

Name of Witness	Wayne John THOMPSON
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]
Address and contact details	[REDACTED] Mooloolaba (Ph: [REDACTED])
Occupation	Helicopter Pilot
Officer taking statement	Det/Sgt Stephen PLATZ
Date taken	08/04/2011

**Wayne John THOMPSON states:-**

1. I am a [REDACTED] year old married male presently residing at [REDACTED] Mooloolaba. I am currently employed as a Helicopter pilot for the Sunshine Coast Helicopter rescue Service. I have been employed by this company for five years and have been a helicopter pilot for the past twenty one years.
2. I hold a helicopter commercial pilot license with a command multi engine rating, winch endorsement, low flying endorsement and various ratings for a variety of helicopters.
3. Our Maroochydhore based organisation operates two single pilot IFR twin engine, winch equipped BK117 helicopters, one out of the Maroochydhore Base and one at the Bundaberg Base. The twin engine aircraft are crewed 24/7 with a pilot, a winch capable crewman and a winch capable Paramedic. (Refer to attached photos)
4. A third smaller single engine Bell 206L, also winch equipped, is based at the Maroochydhore Base and is used when one of the larger machines is offline for maintenance.

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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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5. We have a contract with the State Government to provide helicopter support to the Emergency Services. There are specific tasking guidelines but generally the Queensland Emergency Medical Services (QEMS) Coordination Centre (QCC) controls all of the helicopter and Fixed wing (RFDS) assets. The coordinator in the QCC that makes the decision to use any of the Rotary or Fixed Wing assets is a Doctor. CareFlight Queensland has a contract to supply the Doctors that are used in the QCC. These Doctors are generally hired on a casual basis and conduct work at other health facilities and hospitals in Brisbane.
  
8. I remember Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 I was at home on a day off. During this time one of the other pilots, Andrew CATON, was working a day shift. I was aware, through the media, that there was a significant flood emergency in the Lockyer Valley area. I did not receive any calls to come into work on this day.
  
9. On Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> day of January 2011 I commenced duty at my place of work at 0630hrs. I came in a bit earlier expecting to be busy due to the flood situation in South east Queensland. On this day we had both winch capable helicopters available with the necessary crews. At 0800hrs I rang the QCC as we had not received any requests for assistance. I had a conversation with their co-ordinator who indicated that we had five jobs waiting in queue for us to attend to but would call us when needed.
  
13. At 1015 hrs I received a phonecall from the QCC operator requesting us to head to the Kilcoy area in relation to a medical transfer. We then proceeded to Kilcoy in Rescue 511 (BK117) and completed this task. At about 1415hrs we then proceeded to Redcliffe aerodrome to refuel. On route to Redcliffe we heard reports on the Queensland Police Service (QPS) radio channel that several people in the Caboolture area were trapped by rising flood water, we contacted the QPS ourselves via radio and asked if there was anything we could do to help as we were in the area. The QPS operator, who I believe was a communications operator, said that they needed our help and gave us details of where the people were stranded.

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14. We contacted QCC and asked to be released to undertake some flood relief work for the QPS. Initially they denied the request and wanted us to go to Proston, South Burnett to retrieve a male patient with chest pain. We disagreed with this decision and asked if they were sure that this was the correct job priority. QCC replied that they wanted us to go to Proston. At this time I said I would call them back. Once I had hung up, the crew discussed the phone call and the situation and decided to call QCC back. I again spoke with the QCC operator and strongly requested to get released to assist in the flood rescue, given the seriousness of the situation. We argued on the phone with regards to this issue and it became quite heated. Eventually QCC agreed and they released us to go to Caboolture. We then proceeded to the job.
  
15. By about 1530hrs we arrived at the job. I observed large areas of eastern Caboolture inundated with flood waters and numerous houses that had been flooded. I had been in contact with the Police who gave us a road as a visual indication. I followed this road and we found about five houses that had been flooded with the occupants on the rooves. The flood waters were about a third of the way up the side of the houses and were running quite strongly. We positioned ourselves over a number of the houses to check on the occupants. These occupants waved us on indicating that they were alright and wished to stay. I continued on until I observed a female on a roof top who was waving for help. I saw that the flood waters were a third of the way up the side of her house and rising. I then positioned the helicopter over the house and winched our intensive care paramedic down into the house. We retrieved this female who was distressed and required assessment. We then flew her to Caboolture Hospital for assessment.
  
16. We then continued our search in the flooded areas and received further job requests from the QPS. These jobs related possible rescues however upon arrival to these locations they did not require assistance. We continued these jobs until last light and then returned to the Sunshine coast airport to change with the night crew.

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17. At no time during the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2011 were we requested by the QCC, QPS or the Flood Co-Ordination people to assist in what was going on in other areas in Brisbane, Ipswich, Gatton, Toowoomba where it appeared that we may have been better placed to offer assistance. If we had not contacted the QPS ourselves I do not think we would have been tasked. During this time we had a fully serviceable winch equipped BK117 helicopter available from 0800 hrs to last light on this day. I do not think it was a well utilized asset especially in light of the now very public statements from EMQ about the size of the problem and loss of life.
18. As a result of my frustration of not being utilised I would like to know; did EMQ ask for assistance, given that they found themselves in that difficult situation. If they hadn't asked for assistance, why not? If they did ask for assistance, what happened to that request?
19. I was aware that my work colleague Brent HALL made a statement to the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry with regards to these concerns also. I sent him an e-mail outlining the issues I had on the 11/01/2011. I am able to produce a copy of this e-mail which is reflected in my statement.


**EXHIBIT: Copy of e-mail sent to Brent HALL on the 09/03/2011 by Wayne THOMPSON.**

**Marked Exhibit No/...**

W.THOMPSON

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 _____ 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 <u>Mulgoona</u> this <u>8<sup>th</sup></u> day of <u>April</u> 2011	

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**Wayne Thompson**

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**From:** Wayne Thompson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 9 March 2011 2:13 PM  
**To:** Brent Hall  
**Subject:** Flood Relief

Hi Brent,

I have looked at the status reports and mission reports for the 11/01/11. The day crew myself, scotty and brett came in early at 0630 that day. On arrival we were made told about the transfer pump problem with the aircraft. From memory engineering cleared the aircraft for flight at about 0800 and the QCC were contacted by phone to let them know we were back on line, they said at that time that they had 5 jobs in the system for us and they gave us initially 2 jobs to get us started. A few minutes after getting these tasks they phoned back saying that the clinical co-coordinator had not decided which jobs required priority so they stood us down, we expected to be tasked fairly soon after however we ended up waiting until 1015 to get our first job! Unfortunately I did not send in an updated status report at 0800, however they were aware of our serviceability due to the phone call and subsequent tasking.

After finally completing the tasking we received at 1015 to the Kilcoy area, we went to Redcliffe Airport for a refuel at Heliwork. Enroute to Redcliffe at approx 1415 we heard reports on the QPS radio channel that several people in the Caboolture area were trapped by rising flood water, we contacted the QPS ourselves and asked was there anything we could do to help given we were in the area? The QPS said that they needed our help and gave us details of where the people were stranded, we contacted QCC and asked to be released to undertake some flood relief work for the QPS. Initially they said no that they wanted us to go to Proston, South Burnett to retrieve a male patient with chest pain. We said are you sure that's what you want us to do given what was happening in Caboolture, QCC replied that they wanted us to go to Proston. At this time I said I would call them back, once I had hung up, the crew discussed the phone call and situation and decided to call back QCC and again try to get releases given the seriousness of what was happening down the road. The call was made and eventually they released us to go to Caboolture but only after what was a heated discussion. On arrival in the Caboolture area we ended up winching one home owner off her roof and found several other people stranded who did not want us to lift them out.

At no time during the day were we asked by either QCC, QPS or the Flood Co-Ordination people to assist in what was going on in other areas in Brisbane, Ipswich, Gatton, Toowoomba etc where it certainly appears that we may have been better placed to offer assistance? Given we had a fully serviceable winch equipped BK117 helicopter available from 0800 - last light on the 11/01/11 it was not well utilized asset in my opinion, especially in light of the now very public statements from EMQ about the size of the problem.

Regards

Wayne Thompson  
Pilot AGL Action Rescue