

QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE STATEMENT OF WITNESS



	Oc	currence #: _	And the second s
	Statement no.:		Date: 27/01/2011
Statement of			
Name of witness: MINNS, Rodney Willian	STORE CONTRACTOR		
Date of birth: Age,	Occupation:	Police Office	cer
Police officer taking statement			
Name of police officer: TUCKERMAN, Ha	ns l'aul		00/0
Rank: Detective Senior Constable		Reg. no.:	
Region/Command/Division: SCOC	0.24 4 (0.12 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4	Station:	Organised Crime Investigations Unit
Statement:			
Rodney William MINNS states:			
1. I am years old and I reside at		with my wife	e Christie Maree MINNS
and our old son Harrison. We h	ave lived in Granthar	n for two and	d a half years. My wife is
the Principal of Grantham State School.	She has been in that	position for t	he past three years.
 I am a Sergeant of Police currently a Academy. 	ttached to the First	Year Progra	am at the Oxley Police
3. Our residence is situated within the sch	ol grounds on the hi	gher level of	Grantham Township on
the Northern side of the railway lines, Th	e residence was not a	affected by fl	ood waters.
4. I recall one to two weeks prior to Mond			
flooding making access into the town ver	y difficult. It had bee	en raining on	and off constantly since
Christmas. There were a number of mind	or flooding where wa	ter had come	e up over William Street
and other low lying areas.			
	the Peace (Qual.)/ Declarations's signature	•	lice officer's signature)

- 5. On Sunday 9th January 2011, my wife and I arrived back into Grantham at about 3pm after being away for the night. We just managed to get through to our home as a result of flood water and mud that had gathered under the bridge. I saw that it was approximately one metre to a metre and a half of fast flowing water over the normal road access which caused me to use the dirt track on the high side of the road.
- 6. At about 5am Monday 10th January 2011s, I woke and heard water flowing out beyond the railway line. I then went out the back yard and saw water everywhere. I could see the road was cut near the turnoff to Placid Hills. The amount of water isolated both access points out of town. At 7am I called work to advise that I was unable to attend due to the floods.
- 7. At approximately 3.35pm I walked down to the railway bridge to check water levels and observe conditions. I saw two vehicles parked, with a number of people milling around. I spoke to some people and returned home. I saw that the water level under the bridge was still about a metre and a half and still flowing fast. I know that it was that time because I wanted to call work before 4pm to inform them whether I would be in or not the next day. I rang work at 3.44 pm and informed them that the situation had not changed and that I would not be coming into work the next day unless there was a drastic change in the water level.
- 8. At approximately 4.15 pm I was in my house and heard rushing water over the back. I walked out to the back yard observed flood waters that appeared to be similar to the early morning flood at 5am then realised that it was actually more water.
- 9. I then grabbed my phone and walked to the back play fort of the school where I could get a better view of the flood waters. Whilst walking to the fort I saw a female running down Christopher towards the school calling out words to the effect of 'there are people on the roof of a car'.
- 10. I then rang triple zero ("000") on my mobile number It took about three or four attempts before I got through. I believe I finally got through to the Brisbane Communications. Centre. I got to the fort, stood on the top level and tried to look for people or the vehicle in

(Witness's signature)

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

question. Whilst on hold I was looking closely at a vehicle in the water about 50 metres in front of me and did not see any persons nor heard voices/ shouts coming from the water.

- 11. When I eventually got connected through to the "000" operator I passed on the information about the flood and vehicle allegedly with people on the roof. I had no description for the vehicle as I did not see it. I could see lots of debris, several vehicles and numerous water tanks floating by in the waters towards the direction of Placid Hills. I could hear the rush of water and sound of water and debris crashing. It was raining at the time.
- 12. I then went up to my house and spoke briefly with my wife, telling her to stay inside with our son. I grabbed some paper and a pen and went back down to the rail bridge to observe. I saw a large volume of water crashing against and spilling over the bridge, I had never seen the water that high. People were in panic, some were trying to get across to the other side (where the water was flowing) and some were saving people from the water.
- 13. I identified myself and told those in the vicinity not to risk their lives by entering the water and told them to move up to high ground to the school buildings. I recall seeing one person (perhaps a teenage boy) helped out of the water. At the time the volume of water and crashing sounds continued and then power poles and lines started crashing down with the electrical wires making contact with the water resulting in a sharp loud cracking sound. I think it was at this time that the power went out.
- 14. Again I advised people not to enter the water and to move to safety. I spoke to a resident (Shandi WILKINS) and asked her to write a list of persons she thought were in the vicinity of the flood when the water came through. I thought such a list may become useful in the aftermath. I took possession of the list she wrote.

I AM ABLE TO PRODUCE THE LIST PREPARED BY SHANDI WILKIN THAT I TOOK POSSESSION.

15. I then returned to the school administration building and spoke to my wife, we began to open up the school to take rescued persons. At this time I was making emergency "000" calls and

(Witness's signature) (Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/ (Police officer's signature)

Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

receiving calls on my mobile. I was also talking to people in the vicinity of the school and on Victor Street and continued taking occasional notes on what paper I had available.

16. Over the course of the next few hours I spoke to Lisa SPIERLING who advised me that she was in the Army Reserve and trained in first aid, she was able to assist with first aid to those injured. I also spoke to Pauline HULSMAN and asked hereto start a list of persons who arrived at the school which had now become a makeshift evacuation centre.

I AM ABLE TO PRODUCE THE LIST PREPARED BY PAULINE HULSMAN.

- 17. I also spoke with Brendan SHANKS, who advised he was in the SES and could help. I also spoke to Geoff PURTON (Grantham Rural Fire Service) who soon set up the RFS van in the school carpark, complete with generator and basic lighting. Geoff and others (including Brendan SHANKS) were operating the radio in the fire van and communicating with both Fire Communications and direct with the EM Q rescue helicopter operating in the area. I kept checking in with them during the course of the evening (between making and taking calls, taking notes, checking the water line and assisting Christie with the set up and running of the makeshift evacuation centre.
- 18. On several occasions during the evening il personally went to the water lines to record/ observe the levels and whether they were rising or falling. The highest water marks on the southern end (i.e. railway bridge) that I observed were:
- 19. 5pm the water level was on or just above the rail line.
- 20. 5.50pm the water was approx 3 lineal metres distance from the telephone pole adjacent to the highset house on the end of Victor street which is the last highset house at the end of Victor Street before the railway bridge.
- 21. 8.30pm the water was at least 50cm below the rail line, indicating it had fallen somewhat during the preceding 3 hours.
- 22. On the northern end of Victor Street (Cnr Boxmore st) I observed a male person place a marker (a black wooden stake) in the ground to mark the water line. I observed it was approx 15 metres from the cnr Boxmore and Victor St (vicinity of 44 Boxmore). This was at about 6.30pm. Approximately 2 hrs later (8.30pm) I note this level was holding, neither rising nor falling.

(Witness's signature)

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

- 23. Numerous times during the night I called in the water levels and provided sitreps over the phone. I do not recall who I spoke to on each occasion however my phone records will show the phone numbers that I called and at what time. I recall speaking with Dave KOLB, the State Duty Officer Brisbane Communications (unknown name), Toowoomba Communications, LDCC, and the OIC Gatton Sgt Bernie Wilkes.
- 24. Also during the evening I began recording names of eye witnesses who had seen events occurring in the flood water (such as people being washed away). I recorded the following names as eyewitnesses Lisa SPIERLING; Ian O'BRIEN and Trevor McCRAW. Though I spoke to Lisa and Ian briefly I did not have the opportunity to record details of what they saw. I did not speak with Trevor, his name was provided as an eye witness to me by Ian.
- 25. During the evening I continued to hear reports (almost exclusively 3rd hand reports) of incidents in the water. I recall, for example, being advised of children that were heard calling from the roof of a house down in the floodwater. No-one could provide an address as it appeared the house had shifted in the water, but Ian O'BRIEN was able to visually point out the house to me. It appeared to be a highset dwelling in the middle on the floods some 50 100 metres from the rail line. I called this information through to emergency and soon after observed the rescue (EMQ) helicopter land on the oval. It appeared they had started doing rooftop rescues and were taking instruction from the locals as to where people were likely to be stranded this included information about the kids being heard calling out.
- 26. At around this time or just after Marie and Pefer Van STRATTON were rescued and brought up to the school. This was perhaps 7pm as I recall it was just on dark.
- 27. During the night I recorded brief notes of other names and events (but do not recall the time or the exact context as everything was happening at once). For example, I recorded the name Linda Van Zelst (I think as an informant) and the names Christine Latz and husband with the words house behind shop, chest pain on roof. I do not recall if this information was passed via an emergency call or via the EMQ helicopter rescue team.

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

28. Another notation I found in my notes referred to Marcus Cassalana (or Casalegno) who had been

rescued that evening and stayed at the school. The notation was in reference to his wife and her

address and a brief description of the residence (I think I recorded this information early Tuesday

morning, but I can't be certain). I recall soon after Marcus received word his wife was safe at

Gatton and advised me of the same.

29. At some point, perhaps 7.30pm, I asked my wife (who was situated at the front office) to begin

recording names of rescued persons who presented at the school. To my knowledge, some were

delivered by helicopter and others made it up to the school by making their own way through the

flood waters (though I can't be certain of this). Also, at this time people had collectively gathered

underneath the school building, while others were situated in the library. I think a BBQ had been

started and sausages on bread were prepared for dinner.

30. At about 8.30pm - 9pm I began setting up the upper year's classroom (back of main admin

building) as the sleeping area for evacuees (aspile of foam mattresses and other assorted bedding

had been hastily placed in the room earlier in the evening). Also during the evening some families

unaffected by flood waters had brought in an assortment of blankets, doonas, towels, swags and

dry clothes.

31. I set up the room by placing the mattresses/swags at varying locations around the double size

classroom, I also opened windows and moved the blankets from the front office to the class room.

I set up a large water container with foam cups for drinking during the night. I noticed there was a

shortage of towels and pillows so went home and obtained more of these items.

32. During the evening I kept liaising with my wife and assisting at the school were I could. From

about 9pm I took responsibility for speaking to people and recording names as they entered the

evacuation centre. On arrival they were provided a towel and dry clothes, given food and hot

drinks and then escorted to their sleeping area. I was assisted with this by my wife, Lisa Spierling

and other volunteers. This activity continued for the next few hours.

33. I began keeping notes in an A4 notepad that I had obtained from school supplies. At about

midnight things started winding down for the evening. It is around this time the EMQ rescues

finished for the evening (I think).

(Witness's signature)

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

- 34. Between 1am 1.30hrs on Tuesday 11th January 2011, I recall briefing Toowoomba Communications and both Don Graham (Gatton Police) and Madonna from the Lockyer Council LDCC rang me. At this time I provided a list of names to Madonna of those staying at the school.
- 35. I recall at perhaps around 1.30am 2am on the lith January, 4 possibly PSRT officers attended the school to check on things and ask if there were any urgent medical evacuations needed. I said nothing that couldn't wait til the morning. They told me they got in through the floods via the bucket of a front end loader. They left shortly after.
- 36. I then conducted a patrol of the town in my own vehicle which is a Mazda 4WD. I checked the flood levels and noticed they had receded slightly, but water was still flowing and it remained impassable by road. I checked all streets namely Christopher, Victor, Boxmore and Robert streets. At about 2.15am someone from the MIR rangemeand I briefed them of the situation.
- 37. Electricity remained cut and landlines coased during the night mobile Telstra coverage only.

 Mains water and tank water remained were still accessible.
- 38. My wife and I slept in the front admin office on the Monday night. In the room with us were our son and Lisa SPIERLING and her youngest daughter. Sleeping in the principal's office were Peter and Marie Van Stratton and their dog. In the staff room was Marcus Cassalegno. In the tuckshop were Hahns & Klaus SPIERLING and their dog. In the library was Chris Barrett and Elizabeth Fraser (and their birds and cats). The remainder of people and animals were accommodated in the upper year's classroom. All up I had a record of 32 persons being accommodated in the school. There were other evacuees accommodated with friends or family in the houses adjacent to the school.
- 39. All lists I recorded were compiled as accurately as possible and to the best of my ability at the time.
- 40. The names I had recorded at the school the 1st night are as follows:

Brad LONG

Natasha LONG

Brendan KEEP

(Witness's signature)

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

Michelle KEEP

Lisa SPIERLING

Ilsa SPIERLING (child)

Hahns SPIERLING (child)

Klause SPIERLING (child)

Sharyn McCRAY

Ian DAY

Stacey BUSIKO

Brodie ERNST

Lynton DREIER

Helen DREIER

Andrew DREIER

Jasmin DELAMER (child)

Domonic DELAMER (child)

Marcus CASALEGNO

Marie Van STRATTON

Peter Van STRATTON

Emma DELONGIE

Chris BARRETT

Elizabeth FRASER

Thomas SMITH

Wendy SMITH

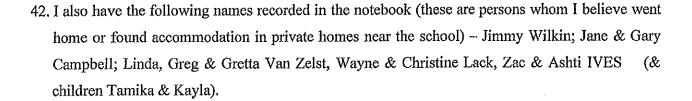
Leigh SHEPHERD

Marty WARBURTON

Morva RICHARDSON

Roy ABRAHAM

41. Including my own family there were 32 persons accommodated at the school.



(Witness's signature)

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

43. At about 5.45am I briefed two council officers who attended school office. I think one of the

persons was an Alan Domrow. I am not a hundred per cent sure of the name or spelling.

44. At 6.20am I spoke with a Brad WRIGHT from SERT and I briefed him of the events to date.

45. At approximately 8am - 4 x SERT officers arrived. They advised that they would assist with

helicopter evacuations via EMQ chopper to Helidon. The intention (as I understood it) was to try

and evacuate all remaining residents of Grantham to Helidon. SERT had begun doorknocking to

try and ensure all remaining persons would come up to the school. Evacuations commenced

around 9am.

46. I coordinated the evacuations from under the school building and recorded names of those being

evacuated. My role was to prioritise the evacuees and get groups of 6 (and later 5) persons seated

and ready to go when called upon by SERI

47. Several evacuations were conducted through the morning before heavy rain/ bad weather

amoughs the morning botole heavy land bad weath

grounded the chopper (maybe 11am?). These flights recommenced about 1.30pm and continued

for about 1 hr before ceasing for the day.

48. At about 3pm I briefed the remaining residents of the current situation (weather and flood

information/ further evacuations/ safety information etc). After the meeting I asked for people to

come forward and provide information of any person/s they believe were still unaccounted for. I

was provided about a dozen names in which liphoned through to the LDCC for their information

and to cross check against their records.

49. I have a record of 56 persons being evacuated by air to Helidon. The names are as follows:

Brad LONG

Natasha LONG

Brendan KEEP

Michelle KEEP

Lisa SPIERLING

Ilsa SPIERLING (child)

Hahns SPIERLING (child)

(Witness's signature)

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



Sharyn McCRAY

Ian DAY

Stacey BUSIKO

Brodie ERNST

Lynton DREIER

Helen DREIER

Andrew DREIER

Jasmin DELAMER (child)

Domonic DELAMER (child)

Marcus CASALEGNO

Marie Van STRATTON

Peter Van STRATTON

Emma DELONGIE

Wendy SMITH

Ian SANGSTER

Brandon SANGSTER (child)

Andrew SMITH

Fiona GORMAN

Jeremy WilkiN

Wendy GORMAN

Roy ABRAHAM

Dorothy ARMSTRONG

Paul ARMSTRONG

Helen McCRAW

Trevor McCRAW

Dillon McCRAW (child)

Gabby McCRAW (child)

Alicia POMERENKE

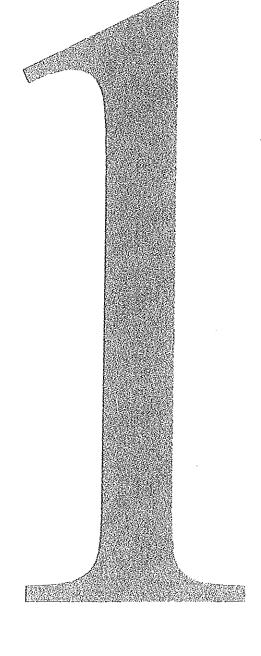
Craig SMITH

Zara POMERENKE (child)

Summer POMERENKE (child)

Wayne LACK

Christine LACK





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

Ashti IVES

Zac IVES

Tamika IVES (child)

Kayla IVES (child)

Robert WILKIN

Shandi WILKIN

Kayla WILKIN (child)

Alyssa WILKIN (child)

Tanisha WILKIN (child)

Jenny SHEATHER

Corey HUGHES

Leslie JOHNSON

Christopher JOHNSON (child)

Daniel JOHNSON (child)

James JOHNSON (child)



- 51. At 5pm I briefed the LDCC in relation to the current situation and advised that there would be some persons still accommodated at the school on Tuesday night. Also during Tuesday the channel 2 news team arrived at the school of recorded the names Paul Lockyer, Gary Ticehurst & Berge Breiland as they were required to stay overnight at the school).
- 52. At 9.30pm I spoke to Andrew LOWE (MIR—Toowoomba) and provided the list of names that I had recorded at Grantham School.
- 53. The following persons were accommodated at the Grantham School on Tuesday night 11th January:

Chris BARRETT

Elizabeth FRASER

Thomas SMITH

Leigh SHEPHERD

(Witness's signature)

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

Marty WARBURTON

- 54. At about 7am on Wednesday 12th January 2011, I arranged a community meeting under school building. I updated the residents as to road and weather conditions, food and medical supplies, further evacuation information, water, power and general safety information.
- 55. At 10am I walked under Railway Bridge to Rollee Forward Command Post that was set up in William St, Grantham. I spoke with an Inspector Mark Kelly and Acting Inspector Newman. I then rang Toowoomba for advice/ assistance and discussed idea of taking convoys under escort into Gatton.
- 56. At 11.15am I conducted another meeting under school building and advised the residents of the plan to send convoys to Gatton to transport the remaining evacuees to Gatton EVAC centre and obtain necessary food, water and medical supplies (namely prescriptions, Imodium tablets).
- 57. 12.15pm 1st convoy commenced. Convoy tasked to obtain food and water supplies, nappies/ baby supplies/ formula, fresh towels, medications generator fuel and gas bottles. Convoy also transported the following four persons to the Gatton EVAC centre at the Gatton Shire Hall (Chris & Elizabeth BARRETT, Thomas SMITH, Leigh SHEPHERD). Convoy also escorted Marty WARBURTON out via own vehicle - heithen met up with friends in Gatton but did not register at Gatton Evac centre). This convoy consisted of six 4wd vehicles.
- 58. I asked Brendan Shanks to assist me by assembling the convoy and recording the vehicle registrations and names of drivers. From memory the following drivers (and their vehicles were used) - Sgt Darren COX (6 Sqd RAAF); Mal Dionicious; Geoff Purton, Kelvin Wood and two others. Also part of the convoy was Brendan Shanks, I and Constable Ash Stevenson, amongst several others.
- 59. I had come across Constable Stevenson whilst walking back from the PFCP that morning and had sought permission to use him for the day up at Grantham School. As for Sgt COX, he had come into Grantham School from Gatton with a resident and offered his assistance with the convoys, he had previously been in Gatton at one of the evacuation centres.

60. <u>At about 2pm – 1st</u>	convoy returned.	
(Witness's signature)	(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/ Commissioner for Declarations's signature)	(Police officer's signature)
		Dage 12 of 14

- 61. At 3pm 2nd convoy commenced. Convoy tasked to obtain further food and water supplies, dog food/ pet food, generators, 35 loaves of fresh bread on order from Coles. Convoy also transported the following three persons to Gatton for collection by family members (Children - Brydie & Makayla PAUL (SIPPLE), Andrew Van ZELST). - Convoy also escorted two persons (named Finn and Mackenzie?) out via their own vehicle-they had asked to drive to the Gatton Hospital to seek medical attention for a foot injury. The 2nd Convoy consisted of four vehicles as I recall.
- 62. At 4.45pm 2nd convoy returned.
- 63. Mains water ceased during Wednesday night tank water only, still no power or landlines.
- 64. On Thursday 13th January 2011 at about 8am I held a meeting under the school to keep the remaining residents updated.
- 65. At about 10am I asked Geoff PURTON to drive me along Philps Road to check the condition and accessibility. I noticed that there were significant debris on the road but was passable via 4WD. Using this road was the first regular vehicle access out of town since we were cut off early Monday morning.

I AM ABLE TO PRODUCE THE NOTES I COMMENCED ON 10th JANUARY 2011.

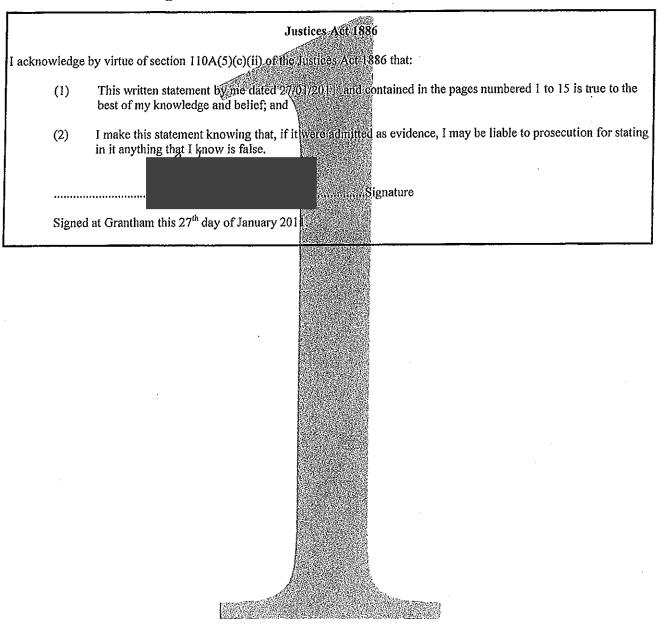


R.W. MINNS

(Witness's signature)

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

Justices Act Acknowledgement



(Witness's signature)

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

Brad Cancil

- 6 staying at School est first - families/Kids - ether 5

-Total No's (78 Fram) - 6 Atschiol

- flower > 40 3

- Meeds-spphs.

5.50p of phaopde e States contact. Bendar galshunds seed. Toogno - mag teads eter Van Stradter Jestoch Fran Roof Lo

Al Marcus - Cassalana. wife. Denise. (GAFE) house - opposite Citaisst white Roof. > A 2 windsocks behad hager 1 Jugus 4 yearnage of John about to whow Send board busic - Theyor McRAW. Confust tobated school Tan O'bridn. & Mead Kids Tanifiads insing

	(N	CKY		and the second
	email-			
	- med	icad		
en en	-			
	chrise	samet	<u>.</u>	Darlene Jenckel
•	Elizabe			Jaimte Green-Smith
	Gaylene		ā	Anthony SMITH (Kids- Nonter)
• •	Pauline	Mulsma	<u>n</u>	Nonte)
	shirly h	otchins		- Graham FRY
	Wayne H			Ken Haak
	Vincent			Ken Harm
	Thomas			Beryl Harm (
	Leigh		d	Jim wilkin
	Marty We			Ray & Morrica Ditcheran
· 	Morva P		Son	KelvinWood
	Linda We		Andreas and a service of	Emmaditchman
	Lance + E)	1011 Ri	handson	
<u>.</u>	1806 4 A	ม่อง มอก		SMITH
 *	Linda Va	an Zels	t (Kid	3 - Casey, Andrew, Gretta)
٠	Mouille d	m: chelle	KUNDI	
,	·hautelle	· SIRRI	=L (Kid	ls-Brady &Mackayla)
	'ien	Heathc	cate	44

•

Duline Man HAAK Brendon of Tess SHANKS (AND 3 Kids) JimFinley Manicanne & Geoff Purtan Mal & Tracey Dieniscious (AND 3 Kids) Paniel Tuck a Tayde Colliger Irlene Strethner lan O'Brien Rod & Chaistie Mainns (AND Hamison Minns) Julie & Genald KUNDE (AND Kids-Zandalee Zane L'estie Johnson (tods-christopher, Paniel, James, Coney Hughes Pavida Claire TOPP Brod a Natasha Long Brendon a Michelle KEEP Lisa Spierling (Kids-Ilsa, Hahns, Klaus) Sharryn Mcc/Pag & lan Day Stacey Busiles Emma Delongie

46.

Lighton, Andrew & Helen PRETER
Jasmind Bomonic Deformer
Marcos Casalegno
Marie Van Stratton
Peter Van Stratton
Hodrew Smith Frong Gornson
Wendy Gorman
Jeremy Willson
Wayne & Christine LACK
1 an & Brandon Sangster
Zaca Ashit IVES (Tamika, Kayla)
Roy Abrolham Porothy & Paul Armstrong
Helen macRAW (4 Trevor, Dillon, Goldoy).
Alreia Bomenonke (Kids Zara 4 Summer)
_ Craig Smoth
Michelled Palmina THORPE
Tracy, Kartelyn & Andrew Donaldson
Riley & Jack COLEMAN (58)
Total- (128)