

STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Prepared by: Legal Services Unit

Date: 12 December 2011

Name of Witness: Lee Anthony Johnson

Address of Witness: Emergency Services Complex, Park Road,
Kedron, Brisbane, Queensland

Occupation: Fire-fighter

Position: Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry Requirement to Provide Statement No. 1795086

I, **Lee Anthony Johnson**, Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service ("QFRS"), Department of Community Safety, Associate Diploma Applied Science (Fire Technology), AFSM, MIFireE, FAIM, state:

Attachments

1. As there are voluminous attachments to this statement, those attachments have been captured in an electronic format and are saved on the attached compact disc marked "**Statement of Lee Johnson – Attachments**".

Background

2. I commenced my career with the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in 1975, as a fire-fighter with the Townsville Fire Brigade Board. In 1985, I transferred to the South Coast Brigade as a Sub-Station Officer, and was promoted to Station Officer that same year. I was promoted to Deputy Chief Officer at Rockhampton in 1988. Following the transition to the new Queensland Fire Service, I was appointed District Commander in 1990. When the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority was established in 1997, I was appointed as Commissioner, Central Region and then as Commissioner, Brisbane South Region in 2001
3. I was appointed as the Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service in November 2001.

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Witness (Lee Anthony Johnson):

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4. I am a recipient of the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM), Australia's highest individual honour for a fire-fighter, acknowledged in the 2004 Australia Day Honours List. I was also awarded the QFRS Diligent and Ethical Services Medal in 2009.
5. I am the President of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC). Further, I represent Queensland as a Director on the Board of the National Aerial Firefighting Centre.
6. I have previously provided a submission to the Commission dated 13 September 2011. Rather than providing the Commission with documents already filed, I will refer to this document (and its attachments) throughout this statement as "the QFRS Submission".
7. In relation to the flood related incidents attended by QFRS personnel in Grantham, I have caused a search of the Emergency Services Computer Aided Dispatch ("ESCAD") system to be undertaken and that data has been collated into a spreadsheet which is attached to this statement and marked "LAJ-1".
8. I will refer to this spreadsheet through-out this statement and draw the Commission's attention to pertinent parts of the data as it relates to each of the responses.
9. For convenience, I have highlighted all incidents that are recorded as being for Grantham on the spreadsheet. However, it should be noted that some of the incidents recorded for surrounding areas were a direct result of the same flooding events.
10. Unless otherwise stated, my answers in this statement are provided on the basis of QFRS records.

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Question 1 To provide a written statement, under oath or affirmation, to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry, in which the said Commissioner Johnson adverts to Queensland Fire and Rescue Service records and any other information available to him and says, in respect of the flooding of the town of Grantham on 10 January 2011:

- (a) when and how the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service was first made aware of
- i. the flooding of the town;
 - ii. the fact that there was an emergency situation there likely to require Queensland Fire and Rescue Service assistance to residents of the town;

11. On 10 January 2011, QFRS was monitoring weather conditions at a regional level. As the weather events unfolded in Toowoomba, Murphy's Creek and other areas below the Toowoomba range, QFRS responded continually to flooding related events from approximately 13.00 hours. Refer attachments 1 and 3 of the QFRS Submission.
12. *In relation to question 1(a)(i)*: The first recorded call for assistance in Grantham was a call for assistance at 16:06:09, and is recorded as incident number QF6-11-002892. This incident is detailed in "LAJ-1".
13. *In relation to question 1(a)(ii)*: This was followed by a succession of further calls for assistance, which indicated the nature of the emergency situation that was unfolding. To assist the Commission in identifying those incidents, all incidents in Grantham on the afternoon of 10 January 2011 have been highlighted.

(b) What personnel and equipment were sent to the town of Grantham on the afternoon and evening of 10 January 2011, giving details by name of who attended, their usual station, and all vehicles sent;

14. Attached and marked "LAJ-2a" and "LAJ-2b" are photographs of whiteboards at the Gatton Incident Command Centre ("ICC"). These whiteboards were used by the ICC to record and manage the various fire vehicles that were responding to incidents in and around the Gatton and Grantham area on the afternoon and evening of 10 January 2011.
15. I have caused a further search of QFRS records to be undertaken to ascertain the personnel crewing those vehicles. That data has been collated and is attached in a table marked "LAJ-3".

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16. In relation to the usual station of the personnel in attendance, I have included a column in "LAJ-3" that details the usual station of each fire vehicle. Vehicles were initially crewed by officers from the vehicle's home station. For example, vehicle 645M, on the first line of the table, is usually based at the Ipswich fire station and it was crewed by QFRS officers from that station.

(c) the precise times of the dispatch of each of those personnel and vehicles;

17. For those incidents recorded in the ESCAD data (attachment "LAJ-1"), the column titled "time of dispatch" indicates the dispatch time of QFRS personnel / vehicles to each incident.

(d) the precise times of the arrival of each of those personnel and vehicles (or if they did not arrive, an explanation of why);

18. For those incidents recorded in the ESCAD data (attachment "LAJ-1"), the column titled "time of arrival" indicates the arrival time of QFRS personnel / vehicles at each incident.

[There were multiple reports of incidents that could not be accessed because of the roads / points of entry being cut-off by flood water. Those incidents are recorded in the ESCAD data (attachment "LAJ-1") as "no access" and/or "no vehicle assigned / responded" at that time, in the "time of dispatch" and "time of arrival" columns of the spreadsheet.]

(e) details of the directions or instructions given to each of those personnel as to the tasks they were to perform in Grantham;

19. For those incidents recorded in the ESCAD data, QFRS personnel were tasked by the Fire Communications Centre (South East Region). A copy of the communications between the Fire Communications Centre and each of the vehicles is attached and marked "LAJ-4". All audio communication files for each particular incident are numbered as per the numbering in attachment "LAJ-1".

(f) a description of the tasks performed by each of those personnel and vehicles and the times at which they were performed;

20. The column entitled "comments" in "LAJ-1" provides a description of the core tasks being performed at each incident.

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[Redacted signature]

(g) an explanation of how and why swift water technician Mills separated from Appliance 850L and joined the Gatton 91 unit in Grantham, with details of what other personnel were involved in that unit, what functions it performed in Grantham and at what times they were performed;

21. I have no personal knowledge of these matters.

22. I am advised that Mr. Mills has been consulted regarding these matters, and attached and marked "LAJ-5" is an email from Mr. Mills relating to these matters.

(h) if there was any delay between the first notification of the need for Queensland Fire and Rescue Service assistance to residents of the town and the dispatch and/or arrival of such assistance, the reason for that delay;

23. Due to the prevailing weather conditions, access to the Grantham was cut by flood waters which delayed QFRS personnel in providing immediate assistance to the residents of Grantham.

24. The first recorded call for assistance to the QFRS in relation to Grantham was at 16:06:09, and is recorded as incident number QF6-11-002892.

25. This call was tasked for response, by the Fire Communications Centre, to rural fire appliance Grantham52.

26. As reflected in "LAJ-1", other QFRS personnel were unable to gain vehicular access to Grantham from 16:31:30 onwards.

27. Whilst there was no vehicular access, QFRS tasked helicopters (Helitak 220 and Firebird 460) were operating in the area.

28. Helitak 220 recorded its first winch rescue in the Grantham area at 17:50 hours, as reported in their post-incident report. See attachment "LAJ-6".

[This report records that over 47 people were assisted from the floodwaters throughout 10 and 11 January 2011 by the crew of Helitak 220.]

29. Information in relation to Firebird 460 activities can be found in the statements of John McDermott and Ben Sutherland, which were provided for the purposes of consideration for bravery awards. See attachments "LAJ -7" and LAJ - 8".

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(i) at what time an incident control centre was established at Gatton, by what personnel it was staffed, and what functions it performed.

30. I am advised by Chief Superintendent John Gresty (who was the South Eastern Region Acting Assistant Commissioner on 10 January 2011) that he directed Inspector Brian Humphreys, and two other officers (Auxiliary Captain Peter Mason and Acting Station Officer [REDACTED]) to travel to Gatton to establish an Incident Control Centre ("ICC").
31. I am further advised that those officers proceeded to Gatton and took with them a cache of equipment (including radios, computers, stationary and a printer) to establish the ICC in Gatton.
32. I am advised that they arrived in Gatton at 17:40, Inspector Brian Humphreys met briefly with Acting Assistant Commissioner Gresty outside of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council chambers — where Acting Assistant Commissioner Gresty reiterated the direction to establish the ICC, and gave a further direction that the priority was to account for all QFRS staff and vehicles in the area.
33. I am advised that at approximately 18:05 on 10 January 2011, Captain Peter Mason commenced telephone contact with listed appliances to get their locations, and also set up radio communication on VHF channel 35, calling on all appliances for roll call. It should be noted that communications on VHF 35 are not recorded and that this is normal when this channel is used.
34. At approximately 19:15 on 10 January 2011 Gatton ICC was declared operational and all fire vehicles were notified of that via VHF radio (Chanel 35) and UHF radio (Chanel 78).
35. The Incident Management Team established in the ICC consisted of:
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Fire Commander: | Inspector Brian Humphreys |
| Operations Officer: | Station Officer Mark Stephenson |
| Planning Officer: | Acting Inspector Peta Miller |
| Logistics Officer: | Station Officer Robert Fletcher |
| Radio Communications: | Captain Peter Mason |
| Planning Support: | Acting Station Officer [REDACTED] |
36. On 18 January 2011, Inspector Brian Humphreys wrote down his recollections of the events of 10, 11 and 12 January 2011. Extracted are those notes relating to 10 January 2011, which are marked as attachment "LAJ-9".

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37. At approximately 19:45 on 10 January 2011 the Fire Commander received a fax from the Fire Communications Centre (FireCom South-East) detailing a list of jobs that required completing. A copy of this fax is attached and marked "LAJ-10".
38. The list had outstanding jobs for Grantham and surrounding areas. Out of a total of 14 jobs, 2 had been completed earlier and 12 had yet to be completed.
39. I am advised that Operations Officer (Mark Stephenson) prioritised tasking of the outstanding jobs and tasked QFRS personnel to attend accordingly. All time stated in the proceeding paragraph's [39]-[46] related to events on the evening of 10 January 2011.
40. I am advised that Gatton Fire Vehicle 91 had completed the first tasked job prior to 20:00, and further tasking of available vehicles and crews occurred until all jobs were attended to.
41. I am advised that at 20:10, a verbal situation report was made to the Regional Operations Centre ("ROC") advising that:
 - There were 4 jobs in Grantham allocated and 10 to be allocated.
 - Firebird 460 had performed six roof-top rescues, prioritising unstable dwellings.
 - A further ten houses, that were in calm water on the Gatton-Helidon Road, had people on the roof and were waiting to be rescued by the EMQ rescue helicopter, as it had night capability.

A handwritten note that I am advised was taken by Inspector Brian Humphries is attached and marked "LAJ-11".

42. A formal situation report was then forwarded to the ROC at 21:38. This report is attached and marked "LAJ-12".
43. Details of the jobs being attended to were captured in the Electronic Incident Action Plan (EIAP), which is a software package to designed to track operational tasks as they occur.
44. I am advised by Brian Humphreys that entries in the EIAP were occurring from the time that the ICC was established at 19:15.
45. I am advised by Brian Humphreys that the data was not saved by the system automatically (as it should have been) for information from 19:15 to 22:47, and a new EIAP session was then commenced to capture information. I am further

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advised that these computers were taken and checked by regional data support officers, but the information could not be retrieved.

46. The earliest records that can be located of an EIAP report for the Gatton ICC commences at 22:47, and indicate that QFRS responded to incidents through the night and into the next morning. That report is attached and marked "LAJ-13".
47. A hand-written radio log detailing radio traffic in the ICC between the times of 21:30 and 23:25 is attached and marked "LAJ-14".

Interaction between the ICC and the LDMG

48. I am further advised that Acting Assistant Commissioner Gresty also traveled to Gatton on the afternoon of 10 January 2011. Mr Gresty advises that he left the QFRS regional office at Beenleigh at approximately 16:00 and arrived at Gatton between 17:00 and 17:30 with some delays being caused by the heavy traffic that had built up because the flooding events had blocked the highway.
49. I am advised that once he arrived in Gatton he attended the Local Disaster Management Group "LDMG" and that he and another QFRS staff member (Neumann) remained at the LDMG as the QFRS liaison throughout the evening of 10 January 2011. Communication between the LDMG and the ICC was initially by telephone and reverted to radio communications later in the evening.

Question 2 To provide a copy of the Gatton incident control centre log and copies of all other records of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service not already provided to the Commission which document the activities of the Service in relation to the flooding in Grantham on 10 January 2011, through to the early hours of 11 January 2011.

50. The available data log(s) kept in relation to the ICC have been discussed at paragraph's [36] and [37] of this statement and are attachments "LAJ-13" and "LAJ-14" respectively.
51. All data captured by the South East Region data collection team for the 10 January 2011 (attachment "LAJ-15") and the early hours of 11 January 2011 (up until 0600hrs) (attachment "LAJ-16").

I make this statement of my own free will believing its contents to be true and correct.

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Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of Section 110A(6C)(c)(i)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated today and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 9 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make it knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating anything that I know is false.

..... [Redacted] . Signature

Signed at Brisbane this 12th day of December 2011

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LAJ-1

ESCAD INCIDENT NUMBER	DATE	TIME OF CALL	Time of Dispatch	Time of Arrival	HOW RECEIVED	ESCAD PROBLEM TYPE	LOCATION	SUBURB	APPLIANCES RESPONDED	PERSONS REPORTED	COMPLETION TIME	COMPLETION DATE	COMMENTS	Multiple jobs for same incident
QF6-11-002443	09/01/2011	22:28:17	311A - 22:33:55 678A - 22:35:28 311Y 23:24:30 GATT1 22:38:42 GRAN41 23:14:07 GRAN51 03:08:00	311A - 23:18:47 678A - 22:54:12 311Y 23:24:40 GATT1 22:38:56 GRAN41 23:14:16 GRAN51 03:08:26	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	Ditchmans Rd - MULTIPLE LOCATIONS	GRANTHAM	311A, 311K, 311Y, 678A, EA4 GATT1, GRAN41, GRAN51, SES, W11, WU3	UNKNOWN	9:05:42	10/01/2011	VEHICLE INTO WATER	QF6-11-002443 QF6-11-002454
QF6-11-002454	09/01/2011	23:07:58	678A - 23:10:43 311Y - 23:11:30 GRAN42 23:14:37	678A - 23:11:45 311Y 23:11:38 GRAN42 23:14:43	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Harris St	GRANTHAM	311Y, 678A, GRAN42, SES	2	3:51:35	10/01/2011	FLOODING AND ACCESS	QF6-11-002443 QF6-11-002454
QF6-11-002617	10/01/2011	9:49:06	643A 09:53:00 645M 09:53:09	no access/qfrs advised not req	QPS	Rescue Water All Types	Pontings Bridge Lowood Patrick Estate Rd	PATRICK ESTATE	643A, 645M, 674A	3	9:56:25	10/01/2011	3 PERSONS CAUGHT IN SWIFTWATER	
QF6-11-002630	10/01/2011	10:14:41	635K 10:21:26 645M 10:17:17 671A 10:16:42	635K NOT REQ 645M 10:39:33 671A 10:20:04	QPS	Rescue Water All Types	█ Old Rosevale Rd	WARRILL VIEW	635K, 645M, 671A	1	11:46:53	10/01/2011	VEHICLE IN FLOODWATER WITH OCCUPANT INSIDE.	
QF6-11-002658	10/01/2011	10:47:56	635K 10:42:57 643A 10:52:16 645M 10:54:59 645Y 12:40:21	635K 11:33:20 643A 11:33:20 645M 11:33:21 645Y K40	QPS	Rescue Water All Types	█ Undullah Rd	UNDULLAH	635K, 643A, 645M, 645Y	1	14:15:01	10/01/2011	VEHICLE IN FLOODWATER WITH OCCUPANT INSIDE.	
QF6-11-002690	10/01/2011	11:36:12	646A 11:39:36 518A 11:43:53 644A 11:37:16 672A 11:44:11	646A 11:51:08 (ALL OTHERS NOT REQ)	Triple Zero	Alarm Private Security	█ Weldon St	NORTH IPSWICH	518A, 644A, 646A, 672A		11:57:00	10/01/2011	ALARM	
QF6-11-002735	10/01/2011	13:31:11	678A 13:39:15 311A 13:40:49 311K 13:40:52 311Y 13:44:32 317A 14:00:45 645M 13:35:50 645Y 13:36:22	678A 14:05:32 (OTHERS CANT RESPOND)	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	Murphys Creek Rd & Thomas Rd	UPPER LOCKYER	311A, 311K, 311Y, 317A, 645M, 645Y, 675Y, 678A	1	16:03:04	10/01/2011	VEHICLE IN FLOODWATER WITH OCCUPANT INSIDE	QF6-11-002735 QF6-11-002760
QF6-11-002741	10/01/2011	13:38:03	635K 13:46:18 645M 14:39:11 677E 14:18:24 645Y 13:55:10 678A 14:50:47	635K NOT REQ 645M 14:39:11 677E 15:33:26 645Y 14:33:15 678A left scene	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	Multiple Locations	MURPHYS CREEK	317A, 635K, 645Y, 677A, 677E, 645M, 678A	17 PLUS	18:21:09	10/01/2011	MULTIPLE PERSONS WASHED AWAY; HOUSES WASHED AWAY; MULTIPLE PERSONS REQUIRING RESCUE AND MORE IDENTIFIED ON LOCATION.	QF6-11-002741 QF6-11-002820 QF6-11-002826 QF6-11-002874
QF6-11-002760	10/01/2011	13:58:32	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	QPS	Duplicate Call	Milora Rd & Murphys Creek Rd	UPPER LOCKYER					CAR WASHED OFF ROAD	QF6-11-002735 QF6-11-002760
QF6-11-002788	10/01/2011	14:13:43	645A 14:26:48 850L 14:19:14	645A 14:26:52 850L NOT REQ	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	Swanbank Substation Swanbank Rd	SWANBANK	645A, 675A, 850L		16:06:33	10/01/2011	VEHICLE STUCK IN FLOOD WATER	
QF6-11-002797	10/01/2011	14:18:54	675A 14:26:33 675Y 14:25:39	675A 15:29:37 675Y 14:53:50	QPS	Rescue Water All Types	█ Murphys Creek Rd	POSTMANS RIDGE	675A, 675Y	1	16:12:58	10/01/2011	HOUSE WASHED AWAY WITH PERSON INSIDE. UNABLE TO ACCESS.	
QF6-11-002806	10/01/2011	14:21:07	676A 14:45:12 677E 15:38:42 850L 14:32:29 EA4 16:56:04 635K K40 675Y15:56:17	676A 15:10:41 677E 15:38:44 850L 15:31:56 EA4 16:56:07 675Y15:56:23	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	Warrego Hwy	HELIDON	635K, 675Y, 676A, 677E, 850L, EA4	16 PLUS	19:06:00	10/01/2011	6 PEOPLE IN VEHICLE SWEEPED AWAY IN FLOODWATERS; 6 PERSONS ON ROOF TOP; PLUS OTHERS IDENTIFIED ON LOCATION	
QF6-11-002815	10/01/2011	14:22:41	673A 14:56:35 678A 15:07:39	ALL REASSIGNED	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	Warrego Hwy	WITHCOTT	673A, 678A	3	15:32:14	10/01/2011	PERSONS IN SHOP RISING FLOOD WATER	
QF6-11-002819	10/01/2011	14:29:48	673A 14:51:35	NOT REQ	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Murphys Creek Rd	POSTMANS RIDGE	673A, 673Y	2	14:52:39	10/01/2011	PERSONS UP TREE REQUIRE RESCUE	
QF6-11-002820	10/01/2011	14:31:36	517A 14:37:44 677E 15:55:33 517K 14:50:19 635K 14:40:38 638A 14:42:31	517A 14:50:26 677E 15:55:36 517K 14:50:28 635K K40 638A K40	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Diana Cr	POSTMANS RIDGE	517A, 517K, 635K, 638A, 645Y, 675Y, 677E		16:36:39	10/01/2011	REPORTED AS HOUSE FLOODED AND PERSONS TRAPPED. INCORRECT LOCATION GIVEN	QF6-11-002741 QF6-11-002820 QF6-11-002826 QF6-11-002874
QF6-11-002826	10/01/2011	14:33:31	643A 14:46:10 645Y 15:56:32	645Y 16:12:42 643A NO ACCESS	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Odin St	MURPHYS CREEK	643A, 645Y	3	0:35:18	11/01/2011	1 ADULT FEMALE LOCATED, 2 CHILDREN AGED 5 & 6 YEARS OLD MISSING.	QF6-11-002741 QF6-11-002820 QF6-11-002826 QF6-11-002874
QF6-11-002865	10/01/2011	15:15:28	635K	REASSIGNED	Triple Zero	Hazard Gas Domestic	█ Karbul Cr	WITHCOTT	635K		15:18:15	10/01/2011	GAS BOTTLE LEAKING	
QF6-11-002874	10/01/2011	15:30:40	678A 15:32:34 645Y 15:32:37	HOUSE LOST	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Postmans Ridge Rd	HELIDON	645Y, 678A	UNKNOWN	15:55:26	10/01/2011	HOUSE WASHED AWAY	QF6-11-002741 QF6-11-002820 QF6-11-002826 QF6-11-002874
QF6-11-002881	10/01/2011	15:39:28	645M AT SCENE 15:40:34	15:40:34	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Building Collapse	█ Murphys Creek Rd	POSTMANS RIDGE	645M	5	16:16:02	10/01/2011	HOUSE WASHED AWAY	
QF6-11-002883	10/01/2011	15:40:31	674A 17:12:17 679A 20:27:11	IMPASSABLE	Triple Zero	Rescue Life Extrication	█ England Creek Rd	ENGLAND CREEK	674A, 679A	6	20:34:28	10/01/2011	HOUSE FLOODED, PERSONS FLOODED IN	QF6-11-002883 QF6-11-002929 QF6-11-003709
QF6-11-002886	10/01/2011	15:44:39	643A 16:07:56 673A 16:07:43 675Y 16:08:09	673A 16:49:55 675Y K40	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Turner St	HELIDON	643A, 673A, 675Y	UNKNOWN	16:56:49	10/01/2011	POSSIBLE PERSONS REPORTED. UNABLE TO ACCESS TO CHECK.	
QF6-11-002889	10/01/2011	15:54:26	WITH41 15:57:15 WITH51 15:57:29	WITH41 15:57:23 WITH51 15:57:36	QFRS Initiated	Assist Public Service	█ Stewart St	WITHCOTT	WITH41, WITH51		20:54:15	10/01/2011	SANDBAGGING	
QF6-11-002894	10/01/2011	16:04:57	GREE51 16:18:37	GREE51 16:18:41	QFRS Initiated	Assist Water Smoke	█ Ison Rd	GREENBANK	GREE51	1	20:56:36	10/01/2011	PERSON RESCUED FROM CAR	QF6-11-002893 QF6-11-002894
QF6-11-002892	10/01/2011	16:06:09	GRAN52 16:08:13	GRAN52 16:08:18	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Gatton Helidon Rd	GRANTHAM	643A, 673Y, GRAN52, HATT52, HATT53	5	20:55:37	10/01/2011	CAR UNDER WATER - 1 DRIVER & 3 CHILDREN; AND HOUSE WITH PERSON ON TOP FLOATING DOWN CREEK.	QF6-11-002892 QF6-11-003050
QF6-11-002893	10/01/2011	16:08:30	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	QFRS Initiated	Duplicate Call	█ Old Greenbank Rd	GREENBANK					PERSON IN VEHICLE IN WATER	QF6-11-002893 QF6-11-002894
QF6-11-002896	10/01/2011	16:17:12	MULG51 16:18:14	MULG51 16:18:24	QFRS Initiated	Assist Extreme Weather	█ Mulgowie Rd	MULGOWIE	MULG51		20:58:19	10/01/2011	SANDBAGGING	
QF6-11-002897	10/01/2011	16:19:47	EC15 16:25:30 FBIRD480 18:08:02 HATT52 17:17:00 HATT53 AT SCENE 645Y AT SCENE	EC15 17:32:53 FBIRD480 18:36:37 HATT52 17:17:05 HATT53 17:18:46 645Y 00:35:35	Unknown	Assist Extreme Weather	Gatton Fire Station █ North St	GATTON	645Y, EC15, FBIRD480, HATT52, HATT53	UNKNOWN	3:44:07	10/01/2011	NUMBER OF PERSONS STANDING ON HOUSES.	
QF6-11-002909	10/01/2011	16:31:30	Delay to to access by floodwater	19:30:49	QPS	Assist Extreme Weather	█ Victor St	GRANTHAM	HT220		Unknown	10/01/2011	PERSONS TRAPPED RISING FLOOD WATER	
QF6-11-002905	10/01/2011	16:33:41	NOT REQUIRED Advised by Police	NOT REQUIRED Advised by Police	Unknown	(RESCUE)	█ Gatton Helidon Rd	GRANTHAM	675A	5	16:48:10	10/01/2011	4 REPORTED ON HOUSE TOP, 1 REPORTED INSIDE.	

ESCAD INCIDENT NUMBER	DATE	TIME OF CALL	Time of Dispatch	Time of Arrival	HOW RECEIVED	ESCAD PROBLEM TYPE	LOCATION	SUBURB	APPLIANCES RESPONDED	PERSONS REPORTED	COMPLETION TIME	COMPLETION DATE	COMMENTS	Multiple jobs for same incident
QF6-11-002906	10/01/2011	16:36:23	677E 16:42:40 678A 16:49:09	677E 17:17:14 678A K40	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Murphys Creek Rd	MURPHYS CREEK	677E, 678A	FAMILY	17:19:00	10/01/2011	FAMILY ON HOUSE ROOFTOP	
QF6-11-002911	10/01/2011	16:36:53	675A 16:54:27 675Y 16:57:48	675A 17:21:51 675Y 17:21:57	Triple Zero	Assist Water Smoke	█ Murphys Creek Rd	MURPHYS CREEK	675A, 675Y,	UNKNOWN	17:41:10	10/01/2011	FLOODED HOUSE, CARS WASHED AWAY, UNKNOWN IF OCCUPANT/S INSIDE	
QF6-11-002910	10/01/2011	16:39:26	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Life Extrication	█ Anzac Av	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	3	Unknown	10/01/2011	3 PERSONS INSIDE CAR WATER UPTO WINDOWS	
QF6-11-002919	10/01/2011	16:51:38	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Railway St	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	2	Unknown	10/01/2011	HOUSE WASHED OFF STUMPS POSSIBLE 2 PERSONS INSIDE	
QF6-11-002921	10/01/2011	16:56:35	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ William St	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	5	Unknown	10/01/2011	5 PERSONS TRAPPED UPSTAIRS	QF6-11-002921 QF6-11-003029
QF6-11-002922	10/01/2011	16:57:42	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Harris St	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	4	Unknown	10/01/2011	5 PERSONS ON ROOF	
QF6-11-002924	10/01/2011	17:03:47	BIAR51 17:04:40	BIAR51 17:04:54	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Kipper Creek Rd	BIARRA	BIAR51	UNKNOWN	0:34:31	11/01/2011	UNABLE TO REACH PEOPLE ON KIPPER CREEK RD REQUESTED SES	
QF6-11-002929	10/01/2011	17:07:28	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	Triple Zero	Duplicate Call	█ England Creek Rd	ENGLAND CREEK					HOUSE FLOODED, PERSONS FLOODED IN	QF6-11-002883 QF6-11-002929 QF6-11-003709
QF6-11-002931	10/01/2011	17:10:41	679A 17:11:44	679A 18:22:44	QFRS Initiated	Assist Public Service	East St	ESK	679A		19:24:17	10/01/2011	ESK STATE SCHOOL EVACUATION	
QF6-11-002933	10/01/2011	17:11:53	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Grantham Winwill Rd	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	2	Unknown	10/01/2011	2 PERSONS IN HOUSE IN CREEK	
QF6-11-002932	10/01/2011	17:12:49	MURP41 17:15:29	UNKNOWN	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	Murphys Creek Rd	MURPHYS CREEK	MURP41	2	Unknown	10/01/2011	2 PERSONS WASHED OUT OF HOUSE	QF6-11-002932 QF6-11-002964
QF6-11-002940	10/01/2011	17:20:51	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	643A 18:21:30	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Gatton Helidon Rd	GRANTHAM	643A	2	19:19:15	10/01/2011	2 PERSONS REQUIRE RESCUE	
QF6-11-002949	10/01/2011	17:32:46	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	QFRS Initiated	Assist Public Service	█ Larnook Av	UPPER LOCKYER	N/A		Unknown	10/01/2011	15 Y/O HOME ALONE UNABLE TO CONTACT MOTHER	
QF6-11-002960	10/01/2011	17:51:46	GATT91 19:54:28	GATT91 19:54:33	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Harris St	GRANTHAM	GATT91	4	19:55:17	10/01/2011	1 ADULT HAS DISABILITY CAN NOT GET ON ROOF FLOOD WATER RISING.	
QF6-11-002964	10/01/2011	17:59:44	675A AND 677E	675A 18:03:15 677E 18:03:32	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	Mccormack Dr & Murphys Creek Rd	MURPHYS CREEK	675A, 677E	2 (BOTH DECEASED)	19:51:29	10/01/2011	BODY RETRIEVAL - 2 DECEASED PERSONS	QF6-11-002932 QF6-11-002964
QF6-11-002971	10/01/2011	18:20:36	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Harris St	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	2	Unknown	10/01/2011	2 ELDERLY PEOPLE IN HOUSE	
QF6-11-002977	10/01/2011	18:26:05	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Helidon Dip Rd	HELIDON	UNKNOWN	2	Unknown	10/01/2011	2 PERSONS REQUIRE RESCUE	
QF6-11-002976	10/01/2011	18:27:21	674A 18:29:37	674A 18:37:28	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Clarendon Rd	LOWOOD	635K, 674A	1	18:49:28	10/01/2011	ASSIST WITH EVACUATION	
QF6-11-003032	10/01/2011	19:30:14	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Harris St	GRANTHAM		2	Unknown	10/01/2011	3 PEOPLE ON ROOF OF HOUSE	QF6-11-003032
QF6-11-003013	10/01/2011	19:31:16	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Harris St	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	3	Unknown	10/01/2011	2 PEOPLE ON ROOF OF HOUSE	QF6-11-003013
QF6-11-003015	10/01/2011	19:36:32	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ New Beith Rd	GREENBANK	COUNCIL		Unknown	10/01/2011	COUNCIL CONTACTED FOR FLOODED ROAD SIGNS	
QF6-11-003017	10/01/2011	19:43:20	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	SES	Rescue Water All Types	█ Robinsons Rd	GATTON	ICC CREW	UNKNOWN	Unknown	10/01/2011	PERSONS IN HOUSE. HOUSE FLOODED	
QF6-11-003022	10/01/2011	19:52:59	GATT91 19:55:59 645M 22:20:28 673Y 19:57:57	GATT91 19:56:24 645M 22:20:32 673Y 20:39:58	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	Harris St & Anzac Av	GRANTHAM	645M, 673Y, EU42, GATT91		3:44:15	11/01/2011	GATTON ICC	
QF6-11-003024	10/01/2011	19:55:44	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Grantham Hotel Anzac Av	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	5	Unknown	10/01/2011	PERSONS ON ROOF	
QF6-11-003029	10/01/2011	20:11:37	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ William St	GRANTHAM	UNKNOWN	5	Unknown	10/01/2011	PERSONS ON ROOF	QF6-11-002921 QF6-11-003029
No Incident Created	10/01/2011	20:26:12	No Incident Created	No Incident Created	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Lawlers Rd	GRANTHAM	645M	32	0:22:39	11/01/2011	24 ADULTS 8 CHILDREN AT RESIDENCE REQUIRE EVACUATION	
QF6-11-003036	10/01/2011	20:27:56	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	NO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODWATER	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Anzac Av	GRANTHAM	ICC CREW	3	Unknown	10/01/2011	PERSONS ON ROOF WITH MINOR INJURIES. HOUSE UNSTABLE.	
QF6-11-003045	10/01/2011	21:06:52	WITH41 21:12:26	WITH41 21:12:33	QFRS Initiated	Assist Extreme Weather	█ Kensington Rd	WITHCOTT	WITH41		21:26:26	10/01/2011	ASSISTING WITH CLEAN UP	
QF6-11-003050	10/01/2011	21:10:55	NO VEHICLES ASSIGNED	NO VEHICLE ASSIGNED	Triple Zero	Rescue Water All Types	█ Arthur St	HELIDON	GRAN51	3 DECEASED	Unknown	10/01/2011	RFB MEMBER WITH 3 DECEASED FAMILY MEMBERS	QF6-11-002892 QF6-11-003050
QF6-11-003064	10/01/2011	21:57:09	676A 22:01:20 677E 22:01:50	NO ACCESS	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Lockrose Rd	LOCKROSE	676A, 677E	UNKNOWN	0:08:19	11/01/2011	PEOPLE ON ROOF UNABLE TO ACCESS DUE TO FLOODING.	
No Incident Created	10/01/2011	22:24:28	No Incident Created	No Incident Created	QFRS Initiated	Rescue Water All Types	█ Lawlers Rd	GRANTHAM	645M		22:25:25	10/01/2011	ELDERLY LADY AND BOY RESCUE	
No Incident Created	10/01/2011	23:04:08	No Incident Created	No Incident Created			█ Anzac Ave	GRANTHAM			23:16:59	10/01/2011		

LAJ-5

[REDACTED]

From: Kevin Walsh (QFRS Superintendent)
Sent: Wednesday, 7 December 2011 8:25 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Information
[REDACTED] - FYI

Kevin Walsh MLshipMgt.
Superintendent
Qld Fire and Rescue Service

Commission of Inquiry Implementation Team

[REDACTED]

From: Bradley Mills
Sent: Wednesday, 7 December 2011 08:20
To: Kevin Walsh (QFRS Superintendent)
Cc: Andrew Neil; Stephen Smith (QFRS Cannon Hill); Bradley Mills
Subject: RE: Information

Kevin,
Please find relevant information below in relation to issues for the Flood Commission of Inquiry.

RE: An explanation of how and why swift water technician Mills separated from Appliance 850L and joined the Gatton 91 unit in Grantham, with details of what other personnel were involved in that unit, what functions it performed in Grantham and at what times they were performed.

On the 10/01/2011 the specialist appliance 850L with crew of Station Officer Brad Mills and Firefighter Andrew Neil were responded at approx 1430hrs to a swift water incident at Withcott. While on route to that incident at approx 1510hrs I heard wordback from appliance 676A who were at a swift water incident with persons on top of a car that had been washed off the flooded Lockyer Creek Bridge at Helidon. I contacted 676A to obtain more information about this incident and to see if the roadway was open. They informed me that we could not get through so I contacted our fire communications and informed them that we would attend this incident and would require another response to the incident at Withcott. We arrived at the Lockyer Creek Bridge at 1531hrs.

There were three people stuck on the roof of a car in the fast moving floodwater. We could not gain access to these people from our position. At the time of this event there was a channel 7 helicopter in the air that was filming this incident. I made radio contact with the pilot of the aircraft and requested he land to pick up myself and Andrew to enable us to undertake a rescue. Once in the air the car and persons had disappeared from view. During a search of the area we had located the female of the car clinging to a small group of trees in the middle of the fast flowing water. I instructed the pilot to land on a small area of land as close as we could to the person. The helicopter then had to leave the scene to go and refuel. After a period of time we had made our way through the floodwater to rescue the female and remove her to an area of safety. I had requested a rescue helicopter to pick us up from that area. It was approx another 45mins until Helitack 220 arrived and returned us and the female casualty to the incident Control point at approx 1700hrs. At this point helitack 220 returned to the air to search for the man and boy. At approx

1715hrs helitack 220 had located and winched the boy to safety and returned him to the control point. We were then instructed at approx 1745hrs to board the helicopter to continue the search for the remaining male person.

While in the air conducting a search pattern we were notified of another possible wall of water heading toward the bridge area and was instructed to check up river to locate any sign of this water. During this search of this area the pilot informed me that he was running low on fuel and needed to divert to the nearest fuel supply which was at Toowoomba, and was not able to drop us back to the control point at this stage. We then proceeded to Toowoomba with helitack 220 to refuel.

While refuelling the rescue crew had received a number of emergency calls requesting winching operations of persons from rooftops in the Lockyer Valley area. On returning from Toowoomba at approx 1830hrs we had located numerous people in need of assistance from flood water. There was a house that was located in the middle of floodwater that was falling apart with two people clinging to the rooftop. The pilot had notified me that he would have to put us on the ground to allow them to conduct winching operations of these and other persons that require assistance. We landed on the oval in Victor street and disembarked the aircraft.

Once on the ground we were met by a large group of locals who all stated they had people missing and required assistance. With no communications to contact the control point I requested the use of a mobile phone from a lady who was involved with the Rural Fire Service. I contacted the Brisbane Fire Communication centre to inform them of our location, sit rep and that we were ok. I had informed them of our previous incident and requested they contact the Incident Controller and inform him of this information. We were totally cut off by water within the Township of Grantham. After a period of time helitack 220 had returned with the rescued occupants of the house and they informed Andrew that there were numerous rescues to perform. I decided that we would conduct ground operations from our position. Andrew then informed the pilot of this decision and also informed him that we were in contact with our communication centre. We had no further contact with Helitack 220.

I was then contacted by Superintendent John Gresty by mobile phone to inform me of numerous 000 emergency calls for assistance from a number of locations in Grantham. I had also informed him of our situation and requested him to make contact with the incident controller from our previous incident. At this stage I had been liaising with a number of local people to gain information on persons missing, locations, persons injured and persons already evacuated. During this time we had conducted searches of wrecked vehicles, houses, railway bridge and had located and made contact with several persons trapped on top of their flooded houses. I provided this information to John and informed him that we would be staying at our location until the emergency situation was over.

During these proceedings it was identified that the vehicle Gatton 91 was at the Rural station and was available to be used. I then set this vehicle up as fireground communications and as a control point. We had no other communications other than mobile phone at that stage. I then contacted South East Fire Communications to set up a incident control point and to give them a sitrep of the situation. They informed me of the main control point at Gatton. All radio messages were then passed through Gatton control. I had instructed 2 male persons on how to use the radio transmitter for fireground use and incident control use. I would then pass information to them who would then transmit to the incident control point.

At approx 2100hrs I had made contact with the swift water crew that made entry from the other side of town. I am unsure of the time that Grantham 91 was officially shut down as a control point. Appliance 850L was being used by these crews. Both Andrew and myself remained in Grantham until approx 0230hrs 11/01/11. We then returned to the Gatton Fire Station incident control point.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Thanks

Brad Mills

Station Officer

Special Operations Unit

Queensland Fire & Rescue Service



8/12/2011



From: Kevin Walsh (QFRS Superintendent)
Sent: Tue 6/12/2011 12:36 PM
To: Bradley Mills
Subject: Information

Brad,
As per our conversation on the phone, the Flood Commission of Inquiry is requesting information to clarify some issues. The question in relation to you is as follows:

An explanation of how and why swift water technician Mills separated from Appliance 850L and joined the Gatton 91 unit in Grantham, with details of what other personnel were involved in that unit, what functions it performed in Grantham and at what times they were performed.

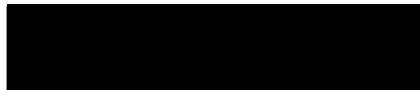
Brad, as discussed please provide information to above as fully as you can including the lead up and subsequent events. Hopefully this will satisfy legal arrangements without having to trouble you further on your long service leave.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Regards

Kevin Walsh MLshipMgt.
Superintendent
Qld Fire and Rescue Service

Commission of Inquiry Implementation Team



LAJ-6

FACTUAL INFORMATION	
Location of Incident:	Lockyer Valley, Grantham, Clarendon contained in the Greater Brisbane Area ,
Time & Date:	10-11 JAN 2011
Pilot:	██████████, ██████████
Aircraft:	UH-UAX (Helitak 220)
Operation:	Flood relief and Personnel Rescue (Winching, Hover Entry/Exits)
Passengers/Crew:	██████████ Winch Operator) ██████████ (Down the wire Crewman)
Weather:	Heavy Rain, Overcast, Thunderstorms
Aircraft type:	BK 117

Prologue

Personal report on operations conducted by Rural Fire Service member ██████████

Operational Details

On the 10th and 11th of January 2011 Helitak 220 was tasked to conduct Flood Rescue operations of personal stranded by floods in the Lockyer Valley west of Brisbane. We were based at Coolangatta Airport in support of SES and QFR,

We received tasking at approximately 4pm and proceeded to Archerfield airport to be briefed by Queensland Fire and Rescue air attack supervisors on an unfolding situation in Toowoomba and the Lockyer valley. We were immediately dispatched with a crew of four with instructions to assist in personnel extraction from flood affected areas.

WINCH RESCUE1

Jan 10 1750: Grantham: Lockyer Valley

A car containing a family of three was swept down the Lockyer valley after been caught in a 5ft wall of water, the family was filmed sitting atop their vehicle by a 7 news media helicopter and swift water technicians from Queensland Fire and Rescue were dispatched to affect a rescue. Before rescue the family were swept from the vehicle and separated in the waters, the technicians were able to save the mother and get her to an island away from the main body of water. Our helicopter, HT220, was able to land and evacuate the technicians and rescued person to local emergency workers on the nearby highway. It was at that stage that we were informed of the missing male and his son. HT 220 then began a search of the area immediately downstream of the location. Approximately 5 minutes from dispatch ██████████ spotted the ██████ yr old boy situated on a hay bailer surrounded by swift flowing water. The decision to winch the child who was clothed in only a t-shirt and underwear was made and we conducted a 2 person winch. Upon entry to the helicopter we ascertained that the child had sustained severe cuts to his lower legs, was bleeding profusely and was in a state of shock.

After been rescued evacuation to awaiting EMS staff and his mother was undertaken. At the time of writing this report the status of the father was unknown. It was recognized by the crew that had the boy not been retrieved the chances of him surviving the night were extremely slim.



Family on car before rescue(7 news footage)



Child on Haybaler before winch extraction



Child in rear of aircraft

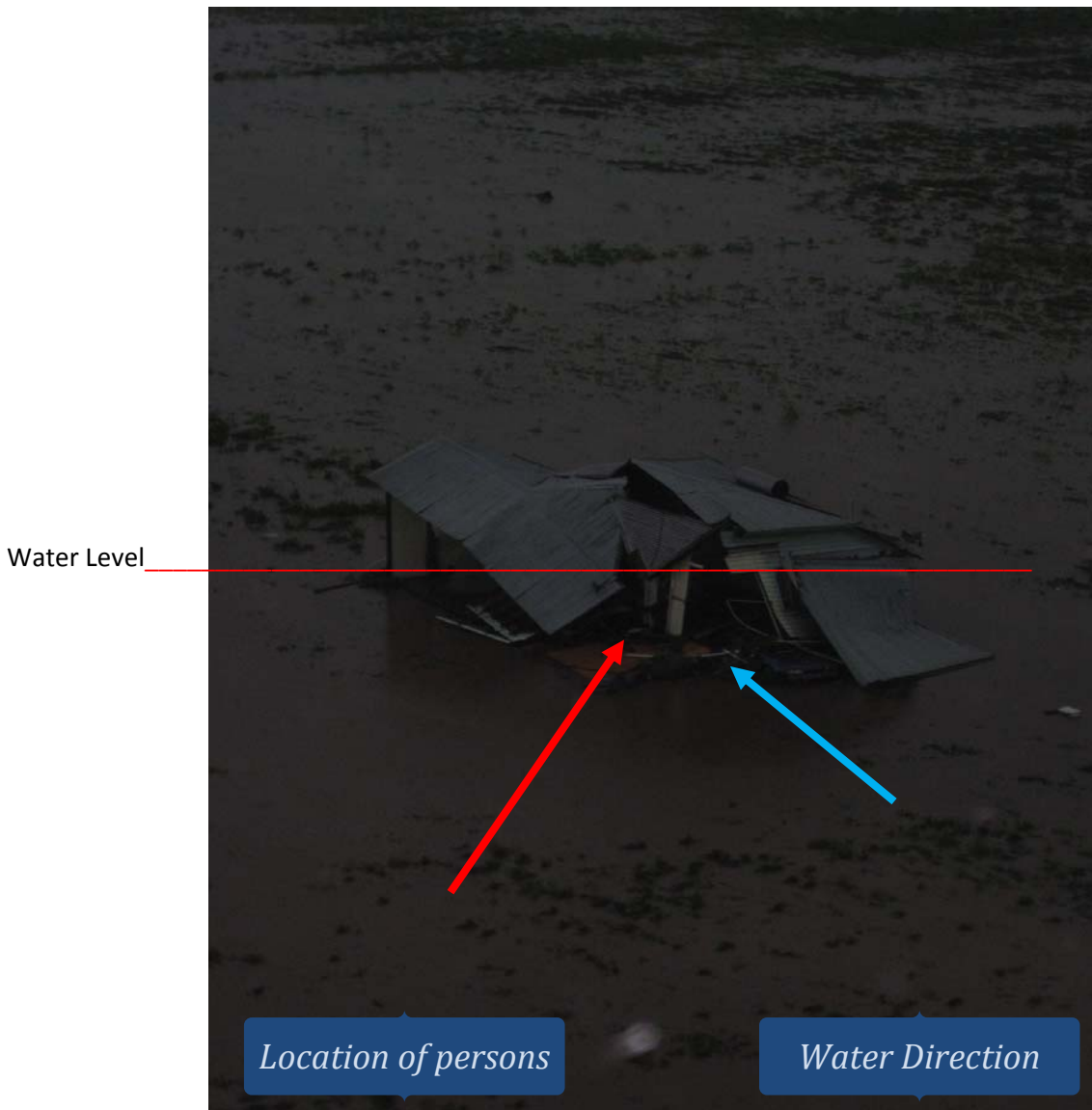


First aid assistance been given to child

WINCH RESCUE2

Jan 10 18:00: Grantham: Lockyer Valley

Swift water technicians called us to a scene near the main rail bridge in Grantham. Reports stated a house containing an elderly couple had been swept 300m downstream. We arrived at the location and found the house with the persons trapped inside on the flow facing side of the dwelling. Water depth was chest height on the trapped people. The persons were trapped and unable to get to the roof or out from under the fallen eave of the house due to the current.



The decision was made to lower the rescue crewman on the wire into the water upstream from the house. He then made his way into the dwelling while in full view of the crew and secured the female before being pulled clear and into the helicopter. He then reentered the house for a second time to retrieve the awaiting male and family dog, upon returning to the machine we vacated to a nearby field where they were placed in the care of swift water technicians. The general consensus within the crew was that had they been left within the dwelling the persons would have perished. It was also noted amongst the pilots and winch operator that the down the wire crewman had performed a rescue that was above and beyond normal expectations and capabilities.



WINCH RESCUE 3

Jan 10 17:00: Grantham: Lockyer Valley

Re-tasked by authorities to the general area of rescue 2 we sighted a 2 story house surrounded by water. Adult male and teenage boy were situated in the house that was located in the middle of the flood stream. Winching was initiated and the Rescue crewman was placed onto the house. Both males were retrieved from the dwelling in separate winch sorties and relocated to dry land.

WINCH RESCUE 4

Jan 11 13:00 Clarendon: Lockyer Valley

Tasked to multiple houses surrounded by water in the Clarendon area. Several of the houses contained within the general area contained persons unable to vacate due to the swift water condition and general weather state encountered at the time. The first house we approached contained 1 male and 2 female occupants. The dwelling was situated well into the flood stream and was totally inaccessible via other methods. Winching was undertaken to retrieve all persons who were removed to the care of local emergency staff at the local sports ground. All winching in this event was undertaken utilizing the 2 person method with [REDACTED] as the rescue Crewman.

On two more occasions [REDACTED] was winch inserted into waist deep water at properties surrounded by water. He then assisted elderly and ill persons into the helicopter via the entry/exit method. One more occasion saw [REDACTED] inserted onto a roof where approximately 12 persons were stranded. He then supervised with the site

preparation and assisted with extraction of persons from this site. The 12 persons were evacuated by hover emplane from roof top.

Many more evacuations were carried out by the method of winching [REDACTED] to the roof top, securing the site and loading evacuees onto the helicopter by hover emplane.

Summary

In all over 47 people were assisted from the floodwaters throughout the two days of operations; [REDACTED] was an essential and vital member of the crew throughout all aspects of the operation. Conditions from a weather and environmental perspective would be described as atrocious at best. His conduct was exemplary for a person with relatively low experience in this field. All members of the crew were impressed by his maturity, attitude and willingness to place himself into what was a mentally and physically trying time in the face of true adversity.

It is the view of the crew and lthat his efforts in this time are truly deserving of recognition, persons would have perished if not for his efforts. In the eyes of myself, my colleagues and associated rescue staff on site he has earned admiration and respect to himself and the organization that he represents.

[REDACTED] (author)

Winch Operator/Aircrewman

United Aero Helicopters

[REDACTED]
Pilot

United Aero Helicopters

[REDACTED]
Pilot

United Aero Helicopters





LAJ-7

Witness Statement

McDermott, John.

6 April 2011

C/- McDermott Aviation, PO Box 600, Cooroy, QLD, 4563.

I, John McDermott state: I am the Director/Chief Pilot for McDermott Aviation Heli-Lift Australia. McDermott Aviation is used by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service on request for support in their operations, which is primarily wildfire.

On Monday January 10th 2011 I received a phone call from [REDACTED] QFRS around 1515hrs asking for helicopter availability. I advised we had 1 AS355 'twin squirrel' available but that it was scheduled to depart at 1600 for flood work at Tarong power station -Kingaroy. [REDACTED] 'tasked' us as Firebird 460 to Wittcott and asked if we were winch capable - we were not but was still required as a priority.

I piloted 460 and was in company with my son [REDACTED] as crewman. We departed Cooroy around 1530hrs and arrived at Wittcott approximately 1635hrs. The flight across to Wittcott itself was quite 'marginal' due to low cloud, heavy rain and gusty winds around the hills of up to 35 knots.

I flew an initial recce flight around Helidon which revealed extreme flooding, serious damage to infrastructure and obvious road closures due to flooding. We landed at Helidon School and waited for our QFRS 'observer', [REDACTED] to arrive. [REDACTED] was in touch with [REDACTED] via text message.

Helitack (HT) 220 flew over us around 1645hrs and landed at Wittcott School. [REDACTED] rang us and we repositioned to their location at 1650hrs. We were immediately tasked to transport 2 'Swift Water Rescue' rescue guys up to Toowoomba. We left [REDACTED] at the School grounds due to weight considerations given we would have to ascend in difficult conditions.

The flight up to Toowoomba was extremely difficult due to very low cloud, rain and very strong gusty cross wind conditions. I tried a couple of direct routes to Toowoomba however the conditions made it impossible to fly that way so I found a 'low level' route via a power-line easement on the southern side of the Toowoomba mountain range.

We landed in Toowoomba and dropped the 'Swift Water Rescue' guys off while [REDACTED] made contact with QFRS. I was monitoring the weather very closely and I advised [REDACTED] that we had to get out of Toowoomba as soon as possible as the weather was moving in and we would likely have got caught there and unable to fly out.

We flew back to Helidon and began a further aerial inspection of the effected area. We were looking for stranded people who required rescue. During this early stage of flight, it was very apparent [REDACTED] that had more than enough work to do just with communications, phones – radio etc and was not in a position to also act as observer. We decided to return to Wittcott School and pick up [REDACTED] who would act as our second observer. The time now was approx 1730hrs.

It would certainly be fair to say, in my 30 years of flying helicopters, a lot of which has been in 'disaster' type scenarios, and I had never seen anything quite like what we were seeing. At this stage HT 220 radioed to advise they had to go for fuel, I explained the route we had found into Toowoomba including the presence of power lines and the other numerous hazards, they were able to land and refuel.

We flew along the flooded 'river' towards Grantham, where the extent of impact of the flooding was extreme. We began to conduct a detailed survey of the area, including flying 'grid lines' to determine and prioritise rescue requirements. There were dozens of people stranded on roofs, though most of these people were on roofs we were able to determine that they appeared to be on reasonably stable structures as well as having the "moral support" of their neighbours in the same situation. Their lives did not appear to be in immediate danger so we plotted their locations and decided to continue, looking for people either stranded in trees, in cars or more isolated.

During this time, approximately 500 meters from the Grantham 'pub' I observed a house which 'appeared to be moving'. Simon thought he could see people within this house. Closer hover investigation revealed two people in this house, holding on to the eaves of the house and waving frantically for help. The time was approximately 1815hrs.

We made an approach to the roof of the house to attempt a 'one skid on' landing to the roof to see if it was stable enough to help remove these people. Sections of the house had been severely damaged and it was apparent the roof was unstable. With the rotor wash, sections of the roof were moving so we pulled back. Simon opened the door and signalled to them that we would arrange help. It was necessary for us to remain 'in sight' of these people as we believe they were very desperate, we continued searching other areas but also kept returning to them to reassure them we weren't going to leave them.

We could not initially make contact with HT 220 but I heard an airplane in the circuit at Toowoomba so I radioed him to call 220 and advise we required him 'as a matter of urgency'. About 3 or 4 minutes later HT 220 radioed and advised they were back 'in bound'. We guided HT 220 back to the house and they carried out a successful winch operation, recovering the 2 occupants – around 1830.

We had also found another couple of people stranded on top of a house approx 500 meters east of the 'floating house'. Again, this was an isolated property and these people were on their own. We established via hand signal

with these people that we would return and we provided HT 220 with Lat and Long for them.

We followed the river further east, again, looking for more people stranded. We flew all the way to a crossing/spill way closer to Gattton where we decided there were enough people in that area to observe anybody in the water or in need of assistance. As such we returned back to Grantham area. We again flew grids looking for additional people, we found and 'logged' quite a few buildings with people in or on them and [REDACTED] passed this information on.

We also went down low to inspect a few cars which were 'floating' with their headlights on. We did NOT find occupants in these cars. It was getting quite dark by now and we were also logging people who were signalling us with flash lights, mobile phones etc. We were trying to complete a 'mental picture' of where we were relative to 'less effected' areas.

We guided HT 220 back to the house where we had found the last two people and then began the flight back towards Wittcott, following the flooded river again. We landed Wittcott School around 1930hrs. By now it was quite dark, so we guided HT 220 into the school grounds and to assist with visual reference I activated our strobe lights and landing lights and of course radio.

We were met by many very disturbed people wanting information as many had relatives in Grantham etc. people had set the school up as a 'base'. We conducted an extensive debrief of activities with HT 220 and [REDACTED]

There was discussion of where we may sleep which included being driven some distance, this is where that was possible, but I expressed concern that I did not want to be separated too far from our helicopters, again in case things worsened and we became isolated from them. Around 2230hrs the local school principal returned and both helicopter crews accompanied him back to his house to sleep the night.

On Tuesday January 11th we awoke around 0445hrs and drove to school grounds and completed our pre flight inspections. The weather was considerably worse than the day before and very marginal for flying. We had still not established where the fuel truck was located and both helicopters required fuel. Once we had established where fuel was being positioned and the weather improved –slightly, we both became airborne and tracked along the flooded river, towards Helidon, Grantham, Gattton and finally landed at Plainland – in the Woolworths shopping centre.

We refuelled and it was around 0700hrs. Ben was on the phone continually with his 'superiors' or whomever and it was decided that 'Forest Hill' was to be evacuated. We were told around 120 people. We began planning for this task then we were told that the military would undertake that operation. The weather was again very marginal and it we decided that we would conduct a reconnaissance as no one was able to develop situation awareness, the view

from the air was the quickest manner in which to assess what had occurred overnight and prioritise the people in need.

At this time and stage, we were the only helicopters in the area able to provide current information of the situation, which was worsening. The weather was deteriorating, rain was increasing and visibility and cloud base was worsening and water levels were again rising quickly.

We again flew the river looking for stranded people and flew to Forest Hill, where we found a lady stranded in a house and isolated. We were able to guide a ground team to her for recovery. We searched the banks of the creek looking for 'people / bodies' or anything requiring attention. HT 220 was tasked to quite a few winch ops.

We were tasked to a few 'addresses' looking for people reported as stranded but it was limited what we could do as of course there were no street signs etc. We devised a system of using lat and longs and with the GPS were able to operate more efficiently.

We returned to Plainlands to again refuel and wait further tasking. We were tasked to fly east along the highway to pick up another QFRS guy with a 'radio pack' as well as air to ground 'streaming' of information. During all of this, Ben was in constant phone contact with Brisbane and reporting on conditions.

HT 220 and ourselves had established a 'report and be seen' system, as visibility was low. We landed on the highway, east of Plainlands to pickup QFRS personnel. At this time, around 1045, the first of the arriving Blackhawks' over flew us in bound to Plainlands. We installed radio pack, took on the QFRS guy and became airborne, where we were tasked to Hattonvale to search for people in a house who were 'stranded' – we established it was not in imminent danger.

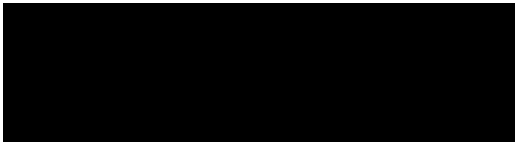
We again flew back to Grantham – Helidon – Forest Hill. At this stage the QFRS guys were filming and I believe direct streaming info back to Brisbane. We returned to Plainlands to refuel and get further instructions. A Navy Sea King arrived and required refuelling – unfortunately, this required our fuel truck to fit a 'pressure nozzle'. This did not work and the result was – despite great effort by [REDACTED] and the truck driver to rectify the problem, our fuel supply was now unserviceable. We later worked around this by flying into Amberley Air Force Base to refuel twice.

We were tasked to Forest Hill to assist with the evacuation of people and flew a mission into the show grounds at Gatton. This had become necessary, as the Blackhawks may not have been able to evacuate all people in the remaining light.

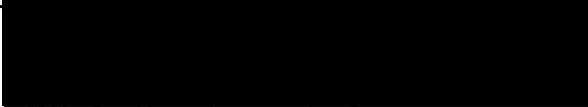
We were then to fly a group of 4 Swift water guys to one of the towns, but by this time, there were a number of lightning strikes quite close to us and we had to shut down for a few minutes.

We off loaded the swift water guys to the military and flew another mission between Grantham, Fernvale, Gatton and Plainlands. Once the thunder storm had passed over the weather improved marginally and we were tasked to Fernvale – to assist HT 220 with retrievals and spotting.

Around 1800hrs we were tasked back to Brisbane Archerfield Aerodrome where we overnighted. We conducted a de-brief and arrangements were made for the next days operations.



Signature *JSA McEwen*
Name/ Rank



Witness Signature
Name/Rank

LAJ-8

Witness Statement

Sutherland, Benjamin J.

9 March 2011

C/- Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, GPO Box 1425, Brisbane, QLD, 4001.

I, Ben Sutherland state: I work within the telecommunications industry on the Gold Coast and I have been a Rural Volunteer Firefighter with the Coomera Valley Rural Brigade for approximately 7 years. I am also trained as an Air Observer and have assumed this role when called upon over the last 18 months. This role works through Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS), Rural Operations - Air Operations and involves the coordination of air to ground efforts during significant wildfires.

On Monday the 10th of January 2011 at approximately 1430hrs I was called by the QFRS State Air Desk to respond to Archerfield airport and meet with Helitack (HT) 220 which was flying up from Coolangatta. The only information I had at that stage was that a house had been washed off the Toowoomba range.

As I made my way to Archerfield I was trying to get more information regarding who would be the contacts for air to ground communication for the operation, what channels we would be using and then configure a briefing for the pilot prior to departure which was mandatory. As I arrived at the front of the hangar at Archerfield HT 220 landed at the rear. I had been unable to obtain much more information, we hadn't heard any news reports of what was occurring in Toowoomba so I briefed the pilot as best as I could. We then departed in the direction of Toowoomba.

Once airborne I could hear a lot of traffic over the South East Region Fire Communications channel. I was contacted by the State Air Desk and advised that Firebird 460 was also on its way from Cooroy. As HT 220 was a winch/rescue helicopter we would meet with Firebird 460 at Withcott primary school and I would transfer into this aircraft as an observation and coordination platform. Whilst flying I received a text message that literally advised me that I was 'flying into a shitfight'.

As we neared Withcott I could see the EMQ helicopter conducting a winch rescue to the west – this was my first confirmation that the situation was significant if they were calling multiple air assets. It was approximately 1600 hrs and we received our first tasking. This tasking was that a Rural Operations truck had been washed away in Grantham. Once the 2 helicopters were on the ground in Withcott I moved into Firebird 460 with John McDermott. HT 220 immediately departed to conduct rescues and we were tasked to transfer 2

swift water personnel to Toowoomba, we had to leave his son [REDACTED] at Withcott due to weight limitations.

Whilst we were flying to Toowoomba I was already being consumed by information. I had to juggle 2 mobile phones, 1 UHF portable radio, 1 VHF portable radio, the 2 CTAF aircraft radios that broadcast within the flight helmet and the internal intercom. McDermott made several attempts to ascend the range into Toowoomba with violent weather conditions and low cloud prevented us from taking a direct route. During this flight the communications increased and I had to insert one mobile phone between my helmet and my head and leave it there, the other phone I used for text messages, text communication for flight following is common practice in air operations due to unreliability of signal and noise. I had a writing pad on my leg for notes, the mobile phone in my helmet and juggled the remaining communications. Through some remarkable flying McDermott managed to find a path into Toowoomba. During a flight such as this we call and confirm any hazards when less than 500 feet so I assisted in calling for McDermott as we ascended the range avoiding powerlines and landed in Toowoomba airport.

We landed and dropped the Swift Water Rescue personnel off. I was in conversation with QFRS South West Incident Control Centre personnel as Toowoomba belongs to a different QFRS region than the Lockyer Valley which is actually in South East Region. They also have different radio channels and Fire communications personnel. We had initially been tasked to Toowoomba and technically belonged to South West Region. One of my duties is to confirm flight tasks and to account for all flight hours being as a result of legitimate tasking. McDermott approached me and advised that if we did not leave as soon as practical the weather would close in and we would be grounded. It was clear to us that the far greater need was in the Lockyer Valley so we exercised our initiative, informed the Toowoomba personnel and departed for another violent flight down the range.

As we descended I switched communications back to South East Region channels and we were immediately tasked to the area of Lockyer Creek. We re-established communications with HT 220 who needed fuel, McDermott verbally guided them along the path he had found and they also managed to fly into Toowoomba Airport and refuel. While descending we were experiencing what I have heard referred to as the 'Hand of God'. These were violent up and down drafts. We would suddenly plummet or rise with force which made writing and juggling the numerous communications devices somewhat difficult.

We began to get a number of taskings however they were all for street addresses, we could not see the streets as they were under water. We requested latitude and longitude coordinates and I began to enter these into the GPS unit so we could fly to locations. It was obvious with the weather conditions, hazards and amount of people in need of assistance we needed another set of eyes for observation. This would bolster safety and also allow me to focus on maintaining the numerous modes of communication. We

landed at Withcott, picked up [REDACTED], and immediately set off toward Grantham.

We conducted a 360 degree primary search of Grantham, identifying people in need, assessed their urgency and plotted coordinates. We also received numerous calls from QFRS crews on the ground to fly over specific areas to look for people which took a degree of time.

We saw a house in a field that appeared to be moving, being swept with the current. As we flew closer it became evident that this house was indeed being swept along what was once farm paddocks, and to our astonishment [REDACTED] saw that 2 people were clinging to the front of this residence. We flew lower and due to their imminent danger we immediately began discussing options as to how we may be able to retrieve these people. HT 220 was still refuelling in Toowoomba. We considered various options such as placing one skid on the roof however the roofing iron was loose, we even discussed the option of landing nearby and removing the doors to allow quick emplane however this was not practical given the timeframes. Thankfully we re-established communication with HT 220 and they were inbound. [REDACTED] communicated with these people that help was coming via hand signals and we continued to search for other people as the light was beginning to fade. We would circle back to ensure these people they were Ok until the arrival of HT 220 and their rescue.

We needed to assess the bigger picture and identify if there were other communities nearby in as much danger. We were the only observation platform and if we could identify areas or people in danger then we could prioritise, inform ground crews and also plan for the next day which was already on our minds. We conducted a low level sweep along the river down to Gatton and then back up to Grantham. We were assessing the structural integrity of dwelling that people were on top of so that we could prioritise. We found 2 more people isolated on a rooftop and we alerted HT 220 as well as 4 more on sheds that needed evacuation.

Throughout this entire time I was inundated with communication, I have never experienced anything like it. However I can understand it as there were very limited air assets and even the resources on the ground were in isolated pockets so we were the only available means to gain situation awareness over a broad area. Light was failing quickly so we had to conduct a last sweep to identify any urgent rescues or to plot people we hadn't seen and then we would have to leave. I vividly recall approximately 20 – 30 people waving to us, some with white sheets and as it got dark these turned to torches. It was very difficult to leave however we stayed until we absolutely had to leave. One disturbing image we saw as we were leaving was a car under water with its headlights flashing. We could not see if there was anyone inside and to this day I sincerely hope that it was just an electrical short.

We landed at Withcott primary school and McDermott activated his landing lights and Nav lights to assist HT 220 coming in behind us. We still had a lot of discussion regarding debriefing what had occurred, planning for how we

would refuel, planning for the mornings operations, finding food and even where we were to sleep was unknown as this stage. I debriefed and passed our information and coordinates of the people we identified onto the Gatton Incident Control Centre that was now fully functioning.

The Gatton ICC would then pass these onto the Swift Water Rescue teams converging on Grantham. I reflected on what had transpired and if there was anything we could improve on, I noted that what was appearing to work well was I had converted a system we use for fire mapping and was using it with these floods. We had never envisaged we would be used in this capacity and most certainly not in an event as catastrophic as this however the system we adapted 'on the fly' was working. We also needed security for our aircraft and luckily the school principal returned and we stayed at his residence for which we were very grateful.

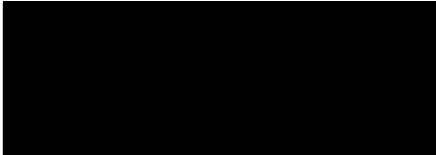
I gave my overalls to [REDACTED] from HT 220 as he had been continually wet and didn't have a change of clothes and then I contended with approximately 3 hours of phone calls to coordinate the next days operations. It was probably about 2300 hrs before I was to attempt to get to sleep. We were up around 0400 hrs Tuesday the 11th. The rain was initially that heavy that we could not fly at all. We had a fuel truck enroute but the highway was cut off. The weather had improved marginally enough for us to fly and we met the fuel tanker at the Plainlands shopping centre car park at around 0730hrs.

The weather for this trip was atrocious and best described as marginal for flying. Heavy rain, strong gusty winds, the threat of lightning and reduced visibility, we were also wet inside and out. We took the initiative and conducted a sweep of Helidon, Grantham and the highway to assess the situation on the way to meet the fuel truck. Again we were the only aircrews and the only source of information on what was occurring over the Lockyer Valley at that time. As a result of this I fielded an extraordinary amount of calls and from some very senior people. At one stage there I believe I was on the phone talking with the Commissioner of Police, another call was from the Commissioner of QFRS and on another occasion on speaker phone to the State Disaster Coordination Centre.

We were once again tasked to assist people on roofs up river. HT 220 conducted the majority of these. In between HT 220 conducting winch operations we would conduct sweeps and we identified several cars that needed closer inspection in the flood waters. On several occasions the weather would ground us, or we would fly over aircraft that chose not to fly however this was not for very long.

We again took up with HT 220 and we had a job log with 20 taskings so we immediately set about working through this. At one stage we even assisted some people to higher ground in Firebird 460 from Clarendon as the larger aircraft were struggling to evacuate a large number of people from Forest Hill in the time available. The weather improved slightly and more aircraft came on line, at one stage I was coordinating 4 aircraft simultaneously with the usual blend of communications modalities.

I continued with operations on the 11th until 1900hrs and then returned all aircraft to Archerfield airbase for yet another debrief in the days events.



Benjamin Sutherland.

Signature

Name/Rank



Witness Signature

Name/Rank

LAJ-9

Date/Time	Details
	Tango Training 19/20 November 2009. nomination.
	Events relating to Lockyer Valley Floods 10-12/1/2011
	Recollection notes 18/1/11
10/1/11	Approx 1550 hrs A/AC John Gresty requested I attend Gatton Fire Station with IMT Cache, Peter Mason + [REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]
≈ 1610	Departed RTR for Gatton Fire Station
≈ 1720	Got caught in heavy traffic congestion on Warrego Hwy near Gatton exit
≈ 1730	At Gatton exit round about a member of public advised he received a call from persons on the roof of a house in the Gatton Grantham area. He had already run "000" but was concerned so I advised him to ring "000" again
≈ 1740	Met with A/AC John Gresty outside the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Offices and he briefed me on the roadside. Not much information available from the LDMG which is set up in a room about 1/2 the size of the ROCC. Instructed to set up an ICC at the Gatton Fire Station and the main task is to located all QFRS vehicles on the fireground. The ICC is to look after QFRS vehicles and not take control - LDMG to provide taskings. Inspector David Caughley is in Murphy's Creek area operating on Channel 35 VHF. David Caughley is returning to Gatton for the LDMG. Clinton Neuman is currently QFRS representative in LDMG.

20 18/1/2011

2

Date/Time	Details
10/1/11 ≈ 1750 (1745)	Arrived Gattan Fire Station. Met up with Peter Mason and [REDACTED]. Commenced setting up IMT equipment in the Fire station training room. Problem initially with setting up radios - VHF aerial used from EPI car.
1755	Received advise verbally that SES warn that all appliances in low areas of Murphy's Creek to evacuate area
1800	Peter Mason advised Firecom to notify all QFRS appliances via radio of the warning
1805	Peter Mason commenced telephone contact of listed appliances to get locations
	Set up radio comms of Channel 35 VHF and Peter Mason calling all appliances for Roll call. Checked SER Comms Plan and decided to remain on Channel 35 VHF as best option. Used station radio in engine room for VHF 78 communications. Problems with mobile phones and internet connectivity of computers.
(1821)	Rang Supt [REDACTED] at ROCC via mobile phone with quick briefing of our situation. Rang David
(1827)	Caughley on mobile phone who was in transit back to Gattan Fire Station with quick overview of operations so far. Peta Miller returning back to Gattan Fire Station. AC Peter Bennichamp requested we use the fire station land line 5468 3300 - a fire fight was designated to sit with phone in duty office
≈ 1900 (1915)	Gattan ICC "operational. Advised all urban + rural appliances operating on Channel 35 VHF and Channel 78 VHF

Date/Time	Details
10/1/11	IMT consists of :
	I/C - Brian Humphreys
	Operations - SO Mark Stevenson
	Radio Comms - Peter Mason
	Planning - Peta Miller with assistance from Rod Pickett
	Logistics - SO Bob Fletcher
	ROCC - Supt Peter Dawson.
	Peta Miller started setting up EIAP on arrival at Gatten.
(1918)	Requested second roll call of all appliances - commenced by Peter Mason. Arrangements to commence change over of day crews started prior to 1900 hrs. Firebird advised
(1940)	ceased operations for night with Helitack 220 at Withcott requiring security. Firebird advised they picked up 6 roof top rescues prioritising unstable dwellings. Some 10 houses in calm water on Gatten-Helidon Rd with some people on rooves. EMR helicopter has night capability and refuelling before continuing operations in that area.
(1945)	List of tasks from firecom via Fax. 12 jobs to be undertaken and 2 jobs completed earlier in day. Ops Officer Mark Stevenson prioritised tasking of an urban pumper with SWR crews for support. Used Gatten 91 for 850L SWR day crew with first job cleared in Grantham before 2000 hrs. Shane Browne from firecare appointed to Gatten Fire Station.
≈ 2010	Sitrep sent to ROCC - 14 urban + 11 rural appliances with staging at Gatten Fire Station. 4 jobs in Grantham allocated and 8 yet to be allocated

20 18/1/2011

4

Date/Time	Details
(1946)	Received request from ROCC to check location of Withcott 51.
≈ 1950 (1951)	Received verbal advice from Peter Mason of possibility of two fatalities at Grantham.
≈ 2120	Took photos of operational whyte boards. Operations winding down at around 2359 hrs and prepared to release crews, permitting day shift to return. Gatten 91 crew stranded in Grantham
11/1/11 0100	5 Appliances still at Grantham, 4 crews waiting at BP Service station due to closure of Warrego Hwy 5 Appliances at Gatten fire station, 3 appliances enroute to home stations. SWR crews still active Briefing at Gatten Command Office with ROCC
≈ 0200	Forest Hill crew checking out access to Forest Hill and access to Warrego Hwy, A number of crews use this route to return to Ipswich.
≈ 0300	David Coughley and I met with LDMG CEO Ian Flitt and [REDACTED] to assess situation and plan activities for morning. Were advised QPS will be conducting a forensic search of Grantham and therefore QFRS should not enter for recovery purposes without QPS consent. Council still to conduct or wide assessment in Murphy's Creek + Withcott. No advise on road conditions. LDMG to conduct an initial assessment at about 0700 hrs before any determination of tasking for the day can be made. No direct deployment for QFRS
≈ 0345	All appliances completed duties and back at Gatten