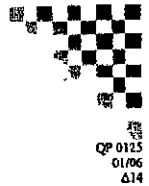




QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: _____

Statement no.: 1

Date: 10/03/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: GOLLSCHEWSKI, Stephan William

Date of birth: _____ Age: _____ Occupation: Police Officer

Police officer taking statement

Name: GOLLSCHEWSKI, Stephan William

Rank: Assistant Commissioner

Reg. no.: 4004386

Region/Command/Division: Southern Region

Station: _____

Statement:

Stephan William Gollschewski states:

I am the Assistant Commissioner, Southern Region, Queensland Police Service and have held that position since 13 December 2010.

I have been a sworn member of the Queensland Police Service since 1 August 1980.

I have over 30 years policing experience involving general duties, criminal investigations (appointed as Detective in 1986), major and organised crime, corruption investigations, intelligence and senior management in areas including metropolitan Criminal Investigation Branches, the Criminal Justice Commission, the Joint Organised Crime Task Force, the (Carter) Inquiry into Police & Drugs, Ethical Standards Command as an investigator and State Coordinator, State Crime Operations Command as the Superintendent in charge of the State Intelligence Group for over four years, regional operations at Central Region as Chief Superintendent from 2008 until December 2010 and now Southern Region.

The Southern Police Region extends from Goodna, 20km west of the Brisbane GPO, south to the New South Wales Border, west to the South Australian Border and back

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up to Tambo and Taroom in the north. Southern Region borders two states and covers over 431,000 square kilometres. It has a population of approximately 430,000.

Southern Region is composed of six Police Districts: Charleville, Dalby, Ipswich, Roma, Toowoomba and Warwick, which include 77 Police Divisions. There are presently 1018 police personnel and 266 staff members employed by the Queensland Police Service in the Southern Police Region.


My offices are located in the Regional Headquarters at 52 Neil Street, Toowoomba.

My principal responsibilities include providing strategic leadership to and management, driving and implementing change agendas to ensure timely and appropriate responses to organisational requirements and developing an effective senior management team to direct and control resource allocation, policing operations and support activities within Southern Region.

With respect to disaster management situations, whilst my position is not formally recognised the relevant legislation, the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (DMA) I have overall responsibility for policing operations within Southern Region and the performance of police personnel attached to that Region.

I have not performed any formal role under the act such as District Disaster Coordinator (DDC) and have not been specifically trained in such roles, however I have attended a number of senior briefings including at the Senior Executive Conference and other information sessions within the QPS, as recently as October 2010 with respect to Queensland's disaster management arrangements. Additionally I have recent experience as the Chief Superintendent, Operations Coordinator, Central Region providing senior oversight and operational coordination of disaster management arrangements for Cyclone Hamish in 2009, Cyclone Ului in 2010 and the Shen Neng 1 response in 2010.

I completed the QPS Incident Command Course in 2004.


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Responsibility for disaster management arrangements in accordance with the roles and responsibilities prescribed in section 26 of the DMA rests with a DDC as appointed by the Commissioner of Police. The six District Officers in Southern Region are all appointed as DDCs under the DMA, each having responsibility under the Act for their appointed District Disaster areas. Each DDC heads a District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) that assists to deliver effective disaster management responses for the relevant district.

All DDMGs have Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMG) that fall within their area of responsibility. LDMGs are formed and maintained by local councils and supported by various organisations having a role to play in disaster management at a local level.

During the 2010/11 flood events, five of the six District Disaster areas within Southern Region were directly affected by flooding and subject to various disaster declarations. The remaining District Disaster area, Charleville, was activated in some LDMG areas but did not move into response at any stage.

I understand disaster management can be described as having three distinct phases, preparation – when capacity building, training and expertise is developed to ensure communities and the agencies having responsibility for disaster management develop the ability to effectively deal with disaster situations; response – when a disaster situation is occurring, the focus is on preserving life, property and services, and enabling effective recovery to follow; recovery – when the dangerous and / or damaging event has passed and the community and all contributing agencies work towards restoring services and repairing damage.

Having commenced in Southern Region on 13 December 2010 I am unable to comment with any authority on the Region's, and its Districts' preparations for the flood events of 2010/11. I was present for and in command as Assistant Commissioner for the entire response phase of those events. I did participate in Service level preparation and planning for the weather events that impacted on the State of Queensland and led to the flooding events. In doing so I did review the


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structures and resources in place in Southern region with respect to disaster management.

My role in the disaster management arrangements within Southern Region took place in two distinct phases. The first related to the period from 20 December 2010 up to and including 9 January 2011 when various flooding events occurred across the Region requiring a disaster response coordinated by the DDCs and once response was concluded moving into recovery.

In this phase my role was reasonably limited and primarily involved remaining informed on what was occurring across the Region to ensure the responses provided by the police and DDCs were appropriate and properly resourced, ensuring core business policing responses were maintained, briefing the QPS senior executive including the Commissioner and State Disaster Coordinator, Deputy Commissioner Ian Stewart on issues of concern from the Region, providing assistance to the Districts through arranging resources and assisting with requests for disaster declarations, ensuring issues of resupply for affected communities were properly addressed and coordinating visits by dignitaries.

The second phase commenced on the 10th of January 2011 when the extraordinary flooding events occurred in Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley and into the Brisbane Valley. In addition to the established disaster management arrangements the QPS provided a major agency response to the loss of life, property and ongoing threat to the safety and security of the community, I assumed overall responsibility for the policing operations in Southern Region.

The events as they unfolded are now provided in this statement in chronological order followed by specific responses to the dot points provided in the Commission's notice requiring this statement.

On 20 December 2010 I was briefed on localised flooding in Dalby District and the activation of the Dalby LDMG by the acting Dalby District Officer and DDC, Acting Inspector Simon Chase. At that stage the District was responding to the issues


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presented in an effective manner. Acting Inspector Chase was later relieved by Inspector Terry Kajewski as both District officer and DDC on 3 January 2011 these arrangements re-dating the floods due to Acting Inspector Chase having pre-booked leave. Knowing this was to occur I arranged for Inspector Kajewski to commence on Friday, 31 December 2011 to ensure complete handover of duties.

On Tuesday, 21 December 2010 the Queensland Police Service (QPS) senior executive including myself was advised via email by Chief Superintendent Alistair Dawson of Operations Support Command that a tropical low was developing in the Coral Sea, which on early predictions was expected to cross the coast between Gladstone and Bowen sometime between the 23rd and 27th December 2010. The low was predicted to bring heavy rain. Early estimations were up to 500mm between Gladstone and Bowen, up to 200mm North of Townsville, up to 200mm in the Central Highlands around Emerald with 100 – 200mm in the Brisbane area.

We were advised that on that day there was to be a teleconference with all coastal DDCs between Cairns and the Gold Coast, where a briefing would be supplied by the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM). It was advised that BOM would also be briefing the Premier and the Police & Emergency Services Minister that day.

A request from Deputy Commissioner Ian Stewart that morning video conferences with all Assistant Commissioners be conducted on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday that week was also communicated via the email.

The conferences were actually conducted via teleconference and continued daily, some days both morning and afternoon, until 18 January 2011 when they were suspended following the move into full recovery from the floods. The forum was reactivated on 31 January and continued until 7 February 2011 to address issues arising from Cyclone Yasi. This forum was instigated and maintained to ensure a coordinated whole of Service approach to responding to the disaster situations that unfolded across Queensland during the December 2010 to February 2011 period.


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The forum included briefings on issues facing other Regions and Districts across Queensland and briefings of material received from BOM and out of the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) and State Disaster Coordination Centre (SDCC). This informed strategic decision making respect to resources and preparedness of the QPS the deal with the disaster situations. Both the Chief Superintendent, Operations Coordinator, Southern Region and I participated in these forums.

On Wednesday, 22 December 2010 in anticipation of the need to deploy police to areas requiring assistance, both within Southern Region and across the State I requested Acting Chief Superintendent Andy Morrow to identify the resources that were available for such deployment from across all six Districts in Southern Region.

On that date the QPS senior executive disaster forum commenced its operations. As indicated there had already been some localised flooding in a number of areas in the Region especially across Dalby District. Significant rainfalls had already been experienced. It was identified on that date that while Dalby District would have resources that could be deployed they would most likely be required within that District.

At that stage it was planned that the SDCC would be activated and staffed around the clock as from 23 December 2010.

On the same day, 22 December, I convened a teleconferenced meeting of all Southern Region DDCs and Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow during which all were briefed on the known information with respect to weather forecasts and requested to provide ongoing daily reporting concerning the situation in each of their District Disaster areas.

The reporting was to be provided as a simple email advice from those Districts with minimal issues progressing to emailed copies of the formal 'Sitreps' that were produced by the Districts for the information of the SDCC when they were in disaster response. This was accompanied by direct 'exception reporting' by the


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DDCs to the Region with respect to any issues that required action by the Region, or involved an issue of significant media or political interest. As events proceeded such issues included the need for additional police resources, assistance to action disaster declarations, major evacuations and dignitary visits amongst others.

Over the next few days from 23 December and through Christmas and Boxing Days localised flooding continued to be an issue for Dalby District with the District providing daily reporting of the situation. The QPS senior executive forum continued to meet discussing the issues including those relating to Cyclone Tasha which had crossed the Queensland coast between Cairns and Innisfail on Christmas Day and the developing flood situation in central Queensland. At that time there had been no major impact on Southern Region.

By 27 December 2010 significant flooding was occurring in the Dalby District primarily at Dalby and Chinchilla with evacuations of residences in those towns having commenced. There were multiple road closures across the District including the Warrego Highway. The Dalby DDMG was activated that day.

On the same day I received advice from the Roma DDC, Inspector Mark Stiles, that there was multiple road closures in that District and that Roma was isolated. I also received advice that three rescues involving a total of 8 persons being stranded by floodwaters had been conducted near Taroom and the Arcardia Valley.

On that date the Ipswich District was providing updates but did not have any significant issues to report. There was some minor road closures and flash flooding. The Ipswich DDC at that time and throughout the flood events was Superintendent Garth Pitman.

Toowoomba District reported heavy rain had fallen all night and that there were road closures due to flooding across the District and damage to roads including the Toowoomba Range and the Warrego Highway. The Lockyer Valley LDMG was activated on that day. There had been rescues of persons from motor vehicles attempting to cross flooded areas at Allora, Pittsworth, Oakey and Clifton. The

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Toowoomba DCC at that time and throughout the flood events was Acting Superintendent Brett Schafferius.

On the morning of 27 December Warwick District reported little or no problems but by the evening on that date had reached major flooding levels in Warwick and its surrounds. The Warwick LDMG had been activated in the morning on that date. There was multiple road closures across the District and a number of helicopter rescues were made at Leyburn, Pratten and Talgai. The Leslie Dam was at 90% capacity and expected to overflow early the next day. Evacuations from residences involving approximately 260 persons had been undertaken. The Warwick DDC at that time was Acting Inspector Mark Ireland, who remained in that role until the return of the substantive District Officer, Inspector Greg Morrow on 4 January 2011 who then resumed the DDC role.

On 28 December the Dalby DDC requested additional police from Toowoomba to assist operations in Dalby. I discussed this with the Toowoomba District Officer, Acting Superintendent Brett Schafferius and Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow and advised I wanted that request met. As a result Toowoomba District provided 4 police officers to assist with policing in Dalby.

A district level disaster declaration for Dalby District under the DMA was formalised by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, Neil Roberts on the same date.

On the same day significant rain had been recorded in the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley areas. There was the evacuation of a person from Pampas on the Darling Downs with two persons rescued at Brightview and the report of a caravan washed away at Gatton in the Lockyer Valley.

The situation continued over a number of days with the Districts and areas within Districts moving into response to deal with rising floodwaters and then into recovery as the floodwaters subsided. This period was characterised by the provision of timely and reliable advice from BOM on rainfalls and expected flood levels which


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facilitated early planning and the ability to pre-position resources and where necessary evacuate people to safety prior to the flood peaks. Whilst there was considerable property and infrastructure damage, there was no loss of life caused by floodwaters.

Through my overview of the flood events I observed that the further an urban settlement was from the source of the floodwaters the more time that existed to plan and respond prior to the arrival of the flood. As an example the flooding that occurred in Warwick on 27 December 2011 happened quite quickly with minimal time to prepare and respond, whilst with respect to that which peaked at St George on around 9 January 2011 there was over five days notice given which permitted detailed planning and response measures. Warwick is very close to the headwaters of the Condamine River whilst St George sits on the Balonne River into which the Condamine River flows is many hundreds of kilometres downstream.

As previously indicated the disaster situation through this period and up until the 10th of January 2011 was largely managed under the established arrangements with the DDCs reporting through to the SDCC however including the Regional management in the reporting provided.

Matters that I did become directly involved in was ensuring appropriate media coverage on issues including the deteriorating state of and debris on roads including major highways in Southern Region which posed significant road safety risks and to attempt to eliminate risk taking behaviour by road users in crossing flooded areas and by persons swimming or taking watercraft into flooded waterways. In addition to the rescues of persons from vehicles an incident occurred in Ipswich District on 28 December 2010 when three male persons had entered the swollen Bremer River with the intent to float to Southbank in Brisbane and had been arrested by Police on Public Nuisance charges.

On 29 December 2010 the Roma DDC, Inspector Mark Stiles, sought advice from, Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow and I regarding a proposed disaster declaration to address a predicted flooding event at Nindigully as advised by BOM. The


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Nindigully Hotel, situated on the Moonie River, is the site of a Bachelor and Spinsters Ball held annually on New Year's Eve attended by up to 1,000 people. The hydrology advice from BOM was that the flood expected in the area, if it occurred, posed a significant threat to life and property. The issue was exacerbated by the reluctance of the organiser of the event to cancel same on the advice of the Police and based on the BOM forecasting. It was considered necessary that a disaster declaration be made to facilitate Police having the powers to prevent a potential tragedy.

I was provided with a detailed briefing by Inspector Stiles. I briefed the State Disaster Coordinator, Deputy Commissioner Stewart both verbally and in writing by email that day recommending the declaration was necessary to preserve life. The matter was considered by the QPS Solicitor, Kate Bradley and following advice that it was appropriate use of the DMA legislation to make a disaster declaration for the Nindigully area before the flooding occurred an application for the declaration was made. The declaration was authorised by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services on 31 December 2011. This facilitated police action to prevent the Ball proceeding with cooperation eventually obtained from the organiser.

On 29 December 2010 I also travelled to Dalby where I met with the Dalby DDC, Acting Inspector Chase and also the Commissioner of Police, Bob Atkinson, Deputy Premier Paul Lucas and Dalby Mayor Ray Brown. I had discussions with same on the flood response in that area and inspected the local arrangements for managing the disaster response and the evacuation centre at the Dalby Showgrounds. I saw that the response was being very well managed and that there was a very effective relationship between the DDC and LDMG, with Mayor Brown showing very good leadership on behalf of his community.

Later that day I transported the Deputy Premier and Commissioner to Warwick where we met with members of the Warwick LDMG including Mayor Ron Bellingham and also the Warwick DDC, Acting Inspector Mark Ireland and discussed the response and other issues that had arisen during the floods in Warwick


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earlier that week. Again I saw that the coordination in the LDMG and with the DDC appeared effective. I was advised the LDMG had conducted an exercise in recent times but before the floods which replicated the actual events that had transpired during the flood and had positioned the LDMG well to respond.

On 30 December 2010 the township of Condamine in Dalby District was completely evacuated utilising Australian Defence Force (ADF) air assets, Blackhawk helicopters, assisted by emergency services officers, due to the threat posed by rising floodwaters. This was the first of two occasions that town would be evacuated. I understand the decision to evacuate followed consideration of the issues by the Dalby LDMG and supported by the Dalby DDC. I was also informed that while it was a compulsory evacuation no person had to be forcibly removed. I contributed to the response in making decisions and giving instructions that were passed through the police structure that a policing presence was to be maintained in Condamine to ensure the security of the residences and other properties in the evacuated area was preserved, and that every possible effort was to be made to accommodate pets and animals owned by Condamine residents. This included taking care of those animals that had to be left behind. Resources for a policing response at Condamine were arranged through discussions with the Roma and Dalby District Officers and was subsequently supplemented by resources from external to the Region.

On Friday, 31 December I again travelled to Dalby and met with Commissioner Atkinson, Deputy Premier Lucas, Minister Roberts, Mayor Brown and Dalby DDC Inspector Kajewski. We attended the evacuation centre at the Dalby Showgrounds and met with representatives of the agencies operating the centre and evacuees, particularly those from Condamine.

I continued to oversee the police operations contributing to the disaster management response and move into recovery over the following week. Over the weekend of 1 and 2 January 2011 I became directly involved in reviewing and discussing responses with the Dalby DDC, Inspector Kajewski with respect to the Dalby water situation, which had become critical due the loss of operations at the Dalby water treatment plant and reduction of local reserves to critical levels. I provided briefings


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to the Commissioner and State Disaster Coordinator that I was satisfied all that could be done was being progressed well with water being trucked in, repairs to the plant to be expedited as soon as possible and alternate treatment options being sought.

On Monday, 3 January 2011 I again travelled to Dalby, on this occasion in company with Commissioner Atkinson, Minister Roberts and Senator Joe Ludwig. We again met with the Dalby DDC and Mayor Brown for discussions regarding Dalby, Chinchilla and Condamine as well as the water and evacuee situations. We visited the new evacuee centre at the Dalby Agricultural College and spoke to staff and evacuees. No significant issues were identified. The coordination and response appeared entirely appropriate given the circumstances.

As that week passed the Dalby District moved more strongly into recovery and resolved a number of problems including those associated with water and repatriating the Condamine evacuees.

At that time the other Districts in Southern Region had no major issues with the exception of Roma District. That District was preparing for major flooding of the Condamine / Balonne River system that was expected to impact on Surat, Dirranbandi and St George. There had been clear advice given from BOM on hydrology forecast that informed planning, preparations and operations in anticipation of the predicted flooding. These measures included the deployment of additional police resources to those communities, such resources being facilitated through the Police Operations Centre (POC) running out of Brisbane and commanded by an Assistant Commissioner. Assistant Commissioner Andy Henderson had established the POC and commanded it during the day. I was involved in discussions with the POC and its commanders over a number of resource issues but did not become involved in the formal request process undertaken by DDCs with the SDCC.

I also assisted with securing Water Police resources through consultation with other regions and the POC. The resources were requested by the Roma DDC in the form of a RHIB with two Water Police officers assisted by Boating and Fishery Officers to


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operate in flood waters in the Balonne River at Surat initially and move into the St George area prior to the following weekend to address safety issues in those areas and act on any regulatory offences committed. The DDC had received reports from SES flood boats that numerous vessels, some in poor condition and overloaded were being operated at speed in the river and through the associated floodwaters.

My role during that week with respect to disaster management was one of overseeing the operations within Roma District and ensuring the DDC, Inspector Stiles was properly supported personally and with resources. Consideration was not just given to police required for disaster response but also the levels required to ensure core policing was maintained.

This included some discussion with the State Disaster Coordinator, Deputy Commissioner Stewart over the pre-deployment of two ADF Sea King helicopters to Roma District to support response operations. This action was undertaken.

Ultimately the preparations undertaken for Surat, Dirranbandi and St George proved effective in dealing with the threat posed by the flooding. The peak was reached on the weekend of 8/9 January 2011.

Towards the end of the week leading into the weekend of 8 and 9 January 2011 it was raining consistently and heavily in the eastern parts of Southern Region including Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. A number of road closures including those impacting on major roads were occurring. At the same time Condamine in Dalby District had moved back into recovery with residents moving back into town. The temporary policing model was retained at that time.

On Sunday, 9 January 2011 the Lockyer Valley LDMG reactivated following heavy rainfalls. I am now aware that some evacuations in Grantham occurred on that date, however I was not advised of that until some time later. I have been informed the residents returned to their dwellings after a short time and before the events that unfolded the next day.


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At 9am on Monday, 10 January 2011 I participated in the QPS senior executive forum via teleconference. I recall a briefing was provided regarding a weather pattern that was moving towards the Region from the North Coast that was expected to have some heavy rain but dissipate over the day. My briefing was largely unremarkable with the exception that Dalby District was expecting renewed flooding in Myall Creek at Dalby similar to the previous level, and in Condamine but not at a level expected to threaten the town again. The District was preparing well to address those issues. The danger in St George had passed by that time.

Not long after the teleconference I had a conversation with Deputy Commissioner Ross Barnett who inquired whether I felt Southern Region required any additional police resources from other Regions and / or Commands. Mindful that many other parts of the State were still experiencing flooding or recovering from it, and that Southern Region appeared to have come through the worst period and was coping well I advised him that the Region was adequately resourced and managing well but that if the situation looked like deteriorating I would discuss it further with him.

During the day I had occasion to check the BOM radar site on a number of occasions and observed that it depicted a large rain event apparently moving towards the Toowoomba area. I distinctly recall the predominant colour of the rain depicted in the image as being yellow, representing moderate rainfall.

At about 1pm I left the regional office to go to Grand Central shopping centre in Margaret Street, Toowoomba to purchase some lunch and collect a mobile phone. It was raining steadily at the time. I had the vehicle radio on the ABC at the time and recall a thunderstorm warning being given for the area. It seemed unremarkable and very similar to storm warnings given regularly during summer months.

When I arrived at the Grand Central shopping centre I parked my vehicle on one of the upper levels. As I exited the vehicle I was approached by a woman who advised me that some 'kids' were playing in West Creek and that she was concerned they would get in trouble. I walked to the edge of the carpark and looking down saw three young persons in West Creek, one in the water and two manoeuvring along a


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fence line in the creek towards the nearby rail bridge. Whilst there was more water than usual in the creek it was still well within its course and not all that turbulent. Nonetheless I was concerned that with the continuing rain its level would rise. Being some considerable distance from the young persons I contacted Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow by phone to get a crew there as soon as possible to remove these persons from the creek before they got in trouble. I advised the concerned woman of my actions and she went into the shopping centre.

I went in and collected the mobile phone I had gone there for and when I returned somewhere between five and ten minutes later was shocked to see torrential rain was falling. I went to the same observation spot and was amazed to see the creek level had risen significantly. I saw two of the young persons further along the creek but now well clear of the water. I went to my vehicle and drove out of the carpark, by that time several inches of water was across Dent Street. I drove along Dent Street to the south and around the block back to the Margaret Street rail crossing where I spoke to two uniform police officers.

I ascertained they were responding to the job I had called in and indicated the direction in which I had last seen the young persons. I asked them to attempt to confirm their safety. The rain at that time was extraordinarily heavy. I then drove back towards Dent Street but did not enter it as I had planned due to the water on that street having become even deeper. I proceeded up Margaret Street for a distance before coming back down it and crossing West Creek which had continued to rise rapidly.

As I drove a section in the CBD I saw part of an awning collapse, apparently from the weight of rainwater. I was concerned about people being injured by such an occurrence. By that time all streets were awash with water and some were becoming impassable. It was apparent something extraordinary was occurring so I again called Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow, advised him of what I had seen and requested police be deployed to respond to what was happening. I determined that I needed to return to the regional office and get better situational awareness of the events and consider the Police Service response.


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I arrived back some time around 1.45pm and immediately took up with Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow to discuss the situation. He and other staff including Acting Superintendent Schafferius were on the regional office balcony over Neil Street discussing and observing with the huge volume of water flowing down along Neil Street towards the CBD. The rain was still extraordinarily heavy and I was very alarmed at the impact such an amount of water would have on the community. At that time I had no concept of how widespread the rainfall was. I informed them of the enormous amount of water in the CBD. It was apparent to me there would be significant flooding and associated problems however I did not conceive the actual extent to which that would eventuate.

I commented that our people could expect a demanding time and then suggested to Acting Superintendent Schafferius he would be making numerous calls, alluding to his role as Toowoomba DDC. He informed me that he had placed Acting Inspector Jim McDonald in the Toowoomba communications centre as things were ramping up rapidly. I applauded that decision.

Events unfolded rapidly from that time on with information coming from multiple sources. The main sources of information I relied upon were Acting Superintendent Schafferius and Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow, however information was being provided to one or more of the three of us simultaneously at times. I recall Acting Superintendent Schafferius advising that the multiple roads had been flooded and vehicles had been swept away in Toowoomba, possibly containing people. The Toowoomba communications centre was taking hundreds of 000 calls.

I concluded that a disaster event was unfolding and requested that focus be on securing situational awareness and ensuring the best possible response by police. I recall discussing with Acting Superintendent Schafferius that it was his role to ensure LDMG arrangements were happening as they should.

I was informed that all available police were being deployed and that situation reports were being provided as police attended scenes. I instructed that as many


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Regional Office sworn staff to be deployed operationally to assist with that process, and as they were senior officers to ensure command and control of Police resources in responding to the events.

I provided a number briefings to Deputy Commissioner Stewart's office that an extraordinary weather event had hit Toowoomba and that as it unfolded and we gained better situational awareness more briefings would follow. I advised the Director of Police Media, Kym Charlton, that the event was unfolding.

I recall that as time progressed more reports of flooding, persons and vehicles being caught in floodwaters and damage to structures in Toowoomba were made. I recall a report that a woman and a child had been swept away in a vehicle from the intersection at James and Kitchener Streets in Toowoomba, that a number of other persons had been saved and that police and emergency services were at the scene attempting to recover the missing persons. However it was feared they were deceased. In time this proved to be correct, the persons having been swept away being Donna Rice and her son Jordan Rice.

There were also reports of other scenes in Toowoomba where people were feared swept away and swift water rescues taking place. I was advised that police crews were being limited in their ability to access these scenes and move about the city due to the significant and violent nature of the flooding taking place. At some stage during this time I received reports that houses had been washed away at Murphy's Creek and Postman's Ridge. I did not have any knowledge of exactly where that was or how much water was involved.

I am not certain of the time but I also recall being told during that afternoon that the weather was preventing helicopters that had been requested from flying and coming to the assistance. I recall receiving a call from the Assistant Commissioner of the Queensland Fire & Rescue Service (QFRS) in Toowoomba who reaffirmed that helicopters were desperately needed for his agency's operations, that a large number of rescues were being performed and required. I spoke to Acting Superintendent Schafferius regarding this issue who confirmed all formal requests were being made.


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I was of the opinion that the Southern Region would need additional police assistance and that there may be difficulty for same in accessing Toowoomba and other parts of the Region due to flooding.

I had a telephone conversation with Deputy Commissioner Barnett to update him on the situation and advised that the Region would need assistance as soon as possible to be able to provide an effective response. I was unable to provide any exact estimation of the resources required and advised I would speak further to him as soon as I could. He undertook to commence mobilising resources to come to the region. At the same time contact with Brisbane was occurring at several levels including the POC and SDCC in an attempt to ensure appropriate understanding of the issues and support required.

At around 3.30pm I spoke with the Regional Crime Coordinator, Detective Inspector David Isherwood who had been to the scene at James and Kitchener Street and advised me that he believed the two persons swept away would have drowned. He advised the car was trapped submerged in East Creek several hundred metres from the intersection and that police and swift water rescue personnel were attempting to access it to determine if any person remained in it. Detective Inspector Isherwood advised that while it was still raining the creek levels were subsiding.

I was also advised that large numbers of vehicles had been washed into the creeks and that several were trapped against the Chalk Street Bridge near the CBD and it was not known if any persons were trapped in them.

I decided to attend the scenes at James and Kitchener Streets and the Chalk Street Bridge to obtain better situational awareness and review the responses being provided by emergency services personnel, especially police. I advised Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow to remain at regional office and continue to coordinate operational responses, including with the Toowoomba DDC Acting Superintendent Schafferius, and advise me of any significant issues. I remained active in receiving and providing briefings via phone during my absence from the office.


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **GOLLSCHEWSKI, Stephan William**

Detective Inspector Isherwood and I travelled to James and Kitchener Streets. En route, whilst listening to the police radio I heard talk about events occurring near Withcott with reports of vehicles and persons believed to have been swept off the Warrego Highway. I do not recall the exact conversation or who was involved but did call the office and request advice as soon as possible.

Upon arrival at the James and Kitchener Streets scene Detective Inspector Isherwood and I took up with Acting Inspectors Doug McDonald and Jason Hopgood who were in command along with other police and Queensland Fire & Rescue Service (QFRS) personnel who were present. All members were saturated and clearly affected by the incident but acting in a professional and effective manner. I was advised by one of the police present that one of the bodies of the missing had been located which I believe was Donna Rice. I was advised she was located some distance downstream past the Chalk Street Bridge after the water had started receding.

I briefly spoke to a number of members of the public who were present and was struck by the apparent disbelief or shock on their faces and in their comments.

I went to a bus shelter next to East Creek where I saw a white vehicle mostly submerged and trapped against something in the creek and was advised by QPS and QFRS personnel present that it was the car belonging to the missing people. They were attempting to confirm no person was inside it. Having gained an appreciation of the scene I held no hope for their survival. The conditions were very poor and the water still flowing rapidly despite having receded to some degree.

Whilst at that scene I received telephone advice from who I believe was Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow that severe flooding was occurring at Grantham and that other areas may be at risk. Whilst I was at the scenes I received and made a large number of calls in a continuing attempt to improve situational awareness and ensure appropriate response and resource deployment.


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: GOLLSCHIEWSKI, Stephan William

I again had a telephone conversation with Deputy Commissioner Barnett and provided an update on the situation, informing him of the unfolding events in the Lockyer Valley and that the region would need whatever assistance could be sent. He advised that police from various areas including SERT and PSRT in Operations Support Command were being deployed with urgency. I also discussed the need for an additional senior officer to assist in the Operations Coordination role which was likely to become overwhelming as the response went forward. The Deputy later advised that Superintendent Alan McCarthy would be deployed to Southern Region assist as I determined appropriate.

I took a number of photographs at that scene, and later near and at Chalk Street and subsequently forwarded one by sms message to Deputy Commissioner Barnett at 4.10pm and some later after returning to the regional office to he and Deputy Commissioner Stewart at around 4.44pm to provide them with better awareness of the situation.

We went to the scene at the Chalk Street Bridge stopping briefly in a nearby car park at the intersection of Chalk Drive and Hume Street to speak to a police officer there. I saw a significant number of cars piled over each other in that car park. We then travelled to the Chalk Street Bridge and saw a number of cars in the creek at the bridge with significant damage. I was informed by QPS and QFRS officers there the vehicles had been cleared and no persons located. The police indicated that Donna Rice's body had been located a little further downstream.

I was satisfied the response being provided on the ground by police in association with other emergency services was as effective and professional as could be expected in the circumstances so I decided to return to the regional office where I discussed a raft of issues with Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow including the coordination of resources, the events that continued to unfold including the weather and the projected operations. At this time I advised I wanted a Commissioned Officer to take charge of all major scenes, to act as Police Forward Commanders (PFC). Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow advised he was preparing an email briefing that would


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be able to describe events to date that could be forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner's office. We discussed the contents and I approved its dissemination.

At that time I was aware there was significant flooding at Murphy's Creek and that a man was reported to be clinging to a tree. I was aware that there was major problems accessing that area and with communications. Additionally the Range Road was closed due to flooding and the prospect of sending assistance was very problematic. I was advised a male person had been talking to Toowoomba Communications when he was trapped in his vehicle on a road somewhere in the Withcott / Grantham area when the call was terminated, and fears were held for his life. There was a huge amount of information being received indicating major problems emerging in the Lockyer Valley however it was also clear that the nature of the events was preventing any quick deployment of resources for rescues or other assistance.

Later on that afternoon I was advised that Detective Inspector Isherwood and other police had been able to travel down the range and access the Murphys Creek area where they were establishing a Police forward command presence. There is no police station in that area, Helidon being the closest. Communication was only via landline telephone. Arrangements were being made to establish a police radio repeater base to improve communications.

At that time access further down the Lockyer Valley to Helidon and beyond by vehicle was impossible due to flooding.

I was also advised that an officer, Constable Chloe Beattie, who had been travelling along the Warrego Highway near Withcott with a wide load escort when the flood came through and became stranded had been calling in information via the police radio, providing the only police presence and information source in that particular area.

I was also advised that the body of Jordan Rice had been located in the East Creek water course near Margaret Street in Toowoomba. There were reports of other persons having been swept away however it could not be established at that time


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whether they had been rescued, escaped the deluge or had perished. It would take some considerable time to confirm that Donna and Jordan Rice were the only lives lost in Toowoomba. This was due to the difficulty in identifying who reported sightings, the persons involved and who saved them, which in some instances was by members of the public.

I was briefed that Brisbane was doing everything it could to get additional resources into the area, including helicopters which were the most required asset given the harsh conditions and flooding. I continued to provide briefings to Deputy Commissioner Stewart on the developing situation. I requested my staff officer that any off duty, including on leave, Commissioned Officers from Toowoomba be contacted and requested to be available or come in to the office. I envisaged the need for a number of command and control structures within the police operations and to ensure their effectiveness wanted the most experienced and capable people involved.

Some time just before 5pm I received a briefing that there were a number of people stranded on the railway line at Grantham and that a rescue helicopter was attempting to evacuate those people to the Lockyer Valley high school. I recall that efforts were being made to secure additional rescue resources into that area. I was advised that Chief Superintendent Alistair Dawson from the SDCC had confirmed helicopters had been deployed but that the weather in the Toowoomba area was hindering air support.

At this time I considered I had gained a sufficient appreciation of the circumstances to provide detailed direction to the police response, formulate some planning and consider resources needs as well as deciding there was a compelling need to establish a senior management team and provide clear leadership. Accordingly I requested a meeting of the key managers involved in the police response which was held at 5.30pm in the regional office. After discussions with Acting Superintendent Schafferius and myself, Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow had commenced developing plans for resources required to respond effectively. I request he report on same at the meeting.


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The meeting proceeded as planned and was attended by Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow, Acting Superintendent Schafferius, Acting Inspectors Jim McDonald, Paul Hart, Douglas McDonald and Michael Newman. I chaired the meeting. The aim was to ensure effective coordination of QPS resources, collaboration with external agencies and to complement the disaster management actions being undertaken by the Toowoomba DDC with the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley LDMGs. I was very careful to ensure the DDC was included in the senior management team to ensure the policing response and the LDMG actions were not at odds.

It was clear to me even at that time that these events required a major agency response from the police and that the normal disaster management arrangements, that had worked effectively in the Region prior to this, were not appropriate. The situation required direct involvement of the regional management. However I was determined to ensure they were followed and supported by the additional measures and resources.

I addressed the senior management structure to be implemented to manage the crisis appointing Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow to have overall operational coordination of the incidents and that I would remain in overall command of all policing responses in the region. It was decided that the senior management team would meet regularly and as required to ensure overall effective policing responses. I tasked Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow to implement a structure that would be comprehensive in its scope, appropriately resourced and able to effectively respond to priority issues. I again requested that a commissioned officer take charge of each priority response area. It was also decided that a log be kept of the senior management meetings and decisions. That log was maintained from that point for all such meetings until 27 January 2011.

The log is available for production and contains details on many of the decisions, responses, deployments and tasks undertaken over that period.

It was also discussed and agreed at the meeting that a Major Incident Room (MIR) would be established to support the operational response to the flooding events and


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loss of life. The MIR was comprised of various cells and a leader for each cell was identified along with the commissioned officers who were assigned responsibility for the priority response areas in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow took command of the MIR and established a command cell whilst I retained strategic overview of the performance of his and all cells, and of the overall policing response. The overarching aim was to establish an effective management team to deliver the most effective operational response in what was extraordinarily demanding circumstances.

I determined that the MIR and the investigation that would follow into the events and associated deaths would need specialist support from State Crime Operations Command (SCOC) staff with expertise in major investigations, MIR functions and IMAC the QPS major incident case management system and also that assistance from the Missing Persons Unit may be required in due course. I contacted SCOC Assistant Commissioner Mike Condon, explained the situation and need and received his commitment of the necessary resources as soon as they could be deployed. Their arrival was delayed until Wednesday due to the closure of roads and restrictions to air travel caused by the weather. SCOC provided support remotely and Assistant Commissioner Condon was active in opening dialogue with the State Coroner to set parameters for the investigation that would later develop into Task Force Galaxy.

I had discussed the issue of media with the Director of Police Media and Deputy Commissioner Stewart and it had been decided that all media responses from the QPS would be management from Brisbane until media support officers could arrive in the Region. This was based on the critical need to ensure timely and accurate information was provided and in recognition of the intensive demand on all the Region's resources simply to provide an operational response.

Throughout the course of the evening, I continued to be briefed on developments and to brief the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners accordingly. This included information provided by a police officer resident in Grantham, Sergeant Rod Minns who was able to phone through direct observations of the tragic events unfolding in that town.


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At some stage I was advised that Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) resources under the command of Acting Superintendent Brad Wright and Public Safety Response Team (PSRT) resources under the command of Acting Superintendent Steve Dabinett had made it through to Grantham. I was surprised they had been able to get through in time but heartened by this news. I instructed that Acting Superintendent Wright was to assume the Police Forward Commander (PFC) role at Grantham. Those officers were able to access contribute significantly to rescue and security efforts. They provided the first reports of deceased persons in the town included a rural fire truck with three bodies in it. The PSRT and SERT officers worked in that area for a number of days until relieved and suffered significant deprivations and exposure to tragedy in performing their duties.

The ability of the Region to provide relief was prevented due to the flooding which also closed of road access from the east later in the evening of the 10th of January and the severe weather which prevented fixed winged aircraft and some helicopters flying in to Toowoomba until Wednesday, 12 January 2011. All helicopters that could fly were engaged in rescue work.

Assistant Commissioner Henderson was in command of the POC in Brisbane and spoke directly with Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow regarding resources required to support operations. The POC supported resourcing the policing agency response in Toowoomba and the Lockyer valley whilst formal requests for assets and other assistance, including for rescues were actioned through the SDCC by the Toowoomba DDC, Acting Superintendent Schafferius. There was some common ground but this was appropriately addressed through our senior management structure and regular discussions between Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow and Acting Superintendent Schafferius.

During the evening reports continued to be received on the events that had transpired in the Lockyer Valley. Our focus was to establish police and emergency services presence where needed, ensure the safety of the community as effectively as possible, secure areas affected by the disaster, establish effective communications,


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improve situational awareness, source the required resources and brief up to inform strategic decision making.

During the evening I was informed that the police operational response in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley had been named Operation Juliet Drew. I was also advised that the searches of the watercourses and vehicles in Toowoomba had been completed and no further deceased persons had been located. We were hopeful if not confident that no further persons had been lost in Toowoomba, in time this was proven to be correct.

I continually consulted with the members of the senior management team to discuss issues, make suggestions, guide planning and decision making, mentoring all in the roles they had to perform. Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow was tasked to ensure appropriate operational planning was being undertaken and was assiduous in undertaking same. By the early hours of 11 March, we had commissioned officers and staff in place at each of the disaster sites. The SERT and PSRT resources were situated on the eastern side of Grantham. They commenced access into Grantham as flood waters receded. JWM

The work of the senior management team continued well into the early hours of the next day until it was apparent no further operations or deployments could be considered until daylight. The MIR had been established under Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow's command to run continually and before leaving around 2.30am I met with staff in that area provided a briefing on what was required to be done until my return. Upon returning to the regional office at 5.00am on Tuesday, 11 January 2011 I again met with MIR staff and was briefed. I then briefed Deputy Commissioner Stewart in detail on the status of the situation as it what then known.

Upon arrival of Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow I discussed with him the planning for the day and we then met with the senior management team to ensure its implementation. During discussions it was agreed that Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow would generate twice daily 'Sitreps' to the SDCC and I to advise of developments under Operation Juliet Drew and with respect to the disasters in


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Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. These reports proved to be an essential part of the reporting and planning that assisted to make the operational response effective.

At the same time I decided then instructed that I would be the 'point of truth' for all releases of details relating to the deceased and missing persons. It was already obvious this was a highly emotional and contentious area of great interest politically and in the media. Deputy Commissioner Stewart and I agreed that only he and I would confirm these details and that I would brief him initially with advice then to the POC and more broadly within the Service if needed, with the Deputy briefing the Commissioner and Premier. Parameters were set up around what constituted a missing person and whether a death would be confirmed. This proved a sound strategy that limited unfounded conjecture about the number of deceased.

This methodology resulted in the Victim Liaison Unit (VLU) under Acting Inspector Paul Hart reporting its outcomes directly to me. The VLU was established as a distinct unit tasked with the responsibility for identifying the deceased and missing, locating missing persons still alive and maintaining liaison with families of the deceased and missing.

The VLU was staffed by Southern Region staff and supplemented with SCOC investigators and Missing Persons Unit staff. This unit proved highly effective with all deceased and missing identified and virtually all accounted for. Some 534 persons reported missing were located and verified as safe. Whilst 3 persons remain missing the work of the unit and subsequently of Task Force Galaxy will contribute greatly to progressing those matters to an effective conclusion. The VLU was a structure created specifically for Operation Juliet Drew and was one of the areas most under pressure yet performed exceptionally well.

Later in the morning but still early I was briefed by Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow on developing a flood threat at Forest Hill. He and Acting Superintendent Schafferius had been advised rising flood water was putting people at risk at Forest Hill which had become isolated. I recall that the situation was deteriorating rapidly and urgent arrangements had to be made for helicopter evacuation of persons in the


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community. The arrangements had to be changed quickly from sending in SES personnel to doorknock through various options to using ADF helicopters to rescue the people. There was considerable concern over the safety of the people in that town, and the bad weather that was a risk for aircraft.


Both Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow Acting Superintendent Schafferius become enmeshed in gaining proper situational awareness and adjusting planning and requests as the situation developed. Through effective attention to the problem they responded quickly and appropriately. All persons were evacuated safely with no loss of life endured.

The flooding that occurred in Forest Hill was not connected to the water that flowed through the Lockyer Valley being on a different watercourse and having risen as a result of rain overnight on the night just passed. As a result this issue developed rapidly. Notwithstanding an effective response was able to be delivered in a rapid and flexible manner.

During the morning I received advice that another life had been lost, this time in flash flooding at Minden. A four year old boy, Jesse Wickman was lost during a swift water rescue in that area. I was advised his mother was a member of the QPS in my Region, Katie Wickman. I was later advised Jesse's body had been recovered. I subsequently spoke to both Katie and her husband Brian.

I continually received reports on developments in the Lockyer Valley and was advised that Acting Superintendent Dabinett and the PSRT team had redeployed to the Murphys Creek area to assist operations there. The response into Grantham and support to that community was being undertaken by the SERT team and other regional staff. A number of deaths were being reported.

I was advised by Acting Superintendent Schafferius that another weather event may be possible that day similar to the previous day that could affect the Murphys Creek area. I was advised that would pose considerable risk to our resources and instructed all personnel were to withdraw to safety. Acting Superintendent Dabinett and


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Detective Inspector Isherwood remained in the area at a safe place with phone communications to report any issues. The event did not eventuate and the police later returned to resume operations which included searching for missing persons and establishing the extent of the disaster.


As the day progressed, just before lunch as I recall, I was advised of flooding at Oakey with persons sheltering on their roofs while waiting for rescue. I was briefed by Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow who had taken appropriate steps to address the issue.

11 January proved to be another extraordinarily dynamic and demanding day with multiple events unfolding and policing responses being required in many areas. The structures we had implemented proved effective but were adjusted and improved as new challenges arose.

For instance the MIR was expanded to include liaison officers from the QFRS, Queensland Ambulance Service and the ADF. As the role of the ADF became increasingly more expanded and critical an ADF Lieutenant Colonel was brought into the senior management team, as were a representative of the Queensland Police Union of Employees (to assist with staff welfare) and the MIR commander, Inspector Wayne Woods.

As the emergency response events subsided in the Lockyer Valley it was evident from the devastation and loss of life that a major police led multi-agency response would continue for some time. The primary focus was on the location of missing persons, security of the community and support to same, investigating the deaths and delivering the necessary resources to complete these tasks. I took particular care to ensure all staff were appropriately supported and instigated proactive psychological support for and screening of staff working in the trying conditions.

By Wednesday, 13 January 2011 Inspector Mark Kelly, assisted by Acting Inspector Anthony Neumann had assumed field command of what proved to be one of the largest police led joint civil authority / ADF operational responses in Australian


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history. This continued until 18 February 2011 when the Australian Federal Police (AFP) contingent that had undertaken community policing in the Lockyer Valley ceased that deployment. The operation continues in a scaled down form in the shape of an enhanced police model and further searching of the Lockyer Valley for the three persons who remain missing.

Whilst additional resources flowed into Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley from the 13th of January 2011, further disaster situations were developing in Southern Region in Ipswich, Warwick with floods threatening Goondiwindi, and in Dalby District with both Dalby and Condamine flooding for a second time, Condamine again being evacuated.

Ipswich was experiencing major flooding with another life lost at Karrabin and widespread property loss. Whilst Ipswich District was given additional resources, including under Operation Safeguard, that were coordinated out of the POC in Brisbane it was evident that Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow could not possibly coordinate operations in that District or any other given the level of demands arising from Operation Juliet Drew.

After consultation with the senior executive I appointed Superintendent McCarthy as Acting Chief Superintendent for Southern Region, with responsibility for operations coordination including disaster management overview in Districts other than Toowoomba, allowing Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow to focus solely on Toowoomba District. This model was later developed further.

I continually reviewed the effectiveness of the model and determined risk existed with respect to the management support and attention given to normal policing functions and Districts other than Toowoomba. I proposed a model that was approved by the Commissioner and implemented on 24 January 2011. The model involved parallel structures to deliver effective policing services across the Region and to effectively progress the search and recovery effort for a continuing period. The organisation chart for same appears later in this statement and is self explanatory but essentially duplicates regional Chief Superintendent and Superintendent,


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Toowoomba roles, one of each for normal policing and the same for disaster response and recovery. I remained in overall command of all functions. There are also some roles that do not normally exist in the regional structure such as Inspector Kelly's role. Overview of Task Force Galaxy fell to the disaster response and recovery role.


This model proved very effective and contributed significantly to the effective and timely operational response by police across the Region. It ensured that all Districts were effectively managed and supported in both normal operations and disaster response. No major issues were experienced during that time and police responses were appropriate. The model continued until the week of 12-18 February when Operation Juliet Drew transitioned to the scaled down long term phase.

During the period from 13 January 2011 to that week the police operations in the Lockyer Valley were focussed in three distinct but coordinated streams:

- The search for, location and identification of the missing and dead, Inspector Kelly's team & the VLU having lead;
- The investigation into the events and deaths that resulted, Task Force Galaxy having lead; and
- The recovery of the community, including the provision of an enhanced community policing model; the Toowoomba DDC, Acting Superintendent Schafferius having lead.

Additionally the normal policing functions were operating as usual across the District. The senior management team met daily at 7am and coordinated all operations to ensure effectiveness and progress. It was essential that the recovery process be allowed to progress as quickly as possible. I maintained overall command with Acting Chief Superintendent Morrow ensuring operational coordination.

During that period I was interacting with the community on a regular basis and undertaking frequent media interviews to promote and progress the operations and recovery. I identified during the first week that the communities of especially


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Grantham and also Murphy's Creek were traumatised, displaying negativity towards police and a lack of understanding of the reasons behind some decisions, such as excluding all entry into Grantham and concerns that property was being damaged unnecessarily when in fact care was taken to minimise damage as much as possible whilst effectively searching for missing people and rendering a inherently dangerous environment safer. This drove a decision to place commissioned officers as community liaison officers at both Grantham and the Helidon evacuation centre, also covering Murphy's Creek. Those officers, initially Inspector Ben Marcus and Inspector Mike Crowley then later Superintendent Maurice Poiner made a huge improvement to the attitude, and in my view recovery, of those communities.

Their work has been continued on by Inspectors Mike McKay and Rob Graham who are working with the Lockyer Valley Regional Council to progress the recovery efforts.

The events that occurred commencing the 10th of January 2011 were beyond my experience and I suspect that of any of my staff. It was the most complex and demanding time in my career. However I can say with conviction that I felt the senior management team in Southern Region, supported by the QPS senior executive and POC, was in complete control of its decision making, planning, responses and was forward thinking. There were some occasions when events were moving too quickly to maintain complete records and I have no doubt there are many things that happened that I do not recall or did not get briefed on. However all the critical issues and decisions were documented. In my view the decisions made have been validated as the correct ones by the outcomes.

This statement is not a complete account of all the events that occurred and actions that were undertaken, the time available to prepare it and the focus of the Commission's points preclude that.

My comments on the Commission's points now follow.



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The preparation and planning undertaken and/or authorised by the officer in his region in advance of and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 flood events.

I commenced in Southern Region on promotion on 13 December 2010. Accordingly I did not play any role in preparation or planning before the flood events. I did undertake such roles during the events as articulated previously in this statement.


The actions undertaken and/or authorised by the officer in respect of the 2010/2011 flood events in his region in relation to immediate management, response and recovery operations.

I had and continue to have overall responsibility for the police responses during the flood events and the support of recovery measures following the floods. My role as articulated in this statement is that of leadership and ensuring appropriate direction to and support of operational managers and DDCs in these operations. I have previously described the types of actions undertaken.

Measures taken and/or authorised by the officer to manage, maintain or reinstate the supply of essential services (water, power and communications) during the 2010/2011 flood events.

My direct involvement in this area was limited to reviewing and briefing on the water supply issues in Dalby, however as it was being handled adequately I was not required to take any action. I was aware of issues in other DDC areas but to my knowledge all were responded to appropriately. I did become aware of some issues of communication in the Lockyer Valley early in the response phase when the DDC was not made aware of water issues by the LDMG in a timely manner, however this was quickly resolved.

The resources sourced by the officer and or authorised by the officer to be accessed concerning weather forecasts and how that information was disseminated amongst relevant persons before, during and immediately after the 2010/2011 flood events.


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I was provided with daily briefings on weather and hydrology through the QPS senior executive forum. This was a summary of the same information provided to all DDCs through the daily SDCC briefings and accordingly was not required to be further disseminated, however on occasions was discussed directly by myself with the DDCs when assisting them with problems. For example the Nindigully, St George and Forest Hill issues.


There was no warning given with regard to the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley events. The only indications I received prior, which meant little to me at the time, were the BOM site radar and the ABC radio storm warning just before the rain began falling.

I am of the opinion that the issue of a forecast is relevant if the event is predictable, as was the rain and subsequent flooding in the west of the region. I am also of the view the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley events as they occurred were not predicted and were not predictable with the information and expertise available at the time. However I accept I am certainly no expert in hydrology or weather.

Measures taken and/or authorised by the officer to inform the community about the 2010/2011 flood events and the response thereto.

I was involved in numerous media interviews including live crosses to local ABC radio for a number of days with respect to these issues after the 10th & 11th of January events. Media releases by the QPS in the first two days was managed from Brisbane. I also provided comprehensive briefings that were utilised by the Government, Commissioner & Deputy Commissioner to inform the community through the media.

I attended the Grantham and Helidon communities and addressed their community meetings on a number of occasions over several weeks to advise of police operational responses and planning that affected their communities and take questions on any issues of concern they had.


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I approved the development of a joint QPS / Lockyer Valley Council brochure that was delivered in early February 2011 via Australia Post to all Lockyer Valley residents in areas impacted by the floods. It detailed information on action required if they located human or suspected human remains, animal carcasses, chemicals and unwanted flood debris.

The nature and timing of all communications between the officer and the District Disaster Coordinator and/or the District Disaster Management Group and the State Disaster Management Group and/or the State Disaster Management Coordination Committee and/or the State Disaster Coordinator relative to the 2010/2011 flood events.

I had innumerable communications with all DDCs in Southern Region during the flood events. Most of their reporting was contained within the daily emailed Sitreps that were also provided to the SDCC. The Toowoomba DDC was also part of the senior management team I established to respond to the Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley events. We spoke daily on multiple occasions and during briefings for over a month. My communications were to achieve strategic overview of their actions and provide advice and support to them in their roles as DDCs and District Officers, as well as to achieve situational awareness to inform senior level briefing and decision making.

I had no interaction with DDMGs other than some brief staff welfare focussed visits to Dalby, Warwick and Toowoomba DDMGs.

I sat in on SDMG teleconferences attended by the Toowoomba DDC on occasions I was available to obtain better awareness of issues but the reporting was provided by the DDC.

I had ongoing, repeated communications with the State Disaster Coordinator throughout the entire flood events and especially at times when significant events were occurring. Contact was typically one on one via telephone but also via the


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medium of the QPS senior executive forum teleconferences. I provided detailed briefings on events and issues that arose and sought advice on various issues including for example disaster declarations, release of information and resources.

The availability and provision of services or logistical support within the disaster management hierarchy before and during the 2010/2011 flood events, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.

I can provide an overall comment on this, however I was not directly involved in the processes that arranged or received services and logistical support from disaster management hierarchy. That process was arranged through the LDMG / DDC arrangements in association with SDCC and from my perspective appeared to function smoothly. I was not aware at any time of any particular issues relating to a problem in obtaining services and resources.

With respect to the events of 10th & 11th of January that system was augmented and complemented by the operations of the POC in Brisbane and the MIR in Toowoomba and in my view operated in an efficient and effective manner. I cannot recall any occasion where services or resources that were needed were not provided. If anything at times additional resources were made available without a request having been made. I believe the response was resourced exceptionally well.

Overall the provision of services and logistical support within the disaster management hierarchy during the crises were excellent.

Any involvement with Commonwealth agencies, including but not limited to Emergency Management Australia or the Australian Defence Force, in relation to the provision of emergency response measures, personnel, equipment or services, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof during the 2010/2011 flood events.



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During the course of the flood events, the ADF and AFP were the only two Commonwealth agencies I had any direct dealings with. The ADF were involved in the evacuation of Condamine, operations in the Roma District and had a major role in Operation Juliet Drew in the Lockyer Valley. The role in that operation was varied, and included air transport & reconnaissance / surveys, searching, community recovery, specialist skills and equipment, command & control among others.

The resources and skills the ADF brought to the operation were extensive and beyond the capacity of any single or combination of State agencies to provide. I can recall being briefed that 12 platoons of soldiers had been involved in searching, 40 Bushmaster vehicles deployed and early in the search phase 15 ADF aircraft including Blackhawks, Sea Kings, Light Operations Helicopters and a Chinook operating out of Grantham. There were also much other equipment and specialised resources deployed by the ADF. The ADF were operating in the area very quickly after the events with their aerial assets being utilised for evacuations on 11 January 2011.

There was a collaborative command approach adopted at the PFC in Grantham with an excellent relationship between the Police commander Inspector Mark Kelly and his team with the ADF commanders and their teams. This resulted in highly efficient and effective use of the ADF resources to meet the needs of the police led operation. The ADF assistance resulted in the operation being much shorter and more complete than it otherwise would have been and resulted in deceased persons being located who may not otherwise have been.

The AFP were also heavily committed in Operation Juliet Drew providing significant resources during the response (search) phase through their Operational Response Group including specialist resources such as divers and also through their International Deployment Group supporting the temporary 24 hour community policing model implemented for the affected area and based in Grantham until 18 February 2011 under the command of Superintendent Peter Khunke. The AFP responses were timely, professional, well resourced and contributed significantly to the community's safety and security and the outcomes of the operation.



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Any involvement with State agencies, apart from the Queensland Police Service in relation to the provision of emergency response measures, personnel, equipment or services, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof during the 2010/2011 flood events.

I had limited direct involvement with other State agencies during the floods crisis which was limited to discussions with the Assistant Commissioners of QFRS and QAS in Toowoomba to ensure appropriate coordination between agencies including an invitation to place representatives in the Toowoomba MIR and to attend same themselves to inspect operations. I understand those invitations were accepted and occurred but was not present for same.

I was present when the QFRS Assistant Commissioner Tom Dawson attended a meeting of the senior management team at my offices during the week of 10-14 January 2011 and discussed collaboration between our agencies.

I had no interaction with any Emergency Management Queensland personnel until some time later when I met the regional director Mr Bob Bundy at a briefing with the Commission of Inquiry at Toowoomba.

I did make a point of talking to any members of other agencies I saw involved in activities on the ground when I visited areas where police were coordinating operations. This included SES, QFRS, QAS, Department of Communities, Transport and Main Roads staff among others. The purpose of that contact was to gain better understanding of the effectiveness of the overall response and provide support to staff involved.

From my perspective the interaction between the various agencies was good, and that all responded in as timely a manner as possible within their areas of expertise and responsibility. I do not recall any problems regarding equipment or services that were not resolved quickly.


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An assessment of the adequacy of equipment and communications systems in the region during the 2010/2011 flood events.

Overall the communication systems within Southern Region were adequate during the flood events. There are obviously some communications black spot areas in a Region as large as it is, and Murphy's Creek proved to be one of those. There was limited mobile phone coverage in that area and this hampered the coordination of the operational response in that area. Even the police radio communications were unreliable but were able to be enhanced with a mobile repeater base in the short term.


Additionally the forward command post at the Murphy's Creek State School allowed had a land line telephone the police were able to use to ensure effective communication.

There are issues with respect to sending out warnings to the community when danger looms as no one system of communication can adequately achieve the desired level of coverage. During the floods crisis I am aware of the use of many forms, including the media - radio, television, papers and the internet, mobile phone network – sms messages, door knocking, pamphlets, direct briefings and meetings by police with the community, and even loud hailer announcements from police vehicles (in the case of Murphy's Creek on 11 January 2011 when there were fears another weather system was approaching), to get information out to the community.

With respect to my own communication with senior executive, staff and other agencies I primarily used direct contact, email and mobile phone for communication. This proved satisfactory and reliable during the entire events.

An assessment of the adequacy of the community's response in the region during the 2010/2011 flood events.

Overall I consider the events in Toowoomba were dealt with well and in a timely fashion. There was no warning but the event was over quite quickly and limited to


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specific areas around West and East Creeks, allowing the response to be focussed and timely.

The community itself appeared to deal with the events well, although I am aware of many instances of people taking unnecessary risks in the flooding. This was also true in the Lockyer Valley, however I am of the view that the events were so extraordinary that people simply did not recognise the risk they placed themselves in. The water behaved in a way that was unprecedented and local knowledge did not assist to assess what was happening, consequently some people made poor choices.

The flooding, devastation and loss of life in the Lockyer Valley happened mostly in two geographical areas, Murphy's Creek and Grantham. I am aware the residents of Murphy's Creek area reacted in a timely manner and the community as a whole displayed remarkable resilience organising themselves and undertaking recovery, meetings and setting up a community centre.

The Grantham community was significantly more traumatised and impacted by the events due to the much more focussed area that was devastated and greater loss of life. The town area was cordoned off under police control until Tuesday, 18 January 2011, which caused great angst for many community members. This had been necessary to facilitate the search for and recovery of deceased people as well as making it a safe environment to allow people back into. The Grantham community has been provided with significant assistance by government and non-government agencies to assist the town to recover and in my view the community has been much more reliant on this assistance than either the Toowoomba or Murphy's Creek communities. I consider this entirely understandable given the events and devastation they endured.

I have not had the same level of visibility with respect to the other communities in the region such as Condamine and Dalby, but I have observed and been briefed on remarkable levels of resilience and commitment in all those communities.


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The circumstances of any human fatality within the region, including the measures taken to prevent and/or respond to any such fatality, during the 2010/2011 flood events.

The following are the list of fatalities directly related to the flooding events within Southern Region.

Deceased located and identified (21)

Toowoomba – (2) 1 female adult & 1 male child, swept away & drowned after attempting to cross a flooded intersection in a vehicle.

Murphys Creek – (2) 1 male adult & 1 female child, swept away by floodwaters & drowned.

Spring Bluff – (2) 1 male adult – 1 female adult, as above.

Postmans Ridge – (2) 1 male adult – 1 female adult, as above.

Grantham – (10) 2 adult males; 5 adult females; 1 Male child; 1 female child; and 1 infant female child, all swept away attempting to flee houses or drowned in houses.

Minden – (1) 1 male child swept away and drowned during a rescue.

Karrabin – (1) 1 male adult – found drowned in a vehicle.

Brymaroo – (1) 1 male adult as above.

Remain Missing presumed dead (3)

Warrego Highway, Helidon – 1 (1 male adult)

Grantham (1 female adult - 1 male adult)

The issue of measures taken to prevent and / or respond to these fatalities are all matters investigated under Task Force Galaxy. Any information I have knowledge of is anecdotal. However I am aware that all deceased persons located have been forensically processed and investigated in accordance with the directions of the State Coroner.

I can say that every available resource was deployed to respond to the large number of calls for assistance, and that the conditions were extremely difficult and limiting to operate in.


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I can say that as the events of 10 & 11 January 2011 unfolded, emergency services officers and members of the general public responded to calls for help in a number of locations, committing acts of considerable bravery in some instances in effecting numerous rescues. The exact number and details of all such rescues remains unknown to me.

The measures taken within the region to protect private and public property and/or preserve vital infrastructure in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events.

There were a number of issues relating to this which I have previously articulated. The QPS approach was to ensure dedicated policing of all flood affected and evacuated communities to the level required to ensure property security during the crisis. This was applied in many centres including Condamine, Dalby, Dirranbandi, St George as well as Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley and Ipswich. These measures were as much about addressing people's fears as ensuring physical security. There was much fear, driven in part by media reporting, about looting in all the flood affected communities.

Having secured property whilst in the active response phase, significant commitment was also made by police to continuing that provision of security in those areas at risk when the threat passed and recovery commenced. I have previously articulated the responses of note in Southern Region concerning the Lockyer Valley, Condamine, Ipswich and Dalby.

This issue was the subject of detailed discussion and planning at all levels in the Service.

Any special consideration that should be given within the region by reason of particular regional or geographic differences.


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Southern Region has particular geographical features that impacted on the capacity for warnings to be given, whether planning for response could be undertaken or if the response had to be immediate. I have explained the issues of the time given to respond depending on how close the flooded centre is to the water source. The longer the time, the better the planning and therefore the response.

I think it also important to note that both Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley have unique topography that contributed to how the events unfolded. Toowoomba is quite high above sea level and perhaps consideration may need to be made of how that impacted on why the rain fell so heavily and suddenly on 10 January 2011. Additionally it is of a shape that caused all water was channelled into West and East Creeks in enormous volumes in such a short time that it quickly became impossible to access different areas and resulted in the violent flooding that swept away people and vehicles.

Both the rain event itself and the flooding severely inhibited the ability of emergency services to respond effectively.

The Lockyer Creek flows through Murphys Creek area and Helidon before it reaches Grantham. It appears to me, given the huge amount of water involved, that the topography of that area contributed to channelling the water and causing it to gain enormous momentum to the effect that when it broke its banks at Helidon it was channelled directly towards Grantham. Given the water's volume and power and the fact other creeks, such as Flagstone Creek, contributed even more volume of water, the relative flatness of the land around Grantham, the Lockyer Creek watercourse no longer was relevant and the water travelled in a direct and devastating fashion through Grantham.

It is evident that the houses lost in the Murphy's Creek area were close to the watercourse, while some in Grantham were quite some distance from any watercourse indicating the difference in the water's behaviour in those two areas.


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Any feature of the disaster preparation and planning stages or the disaster response and recovery operations which, in the opinion of the officer, presented particular difficulty or may require practical or legislative change to improve future disaster management in the region.

During 2010/11 there have been a series of disaster events that had a huge impact on the community. The distinguishing feature of the events in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley was the significant loss of life. In my view that loss was avoided in other events including Cyclone Yasi because of the ability to give adequate warnings to the community. Whilst there was massive property loss, it is difficult to see how that could have been prevented given the severity of the weather events. However it is clear the ability to have given a timely warning to the community regarding the severity of the flood events that occurred in Toowoomba or in the Lockyer Valley may have saved many lives.

As I have previously articulated I believe that the ability to deliver a warning is based on the ability to predict or forecast events, and whether same is even predictable.

I have discussed this many times with a wide variety of people and concur with Superintendent Morrow that in order to predict the events in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley critical information would have to be available and provided to someone with the necessary expertise, experience and local knowledge including:

- The volume of water / rain involved
- The period of time it would fall
- Precise locations of falls
- The effects of topography and the state of watercourses
- How the water would behave
- The areas that would be at risk
- The time available to warn and the methods available

With respect to the other aspects of this point, it is difficult for me to comment on preparation or planning prior to the events. I have explained those issues as they applied during the events.


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I consider there may be some inconsistency and uncertainty over the transition from response to recovery and when Police hand back lead to the LDMGs to allow recovery to gain momentum. I do not consider legislation is required, that this is an issue that will vary from event to event and needs to be subject to the application of experience, common sense, consultation and ensuring the primary focus is addressing the interests of the community are given primacy.

In order to develop appropriate forward planning and evacuation strategies I consider flood mapping needs to occur in all areas to demonstrate the impacts on the community and illustrate infrastructure that will be adversely impacted at various levels. I also suggest consideration of better warning mechanisms at flooded roadways / intersection and perhaps along high risk watercourses. Clearly many people do not properly assess the risk and make poor choices. The usual flood level indicator on a stick is not readily seen and largely ignored. At high traffic volume places perhaps electronic flashing/sound warnings triggered at pre-set levels may be more effective.

In my view some LDMGs struggled with the enormity of the challenges presented. This is entirely understandable given the magnitude of events and the varying levels of experience and resources. I consider the development of a cadre of qualified experienced individuals that can be deployed on request, or directed after an objective assessment by the SDMG or other senior decision making body to work with local councils to establish effective recovery mechanisms should be pursued.

An explanation of the management team created within the officer's region that fell outside the auspices of the Disaster Management Act.

The management team created outside the DMA was implemented at my direction to ensure the needs of the community were effectively addressed, with respect to preserving safety and security, locating missing and deceased persons, providing effective policing services and working effectively with partner agencies and stakeholders. It was implemented to complement the DMA arrangements, not replace them. It was clear the powers under the DMA were required to give effect to the operations, and that the aspects of response and recovery remained valid.


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However the existing DDC and LDMG model would not have been able to manage the operations required.

Also important but parallel was the need to quickly and effectively search for the missing and investigate the circumstances of the deaths that occurred. Additionally the operation was an enormous logistical challenge that required resources and services that could not be sourced solely from the State of Queensland. The structures implemented, which have been previously described and are represented in organisational charts being made available, including later in this statement, proved effective in delivering this collaborative and coordinated approach.

The major difference was the establishment of the parallel command structures addressing both disaster management and normal policing under my overall command. A feature of this was that the DDC assumed responsibility for the recovery aspect whilst the response, in the form of searching and providing security, and investigation continued under other commanders. The DDC remained a key member of the senior management team that coordinated all these efforts.

Notwithstanding the lack of acknowledgement of any role under existing disaster management arrangements, the Assistant Commissioner and Chief Superintendent became critical to delivering an effective response.

The rationale behind that approach was to enable recovery to commence as soon as possible and be effective. I was mindful that urgency was required to move the communities back to normal as quickly as possible and that the process to achieve that had to be visible and timely. I understand given the magnitude of the tragedy achieving recovery will still take some time to achieve.

Any structural or organisational charts that illustrate the management team created within the officer's region that fell outside the auspices of the Disaster Management Act.



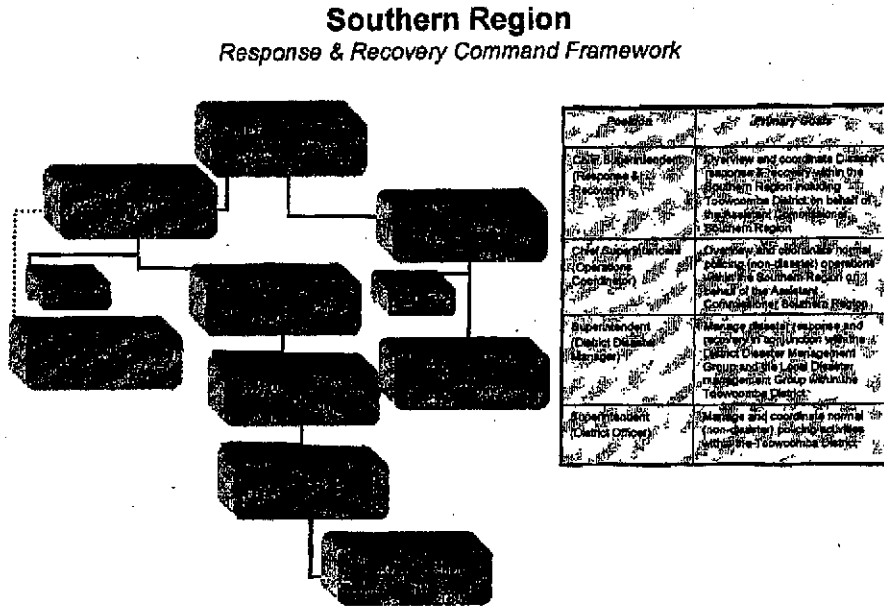
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The below chart illustrates the temporary model that was implemented within Southern region and is self explanatory.



An explanation of how and what aspects of the management structure was adopted by Queensland Police Service Disaster Management in relation to Cyclone Yasi.

I had discussions with Assistant Commissioner Katarina Carroll from Far Northern Region (based in Cairns) in the lead up to Cyclone Yasi concerning the use of the dual command model and the methodology of the VLU. Thankfully the VLU model was not required with no significant loss of life, however both Far Northern and Northern Regions adopted the dual command models with a Chief Superintendent over viewing disaster response and recovery, and another Chief Superintendent managing delivery of normal policing services.

This was subsequently acknowledged at senior executive level as an effective model that worked effectively in all applications.

The capacity of the Local Disaster Management Groups and Local Councils in Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley and Western Downs to fulfil their obligations

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pursuant to the Disaster Management Act and whether they did fulfil those obligations before, during and after the 2010/11 flood events.

In my opinion both the Toowoomba and Western Downs LDMGs and Councils performed admirably in this area. I consider the Western Downs LDMG and Council, under the leadership of Mayor Ray Brown to have performed exceptionally well and were consistently forward focussed during a prolonged period of adversity. Toowoomba was a different type of issue with the event happening unexpectedly and being over quickly, notwithstanding, from my perspective the LDMG and Council performed well.

I consider Lockyer Valley LDMG was overcome with the enormity of the tragedy which occurred in the Lockyer Valley. I believe this to be entirely understandable and that no Council is trained or resourced to deal with such an event or even experienced in same in this State. It took a little time for all to gain an accurate appreciation of the significant recovery activities required, which will continue for some time. Additionally the response phase endured for some time, making the transition to recovery unclear and difficult to give effect. The elected members of council and their employees in most instances have little expertise or training in disaster management, recovery operations or even major crisis management. This is to be expected given elected members have a variety of previous occupations, many with no involvement in such events.

Notwithstanding, the assistance given to the Lockyer Valley Council from a variety of sources and the commitment of both the council and its employees to deliver effective recovery led to rapid improvement in its response in that area.

I have no great detailed knowledge of the relevant legislation, however to my understanding the each LDMG had disaster management plans in place and met their other obligations under the Act.


S W Gollschewski
Assistant Commissioner
Queensland Police Service

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