



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS

QP 0125
01/06
A14

Occurrence #: Flood Inquiry

Statement no.: _____ Date: 08/03/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter

Date of birth: [REDACTED] Age: [REDACTED] Occupation: Police Officer

Police officer taking statement

Name: STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter

Rank: Deputy Commissioner Reg. no.: 4002568

Region/Command/Division: _____ Station: _____

Statement:

Ian Duncan Hunter Stewart states:-

I have been a Deputy Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) since April 2008. I am currently the Deputy Commissioner with responsibility for Regional Operations. Between April 2008 and October 2010 I was the Deputy Commissioner with responsibility for Specialist Operations. I was sworn in as a member of the QPS in 1973 and have remained as a member of the service since that day.

I have 37 years of policing experience having served in a variety of roles both functional and geographic throughout my career. Postings have included Brisbane, Townsville, Blackwater, the Police Academy, Redcliffe, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast. In that time I have worked in a range of roles including as a general duties, traffic officer, detective, Project Officer and as an operational manager in areas including District Inspector at Redcliffe, District Officer of the Gold Coast Police District and in Senior Management roles including Assistant Commissioner of the Ethical Standards Command & the Assistant Commissioner of Information Communication & Technology. As the District Officer of the Gold Coast Police I undertook all the roles of District Disaster Coordinator whilst in that position between 2001 & 2003. As a Commissioned Officer in Redcliffe District I undertook

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

specific training in disaster management. I have also participated at various levels in disaster management and national security exercises during my career including as an exercise director and facilitator.

Links between National Security and Disaster Management

The implications of the National Security framework in Australia for Disaster Management and my involvement in this framework has enhanced my capability to deal with disaster events. While performing the role of Deputy Commissioner Specialist Operations I was the Queensland law enforcement representative on the National Counter Terrorism Committee (NCTC). During this period a number of significant changes occurred at the federal level. The first was the creation of the National Emergency Management Committee (NEMC) to mirror the role of the National Counter Terrorism Committee in relation to the development of consistent national capability including legislation, procedures and policies in the area of disaster management. The second major change was the adjustment of the concept of National Security to include the "all hazards environment" that recognised naturally occurring disasters as well as terrorism. The third major change at the National level was the recognition of resilience as underpinning the ability of the nation to recover from any event impacting on National Security.

While the NCTC remains responsible for implementing the National Counter Terrorism Framework set out in the *Intergovernmental Agreement on Australia's National Counter Terrorism Arrangements (2002)* to:

- Provide strategic and policy advice
- Co-ordinate an effective counter terrorism capability
- Maintain arrangements for the sharing of intelligence and information across relevant agencies
- Maintain the National Counter Terrorism Plan, and
- Provide advice on the administration of NCTC funds;

it does so within the context of National Security together with the NEMC. Australia continues to face a range of complex, dynamic and evolving security challenges. The first Australian National Security Statement in 2008 set out the Government's

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

security status and vision to address these challenges and reform the national security structure including disaster management.

Since it's inception, the NCTC has enjoyed a level of cooperative support from all members and State/Territory governments to the extent that significant progress has been made in aligning and enhancing capabilities and sharing of intelligence to a degree that was considered unachievable only a few short years ago. This collegiate environment has enhanced the relationships between all State jurisdictions, Federal Government Agencies including Emergency Management Australia (EMA) and the Australia Defence Forces (ADF).

These positive relationships enhanced the interaction between these agencies and jurisdictions in support of Queensland authorities throughout the flood crisis that occurred in Queensland from December 2010 to February 2011. This enhanced relationship is demonstrated by the fact that both the National Security Advisor (Mr Duncan Lewis) and head of EMA (Mr Cam Darby) at times accompanied Prime Minister Gillard during her several visits to Queensland including attendances at State Disaster Management Meetings in Brisbane. All three individuals unreservedly offered their support for the response to the unfolding weather and flooding events.

Old Disaster Management Arrangements and Legislation

In the context of Disaster Management in Queensland my position as Deputy Commissioner Specialist Operations was also responsible for Operations Support Command (OSC) within the QPS. OSC has responsibility for police service policy and procedures impacting on disaster management in Queensland and therefore disaster management generally at the corporate level within the Queensland Police Service. In this regard I was part of the consultation process that occurred in relation to the review of the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (the Disaster Management Act) in Queensland during 2009. I partnered the Department of Community Safety in consulting with local government in Queensland on the outcomes of that review. That consultation phase occurred during early 2010 at which time I attended a number of meetings in Brisbane, Rockhampton and in Townsville, to meet and discuss issues relating to the proposed changes to the Disaster Management Act and

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

the consequences of those changes. The meetings with local government officials and senior police officers in those areas indicated that there was support for the changes, but also some scepticism about the role of senior police in coordinating disaster management during the response phase generally. In my opinion the basis for this scepticism has been dispelled during the recent flood and cyclone events.

On the 1st of November 2010, the Queensland Disaster Management Act was amended. Arguably, a significant change was the creation, in the context of a hazards specific environment, of the positions of State Disaster Coordinator and State Disaster Recovery Coordinator. The choice of person to be appointed to either role is determined by the nature of the disaster. Any appointment to these positions are to be determined by the Chair of the State Disaster Management Group in consultation with the Commissioner of Police, with the individual appointed to these positions to take responsibility for coordinating the response phase and the subsequent recovery phase to any disaster respectively. Both these positions were designed in the context of the Planning, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPPR) which are fundamental phases in the context of disaster management arrangements in Queensland.

The Queensland State Disaster Management Plan identifies that disaster management legislation in Queensland is based on five main principles which support and build on the four guiding principles outlined in the Disaster Management Act. The five main principles of the Plan include:

- a comprehensive approach to disaster management in the context of a balance between the reduction of risks and the enhancement of community resilience whilst ensuring effective response and recovery capabilities;
- the all hazards approach assumes that the functions and activities applicable to one hazard are most likely applicable to a range of hazards and consequently a disaster management plan captures the functions and activities applicable to all hazards;
- an all agencies approach recognises no single agency can prepare for and deal with the disruption to community life and infrastructure that can result from a disaster;

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

- local level capability is recognised as the front line of disaster management; and
- a prepared resilient community that includes awareness and preparedness of communities involved at whole of community and individual levels, with a shared responsibility before, during and after disasters take place.

Other significant changes included enhanced accountability for disaster management, changes to the appointment of executive officers to State and District level Disaster Management Groups, flexibility in declaring the area of any disaster, and the appointment of both permanent and temporary District Disaster management positions.

Disaster Management Structures

The structure of disaster management within Queensland is based on a tiered approach which generally escalates from the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG), then to a District Disaster Management Group (DDMG), whose operational areas are loosely on QPS Districts, then to the State Disaster Management Group (SDMG) which takes a whole of State approach. The fourth and final tier is the Australian Government level where the Attorney Generals Department coordinates support to large scale crisis events by the provision of Commonwealth assets. This structure is designed to coordinate resources, provide support to disaster management groups at all levels and provide communications between all levels and agencies involved.

At the local level it is usual that the mayor of the local council is the chair of the local disaster management group, although the act also recognises the role of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of councils throughout the state. The State Emergency Services (SES) are managed by local councils and in the first instance it should also be recognised that local disaster management groups may appoint the CEO as the Local Disaster Coordinator. The LDMGs are recognised as the front line of disaster management arrangements for Queensland as they are best placed to decide what resource are required, when they are required and how best to apply the available resources to minimise hardship and suffering to relevant communities.



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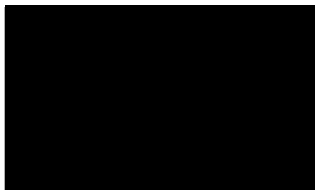
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DDMGs provide a whole of Government planning and coordination capacity to support the LDMGs. Generally, DDMGs plan and respond to requests from Local Disaster Management Groups. Ultimately, DDMGs are responsible to the SDMG for all aspects of the State Governments capabilities in Disaster Management for their particular district.


Finally the SDMG is the peak disaster management policy and decision making body within Queensland, and it provides strategic direction and advice to government. The SDMG is accountable to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services as the Minister responsible for administering the Disaster Management Act. The SDMG is chaired by the Director-General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and is comprised of the chief executives of State Government participating departments and agencies. Other people may be seconded to that group as advisors to assist the SDMG in its role. As previously indicated, at an appropriate time the Chair of the SDMG may appoint a State Disaster Coordinator (SDC). The role of the SDC when appointed is:

- to coordinate disaster response operations on behalf of the SDMG;
- report regularly to SDMG about disaster response operations;
- ensure as far as reasonably practical that any strategic decision of the SDMG about disaster response operations are implemented; and
- provide strategic advice on disaster response operations to District Disaster Coordinators (DDC) as necessary.

The SDMG is supported in its role by the State Disaster Coordination Group which coordinates the delivery of the SDMG legislative responsibilities for the purpose of facilitating disaster management preparedness and response outcomes to Queensland communities. Other support groups include the State Disaster Mitigation Committee and the State Recovery Group. The State Disaster Coordination Centre supports the SDMG and provides a venue for the State Disaster Coordination Group in terms of its role and also allows the State Disaster Coordination Group to manage the decisions and operations of the SDMG. The State Disaster Coordination Centre also



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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

provides for regular reporting arrangements and information management regarding any disaster currently being managed. At the federal level, the Federal Attorney-Generals department is responsible for coordinating the Australian Government assistance to the states and territories under the Australian Government Crisis Management Framework and the Australian Crisis Coordination Centre, co-ordinates the whole of government response to major emergencies.

In terms of financial arrangements under the State Disaster Management Plan, these arrangements are outlined in section 4.3, which includes the National Disaster Resilience Program and State Disaster Relief Arrangements, the National Disaster Relief And Recovery Arrangements and ultimately the Premiers Disaster Relief Appeal. Individual State agencies also have financial responsibilities which are outlined in section 4.3 of the Plan.

My Role In Relation to the New Disaster Management Arrangements

During 2010, in my then role as Deputy Commissioner (Specialist Operations), I oversaw the development of the new arrangements between the QPS and other agencies, in particular Emergency Management Queensland, related to processes and systems that were going to be required should the government enact the recommendations of the Review of Disaster Management Report. Members of the Disaster and Major Events Planning Unit of Operations Support Command were primarily involved in developing these new arrangements, but in particular I would highlight the work by Inspector Richard Hahn and Superintendent Scott Trappett.

These officers worked closely with members of Emergency Management Queensland to identify procedural issues and changes that would be required in relation to all facets of disaster management, including whether the State Disaster Management Plan should the Act be changed. Subsequently in September 2010, I appointed Acting Chief Superintendent Alistair Dawson to finalise these arrangements and to ensure that all systems, processes and individuals who would be required to give effect to the amended legislation (within the context of the QPS) were prepared and ready for the 2010 storm season. This included the finalisation of temporary executive officer positions across the state, which had been identified in

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

priority order to assist District Disaster Coordinators (DDCs) in carrying out their functions under the DMA. The priority order was based on District staffing levels and likely areas of impact for natural disasters.

These arrangements built on the project work undertaken by Superintendent Trappett and culminated in courses being developed and offered to ensure the new executive officers understood their role and functions under the new arrangements. As can be seen by an examination of the Disaster Management Act prior to the amendments taking effect in November 2010, the role and functions of the District Disaster Coordinators (in essence District Officers of the QPS) changed little other than providing them greater support within their own organisation.

Also relevant to this discussion were a number of meetings particularly in relation to the role of new State Disaster Coordinator (SDC). I am aware that on Tuesday the 30th of November 2010, a discussion exercise was held involving members of the QPS and Emergency Management Queensland to identify that role in terms of the practical ramifications of the SDC responsibilities. Preparatory discussions by Senior Executive members within the QPS including myself had identified the preferred level for the SDC role as an Assistant Commissioner. A number of individuals in priority order were identified to undertake this important role. I proposed the primary SDC was to be Assistant Commissioner Andrew Henderson. This choice was based on his experience of command situations, his understanding and involvement in developing the new systemic arrangements for disaster management arrangements and his senior rank. My proposal was conditional on support of the Commissioner of Police and final appointment by the Chair of the SDMG.

As previously identified, amendments to the legislation included the requirement for the Commissioner of Police to appoint a particular officer as a DDC for a particular disaster district. In this regard, the most significant departure from previous arrangements was the decision to nominate the Assistant Commissioner of Metropolitan North Region as the DDC for the whole of Brisbane. Previously this position had been filled by a Superintendent. This proposal recognised the scale of Brisbane City Council and levels of decision making likely undertaken by the

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LDMG during all phases of disaster management. This decision and the subsequent appointment of Assistant Commissioner Peter Martin to that role appears to have enhanced the relationship, interaction and decision making between those involved in the Brisbane LDMG and DDMG.

The Storm Season and Flooding Events

In the months leading up to the start of the 2010 storm season the SDMG met on two occasions, on the 12th of October 2010 and subsequently on the 8th of December 2010. At both of these meetings information was provided by Bureau of Meteorology forecasters, during their formal presentation, of potentially extreme weather conditions and above average cyclonic activity during the 2010 cyclone season. The initial presentation was provided on the 12th of October 2010 by Mr Jim Davidson and on the 8th of December 2010 by Mr Bruce Gun. As a result of these meetings communication was undertaken by me with the Senior Executives for each of the Regions and Commands of the QPS identifying the need for a focus on preparations for the storm season. These communications were in the form of memorandum and video/tele-conferencing. The preparations included ensuring there were sufficient resources available in each of the regions and districts to cope with any disaster or emergency event, to identify key officers and to ensure communication channels remained open with those officers, using contact lists which were distributed throughout the State within our organisation and subsequently to Emergency Management Queensland.

In my role as Deputy Commissioner of Police, I noted during early December 2010 and prior to Christmas that there were a number of deaths in Queensland due to persons trying to drive through flooded creeks or where individuals had died as a result of misadventure, when swimming in areas affected by flood waters. These unfortunate deaths are symptomatic of the impact of annual rain events in the respective areas.

On the 23rd of December 2010, significant rainfall occurred in Central and Northern Queensland which lasted for about four days. On the 24th of December 2010 an extraordinary SDMG meeting was convened due to the potential formation of

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

tropical Cyclone Tasha. Prior to that meeting, at 10:58am on 24th December 2010, I was appointed as the SDC by the Chair, Mr Ken Smith. My initial appointment remained in place until the 21st of January 2011, at 5pm. During that time there were a series of extraordinary SDMG meetings, which numbered 18. These meetings were called to deal with the weather and flooding events which evolved throughout that period. During that period I attended many of these meetings, however on specific days, I was unable to attend in person. My absences were due solely to my decision to travel throughout the State, often accompanying senior political figures to obtain operational and situational awareness in those places where flooding was about to occur or had just occurred. It became increasingly important for me in my role as State Disaster Coordinator to be able to provide advice to the SDMG by virtue of that situational awareness. It also gave me the ability to speak directly with District Disaster Coordinators or their representatives and senior members of the LDMG in many parts of the state. During that period, from the 24th of December 2010 to the 21st of January 2011, I attended at many of the sites that were significantly impacted by the rain and flooding events which occurred after Cyclone Tasha.

Either before or after my absence from Brisbane during any specific day (and most often both before and after), I would receive a briefing by Queensland Police Service members of the State Disaster Coordination Group or support staff. I remained in contact with the Commissioner of Police when he remained in Brisbane, with Assistant Commissioner Pointing (the Executive Officer of the SDMG) or with Inspector Richard Hahn & Superintendent Alistair Dawson. One or more of these officers would provide my briefing to the SDMG if I was not present at a particular meeting.

On the 10th of January 2011 the events of flash flooding also occurred in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. I subsequently visited both those areas some days after that date to gain situational awareness but also to assist and support local senior managers and discuss with the mayor of the Lockyer Valley Mr Steve Jones all issues in relation to the response at that time. This also was the period of flooding in Ipswich and Brisbane and for those reasons I did not immediately visit Toowoomba or the Lockyer Valley areas. Due to the significance of the flooding in

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

Brisbane and Ipswich I remained at the State Disaster Coordination Centre in respect of the events then unfolding.

After the 21st of January 2011, when I stood down from my position as the SDC, I did continue to monitor the situation involving weather events and the recovery phase occurring particularly in Brisbane and the Lockyer Valley areas. With information from the Bureau of Meteorology continuing to evolve regarding a weather event over the area of Fiji, my focus remained on the ability and capability of the Queensland Police Service and other related emergency related agencies to respond to further weather events.

On the 28th of January 2011, as a result of information from the Bureau of Meteorology, I was again appointed to the role of SDC, to take effect from 2:30pm on the 28th of January 2011. The SDMG met in an extraordinary meeting later that same afternoon and subsequently there were sixteen further meetings of the SDMG up until the 10th of February 2011 to deal with the impact of Tropical Cyclone Yasi which crossed the coast on the night of the 2nd of February 2011 at about 11pm. My role as State Disaster Coordinator was terminated on the 11th February 2011 at 5pm.

I note that various organisations or units of government have prepared chronological records of events starting in late November or early December 2010 and culminating in January or February 2011 which relate to the evolving responses, decisions, meeting schedules and milestones. I have viewed multiple chronologies but have not specifically developed my own. I note the chronology developed by the Reconstruction Authority appears to be an accurate depiction of the events from November 2010 to February 2011.

Since the 11th of February 2011, I have contributed to the capacity of QPS to identify opportunities for improvement resulting from our operations throughout December 2010, January and into February 2011 in response to the significant flood and weather events impacting on Queensland. Together with the entire Senior Executive of the QPS we have also examined our capacity to respond again if further called to respond to any emergency or disaster that may impact our state.

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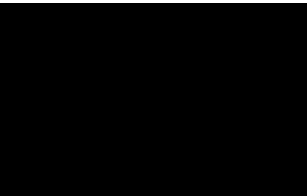
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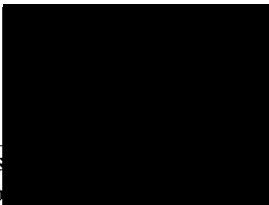
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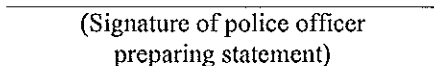
Of particular note during my interaction as the State Disaster Coordinator with various LDMGs and in particular, the leadership of those groups, was a variation in attitude to the roles and responsibilities held by those individuals and those groups. On occasions, this variability impacted on decision making undertaken by those individuals and groups, sometimes in respect of time critical issues. Examples that I can provide in relation to the flooding events throughout Queensland include decisions on evacuation plans, preparedness and potential execution of those plans at times of critical risk. In one example the LDMG had been provided independent hydrology advice regarding the soundness of the levy system operating in their town area. Their advice was that the levy system would not be breached by flood waters of any level in recent history.

The advice provided to the particular LDMG by the independent hydrologist was based on the flood plains to the south of the levy area which had the capacity to quickly diminish any impact of flooding in the local river, making the possibility of a levy breach virtually impossible. The hydrology information provided to the SDMG and to me personally indicated record level flooding in the river system upstream from this particular town. There was significant discussion required to assist the LDMG in identifying the actual flood risk to their town that potentially could occur due to the record level of floods. Ultimately, the LDMG acted promptly and implemented a three phased plan which was immediately executed, the first phase of which was the voluntary removal of individuals from the low lying areas of the town into shelter accommodation at the high point within the town precinct.

Whilst the levies proved to be sound and the flood waters did not breach any of the levy bank system around that town proving the independent advice to be correct, the margin for error was slim and the consequences were catastrophic. The specific issue related to the preparedness of the local officials to make decisions without a formal risk assessment of all the circumstances facing them at that time. It should be noted that the time frame in which this discussion took place was approximately a two hour window during which time the flood levels were rising at the levy banks.


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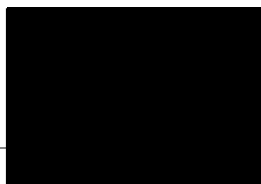
A second example relates to a different town where the scenario related to rising flood waters and the ability to evacuate members of the community by road for a reasonably short period of time, until flood waters would make the roads totally impassable and the ability in that town for the levy banks to cope with the potential and forecasted levels of flooding that were then currently in the river system. I had personally flown to this township to discuss with the senior members of the LDMG their decision making and risk assessment. On my arrival at that meeting at 9.00am on that particular day a further advice was received from the Bureau of Meteorology which resulted in a revised forecast of the flooding downward and did not necessitate the ultimate decision to undertake evacuations at that time, nor subsequently. Again the margins for error were slim at best.

Whilst I am aware that the terms of reference of the Commission of Inquiry do not include the impact of Tropical Cyclone Yasi, it may be potentially an advantage for the Commission to consider these same issues of critical time limited decision making in crisis situations. There were further examples of variability of LDMG members capacity when dealing with and trying to coordinate the response at all levels to that event.

Possible Legislative Change

In preparing my statement I have been asked to consider a number of processes and systems and circumstances which occurred during the flooding events. In respect of the legislation which currently exists I argue that in general terms the legislation is sound and provides a strong foundation for managing potential disasters in this State.

However, based on the examples previously outlined, I do consider that there is scope for consideration of legislative powers to be provided to the State Disaster Coordinator, based on specific trigger points and criteria, which would allow the intervention by the State Disaster Coordinator in some critical decisions. The main purpose for legislative powers is to expedite those decisions which would need to be based on very specific criteria. An option would be for the State Disaster Coordinator to be provided specific powers for specific purposes, but only at the discretion of the Chair of the SDMG. That discretion may be exercised in consultation with other key members of that group. This recommendation is not



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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

made lightly and it is made with full knowledge and understanding of the potential that such an intervention at state level would have on the role of the local leaders of LDMGs and potentially District Disaster Coordinators. A major factor in considering the exercise of such a power by the SDC must always be the must always be the strength of the tiered structure of response in times of disaster. Those leaders of those tiers are on site and can motivate or hinder those required to enact such a decision. Any attempt at intervention and decision making from a much higher level has inherent risks in relation to the ability for those decisions to be implemented by persons which then may be hostile to the decision maker.

A general comment can be made in respect to the current legislative structures and the interaction between the different levels in the disaster management structure. The arrangements work particularly well, specifically because the structure recognises that most of the response and in fact all aspects of the disaster management system occur at the local level. The other three levels including the Federal level are designed to coordinate and support that local level particularly during the response phase.

In relation to the response to major and catastrophic events there is potential for recognition within the Disaster Management Act of the role of senior police managers at the level of Assistant Commissioner and Chief Superintendent where they have specific responsibility for the management of the area impacted by the event. Currently, their roles are not identified in the Disaster Management Act as having any responsibility in the structure of response. The recent examples of the flash flooding in Toowoomba and in the Lockyer Valley during which the Senior Regional Officers played a vital role in the response phase, indicates a potential gap in the legislation, particularly from a governance perspective.

These senior officers coordinated the deployment of extra resources including police officers into the impact zones and created a parallel chain of command to manage the complex and significant response required by the circumstances confronting them.

It is noted that the variability previously identified in this statement occurs amongst many of the players involved in disaster management decision making. Much of this

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variability appears to be due to differences in knowledge, experience and commitment to the roles played by the individuals involved. Certainly, this is my recent experience. Perhaps consideration of strategies to overcome these differences or to at least identify minimum standards in respect of the issues of knowledge and experience may assist. Legislative regulations (in particular regulation related to training, may be useful in this regard. For example, a person elected to a local government authority who may fill an executive position on the LDMG for that area, may be required to achieve a specific level of training within 12 months from the date of their election. The specific training requirement may be identified in regulation as determined by the Director General of the Department of Community Safety.

Other Issues

From a practical perspective there may be some impediment in determining the levels of variability that occurred amongst decision makers particularly at the local level. In particular any examination using local resources, may have an unintended consequence of damaging, if not destroying, relationships built up over a long period of time and may also in some situations identify simple opinions in respect of the quality of decision making that took place during the flood events. Should the Commission be of the mind to examine this variability in any way, an option may be to engage some independent expert/s to undertake an objective, criteria driven assessment of the performance of specific areas., Whether this be one expert or a panel of consultants would be a matter for the Commission.

In terms of dealing with potentially catastrophic events it is arguable that individuals and individual communities need to take responsibility for first response activities, and in that light, the role of local leaders is particularly important to those circumstances. Whilst there were examples of local leaders emerging at places like Jericho, Murphy's Creek and no doubt in many other areas around the state, one area of I urge the Commission to examine is the ability to support and assist the development of local leadership in response to disaster events. Community resilience is a key factor in responding to disasters. Similarly, consideration of key initiatives to educate the community based on the philosophy of personal action in times of severe threat may also be considered appropriate by the Commission.

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What Worked Well

The engagement between all key decision makers and representatives of departments involved in the final preparation and response phase was of a particularly high standard and certainly was based on the many trust relationships that have developed over periods of time. In this regard, the consistency of representatives attending normal meetings at all levels from SDMG to LDMG and the commitment of all of those involved to their various roles in dealing with disaster management is something that should not be underestimated in the success of the outcomes that resulted during these tragic events. The willingness of these individuals and agencies to work together seamlessly in a focused way was a critical factor. In part, I would argue that the recency of the disaster management review and the consultation that occurred across the state in relation to the outcomes of that review and subsequent legislative change were also critical in highlighting for all those involved, the important roles that they and their agencies play in the overall response to disasters. The timeliness of these events leading up to the 2010/ 2011 storm season in Queensland was, I would argue, fundamental to the heightened awareness of the roles and responsibility of all of those involved.

Similarly, I would argue that the experience of many of the decision makers involved in all tiers of disaster management was also critical to the successful response phase to these events. My argument is based on the qualities and the longevity that many of these persons have in their particular roles and positions within their respective agencies whether at a local government level or in fact a state government or support agency role. Another factor which in my opinion contributed to the success of the response phase was the co-location of all of the key players involved in the support functions of the State Disaster Management Group at Kedron. Whilst the size of some of these facilities impacted on the need to share resources, that in itself in my opinion added to the strong engagement which occurred between the various groups and officials. The fact that the new State Disaster Coordination Centre is now available and can accommodate all those groups leads me to believe that this issue of co-location will not be problematic in future response events.

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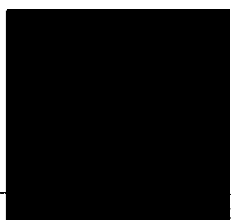
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

A further issue which in my opinion impacted on the relative success of and focus that was given by responding officials to the unfolding weather events was the fact that these events were in many ways unprecedented in their scale and potential destructive power. A fact that two thirds of Queensland was involved in major flooding events was an extraordinary circumstance and it is my opinion, that this in fact added to the motivation of all those involved in the response, to act seamlessly to ensure that the risk to all communities impacted was minimised.

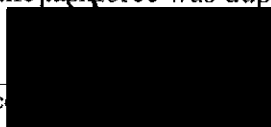
The use of social media possibly for the first time in a disaster event by police and other response agencies appears to have generated significant follow up traffic which indicates reliance on the information as a point of truth. Certainly, statistical analysis of those persons accessing Facebook messages from the QPS indicate an acceptance of the messages as important throughout the entire flooding and cyclone events. This combined with the program of media releases and media conferences undertaken by the key agencies involved, including senior government representatives appears to have benefited the community in providing consistent, timely and valid information at times of high stress. Certainly, the follow up reports, particularly in the print media, indicate a significant acceptance of the media reporting which took place initially through electronic media and subsequent articles in the print media.

The Defence Aid to the Civil Authority (DACA) arrangements proved to be very successful in meeting the demands caused by the flooding events which could not be serviced by the resources at local and even at state level. The types of assets which were identified for use initially in the flood events and ultimately supplied by the military, were predominately aviation assets. These included heavy lift helicopters such as the Sea King and the Black Hawk helicopters and heavy lift aircraft including C130 that were initially deployed with their support teams. There was also the ability for the military to provide other general assets but primarily it was the aviation assets which were of most use in the early part of the flooding events. The initial request for military aid to Queensland went through normal channels as required in the State Disaster Plan, but as the urgency grew, the military set up a taskforce to directly support the flood response effort. This taskforce, initially based at Enoggera, was instrumental in increasing the timeliness of response to requests for support. Subsequently the taskforce was duplicated in North Queensland during the



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preparing statement)

response to TC Yasi. The creation of the taskforce mirrored arrangements utilised in the recent Victorian bushfire crisis and proved to be very successful in expediting requests for support.

While I have no expertise in the area of civil engineering or town planning, the issues of housing development and planning approvals, and the issue of levee banks as protection against flood waters are areas worthy of consideration by the Commission. The experiences in Emerald and Ipswich where I witnessed large numbers of houses in 'new estates' inundated with flood waters may indicate the need to examine planning decisions. Similarly, the positive effect of levee banks that exist at Alpha, St George, Goondiwindi and Dirranbandi, that appeared generally to reduce inundation of buildings, is also worthy of further examination.

What Could Be Done Better

An area that needs to be considered from a practical point of view is the potential for greater education in relation to the operation of evacuation centres and or places of shelter. It maybe helpful for the Commission to consider the advantages of ensuring that every home throughout the state or those in greatest risk are aware of the types of triggers that may occur for them to be evacuated mandatorily or voluntarily. Also the kind of possessions that should accompany them, should they need to mandatorily leave their premises. It is obvious in the case of a voluntary evacuation that individuals determine themselves what possessions they take with them and there were many examples of this in the Brisbane and Ipswich floods.

Previously in my statement I have spoken about the variability in decision making and preparedness in some areas, to deal with the circumstances of these flooding events throughout Queensland. In respect of legislative changes which may potentially assist in enhancing identification and management of evacuation centres, the Commission may wish to consider investigating minimum standards for the development and management of such facilities.

In terms of the medium to long term there are a number of aspects of the response to the 2010/2011 flood events which may be enhanced through longer term strategies. One of these strategies could be the development of community courses on disaster management and the role of the community. This would be a step further than

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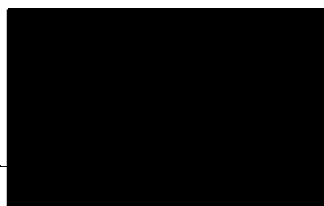
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter**

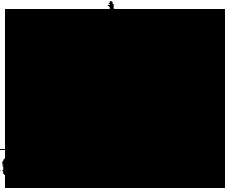
simply identifying good practice and providing members of the community with some advice on the types of roles and responsibilities that they may wish to consider in times of great stress caused by disaster management or other traumatic events within their communities. The broader program of undertaking voluntary training of community members for this role is perhaps worth considering in the longer term.

Similarly it may be advantageous to examine, the potential for prepositioning tools and equipment relevant to the response and initial restoration of communities that occur immediately after the initial impact of a disaster event. Whilst there are obvious short term beneficial initiatives such as the prepositioning of sand bags, shovels, pumps and generating equipment, potentially a longer term and more strategic view of relevant equipment sytores may be an advantage. This strategic view may include the positioning of significant warehousing facilities in the north of the state to match those in the south of the state. It may also mean the relocation of some stores to areas which are unlikely to be affected by major weather events but have ready access to resilient transportation corridors servicing many regional areas.

Finally, at times of high risk, the acquisition by the Queensland Government of rotary and fixed winged aircraft capable of a range of taskings associated with rapid deployment of response staff, aero-medical transportation, re-supply, search and rescue and rapid damage assessment of event impacts, may warrant consideration by the Commission. This is similar to the pre-positioning of fire-fighting helicopters during fire seasons in the southern areas of Australia.



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Commissioner (signature)



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preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: STEWART, Ian Duncan Hunter

Conclusion

I have attempted to assist the Commission by commenting on the strategic issues related to my role that became apparent or were dealt with by me throughout the 2010/2011 flood events, In my view, a detailed analysis of the planning and response to these events at District and local levels is best undertaken by reference to the relevant individuals who had responsibility for the management and coordination of the disaster response at those levels.

Should the Commission have further requirements of me, I am willing to assist.

OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)

I, Ian Duncan Hunter Stewart, do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

(1) This written statement in pages numbered 1 to 19 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and

and I am aware that if I make a false statement, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it

that I believe to be true and virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act

Signature

Commissioner of Declarations

Other (Please State) *Solicitor*

(Witness's signature)

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

(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)