

Name of Witness	Burnett Fitzpierce JOYCE
Date of Birth	20/1/47
Address and contact details	Gyranda Pastoral Company [redacted] Theodore 4719 [redacted]
Occupation	Business Owner/Farmer
Officer taking statement	Detective Senior Sergeant Mark REID
Date taken	9 May 2011

**Burnett Fitzpierce JOYCE states:**

- I am a [redacted] year old married man presently residing at Gyranda Cattle Station situated on the [redacted] Theodore with my family. I have lived on this property all my life and it has been in our family since 1911. Gyranda is about 23,000 acres in size.
- We are primary producers of cattle and we run a number of properties along the Dawson River. The properties have a river frontage of 35 kms.
- In about December 2010 we started to receive regular rain in the Theodore District. On the Friday night before Christmas 2010 it began to rain consistently through till after the 7<sup>th</sup> of January 2011. During the month of December 2010 we received about 26 inches of rain on our property, which is usually the amount we will receive in a 12 month period. This resulted in flooding which saw us cut off for a period of a few days. *WEEKS* [redacted]
- At our property we are generally self sufficient as far as food goes as we supply our own *MEAT* [redacted] and we grow many of our vegetables. Any provisions that we may need are purchased at Theodore.
- We have quite good communications at home, as our home phone and internet is via satellite hook-up, and we have some mobile service on the property, but not around the house area.

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Signature of officer [redacted].....

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6. Power was a major problem for us during the floods in December and January. We have a number of installations along the river and we became concerned for safety reasons during the flood. I contacted Ergon Energy some time around 29 December 2010 to try and have the power cut off along the branches in the area next to the river to avoid any safety issues. Ergon returned our call some 30 hours later around New Years day 2011, but due to the time it had taken for them to respond, the flood waters had risen to within 4.6 metres of the power lines making it unsafe to work on. As a result they cut our power off to the entire property. Because they had not given us any warning with the power being cut off, we did not have generators available initially, and were left without power for 7 days. We advised Ergon early about this issue hoping to have only the branch of lines near the river cut off from power, but the end result left us quite unhappy. We did not have the time to prepare for a total power outage.

**Warnings**


7. The warning of the impending flood at our property was by word of mouth only. We did not receive any warning from any agency that any of the district was under threat. We have access to the measuring stations operated by Sun Water, but I became aware that the readings being supplied were not accurate. The most reliable information that I can receive is contact via telephone with my brother Donald at Taroom. Any rain they receive takes approximately 2 days to reach us, so he often supplies me with river heights which allow me to gauge how the rain will effect us on our property.
8. One of the difficulties that we experience with the Dawson River, is the size of the catchment area. Often a local storm can occur in the catchment area which cannot be recorded on the gauges, but can create problems downstream after the event.
9. Another point that I will raise is the lack of response to warnings by residents of the Theodore. Theodore received about 2 weeks notice of the impending flooding, yet many of the residents did not do anything to help themselves prepare for the flood. This led to damage to property that could have been avoided. This lethargic approach I think is due to the overload of information that the

community receives. Often our region is bombarded with cyclone warnings on the radio, as well as general information on events that do not generally effect us.

10. Due to our self sufficiency I cannot comment on the local contact or comment on road signage during the floods.
11. I did hear that during the flood a family at Taroomban was stuck on the roof of their home after the property was inundated. A local pilot was stopped from flying out to rescue them with his helicopter because he was not licenced to do so. I think that there needs to be some common sense should prevail in an emergency situation for the well being of people involved in the emergency.
12. From an infrastructure point of view the roads in the area have been of a poor quality prior to the floods. The Eidsvold Road is damaged and is of poor quality. This had not been addressed prior to the flood and is still in a very bad state. Restrictions have been placed on the road for trucks and has caused a direct increase in our cattle haulage costs by 25%.
13. On a positive note the floods have seen the improvement of some other infrastructure. The road repairs to the Krakow/Theodore Road would not have been fixed without the flood occurring. The roads condition has been improved considerably with some improvement also to the Krakow/Eidsvold Road. This recovery work has been positive by the Banana Shire Council.
14. The repair of general infrastructure in the Theodore has been done well with repairs around the town.

**Recommendations**

15. Some general recommendations from my observations of the floods are:
  - To have monitoring of the catchment area of the Dawson River on a regional level looking at rainfall. At present everything is monitored outside the region which does not give us a local picture of the rain event. We need regional dissemination of information that is collected so that better assessments can be

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made. Many of the decisions are made in Brisbane who would not be aware what 100mm of rain means in a local catchment area. The Bureau of Meteorology report indicates that are region received moderate rainfall during the flooding, yet our district received its biggest flood on record.

- Ergon Energy need to look at their clearing and maintenance programs for power lines. Many are too close to trees that have not been removed, and the power poles are often placed too shallow in the ground which results in them leaning in the soft soil. This causes a reduction in the clearance heights for the power lines themselves.
- A permanent Disaster co-ordinator be appointed from one of the existing agencies to manage future events. There appears to be a lack of co-ordination between the Emergency Services being the Police and SES. An example of this recently was the closure of roads which could still have been used for certain types of vehicles to allow collection of supplies. There was some conflict on who was managing the roads.

16. I cannot comment on preparation by the local council regarding Disaster Management, as I have had no association with them in the planning process and I am not aware of any council disaster management plans.



B JOYCE


**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 9/05/2011 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 .....Brisbane .....this.....day of.....May....2011

Witness Signature..... Signature of officer ...  .....