

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Gregory Wayne EVANS
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	
<i>Occupation</i>	Farmer
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Senior Sergeant Mark Reid
<i>Date taken</i>	30 March 2011

Gregory Wayne EVANS states:

1. I am a married man, [REDACTED] years of age and I reside with my wife and family at our [REDACTED] property [REDACTED] Chinchilla. At my property I farm a combination of grain and cotton on 500 hectares of land.
2. I have lived in the Chinchilla area since 1992. I have been part of the Chinchilla Community and Commerce and Industry for 2 years. Prior to that I was part of the chamber of commerce for 12 months.
3. During the month of December 2010 we received constant rain that saturated our paddocks and the Chinchilla area. We received a first flood at our property on 27 December 2010 with 1 foot of water across the entire property. The town's flood height reached 7.25 metres at Charleys Creek and Rocky Creek. It receded over the next few days. The flood cut us off from town until about 5 days later.
4. During that first flood we did not suffer any property damage, but some of fertiliser got wet in the sheds. I would also estimate that we would have about a 20% loss of our cotton crop through ground saturation. We have no insurance for the loss of the crop.
5. After the first flood I drove my tractor to Chinchilla to assist other towns people suffering from the effects of the flood. I used the tractor to ferry people around the town so that they could lift produce up in the shops to avoid rising flood

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400 George Street Brisbane  
GPO Box 1738 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone 1300 309 634  
Facsimile +61 7 3405 9750  
[www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au](http://www.floodcommission.qld.gov.au)

water. I also used the tractor to tow vehicles that had been swamped, out of the water to higher ground.

6. We have a Local Area Council (LAC) in Chinchilla to look at handling natural disasters. The LAC is made up of the Police, Emergency Services (SES), the Hospital, Ambulance Service, and the Local Council members. The meetings were co-ordinated by a local Council member Ed HOFFMAN. These meetings commenced prior to the first flood on the 27 December 2010. Once the meetings began they were convened twice a day at 9.00am and 3.00pm. The meetings looked at the weather updates and Bureau of Meteorology to plan the response for the town. Each area was given jobs at each meeting.
7. I attended my first meeting on behalf of the CCCI and suggested the use of the SMS warning system to inform the town's residents of further flood information.
8. In the lead up to the second flood on 11/1/2011 I was contacted by the LAC regarding the use of the SMS Early Warning System. I advised the LAC to contact the Emergency Management Queensland about the matter as that was the advice I had received. The second flood was a much bigger dump and it came up quite quickly. It was also a higher flood with a creek height of 7.5 metres.

#### Warning

9. Some businesses were notified of the first flood prior to its peak on 27 December 2010. The police had door knocked the western side of the town letting them know of the upcoming flood. Many businesses disregarded this warning leading to the flooding of their businesses and the loss of stock.
10. There was definitely sufficient warning for the second flood as it continued to rain. Police agreed to doorknock the areas below the 7.5 – 8 metre mark.



11. Council were initially reluctant to use a full SMS notification of the town. With the second flood the Council used a full SMS warning to the town members to notify the whole town of the expected higher flood levels.
12. The SMS message system was used again after the second flood to alert town's people of the possible E-coli contamination of the water supply as the source water had been shown to contain the bacteria. Residents were warned to boil their water.

### Recommendations

13. To assist with future disaster prevention, I think that more automatic and manual river height gauges should be installed in creeks that effect Chinchilla. They would be Charleys Creek and Rocky Creek and some of their feeder creeks. Manual gauges need to read regularly. Most people in the area monitor the BOM website from home on the internet so the monitoring of the gauges needs to be done on a regular basis to support these people. This may mean an increase in the BOM funding to meet the required increase in gauges and monitoring.
14. The Local Council and LAC should look at the use of Facebook and Twitter in an official capacity as another means of providing the town with information to help with making informed decisions on the disaster. I think that after a LAC meeting a sanitised version of the meeting could be released to concerned persons on what was discussed and the outcomes of the meeting.
15. The Council should also look at updating the disaster management plan for the area with the things that we learned during the two floods, then notify the residents of the town of these changes.
16. Prior to the first flood most towns people knew of the local meetings by the LAC to co-ordinate responses to disasters in the area. The communication of the

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information was the problem. My earlier preconceptions of the Council were unfounded, as I saw when I had more access to meetings and the information from them. A lot of the communication problems the town faces could be fixed with a liaison officer to pass the information to the town residents either personally or on facebook.

17. I also think that the railway line that runs through town is obstructing water escaping during flooding. The train lines do not have enough culverts to allow the water to move through town. During Flood 1 Charleys Creek peaked first and was higher than Rocky Creek causing the water on the northern side of the railway lines to flow to the west. The difference was noticeable on both sides of the railway line. The water travelling in an East and Westerly direction on the Northern side trying to find a way to disperse. The complete opposite on the southern side was the case with flows back toward the creek.
18. During Flood 2 Rocky Creek peaked first causing the flood to travel South East trying to disperse. This situation could be relieved by placing more culverts through the train lines to allow the water to escape more quickly. The rocks under the lines continued to be washed out from under the lines in both floods highlighting the problem.
19. The recovery was well organised, but there was one thing that I felt needed to be identified. I had arranged for the cleanup teams to be reduced in size so as not to intimidate owners of the address. We were using teams of five rather than larger teams to help reduce problems.

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20. On the 31<sup>st</sup> day of March 2011 I located the electronic copies of the Notes from the Chinchilla and Dalby Human Services and Volunteers Debrief and Planning Meetings for the dates 4 February 2011 and 10 February 2011 respectively. These notes contain the persons that attended the meetings and the main issues discussed. I forwarded these minutes to the Detective Senior Sergeant REID of the Queensland Flood Commission for their information.

*Witness refers to copies of the Chinchilla and Dalby Human Services and Volunteers Debrief and Planning Meetings for the dates 4 February 2011 and 10 February 2011.*

**Gregory Wayne EVANS**

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