

<i>Name of Witness</i>	John Leslie DOHLE
<i>Date of Birth</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Address and contact details</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Occupation</i>	Contract Musterer
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant Paul Browne
<i>Date taken</i>	01/05/2011

I, John Leslie DOHLE state:

1. I am a [REDACTED] year old married man, and reside with my wife and family on a property in the Linville area. I have lived at this address since 1994, but in the Linville area since 1978.
2. I have no personal experience is disaster management or evacuation. I used to be involved in the Rural Fire Brigade at Mt. Stanley, however that has been disbanded for a few years now.
3. Our property is situated just north of Linville, but is separated from Linville by Blackbutt Creek. At the time of the flood in January 2011 we were initially isolated from all of our neighbours by Blackbutt Creek to the South and Sandy creek in the North. However, throughout the following few days we were mostly able to access Linville from our home, as the water which comes up in the creeks and cuts us off, also recedes quite quickly.
4. I recall Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2011. After receiving weeks of rain, on that day we recorded a further 200 mls of rain.

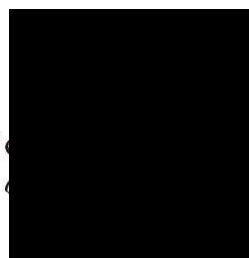
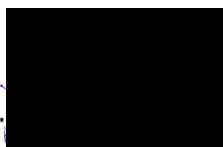
Witness Signature. [REDACTED]

Page Number 1 of 12

Signature of off [REDACTED]

400 George Street Brisbane  
 GPO Box 1738 Brisbane  
 Queensland 4001 Australia  
 Telephone 1300 309 634  
 Facsimile +61 7 3405 9750  
 www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au  
 ABN 65 959 415 158

5. That same night we heard Mrs. Valmai Burnett from 'Rathburnie' (which is about 15 klms North of Linville) who was speaking to 'Katrina Davison' on the ABC Brisbane radio station. Mrs. Burnett said there was more water in the Brisbane River than she had seen in 55 years to which Katrina replied: 'Oh, we don't want you to scare people'. I remember after that Katrina spoke to a Hydrologist who said: 'he did not think that was right'. The Hydrologist later confirmed that he did not believe what Mrs. Burnett had said was right, however I believe that she was.
  
6. At about 9pm that night we lost power. We were then without electricity for a week, until it came back on at about 8pm, the following Sunday night (1 hour short of a week). We also lost our landline telephone communications on the Monday. In usual circumstances there is also little or no mobile telephone coverage in the Linville area.
  
7. On Monday we were able to access Linville and later on Monday morning were able to access Moore, however the Linville road had been cut at Greenhide creek. The D'aguilar Highway was cut at Emu Creek near Colinton and also by the collapse of the Blackbutt range to the west. On Monday night we lost our land line phones, which was a concern because Linville has little or no mobile phone coverage.
  
8. On Tuesday Linville recorded the highest flood level since the 1955 floods. I believe that further upstream the 1955 flood level was eclipsed by 1 metre.



9. On Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January some of the water had receded and we were able to access Kilcoy and get some supplies. On our return we were stopped by a group of Linville residents in the town. The Linville town reservoir was running low on water as the pumps had been submerged by the flood and at that time a community meeting was called for 9.00am the next day (Thursday morning), by the residents. I also started to make some phone calls to let people know about the meeting.

10. After we had returned to Linville the town of Moore remained accessible to us. We were also mostly able to access Kilcoy, however remained isolated from Blackbutt.

11. Later Wednesday afternoon an S.E.S. Helicopter landed with bottled water for the residents. I think this was organised by some of the residents from town, who had gone to the Council offices at Kilcoy. The first I knew of that was basically when the chopper landed and I went up to see what was happening.

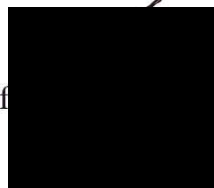
12. By Wednesday we were concerned for the residents of Mt. Stanley, as Mt Stanley road crosses the Brisbane River (Eastern Branch, Western Branch, Cooyar creek, Muddy creek - approximately 58 crossings), isolating families from each other, with no phones, no mobile phone service and no electricity.

13. I suspected that the people of Linville would be able to deal with a lot of things themselves, but my main reason for becoming involved was my concern for the people at Mt. Stanley.

Witness Signature



Signature of of



.....

14. For that reason Michael Carey (another local from Linville) and myself began sourcing generators and Helicopters, using Michael's phone. We had discovered that Michael's phone was the only mobile phone we knew of in Linville, with reception.
15. Communication was the biggest concern for us, as with the landlines being down this mobile phone was our only means of communication.
16. First we contacted the local S.E.S. (I am pretty sure that was at Toogoolawah), who said they would supply a helicopter to drop off supplies if we could ascertain what was needed. The S.E.S. said to contact a certain number (unknown to me now) and not to ring the Command Post. I think from what they were saying at the time was if we went through the Command Post then this would delay things as opposed to going through a designated contact.
17. At 9am on the morning of Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January, I attended the meeting at the Linville Hall, where a large crowd had gathered. Before that Michael and I had spoken with the Police and other groups we needed to and had some idea of what we were hoping to achieve.
18. Andrew Fitzpatrick (Moore Police officer) and Sergeant Marty Tanwan (Kilcoy Police officer) were in attendance at the meeting and it was decided to set-up the Linville Hall as a community centre. The Police had purposely attended the meeting and offered advice on what they could and couldn't do to assist.

Witness Signature

Page Number 4 of 12

Signature of off

....

19. The community centre was set-up to cater for and provide two meals a day to residents of Linville, as there was still no power and people were running short of food and the ability to prepare and store food in their homes. We sourced generators and set up Fridges and Freezer storage for food, from people in the town.

20. One of the generators came from just out of town but it ended up failing because of something that was plugged in and drew too much current. We then set-up a fire place at the back of the hall where people could cook like a galley, and the next door neighbour (Ron MANNING) was nominated as the camp cook. I think on one evening they served as many as 50 meals from that.

21. Eventually I was able to source another generator from someone I knew outside of Toogoolawah. I sent 3 or 4 locals down to get that and they ended up having to put it into a boat and row that across Ivory's creek to get it back to Linville.

22. As for food, anyone who still had food left that hadn't spoiled was just pooled in together, until ration packs started to arrive. Andrew Fitzpatrick also sourced some food and vegies that he could and on one occasion he brought back some sheep which we ended up slaughtering.

23. There was no evacuation centre at Moore and I know that when Andrew Fitzpatrick had door-knocked or spoken to people from Moore, he was also referring them to us and some were attending the centre in Linville for meals.

24. We did not house anyone at the Linville community centre and it was only used to feed local residents. I knew prior to us getting established that there had been a couple of people who were stranded in Moore and they had set up something at the hall, but as soon as the road had opened up, there was no need for it and they had disbanded.

25. Some of the local ladies in town really stepped up and took on responsibility for managing the food and service at the evacuation centre and also delivering meals to some of the elderly residents of Linville, who were house bound.

26. Michael and I also used the hall as a command post and tried to make sure that one of us was there as much as we could. At times we would also go out and check heights of the river but tried to maintain a presence at the hall in case somebody came looking for us.

27. After the meeting we also arranged for Geoff Bontoft & Steve Roberts (who have a private Helicopter) to fly a reconnaissance flight to Mt. Stanley. Geoff was a former resident of the area and Steve has some property North of us, and when I spoke to Geoff they both came to help us in Steve's chopper.

28. They were able to land in a few different places at Mt. Stanley and ascertained that all residents were OK, however they were in need of some food supplies, medications and fuel for generators. Some Mt Stanley Residents had been isolated for some weeks and some were without generators.

29. As a result of that we contacted the S.E.S. on the number we had been provided and informed them of what was needed at Mt. Stanley. The

S.E.S. seemed to procrastinate but eventually after several phone calls, they retracted their original advice and suggested we call the S.E.S. command post. We then contacted the Command post (I am not sure where that was) and were told that this request would be considered a “new order” and they would get back to us. After several more phone calls to the command post (one as late as 10.30pm) they again said they would get back to us, to advise us on what was happening. We waited until after 1.00am, they have yet to return our call.

30. On Friday morning (14<sup>th</sup> January) I again spoke with Geoff about our situation and he and Steve again volunteered to return and drop off supplies, at their own expense. To save weight in the chopper Steve returned on his own.

31. That same day Steve came out to Linville. I also know he dropped off supplies like bread and milk which he had bought himself to other places between where he lives at Pomona and Linville. When he got to us we drove out to meet him and we loaded him up with some supplies and fuel that we had here, for him to drop off at Mt. Stanley.

32. While he was there he also evacuated two adults and three children from Camp Duckadang, one adult from Mt. Stanley Station and three children from Scott & Alison Phelps property. I think in total he made three separate trips out to the Mt. Stanley area to drop off supplies and evacuate people. I’m not sure why all of those evacuations took place but think a couple of them were medical related. I do know the ones at Duckadang were stranded and were getting low on food.

Witness Signature

Page Number 7 of 12

Signature of off

.....

33. Later on Friday the S.E.S. arrived with a hovercraft, ferrying fuel and a generator, which had been supplied by local residents from Linville, across the first crossing to Mt. Stanley. They were to do a reconnaissance further up the river but were unable to reach beyond the 2<sup>nd</sup> crossing.

34. On Saturday the first ration packs arrived from the Kilcoy S.E.S. These consisted of food and general staples and we sent them on to Mt. Stanley. Throughout this time Linville had remained mostly self sufficient.

35. Another Helicopter owned by Dick Karraman (again at owners expense) also delivered ration packs to the residents of Mt. Stanley. I think this was organised through the Toogoolawah Fire Brigade but cannot be sure. I do know that he had also evacuated some people from Wivenhoe Pocket. I'm unsure how it was organised but he came to us to collect the ration packs, then on the first trip I went with him to show him where they had to be delivered.

36. On Sunday Dick Karraman arrived again in his own Helicopter to drop off more ration packs. These were being delivered to us by road and I think it was mostly organised by the Toogoolawah Fire Brigade and also Andrew Fitzpatrick. I think we might have been getting ration packs from a few different sources. Then later that day a Police funded Helicopter arrived, and once again we loaded it up with more ration packs for delivery to the Mt. Stanley area. I also went with them to show them where it needed to deliver the rations.

Witness Signature

Page Number 8 of 12

Signature of officer

..



37. Those ration packs consisted of a variety of things, some had nappies in them and also a few things that were repetitive or not needed by some people. For that reason, what we ended up doing was breaking them up and sending the more vital items to the people who needed them. An example of that was the 'family' packs, it was a waste of time sending nappies to people who had no kids, so we took those out and sent them on to those people who obviously needed that type of thing.

38. Again on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> January a Police funded helicopter returned to supply fuel and drop food. On that occasion it was accompanied by a local Police Sergeant, sent to check on the welfare of Mt Stanley residents.

39. On Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January the Moore Rural Brigade organised another Helicopter & Fuel drop, that time funded by the Fire Service. By that time all of the properties should have had ample Ration packs and a six day supply of generator fuel. Despite that they still had no phones, mobile phones or electricity.

40. Despite our issues with and the lack of communication, throughout the time of the evacuation centre there was no confusion amongst the residents as all inquiries came to us (Michael and myself), and we managed things from that one central point.

41. I am not sure if I would like to be involved in anything of this nature again in the future. I do however believe that communications in general for the Linville, Mt. Stanley and surrounding areas is something that needs to be looked at and addressed.

42. Duncan Williamson who is a mate of mine who lives at Mt. Stanley was trying to co-ordinate from that end, but because of the communication problems this wasn't easy. Not only were we reliant on one mobile phone that worked in Linville, but communication in Mt. Stanley was to the point where the service would drop in and out at random. We would have to ring and leave a message and then when their phone came back into range, he would get the message and try to call us back.

43. At the same time I know that Duncan was able to communicate with another of his family members who lived further away by UHF radio.

44. Improved communications would have a significant impact on the community in general and also at times such as those experienced in January 2011.

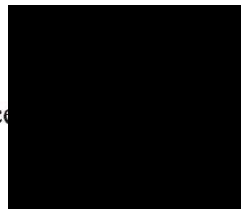
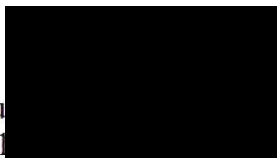
45. In summing up I would like to commend the actions of the local Policeman Andrew Fitzpatrick for his outstanding effort. Throughout the time of the flood he left us to manage things and although contributing to the evacuation centre he did not try to interfere. He visited us regularly at the centre but was also travelling between Moore, Blackbutt and Kilcoy, getting fuel and medical supplies for us as needed.

46. I would also commend the organisation of the Toogoolawah Rural Fire Brigade for the ration packs and also the fuel that they were able to supply to us. They really did a great job in their organisation and once we had established a contact, they made it really easy to get a response and deliver the supplies we needed.

47. This was in complete contrast to what was happening with the S.E.S. and the lack of communication we got from them.

48. The only other thing that I would mention was an issue with rubbish collection. Because Monday is our usual day for people in town to put their bins out they did so. However, because there was no collection the bins remained full and created a further problem for us to deal with. After a few days we decided that something had to be done so through Michael's family we arranged for a hole to be dug out of town and the rotting garbage to be collected and dumped at that location. This avoided any issues with vermin or disease and because a lot of what had been put out was rotten meat.

49. Although I am unsure about wanting to be involved in something like this again in the future, I would like to see a process put in place for the Linville Hall to be used as a proper evacuation centre. This would involve setting-up it up with its own generator and perhaps communication equipment, so that should something similar occur again in the future the centre would be ready to go.





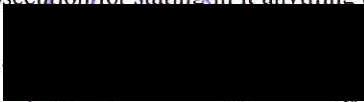
**John Leslie DOHLE.**

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011.

**Justices Act 1886**

I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

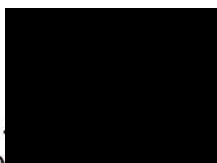
- (1) This written statement by me dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 12 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

..........Signature

Signed at .....Linville.....this.....3<sup>rd</sup>.....day of.....May.....2011....

Witness Signature

Page Number 12 of 12



Signature of of

