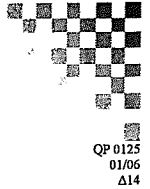




QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: _____ Date: 20/01/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith

Date of birth: [redacted] Age: [redacted] Occupation: Pensioner.

Police officer taking statement

Name: ARMITT, Thomas Andrew

Rank: Detective Sergeant Reg. no.: 10407

Region/Command/Division: Southern Region Station: Task Force Galaxy.

Statement:

Bronwyn Faith DARLINGTON states that

1. I am a [redacted] year old woman who resides at [redacted] I live there with my husband Michael DARLINGTON snr, my daughter Karina DARLINGTON who was living there to look after me as I have been ill and her two sons, Trai who is [redacted] and Michael who is [redacted]. My son Brendan runs a bob cat, tip truck hire and water cartage business from our home. My home phone number is [redacted] and mobile is [redacted] I am currently living at [redacted]
2. I have been a resident of Grantham since 1996.
3. Sometime after we first bought our land a flooding event occurred where we were woken by people at 9:00pm at night that the Sandy creek was flooding due to rain. We had no warning other than the local people being aware of what was going on and Monica DITCHMAN then going around and warning people.
4. Since then there has been installation of the alerts in the river heights.
5. In the lead up to Monday the 10th of January 2011 there had been wet weather in and around Grantham as it was raining for a period of weeks on and off since I had left hospital in August 2010. We would have rain for a period of time and then a small dry time and it was raining

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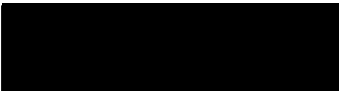
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Commissioner for Declarations's signature)


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(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)


CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

again. I remember logging onto my facebook account and complaining about the ordinary weather we were having and wanting my summer time.

6. I am aware of three prior flooding events prior to the Monday the 10th of January 2011. The first was on the 27th of December 2010, Thursday the 6th of January 2011 and the night of Sunday the 9th of January 2011.
7. I would describe myself as an avid watcher of the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website in particular the river height alerts for the two Helidon alerts, the Sandy Creek alert and the Gatton and tent Hill alerts. I examine both the river height plots and the graphs for the readings. I also looked at the weather radar. I have been doing this for a couple of years since I became aware of the alerts with the website. I pay particular interest especially when it is raining.
8. I have had discussions with members of the community and spoke to friends including Monica DITCHMAN about the alerts and they had the thought that they were under the impression that we would be warned by sirens about the flooding.
9. About two years ago I made inquiries with Colin O'CONNOR who was the CEO of the council at a morning tea at a council meeting asking him how the river alerts worked and he referred me to the website. I was already aware of the website.
10. Sometime following the flooding of the 27th of December 2010 I had made an inquiry with Peter FRIEND who is the councillor for the local council asking him how the river height alerts worked. I told him that people in the town were under the impression that an alarm would go off. Peter told me that it was not true and that someone in the disaster centre in Gatton was supposed to watch the river heights and when the river got up they would then come out and door knock us and tell us to get out. Which we both agreed appeared to be a stupid idea as by the time the person came out they would just get flooded in town with the rest of us.
11. I also rang Steve JONES who is the local mayor for the area about the alerts on the Sunday the 9th of January 2011 and I also spoke to him about the people on the railway locking the gates to the railway.



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Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

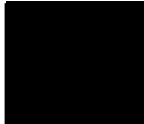

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

12. The situation with the railway yard at the station is that it high ground and is traditionally used for people to put their vehicles up there in the yard when any flooding occurs. We had previously made arrangements for about three or four other people in town including myself could open the gates in the event that the railway yard needed to be opened on occasions that it flooded.
13. I am aware that the rail yard was open on the 27th then it was locked and people were not able to get their vehicles out. The lock that we had keys to was taken out of the loop and we were not able to unlock them.
14. The next flooding event on the Thursday the 6th of January 2011 the rail yard was locked and we went up there with bolt cutters to open the gates because the gates were locked but a person from Queensland rail showed up and said he had keys and not to cut the gate.
15. So when I spoke to Steve JONES I spoke to him about the river alerts and the railway line being locked and I then spoke the Council CEO Ian FLINT who I asked to send a letter to the Queensland rail asking them to not lock the gates.
16. I had even been on WIN news sometime that week being interviewed by a male reporter who was doing a story on the Grantham flooding that day and I spoke about the Sandy creek alert not working.
17. On the Sunday night the 9th of January 2011 my husband had to rescue a couple of firey's on the old Warrego highway directly opposite our place as they had come into town just on or after dark trying to deliver sand bags after the creeks had broken their banks and after stopping to talk at the service station he was not able to move. It turned out that they had lost a spare tyre into their dual wheels not allowing them to move forward. They were stuck in water out on the road.
18. That night I rang Peter FRIEND asking him to ring the powers at be asking if they needed to be moved or rescued and he rang me back telling me that they had it covered.
19. An hour or so later the swift water rescue guys walked in to rescue them walking in against the current but they could not get there as the current was too strong so my husband offered to assist by getting his backhoe over and take them out on that which they did.

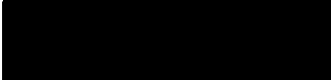

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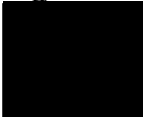

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

20. The two firey's, Viv and Peter told us had been trying to get out to us all that day to get sand bags to us but had been told by the control centre in Kedron that they had been told they were not to and then someone else told us they could come but by then it was too late as the creek had already come up.
21. The firey's sent two trucks out that night and I heard the loud speaker but could not understand them and I rang Marty WHARBURTON from the Servo asking him if they were telling us something we should know and he told me that they were asking if he needed sandbags and I laughed and said it was a bit late for that as it was already in his shop.
22. On the Monday morning the fireies left.
23. Sometime in the morning of the Monday the 10th of January I think after 10:00am my daughter Karina came in with a man from one of the TV stations who was looking for a story and some footage from the flooding from over night and my husband Mick had some on his phone. So they went out to try and get the footage off Mick's phone and were doing that for quite a while.
24. When the reporter first came into the house he told us that he had been out to Wivenhoe dam and when he went out there the water had been a meter under a certain bridge and when he came back it was a meter over the bridge and then he came out to Grantham.
25. Mick told me that the guys had shown him the BOM website on his mobile phone and Mick told me he saw it and told me it was all red over Toowoomba.
26. During the day the creek went down and I rang Stanbroke the meatworks to ask them if they needed my grandson Michael to work there and they told me that they did and I recall my son Brendan took him over to work. This would have been around 10:00am.
27. I recall Brendan came back and told me he was going to Junction view and he came back later saying he could not get there as the roads were all washed out.
28. When Brendan came home he and Mick worked on the trucks for a while and I was watching the BOM website at the river alerts and saw all the creeks were coming up gradually during the day.


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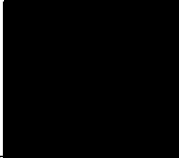

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

29. My husband Mick got annoyed by us constantly looking at the website earlier on Because my Grandson Trai was constantly coming out and reporting the river heights coming up and it was happening every ten or so minutes and it became annoying for Mick.
30. At about 3:00pm Trai came out and told me that the alert for Helidon was reading 12 meters. The last time I read it was around the 6 meter mark and the creeks weren't over and I told him that he was reading the alert wrong.
31. I then got the laptop that I was using and looked at the Helidon alerts and they said the water height was a big spike to 12.95meters. I checked the Sandy creek one and it was normal, still rising but not fast.
32. I then rang the council and spoke to a female and asked her about the alert and asked her if was broken and she said it was nothing to do with them, it was the Bureau of Meteorology. So I then rang Peter FRIEND.
33. When I rang Peter I thought he said that a dam had burst behind Withcott, but I miss heard and I now think he said it was like a dam had burst behind Withcott and it was coming our way.
34. I got off the phone relayed the information to everybody and then said to Brendan that he had to go and get Michael from work and my husband Mick went and started the truck.
35. My grandson Trai went down to the shop to tell them what was going on and I rang my neighbours Wayne and Ann-marie GEAVES and told them that a dam had burst behind Withcott and told them to get out because it was huge and it was 12 meters.
36. Brendan rang me and told me that he had got as far as the bridge on Flagstone creek road and it was already over and rang and said to us that we were in big trouble. He told us to get the trucks out if we could and to get out.
37. I then went downstairs and started throwing things on the veranda. Our house is a two story house so they were up higher.


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

38. Brendan rang again and said he was headed to Helidon and told us there was a lot of water coming.

39. My husband Mick moved the two trucks up to the railway yard which was open and by the time he was coming back I saw that the water was over his waste in the back driveway the water was rushing loud and fast.

40. I saw Mick go into the compound which was out of the water and he got Trai to help him do something then Trai came up to the house.

41. Mick was left alone in the compound and myself Trai and Karina were up near the house but still on the high piece of land near the house, all of a sudden the water rushed up on the high piece of land and washed everything away and up to the third step of the house and rising and Karina called me up into the house.

42. I then rang Mick on his mobile number [REDACTED] and asked if I should tie our boat up to the house and he said I should I grabbed a bit of rope off the veranda and tied the boat by the stern to a post off the veranda but it only held for a few minutes until the pressure of the water ripped the support to the veranda out so Trai cut the boat loose.

43. We had a 40 foot long pantek trailer in the yard and it started floating and I thought it held up against the fence as it turned but the pressure was too high and it went over the fence and turned as it was facing towards the skateboard bowl and then rolled over.

44. At this point in time myself, Karina and Trai were in the house and Mick was in the shed.

45. I then heard another loud noise and we have an aerial post that was being pushed over and dragging the TV so I had to unhook that.

46. The water was still rising, it sounded like it was roaring very very loud and you could not hear each other talk and had to yell really loud to hear and the current was very very strong and it got up over the back veranda and we heard a big bang as it burst the double French doors open and raced through the house on our second story house up to my thighs and the water was very strong current through the house and I had to hold on to the table. Trai and Karina were in the back bedroom and at some stage I saw Mick on the roof next door.

[REDACTED]
(Witness's signature)

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Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

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(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

47. The water would come in surges through the house, it would roar through but then stop and you would think it was over but then it surged strongly again.

48. The water surged through our house at that height for a long time.

49. I remember seeing a shed float past the back of our house from the west and headed to the north and I knew the shed but could not place it I did not see where it went.

50. I then saw part of the front of the pub float away and I saw Lance and two others on the roof of the pub which is two blocks up.

51. I saw the house which is Jim HAUSER's place next door to the pub loose its rear covered area which floated away.

52. I could hear Trai and Katrina screaming and upset and I was calling out to him that he was right and that he was safe in the house.


53. I remember seeing that the water inside our house was about a meter higher than the water going past next door and out in our compound as it was being lifted up and into our house with the massive current.

54. I was able to gauge the height of the water by looking at its height on the house next door seeing where it was against a window of the house. I watched as it rose to a broken window pane and then gradually come down lower.


55. Our table had jammed up on the archway of the house so I spent time clearing debris from, it so that that it would not dam up inside the house and I tried to pull debris from the back door but the current was too strong.

56. Eventually the water dropped about a foot and was lapping the floor boards.

57. Karina had received a phone call on her mobile which is 0401408064 from Bri SOMMERS who told her that Ross from the police at Helidon had said that there was another six meters of water supposed to be coming.



(Witness's signature)

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

58. Mick was able to kick through the side of the shed and he got out and got onto the roof of the lower shed and he was yelling out to Karina and Trai and he was able to get to our house by building a small bridge from material on the top of the shed to get to the house and inside the bathroom of the house.
59. Mick save a pallet box and we all came out onto the back veranda of the house and used the pallet to climb up on the flat roof area of the shed which ajoin the house and then climbed up to another part of the shed and climb along the roofing area and we tried to wave at helicopters that were going over but all we saw was camera men. I did see one helicopter rescue over near Armstrong road.
60. We yelled at the neighbours to tell them that we thought there was more water coming and we wanted them to come over to us. These people the GEAVES as I mentioned before.
61. We were able to get through an area that Mick had broken out and onto the mezzanine floor of our big shed. Prior to doing this Karina took some still photographs using a digital camera. I recall it was still daylight.
62. We made a rope bridge across the ground for the Geaves to hold onto by throwing a rope between the areas and allowing them to hold on and across to us. It was well and truly dark at this point in time.
63. We then went up on the Mezzanine floor and got a truck battery and lights to set up lights on the floor so we did not have to use torches.
64. As the water was going down I could see this red light appearing and got Mick to check what it was but he could not see anything.
65. We hung in there in the shed and tried to make ourselves comfortable and eventually heard machinery noises and lights outside and Mick went and talked to them and it was someone with a Front end loader and they wanted to take us out.
66. There was a police officer with the front end loader and also a big dog in the loader and Mick and copper argued about whether it was going to be one or two trips in the loader because Mick did not want me in with the dog.


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

67. Eventually we were taken out to the western side of Grantham where the police go to our details and we were then taken to a council ute and were interviewed by people from the TV station.
68. We went to get in the council ute but got out because Brendan was there and he took us into Helidon. Brendan had been coming back and forth all night trying to get through to us and each time he had been transporting people out to Helidon.
69. We arrived in Helidon and registered with the Catholic minister and told them we would not be staying there and told them we would be staying at 5 Airforce road, Helidon which is where Brendan lives.
70. My daughter rang as many people as we could to let them know we were ok when we arrived in Helidon.
71. In the aftermath of the event we were requested by the Queensland Urban Utilities who were in the Gatton shire council building to use our water truck that had been in Grantham to assist in supplying water for the Gatton township and the Helidon township but the police would not let us into Grantham at all even though some police at the command post in Gatton told us we could go in but the road block people would not let us in.
72. It was not until we spoke to an army officer attached to the General with Anna BLIGH and Julia GILLARD that the police allowed us in within minutes of us telling our story to them to allow us to get the water truck out.
73. We have been registered with a number of places including the minister, the police officer in Grantham when we came out, another police officer who was the officer at the Helidon RSL hall and then with red cross. Then the coroner's office rang Mick and told him he was listed as missing and Mick told them we weren't and it was comical as they were only six feet apart when the man rang him at the RSL hall. We also spoke to another police officer who thought we were missing, so obviously no-one was speaking to each other.
74. Also the 1300 number was useless as not one person I have spoken to who rang that number was able to tell me that they got any information.

(Witness's signature)

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(Signature of police officer
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **DARLINGTON, Bronwyn Faith**

75. On the night of the 18th of January my daughter found a disgusting facebook site about the Jordan boy who died in Toowoomba and I rang the Gatton police and Toowoomba police and were not able to get any body and eventually I had to walk over to the Helidon police station and handed a copy of the website to Senior Constable Ross at Helidon. I know within a day or two the website was down.

76. We have been told that the road blocks were supposed to be stopping people coming in but I have gone through twice and not been stopped from both ends and there is no stop on Lawler's road, so people can just come straight through there without being checked and we need to stop rubberneckers from going in there.

77. I am also upset that they have started moving all the stuff off the side of the road before the people in town could go through it and allow us to retrieve it before it gets thrown out which is against the promises police made for us to check that stuff before it gets thrown out.

78. I believe they did have time to warn us as the water came through Helidon but they didn't and there was time for us to get out.

Bronwyn DARLINGTON.

Justices Act Acknowledgement


Justices Act 1886

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

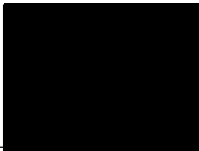
- (1) This written statement by me dated 20/01/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 11 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

.....Signature

Signed at Helidon this 20th day of January 2011.


(Witness's signature)

(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)


(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)