

Name of Witness	Fleur Maree ANDERSON
Date of Birth	13/03/82
Address and contact details	[Redacted] Theodore
Occupation	Farmer
Officer taking statement	Detective Sergeant Stephen Platz
Date taken	09/05/2011

Fleur Maree ANDERSON states:

1. My husband, Kirk ANDERSON and I are cotton farmers residing at our property located at [Redacted] Theodore. This property is 1000 acres and borders close to the Lonesome creek which is linked to Castle creek that feeds into the Dawson River. We have been at this property for eight years. During this time it only ever flooded in March 2010 and the current event. I am also the president of the Dawson Valley Cotton Growers association which is a group that represents all the cotton growers in the area. I have been performing this role since the beginning of last year.
2. On the 3rd of December 2010 we received a large amount of rain in the catchment that affected the local river heights of the Dawson River. We received this information via the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) website, the Sunwater website and local knowledge. At this stage there was no flooding of concern but the river height was rising consistently.
3. On the 22nd day of December 2010 I was at home with my daughter, Tilly (2 years) and my husband. It had been raining during the day as it had been for the past month. I had been monitoring the BOM website and my husband was out around the property checking the local creeks. At about 11.00pm my husband rang from Castle creek which is about ten to fifteen kilometres down the road. He advised me to pack up some things, get Tilly and go to his Mum and Dad's place. He was concerned that Castle creek would overflow and cut us off from the rest of town. I then packed some belongings and left.

Witness Signature [Redacted] Signature of officer [Redacted]
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 Date: 23/05/11
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4. On the 23rd of December 2010 the creek had overflowed and the road leading to the house was cut. Castle and Lonesome creek are not monitored digitally and if it wasn't for my husband checking the creek we would have been stranded at the house. We did not receive any warning via any means with regards to the creeks rising to this level.
5. I remained at my mother in law's house in Theodore for eighteen days. During this time my husband was constantly monitoring the flooding at our farm. On the 25th of December 2010 the levee bank that borders the property broke at several places where the two creeks met. The flooding inundated the entire farm which resulted in total crop loss. The water came to the third step of the house and thankfully did not enter. We suffered quite a bit of infrastructure damage to pump sites, roads, levees and irrigation systems.
6. The levee that borders the property is there to prevent flooding from high rises in the creeks and has saved our crop for most of time we have been here. The levee has only broken on the two occasions during 2010.
7. As the president of the local cotton growers association I receive input from the local cotton growers who were also affected by the floods. The issues that stand out with regards to the cotton growers relate to lack of monitored creeks, lack of capacity in the local government and the potential loss of telecommunications in the area.
8. There are key creeks between Taroom and Moura which are not monitored that prevent farmers and other local agencies in getting accurate predictions on river heights during times of flood. The cotton growers association have a system of communication that passes visual observations of river heights to other cotton growers by phone and e-mail. We also have access to the Sunwater website which is a government agency that controls irrigation to farmers. The local council did

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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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not have access to this which I think they should have access to so they can inform the community of pertinent information.

9. The local council did the best they could with the resources they had but were unable to provide any significant early warning and recovery to people in outlying areas. Their focus seemed to be on the residents in the town. No information was provided to farmers concerning flood preparation or response leading up to the major flood event. It does not appear that the council is adequately funded to provide this information and also flood recovery concerning the repair of roads and other infrastructure. To this stage the local council are yet to receive all the funds needed to repair roads that have been damaged.
10. The other main issue that was evident during the floods was the potential loss of telecommunications. When the town was flooded the power supply to the Telstra exchange ceased and became reliant on generators. At one stage we were at risk of the generator running out of fuel because of the flood waters preventing access to the exchange. This became critical and only a few hours of fuel were left. I was in communication with the local Telstra employee who informed me of the situation and I then informed the mayor. The mayor subsequently got another generator flown in to prevent the mobile phone lines going down. I think this was an unforeseen situation and is something that needs to be taken into account by the local government or emergency services. The deputy mayor, Maureen CLANCY, did an excellent job in acting on this information.

Witness Signature. [REDACTED]

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Signature of officer [REDACTED]

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11. The other issue which has been raised by residents more so in St George than here is that of levee banks. The levee banks are very valuable to the cotton growers and the entire community and as stated have protected our crop on many occasions. With regards to our area there is no evidence that these banks have caused adverse affects to water flows on the surrounding land. We are mindful of this and consult with neighbours regularly.

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 09/05/2011 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 THEODORE this 9th day of May 2011

Witness Signature.
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