

**QFCI**

Jm

Date: 11/05/11

Exhibit Number: 336

**Oaths Act 1867**

**Statutory Declaration**

**QUEENSLAND  
TO WIT**

I, Stuart Mark Holley, of [REDACTED] Mackay, in the State of Queensland do solemnly and sincerely declare that:-

1. The local planning and preparation, including training, undertaken in advance of and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 flood events.
  - Continual review and updating of Main DM Plan and operational plans.
  - Mackay Regional Council Emergency Response Sub Plan reviewed and updated – Dec 2010.
  - Individual Council Department Emergency Response Plans reviewed and updated.
  - Training provided for additional 79 staff in the Guardian Disaster Management System in October/November 2010. Additional 28 staff trained and revision training for existing trained staff provided in February 2011.
  - Accredited training provided to 180 MRC staff including councillors and management in Introduction to the Queensland Disaster Management System and Disaster Coordination Centre Operations in 2009.
  - LDMG Meeting 29 November 2010 to discuss agency preparations and planning.
  - Three LDMG meetings held during the lead up and during Tropical Cyclone Yasi.
  - Monthly DDMG attended by Mayor, Local Disaster Coordinator and Assistant Local Disaster Coordinators.
  - Media & public education campaign on upcoming storm season noting BoM predictions of active season.
  - LDMG contacts list updated and redistributed 20.12.2011
  - DDMG contacts list updated and redistributed 22.12.2011
  - Review of Emergency 'Action Guide' in September 2010 that is available to all residents in hard copy and via Council's website.
  - Ongoing media publicity during lead up to 2010/11 Cyclone season including involvement in a 'Cyclone Saturday' event at local shopping centre promoting awareness of emergency events.
  
2. Any measures implemented immediately prior to or during the 2010/2011 flood events that were designed to mitigate the effect of any flooding (for example, sandbagging, temporary levees), including an assessment of the performance of those measures.
  - Drainage structures were checked and cleared as part of the pre-season maintenance.

- Prior to the 2010/11 season, Council placed publicly accessible sand stockpiles at various sites around the region which was publicly advertised and also on Council website. (Well received by residents).
  - Sand stockpiles were continually monitored and resupplied on a regular basis and were well used by public over period.
  - Continuation of rebate by Council for residents purchasing inflatable sandbags as part of self preparation.
  - Sand bag levees were installed at two locations (across boat ramps) at Midge Point to reduce and/or stop the effects of a predicted storm surge on that community from TC Yasi. (Eliminated intrusion of sea water).
  - Floodgates at Sandfly Creek were lowered based on BoM forecasts. This is a standard practice to eliminate problem of riverine flooding (Pioneer River) flowing back into the local drainage network. (Continues to work successfully).
3. Local participation, or otherwise, in Emergency Management Queensland's (EMQ) 2010 Pre-Season Flood and Cyclone Workshop, including an assessment of the local assistance gained thereby.
- Mackay pre cyclone season workshop attended by Mayor, CEO, Deputy Mayor, Emergency Management Coordinator and Tech Officer – Emergency Management and SES Local Controller on 7 October 2010.
  - Presentation at workshop given by Tech Officer – Emergency Management into lessons learnt from Cyclone Ului.
  - Insight given into the forthcoming season given by BOM very helpful and assisted in planning stage.
  - Local Disaster Coordinator also actively involved as a member of the Queensland Tropical Cyclone Consultative Committee (QTCCC).
  - Pre season workshops have continued to be a valuable tool to again raise awareness of upcoming Cyclone season.
4. Local participation, or otherwise, in EMQ's 2010 Consultation Sessions concerning the proposed changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003* (Qld), including an assessment of the local assistance gained thereby.
- Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors and EM staff attended LGAQ Disaster Conference in Home Hill in September 2010 at which the changes to the Act were presented and workshopped.
  - Officers participated in EMQ sessions concerning change to the DM Act 2003 in late 2010.
  - There is some misperception in the roles of the Queensland Police Service and the role of Local Government in events. Basically the DM Act indicates the role of Local Government is to respond and manage the event, district and state is there to support the functions of local government. This is not necessarily always practiced by State.

5. Any measures taken to train and/or equip the local State Emergency Service (SES), including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.
  - Mackay Regional Council has taken the proactive step of employing a full time SES Local Controller due to the significance it places on the role, and in response to the lack of financial support from the State Government in the support of SES generally.
  - Council has also introduced a separate levy charged to all rate payers to assist in funding to support SES functions and Emergency Services activities/ management. For example the levy funds have been used to assist in purchasing generators to ensure that Councils Local Co-ordination Centre and Operational Depots are self reliant on power. The fund will also be used to assist in the upgrading and enhancement of SES buildings across the region.
  - As per previous years, the Mackay Region SES Unit took steps to ensure that its SES volunteer numbers remained above 200 persons prior to the yearly storm season and that 95% of those were trained and ready to participate in some capacity as part of an SES response and/or recovery team.
  - Sand and mechanically sandbagger provided.
  
6. The local actions undertaken in advance of and/or in respect of the 2010/2011 flood events in relation to resourcing, coordination and deployment of any personnel and equipment.
  - QFRS advised that staff were being pre deployed for swift water rescue.
  - Pre-deployment of Council resources and materials prior to the cyclone events.
  - Disaster Coordination Centre set up prior to the Christmas break.
  - Emergency Coordination Centre used over the Xmas break.
  - Emergency Management staff were on call and monitoring the weather during Xmas break.
  - The SES has adopted its standard approach with regards to disaster preparation, that is to both prepare for and expect the worst prior to each storm season this places the SES at its highest possible level of readiness.
  
7. The local actions undertaken in respect of the 2010/2011 flood events in relation to immediate management, response and recovery operations, including the coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment.
  - Emergency Management staff monitored river levels and rainfall via SMS River Alert System.
  - During rainfall events on 3 Dec and 24/25 December Emergency Management staff activated and operated the Emergency Coordination Centre and maintained communications with DDMG.
  - Emergency Management staff participated in daily state teleconferences 24 - 31 Dec 2010 and in lead up to and during TC Anthony and TC Yasi.

- Emergency Coordination Centre used over the Xmas break and TC Anthony.
- LDMG Executive maintained a watching brief and received daily updates by Emergency Management staff.
- SITREPS and information released to DDC and XO of DDMG and LDMG members.
- The Mackay Regional Council deployed a team of seven (7) experienced disaster coordination centre staff lead by an Assistant Local Disaster Coordinator to Emerald for a period of a week at the request of the Central Highlands LDMG to assist in running the Disaster Coordination Centre and to relieve CHRC staff. Staff performed 565 hours of work.
- Mackay SES deployed 103 SES volunteers over 6 separate deployments to Rockhampton (2), Townsville (3) and Cairns (1) for a total of 30 days and over 6,000 hours of work performed.
- Full Disaster Coordination Centre activated for TC Yasi 24 hours operations on the night of 2.2.11
- LDMG activated 1.2.11 and stood down 3.2.11
- Council staff on standby for TC Anthony & TC Yasi.
- Council departmental operational plans put in place prior to each event including plant and resources preparedness, filling water reservoirs, placement and testing of standby generation for both water and sewerage treatment plants and major pump stations.

8. Any local measures taken or requested to preserve vital infrastructure and to manage, maintain or reinstate the supply of essential services (water, food, power, transport, communications and/or sewerage) during the 2010/2011 flood events.

- Emergency Management staff maintained contact with major shopping complexes regarding resupply of food over the Christmas period with road closures at Gin Gin and Rockhampton affecting supply routes.
- Emergency Management staff received regular updates as to sewer overflows/problems for Water and Waste Managers.
- All water reservoirs filled to capacity as part of cyclone preparations when cyclone watch issued. Water restrictions ready to be placed, if required.
- Additional large generators sourced from Brisbane to power critical water and sewerage infrastructure.
- 90kva Generator sourced to run Disaster Coordination Centre.
- Adequate DCC and operational staff placed on standby.
- Floodgates at Sandfly Creek were lowered based on BoM forecasts.
- Maintained contact with XO of DDMG in relation to food supplies.

9. Any information received or obtained concerning weather and flood forecasts or warnings, and the steps taken to disseminate that information to the community before, during and immediately after the 2010/2011 flood events.

- Weather information obtained by BOM and warnings received by email and fax.
- In partnership with BoM, the Pioneer River Improvement Trust and Council there are 20 river and rainfall alerts within the Pioneer River Catchment that issue SMS alerts based on definable trigger points. For rainfall the indicators are set at 50mm of rainfall within 1 hour and river heights are measured in 50mm level intervals with set trigger points.

When a trigger point is achieved the alert system sends a SMS alert to three Council Officers (LDC and two ALDC). Emergency Management staff have home access to rainfall and river heights via laptops. Based on the warnings received, information is then disseminated to affected residents.

- During the 2010/11 season, floodgates were lowered and pre-emptive road closures made based on this information.
- Participated in daily State teleconferences where updated and specialised information was provided by BoM and DERM.
- Information also received by direct telephone contact with the Flood Warning Centre and DERM.
- Cremorne residents in low lying areas next to the Pioneer River doorknocked either by EM staff or SES advised of potential riverine flooding on 3.12.10 and again on 24.12.10 when BOM forecast a river height of 7m or greater and part of normal procedure.
- Corporate Communications provided media releases and warning information.
- Daily media conferences held with Mayor and DDC to provide a one united front message during Cyclone Yasi.
- Cyclone Saturday Community Information Event held 27.11.10 at Mt Pleasant Shopping Centre.
- Second Cyclone Saturday Community Information Event held 15.1.11 at Bunning's Warehouse.
- Copies of media releases attached.

**10. In relation to item 9, an indication of the source/s, accuracy and timeliness of that information for local purposes.**

- The warnings and advice from the BoM was both timely and accurate.
- Advice is received by email and Council Officers have blackberries to receive advice.
- Warnings are on forwarded to Council Management and elected representatives (ie. Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Councillors) by automatic rule based on message subject or warning type.
- The BoM warnings are backed up by the Riveralert Stations where Emergency Management staff can monitor river heights and rainfall via laptops either at home or at work.

**11. Any local measures undertaken to protect life and private/public property in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events (such as road/bridge closures, evacuation arrangements, etc), and the steps taken to disseminate information about those measures to the community before, during and immediately after the 2010/2011 flood events.**

- With rainfall and potential flood events on 3 December and 24/25 December advice given to residents in low lying areas of Cremorne to prepare for potential riverine flooding of up to 300mm. Residents prepared properties and vehicles moved to higher ground.
- Tropical Cyclone Anthony and Yasi events all residents advised to prepare properties for potential threat.

- SES volunteers door knocked Midge Point residents on February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011 to advise residents of the possible 0.5m storm surge and to take preventative measures or voluntarily evacuate.
- Sand bag levees were installed at two locations (across boat ramps) at Midge Point to reduce and/or stop the affects of a predicted storm surge on that community from TC Yasi.
- Intensive media coverage undertaken by Council.
- Floodgates lowered based on river heights and BoM warnings.
- Some road closures can be pre-emptively undertaken with information obtained by the Riveralert system.
- Council also has in place permanent boom gates on road crossings of rivers, drains and causeways that have a history of flooding. These boom gates are utilised as required to warn the community that the specific road crossing is not trafficable.

12. The circumstances of any rescues or evacuations performed in the local area in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.

- A number of swift water rescues performed by QFRS in relation to vehicles crossing flooded roads in some cases ignoring road closed signs etc.
- Media coverage undertaken to avoid crossing floodways.
- QPS monitored some of the known trouble spots to detect and enforce breaches of drivers ignoring road closures.
- No rescues required from houses/ properties.
- Public education program needs to be undertaken into the dangers of crossing floodways and swimming in floodwaters.
- Penalties involved in ignoring road closures due to flooding need to be increased (currently \$120) to reflect cost to emergency services and dangers emergency services personnel are placed in.

13. The circumstances of the establishment, and subsequent operation and performance, of any Evacuation Centre/s in the local area, including an assessment of any particular difficulties encountered.

- No evacuation centres activated.

14. The circumstances of any flood-related human fatality within the region, including the measures taken to prevent and/or respond to any such fatality, during the 2010/2011 flood events.

- Three fatalities in a short period of time in December in relation to crossing flooded roads in Mackay District area however not within the Mackay Regional Council Local Government Area
- Media coverage raised into not crossing flooded roads.
- Matters raised at DDMG December meeting and additional media attention given.

15. Any involvement had with State or Federal agencies, including particularly the Queensland Police Service, in relation to the provision of emergency response measures, personnel, equipment, services or logistical support, together with an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof, during the 2010/2011 flood events.

- LDMG members include State agencies: Police, QFRS, QAS, etc.
- Mackay Regional Council is a part of DDMG which includes a number of State agencies.
- All LDMG and DDMG agencies are committed and are well rehearsed.
- Some information requests by SDMG were considered unnecessary as the information only related to Local Government responsibilities i.e. requiring contacts for evacuation centres. LDMG's are responsible for activating evacuation centres.
- Information being given by Premiers Department in relation to caravan parks advising travellers to travel to Mackay when we remained in the cyclone warning zone and when caravan park operators were advised to evacuate locals the day before was confusing. This advice should be given by LDMG not State.

16. The nature and timing of any communications within the disaster management hierarchy, including particularly any communications had with the District Disaster Coordinator (DDC), the State Disaster Coordinator or the State Recovery Coordinator, and whether any direction/s were given by the DDC and the nature of any such direction/s.

- A number of Situation Reports were forwarded during events and open communications with the DDC and XO of DDMG.
- Telephone conversations with XO and DDC
- Copies emails enclosed (DDC and XO of DDMG are included in mail distribution group of Mackay Local Disaster Management Group)

17. An assessment of the adequacy of equipment and communications systems in the local area during the 2010/2011 flood events.

- Communications for our limited flooding events were adequate.
- SMS for Cyclone Yasi created a number of major problems and these have been reported via the DDMG debrief. In particular the length of time taken approximately six hours to complete calls, calls made before times indicated by SDMG i.e. 7.00pm calls received earlier maybe due to confusion over daylight saving time and calls being made from interstate – therefore no lead time to ramp up call centres etc, some calls being received towards midnight, a number of people with mobiles never received any alert dependant on provider/billing address, panic and fear created, incorrect wording, created overrun on telephone calls at call centre and Council website crashed several times.

Overall the timing and the wording of such messages needed to be given more consideration in the future. Having said that, this is one tool that has great potential to alert a lot of people at very short notice.

18. An assessment of the adequacy of the community's response in the local area during the 2010/2011 flood events.

- Overall the general community's response was good and adequate for events affecting Mackay. This is due in part to good community education, good participation by local media organisations and prior events including Tropical Cyclone Hamish, Tropical Cyclone Ului and 2008 Mackay Floods.
- Some concerns lodged by the community and council over the closure of the local ABC radio station and lack of local information being broadcast by ABC.

19. Any measures being proposed, planned or implemented to prepare for, mitigate or manage future flood events (such as the installation of automatic river gauges, culvert management, levee construction and the like).

- Mackay has approximately 20 river and/or rainfall automatic alert gauges which are then linked to a SMS river alert system which is monitored by EM staff. Four additional rainfall alert stations were applied for in 2009 and again in 2010 however grant funding was unsuccessful.
- Proposed storm tide levee to assist in mitigate storm zone to 1m in South/East Mackay area has been investigated and a study completed. This is in effect as part of Council's risk management approach to provide improved immunity to the Mackay Airport. Funding of \$4 million required to implement the study recommendations.

20. Advice as to any special consideration that should be given the local area by reason of particular regional or geographic differences.

- Mackay is divided by the Pioneer River which has a very short lead time for rainfall/ flooding events.
- The Pioneer River has a catchment of 1500km<sup>2</sup> and can be described as a most unusual river for the three following reasons:
  - Its unusually straight course
  - The rocky nature of its lead, especially the lower reaches and;
  - The irregular nature of its water shed
- Mackay has a large population located within the storm surge zones. A half metre storm tide above HAT requires an evacuation of approximately 11,000 residents.

21. Advice as to any feature of the disaster preparation and planning stages or the disaster response and recovery operations which presented particular difficulty or may require practical or legislative change to improve future disaster management in the local area.

- Being within the cyclone region it is difficult to have an adequate evacuation plan for cyclones with associated storm surge when there are no certified cyclone shelters within the region. The problem this creates is that to open "refuges of last resort" can be seen as offering reasonable safety to residents and staff, however, should anyone be injured or killed in a non-certified shelter the question of liability arises. Even though you have acted in good faith. Legislation is required to clarify liability.



- The provision of certified cyclone shelters has been an ongoing problem for in excess of ten years. Council does not have the funding available to build these centres and most buildings that could be suitable to upgrade are State Government owned buildings, such as school halls, which Council is unable to carry out works upon.

A study was completed by QBuild in 1998 to upgrade 13 buildings at a cost of approximately \$2M, approximately \$30K was spent before the project was cancelled.

Prior to the commencement of the "Building Education Revolution" Council representatives spoke with local representatives from Education Queensland as to what standard building would be built too and a copy of the State Government's Evacuation and Shelter Guidelines given. Advice back from Education Queensland was that the upgrade was considered too expensive (approximately \$66M was spent in the region) – this was a perfect opportunity missed.

- Everyday communication systems such as mobile networks and landlines can be overwhelmed in events and are dependant on power. Specialised warning sirens need to be adopted on a state wide basis to assist in communicating urgent warnings and messages. This is proposed by an education program of 'hear the siren - listen to the radio'. Events such as TC Yasi showed that it took over six hours to broadcast a warning message to less than half the state. Therefore in a event such as tsunami you could not adequately warn residents and a number of residents would either have switch off mobile phones or not be near a landline.
- The National Storm Tide Warning System needs at least an additional 2 to 3 m of warning areas added to adequately enable evacuations, however do not change the initial 3m colours as people are now educated as to the zones. Just add additional zones and associated colours.

(For example the predicted storm surge for Caldwell was 7 metres above HAT and initial predictions for Mackay ranged from 4 to 5 metres above HAT when mapping is limited to 2.5m under the present guidelines as the first zone is 0.03m above HAT.)

- Public education campaigns need to be more coordinated, currently each local authority has a responsibility to educate the community.

Other agencies such as Ergon etc prepare their own information separately.

Some Public Education Campaigns should be State run, such as for tourists.

Limited funding inhibits adequate public education campaigns.

Only 80,000 copies of the EMQ's 'Get Ready Guide' are printed for the whole of the State. A great document but underutilised.

- Penalties involved in ignoring road closures due to flooding need to be increased from the current \$120. The cost to emergency services in

attending these incidents and the danger emergency services personnel encounter needs to taken into consideration when rescues are then required.

- Public education program needs to be undertaken into the dangers of crossing floodways and swimming in floodwaters.
- During 2010, DERM advised that the highest astronomical tide (HAT) was increased by 0.17m at Mackay. Council's Planning Department applied as a "minor amendment" to the Planning Scheme to increase the minimum building floor heights by 0.2m after six months wait the Council was advised that this would be a considered a "major change" requiring resubmission with a estimated approval time of an additional 18months. Whilst there needs to be due process this will result in approximately an additional 2,000 to 2,500 buildings being built at the lower level, thereby at risk of future inundation. This process needs to be reviewed to enable a more realistic timeframes when trying to mitigate against future losses.
- Legislation is required to have standardised insurance flood cover.
- Improved funding to Local Government is needed to support the State Emergency Service and an increased focus/ resources is required from EMQ with regard to the training provisions for SES volunteers. It should be noted that the SES units within the Mackay region are reasonably resourced due primarily now to the funding provided by the Council as a result of the recent levy paid by all residents. This has resulted in the ability to retain and attract volunteers. This is not necessarily the case across the remainder of Queensland. Training of SES volunteers due to the systems now in place can be arduous and bureaucratic and a disincentive to volunteer involvement. Or indeed it is likely to be well beyond the ability of small units/ groups to obtain the required training.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1867.

.....  
Declarer

Taken and declared before me at Mackay this .....*month*..... day of May 2011, before me.

.....  
Lawyer/Justice of the Peace/  
Commissioner for Declarations