

Name of Witness	Paul Antony SILJAC	
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]	
Address and contact details	[REDACTED]	Fernvale, QLD
Occupation	Training Education Support Manager	
Officer taking statement	Detective Sergeant Paul Browne	
Date taken	18/04/2011 6/5/2011 <i>[Signature]</i>	

I, Paul Antony SILJAC state;

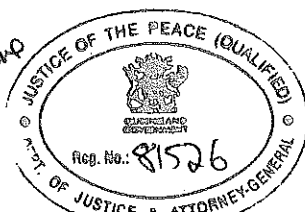
- I am a [REDACTED] year old married man, and currently reside at [REDACTED] Fernvale. I am the First Officer of the Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) and have held this position since August 2010. I am due to complete my crew leader training course Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2011.
- As part of my role with the Fernvale RFB I was involved with the January flood and took responsibility as Incident Controller, co-ordinating the emergency response in the Fernvale area. This was focussed on the community which was isolated between Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011, and the recovery period following that. By isolated I mean that roads were cut off by water, there was no electricity or town water, very limited mobile phone coverage and no landline communication.
- I have been a member of the Rural Fire Brigade for 4 years. Prior to becoming First Officer I was a Training Officer and Chairman of the Brigade and have completed Fire Management Level 1 and (among a lot of other training, have also participated in a two day 'Incident Management Team' (IMT) training exercise. From this exercise I developed some understanding of the lay-out, roles and structure of an IMT.

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*Corin Campbell Moore*  
16TH MAY 2011

*Witnessed Signature  
of Paul Antony  
SILJAC only.*

Exhibit Number:

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Date:

09/05/11

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4. This was the second time I have had to perform the role of incident controller. The first was a fire at the end of 2009, when we had a big fire season and a multi-crew response to a fire which lasted around 9 hours. There was not an IMT in place, and I oversaw co-ordination of the fire, communications and basically all roles in one. That incident was more about leading multiple crews and co-ordination.
5. The Fernvale RFB has 30 members residing in the area and encompasses an area bordered by the Brisbane River. The river is actually our North boundary and starts near the bridge over the river heading North out of Fernvale and goes to the Ipswich City Council Boundary at Borallon. Our Western Boundary follows the mountain range that divides Glamorgan Vale and Minden and our Southern and Eastern boundaries are the Somerset Shire Council – Ipswich City Council Boundary. Our neighbouring Rural Fire Brigades are Wivenhoe Pocket to the North, Pine Mountain to the East, Marburg to the South and Minden to the East

**I am able to produce a map of the Fernvale RFB area.**

**Tendered as Annexure One to this statement.**

6. I first became involved in the January flood on Tuesday morning, 11<sup>th</sup> January at about 0915 when I activated our brigade. At that time I activated our brigade through 'Firecom' (Queensland Fire Service South East Communications Centre) as a result of another of my RFB members having been asked to assist QPS (Queensland Police Service) direct traffic. At this point of time the RFB member directed the QPS officer to make the request through 'Firecom' and they in turn contacted me to

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question the request. Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade activated at this point of time and this is recorded in QFRS 'Firecom' transcripts.

7. At that time we already had localised flooding occurring throughout the town of Fernvale and mostly as a result of run-off. There had also been inundation and the town was broken down into segmented areas which were divided by the water. The areas that I could get too were limited because of that and where our station is we had very limited access. Mostly it was to the higher areas which were not overly affected by the flooding. For that reason the range to where I could investigate was limited.
8. I had been in touch with multiple members of my team, some of whom were trapped on the highway in transit between two flooded creeks. I was able to guide one member through some flood waters and basically I just grabbed who I could. At that time our first response was traffic control and medical assistance requests.
9. Initially one of my Brigade members who was in town spoke with a Police officer (Constable Dan from Lowood Police station, I am not sure what is surname is) to see if he needed help. He indicated that he needed assistance with Traffic control, he raised that through 'Firecom' and I then sent out a page.
10. At that time there was a lot of traffic trying to move along the Brisbane Valley Highway which had a land slide completely blocking the highway near Allen Rd and flooding near the junction with Fearnly View Fernvale Rd, so we were just trying to divert traffic at that point.
11. By afternoon, I was getting a lot of calls from various sources, our Firecom, The Queensland Police Communications Centre, from Andy

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BICKENDEN the Lowood S.E.S. Controller who was working out of Esk at the time (on the L.D.M.G.), and from Queensland Ambulance.

12. As at this point of time I had 1 RFB member on traffic control and 1 with me, I had to recruited a couple of citizens to assist in traffic control. The calls I was receiving were in response to calls they were receiving about concerned households and persons. We were going out doing assessments and most of them were OK. We were doing emergency evacuations where required. I was getting multiple requests though he various sources to respond to addresses that I could not get to due to isolation.
13. There are and were no other emergency services or resources available or present in Fernvale. Constable Dan was caught in town with us, the S.E.S. were not present and could not get to us because of our isolation.
14. By this point in time Fernvale had lost power, we had lost landlines and we had lost water. Mobile telephone coverage was poor and very patchy, but fortunately I was able to get most of the information via my own personal mobile phone. Luckily I am with Optus and as I understand it, it was mostly the Telstra towers that were not functioning or at limited capacity.
15. My phone ran hot throughout the entire incident. The 'Firecom' radio was also busy but again the service was fairly patchy due to the conditions and because of the amount of rain and the times I was in and out of the vehicle, I advised 'Firecom' that the best way of contacting me was via mobile phone and I maintained that.

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16. One request was made by a Channel 10 news reporter that flagged us down on the road and requested assistance to free a trapped horse. We went to the indicated location where we were required to cut a fence, enter flood waters on foot and assist the landholder to move a horse to higher ground. Footage of this rescue is on U-Tube. This rescue made it evident to us how quickly the water was still rising.

*Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>* [REDACTED]  
17. On Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup>, day one of our response, it was mainly emergency relief but we did a horse rescue, cutting stock out of a paddock and on day one. I could not get to a lot of the larger areas that were flooded, but did get to one lady who was on Oxygen, had only one bottle left and had no power to run her oxygen machine. Knowing that Woolworth's still had power (thanks to their diesel generator) I had her transported there so she could plug her machine in.

18. I had been requesting a chopper drop for Oxygen but it never happened. I assigned her care to 2 members of the Fernvale Lions Club to manage the situation. They managed the situation from that point on, but I later was advised that the power was not successful because the Oxygen machine adaptor was not suitable and they weren't able to just plug into the Generator to get electricity.

19. I was really worried because she only had 10 hours of Oxygen remaining but through self management she was able to get through until Thursday when we were able to evacuate her via Ambulance.

20. A lot of what I did on the Tuesday day came to a dead end. This was for a variety of reasons, in some instances I could not get to them, in

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other instances I was asked to go check on somebody and when I got there they were high and dry and did not require assistance. I was also being sent to go and check things out or run things down and there would be no-one there or no threat whatsoever.

21. At this time I was getting around in the Fernvale RFB fire truck '51' (Medium Appliance). This vehicle is a 5 tonne, 4WD, diesel Canter that is a high clearance vehicle with plenty of weight.
22. For staff I had myself, one younger member who I had left to assist with traffic control and one other more experienced fire fighter who was with me. These were the only members that could get to us and because there was only three of us, so much to do and so little we could actually do, we could not leave anyone at the station.
23. At one point during the day we got to the point where there was not much we could actually do other than just monitor water levels and try to get a scope on where the restrictions where.
24. Then as the waters rose we started to get more and more calls for areas like Titmarsh court, Pool road, but I just could not get to them. There was water across Ferny Gully (on the Brisbane Valley highway near the fuel station) and the water was running very swiftly. We were aware that tarmac had already been stripped off the bridge, the stability of the bridge was affected and we were uncertain as to whether or not the bridge was still there. You could not see any aspects of the bridge at that time.

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25. Not having any swift water training, I deemed it not safe to cross. We did not have the capacity to rescue anyone that got swept off there and the water was moving at quite a pace. As frustrating as it was to hear there was an 84 year old man stranded on the roof across, I just couldn't get there without risking another persons life. At the time I didn't know which house that was but later I was able to identify it and it was one that we could see but we just could not get there or get people to them.
26. It was later in that day that the rain had stopped, the run off had abated and started to recede enough that we were able to cross for the first time. I was advised later that Constable Dan was able to cross and rescue some people. He had his vehicle which was trapped on the Fernvale township side, but I was advised that he was able to get across by foot and assist.
27. Ferny Brook which is also on the Brisbane Valley highway before you get into town was also under water and it was under a lot. I have been out in Fernvale for over 10 years and I have only ever seen that go under once before.
28. I stayed on duty until about 2100 on the Tuesday night, when I had to go home and deal with my own family and set them up as they had no power or water either.
29. Just before sundown the water had started to abate enough over Ferny Gully that we were able to see the bridge. One edge had been wiped out but we were able to put up some star pickets and some demarcation tape, just so that we could try and get some people through. I remember because it was dark and after the demarcation we had people

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doing some traffic control there, another member had been able to come in and Constable Dan and two of my members assisted with the traffic control on that bridge because it was fairly damaged.

30. Things had begun to ease down by the time I went home, unaware of what was coming. Everything that happened with the flooding on Tuesday was pre dam release and was all run-off. When I had first left my house on Tuesday morning to go and do some recognisance I had emptied the rain gauge. About an hour later I returned and we had had 5 inches of rain in that short period. There was water running through town near the Mitre 10 which was just pure run-off coming across open ground. It could just not deal with that amount of run-off and could not get down the Brisbane River or run away and was just backing up.


31. Throughout Tuesday we did not have an opportunity or staffing to set up an Incident Management Team (IMT) location and were just purely mobile. It wasn't until Wednesday that we set-up and started to operate out of the Fernvale Information Centre, which is a community draw point and we were there to assist those people that could start to get in.

32. On the Wednesday, about midmorning, I was joined by a few more members. Blacksnake creek had dropped and that allowed some of the traffic to get off the Brisbane Valley highway and into town. They got across through Glenmorgan Vale road into Fernvale and that brought up my ex-first officer and some other members. Those people had worked that out for themselves and although the bridge had been damaged on Glenmorgan Vale road, they were able to get across by 4WD and into Fernvale.

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33. Having the previous First Officer of the Fernvale Brigade, who is an experienced member, provided me with invaluable support as Operations Officer. Our chairman also joined us who turned out invaluable as Communications/Logistics officer. On that day and in days following, as people became available we slowly started pulling more and more resources into the IMT.
34. Wednesday was mostly about us trying to get ourselves in order, as to realising this was a really big job and having never responded to floods. We were specifically trained for this as this was not our focus. There was no S.E.S. presence in town as it is based at Lowood which was completely cut off from Fernvale and they could not get to us. We were trying to do what we could and work out what we needed to do. We were dealing with things as they came in, people being displaced were housed temporarily in the Fernvale Futures complex, there were about 16-20 in there initially.
35. The ladies (Volunteers) at Fernvale Futures just opened their doors to that and took care of it. I became aware of it and once we had done a fuller assessment and understood what had been self initiated by the population we started to get a fuller picture and began trying to co-ordinate some of the efforts.
36. Later on Wednesday we realised that we needed Fernvale Futures as an information centre to give information out to people and it was not the ideal place for a relocation centre because of space. I decided to relocate the evacuation centre down to the School, purely because it had the

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space. That allowed the people some peace and quiet and allowed us some space to operate.

37. The Fernvale Futures Complex consists of the information centre at one end and meeting and conference rooms at the other. Because we were initially running the IMT from the Information Centre we began to get bombarded by people and questions, we needed to withdraw so later that afternoon we moved down into the meeting room end of the building and were able to set-up a proper IMT structure.

38. At 1000 Wednesday morning we formally set up the IMT and identified Colin Cook as my Operation Officer and Jonathan Dillon as Communications/Logistics officer. From this point we started keeping activity logs and other details. All of these records have been forwarded to QFRS Ipswich District Office.

**The IMT Incident Logs have been submitted to QFRS Ipswich ICC.**

39. Some of these things sort of just happened, the community stepped up and was amazing, and all of those things just became available. The Principal of the School had already been in touch with one of the Volunteers at the Futures Centre and offered the School, which we took them up on. The volunteers had turned up for their normal operations to open the centre and be there and no one would ever say no, because that is what the community understands the site is there for.

40. From that point of time things really started. Each day it was a nightmare and a struggle because we were out of our depth and not trained for flood events. We just tried to stick to the Incident Management Systems we had been trained in and took it one step at a

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time. We tried to log all activities and tried to keep 'Firecom' updated where possible, especially of staff change overs. Those transcripts should be available if required.

41. We worked in shifts. I stood down at night and had someone take over from me to do the night shift. We covered a 24 hour shift and I prepared a rough roster outlining staff and roles to be performed. At night we would have two, sometimes three people and that sort of phased off during week one.

42. Our primary function on Wednesday was still evacuations and also trying to do some damage assessment of the area, however Wednesday was the day we had the dam release and Lockyer Creek flash flood so we had 2 new flood events that had occurred.

43. The first we knew of the dam release was in the morning when we had residents approach a team in the field saying "the water's rising, the water's rising". Then the water just came up, flooding Poole, Schmidt, Nardoo and surrounding roads, all the way up to Titmarsh. Most of these properties had already been inundated by the storm water backing up the day before but this was much higher. This water pushed right through the culvert through town and across Banks Creek Rd. On Wednesday morning Ferny Gully also went under again after the dam release came.

44. This was the first we had heard of it (the dam release), we had no idea it was going to happen and by the time we got there (Schmidt road) it was too late and the road was cut off. Some of my members who live in that area have told me that it was so quick that all they had time to do was to get in there, grab the kids, get into the car and get out. The water was

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coming up at such a quick pace that they had no real time and all they could do was react to get in there and get out.

45. I sent a crew down there to have a look but by the time they got there they were already cut off from the Brisbane Valley highway end of Schmidt road.

46. Another of my members who lived in the immediate area had already responded and, with the assistance of other community members, helped evacuate those people from that area and dispersed them out into other homes. While the Water was up, isolating this community, some of the people who had responded, also set-up a welfare centre on the corner of Schmidt and Titmarsh.

47. At 1240 Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> January an SMS message was received notifying of a Flood Warning with expected water rises of 18-19 meters on Wednesday AM and to evacuate river areas along the Brisbane River.

48. That welfare centre consisted of a couple of shade cloths and a BBQ. People were also donating goods and things that were in need to those ladies on the corner for them to disperse out to members of the community that needed them.

49. Some of the things that were donated or that were in high demand at the time were Medications, Sanitary needs, food, water and things like baby formula. Medical needs were most in need but also general groceries and food like bread and milk that people needed to survive. People had not had power since Monday and many household perishable food stocks were running low.

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50. Requests for those types of goods were coming into that welfare centre but also to us at the Futures Centre. Then once the water started to abate we tried to relocate as many people as we could (who wanted to leave the personal residences they had been in) to the School and we combined all of that into the one central location.

51. Feeding people was a big daunting issue at first but it eventually went really well. Darren, the Manager at Woolworth's tried to continue to trade to the population on Tuesday but found lack of power making it unmanageable. He did however; open the doors to us as a Management Team saying: "What do you need?" Knowing that we had the Disaster Management Team set-up he continued to supply us our needs.

52. We accessed bottled water, food stuffs and some basic medical and sanitary needs from him. We had a couple of trained Nurses that offered their services and we were able to set up a trauma centre at the Futures Centre, and later we re-located that to the Doctor's Surgery across the road. I think it was either Friday or Saturday when that occurred.

53. On the Thursday we were able to locate a Pharmacist over at Marburg and we had to send our '51' Fire Unit over there to bring the Pharmacist back. They had to cross through a couple of flooded creeks but were able to bring the Pharmacist back into Fernvale and they were then able to write out scripts from the Pharmacy.

54. The '51' is our larger medium Truck vehicle, we also have the '41' unit, which is a Nissan Patrol light attack vehicle. That second vehicle

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was also used throughout the flood in recognisance patrols, Rapid Damage Assessments and any other task that arose.

55. As far as fuel was concerned we carry a lot of fuel on our vehicles and surprisingly our own vehicles did not use a lot of fuel because initially in the first week we could not get very far and were limited in the areas we could travel. Also once we had the IMT set-up, because of limited man power and the rotation of staff it wasn't a case where we had the whole team pull out in one day. The trucks were not out a huge amount and I just had to manage those resources. Once I was restricted to the IMT, Colin COOK (who was overseeing Operations in the first few days) was sending out crews to go and check out addresses. We also used the Canter on one occasion to push a water tank off a road so we could get through.

56. Power was one of the things that we were trying to get going and we had some generators. Members of the community were offering equipment and we started to just make a list of what was being offered so that when we needed those resources we could access it.

57. We took any Generator that we could get and initially we put one generator at the School Evacuation Centre and then we started looking at homes that had multiple families living in them and that really needed it to survive. Noel BAUER from the Fernwood Landscaping Centre came down when he could get in and gave us two of his Generator's to use. In that time when we were sourcing equipment and supplies, nobody ever asked or said this is going to cost you or whatever and it was sort of just understood by the community that those sorts of things would be worked out later.

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58. I remember one man, who was a Farmer from up on the downs, who had a large truck and had driven into town but got trapped. He contracted in a private Helicopter to get him out because he needed to get home and he just handed us his keys and said there is 80 litres of Diesel in his truck and we were free to siphon that as needed, so we did.

59. We did have some power at Woolworth's because they had some Diesel generator's so we did use some of the Diesel to keep those going. But once they stopped we could not get them going again, which was an issue. That was just trying to power the Woolworth's fridges and freezers. Darren was extremely forthcoming with anything we needed and even tried to keep the front doors open for people but because he could not maintain the power to run the store he had to close to the public.

60. Thursday morning we got accessibility via the Glenmorgan Vale road to the Blacksoil Fuel station, so we could get back towards Ipswich as far as Kholo. I was using my personal work Ute for running around also and we were able to get back there and fill up. The access was still extremely restricted but it just opened up a little bit more and gave us another resource we could access. We then had people doing ice and bottled gas runs as we were operating off BBQ's for cooking and heating water.

61. The Fernvale 'Lions' had stepped up to oversee the food and we had many BBQ's running. The Fernvale Butcher, Hotel-Motel and Tavern all said their fridges and freezers were down and they had to get rid of the food. So we accessed that food to feed the population. The

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Fernvale Butcher offered their mobile cold room which we hooked up to a generator to store the donated meat and food stuffs.

62. The BBQ's were being run out the western end of the Futures Centre in the park and the Lions took that over and were running it. I had a RFB member Trudy HATCHER and civilian Amanda SEED assisting the management of welfare services and liaising with my IMT. This Food station was used to feed people who not only had been flooded and displaced but also to those needed feeding because we still had no power or supplies or to people that came in to offer assistance.

63. Because of the loss of power to the township, by Thursday we had to start looking at Disease control due to the large amount of perishable food stuffs being emptied from fridges into wheelie bins, so we starting to look at rubbish collection. This was where the people who operate the Fernvale Quarry (Brad and Darren Zannow) stepped up and they used their tippers, backhoes and staff to go around and empty garbage bins. This was something we had to plan and organise. After initiating that collection, we had an on-going issue that needed to be managed and fortunately on Thursday, Susan PITKIN (who works for the Somerset Shire Council) was working alongside us in the IMT and she co-ordinated that

64. Once we started to get more information in and inspect more of the properties, it was identified that we also had the issue of dead animals and livestock on flood effected areas which needed to be buried. Susan and the Somerset Shire Council were assigned this task and saw it done. The IMT tried to coordinate manpower as we had a lot of people turning up to volunteer and asking "What can I do?" In response, we tried to

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register and task those people out to jobs around the area such as with helping people clean up, garbage collection, manning the BBQ's and donation stalls, water distribution teams etc. A lot of people were also just self activating and going into areas, but we had to ensure that all effected areas where getting assistance and everything was being completed in accordance with home owners wishes and, of course, safely. Unfortunately, many volunteers had no interest or thought to register with us for coordination.

65. By Friday things were starting to get a lot more co-ordinated and we had moved from having done the majority of the garbage collection and were moving more into just general rubbish and flood damaged materials. People were going back into their homes and were just hauling stuff out onto the sidewalk.

66. As the strategy was to clean one street at a time, there where a large number of heavy vehicles and workers working on and near the roads at a time. This highlighted the risk being created by excessive number of tourists and onlookers. To address this, road closures where used to prevent unnecessary road traffic from endangering the work teams or public.

67. We also had some issues with a couple of home owners and residents who had evacuated their home and where unable to face the trauma of what occurred and refused to come back. These people and we had to hunt down those people and find out through neighbours and friends where they were. I was looking at it more from a sanitary point of view because they weren't home, we knew they were away but we couldn't get access to the houses. Those houses were flood affected and

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they had fridges and freezers which were starting to rot. In one instance the residents had gone away and did not want to come back and deal with it because of the trauma. I understood that but had to say that they needed to come back and deal with it or we would need to contact the Police and force entry, because we did not want to have disease spread. I was able to resolve those issues by speaking to the people concerned, they came back and neighbours came in and helped them clean up.

68. This was another area where we tried to use the community as much as we could and the manpower of volunteers to assist.

69. Another major issue that we had as soon as the access started to open up was looting. The first suspected looter was sighted as early as Tuesday night and I had to station people at the School. We also put up a barricade up at Schmidt road, and with one exception we used Fire Brigade members. I always made sure that anyone on the Barricade was in fire brigade colours, loaning some gear to the one person who was not a member of the Brigade. We were already exhausted but realised that we had to do 24 hour assistance because the people needed to be able to sleep or recover without this worry, and in some instances they weren't even at home.

70. We knew looters were around because we had many people reporting to us about strange people driving around and acting suspiciously. Although we understood we did not have the authority to stop anyone, by putting up the barricade we were able to query people about what they were doing and recorded details of all vehicle registrations. That did upset a few of the locals but it was for their own betterment.

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71. On the second night we did that, I had a guy come in and he did the barricade with his wife, they just sat there all night. He actually came back again the next night and did it again and it was great that I knew the task was being taken care of. We manned those people with radios so they could communicate with our IMT at all times and we also used our RFB vehicles to go around and be seen as a presence. A couple of people were seen cutting through paddocks but there was not a lot more that we could do about that. I believe we did reduce the impact and possibility of Looting on the community during that period.

72. A lot of our role was answering the questions of How do we get in? How do we get through? What's happening etc? The volunteers from the information centre really manned that and we tried to let them handle those public inquiries and took a lot of information. One of the things we did as an IMT was have regular briefings between the IMT and volunteers who were manning the Information Centre at the Futures complex. This was so that we could provide as much information for the community as we could and also get back as much information as there was from outside and was a continual two way feed throughout the incident.

73. On Friday we had some guys from the Airforce (6<sup>th</sup> Squadron and 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron) arrive and there was 24 of them. They came in and they were absolutely amazing because of the way there were able to work as a Unit. They asked what we wanted them to do and we were able to use one of their men (who was injured), on tasking and he was able to task his men and the volunteers out to jobs as they were coming in. As we got

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information in he was tasking them out. They stayed for Saturday and Sunday and did a lot of the clean-up in the more denser areas.

74. At that time the jobs were still coming from those same sources, but the tasks themselves were changing more to calls for assistance and help with cleaning up as opposed to emergency or evacuation.

75. We had already been around in the days prior and I would have my crews collecting information from the streets that we knew were affected on who was inundated, what help they needed and also telling people what assistance we could provide. A lot of those people weren't home at the time or they wanted help with cleaning up on a future day. So working from that information we started to task out the Airforce and other volunteers we had available.

76. We also needed more assistance in Rapid Damage Assessments (RDA). At first I didn't understand the full capacity of that until Saturday when someone from QFS showed up and gave us a lesson in them. That was terrific because it really showed us what was required and we were able to really get in and break down the area into sectors and I could make sure that everyone in my area had been contacted, checked and properly assessed.

77. I was not keen on handing over control of the incident until I knew that everyone was OK and anyone who needed assistance was getting it. In particular I knew there some houses out on Pine Mountain road where I knew the river had moved on a bend and I sent four different teams out there at different times, just to ensure that all of that area was fully checked.

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78. Once we had that information we were then able to task people out because the Damage Assessments better identified what was needed.

79. The Wivenhoe Pocket Brigade which borders us to the North have an area which is cut off by England Creek up to the Brisbane Park. Graham PEEL who is the First Officer of Wivenhoe Pocket RFB was overseeing his area but could not get to them. We were mindful of that but we could also not get across the Brisbane River to help them because it was cut at all the crossings and effectively nobody could get to those people.

80. We kept getting reports that the people there were isolated and no supplies or resources were getting through to them. They needed medical supplies, fuel for the Generators and food. We were constantly reporting that information through our chain of command but I was not getting anything back in regards to that, but there was not a lot more that I could do.

81. A lot of the information we were getting from people was third hand but wherever we could we tried to track it back to the source. In instances people were telling us they had just spoken with family members in the area. And on the occasions where we could not verify the source or information, we ensured that when the information was passed on we made it clear that it had been received third hand.

82. At one point we were trying to get some resources (medications and fuel) over to the areas of Wivenhoe Pocket that were isolated. We had sourced those through someone who had brought the items in to us

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but we just couldn't get it over there. We did have some of what they needed (some supplies and medication requests) but we just couldn't get the Choppers to deliver it.

83. Although we were trying to get resources into help this area most of my concentration was taken up with my own patch and I could only stretch my attention so far and in the end I just had to say that we would pass on any information we got, or any concerns from that area back onto ICC and LDMG or back to S.E.S. and if they needed anything further they could come back to us.

84. Some of my own area at Glenmorganvale was also isolated from us for a period of time, although once the water began to reside we were able to get access by foot. Unfortunately the bridge was too damaged to go across by vehicle, but we were then able to at least communicate with the people in that area and get some information back. This is one of the areas that I was unhappy about in terms of the response that we were able to provide, I feel they sort of got pushed to the side a bit because of all the high density population with damage in Fernvale and the attention that it grabbed. This is one of the reasons why I want to be involved in that Disaster Management plan so that next time, we have a system in place to get information back to us and we can co-ordinate that better.

85. We probably could have done more for Glenmorganvale and this is something we have learnt from an IMT perspective.

86. Probably the biggest challenge was with drinking water. The town water was cut off because of a burst pipe, but then at one stage we were advised by the Council that it was OK to drink water again. Then people

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started getting sick so we advised not to drink the water without boiling it. Whether the sickness was from the water we don't know, but that was what we were advised so we followed that. There were also a lot people with tanks, but because there tanks were under water they also had no water.

87. We did access a lot of bottled water via Woolworth's, then we started getting Chopper drops of Water coming in. I had asked through 'Firecom' and also 'LDMG' advising them that we needed water but we just couldn't get any. We did eventually start to just keep on top of the water supplies but we had to put a lot of effort into driving that.

88. The chopper drop we received was purely a water drop and we weren't actually advised that it was coming in. We had been asking and asking and asking for it then suddenly we hear a Helicopter coming in. We were very mindful of a Helicopter coming in, wondering what's going on and then seeing it land at the Showgrounds. So I immediately got a crew over there to see what was going on and it was water.

89. Because of the issues with water on Friday we had to start rationing water because with all of the donations and supplies we had people were coming in and taking big slabs of food and water and I was concerned we were going to run out.

90. Eventually we got four chopper drops of water and later on I had been in touch with Queensland Urban Utilities (QUU) and on Sunday they were able to get a truck of water out to us.

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91. Another issue I had was with the LDMG. I know that our LDMG was at Esk and they were having their own issues but there was a lot of confusion from my point of view and that of my team with knowing exactly what the command structure was. We knew that we had an Incident Command Centre (ICC) from a QFRS point of view and that the LDMG existed. Prior to this event we had spent a fair bit of energy trying to understand what the LDMG was, how it worked and trying to become involved in any Emergency Disaster plan (knowing that we are the only Emergency Service in town), because we wanted to be very proactive about that. A couple of meetings we went to where really just a talk fest and there was really no outcomes.

92. I understand that they had their issues with communication and isolation (so many small issues preventing a good operation) and it was not a good circumstance to operate under.

93. Tony JACOB's who is the Operations Manager for Council and I believe may be the head of the LDMG and also the Council CEO Bob BAIN were both trapped in town with us because they live in Fernvale. Tony would drop in 2 or 3 times a day but really he was more of a distraction and was getting in the way. Initially he was telling me to do this and do that but because I had been given no instruction as to what the command structure was, on how the LDMG worked or where they fitted into the picture or whether they were just a support organisation to EMQ, I wasn't aware what to do. I did know who he was and he did identify himself to me on the first occasion he turned up.

94. He did also try and come in and tell us what needed to be done and I had to very politely thank him, but tell him to stand back as that was my

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Colin Campbell Moore





scene. We maintained communications and I listened to what he had to say but his main focus was operating through Susan PITKIN who did a fantastic job in co-ordinating things from a Council perspective and all of those resources (she deserves a Medal). Susan just happened to be a local as well and we worked really well together as a team by identifying who was going to focus on what and then letting each organisation go about their own role.

95. Susan really focused of getting the main utilities, power and water fixed while we handled the emergency supplies of water and things. They took over road repairs and garbage collection and we shared whatever resources of machinery that was made available to us. That co-ordination worked really well as part of the Incident Management team structure.

96. The communications we had with the actual LDMG Centre at Esk were really non existent and the only contact we had with the LDMG was when Tony stuck his head in. Once we had access through to Esk later in the week (via a round trip way), we might only see him once a day on his way back home.

97. I did have communication to my ICC at Ipswich on a couple of occasions. I know that there is a District Disaster Management Group but did not have any communication with them and instead my communication for anything we could not source ourselves was through either 'Firecom' or the QFRS ICC.

98. I'm not sure of exactly when but we did find out (I think through the LDMG or QUU) that a truck load of bottled water had arrived at the Laidley Council Depot. We were in the process of organising a truck to

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get over there to do a pick-up for Saturday morning because we desperately needed water. This would have been an experiment to try and get a truck to Laidley, but then really late on Friday evening I was advised by QUU that they could get a truck of water directly to us.

99. My communication with QUU was direct and throughout this entire time I continued to communicate via my own mobile phone. That was then being used by my Communications and Logistic's officer who was handling everything through that phone. On Sunday we were able to organise a landline through the Council, we could ring out on that phone but you could not ring in.

100. On Friday the S.E.S. arrived but they were not capable of mobilising until Saturday. They came in with 50 people but they were not local S.E.S. people. They seemed to take a long time to get their heads around what was happening and in the end I was a bit surprised and disappointed with the support we got from S.E.S.

101. On Saturday I had three QFRS strike teams (15 trucks with 2 or 3 men each) to help us with the work. By that time we were already heavily into our Urban Search and Recovery and had given that information over to the S.E.S. The co-ordination plan was while Council continued to work on road repairs, garbage collection and getting main utilities back-up and going, the S.E.S. would take over Rapid Damage Assessments and identify areas that needed work and we would move into clean-up and run off the back of their direction.

102. It just didn't happen and S.E.S. just didn't have anything happen at all and weren't getting anywhere. I had strike teams just sitting

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Colin Campbell  
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there doing nothing and aggravated by that we ended up tasking them out ourselves, off the information we already had.

103. Because the Airforce Squadron had already gotten in and done a lot of the heavy work in the densely populated areas, I used a lot of the task force guys to continue on and finish off the Rapid Damage Assessments in the more isolated areas and areas that we hadn't gotten too. That took up most of Saturday. Then when they came out on Sunday we had more clean-up for them to do.

104. Overall the S.E.S. activity was fairly ordinary.

105. On Saturday morning the Department of Community Services arrived and set-up in town. That was great and I tried to hand over all of the welfare stuff for them to run. They were operating out of Fernvale and were doing the Centrelink support and all of the community support.

106. Prior to that we had had a lot of counselling issues with this sort of Trauma, people attempting suicide in their homes but also in the evacuation centre. We had people coming in and people who were not trained in anything just had to deal with it.

107. There was a lot of burden on the ladies at the information centre who took a lot of public's frustration and stress. Because a lot of people couldn't get to work though there was a variety of ages of people and volunteers with different experiences who could share the burden.

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108. Late Saturday afternoon the Red Cross also made it out. We had been asking all week for some type of counselling support to come out and they made it out to us on the Saturday.
109. By this time we were feeding 2000 people a day from Fernvale. Fortunately the Butcher had a mobile freezer that he uses and we were able to get that hooked up to a Generator to keep things going with meat we got from the Butcher and Tavern. This was a big welfare issue.
110. Apart from the water we did not get any other supply drops.
111. On Sunday, John BOHLES (Sector Commander) from QFRS come out and he took over as Incident Controller from me. He took on responsibility for overseeing the larger areas of Fernvale, Lowood and Wivenhoe Pocket.
112. I was relieved as Incident Controller on Sunday morning at about 7am. John had been out the previous morning and advised me of what was happening and then he took over when I arrived on Sunday morning. I was required to stay on for the remainder of the week because I knew what was going on and was the local contact on the ground. I basically continued to assist to run things in the local area, through John.
113. Up until that time we had been working really well with the different organisations that we had available to us and the co-ordination with Council and Community Organisations was really good.
114. On the Sunday we were able to start getting emergency vehicles through to Lowood via road. As things started to improve and water

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Colin Campbell Wood





receded Police were calling in as they could get through. I made them aware of the looting issues and what we had in place. We also had Constable Dan there for the first few days but once things opened up he was recalled back to Lowood. For someone junior in Service he did a fantastic job, but was also suffering from very poor communications. On one occasion, Lowood Police called me direct to liaise with him. His vehicle was also helpful and he managed the traffic control and really let us do our thing, which was a great relationship.

115. Medication and medical emergencies were also an issue for us until we got the Pharmacist. Tuesday and Wednesday was almost all Emergency Response and Thursday we got things flowing and moved the Triage Centre off site to the Doctor's Surgery.

116. On Wednesday we had a medical emergency and there was a Paramedic who was actually on holidays but living in Fernvale. He came off leave and we had to transport him around to different areas. I remember getting him across through the water at Ferny Gully to get him to some of the emergencies.

117. He was initially activated through an Emergency involving a lady who had suffered a stroke in another area. My notification of that was someone needed to transport an 'Ambo' around and I did that myself because I needed to get out and have a break from the IMT. After taking him to the Stroke victim I took him to see another lady who reported to be suffering an Annuerism because I wanted her checked out as well.

118. I had actually become aware of her situation on Tuesday but we could not get to her. One of my members who lived near her and could

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CAROL CAMPBELL MOORE



get to her from Schmidt road was able to walk around the corner and he had sat with her for a while but there was nothing more we could do. He dealt with that himself through Firecom and stayed with her for several hours. Then when the second flood came after the Dam release on Wednesday he went back to her place and evacuated her and made sure she was OK.

119. One thing I noticed prior to the flood was that a lot of people (particularly in the higher areas) really had no idea what was going on. On the Tuesday morning when I was driving around checking locations people were out mowing their lawns, oblivious to what was happening.

120. LDMG could have done more and I would have liked to have had more frequent communication and direction with our own ICC, because we were out of our depth. In saying this I am aware that nobody could get to us and also the other circumstances that were unfolding in other areas at the same time.

121. Apart from the water drops there was no Chopper response but I understand from what I was told that they were grounded a lot because of the weather conditions. When the water drop had occurred we could have perhaps used that for other purposes and needs but we did not have any advance notice. I have heard a number of stories about personal Helicopters flying around and there was the one man with the truck. He told me it cost him \$3,000 but it was cheaper than him not getting home and I know that he left town on Wednesday, after the dam release.

122. We just tried to get through with what we knew about communicating resources in an emergency situation. We were stuck and

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just had to deal with it. It wasn't us on our own, because the community really pulled together and everyone stepped up and did their part.

123. I learnt a lot from the experience but would not like to necessarily test what I have learnt at anytime in the future. One thing we did learn was with the Rapid Damage Assessments and getting onto those a lot earlier.

124. Throughout the incident I was not flood affected at home and because of where I live I was able to get to and from home each day.

[Redacted]

✓ Paul Antony SILJAC.

18 April 2011.

6<sup>th</sup> May 2011

[Redacted]

Justices Act 1886

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

- (1) This written statement by me dated 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 31 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

[Redacted]

.....Signature

Signed at Fernvale this 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 2011....

6<sup>th</sup> May

Colin Campbell  
Moore



6<sup>th</sup> May 2011

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# FERNVALE RURAL FIRE BRIGADE ADMINISTRATIVE MAP

Scale @ A3: 1:50,000

Map Request Number: 608-888

Map Produced on: 28/01/20

Map Request Number: 608-888

Map Request Number: 608-888

Map Request Number: 608-888

Map Request Number: 608-888

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KILOMETRES

Note: Grid co-ordinates  
are shown as decimal degrees,  
not degrees/minutes/seconds.

- Rural Station
- Fire Station
- Fire/Highway
- Secondary Connector
- Local Connector Road
- Local Connector Road
- Private or Restricted Road
- Timber Reserve
- Forest Reserve
- National Park
- State Forest
- Rural Fire Brigade Boundary
- Urban Fire Brigade
- Local Government Area

