

QFCI

Date:

11/2/12

Exhibit Number:

1139

IN THE MATTER OF
THE QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY 2011

A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY UNDER THE
COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ACT 1950

AND PURSUANT TO THE
COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDER (No. 1) 2011

STATEMENT OF LOUW VAN BLERK

On the 30th day of January 2012, I, Petrus Gerhardus Louw Van Blerk, known as Louw Van Blerk, of C/- 69 Junction Road, Karalee, North Ipswich, state on oath:

1. I am currently employed by Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority ("Seqwater") as a Dam Safety Engineer and Flood Officer.
2. This statement is provided to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry pursuant to a "Requirement to Provide Statement" issued by the Commission dated 25 January 2012 (the *Requirement*). The statements I make below are my best recollections of the matters referred to in the Requirement which I have been able to prepare in the short time since I received the Requirement.

Qualifications and Experience

3. I hold a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) from University of Pretoria obtained in 1983.
4. I have been a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland since 2007.
5. My relevant employment history may be summarised as follows:
 - (a) Since 21 October 2008 I have been employed by Seqwater as Dam Safety Engineer. I became a Data Collector, also known as a Flood Officer, around June 2010, and transitioned to a Flood Engineer in November 2011.
 - (b) As a Flood Officer/Data Collector, when the Flood Operations Centre was mobilised, I:
 - (i) monitored incoming data received from Alert Stations and the Bureau of Meteorology.

- (ii) ran "Flood Col" - the data collection computer program to check the integrity of rainfall and stream height data, and correct obvious inconsistencies.
- (iii) kept a record of communications with the Flood Operations Centre, dam operators and other agencies in the Flood Event Log.
- (iv) transmitted directives issued by the duty engineer to dam operators and confirmed that actions had been executed.
- (v) general housekeeping and support to the duty engineer.

Dates present during the period from 6 January 2011 to 19 January 2011

6. During the period 6 January 2011 to 19 January 2011 I was present at the Flood Operations Centre at the following times:
- (a) from around 7am to around 7pm on Friday 7 January 2011;
 - (b) from around 7am to around 7pm on Monday 10 January 2011; and
 - (c) from around 7am to around 7pm on Monday 17 January 2011.

Flood Engineers and Officers present at the Flood Operations Centre

7. I have been asked to give an account of the flood operations engineers who were at the Flood Operations Centre at the times that I was there. I cannot recollect exactly, but at various times I was at the Flood Operations Centre with all of the four Flood Engineers, namely Terry Malone, John Tibaldi, John Ruffini and Rob Ayre.
8. While I cannot recollect precisely, the other Flood Officers would also have been present at various times, and would have had to have handed over to me at the beginning of a new shift.

Entries in the Flood Event Log

9. I made numerous entries in the Flood Event Log that is Exhibit 23 before the Commission during the period between 7 January and 12 January 2011. I have reviewed the entries that have my initials "LVB" in the initial column and make the following comments:
- (a) I do not believe that I made the following entries as they were made before I started my shift at 7.00am:
 - (i) 6.07am on Friday 7 January 2011;
 - (ii) 6.00am and 6.30am on Monday 10 January 2011.



I do not know who entered the information or how my initials came to be in the initial column beside these entries.

- (b) There are a number of entries with my initials that are categorised as "Directives", a large number of which contain details of the gate openings and closings. I think it is unlikely that I entered the details of the gate openings and closings. I generally would only have entered a comment such as "Issued Wivenhoe Directive #1". It appears that someone, I do not know who, has entered the gate increments at a later time.
- (c) The entry at 6.00pm for Friday 7 January 2011 has "JW" in the initials column. "JW", which I believe refers to Flood Officer John West was not on duty at the time but might have visited the Flood Operations Centre.
- (d) The entries at 8.38am and 9.38am on Monday 10 January 2011 were most likely dictated to me by Flood Engineer Terry Malone as the language is more typical of Terry than me.
- (e) The entry at 12.02pm on Monday 10 January 2011 states "Spoke with Peter Borrows". I did not speak to Mr Borrows myself, but I believe that a Flood Engineer would have. The same can be said for the entries at 12.36pm and 12.41pm that day: I did not make the telephone calls but instead was recording that one of the Flood Engineers at the Flood Operations Centre had made the calls.

Information or details to add to the Flood Event Log.

- 10. I do not now have a recollection of any additional information or details to the entries that I made in the Flood Event Log between 12am 7 January and 12am 12 January 2011.

Further information

- 11. I am not now able to recollect any further information or details of conversations between 12am 7 January and 12am 12 January 2011 on the topics referred to in subparagraphs 3(a)-(e) of the Requirement. There were many discussions that occurred during that time, but I was focussed on my role and did not pay attention to discussions unless I was directly involved. If I was directly involved in the discussion, and thought it necessary to record the discussion, or was asked to by the Flood Engineer, I did my best to briefly record the effect of the conversation in the Flood Event Log.



SWORN by **Petrus Gerhardus Louw Van Blerk**, known as **Louw Van Blerk** on 30 January
2012 at Brisbane in the presence of:



Deponent



Solicitor *G. BYND CHRY SINGH KALSI*