

<i>Name of Witness</i>	<i>Jennifer Lee BEATTIE</i>
<i>Date of Birth</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Address and contact details</i>	[REDACTED]
<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Manager</i>
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	<i>Detective Senior Sergeant Mark REID</i>
<i>Date taken</i>	<i>12 May 2011</i>

Jennifer Lee BEATTIE states:

1. I am a [REDACTED] year old married woman and I normally live at the managers residence [REDACTED] with my husband Barry. At present we are living at a temporary address at Woolloowin whilst we wait for the repairs to our residence which was damaged during the flood in January 2011. I am the manager of the Gales Caravan Park and I have worked in that position for the last 11 ½ years.
2. The property has approximately 100 - 120 residents made up of permanent residents with the occasional non permanent resident.
3. A few years ago I was approached by the Ipswich SES Co-ordinator regarding planning for future flood evacuations at the caravan park. I am not sure of the SES Co-ordinators name but he made quite a big fuss about having an evacuation plan for the park. The SES officer told me that he wanted all of the occupants of the caravan park to assemble at the evacuation point at the Bundamba School. I was concerned at the time that this was not an appropriate place as the Woogaroo Creek runs between the Caravan Park and the Bundamba School, and often floods cutting us off from the school. I told the SES officer this at the time.

Witness

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[REDACTED] signature of officer ... [REDACTED]

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4. Not long after my discussions, with the SES we experienced a small flood in the area which resulted in the Woogaroo Creek backing up in flood, which would not allow us to go to the Bundamba School if we needed to evacuate. I had told the SES Co-ordinator at the time that this would not be the best spot for use to evacuate to for this reason.

5. Around the end of the year 2009 we had a cyclone threaten to come down the coast of Queensland. At this time I rang the SES Co-ordinator regarding the evacuation point to talk to him about its suitability. The telephone did not answer and I left a number of messages. I wanted to make sure that we had an evacuation point on our side of the Woogaroo Creek. We eventually spoke and I thought we had agreed on the Camira School as a suitable place for the caravan park to evacuate to as it was on our side of the creek. I felt that as the SES Co-ordinator he should have known where the creeks were situated in the local area in relation to the property we were on.

6. It was at this time that I became aware of the chain of command when reporting an emergency situation. I was told that I was to contact the local SES (Ipswich), then they would inform the police and the result would be the police evacuation of the entire caravan park. I was told that an evacuation was an all or nothing requirement. I also agreed to receive warnings on my mobile telephone, which was about 2 years before the 2011 floods. I thought that if a flood was going to occur, I would receive a warning on my mobile telephone. This would allow me to make decisions about the evacuation of the caravan park.

7. On Monday 10 January 2011, I checked all websites, such as the Bureau of Meteorology for any signs of flooding in the Gailes stretch of the Brisbane River or Woogaroo Creek. We had been receiving constant rain through December 2010 and January 2011. I did not find any warnings or alerts regarding any flooding in the Brisbane River or Woogaroo Creek.


8. It was at this time that my husband Barry and I were due to go on holidays for a week to the Noosa area. As a result we had put our assistant manager in charge of the caravan park for that period. We left for Noosa that afternoon.

9. On Tuesday morning 11 January 2011 I got up and decided to check the BOM website for any changes to the flood condition of the caravan park area at Gales. There were no warnings for flooding in the Brisbane River. At around 9.30am we decided to return to Gales after a conversation with the Assistant Park manager at 8.30am. She had said that some flooding was occurring due to the backup of water in Woogaroo Creek from the Brisbane River. There was no water in the caravan park at this stage. We left Noosa straight away and were eventually stopped by flooding at King John Creek at Caboolture. We lost contact with the caravan park at 11.00am due to failure of the telephone system. We were held up at this creek for a number of hours. By the time we arrived at the Gales Caravan Park it was too late. All of the vans bar three or four were already flooded. A lot of our residents are single men who were working so they did not have the time to empty their vans of their belongings.
10. The Assistant Manager commenced trying to call the Ipswich SES prior to 11.00am to get help with the evacuation of the park. The SES line would not answer on either the land or mobile telephone numbers. A number of messages were left but went unanswered. The Assistant Manager then called the State SES telephone number but was politely told that they could not help her. She then rang the Ipswich Council telephone number and was told to get off the line as it was needed for people in emergency situations.
11. The caravan park was well in flood and I was concerned for the older occupants of the park. The Assistant Manager made contact with the Goodna Police Station, but they could not act initially. They appeared to be waiting for the SES to direct the police to assist with our evacuation. Eventually a female Police Sergeant organised a bus for the occupants of the park to evacuate. This should have been done earlier with the police making the decision without the intervention of the SES. I think she was the acting officer in charge. The park was evacuated at around 3.00pm and the residents were taken to the Shiloh Church Redbank Plains after the police contacted them. The Camira School was not opened at that time to us contrary to what I was originally told by the SES in our previous conversations. These evacuations plans were written down in our handbook at the

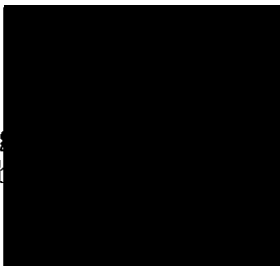
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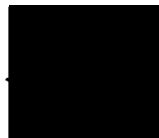
caravan park for the assistant manager to follow if I was not there. I had organised a pin board behind the telephone with all of the contact numbers for her to follow in case of an emergency.

12. We then received an SMS warning text at 4.00pm on my mobile telephone telling us that our area was going to flood. This warning was hours to late as the park was already flooded. This message should have been sent earlier that morning, and would have allowed the park residents to shift some of their property and possessions from the vans to higher ground.
13. The BOM should have notified the public much earlier that the Gailes area was going to flood. They did not put any information on the website which we had been monitoring closely on both Monday and Tuesday. This would have allowed me to help the park residents to make better decisions regarding their property.
14. A new residence had been built at the 
The entrance to the property is on Braggan Street Gailes as a result of the construction of the new Ipswich Motorway which had resumed some of caravan park land. The construction of this home was prior to the January 2011 floods. The Ipswich Council had directed that the house was to be constructed higher than the previous residence due to the floods of 1974. At the rear of the block was a concrete slab that had gone under water during that 1974 flood. We thought the flood height was 8 feet over slab during 1974 and we were comfortable with the previous flood heights with the new home. Even though the office level may have flooded, we thought the upper level of the home which was our living space would okay.
15. During the floods of January 2011, the new home was completely inundated with the water rising over the roof of the house. The advice the council had provided about the height of the home was useless. One of the neighbours later told us that he had the height of the 1974 flood recorded at his property and it clearly showed that the newly constructed home was under that height.

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16. We have since heard from an employee of the Ipswich Council that they had been informed at 6.30am on Tuesday 11 January 2011 at the Council Depot that if you had been effected by the 1974 flood to go home as the flood was on again. This information should have been made public to the local area.

Recommendations

17. For future events I would prefer the earliest warning possible, even if it was jumping the gun so that people could make decisions to shift possessions.
18. Something needs to be done about the chain of command, with the police making decisions on evacuations rather than waiting for direction from the SES in our local area. This needs to be fixed. A volunteer organisation should be large enough to assist all of the area should an event like this take place, and if they are not able to assist, it should become an official organisation that is paid. The current situation in Ipswich with the SES controller as a paid employee is not sufficient, and a better solution would be the employing of a number of full time staff with suitable skills to undertake the role in such a large area.

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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 13/05/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 3 [REDACTED] ef; and [REDACTED] were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to [REDACTED] now is false.

.....Signature

.....May....2011

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