your particular roles and responsibilities should be.

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The evidence here tends to indicate what I suppose is obvious, that different Local Government councils have different capabilities to respond to disasters depending on the size of them?-- Yep.

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There has been some evidence here promoting the idea of having a specialist team or teams to fly in to assist the local association. Do you have a view on that?-- Yeah. I certainly conceptually think that bringing people in to augment a local disaster group that has been overwhelmed, either by the size/complexity of the event, or something else. I, however, would not be supportive of a specialist team - an A team environment that sat to be accessed by Local Government. I think that that has a couple of problems with it. One is that I think Local Government - it makes it too easy for a particular Local Government to put up their hand and ask for support when clearly that's their responsibility, and so I think there is a potential that it could be used to abrogate a particular responsibility that that group might have. The second problem is that if we were faced with - or not even on the scale that we have, how many A teams might you need, and I don't know that we could actually support that. I think the model that I talked about with the SES, where the SES needs to become more agile, when the issues are agility, scalability and sustainability, they are the three things that you need to be able to support over time in a disaster. So the work that LGAQ has done on their C to C program, and I think they have given evidence around that, we would certainly support that. I would certainly see that that may become a very specific training function delivered by us or others through our program. Where I think the criticism - and I think the criticism was correct around the utilisation of that

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program - is that the request may have come in for assistance from a local council, we then gave that to the LGAQ to manage and lost visibility of it. So the council who was providing and the council who was requesting, I think, quite correctly - you know, there was a level of confusion about who was actually doing this. So that program, fully support it. My view is that managing that should be brought into the State Disaster Coordination Centre, so LGAQ employees, no problem, come into the State Disaster Coordination Centre, access the systems, use - you know, get the visibility on what's actually occurring, and also have the support of the planning, logistics and administration cells to be able to give effect to the movement of the people around to meet those priorities. I think conceptually the idea of flying people in is a good one but I wouldn't have a specialist A team to do it. I would access resources from all Local Governments.

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And you would promote, as you have told us, training of the local group to be able to manage better in that situation anyway?-- Yeah, I think there is a training component again for both the council who may request it, what's available, how do I get it, what will it do when it gets here, and training for the people who come in. "Okay, I am moving in. I am not taking over, I am part of their Local Disaster Coordination Group. What's my role? How do I fit in? How do I become effective?"

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Can I ask you something quickly about evacuation centres? The evidence here has indicated that in a number of localities there were official and unofficial evacuation centres for a whole host of reasons. Have you taken that on board in terms of future planning?-- Yes. I think what's happened for all of us in our lesson out of this is we have tended to attempt - and by that I mean us and Local Government - to identify what is the big evacuation centre that can hold a lot of people and has all of the facilities that are needed to support people over time. And that's fine, I wouldn't suggest that we move away from that at all. What I think that this has taught us is that we actually need to identify where any evacuation centre might be, to do some preliminary work around assessing its appropriateness, and then to engage with whomever might be the owner/operator of that centre. So we have heard church groups have established an evacuation centre. If that becomes the potential evacuation centre, then there should be some preliminary work around protocols, contact numbers, et cetera, around how do we integrate that back into the system so they don't become outriders, so they are part of the overall system, they can be supported with people, they can be supported with supplies and whatever else it is that they may need.

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Could I move on to the issue of resupply during these events. Is there a need to emphasise where resupply, as such, sits in the disaster management arrangements?-- Certainly. Again, I think our learning from these recent events is that the resupply policy and its application has largely been designed for a North Queensland environment, where it rains, rivers come up, people get isolated for long periods of time. What

this has shown us is that we have had multiple resupplies occurring simultaneously and our ability to be able to bring experienced people to sit with Local Government and work them through the resupply arrangements has certainly been limited. So I think we need to revisit the resupply arrangements, not in their intent but certainly, I think, to provide more guidance and assistance to a local council that may only use resupply on an infrequent basis. There has been a lot of confusion. You know, the requirement to have three quotes, and so on, is holding things up. That may or may not be the case. We would certainly encourage people, if there is any, you know, potential requirement through your risk profile to have a need for resupply, make those arrangements before the event. Go to the market, get your three quotes, have a standing offer arrangement in for both fixed wing and rotary wing assets, or whatever it is you may need. You may not need them, but if you do you have already been through the due diligence process. I guess the other comment that I would - may like to make around resupply is the function of resupply is not one of an emergency nature. You know, it is something that can be managed that can be coordinated well, and can take a little time to give effect to. You know, it is not like a triple 0 call where we need to immediately get to, you know, a location and get someone who is injured or ill. It is around the timely resupply of essential items into a community that's been cut off, and usually them being cut off is an event that has been known or anticipated for some time.

When you talk about - in passing you mentioned the - whether there is a need to get three quotes. You are talking about that, I take it, in the context of resupply arrangements?-- That's correct, yes.

Is there any such requirement in terms of arranging an evacuation, for instance?-- No, no. This is only for the resupply of foodstuffs, medicines, et cetera, into a community that may have been isolated, for example, by floodwaters.

All right. Can I move to requests for assistance? You have told us that in your view if a Local Disaster Management Group decides that it can't fill a request it has within its local boundaries, it is quite entitled to use its own initiative and go outside its boundaries to organise that request, whichever way it can, before going up the level to the District Disaster Management Group for assistance. So it might be a matter of how you interpret the protocol but you see nothing wrong with a local group acting in that way?-- No, look, the reality is the local group and the district group are almost joined at the hip usually in these anyway. I think that we need to take a practical approach to those things. My view is absolutely you should keep the next level of your system informed of what it is you are doing and so on, but if you can solve the problem, then I think that's where it should go.

There was some evidence given by the Mayor of Rockhampton, Mr Carter, about a request he made for flood barriers for the airport, which was denied initially because of the cost of something like \$20,000. Are you aware of the-----?-- Yes, I

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-----evidence first and the example?-- I am.

Can you tell us what you know about that?-- Well, first of all, it wasn't denied because of the cost. That's absolutely refuted. The request was made at a time when Rockhampton was not facing a major flood and there was no identified specific need for that flood barrier. Much of the rest of Queensland was in flood or was facing potentially significant flooding and it was mine and others' opinion - I am quite happy to take responsibility for the decisions - sorry, if I can just - the flood barrier is like a big Meccano set that you put together. It is a kilometre lineally but you can also put it around critical assets to protect them from floodwaters. We keep half a kilometre in Brisbane in our warehouse at Ormeau and half a kilometre in Townsville, and it is all pelletised so it is able to be moved around very quickly and on very short notice. So the decision not to provide the flood barrier to Rockhampton was one based on need and the immediacy of need and the risk assessment of elsewhere in the State, not on any financial consideration. When the circumstances changed later in December and Rockhampton was facing a major flood, the flood barrier was dispatched to Rockhampton. It was used to protect the terminal of the Rockhampton Airport, which we know was flooded. So when the floodwaters went down and the tarmac was available, so was the terminal and all the equipment in it. So - and I guess that's, by way of an example, one of the issues that is dealt with at State level around competing tasks from multiple local governments who may all have a need and it is not possible to satisfy all of those needs simultaneously, so there is a need to assess those, to prioritise them based on their need, the availability of the assets and a range of other factors.

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Has there been some thought given to streamline the arrangements between the Commonwealth, in particular the ADF, when requests for their assistance are made?-- We have been working very closely with the Commonwealth probably for the better part of a year and a half now around the application of the DACC Policy, the Defence Aid and Civil Community policy. The issue has been that the DACC process is predicated on the assumption that you have exhausted all of the State's resources and available commercial resources before you call on the Commonwealth, and as a policy position, I have got no problem with that. I think that's entirely appropriate. Where we found a problem was that where you could reasonably anticipate that Defence was going to be the only appropriate resource, that we could actually get them planning earlier. So that at the time that the need came about, they were actually ready to execute that, and I think there have been a lot of advances made in that. Certainly with this event, we had a senior officer from Enoggera imbedded with the State Disaster Management Group early on. That opened up those channels of communication and requests flowed very efficiently and when the scale of the event, you know, after the Brisbane/Ipswich floods became so large, Defence actually established a taskforce with a Brigadier in charge, and all of

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the Defence assets were then made available to that taskforce to be deployed. So there has certainly been, I think, a lot of advances over the last two years from a relatively, you know, bureaucratic, policy-driven approach to a much more, you know, event-based and risk-based approach and we continue to have those discussions with both the Commonwealth and the ADF.

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One proposal is that the ADF have advance warning so they can commence their planning?-- Yes.

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And if needed they can then deploy the assets very quickly and if not needed they can simply cancel the planning for it?-- That's right, and the ADF are exceptional at planning and they like to practise, so I guess if they plan and it doesn't eventuate, then it hasn't been entirely lost.

Now, you mentioned again in terms of requests for assistance. Is your All Hazards Information Management System of use in that context?-- Absolutely. One of the critical elements we will be able to both receive data around requests for assistance and then provide visibility around how that request is being progressed to all levels of the system, and across all agencies, because the nature of requests for assistance are that they will come into the system, they will find a home at District or State level as to where they believe that request could be satisfied, and then usually the requirement is that it moves outside to another agency or a group of agencies to resolve. So the principle of the design of the All Hazards Information System being through the system and across all the agencies is that all of those agencies will be able to input data into the progress of a particular request and that all levels of the system will be able to have visibility around how that particular request is being progressed.

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Now, currently the State Disaster Coordination Centre is based at the EMQ Headquarters at Kedron?-- It is.

In your view would there be any benefit in the Commissioners personally, if they had the time, visiting that centre and seeing it for themselves?-- I think, you know, if the Commission had time, that that certainly would provide a benefit. We - it is not so much about seeing the room, it is just walls, but it is about looking at the organisation of the room, the structure and then I think it provides, you know, some greater context to the way the system is designed and how we give effect to that system.

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And that could be arranged if need be?-- Absolutely, at any time. More than happy.

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Now, you have agreed that a central point of tasking would be - well, it is essential really for the deployment of helicopters?-- Yes.

We have heard an example in the evidence where a helicopter turned up at St George and thought to be from Townsville and the locals certainly believed it wasn't necessary, it was a

waste of valuable resources?-- Uh-huh.

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Are you aware of that example firstly?-- I am.

Can you tell us what you know about that?-- Yes, it was from Townsville. We had been moving assets, rotating assets around to meet either actual or perceived need. There was some evidence, and certainly there was a level of uncertainty, around what the potential for the maximum height of the flood in the Condamine-Balonne system would be and how that would affect townships like St George and below St George. There was a lot of work being done by the bureau around a place called the Barrackdale Choke and because the river was in record flood levels, they were uncertain as to how this point would operate. Basically, it is almost like a dam and the water traditionally has always built up at this point. They were uncertain whether the water actually let go and almost a wall of water would come down, or whether it would operate as normal and basically control, to some extent, the amount of floodwater going down. We had experience in St George in the previous year where they had a record flood where a number of properties needed to be evacuated and potentially hospitals, nursing homes, and so on. The decision was made preemptively to position an asset that may have been critical had a set of circumstances occurred, to have it available there before that event occurred. It didn't. Our view is always we plan for the worst and hope for the best. This time we got probably not the best but something close to that. The craft was tasked I think for two jobs. It was no longer needed and we removed it. It is a decision that I would make every time given the same circumstances.

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Thank you. Mr Taylor, who gave evidence before you, raised that the server at West End went down?-- Uh-huh.

You are aware of that?-- I am.

What effect did that have on the disaster management arrangements?-- Limited. The data that's held in that is passive information, basically. We would certainly like to extend that and the All Hazards system will do that, where it becomes an exchange of information rather than the provision of information. It was down for I think half a day. We were able to secure the server and reconnect it. The system came back up again, so there was no critical elements that were unavailable.

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And have steps been taken since then to the protect that server?-- Absolutely. The server is now located in our server rank at Kedron but there are also redundancy arrangements with backup servers in other places.

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All right. Now, the State Disaster Management Group, did it have an initial debrief on 2 March this year?-- It did as part of its meeting, yes.

And have minutes of that debrief meeting recently become available?-- Yes, they were endorsed this - last week.

All right. Can you look at these, please?

COMMISSIONER: Was that something provided to the Commission in advance, Mr MacSporran?

MR MacSPORRAN: No, it hasn't been.

COMMISSIONER: That's a bit unhelpful because there may have been questions arising out of it.

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MR MacSPORRAN: My assessment of it is that the issues that are raised in there have been covered. I think for completeness, I simply wanted to tender it so that you have it and you can see the work that's being done in identifying issues and addressing them.

COMMISSIONER: All right.

WITNESS: That's the document. It is marked "draft" but it has been endorsed with one minor amendment.

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MR MacSPORRAN: I will tender those minutes.

COMMISSIONER: Exhibit 495.

ADMITTED AND MARKED "EXHIBIT 495"

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MR MacSPORRAN: That's all I have, thank you.

COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Mr Callaghan?

MR CALLAGHAN: Subject to anything arising out of those minutes, but we can address that in other ways. I have no further questions.

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COMMISSIONER: Thank you. Thanks very much, Mr Grady, you are excused.

WITNESS EXCUSED

MR CALLAGHAN: There is only one witness to be called and that's Mr Baddiley who is scheduled to be called tomorrow.

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COMMISSIONER: All right. We will adjourn then till 10 o'clock tomorrow.

THE COURT ADJOURNED AT 12.50 P.M. TILL 10.00 A.M. THE FOLLOWING DAY