

Name of Witness	Robert Parr SANDERSON
Date of Birth	[REDACTED]
Address and contact details	[REDACTED]
Occupation	Farmer
Officer taking statement	Detective Sergeant Stephen Platz
Date taken	30/03/2011

Robert Parr SANDERSON states:

1. I am a 37 year old male presently residing at [REDACTED] Condamine. [REDACTED] is a 3000 acre property where I farm cattle and grain. I have lived at this property with my wife and child for the last six years. The infrastructure on this property consists of the house, three sheds, irrigators, yards and fences. The Condamine River is about 200 metres from our house and I am aware that this has the potential to flood.
2. On the 22nd day of December 2010 my family and I left the property to travel to Tambo in order to spend Christmas with my extended family.
3. On the 28th day of December 2010 I had a conversation with my [REDACTED] year old uncle at Chinchilla who has lived in the area part his life. My uncle and I were discussing the heavy rain and localised flooding that the region was experiencing. My uncle has had previously experience of flooding in the chinchilla district and he indicated to me that it would be a good idea to get back to my property to prepare for flooding.

On the 29th day of December 2010 I chartered a helicopter and my brother and I flew back out to my property. We then set about preparing my property for a flood. I did not receive any official warning and acted only under the advice of my elderly uncle. During my preparations I transported my essential farming machinery and other equipment to my neighbour's place, which is on higher ground. I also moved other equipment such as the irrigators to higher ground

[REDACTED]

12th / April / 2011

Robert Parr Sanderson

Exhibit Number:

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within my property. Any equipment that I left behind I stacked it up and away in my sheds.

4. On the 1st day of January 2011 at about 11:00am we received significant flooding to my property. The flooding covered approximately 1500 acres of my property, entered my sheds and was about three inches away from entering the main house. As a result of these floods I lost fences, the erosion of roads and culverts and the loss of significant amounts of top soil.
5. During this time we were cut off from leaving the property and lost landline communications. As a result of the loss of the landline we still had internet and there is no mobile phone coverage in this area. The Condamine river peaked on the 1st day of January 2011 I remained at my neighbours place until the 8th of January 2011 where my brother and I managed to drive out through flood waters and head back to Toowoomba. I then stayed at my parents unit until the floods receded.
7. The main issues that I feel important in this case are the lack of constant and accurate readings of river heights and the lack of communications.
8. The three main river monitoring stations that I monitored, leading up to the main flood, were the Chinchilla weir,condamine station and the bedarra station. I monitor these stations via the Bureau of Meteorology website. On the days leading up to the main flood I found that the readings were not consistent and that they stopped altogether. I understand that the condamine station is manually recorded and I think this is not a reliable method.
9. As these river heights are extremely important to predict flooding in our area, I think that the rivers should have automatic stations that report the heights every hour.



12/April/2011

Robert *per* Sanderson

10. Despite receiving advice from my uncle that flooding may occur, I did not receive any firm warning that the floods were going to be as high as they were. I later received a text message from the western downs council about self evacuation I only received this as i was in toowoomba at the time.. I think that more mobile phone towers should be installed in remote areas along the rivers with the ability to operate independently of mains power.

11. I was lucky that I had some prior warning to this disaster and as a result my losses were reduced. I do realise that I live close to a major river system that has the potential to flood and that there is only so much the government can do to predict and respond to such events. I believe, however, that better warning systems can be installed along more efficient communication systems to assist in such events.

R.Sanderson

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 30/03/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 3 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 atcondaminethis...*12th*...day of...*April*.....2011