

Name of Witness	Gerard John KEOGH
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]
Address and contact details	[REDACTED]
Occupation	Company Director (GSK Group)
Officer taking statement	Stephen Platz
Date taken	03/03/2011

[REDACTED]

Gerard John Keogh states;

1. I am a [REDACTED] year old married male presently residing at [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with my family. I am the owner and company director of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] which is an excavation business. I have no formal disaster response experience however I have been involved in a number disaster incidents in Europe where I assisted.

2. I remember Monday the 10th day of January 2011 I was at my home at Burpengary. It was raining heavily at this time and had been over the past week or so. Some time in the morning I received a text message from an unknown source (*I believe this was a government sent text message*) indicating of the possibility of a flood in my area. I live fairly close to a water course so the text message was relevant and I took heed of this notice. I subsequently moved all my children to the upper level of my house. I did not make any further preparation at this stage.

3. At about 12.00pm there was no sign of any significant flooding on my property (*there was no serious flooding on my property after the rain event*). I was watching television at this stage and noticed a report on the ABC which outlined that there was significant flooding in the Lockyer valley region which had resulted in fatalities. After speaking to my wife I decided to head to this area to assist any way I could.

4. Whilst on route in my vehicle I stopped at a Quarry near the Pine Rivers Bridge where I saw that a man was stranded on a building surrounded by flood waters. I

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[REDACTED]

Signature of officer

[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

noticed that Police and SES personnel were in attendance however they could not access the man as they had no equipment to rescue him. The police were unable to access a helicopter, as they did not have one, and the SES only had a small canoe which was much too small for the turbulent water conditions. I thought this was ridiculous that emergency services did not have the resources to rescue this man at this time. I left some time afterwards as they were emergency services in attendance. I have since found out that this man was recovered safely.

- 5. I continued driving towards the Lockyer Valley. Sometime in the early afternoon I arrived at Murphy's Creek. Upon arrival I observed that the area had been subject to significant flooding and I saw that houses, buildings, bridges and roads had been severely damaged or destroyed. I spoke to a number of residents and I received information that people had been swept away and possibly killed. I then made an assessment of the area and drove back to my home at Burpengary.

- 6. I returned to my property and I arranged for five of my 15 to 50 tonne excavators to be transported to Murphy's creek to help with the recovery of missing persons and the rehabilitation of the area. I contacted other companies, friends and family to assist with me with the transport and operation of machinery for this purpose.

- 7. On the morning of Tuesday 11th day of January 2011 I returned to Murphy's creek and set up my equipment. At one stage saw that the police were on their hands and knees sifting through debris trying to find a missing girl. I then liaised with Superintendent Morrow from the Police and offered my assistance. It was a very precarious situation utilising excavators in the flood affected areas but due to the circumstances and the possibility of finding people alive, it had to be done. Under police guidance, I started clearing the creek of debris in order to locate some of the missing people and to allow the creek to flow again. During this search, the niece of Wes Schefe was located, deceased. I continued assisting the police in the

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Signature of officer

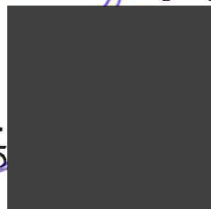


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search of Murphy's creek and its surrounds for missing people, using my machinery.

- 8. During the flood event resident's driveways, bridges and roads had either been damaged or destroyed. As a result of this, some residents were isolated in their properties or could not get access. Once I had finished assisting the police in the search for missing people I then started re-building the township by fixing bridges, roads, causeways and driveways. I have continued the re-building of the township to this date.
- 9. The communications in Murphy's creek at this time was extremely poor. There was no landline access as the phone lines had been destroyed and mobile phone coverage is virtually non-existent. I was furious at this and I made a number of inquiries through the federal member, Scott Buchholz, to have an emergency Telstra tower installed to assist with communications. Scott Buchholz was a great help. I required fuel for my equipment and he arranged for about 20,000 litres of fuel to fuel our vehicles.
- 10. I do not think that Murphy's creek was properly prepared for such an event. I believe that if you look at the geology of the area that an event like this has happened before, although this might be prior to people settling in the area. I think that the creek should be cleared of debris regularly to allow water to flow in the event of a similar flood. There was no designated evacuation point for the community and the Murphy's creek pub was converted into the evacuation centre. I don't think any evacuation plans or strategies had been employed for such an event.
- 11. With regards to the emergency services response, I think they did the best they could under the circumstances. The police had no resources to recover deceased people and relied on people like myself to excavate debris. Again, the

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communications was poor and the police could not properly communicate in the Murphy's creek area. The police were on the scene quickly and I overall they did a good job. I spent a lot of time assisting Superintendent Morrow who coordinated the search for missing people as a result of the flood. He did an excellent job under trying conditions and with limited resources.

12. The local government response was poor. I had arguments with the local council concerning their assistance. They did not believe that it was their responsibility to help the police in this task and this is why my machinery was utilised. The council did not provide assistance to Sue HAUGHEY of the Murphy's creek pub which was the make shift evacuation centre. To this date I have received limited financial re-imburement from the council or other agency for the search/recovery of people and the rebuilding of roads. I volunteered my equipment and time however it has been a massive financial burden on my family and business.
13. I also noticed that there were no trained personnel in Disaster management. We had multitudes of displaced people unable to go to their homes and everyone was going to the pub. There was no power, water and communications at the pub. It was a chaotic situation. There were no officials to manage people and arrange for general necessities for life. In the end the local community had to provide all of this.
14. The recovery process for this area had also been poor. The council did not repair any of the roads and facilities or provide financial assistance to the people to do so. I think that the Lockyer council, in particular, had forgotten Murphy's creek and only recently provided assistance to the local area.
15. I think overall the main issues that affected the Murphy's creek area were lack of proper maintenance of creeks and water courses (*clearing of debris*), lack of

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400 George Street Brisbane
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communication, lack of disaster management by the local authority and lack of resources for the emergency services.

G.KEOGH

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 3/3/11..... and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 5 of 5... 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 Brisbane.....this 25.....day of March.....2011.....

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