

<i>Name of Witness</i>	Max MAYNE
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	Mayneland Station Starlee Road, Rolleston
<i>Occupation</i>	Farmer
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant Stephen Platz
<i>Date taken</i>	10/05/2011

Max MAYNE states:

1. I am a [REDACTED] year old married male living at my farm, Mayneland, with my wife, Lyn. I have lived and run this property since 1978. It consists of mixed farming, which includes crops such as cotton, sorghum and wheat. I also have 1500 acres of irrigation. The property covers 7000 acres and borders the Comet River on the eastern boundary and Meteor creek cuts through the middle of the property. We are about 12km from the town of Rolleston by road. As part of my business I own and operate a Robinson 44 which is a 6 cylinder avgas powered helicopter. I normally use the helicopter to transport staff, collect parts, checking infrastructure on the property and general farm duties.
2. We have had ten years of drought but normally I would expect flooding once per year. During times of flood in the area, the town of Rolleston gets isolated from all directions. Because of this regular flooding I use this water for flood harvesting and then use this water for irrigation. The highest recent flood, prior to this event was in 10th March 2010. The official recorded height at the lake gauging station was 14.7 metres. This isolated the town for at least three months but there were times when you could get supplies in. I assisted the community during this time by ferrying supplies in via my helicopter.
3. During the month of December 2010 we received a significant amount of rainfall that resulted flooding around the 22nd of December 2010. The Panorama and the Comet River overflowed and cut the town off. My wife wasn't home at the time

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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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and I was isolated at the property with one other staff member. As I have access to the helicopter I was self sufficient at the property.

4. During this time I was monitoring the Bureau of Meteorology website and monitoring the heights of the rivers. Unfortunately the site is not specific to our area and there are no automatic gauges upstream on the local rivers.
5. On the 27th day of December 2010 at about 6.00am I was at the farm when I received a phonecall from a local who is upstream about 20 miles on the Meteor creek. She indicated that the creek was higher than she had ever seen it and informed all people in low lying areas down stream to be aware. This was the first warning I received in relation to the major flood event. It was raining heavily at the time and there wasn't much I could do to prepare for the flood.
6. At about 2.00pm I could see the flood coming from the west and it then inundated my crops and covered all my property. I lost vehicles, pumps and other infrastructure aswell as all my crops. My house and sheds were safe as they were on high ground. The flood water was roaring and moving very fast. This was the highest I had ever seen the flood waters since my time at the farm and was recorded at 17.4 metres at the lake gauging station.
7. At about 4.00pm there was a break in the weather so I took the helicopter up to survey the damage. During this survey I checked on my neighbours as they had kids, to see if they were alright. I saw them waving at me and that they were OK.
8. On the 28th day of December 2010 at about 10.00am I went up in the helicopter to see what the flooding was like in the town. I could see water every where and massive devastation to farms and local infrastructure. Whilst in the air I saw a heap of cattle stranded in water up to their knees. I landed and opened a gate that

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was near to them to let them on to high ground. Also whilst in the air I received a radio call on the UHF radio that was scanning at the time. I received a distress call from a group of people who were flood bound in the Arcadia Valley. They had been isolated in their car for two and half days. I proceeded to their location and picked them up. I flew them back to their house.

9. Over the next few weeks I was pretty much isolated as all my country was under water. During this time I was using my helicopter to ferry supplies for myself and the community. As soon as word got out that I had a helicopter I was requested to get supplies from Emerald and Rockhampton. These supplies included mainly bread, milk and fuel. I also assisted the community by picking up pets that were stranded on their properties and starving. To my knowledge I am not aware of any official transport of goods by the council or other agency. The community pretty well had to look after themselves.
10. After the flood I made some observations and identified certain issues that came to light during this crisis.

Warning

11. There was no official warning provided to residents in our area. The only warning came via word of mouth from people upstream. This flood was the highest ever recorded in white settlement in this area. There needs to be more gauging in local waterways such as the Meteor creek and Comet river. I also think there needs to be more automated rain gauges back towards the Arcadia Valley and up stream of Rolleston to get a more accurate warning in our area.

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Preparation

12. As Rolleston is a regularly flooded area and often cut off there needs to be more flood mitigation measures. The main one is the flood proofing of roads. The roads and bridges in the area are in low lying areas which quite often go under. We have had meetings in the past and it is a recognised issue that the council is aware of but to this date there is no work planned. The other issue is the amalgamation of the local councils to the Central Highlands regional council. The new regional council is too large and is not in touch with local needs. The council only brought in a bag of potatoes during the time of the flood, we were largely ignored. During the flood Rolleston seemed to be forgotten about. The local community organised all supplies and responded to their own emergencies. For example, the local shop keeper had no food in the store and had to get supplies. Because of the load limits on the local roads, due to the flooding, the shop keeper had to do a full day trip via Daringa to get to Emerald to collect supplies.

Response

13. I cannot really comment on the response by the government concerning emergent situations other than I did not see or hear of them in Rolleston. There was one SES fellow in Rolleston who was busy ferrying supplies across the flooded roads during the flood event. Main Roads has closed roads but there was no communication with the locals, as people could still get through. As mentioned the local community responded to any situation where help was required. The main means of communication between residents at the time of the flood was via UHF radio and phone. The mobile phone coverage went out for about five days but came back on. Overall the communications were good which definitely helped the community during this period.

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Recovery

14. After the main flood hit there was very little immediate recovery by the government agencies. As mentioned, all supplies were brought in by local people via helicopter or by vehicle and then boat. On occasions some civilian pilots brought in supplies by their own aircraft on their own cost. I saw that the mines had aircraft in the air most of the time supplying their own interests but ignored Rolleston. The biggest issue resulting from the fact we were looking after ourselves was the lack of Avgas available to civilian aircraft.
15. When I flew back to Rockhampton to pick up supplies the government had ordered that no AVGAS was to be provided to non emergency service aircraft. In my view we were an essential service to the Rolleston community and the fuel was needed for this purpose. I managed to get fuel from other residents who had stores on hand but I think their needs to be recognition of civilian aircraft helping communities in a time of natural disaster.

M.MAYNE

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 06/05/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 4 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.

.....Signature

Signed at Rockhampton this 10th day of May 2011

Witness Signature..... Signature of officer

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