

QUEENSLAND FLOODS COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

On Wednesday, 9 November 2011, at 8.30am

At level 30, 400 George Street, Brisbane, Qld

Conducted by: Mr Nick Bailey, Mr Conor McGarrity,  
Ms Zoe Staines

Also present: Mr Alan MacSporran SC  
Mr [REDACTED]

Private interview of Bruce Grady, EMQ

1 MR BAILEY: Good morning. My name is Nick Bailey. I am a  
2 principal legal officer with the Queensland Floods  
3 Commission of Inquiry. Today is Wednesday, 9 November  
4 2011. Could all the people present in the room please  
5 announce their appearances for the record, perhaps starting  
6 with the Commission staff.

7  
8 MR McGARRITY: My name is Connor McGarrity, principal  
9 researcher with the Queensland Floods Commission of  
10 Inquiry.

11  
12 MS STAINES: My name is Zoe Staines, Researcher with the  
13 Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry.

14  
15 MR GRADY: Bruce Grady, Assistant Director-General,  
16 Emergency Management Queensland.

17  
18 MR MacSPORRAN: Alan MacSporran, counsel for the State.

19  
20 MR [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Deputy Crown Solicitor, Crown Law,  
21 acting for the State of Queensland.

22  
23 <BRUCE GRADY, interviewed:

24  
25 MR BAILEY: As I have previously indicated, we have  
26 provided to you, Bruce, a list of questions signifying our  
27 areas of interest. The general plan this morning is simply  
28 to run through those, if we may.

29  
30 Q. Starting with the General section, question 1:  
31 Explain the role of instructors or trainers in specialist  
32 fields such as chainsaw operations, traffic control and  
33 flood-boat operations, including how they obtain specialist  
34 expertise and what, if any, financial compensation they  
35 receive, and should they be compensated?

36 A. The role of trainers and instructors in the SES is to  
37 provide functional training to SES members. Members  
38 require that they are trained in those functions before  
39 they can actually complete those functions in an operation.  
40 For example, until you have completed your chainsaw  
41 training, you can't operate a chainsaw. That's primarily  
42 for safety reasons.

43  
44 The trainers are required to have completed that  
45 functional training. They then are required to have  
46 completed a Cert IV in training. The cost of that is met  
47 by EMQ. Then they become an assistant trainer, where they

1 are observed. Then when they have reached a level of  
2 competency, they are then able to train on their own.

3  
4 I have some documents around policy. I am happy to  
5 make those available to the Commission, if you would like  
6 them?

7  
8 MR BAILEY: All right.

9  
10 MR McGARRITY: That would be good.

11  
12 MR BAILEY: Q. For the record, could you just perhaps read  
13 the title of the relevant documents?

14 A. Yes. There is training policy, staff competence,  
15 appointment of trainer assessors, appointment of direct  
16 supervisors, appointment of core skills trainer, and I  
17 think - yes, that's it.

18  
19 MR McGARRITY: Thank you.

20  
21 MR BAILEY: Q. The trainers themselves, are they by and  
22 large SES volunteers?

23 A. Primarily, by volume, yes. EMQ does have a number of  
24 permanent training staff for the SES in each region,  
25 usually three to four in each region. They will assist in  
26 the train the trainer, they will assist in the  
27 accreditation process and they will also deliver specialist  
28 training when required. So, it is a combination of  
29 full-time permanent staff and volunteer trainers who  
30 deliver training.

31  
32 Q. The expectation is that the volunteers who are  
33 qualified then go on and train people within their groups?

34 A. That's correct. That's something that they would - a  
35 pathway that they would pursue of their own volition.  
36 There is no pressure on them to do it. So, if people want  
37 to move into that training then they are supported with the  
38 Cert IV in training, which is a nationally accredited  
39 certificate so it can be used elsewhere, and then they will  
40 undertake that training. They are certainly encouraged to  
41 but there is no requirement.

42  
43 MR McGARRITY: Q. At the end of the training provided by  
44 the SES members who have attained the Cert IV, do they then  
45 suggest whether a person who they have trained has reached  
46 a level of competence by which --

47 A. Yes, they will have to assess that person. So it's

1 either through training - and I think there are questions  
2 later on about recognition of prior learning, and so on,  
3 and there's a process there.

4  
5 Q. That is a judgment call they make, though, based on --  
6 A. Well, it's a judgment to criteria. There is a  
7 criteria that has to be met either through the delivery of  
8 a particular training course or through an assessment  
9 through the RPL process.

10  
11 MR BAILEY: Q. Is there a view about compensation?  
12 A. Again it goes to, really, a question of volunteerism.  
13 Now, there's a couple of issues here. We have certainly in  
14 the past taken on volunteers in a casual training role when  
15 there has been a specific need for it. If we have had to  
16 deliver a lot of training or deliver training in areas  
17 outside of the east coast, for example - more remote areas  
18 - and there aren't qualified trainers out there, we have on  
19 occasion taken volunteers, put them on either as casual  
20 staff or contract staff and paid them to go and deliver  
21 training. But that's not the norm; that would be for a  
22 specific purpose.

23  
24 The question about should they be compensated, I  
25 think, goes to a - and compensation, I guess, is also a  
26 fairly wide reach. Should they be paid, is one question.  
27 Should they be compensated if they travel? They certainly  
28 are. If a volunteer trainer was to go from Brisbane to  
29 Roma to deliver a training course, then all of the costs  
30 associated with their travel, meal allowances - all those  
31 things - would be met by EMQ. They wouldn't necessarily  
32 receive payment for that unless that was part of one of  
33 those programs that I referred to earlier.

34  
35 Q. Question 2: Is it possible to amalgamate SES training  
36 with other emergency services training; for example, the  
37 Rural Fire Brigade?

38 A. Yes, it certainly is and that is done. There are a  
39 number of courses where accreditation is joint, so if you  
40 receive the training in the Rural Fire Service then that is  
41 recognised in the SES and vice-versa. I can actually read  
42 you a list of what those courses might be: Communicate in  
43 the workplace, protect and preserve incident scene,  
44 maintain safety at an incident scene, provide service to  
45 clients, work in a team, follow defined occupational health  
46 and safety policy and procedures, work effectively in a  
47 public safety organisation, apply first aid, operate

1 communication systems and equipment, work as a team member  
2 in an emergency operations centre, map reading and  
3 navigation, trim and crosscut felled trees - it's a  
4 chainsaw course - undertake flood and inland waterways  
5 rescue boat operations, search as a member of a land search  
6 team, and conduct briefings and debriefings.

7  
8 They're ones that if you were to receive that in the  
9 other service, then that would be automatically recognised.  
10 Other courses where there may be - that may have been taken  
11 externally to that, we would certainly look at the  
12 recognition of prior learning and apply that policy.

13  
14 Q. One of those training areas that you mentioned,  
15 emergency operations centre training, what is that exactly?

16 A. That's an introductory course to working in an  
17 emergency operations centre. That is a generic term.  
18 There is a question later on about some conflicting  
19 terminology, and so on. EOC or emergency operations centre  
20 is a generic term to work in an incident coordination  
21 centre or a disaster coordination centre. It's an  
22 introductory course and then there are further courses that  
23 deal with specific elements of that.

24  
25 Q. So, Incident Management Team training?

26 A. There's another course introduction to Incident  
27 Management Team. Again, that's a fairly short course.  
28 It's a generic "This is what an Incident Management Team is  
29 about, this is what it seeks to achieve". Then there's  
30 further training about the functions that would occur in  
31 there.

32  
33 Q. The EOC one is directed to the latter?

34 A. Yes, that's an introductory course, yes. It's an  
35 overview, if you like, of an emergency operations centre.  
36 If that's delivered in Rural Fire or it's delivered in the  
37 SES, they are recognised across those two services.

38  
39 Q. Question 3: Has there been any work by EMQ to  
40 consolidate the position of local controller in those local  
41 governments that have more than one unit? The Disaster  
42 Management Act seems to intend only one local controller  
43 per local government area. Perhaps we might deal with that  
44 question first.

45 A. Yes. I think the assumption in relation to the Act is  
46 a correct one. The Act is not absolutely crystal clear but  
47 I think when you read several parts of the Act, it tends to

1 infer one local government, one local controller. I guess  
2 the conflicting issue arises post-amalgamation, when we  
3 have moved from in excess of 150 local governments to 73.  
4 That has increased the size, the scale, the scope of a role  
5 of a single local controller in a very big local government  
6 area. There are issues around span of control, how many  
7 groups can a local controller - particularly a volunteer  
8 local controller - reasonably be expected to manage. Then  
9 there are issues of distance. If the next group is a few  
10 hundred kilometres away, is there any reasonable  
11 expectation that a local controller is going to be visible,  
12 is going to provide regular oversight, assistance and  
13 support to that group.

14  
15 Q. Are there any specific areas or local government  
16 areas, post-amalgamation, where the issue of span of  
17 control, as you have described it, is being specifically  
18 addressed?

19 A. It has been addressed differently by different local  
20 government areas. Some have agreed to deputy local  
21 controllers. For example, Toowoomba Regional Council has  
22 just moved to a model - and caused some anguish amongst its  
23 volunteer community - where deputy controllers were made  
24 group leaders. Some saw that as a downgrade. They  
25 actually performed exactly the same functions at the end of  
26 it, so it was, realistically, a title change only. So,  
27 they have moved to a single local controller and then  
28 deputies and then group leaders. They have a paid local  
29 controller. There are others in North Queensland where a  
30 number of local controllers have been appointed in a single  
31 local government area.

32  
33 Q. I think Central Highlands Regional Council may be one  
34 where they are trying to move to a single local controller  
35 with various deputies --

36 A. Yes.

37  
38 Q. -- as I recall the evidence.

39 A. Yes. If there is going to be a suggestion of a  
40 mandating of a model, then I think that there needs to be  
41 analysis of what that actually means and then a relook at a  
42 structure that would sit underneath that which actually  
43 enables the intent of the SES to be delivered. I guess it  
44 goes to a number of other questions about where the  
45 Commission may seek to make recommendations in relation to  
46 payment and professionalisation and a whole range of things  
47 that seem to be intended in here. I'm not quite sure where

1 it's going, but I think we have to look at it as a whole  
2 package, rather than break it down into component parts.

3  
4 Q. The process that you have described with Toowoomba  
5 Regional Council, is that process being driven by local  
6 government on an ad hoc basis or is EMQ actively involved  
7 in that in some sort of collaborative or supervisory role?

8 A. That's being driven by local government. There is no  
9 policy approach that EMQ is taking at present, simply  
10 because we are, I guess, waiting for the Commission to  
11 finish its work, understanding that it is going to focus on  
12 this particular area. So, we have made no proactive moves  
13 in that area.

14  
15 Q. Do you see it as desirable for the practical  
16 arrangements to reflect the intent of the Act in this  
17 regard or what we infer the intent to be - because, as you  
18 have said, it's not made explicit but the inference seems  
19 to be that this is the structural arrangement that's  
20 intended?

21 A. The difficulty with having a single approach mandated  
22 by legislation is that the local governments have very  
23 different character. There are big, very well-resourced  
24 financially and otherwise councils, there are very, very  
25 small remote and regional councils. So, to have a single  
26 model that applies uniformly to all of those, without some  
27 recognition that there is either a variance that goes to  
28 the core of what it is that you might want to legislate or  
29 that there needs to be a recognition that there might need  
30 to be some practical approach to that, either a  
31 substructure that sits under local controller and recognise  
32 that through either legislation or policy, I think, would  
33 be the way that we need to approach this.

34  
35 Part of the issue that both the State and local  
36 governments confront is that there is a single piece of  
37 legislation that has some quite simple intents in it; the  
38 application of that across the variety of scale, scope and  
39 viability - in some cases - of local government makes it  
40 difficult to have a uniform application of that.

41  
42 MR McGARRITY: Q. Has there been any feedback through your  
43 area and regional directors from local governments as to  
44 how the current arrangements are operating, given that  
45 different local governments have different ways in which  
46 they operate?

47 A. Well, I think the different ways in which they're

1 currently operating answers that question. Yes, there are  
2 different views and different approaches to how local  
3 governments have dealt with that. We have taken an  
4 approach where we don't believe that getting into conflict  
5 with local government over this issue is of any benefit to  
6 the volunteers. I guess what we have now is a set of  
7 arrangements that are not uniform but they're delivering a  
8 reasonably uniform outcome. It comes down more to the,  
9 almost, nomenclature about what particular roles are  
10 called.

11  
12 MR BAILEY: Q. Is that all it is, just renaming people so  
13 it accords with the Act and managing their disenchantment  
14 if they think they have been demoted in some way, or is it  
15 more than that?

16 A. No, I really don't think so. I don't underestimate  
17 managing the disenchantment side of it. Volunteers  
18 volunteer for a number of reasons and for some it is to  
19 have a very visible role in their community. But I think  
20 across all of the - what are seen as different models, if  
21 we actually just call people common names across that,  
22 we're probably able to map an outcome that wouldn't mean  
23 terribly much change.

24  
25 Q. I suppose that leads into the second part of question  
26 3: Is there an anomaly here in relation to there being  
27 potentially more than one local controller who is put in  
28 charge of a disaster response in a local government area?

29 A. Just in terms of the language used in that, a local  
30 controller is not in charge of a disaster. I know that is  
31 probably not the intent of it but, just reading through the  
32 questions, I think there continues to be a level of  
33 confusion around the function of disaster management and  
34 the function of disaster operations.

35  
36 The SES is not involved in disaster management; it  
37 doesn't have a role in disaster management. Disaster  
38 management is the overall coordination of the event and the  
39 response to the event, and that's a role undertaken by a  
40 Local Disaster Management Group, a District Disaster  
41 Management Group and a State Disaster Management Group.  
42 They are responsible for disaster management.

43  
44 The SES is responsible for one area of operation in  
45 disaster operations. It has its functions and it basically  
46 should be, and is, limited to delivering those functions in  
47 a disaster event. The issues around its management or

1 command and control - however you want to characterise that  
2 - only relate to the delivery of those functions, nothing  
3 more.  
4

5 What we are talking about here is should a local  
6 coordinator be in command and control - a local controller,  
7 sorry, be in command and control of his or her SES unit in  
8 the delivery of their functions during a disaster event.  
9 The answer to that is yes. The model that we have just,  
10 perhaps, talked about is would a deputy local controller or  
11 a group leader have the same function for the people who  
12 sit underneath them. The answer to that is yes. So, then  
13 the role of a local controller would be around coordinating  
14 those SES for the delivery of their functions only in the  
15 area of operations; do they have the right number of  
16 people, what are our priorities here versus there, and so  
17 on.  
18

19 Q. But are you aware of any difficulties where single  
20 local government areas still have multiple local  
21 controllers because there are multiple units, in terms of  
22 performing the SES responsibilities?

23 A. No, I haven't had any evidence of that.  
24

25 Q. Question 4: Does the SES Doctrine state explicitly  
26 that there should be one local controller per unit?

27 A. Yes, it does.  
28

29 Q. Which ODI?

30 A. That's BMA 8, 4.1:  
31

32 *Each SES unit must have one local*  
33 *controller appointed in accordance with the*  
34 *DM Act.*  
35

36 You can have a copy of that as well.  
37

38 MR McGARRITY: Thanks. So that's valid from 19 November  
39 2010.  
40

41 MR BAILEY: That is business management directive BMA 8.0.  
42

43 Q. Question 5: Is there a need for greater information  
44 sharing between EMQ and local government, particularly with  
45 regard to what training EMQ has provided to the local SES  
46 and information about the SES groups in their area?

47 A. The issue of need here, I guess, is the question. I'm

1 not quite sure what a local government would do with the  
2 information. It is quite low level, in terms of who is  
3 trained and what qualifications they have. So, I'm not  
4 sure that there is a need for the data to be transferred to  
5 a local government.  
6

7 Local government and the State agree on the functions  
8 of the SES for that particular area and local government  
9 may well have an interest in do we have sufficient people  
10 trained in a particular function. I think that's entirely  
11 legitimate and I would strongly encourage the most frequent  
12 possible dialogue between local government, EMQ and the  
13 local controller around those strategic issues of do we  
14 have an SES that is sufficient in number and trained to  
15 respond to the risks that are in our particular local  
16 government area. I think that's a conversation that should  
17 occur and it should occur frequently.  
18

19 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on that, is it incumbent then on  
20 the local government to make inquiries about the relevant  
21 SES capability within their area or is it incumbent on EMQ  
22 to be proactive and provide that?

23 A. The question of incumbency is, I guess, a little  
24 fraught. There is no policy or no framework in which that  
25 occurs. What we have, certainly through our permanent  
26 staff, is an arrangement where frequent dialogue is  
27 encouraged with local government on a range of issues  
28 around both the SES and disaster management more generally.  
29 We play a significant supporting role and advisory role to  
30 local government in the development of their local disaster  
31 management plans. If there are issues identified in terms  
32 of gaps around capability or capacity, then that's where  
33 that conversation should occur. We would never withhold  
34 information from a local government if it was requested.  
35

36 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 6 arises out of one of the  
37 attachments to your most recent statement. I think that's  
38 the Brisbane SES debrief.

39 A. Oh, yes.

40  
41 Q. There was a comment in there about RFAs for flood  
42 boats and the issue of three-way tasking between Surf Life  
43 Saving Queensland, SES and QPS. Apparently there was  
44 something done in that regard which was, I think, regarded  
45 as reasonably successful. Is there anything being done to  
46 promote that further or to develop that further?

47 A. I guess there 's two points that are relevant to that.

1 One is that since then we have actually executed a  
2 memorandum of understanding with Queensland Surf Life  
3 Saving, and the second is that there is a meeting on this  
4 Friday that will include EMQ, Surf and Police, where they  
5 will finalise the arrangements - well, I'm not sure that  
6 they will finalise them on the day, but the intent is that  
7 that meeting will progress the finalisation of any  
8 documentational protocol that needs to exist around there.

9  
10 This is not an issue that I have heard raised by any  
11 other part of the State. The areas where it would be most  
12 likely would be on the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast,  
13 where there's very active surf life saving clubs. We would  
14 certainly undertake to make whatever protocol is developed  
15 out of the Brisbane arrangements available broadly,  
16 certainly to all those councils in the coastal regions  
17 where surf life saving has a presence. That would be  
18 handled under that memorandum of understanding. It's a  
19 heads of agreement, so it doesn't go to the detail that  
20 this will, but it certainly provides a mechanism whereby  
21 these things can occur.

22  
23 Q. You said that MOU has been executed?

24 A. Yes.

25  
26 Q. Are we able to see a copy of that?

27 A. You can have one. It will make my folder much  
28 lighter.

29  
30 Q. Thank you. Moving on to question 7, RFA Online, could  
31 you just explain how RFA Online actually works? I  
32 understand that it's the mechanism for transferring  
33 requests for help that arise through 132500. That's the  
34 starting point?

35 A. Yes, that's its primary - the primary input into RFA  
36 Online is calls to 132500.

37  
38 Q. If you can just explain how it works?

39 A. RFA Online is an SES tasking system, it's not a  
40 disaster management system. Its only purpose is to  
41 capture, record, manage and report on SES tasks. It can do  
42 that by categories, and so on. As I say, principally, a  
43 call from a member of the public for assistance will come  
44 to 132500.

45  
46 Since the last sittings of the Commission, we have  
47 worked with Smart Service Queensland and we have actually

1 developed an onscreen interface. Previously there were  
2 about three steps to get a call into RFA Online. Now the  
3 operator can directly input the data into RFA Online.  
4 There's one step, so it's both efficient and it avoids  
5 duplication and opportunities for error.  
6

7 That then comes into RFA Online and those tasks can  
8 then be distributed to particular SES groups, and those  
9 groups that have RFA Online - and not all have it as yet.  
10 Some don't have connectivity, some don't have computers. I  
11 will deal with that, if you like, at the end of the  
12 question. So, they can get visibility of that. If they  
13 don't have RFA Online, we can certainly deploy - it's a  
14 deployable capability. A group of people with laptops can  
15 go into a centre, connect in wirelessly, get the  
16 information and start then to manage RFA Online.  
17

18 Q. How do you mean "get visibility of that"?

19 A. The number of jobs, the type of jobs. All of that  
20 information, if you like, helps to be able to assess do I  
21 have enough people to meet these tasks in a reasonable  
22 time, do I have the skills, do I need something else, do I  
23 need more tarpaulins, do I need more equipment of a certain  
24 type, is this something where we might need to deploy  
25 additional people with additional skills or additional  
26 equipment. So, to anticipate and get ahead, if you like,  
27 of what the demand might be on days two and three, we  
28 actually - by being able to analyse the tasks that are  
29 immediately being input - make some assessments about the  
30 future requirements, whereas if you've just got a pile of  
31 paper, it's a bit hard to undertake that analysis.  
32

33 Q. That assists in the management of ongoing needs and  
34 resources --

35 A. Yes.  
36

37 Q. -- once the system is up and running?

38 A. Yes.  
39

40 Q. What about at the first inception, the first hit-out?  
41 A call comes into 132500 and the SSQ operator inputs it  
42 into RFA Online?

43 A. Yes.  
44

45 Q. Where does it go from there?

46 A. Just in a normal environment where we are getting a  
47 few jobs, maybe overnight, it will come to the EMQ watch

1 desk. That's its first destination. That's manned  
2 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Then it's distributed  
3 electronically or by telephone, depending on whether the  
4 unit has RFA Online, but it would be both, particularly if  
5 it's at night.  
6

7 If there is a job going to Mackay at 2 o'clock in the  
8 morning, it will come through to the watch desk and the  
9 watch desk will make an early assessment of is it something  
10 that we need to do now. So, if it's storm damage, a  
11 damaged roof, we would make a phone call to the Mackay SES  
12 and alert them to the job. If they have RFA, they'd then  
13 be able to see the job online, otherwise we would either  
14 email, fax - or what have you - the job through to them.  
15

16 MR McGARRITY: Q. That communication goes to the local  
17 controller?

18 A. Local controller or nominee. We have a number of - we  
19 have a call tree, if you like, and they might nominate  
20 someone to be on call, those sorts of things.  
21

22 MR BAILEY: Q. With the call tree, presumably your local  
23 controller is the top of the list?

24 A. Yes.  
25

26 Q. What, is it home phone, work phone, mobile?

27 A. Yes.  
28

29 Q. Do they have pagers?

30 A. Some do, I believe, yes. Very rarely, yes, but some  
31 do.  
32

33 Q. All of those options are available and that's the way  
34 you bring it to their attention?

35 A. Yes.  
36

37 Q. They turn on their computer, log in - bang - there it  
38 is?

39 A. Yes. I guess if I can make a point or a comment at  
40 this juncture as well, the SES is not an emergency response  
41 organisation per se. This is not triple 0 calls for  
42 immediate threat to life or immediate threat to property.  
43 This is a service provided to the community and best  
44 efforts will always be used. We don't have, if you like -  
45 Fire, Ambulance and Police will have targets for response  
46 times, and so on. We are a volunteer organisation  
47 providing a service, so expectations need to be

1 commensurate with both the structure and the nature of the  
2 organisation. I think it's quite important to make that  
3 distinction in any analysis that's being done around any  
4 potential changes to either the structure, the funding or  
5 the nature of the SES.  
6

7 Q. Fair enough. The EMQ watch desk is at Kedron, is it?  
8 A. Yes.  
9

10 Q. How many people staff that?

11 A. There's a rotation. Two shifts per day of three  
12 people.  
13

14 Q. Do you have the capacity to ramp that up?

15 A. Yes. This is, if you like, the permanent capacity.  
16 What they are basically there to do is to be available for  
17 warnings. The Bureau may issue a warning for a storm in  
18 the middle of the night; they will then distribute that,  
19 again through a call tree, electronically - that will be  
20 through text messages, and so on.  
21

22 Q. To SES local controllers or to --

23 A. No. This will be to a much wider variety of people.  
24 This will mainly be local government, other emergency  
25 services, and so on. There are no jobs yet, this is the  
26 warning of some extreme weather event or severe weather  
27 event. They do tsunami warnings, they do weather warnings,  
28 earthquake warnings - all those sort of things. Hopefully  
29 we never get tsunamis or earthquakes.  
30

31 The other things they do is manage those requests for  
32 assistance that come through 132500 and they will  
33 distribute those. They undertake a range of project work,  
34 and so on.  
35

36 MR McGARRITY: Q. Could I just touch on something you  
37 mentioned previously about the SES not being an emergency  
38 service organisation, more of a community service  
39 organisation?

40 A. Mmm.  
41

42 Q. Is that something that's not well understood in the  
43 community or is there a misperception that the SES does  
44 provide emergency services?

45 A. Well, there is still a misconception around the SES  
46 that it is an entirely volunteer organisation. It's  
47 lessening. I think some data - I'm guessing here, but I

1 think it was around 30 to 40 percent of people recognised  
2 that the SES was a volunteer organisation, so the balance  
3 thought they were paid. I think that drives then a  
4 misconception about their role and performance  
5 expectations. So I think, yes, that's shifted.  
6

7 Again, on my understanding, one of the insurance  
8 companies has done some research and I think that  
9 recognition is now over 50 percent - raw numbers again - in  
10 terms of the recognition of volunteering.  
11

12 MR BAILEY: Q. You mentioned that some SES units have the  
13 IT capacity to operate RFA Online. In percentage terms,  
14 what are we looking at there - unless you have some more  
15 specific information?

16 A. Look, I don't - that's current usage (handed). I  
17 guess one of the issues here is around the ability to  
18 actually connect, and the State's response to the interim  
19 recommendations from the Commission have seen some  
20 additional money flow to us for that specific purpose. We  
21 have \$500,000 per annum recurrent to look at specific  
22 issues of connectivity. So, can units actually - do they  
23 have a business rate internet connection. Because the  
24 money is recurrent, if there are ones that don't and we  
25 need to fund that or need to negotiate a funding  
26 arrangement with a local government, then we have the  
27 capacity to certainly continue to fund that on a recurrent  
28 basis.  
29

30 In addition to that, there is another \$500,000 a year  
31 around development of application systems/software to  
32 support operations and administration. So, there is an  
33 ability now to start a program to respond, to improve the  
34 connection of RFA, for example, to all groups.  
35

36 Q. You have provided us with a table, thank you, dealing  
37 with RFA use as at 7 November 2011. There are just a  
38 couple of terms in here that I would like you to explain,  
39 if you could. You say "the number using ICCS". What does  
40 ICCS stand for?

41 A. That's an instant coordination software of various  
42 types. Guardian is one that you have referred to  
43 previously. Other councils might be using other types of  
44 software.  
45

46 Q. I see one here called Contego. That's another --

47 A. Yes. I'm not specifically aware of that one. I'm

1 certainly happy to answer if there are any particular  
2 questions that come out of that.

3  
4 Q. We have jumped around a bit here because I think we've  
5 probably touched on questions 8 and 9 already. We have  
6 received some feedback that some councils are not so  
7 interested in RFA Online because they have Guardian up and  
8 running and they are happy with that.

9 A. Yes.

10  
11 Q. They have some reservations about double-handling  
12 information by having the RFA Online as well. Is there  
13 some sort of interface between these two systems?

14 A. Yes.

15  
16 Q. Can they operate together?

17 A. Maybe if I just make a comment about question 8,  
18 because I think that is still relevant around access to  
19 RFA. The intent of RFA is that it is made available. It's  
20 not a system that we are seeking to protect. Clearly it's  
21 containing information around properties that are damaged,  
22 and so on, so there's an element that we do need to provide  
23 some security, so it's password protected but within the  
24 disaster management environment, it's made freely  
25 available. There is no intent to limit its use other than  
26 to protect the privacy of people who have their details  
27 entered on it. It's available to councils as well. It's  
28 available via the web, so you can just log on, put your  
29 password in and access the information.

30  
31 The question that you have just posed around any  
32 conflict between RFA and Guardian - certainly Guardian can  
33 do some of the things that RFA does. It's a system that  
34 captures information around tasks. But Guardian is  
35 principally a disaster management system, so it's around  
36 capturing information on all of the aspects of damage, of  
37 impact, of consequence that a disaster event may cause.  
38 Damage to the roads infrastructure, bridges, culverts; what  
39 are other assets that have been damaged; calls from the  
40 public around perhaps a nursing home that has been  
41 impacted; all of those sorts of things.

42  
43 I guess the power of Guardian is that it is designed  
44 to link into the back end of councils' systems, so systems  
45 around their rates base and all the data that they would  
46 hold around their community and the infrastructure within  
47 their local government. RFA is specifically a system

1 designed to manage the tasking of the SES, so it is very,  
2 very specific, it is very, very narrow. It is not to do  
3 anything else, not intended to do anything else.  
4

5 I think the second part of your question was about the  
6 movement of data. We are working - and we have provided  
7 some funding to the developers of Guardian - to have an  
8 interface between RFA and Guardian so that summary data can  
9 move across, so that information on jobs that have come  
10 through RFA can be displayed geo-spatially, so we can put  
11 them on a map. We can provide applications to councils to  
12 do that if they don't have the capability, a program called  
13 TOM, Total Operations Mapping. So either through that - we  
14 don't really care how they use it, but we are working  
15 towards making that information available both  
16 electronically and in reporting format, if that's needed.  
17

18 MR McGARRITY: Q. What sort of timeframe would you be  
19 looking at for that compatibility to be --

20 A. This would be our next wet season outcome.  
21

22 MR BAILEY: Q. 2012/2013?

23 A. Yes.  
24

25 Q. Job completion for RFA Online would be logged by the  
26 SES on the ground?

27 A. Yes.  
28

29 Q. It goes back into the system --

30 A. Yes.  
31

32 Q. -- that is monitored by EMQ?

33 A. Mmm.  
34

35 Q. And presumably --

36 A. Well, may or may not be, depending on the nature of  
37 the event. There are some events where EMQ has no need and  
38 no expectation that we would become involved. That can be  
39 a reasonably sized but localised event. The local  
40 controller and his or her team will manage that and provide  
41 the reporting of all that information. Major, complex  
42 events, that's when we start to get into providing some  
43 level of assistance and oversight.  
44

45 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is that decision made when the initial  
46 RFA goes to the watch desk, whether or not EMQ wants to  
47 monitor the situation or perhaps get involved at a later

1 date?

2 A. There would be two ways of managing that. Again,  
3 there is a question later on about duty officers. If we  
4 were receiving a number of requests for assistance in a  
5 particular localised area, we would provide those to the  
6 SES and we would also advise the duty officer that there is  
7 an event of some substance occurring. Then the local  
8 controller or the executive of the SES and the duty officer  
9 would work out how they wanted to manage that; is there a  
10 need, is there some assistance required from EMQ, is the  
11 SES happy and capable of managing that on their own. That  
12 would be a negotiated outcome.

13

14 Q. Now might be actually opportune to just get some more  
15 information about the role of the duty officer and where  
16 they fit into the picture?

17 A. That's pretty much it. It's an on-call - they are our  
18 staff, so our permanent staff; they are on-call, so they  
19 have a mobile phone with a consistent number for each  
20 region. There is a State duty manager at the moment. We  
21 are looking to perhaps move away from a State duty manager.  
22 Now that we have additional resources in the watch desk,  
23 there's probably not a need to have that. They are there  
24 really for the specific purpose of managing out-of-hours  
25 operations.

26

27 MR BAILEY: Q. Just getting back to the use of RFA Online,  
28 this document provided to us is a static snapshot of where  
29 we are at?

30 A. Yes.

31

32 Q. What encouragement, if you will, is being given in  
33 terms of the take-up or the roll-out of the system? What  
34 is being done to promote it and how far do you expect this  
35 to go?

36 A. My objective is to have it in all SES units and  
37 groups. Whether that is achievable or not, that's a  
38 stretch but certainly a target. Now, there are some  
39 issues. How much effort do we need to go through for a  
40 Paroo or a Bulloo Shire Council, with a population of 350  
41 in 90,000 square kilometres, to put a complex IT system in.  
42 They can probably manage their events on a whiteboard with  
43 post-it notes very effectively.

44

45 So, that would be an assessment that would be made.  
46 Is there actually a benefit in going down that path?  
47 There's certainly a benefit to EMQ because every bit of

1 data helps and the more quickly we can gather the data and  
2 be able to use that in the disaster management framework,  
3 then that is beneficial. But we certainly wouldn't want to  
4 impose an onerous obligation onto a small remote council  
5 when there is no benefit from it. So, that would be, I  
6 guess, a determining factor.

7  
8 Is there a strategy in operation today to roll it out,  
9 other than active encouragement by our regions? The answer  
10 to that is no. Will there be, now that we have been able  
11 to secure some funding so that we can actually be much more  
12 proactive in saying if the reason you're not using this is  
13 because you don't have the infrastructure, we can solve  
14 that problem for you. So, post- this wet season - we won't  
15 be doing anything probably until March but come next year,  
16 we will be actively working with local governments and SESs  
17 to promote the use of RFA where it is not currently used.

18  
19 We are starting to - with all new things there is  
20 always a bit of resistance. The fact that we have now used  
21 it very, very effectively and a number of people on  
22 deployment, particularly for Cyclone Yasi and to Townsville  
23 and Cairns, have seen how effective it can be in making the  
24 management of tasking much more efficient.

25  
26 Q. Moving on to question 10, again this arises out of the  
27 Brisbane SES debrief note. There was a comment there about  
28 radio channels and radio equipment in Far North Queensland  
29 being different from what was in use by SES groups deployed  
30 from South-East Queensland, and compatibility problems. Is  
31 that being addressed?

32 A. What I understand occurred there is Brisbane City  
33 Council has issued digital radios to a number of their SES  
34 units. That's not a standard practice, so that's not the  
35 standard for the SES. Digital radios don't work on UHF  
36 channels and never will. In the rest of the State, any UHF  
37 radio will work on those repeater sites in Far North  
38 Queensland. It was really an issue of some non-standard  
39 equipment having been issued.

40  
41 Are digital radios better than UHF? The answer to  
42 that's probably yes. We don't have them Statewide, so we  
43 do need a Statewide solution to be able to provide  
44 consistent outcomes when we move people around, and that's  
45 a very significant issue for the SES.

46  
47 Q. Is that to be regarded as an isolated incident?

1 A. I think it's an anomaly, an isolated case.  
2  
3 Q. Can it readily be solved by issuing UHF equipment on  
4 deployment?  
5 A. I think they have the UHF, they have just chosen, of  
6 their own volition, to issue a different type of radio. I  
7 think the reason for that is they actually have a digital  
8 network for their own council staff, so they actually have  
9 the infrastructure and they have made that call. It's an  
10 issue that we will need to be aware of in any future  
11 deployments either into or out of Brisbane.  
12  
13 Q. Whose responsibility would it be for additional UHF  
14 radio equipment? Would EMQ provide that to a Brisbane  
15 group?  
16 A. That's equipment that we provide through our funding  
17 stream, yes. But, again, I don't think the issue was that  
18 they didn't have enough equipment; the issue was that they  
19 chose to use different equipment.  
20  
21 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on that point, could EMQ staff, in  
22 the instance of that employment, direct those people who  
23 are on deployment to use UHF as opposed to trying to stick  
24 with the digital equipment?  
25 A. That's what would have happened. I think what you've  
26 got is some volunteers who said, oh, we were deployed to  
27 North Queensland and our radios didn't work.  
28  
29 Q. This is just an observation, effectively --  
30 A. Yes.  
31  
32 Q. -- from those people?  
33 A. They would be immediately issued with UHF radios and  
34 connected in. It's probably somebody has seen it as - you  
35 know.  
36  
37 Q. As a problem that doesn't really exist?  
38 A. As a problem - yes, that's right.  
39  
40 MR BAILEY: Q. That is easily addressed?  
41 A. Yes. We certainly wouldn't want to see more instances  
42 of individual councils making individual decisions around  
43 equipment because that then flows back to a whole range of  
44 issues around management and support. Training is based on  
45 an equipment profile. Radios are not related to - well,  
46 they are related to safety in the instance that if you're  
47 not in communication, then that can be an issue, but it's

1 not a direct safety issue. But different equipment can  
2 bring with it safety issues, particularly when the training  
3 and the equipment are not aligned. So, there's a whole  
4 range of things that flow back and it comes back to the  
5 dilemma always about standardisation provides uniformity  
6 and efficiency. People can always identify that in this  
7 particular circumstance, this other piece of equipment  
8 would be better or, more often, "I like this particular  
9 piece of equipment so why can't I? Why don't we use it?"

10  
11 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is Brisbane City Council the only  
12 council you are aware of at the moment that supplies  
13 digital equipment?

14 A. Yes, it's the only one I'm aware of.

15  
16 MR BAILEY: Did you want to deal with question 11?

17  
18 MR McGARRITY: Yes.

19  
20 Q. Question 11. I think this was an attachment to your  
21 statement. There was some suggestion of an SES supporters  
22 website for businesses and I think that was a means of  
23 saying thank you for allowing your employees to attend SES  
24 business, perhaps during work hours, and so forth. Has  
25 there been any movement on that or any --

26 A. It's a great idea. I can't find where I said it.

27  
28 Q. I think it was attachment 12.

29 A. Oh, okay.

30  
31 Q. It might have been in part of the debrief, actually.

32 A. Yes - no. This is a - yes

33  
34 Q. So it's not an EMQ --

35 A. No. But, look, it's something we attempt to do on a  
36 regular basis ad hoc. We always take the opportunity to  
37 publicly thank employers. We offer certificates so  
38 employers can have a visible - you know, identify that they  
39 have supported the SES. I think the issue raised is a good  
40 idea and we have looked to put something on our website or  
41 on the volunteer portal. It's not something that I have  
42 actively turned my mind to, to this point, but now that you  
43 have raised it, I will.

44  
45 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 12: If you could just describe  
46 the role and functions of taskforces and how they are  
47 selected, including a brief overview of their deployment?

1 A. Yes. A taskforce for the SES is established when it's  
2 identified that there is a resource requirement, a  
3 particular skill set that might be required or in  
4 anticipation of those two things. Now, there are two ways  
5 that a taskforce could come about; one is through a  
6 specific request from the receiving group, so either  
7 through the local controller or the Local Disaster  
8 Management Group there, or if, for example, the district or  
9 the State Disaster Management Group, based on data  
10 available to it, was generating a concern that something  
11 might be going to happen in the future, it could anticipate  
12 and say, look, we need to be ready, so we might look at  
13 either pre-deploying or having a deployment ready in  
14 anticipation of a need presenting itself. They're the two  
15 ways in which a deployment might be mounted.  
16

17 The selection is - there's a couple of stages to that.  
18 One, we would go to an area where they have no activity or  
19 little activity. So we wouldn't be - you know, if there's  
20 a flood coming to Brisbane, we wouldn't be looking for  
21 Ipswich or the south-west region, we'd be saying, okay, we  
22 need to go to our central northern or far northern regions  
23 to select those taskforces. It's based on a risk  
24 assessment of what potential there is for an event to occur  
25 in the area where we might be selecting people from.  
26

27 The participation in it is voluntary, so an individual  
28 SES member - we will put the call out through the local  
29 controller and group leaders that we need this sort of  
30 taskforce. They will receive a document that says this is  
31 what the taskforce is for, this is the sort of skills we  
32 want, this is where it will be, this is the duration; all  
33 of the details that would reasonably be expected that  
34 people should know. That's documented.  
35

36 They will then talk to their members and people will  
37 volunteer. They will come back to Kedron and say we have  
38 two, three, five, ten volunteers willing to be part of the  
39 deployment. We'll then manage all of that, select people  
40 and then the deployment will occur.  
41

42 They get briefings before they go, before they are to  
43 leave. They will get a briefing when they arrive. So,  
44 they will be told what you are going for, what to expect,  
45 etc. They will then get a briefing when they arrive about  
46 what's actually happening on the ground, any particular  
47 issues, the conditions they are likely to be working in,

1 the sort of tasks they will be looking at, what the  
2 coordination management incident control arrangements will  
3 be, etc.  
4

5 They will then stay for - what is it? A day there, a  
6 day back - it's usually three days on the ground, to manage  
7 fatigue. They always want to stay longer. Then they will  
8 get a debrief when they return and an opportunity to  
9 present any issues they might have encountered, to make  
10 suggestions for improvements, and so on. Those things are  
11 captured.  
12

13 Q. Question 13 --

14 A. Sorry. And they will be accompanied - and I think 13  
15 might go to this, about EMQ's role in that? No.  
16

17 Q. No.

18 A. All task forces are accompanied by an EMQ liaison  
19 officer. There are a couple of reasons for that. Having  
20 permanent staff with deployments is a good thing, and they  
21 also hold a credit card so they can pay for accommodation,  
22 pay for meals, meet any incidentals. You know, if a  
23 chainsaw breaks, they can go and buy another chainsaw at  
24 Bunnings, or whatever it is we need. They can take care of  
25 all of those issues around support and welfare, and so on,  
26 for the volunteers.  
27

28 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is it the liaison officer who conducts  
29 the briefing and the debriefing sessions?

30 A. It may or may not be. It depends. I've done it on  
31 occasion, the people who are raising - who are managing the  
32 coordination of the deployments might do it, a regional  
33 director could do it, an area director could do it.  
34

35 Q. But it's always an EMQ officer?

36 A. Yes. I've not seen one - I mean, I can imagine a  
37 circumstance where it might be a local controller who's  
38 given the information. There's no reason to say that it  
39 couldn't be. But in all the instances I have seen, it has  
40 been EMQ, simply because we have been the organisation  
41 actually managing all of the logistics, so we have all the  
42 information, pretty much.  
43

44 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 13 I think we have touched on  
45 already in the context of question 2, although I think  
46 question 2 dealt with cross-recognition of RFB type  
47 training.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. I suppose we are asking there is there any scope for  
4 broader recognition?

5 A. If you like, that's our applicant guide for  
6 recognition of prior learning (handed), so that's how we  
7 approach it. I guess I have a couple of observations.  
8 From a policy position, we certainly recognise prior  
9 learning; we have a predisposition to ensure that we do  
10 that. Being a very widely distributed organisation with a  
11 volunteer executive, over which we exercise a level of  
12 control but not a management type control, there are  
13 certainly, I guess, around the State some variations in  
14 interpretation of the policy.

15

16 I know of instances where people have indicated that  
17 it is very difficult in the local environment to get  
18 recognition of prior learning and they are retrained in  
19 things. That's certainly not something that we are  
20 supportive of. Through our training team, we are working  
21 through our regions to provide as much information,  
22 encouragement, support for RPL as an instrument for people  
23 to get skills.

24

25 Having said that, very clearly we won't compromise  
26 standards. The safety of our volunteers is always our  
27 primary objective and we won't resile from that. If that  
28 creates a conflict, and so on, then I will always err on  
29 the side of providing a safe working environment and  
30 ensuring that I can demonstrate that safe working  
31 environment. So that's, I guess, our position.

32

33 Having said that, it has been raised sufficient times  
34 throughout the course of this Inquiry and in the noise that  
35 an Inquiry of this nature creates in the community, so I  
36 think that there is certainly an issue for volunteers  
37 around the ease of access to a recognition of prior skills,  
38 prior learning.

39

40 What we will do after this wet season is I will have  
41 an independent assessment conducted around our training  
42 environment, its appropriateness, focusing primarily on the  
43 delivery. I don't think there is any issue with the  
44 programs themselves. That's never come into question.  
45 It's around how are those training outcomes delivered. We  
46 will be undertaking that from around March next year and  
47 that will be a - I haven't actually let it yet, I haven't

1 written the terms of reference for it, but it will  
2 certainly be broad-based and volunteers will certainly be a  
3 primary source of information for that.  
4

5 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is it in some respects an issue of  
6 awareness, in that EMQ has this policy and these systems in  
7 place for RPL and perhaps the volunteers are just not aware  
8 of it or they haven't been informed about its existence?

9 A. No, I don't think so. I'd be very surprised if  
10 volunteers weren't aware of the availability of an RPL  
11 process - very, very surprised. I think the issue is in  
12 its application and in the processes that need to support  
13 it. I think there's too many steps at the moment. It  
14 comes from the volunteer to the trainer to the local  
15 controller to EMQ to our training group. I think, by  
16 design, it is a complex and convoluted process.  
17

18 MR BAILEY: Q. There is no one sticking point; it's an  
19 elongated sort of process?

20 A. That's right, yes. It is a process issue, in my view,  
21 and probably a performance issue across the service around  
22 ensuring that there is a consistent and common application  
23 of the policy intent in all areas of the SES.  
24

25 Q. When you say this process is involved, going up  
26 through the volunteer, the trainer, the local controller,  
27 where does the process stop? Who signs off on it?

28 A. It gets signed off in our training unit. They are the  
29 people who are responsible for ensuring our registered  
30 training organisation, compliance, and so on.  
31

32 Q. Are they the ones who will give or provide  
33 acknowledgment of prior learning?

34 A. They will assess the documentation that has been  
35 prepared at either the group or unit level, it's gone  
36 through the region and then comes to us. In my opinion,  
37 there are too many steps in that and each one of those  
38 steps - given that transmission of information from  
39 volunteer to paid service is often slow. Paperwork is not  
40 something that people who volunteer sign up to do. So, I  
41 think in each step of that process there is an opportunity  
42 for delay, impediment, misunderstanding. It moves up to  
43 the next stage, they haven't met this part of the standard,  
44 it goes back and then people throw their hands up and say  
45 this is all too hard. That, I think, is a legitimate  
46 concern and certainly one that we will be moving to  
47 overcome.

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Q. The review that you talk about implementing next year is designed to --

A. To streamline that process. If there are issues of marketing in that - if we go out and poll the volunteers and I am wrong and most of them say "I didn't know we had access to RPL", then that will obviously be an issue that we will need to address.

MR McGARRITY: Is now a good time to take a break?

MR MacSPORRAN: That would suit us for other reasons.

MR McGARRITY: We will take five minutes.

### SHORT ADJOURNMENT

MR BAILEY: Q. Moving on to question 14, it's just a query about swift water rescue. Is there any place for SES volunteers receiving some level of training in that regard?

A. I don't believe so. Swift water rescue is a Queensland Fire and Rescue Service function. It's governed by an internal policy called State Rescue Policy, which is a policy internal to our department. It simply seeks to identify roles and responsibilities for rescue functions so that we are not doubling up, and so on. Swift water rescue, I think, is a specialised function and should remain within the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service.

Q. Can you envisage any situations where there is a fine line between flood-boat operations and swift water, because the definition of swift water is, I think, anything moving faster than about 2 kilometres per hour. There is, potentially, that line between when are you operating in floodwater and when are you operating in swift water?

A. The difference, I guess, is we don't enter the water to pull people out. We will, in a boat, pull people into the boat, and we have procedures and people are trained to do that. They are not trained to go into the water to retrieve someone. That's Fire and Rescue.

Q. That training is covered as part of flood-boat operations?

A. Yes, the taking somebody out of the water into the boat, yes. If you are interested, that is a copy of the -- (handed).

1 MR McGARRITY: Thank you. That is a document titled  
2 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, State Rescue Policy.

3  
4 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 15: The possibility of providing  
5 incentive payments to SES members for attendance at  
6 training exercises or courses, is there some value in that  
7 suggestion?

8 A. I think it goes to the heart of volunteering and  
9 volunteerism. Certainly there is a very strong view  
10 amongst the SES membership that they hold the fact that  
11 they are volunteers extremely dear to their heart; they do  
12 it as a sense of community. If you shift it to some form  
13 of payment - not compensation. If someone is out of pocket  
14 for something, that's different and, yes, they should be  
15 compensated for that. That's a very different set of  
16 arrangements than people being remunerated for an activity.  
17 It then, I think, shifts the nature of why people  
18 participate in it.

19  
20 It then also brings a significant overhead, in terms  
21 of administration and governance, because we're talking  
22 about the public purse. So, if we are starting to move  
23 into an arrangement where most volunteers receive a payment  
24 that is a remuneration type payment, then I think we are  
25 fundamentally changing the nature of the organisation and  
26 the way we have to administer it, manage it, report on it.  
27 Those things then become subject to Queensland Audit Office  
28 and that brings then a whole new level of - so I think that  
29 it's starting to move on to quite dangerous ground for the  
30 SES to move into a remuneration model, particularly one  
31 that's ad hoc.

32  
33 MR McGARRITY: Q. But currently members who do attend  
34 training and have out-of-pocket expenses are compensated?

35 A. If they had to move to another location to attend the  
36 training, then in most cases they would - if they make a  
37 claim, then that would be covered. Someone going to  
38 deliver training who is out of pocket, yes, but they don't  
39 receive any payment for attendance at training.

40  
41 Q. If a member had to travel 50 kilometres to attend a  
42 training session in use of a chainsaw, could they then  
43 claim for a fuel reimbursement?

44 A. Yes, strictly speaking, they could. Very few that I  
45 am aware of do.

46  
47 Q. But the mechanism is there if they want to avail

1 themselves of it?

2 A. Yes.

3

4 MR BAILEY: Q. And they are aware of that?

5 A. I would assume so, yes. I mean, it's not something  
6 we're out there promoting every day of the week. What I  
7 hear is it's more the commitment of time than the actual  
8 cost - than a direct cost.

9

10 Q. Going to your most recent statement, attachment 1 is  
11 Approved SES Functions. I take it that is a complete list  
12 of SES functions?

13 A. Yes, the one that you have got is, I believe.

14

15 Q. As opposed to it being referable to any particular  
16 unit?

17 A. The one that has been added in recent times is  
18 fundraising, so as long as it has that on it. It's at the  
19 very bottom of the blue section. I will give you the  
20 document Approved SES Functions (handed).

21

22 MR McGARRITY: Q. What is the date of this document?

23 A. It is current. It's an attachment to a doctrine but  
24 I'm not sure what dates, but I can assure you it is  
25 current.

26

27 Q. So that's current, Approved SES Functions, one page?

28 A. Yes. The issue of fundraising I think you have  
29 referenced a couple of times and I might just give you a  
30 very quick background as to why fundraising has been added.  
31 The SES are covered for the purpose of insurance whilst  
32 they are conducting an approved function. SES, on many  
33 occasions, are given opportunities to fundraise in their  
34 local communities, running a sausage sizzle or doing  
35 traffic control, and getting some compensation for that.

36

37 This was almost an administrative purpose for adding  
38 this. They're doing it and there were some occasions where  
39 they were asked "Do you have public liability insurance?"  
40 So if someone trips on the corner of the BBQ table, were  
41 they covered. This was simply included in the functions to  
42 make sure that they had appropriate insurance coverage in  
43 the conduct of those. There was no other reason for doing  
44 it.

45

46 MR BAILEY: Q. We might just move on to question 18. You  
47 stated in your evidence in the first round that you did not

1 consider the SES should be a completely State-run service  
2 with a definite command and control structure as exists in  
3 New South Wales. Can you expand on your reasons for why  
4 such a model may not be suitable in Queensland?

5 A. Can I just say at the outset that I don't think that's  
6 actually what I said. I was asked a specific question  
7 about did I agree with the New South Wales - something  
8 around the New South Wales model, and I said it's not a  
9 model that is directly transferable and applicable because  
10 there's a range of differences. What I was alluding to was  
11 it's fraught to just say we can simply take a model from  
12 another jurisdiction and overlay it in Queensland and it  
13 will be effective.

14  
15 The reason for that difference - and the two models  
16 that are, I guess, most applicable are those in New South  
17 Wales and Victoria. That's more because of the population  
18 density and the size, and so on, of the SESs in those two  
19 States compared to the others, which are quite small. The  
20 first is that in those jurisdictions, the SES does have a  
21 direct role in disaster management. They have a concept of  
22 combat agency. So the SES for flood and storms is the  
23 combat agency, so it is responsible for disaster  
24 management, i.e. the overall coordination of the response  
25 to the event or series of events and to the response  
26 activity itself.

27  
28 Q. This gets back to the distinction you were drawing  
29 before --

30 A. Yes.

31  
32 Q. -- between disaster management and disaster --

33 A. Operations.

34  
35 Q. Discrete operations?

36 A. Yes, yes. That brings with it an overhead and some of  
37 their funding is related to disaster management and some of  
38 it's related to disaster operations. Now, EMQ, as an  
39 organisation, covers both of those, so there is some  
40 comparison but there would be a significant body of work to  
41 be able to unpack the models and start to get some direct  
42 comparisons between the three jurisdictions and where the  
43 money actually goes, because we all do something a little  
44 bit different and we all fund things slightly differently.

45  
46 In both New South Wales and Victoria, there is a  
47 separate office of emergency management. That's combined

1 here in Queensland. EMQ does all of those things. We run  
2 a helicopter rescue service, so that would have to be  
3 backed out. Some administer grants, some don't. There are  
4 a whole range of costs that are not necessarily apples for  
5 apples comparisons. If we are to make those comparisons, I  
6 think there is a body of work that needs to be done - and  
7 it hasn't been done, as far as I am aware - that actually  
8 starts to do some analysis of the jurisdictions.  
9

10 The other aspect of it is the role of local government  
11 and the role of local government in Queensland is  
12 fundamentally different to in the other two jurisdictions.  
13 In New South Wales and Victoria it's a relatively passive  
14 involvement; in Queensland they are actually acknowledged  
15 in the legislation that they have a role in both disaster  
16 management and the SES. In the other jurisdictions there's  
17 some legislated responsibilities of local government; ours,  
18 there is probably less clarity around them. There are a  
19 lot of differences there, so I'm just cautioning that it's  
20 not simply being able to take one model and then overlay it  
21 onto a different jurisdiction.  
22

23 MR McGARRITY: Q. I think we probably touch upon this  
24 later on in the questioning but it is related to what we  
25 are talking about presently. Is there anything within  
26 either the New South Wales or Victorian models that you  
27 think could perhaps work in Queensland that perhaps  
28 currently isn't being done with respect too SES?

29 A. The arrangements in those States, I think, provide a  
30 level of clarity that is absent and the cause of some of  
31 the lines of questioning and the focus of the current  
32 Commission and its work. To say that there is nothing we  
33 can learn from those jurisdictions, I think, would be  
34 wrong.  
35

36 However, what I would strongly encourage is that if we  
37 are going to make recommendations around that, that it be  
38 based on a much more detailed analysis than has been  
39 available to us at this time. Without wanting to make any  
40 suggestions as to where the Commission should go with its  
41 recommendations, I think the authority that a  
42 recommendation would bring to a detailed analysis of the  
43 benefits and disadvantages of opportunities that may be  
44 presented from other jurisdictions would certainly be an  
45 outcome that would be beneficial to the SES. Making a  
46 recommendation to simply apply something because it --  
47

1 MR BAILEY: Q. Sounds good.  
2 A. -- looks like it - or it sounds sensible, without  
3 taking the time to actually map through both intended and  
4 unintended consequences of that to funding, membership,  
5 culture, is fraught to either underestimate or misrepresent  
6 the importance of culture to a volunteer organisation. It  
7 is the only reason that people join and if we have an  
8 unintended consequence that goes to the heart of that  
9 culture, then we will disenfranchise a huge number of  
10 existing volunteers and a huge number of potential  
11 volunteers, because I think the reason why new ones are  
12 going to volunteer is pretty much the same reason why  
13 current ones volunteer.

14  
15 I think there are lots of good things in the  
16 legislation, the policy frameworks and the operation of the  
17 SES in other jurisdictions. Whenever they have come here,  
18 we have been terribly impressed with their approach, their  
19 professionalism, their levels of training - all of the  
20 things. There's nothing there that I can point to to say,  
21 well, we don't want to touch that because they are not a  
22 good organisation. Far from it. They are excellent  
23 organisations and we are always happy to learn.

24  
25 Q. If a review or an analysis of the type that you have  
26 mentioned was to be conducted, who would be the best person  
27 or organisation to do it?

28 A. I believe there would be an advantage in a level of  
29 independence but I think it would also need to be  
30 controlled with some sort of a governance arrangement that  
31 had key stakeholders. I think those key stakeholders would  
32 certainly need to include the Department of Community  
33 Safety and EMQ, would certainly need to involve local  
34 government, probably at the peak body level - the LGAQ - as  
35 well as a couple of representative councils - maybe a large  
36 one, a small one and a remote one, something along those  
37 lines - and would absolutely have to include volunteers.  
38 There would have to be some level of volunteer  
39 representation on that, in my opinion, and again it would  
40 have to be broad based. So, whatever the recommendations  
41 were, I think, would need to be tested through the  
42 volunteer, local government and State government.

43  
44 MR McGARRITY: Q. Would there be any role for a  
45 Commonwealth agency - for example, Emergency Management  
46 Australia - to play in any part of that review or is that  
47 not something that --

1 A. No. The Commonwealth play very little role in the  
2 SES. An organisation like AFAC, the Australasian Fire and  
3 Emergency Service Council, has an interest in the SES. It  
4 has an SES group that are full members of AFAC, with all  
5 jurisdictions represented, called ACSES, Australian Council  
6 of State Emergency Services. That would probably - now,  
7 it's a non-government organisation but it is independent  
8 and its only purpose is to serve its membership, which are  
9 all jurisdictional emergency service authorities through  
10 Fire and the SES. It has a level of independence but it  
11 also has some equity in the outcome, some interest in the  
12 outcome and some expertise to offer. So, it might be an  
13 organisation that we could include.

14  
15 MR BAILEY: Q. Could I just step back to the idea of  
16 approved SES functions for a moment?

17 A. Yes.

18  
19 Q. In the material that we have sourced from various  
20 entities - I cite by way of example a response from the  
21 Gladstone Regional Council where they talk about their  
22 particular approved functions. They have listed those in a  
23 document for us. What I am interested in is the detail to  
24 which they descend, in that they have a unit and eight  
25 subsidiary groups and they have the functions listed for  
26 each one of those groups, just by way of a table. You're  
27 welcome to have a quick look at that, if you like. It's  
28 just that table there.

29 A. Mmm.

30  
31 Q. They descend to a level of detail in terms of what  
32 each group can do by way of approved function. Is there  
33 any sort of register held by EMQ that documents all of this  
34 information on a Statewide basis?

35 A. I don't believe I have it in aggregate - you know,  
36 it's in table - but certainly the functions are approved  
37 through, or the role is assigned to, our chief executive  
38 but delegated. So, we can certainly create one.

39  
40 Q. Are you aware of whether the approved functions are  
41 listed on a unit level, or does it descend to the level of  
42 individual group approved functions, as that document --

43 A. If it's at a unit level, then those functions are  
44 applicable to all groups within that local government area.  
45 If there is a desire to limit it or include an additional  
46 one for a particular group, then that would be a variation.  
47 So, if we only had six functions for a unit, then every

1 group in that unit would have all six functions.  
2  
3 Q. That is the way EMQ looks at it?  
4 A. Yes.  
5  
6 Q. The council comes along --  
7 A. But it's quite appropriate for that council to limit,  
8 if they wish to, the way they have there. That's entirely  
9 appropriate.  
10  
11 Q. That is up to the local government --  
12 A. Yes.  
13  
14 Q. -- rather than EMQ?  
15 A. Exactly.  
16  
17 Q. If they do this, do they --  
18 A. It's by agreement. We approve the functions but we  
19 are required by the legislation to consult with local  
20 government. Basically, we ask them what functions do you  
21 believe you need; we'll then agree on that. If our region  
22 comes back and says they've actually got a flood-boat risk,  
23 we then have to start a negotiation around, well, why isn't  
24 flood-boat a function of your council. But it would be by  
25 negotiation.  
26  
27 Q. The approved functions, from your point of view,  
28 operate at a unit level and if the council wants to be a  
29 bit more discriminating about particular groups --  
30 A. Absolutely.  
31  
32 Q. -- that is a matter for them?  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. Independently of the --  
36 A. That's right. A classic example would be road crash  
37 rescue, which is a function that very few SES units or  
38 groups have because it's primarily a function of the  
39 Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. However, if there is a  
40 gap in their coverage, we can provide that. So, there may  
41 be a group that is trained in road crash rescue but the  
42 whole unit doesn't require it because they are not in an  
43 area that needs road crash rescue.  
44  
45 Q. How often, if at all, are the agreed functions  
46 reviewed or updated as between EMQ --  
47 A. There's no requirement for a review period. It's as

1 often as they're needed. If everybody is happy with the  
2 current functions, then they remain static.

3  
4 Q. But at any time a council can turn around and say --

5 A. Yes.

6  
7 Q. -- we would like to rejig this a bit. No problem?

8 A. No problem.

9  
10 Q. Is that an easy process?

11 A. Yes. I mean, it would only be difficult if there was  
12 a dispute and I can't imagine a circumstance where it would  
13 be, unless it was something around highly specialised and  
14 expensive equipment that was required that wasn't able to  
15 be funded. If there was a very low risk - and some units  
16 would love to have a flood boat but they haven't got a real  
17 risk. It's \$70,000 for a flood boat, there's lots of  
18 training required for flood-boat operators. If they are  
19 never going to use the flood boat then it's a poor  
20 allocation of scarce resources. So, that might be an issue  
21 where there could be a level of - I wouldn't quite put it  
22 in terms of conflict, but there could be a difference of  
23 view, but we'd just have to negotiate through that.

24  
25 Q. Who within EMQ conducts a negotiation?

26 A. Regional director or area director. It's done at the  
27 local level because they know the circumstances best.

28  
29 Q. Any approval to a change of functions can be given by  
30 a regional director?

31 A. The approval can't. Certainly we would take the  
32 negotiation, in terms of we and they agree.

33  
34 Q. And they would make a recommendation?

35 A. Our agreement would be based very much on the  
36 recommendation of a regional director or an area director.

37  
38 Q. Does the final sign-off come down to you, does it?

39 A. Yes.

40  
41 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can I just ask - this is probably  
42 descending into the technicalities of it. We talked  
43 earlier about local governments perhaps having more than  
44 one SES unit within their regional boundary, but the  
45 agreement as to functions is between EMQ and the local  
46 government; basically, the council. Is there then an  
47 expectation that it's the council, rather than each unit

1 within that council area, that can perform the agreed list  
2 of functions? I'm thinking here is there perhaps a risk  
3 that where you have four units, two of those units can  
4 effectively perform the functions that have been agreed  
5 upon by the council and there may be occasions whereby the  
6 council and EMQ has come to an agreement as to the  
7 functions that they can perform but when it gets down to  
8 the ground level, a particular unit can't actually perform  
9 the functions?

10 A. That would be one of the prime considerations that our  
11 people would have in that negotiation with council. If a  
12 unit has three people and they want to have flood boats,  
13 they can't because they need four people trained in  
14 flood-boat operations - so those very practical elements.  
15 We would be talking to the local controller or the group  
16 leader around those negotiations as well.

17  
18 MR BAILEY: Q. They would have to produce some evidence  
19 that the capacity they are seeking can be fulfilled?

20 A. Yes, that's right. It goes to risk. Again, if you  
21 don't have a creek in your patch then having a flood boat -  
22 I mean, it's really about a very practical set of  
23 arrangements that deal with the risks that present  
24 themselves in a particular area.

25  
26 MR McGARRITY: Q. In practice, for example, the local  
27 government - the CEO or whomever - would discuss with the  
28 local controllers within the council what can we do, what  
29 can't we do, because we need to sign this agreement. Is  
30 that effectively how it would work?

31 A. Yes. It comes both from the ground up, an SES unit  
32 wanting to do something or believing they should, and local  
33 government and EMQ saying, well, is that reasonable, is  
34 there a risk to address, what are the consequences of that  
35 in terms of cost, in terms of training, in terms of all the  
36 issues.

37  
38 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 19: The SES operates an exit  
39 survey process for members who leave. Can you describe  
40 this process, including how surveys are administered, who  
41 does it, how it is marketed or made known to members and  
42 what happens with the results?

43 A. Yes. I guess the first observation to make around  
44 this and without wanting to be flippant, when I asked them  
45 about this, most of my people said that most SES members  
46 fade away rather than - so, it's a function of age, or what  
47 have you, and they just simply decide that they're no

1 longer able or willing or capable of participating. In  
2 those cases, those people would not fill out an exit  
3 survey; they would just simply say farewell and head off.  
4

5 The other primary reasons for people leaving is  
6 relocation or work, and/or both. A lot of people in the  
7 rural environment now fly in/fly out, drive in/drive out.  
8 Mining is a huge industry in rural and regional areas. It  
9 doesn't lend itself to SES membership. Some manage it but  
10 many don't. With that, they choose to leave.  
11

12 Certainly there are a number of people for whom the  
13 SES didn't meet their expectations, for whatever reason.  
14 They're usually the ones who fill out an exit survey.  
15

16 Exit surveys are made available electronically and  
17 physically to anybody who is leaving. Can I sit here and  
18 put my hand on my heart and say that everybody is actively  
19 managed and provided with a copy? No, I'd be silly to say  
20 that.  
21

22 There is probably some work that we can do in  
23 marketing. I think it is a very useful tool that allows us  
24 to take the temperature of the organisation and if people  
25 are leaving because of legitimate pressures of work or  
26 family reasons or physical relocation, then that's  
27 something that's useful to know but it's not driving at the  
28 heart of the culture of the organisation. If everybody is  
29 leaving because they think it's a terrible organisation or  
30 they're being bullied, or whatever it is, then that is  
31 really important information. I would absolutely agree  
32 that if we can do more to capture that, then that's  
33 something that we should do. So, we will look at  
34 opportunities to better and more extensively market the  
35 exit survey.  
36

37 Q. We just have a specific question there as well. There  
38 was --

39 A. Did you want a copy of the documentation around that?  
40 There is a --  
41

42 MR McGARRITY: Yes, please.  
43

44 THE INTERVIEWEE: There is a doctrine and there is a copy  
45 of the survey.  
46

47 MR McGARRITY: Thank you. That is Business Management

1 Directives BMH 26.5, Cessation of Membership.

2

3 Q. In your statement dated 30 September, you attached  
4 various surveys that had been conducted by the SES over the  
5 past few years.

6 A. Yes.

7

8 Q. There was a recent Sunday Mail article in which the  
9 minister referred to a specific survey of 600 members.

10 A. Yes.

11

12 Q. We just want to confirm whether or not that was one of  
13 the surveys that was attached to your --

14 A. Yes, it is the one. I think it's 19.

15

16 Q. 19?

17 A. Yes. It's the last one of those surveys and it is the  
18 same one.

19

20 Q. No worries. We just wanted to confirm that.

21 A. Yes.

22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 20 --

24 A. I think we have done that one.

25

26 MR BAILEY: We have discussed the role of duty officers.  
27 Are you satisfied with that?

28

29 MR McGARRITY: Yes, we did touch on duty officers.

30

31 Q. Duty officer and regional duty officer, are they  
32 essentially the same thing?

33 A. Simply location. There's seven regional duty  
34 officers. Each region has a duty officer at any one time.  
35 They're on-call, so it's our permanent staff on-call,  
36 out-of-hours work. There is currently a State duty manager  
37 - that's one person - from Kedron head office. We are  
38 looking at, as I said previously, with the introduction of  
39 the additional staff into the watch desk, the need for a  
40 State duty manager, and we will probably do away with that  
41 in the near future.

42

43 Q. Just to confirm, the duty officers in the regions can  
44 be any one of a number of the EMQ staff? That's rotated  
45 around?

46 A. Yes. It's usually more senior staff; area directors,  
47 regional directors, some of the more senior and experienced

1 training officers. The function is when something does get  
2 a little bit more complex and people are either wanting  
3 local knowledge or a decision about should we/shouldn't we,  
4 if there's a judgment in it, so it's people who actually  
5 have some experience.

6  
7 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 21: Can you explain how the  
8 Statewide natural hazard risk assessment - Risk Frontiers -  
9 will be utilised?

10 A. In relation to the SES directly, not at all.

11  
12 MR McGARRITY: Q. Not at all?

13 A. No. This is a planning instrument for local disaster  
14 management plans. Now, will those plans potentially drive  
15 some activity in the SES? Possibly. If the risk profile  
16 identifies something that has either not been properly  
17 identified or for which the mitigation arrangements are  
18 inappropriate, then that may have a consequence to the SES.  
19 But the purpose of that is not for driving any change or  
20 changes in the SES. It's purely for planning at the local  
21 disaster management plan level.

22  
23 Q. Just on that point, was EMQ involved in any early  
24 stages when it was decided that this Statewide hazard  
25 assessment would be undertaken?

26 A. Yes. The reason for it - what drove the establishment  
27 of this was discussions between all of the State  
28 jurisdictions and the federal government and, primarily,  
29 it's around ensuring that there's a connection between  
30 grant funding for resilience and a risk profile. The  
31 secondary benefit of it is that it actually allows, I  
32 guess, some independent assessment of the risk profiles  
33 across the State and that is a useful instrument in  
34 assessing those local disaster plans. So, the purpose is  
35 twofold; one is to make sure there is a clear connection  
36 between streams of funding directed at real risks and then,  
37 secondly, an assistance to planning.

38  
39 Q. One of those streams of funding you referred to would  
40 be the NDRP?

41 A. Yes.

42  
43 Q. The Natural Disaster Resilience Program?

44 A. Yes.

45  
46 MR BAILEY: Q. Moving on to command and control, question  
47 22, what is the status of the document "EMQ Roles and

1 Responsibilities in support of Disaster Management  
2 Arrangements"?

3 A. It's currently still in draft. We are just about to  
4 put on some additional staff at the moment. One of the  
5 functions of that will be to resolve it. We anticipate  
6 that it will be finalised, subject to any issues in  
7 consultation, through early December this year. It has  
8 just simply been a resourcing issue. We have had a little  
9 bit to do over the last couple of months.

10  
11 MR McGARRITY: Understandable.

12  
13 THE INTERVIEWEE: Are you happy with the watch desk part of  
14 that?

15  
16 MR McGARRITY: I think we have covered that sufficiently,  
17 thanks.

18  
19 MR BAILEY: Q. Similarly, question 23 we have covered.  
20 A. Yes. Do you have the doctrine on deployments?

21  
22 Q. Is that 8.0?

23 A. 8.0. You have that?

24  
25 MR McGARRITY: Yes, we have that one, thank you.

26  
27 Q. If we move to question 24, there has been some  
28 suggestion in the material we have received from various  
29 people that there is no direct statutory authority for  
30 tasking and deployment of the SES, but under the current  
31 legislative arrangements there is a delegation to EMQ with  
32 respect to the management and performance of the SES and  
33 local controllers, specifically, and that this provides  
34 indirect authority for tasking and deployment. Is this a  
35 view that is shared by you, that there is an indirect  
36 authority assumed?

37 A. Yes, it is an assumption. The Act is not clear. I  
38 think it is certainly inferred. I guess there is a level  
39 of complexity to a solution to that, if it is determined as  
40 a problem. I believe that the Act provides in two areas an  
41 opportunity for us to make doctrine that goes to the  
42 command, control and management of the SES. One is section  
43 83 and the other is section 137, which is around making  
44 codes for practice.

45  
46 We, in the SES or EMQ, have probably not used section  
47 137 to the extent that perhaps our colleagues in Fire and

1 Rescue have in relation to the Rural Fire Service. I think  
2 that has more to do with the culture and nature of the  
3 organisations than anything else. The fire service is a  
4 uniformed, command and control organisation absolutely,  
5 from the start of recruitment right up to a Commissioner.  
6 Its whole structure is predicated on uniform, rank, command  
7 and control. EMQ is a public service organisation that has  
8 more of a management structure than a command and control  
9 structure, and I think that has probably driven the  
10 approach to how we deal with this.

11  
12 If we use the backdrop of the events of 2010/2011 as  
13 the context to have the discussion, then I think it is very  
14 clear that greater clarity around command, control and  
15 coordination would serve the community better; that there  
16 is no confusion, it is absolutely crystal clear who is  
17 what. It's not about the issue of barking orders, and so  
18 on; it's about greater clarity around roles and  
19 responsibilities and accountabilities, in my view.

20  
21 So, if there is an outcome that can be achieved that  
22 delivers greater clarity in those areas and whether that is  
23 - sorry, if I can go back, my ability to be able to  
24 articulate a - let's use command and control as an example.  
25 My ability to be articulate that, using either section 83  
26 or section 137, can't extend - this is my view and I'm not  
27 a lawyer - beyond the intent of the legislation. I can't  
28 do something more in those sections than the legislation is  
29 either clear about or intends. I think that is probably a  
30 reasonable position to start. If the Act is silent on a  
31 level of command above local controller, then I guess it is  
32 ambiguous as to whether I can reasonably make doctrine that  
33 actually delivers that.

34  
35 However, the SES is established as a State service,  
36 not as a regional service, not as a local service. So,  
37 again, my opinion is there is always an intent by the  
38 legislation that the SES will be managed as a State  
39 service. The experience, particularly of 2010/2011 and in  
40 many events prior to that, is it has to be operated as a  
41 State service because a large event immediately overwhelms  
42 capability and capacity at the local level. The whole  
43 disaster management system is predicated on that as an  
44 assumption and that's why there is a district level, a  
45 State level and a Commonwealth level. So, whilst local  
46 government is embodied in the legislation as the prime  
47 responder to an event, the legislation acknowledges that

1 there is going to be assistance required.

2

3 If we talk about the SES and its units and groups and  
4 if we leave to one side any confusion about local units and  
5 groups and what the structure of those should be, and we  
6 simply talk about bringing disparate bodies of SES together  
7 and being able to manage those in a coordinated way,  
8 efficiently and effectively, for the benefit of the  
9 community, then I think there is absolutely a need to have  
10 a clear structure that sits above a local controller. A  
11 local controller - in my opinion, it cannot be assumed that  
12 a local controller automatically has the capacity to manage  
13 and coordinate a major catastrophic disaster event. They  
14 are --

15

16 MR BAILEY: Q. Sorry to cut in, but you are contemplating  
17 there where other units have been deployed --

18

19

20 Q. -- from outside the region into a location, and a  
21 local controller who normally is responsible for 40 people  
22 --

23

24

25 Q. -- suddenly has 200 people?

26

27 A. Exactly, yes. This, I think, is where confusion  
28 reigns supreme because, historically, if there has been an  
29 attempt to codify a set of arrangements, then that is seen  
30 as an interference with local arrangements. My personal  
31 view is that's not the intent at all. If there is a local  
32 event occurring in a local area, the local controller  
33 manages it, commands and controls, does everything that is  
34 needed to respond to that. It is when it moves beyond  
35 their capability or capacity that we need a level of  
36 structure that sits above that and enables a very clear  
37 chain of command.

37

38

39 I don't come from a military or uniform background.  
40 I'm probably the - people don't like talking to me about  
41 uniforms and command because I don't like it. If you have  
42 to tell somebody how to do something, you have lost the  
43 plot, in my opinion. But if it clearly identifies, as I  
44 said before, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities  
45 then I think that is a really, really beneficial thing.

45

46

47

48 If I can maybe point to an arrangement that I think  
49 does work fairly well and that is in the Rural Fire

1 Service. If there's an event that is occurring in a  
2 particular area, then what they do is appoint an incident  
3 commander, and there's a fairly structured approach to  
4 that.

5  
6 In our world, that would be a flood in Roma, nowhere  
7 else, and the local controller would be the incident  
8 commander. If three or four rivers in the Maranoa were in  
9 flood concurrently and we had multiple SES responding to  
10 the same cause, then we would appoint an area commander and  
11 that would, in most instances, be an EMQ staff member. It  
12 wouldn't have to be, and I'll talk to that in a moment. If  
13 the whole of South-West Queensland was in flood like it was  
14 in 2009, then we would appoint a regional commander and  
15 that would probably be our regional director in the  
16 south-west. If we had multiple events across multiple  
17 parts of the State occurring concurrently, we would appoint  
18 a State commander.

19  
20 It simply escalates the complexity, the need for  
21 coordination, the need for logistics, the need for planning  
22 and intelligence, all those things, to an appropriate level  
23 but there would be greater clarity around who was doing  
24 what. At the moment, there can be those things happening  
25 at the local level independently of things happening at a  
26 regional level, independently of things happening at a  
27 State level. Everybody is well-intentioned but it's not  
28 organised, it's not arranged, because there is no clarity  
29 around who necessarily needs to do what.

30  
31 Q. You are talking in terms of the SES still, I take it?

32 A. Yes.

33  
34 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is that reflective, perhaps, of the  
35 hierarchical nature of the disaster management system; the  
36 local, district, State level? Are you looking at a similar  
37 type of --

38 A. Yes, but they're disconnected to the extent that  
39 they're doing two entirely different things.

40  
41 Q. Of course, but you would see that sort of movement up  
42 the chain, so to speak?

43 A. Yes. The bit that would be common would be the scale  
44 and complexity of the event. The purposes for doing it  
45 would be fundamentally different, however. The SES is no  
46 different to the fire service, the ambulance service or the  
47 police service in how it needs to arrange itself as that

1 level of complexity and the scale escalates. Whilst I have  
2 made the distinction that it is not the triple 0 emergency  
3 responder organisation, it still has a very critical  
4 community service to provide. The more efficiently, more  
5 effectively and more rapidly it can do that, the less the  
6 community is suffering. So, there's a clear objective to  
7 make it as efficient and effective as we possibly can.  
8

9 Q. Would you agree then that the key to the effectiveness  
10 of such a system would be absolute clarity around what the  
11 SES does and does not do?

12 A. Well, I think there is clarity - there certainly  
13 should be clarity around that because it shouldn't extend  
14 beyond its functions. That's what it's designed to do,  
15 that's what it's trained to do, that's what it's equipped  
16 to do and that's what it's managed to do.  
17

18 MR BAILEY: Q. But there also has to be clarity around the  
19 roles and responsibilities as the situation escalates?

20 A. Yes, and it's the issue of above a local incident  
21 occurring, so this is the 5 percent of the time scenario.  
22 What is seen, I think, as a great risk - and if not  
23 properly managed, will be a great risk - is that the  
24 5 percent of the time will be used to manage the 95 percent  
25 of the time.  
26

27 SESs are established locally, they are established for  
28 the benefit of their local community - absolutely, that is  
29 a primary objective and a primary purpose - and their first  
30 port of call is to their community. However, there are  
31 circumstances - and it's the criticality of when those  
32 circumstances occur that brings a criticality to the design  
33 of an outcome that actually manages it. When it becomes  
34 critical, we have an event of usually significant or  
35 catastrophic proportions and we have to be able to move  
36 quickly, we have to be able to move effectively, we have to  
37 be able to have the right people in the right place at the  
38 right time with the right things. That doesn't just  
39 happen; it needs management, it needs coordination, it  
40 needs a level of control and it needs an ability to set  
41 priorities across all of those.  
42

43 Q. I don't see any difficulty with local level  
44 operations. The SES needs to be responsive to a range of  
45 agencies when something happens. It could be 132500, it  
46 could be QFRS about something, it could be QPS about  
47 something else, a search or what have you.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. They can self-activate all these sorts of things. So,  
4 at that local level they are responsive in a number of ways  
5 and to a number of organisations and stimuli, if you like.

6 A. Mmm.

7

8 Q. A local controller can be the one responsible for  
9 dealing with what his volunteers are doing. I can see that  
10 as an essential part of what they do and that's a situation  
11 that can probably operate fairly clearly. Where the  
12 difficulty seems to emerge is when you have complex  
13 operations where you need to start building up the scale to  
14 the response. You have EMQ officers feeding in to provide  
15 support and logistics, and so forth, but there also has to  
16 be that connection and integration, if you will, with the  
17 disaster management arrangements, and that seems to be a  
18 source of confusion as well. I'm talking about big, major  
19 events and how these things work in major events. You  
20 would agree, would you, that how they integrate with the  
21 disaster management structure is something that seems to  
22 have caused some confusion as well?

23 A. I think disasters by their very nature are chaotic and  
24 confusing. I have not experienced one where there hasn't  
25 been a level of chaos and confusion attached to it. Our  
26 objective is to limit that to the greatest extent possible.

27

28 The way that the SES - as to do all response agencies  
29 - needs to connect into the disaster management  
30 arrangements is through an appropriate liaison officer  
31 function. The SES locally should have a liaison officer  
32 with the Local Disaster Management Group and that liaison  
33 officer should be doing a couple of things. They should be  
34 taking tasks and information out of the Local Disaster  
35 Management Group that's relevant to the SES locally and  
36 feeding that through. They are the conduit through which  
37 information and, potentially, tasks might move from a Local  
38 Disaster Management Group to the local SES, and priorities.

39

40 The Local Disaster Management Group may well make  
41 decisions that say we are not going to do work in this  
42 area, our top priority is doing work in this area. That  
43 may well then change the whole concept of operations for  
44 the SES. They may be wanting to go and put tarps on roofs  
45 but the higher priority that's established is for them to  
46 go and do something else. So, that is why a liaison  
47 officer is very important. That should also be replicated

1 at the district level and at the State level.

2

3 Q. The liaison officer in each of those cases would be  
4 EMQ?

5 A. In the district and the State level, yes.

6

7 MR McGARRITY: Q. And at the local level?

8 A. At the local level it is probably going to be a  
9 member. It might not be.

10

11 Q. Not the local controller?

12 A. I would think that the local controller is probably  
13 more use in actually managing operations. I think there's  
14 a need for overt leadership and to be seen with your  
15 members at the coalface and directing operations is  
16 appropriate.

17

18 MR BAILEY: Q. You would see that tasking at the local  
19 level - and we're talking about a situation where the Local  
20 Disaster Coordination Centre is up and running. Tasking  
21 would come from them to the SES liaison officer, fed on  
22 then to the local controller, who would decide, in  
23 practical terms, how they are going to go about it?

24

A. Yes.

25

26 Q. And direct his members accordingly?

27 A. Yes. The Local Disaster Management Group will set  
28 priorities and will allocate tasks. It should not - and  
29 will not, whilst ever I'm around - tell the SES how to do  
30 the job, as much as it would never tell Fire how to respond  
31 to their issues, Ambulance how to deal with a  
32 multi-casualty event or Police how to deal with --

33

34 Q. But the tasking and prioritisation should come from  
35 the LDCC?

36 A. Yes, and in the absence of any direction, they will  
37 just simply work through their tasks in an orderly way to  
38 achieve the maximum effect. So, if the LDMG provides no  
39 direction as to tasking priority, then the SES will just  
40 get on with organising themselves to deliver on the tasks  
41 that have been provided to them.

42

43 Q. That would come through RFA Online?

44 A. Yes, primarily that would probably be the lion's share  
45 by volume, RFA or 132500, whether it's RFA or another  
46 mechanism to actually collate those. But, yes, requests  
47 for assistance from the general public through calls to

1 132500, in most instances, will be far and away the lion's  
2 share of tasks.

3

4 Q. If you go up the scale, the District Disaster  
5 Management Group is up and running as well.

6 A. Yes.

7

8 Q. They can provide tasking and prioritisation?

9 A. Probably not. There is the opportunity to do that  
10 but --

11

12 Q. Because their raison d'être is to support downwards?

13 A. Yes. Two purposes for the district level. One is to  
14 ensure that the local level is operating, and operating  
15 effectively and efficiently, and doing all the things that  
16 it needs to. The district officer, under the legislation,  
17 has the authority to give direction, so if they see  
18 something that should be happening that's not happening,  
19 then they can actually give directions to the Local  
20 Disaster Management Group. But they are primarily there as  
21 the first port of contact in the escalation process; when  
22 something is needed, they are able to identify whether they  
23 can source that regionally or within their sphere of  
24 influence; if not, to progress that up through to the  
25 State.

26

27 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can I just go back to something you said  
28 under the model you suggested, whereby EMQ has an area  
29 presence, a regional presence and then a State presence for  
30 SES. You said that perhaps at the area level that might be  
31 an area director who fulfills that. So, there is currently  
32 expertise within EMQ to fulfil those roles as you see them  
33 through that escalation chain?

34 A. My next point was going to be that I would actually  
35 see that there is a level of competency required to fulfil  
36 those tasks. If you are going to be an incident  
37 controller, commander - whatever we want to call it - then  
38 I think there should be a multi-tiered incident command and  
39 control environment similar to those encouraged through the  
40 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission; 1, 2, 3 level  
41 incident controllers, level 3 being major events Statewide.  
42 You know, highly-skilled, lots of training, down to can I  
43 manage a level - level 1, I think, is the lowest level and  
44 level 3 is the highest, sorry. You know, managing a local  
45 incident.

46

47 I would see that there would need to be a transition

1 through to the acquisition of a set of skills and  
2 competencies to fulfil those tasks and we would need to  
3 design a set of arrangements that people who were going to  
4 be assigned to those roles held the appropriate training  
5 and/or competency. In that model, it would, therefore,  
6 mean that there might be an occasion where a volunteer  
7 local controller or somebody in the SES might be an area or  
8 regional commander, if they hold the skill to perform that  
9 function.

10  
11 So, my sense here is not about particular agencies or  
12 particular positions in agencies doing certain things.  
13 There's probably a natural order to those things that would  
14 occur in most instances, but I would see them as a  
15 competency-based appointment rather than a position-based  
16 appointment.

17  
18 Q. Is there a need then for some analysis to be  
19 undertaken, firstly, as to what those competencies would  
20 be --

21 A. Yes.

22  
23 Q. -- before you can identify the appropriate people  
24 within the area to perform it?

25 A. That's right. There are certainly bodies of work  
26 around the country about this. Every State, I believe, is  
27 in one way, shape or form looking at such a set of  
28 arrangements, whether it is as I have described it or  
29 whether their view is something different, but they are  
30 all, as I understand it, looking at a more structured  
31 incident command arrangement. I think that would be  
32 consistent with the things that are happening in the  
33 emergency community generally, certainly consistent with  
34 what's happening in the uniformed areas and, in my opinion,  
35 would certainly go to responding to some of the issues of  
36 confusion, or more, that have been identified in the  
37 evidence and submissions that have been provided to the  
38 Commission.

39  
40 MR BAILEY: Q. Can I just jump back to the example of a  
41 local controller who is used to dealing with or managing  
42 40 people and suddenly there's an out-of-region influx of  
43 deployment and he has 200 people on his doorstep. What  
44 command and control arrangements would you envisage in that  
45 situation for the SES operations then to be conducted?

46 A. If it was an area, the area commander could either  
47 take command of that or could appoint someone to do that.

1 That would be the way I would see it. So it could, in  
2 fact, then be that the local controller is taken out of  
3 their role of local controller and put into an area  
4 coordination role for the SES. But, again --

5

6 Q. Competency based?

7 A. -- it would be on competency.

8

9 Q. Do the ODIs - and I am thinking specifically of 2.0  
10 which is the hierarchy ODI, and 4.0 which is the incident  
11 control function ODI - effectively facilitate the  
12 arrangement that you have just articulated?

13 A. Not really.

14

15 Q. No?

16 A. I think it's attempting to meet the requirements of  
17 too many people; therefore, it's unclear. All of the  
18 elements of it that have attempted to take account of  
19 particular interests or positions have had the net effect,  
20 I think, of watering down its intent and certainly its  
21 clarity. I think, thus, we find ourselves in the position  
22 that we are and people questioning the authority of our  
23 ability to be able to make such doctrine.

24

25 Q. Because it is not clear, it breeds confusion?

26 A. Mmm.

27

28 Q. For example, 2.0 talks about EMQ directors taking  
29 operational control when it gets beyond the capacity of a  
30 local controller.

31 A. Yes.

32

33 Q. 4.0 talks about EMQ appointing an incident controller.

34 A. Yes. Again, there's --

35

36 Q. In the context of a major event.

37 A. Yes. There are different issues at play and, again,  
38 because they're not attached to a very clear structure, we  
39 attempt to use other instruments to achieve outcomes. So,  
40 the incident controller in that context is more around  
41 running an incident coordination team, which is about  
42 managing and coordinating the tasks that come, than a  
43 command and control structure. So, there's a confusion of  
44 purpose here, I think.

45

46 If the legislation was to give a clear intent - not  
47 attempt to clarify the structure, but give an intent - as

1 to what outcome was sought to be achieved by implementing a  
2 structure and then leaving it up to the ability to make  
3 codes of practice and to make doctrine under the  
4 legislation, then I think we would have the authority to  
5 move down the path of putting in place the intent and then  
6 providing much greater clarity.

7  
8 Q. That's a really important point and I just want to  
9 make sure I have understood it. Any legislative change  
10 perhaps, what, in terms of section 83?

11 A. Well, I think section 83 and section 137. I'd have to  
12 look at them or somebody with a legal background would have  
13 to look at them, I think, in great detail. I think that  
14 they would stand on their own merits, perhaps, with a -  
15 they may need a minor tweak. But I think somewhere in  
16 either the objects or the lead-in, there needs to be  
17 clarity around what is the intent of raising the SES; that  
18 it is for the purpose of local response but it is also for  
19 the purpose of being able to coordinate a Statewide  
20 response in delivering the functions of the SES.

21  
22 I think that sections 83 and 137 - and, again, I'd  
23 take advice on it - certainly would appear to have  
24 sufficient authority to be able to then make codes of  
25 practice or to make policies that give effect to that  
26 intent. What's unclear at the moment is, I think, that  
27 heads of purpose for establishing the SES.

28  
29 Q. The review of the disaster management arrangements  
30 conducted by Jim O'Sullivan, which was finalised in August  
31 2009, made the comment in relation to, effectively, section  
32 83, which deals with the responsibilities of the chief  
33 executive in relation to the SES, that those heads are  
34 essentially enabling and supporting roles only and  
35 certainly he took the view - and it's a view that can be  
36 taken - that it really didn't extend into assuming command  
37 and control over the SES.

38 A. Yes.

39  
40 Q. Which is what ODI 2.0 asserts or attempts to do, by  
41 saying that operational responsibility has been delegated  
42 from the chief executive to the executive director - which  
43 is now you, obviously, as the assistant director - and that  
44 really there was something that was being done there by way  
45 of ODI that exceeded the legislative basis for it. Now,  
46 that was a view that was taken by Mr O'Sullivan and  
47 articulated in his report.

1 A. Yes, and that was attempted to be resolved by the  
2 establishment of the memorandum of understanding, because  
3 that was the only recommendation that was made in relation  
4 to the SES.  
5  
6 Q. Yes.  
7 A. I guess the purpose of that analysis and that review  
8 was to look primarily at the disaster management  
9 arrangements. The SES was, I guess, a smaller component of  
10 that analysis and there was only one recommendation made in  
11 relation to the SES, and that was the MOA.  
12  
13 Q. As we have touched on the MOA, can I just ask about  
14 that, because the MOA does seek to deal with certain  
15 operational arrangements. At section 5.2 of the MOA it  
16 talks about local government undertakings. Under the  
17 heading Activations, Taskings and Deployments it  
18 articulates four scenarios, if you like. Are you familiar  
19 with these?  
20 A. Oh, I haven't read it for a while.  
21  
22 MR McGARRITY: I have a copy here for you.  
23  
24 MR BAILEY: Q. Page 10. I am just picking up on the point  
25 that you said that the recommendation that was made by Jim  
26 O'Sullivan, there was only one and it was to do with  
27 developing MOUs?  
28 A. Yes.  
29  
30 Q. This document is the result of that recommendation?  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 Q. In terms of the issue of command and control, I am  
34 interested in this section in 5.2 at page 10 where it  
35 articulates four scenarios, (a), (b), (c) and (d). It  
36 seems to me that scenarios (b) to (d) contemplate  
37 arrangements occurring within the disaster management  
38 system.  
39 A. Which --  
40  
41 MR McGARRITY: Have I given you the right document?  
42  
43 MR BAILEY: Page 10.  
44  
45 MR McGARRITY: Have you got page 10, 5.2?  
46  
47 MR BAILEY: That is different to the copy I have.

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THE INTERVIEWEE: I have a copy. I can find it.

MR BAILEY: Q. I am referring to a version which was an attachment to your most recent statement, so if you have a copy of your statement --

A. Yes, I think I'm there.

Q. Attachment 2 is the version I have.

A. Yes. Under Appointments or Activations?

Q. Under Activations. Down the bottom of page 10 it has (a), (b), (c) and then (d) on the top of page 11.

A. Yes.

Q. I am looking at that in terms of your comment that this MOU was developed to try to address the criticism that Mr O'Sullivan had that the ODI really goes beyond the support that the legislation provides it. Those scenarios clearly contemplate these things occurring within, and feeding into, the disaster management arrangements.

A. Yes.

Q. But they're silent on the issue of command and control of the SES itself.

A. Yes.

Q. I suppose the question is where do we go from there, in terms of articulating that, either in relation to the MOUs or generally in relation to SES doctrine?

A. The requirement to have an MOA is driven, I guess, by an unwillingness to have a direct position on this. Therefore, what we have been given is an attempt to manage this by separate negotiation with 73 different local authorities. However skilled and astute we are at managing that, I think we will end up with 73 variations on the theme. Some of them will be quite narrow, some of them may be quite significant.

The ultimate outcome? Will we get 73 agreements? I don't think so. I think some local governments will choose not to enter into an MOA and I can't force them to because it's an agreement and if I make them, then it is no longer an agreement. So, I think that whilst this is certainly a useful step, I certainly would not like to see an outcome that is prescriptive down to a fine level of detail or granularity because I think that there are certainly some

1 local arrangements that do need to be made. I have said  
2 before that there is great variability across councils in  
3 both their risk profiles and in their capability and  
4 capacity to be able to respond, to be able to support an  
5 SES and be able to support disaster management generally.  
6

7 I think there would be benefit and value in taking  
8 those key Statewide principles and structure that would  
9 provide assistance to the clarity of the purpose and the  
10 organisation of the SES, to make those things more clear  
11 and then provide some ability to be able to make  
12 arrangements below that which take account of those  
13 variabilities and of those differences.  
14

15 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can I just confirm one thing in relation  
16 to the model that you mentioned with the area, region and  
17 State directors. You said that would really be based on  
18 the skills required in that particular disaster and you  
19 said that perhaps there may even be instances where a local  
20 controller is the area director for the SES, let's say.  
21 A. Yes, is the area controller or commander, or whatever  
22 it is, yes.  
23

24 Q. Sorry, commander. In such an instance, there is the  
25 potential for a volunteer to be in charge of that  
26 particular - in command of that area during a disaster?  
27 A. Yes.  
28

29 Q. So I have that right?  
30 A. Yes. So long as they hold the skills.  
31

32 MR BAILEY: Q. We have jumped around a fair bit there. I  
33 might just deal with one more topic and then we could take  
34 a further break. Turning to your most recent statement, at  
35 paragraph 76 you talk about the issue of tasking. The  
36 decision to accept tasks is the responsibility of the local  
37 controller at all stages, and the local controller is  
38 responsible for command and control.  
39 A. Of their members.  
40

41 Q. Of their members. Moving on to paragraph 77 - and I  
42 don't think there is any issue about local level stuff.  
43 Where we are running into the potential for confusion is  
44 when you have a major event and a large escalation of  
45 people and resources, and how it is then going to work. At  
46 paragraph 77 you say:  
47

1           *In a large and/or complex event, all SES*  
2           *tasks are likely to be managed through an*  
3           *SES Incident Management Team under the*  
4           *management of an incident controller.*  
5

6           Just to paraphrase, the role of the IMT is to establish  
7           communication channels with the sources of tasking, to  
8           record and prioritise all tasks, allocate tasks, plan for  
9           future requirements, and so forth.

10          A.    Mmm

11  
12          Q.    That is an essential ingredient in terms of any area  
13               commander arrangements?

14          A.    Yes, but it's a function. This is not a command role,  
15               this is a functional support role. An Incident Management  
16               Team is the body through which coordination occurs. It's  
17               not about setting direction, it's not about giving command  
18               or actually allocating priorities, or what have you; it's  
19               about the collation of all of the information that's  
20               necessary, bringing that together, and then dealing with it  
21               through an incident management system approach.

22  
23               We use in Queensland, as most jurisdictions do, AIIMS  
24               - Australian Interagency Incident Management System. That  
25               provides a structure to deal with incidents and it also is  
26               an arrangement that lends itself to escalate. It can be  
27               used on the back of a sheet of paper to manage a small  
28               thing out of a truck; it can be used to - we use it to  
29               manage the State Disaster Coordination Centre, to manage  
30               multiple inputs from all over the State. It's the same  
31               system. It is a structure to - it allows a structured  
32               approach to the management of multiple inputs and to  
33               organise them for appropriate outputs to get things done.

34  
35          Q.    What would be the difference between an incident  
36               controller and this notional area commander?

37          A.    The incident controller would be the person in charge  
38               of that Incident Management Team. So, that is almost a  
39               functional responsibility to organise that team. The  
40               incident commander - if that's the terminology we want to  
41               use - is, in fact, the head of the response.

42  
43          Q.    The command and control?

44          A.    So, the Incident Management Team would sit under the  
45               control of the incident controller - commander.

46  
47          Q.    I think we have already touched on the idea that --

1 A. But to be very, very clear - and I know I keep harping  
2 on this - reading back on the transcript when I gave  
3 evidence and we talked about incident management teams and  
4 coordination centres, I think there was a significant  
5 amount of confusion - and there may no longer be - around  
6 incident management for the SES and incident management for  
7 the disaster. I think that there was confusion that the  
8 SES Incident Management Team had a role in coordinating the  
9 entire event. It only coordinates the bits that relate to  
10 the operation of the SES.

11  
12 So, there will be an SES Incident Management Team  
13 operating in a big event, there will probably be a Fire  
14 Incident Management Team operating, there will be a Police  
15 Incident Management Team operating, there may be an  
16 Ambulance Incident Management Team all operating  
17 independent of each other but their outputs will feed up  
18 into the disaster management system in the form of  
19 situation reports, so that the disaster management system  
20 has visibility of what's occurring in each of those streams  
21 of response.

22  
23 Q. The first stop, in terms of the sit reps, is the LDCC?  
24 A. That's right.

25  
26 Q. And then up?  
27 A. That's right.

28  
29 Q. In relation to, say, an SES Incident Management Team  
30 and given their close relationship with the local  
31 government, where should they be? Should they be  
32 co-located in a disaster --

33 A. No, not necessarily. It's probably not ideal to have  
34 them co-located. It's just simply too busy and confusing.  
35 In Yasi, Townsville had an Incident Management Team  
36 established at the racetrack because it was an ideal  
37 situation for it. In Cairns --

38  
39 Q. This is the SES?

40 A. Yes - sorry. The Incident Management Team doesn't  
41 necessarily have to be fully resourced by SES. We have had  
42 occasions where we have outsourced an Incident Management  
43 Team to the fire service, simply because that was the best  
44 way to approach it. Because we all use AIIMS, we're all  
45 using the same structures, and so on, so people are  
46 familiar with what it is we are doing. So, it is a skill  
47 to work in an Incident Management Team, not a skill

1 necessarily to know in absolute detail the role of the SES.

2

3 Q. You could conceivably have one Incident Management  
4 Team that's actually, if you will, servicing a QPS command  
5 and control officer - whoever that happens to be on site -  
6 it could be QFRS, it could be SES as well?

7 A. Sorry, could just explain what you --

8

9 Q. Could one Incident Management Team actually serve a  
10 number of different operational response groups?

11 A. No.

12

13 Q. No?

14 A. No. What you're doing there is getting into the  
15 function of disaster management. An SES Incident  
16 Management Team will take all of the tasks that are  
17 required and start to allocate those tasks out, and so on.  
18 The analysis of all of those tasks - and one of the  
19 functions of an Incident Management Team is planning and  
20 intelligence. They may go, oh, we don't have enough  
21 people, we don't have enough resources, we don't have  
22 enough equipment - whatever it might be - to meet all of  
23 these tasks beyond tomorrow. Can we find it locally? If  
24 the answer is no, then that will go as a request.

25

26 It can go two ways. It can either go up the chain of  
27 command within the SES, so EMQ may have access to more of  
28 what it is they want, in which case we will solve that. If  
29 it's not within our ability to solve, it then becomes a  
30 request for assistance into the disaster management system  
31 where somebody else will need to provide the solution to  
32 that. So, whilst ever you can deal with it in your own  
33 chain of command, you do so. When you can't, that's hands  
34 off and that becomes a coordination issue for the disaster  
35 management arrangements, because they might be getting a  
36 request from the SES, they might be getting a request from  
37 Fire, they might be getting a request from Police, they  
38 might be getting a request from Ergon Energy for similar  
39 sorts of things. So, they will solve that in the disaster  
40 management system.

41

42 MR McGARRITY: Q. So an SES Incident Management Team may  
43 have staff members from other response agencies?

44 A. Could do, yes.

45

46 Q. But it still only performs SES functions?

47 A. That's right, yes.

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Q. And still reports straight up through the SES management hierarchy?

A. That's right. Maybe I confused you when I said we could have a fire team. What we would do is say, "Fire, we've got limited resources. The best use of the SES skills is not running an Incident Management Team, it's going and putting tarps on roofs. Could you provide some staff to assist us with an Incident Management Team --

Q. For the SES?

A. -- for the SES. Sorry, that was probably my confusion there.

MR BAILEY: We might take a break at this point.

### SHORT ADJOURNMENT

MR BAILEY: It seems that we have jumped around a fair bit in terms of our list of questions. We have touched on quite a few of the command and control ones already.

MR McGARRITY: Yes. We probably should discuss a bit more of the MOAs, if we could, or am I jumping ahead too far?

MR BAILEY: No, that's all right.

THE INTERVIEWEE: 32?

MR McGARRITY: Q. We are up to - sorry, if you could go back to 27 and the execution of the MOAs.

A. Yes.

Q. There was some suggestion - and I think it was in a State response the Commission's Interim Report - that all MOAs would be executed by 1 November.

A. No.

Q. We just wanted to gauge the status of that.

A. No, there was no suggestion that MOAs would be executed by 1 November. They would be out for discussion by 1 November.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. I would never give a guarantee that we will have every local government with an MOA, because it's an agreement that is at the discretion of either party to enter into.

1 I've got to say, anecdotally, most councils are waiting for  
2 the findings of this Commission before they will enter into  
3 a memorandum of understanding. I think they probably see,  
4 if they're strategising, see that entering into a set of  
5 arrangements may in fact influence the direction of the  
6 Commission's findings, so I think they're just all waiting.

7  
8 Some of the small ones, where capacity is an issue and  
9 the State provides them with additional capacity, and so  
10 on, are quite happy to enter into MOAs; others are  
11 certainly less so.

12  
13 Q. How many currently would be out?

14 A. Nine.

15  
16 MR BAILEY: Q. Impressionistically, they are from smaller  
17 councils?

18 A. Yes.

19  
20 Q. What about attachment A, the local arrangements?

21 A. No. Again, I think the reason is that people are  
22 waiting to see what a set of findings might be.

23  
24 Q. When you say "No", none have been executed?

25 A. None of them have been executed.

26  
27 Q. Are any under discussion?

28 A. Yes. Well, all are on that basis; it's whether we can  
29 get them across the line or not.

30  
31 Q. Active discussion?

32 A. Yes. I'm sure we will have a hiatus from December,  
33 January, February when we will get a series of events  
34 occurring, but we will continue. Of course, any  
35 recommendations that go to the heart of providing a level  
36 of guidance for them would, I think, then require us to  
37 revisit the whole arrangement of the MOA and how it's  
38 structured and the basis on which it's determined.

39  
40 Q. Just moving on to question 32, I simply note in  
41 passing - we have already had a discussion about a number  
42 of these components - that the MOA does have some  
43 information there about tasking arrangements and scenarios.

44 A. Yes.

45  
46 Q. But section 6 throws it all back on to the ODIs if  
47 there is any inconsistency.

1 A. Yes.

2

3 Q. The ODIs are in the state that they are in, so, again,  
4 there is potential for that confusion to be ongoing.

5 A. Yes. The intent there was that the doctrine was to  
6 provide the basis for that, if there were to be local  
7 arrangements that extended that, then that was fine, but  
8 they couldn't go to the heart of it. That's the reason  
9 that that was constructed that way.

10

11 Q. Moving on to question 33, dealing with inter-region  
12 deployment, I think we might have touched on this already.  
13 The idea of deployment out of an area from a donating area,  
14 if you like, is voluntary?

15 A. Yes.

16

17 Q. They can't be forced to go?

18 A. No.

19

20 Q. They have to agree to it?

21 A. And I don't believe there is conflict between those  
22 two. I think they actually work in concert at different  
23 levels. The local controller will determine - based on  
24 volunteerism, and so on - whom they will put up. The  
25 second part of that, 4.1, is that the regional director  
26 will then have a look at that and make sure that the  
27 volunteers who have been put forward actually meet the  
28 requirements of the deployment. So, if we are saying we  
29 want a deployment of chainsaw operators and they are  
30 putting up three people who don't have chainsaw  
31 qualifications, it's simply, I guess, a filter to go  
32 through to make sure that we're getting the right skill set  
33 for that deployment.

34

35 Q. Question 34 we have dealt with. Question 35 I think  
36 we have probably covered.

37 A. Yes.

38

39 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on 35, the second part of that  
40 question, is there any consistent training framework to  
41 ensure that SES unit members - that each unit has at least  
42 one person who is trained in IMT - incident management  
43 team?

44 A. Yes, there is a training framework for that. There  
45 are three elements. I think we have touched on one of  
46 them, working in the emergency operations centre. That's a  
47 one-day course, a general overview for any type of

1 operations centre. That's a nationally accredited one-day  
2 course. There's Introduction to Incident Management Team.  
3 Again, it's an introductory course that's two hours. That  
4 is more about an SES Incident Management Team. Then there  
5 is AIIMS training, and AIIMS training is as long as a piece  
6 of a string. You can do courses from a day to four days  
7 and then you can do further courses to get into more and  
8 more detail around that, and they are nationally accredited  
9 as well.

10  
11 Q. The expectation might be that every local government  
12 would have one SES member who has received formal training  
13 in setting up an IMT and running an IMT?

14 A. Yes. We would certainly want more than that, yes

15  
16 Q. More than one?

17 A. Yes. There is some other doctrine there about  
18 incident management structure, incident control function  
19 and activation guidelines that might be of use (handed).

20  
21 MR McGARRITY: Thank you.

22  
23 MR BAILEY: Q. What physical resources are there  
24 throughout the SES at the local level to run an Incident  
25 Management Team? I mean, if you are going to have a basic  
26 IMT running, what do you need?

27 A. Pretty much a room. Most of them would be run out of  
28 the SES headquarters, so the SES shed or what have you.  
29 Now, they are of varying degrees of --

30  
31 Q. Serviceability?

32 A. Yes, usefulness. Certainly there should be an  
33 arrangement in planning to say where are you going to run  
34 your IMT from. It could be - as I think you suggested  
35 earlier, it might be in council but out of another room to  
36 the Local Disaster Coordination Centre. So there's a range  
37 of options. The training is around how you structure it  
38 and what are the basic things you need to operate it. You  
39 don't need computers, and so on, to run it; you can run it  
40 on a whiteboard or butchers paper. I've seen people run  
41 them with post-it notes and the old cards that people used  
42 to run incidents. So, it's not a requirement that you need  
43 high levels of sophistication. That simply adds to the  
44 efficiency of the operation, if you need it.

45  
46 Q. With IMT training, just to jump back a bit, how  
47 sophisticated is the training? Are they being told how to

1 run a whiteboard or are they being told how to run computer  
2 software, or is it everything?  
3 A. It doesn't get down to that level of detail. Like, it  
4 won't teach you how to run a particular computer program.  
5 It's basically about what are the functions and the outputs  
6 and what are the issues that need to be addressed. How you  
7 then choose to do that is something that you would then  
8 plan and practice after the event of training. If there  
9 are computer programs or if you want to structure up a  
10 whiteboard, or whatever it is that you think is appropriate  
11 to deal with the risks that might be presented to your  
12 particular area, is how you would then design your response  
13 to that training.  
14  
15 Q. The incident management function is designed to  
16 receive information that provides situational awareness,  
17 receive tasks, prioritise tasks, dispatch tasks, get  
18 reports back on tasks completed?  
19 A. Yes. Its basic design is to break up large volumes of  
20 information in complexity and chaos and put it into a  
21 structured environment where there are very clear roles,  
22 responsibilities and arrangements where those roles and  
23 responsibilities interact with each other appropriately, so  
24 that what you get out of it is an efficient and effective  
25 response to the inputs that are coming into that Incident  
26 Management Team, and an ability to be able to plan and see  
27 into the future and anticipate future requirements and to  
28 be able to make requests to satisfy those things at the  
29 earliest possible time.  
30  
31 Q. Going back to the incident management room, at the  
32 very least, obviously, you need telephones and radios?  
33 A. Yes.  
34  
35 Q. But maybe not necessarily - well, RFA Online would be  
36 good?  
37 A. Yes. I mean, if you go to a lot of units, they  
38 actually already have an incident management room set up  
39 and they will have their radios in there and they will have  
40 their comms people, they will have a computer in there with  
41 RFA on it - if they have access to it - or a couple of  
42 computers, and they will have their little signs overhead;  
43 here's operations, here's logistics, here's the intel and  
44 planning, and so on. They will have already structured  
45 that up. That will probably be appropriate and  
46 commensurate to the things that they do on a regular basis.  
47

1           Come a major catastrophic event - and I think I have  
2 already used the Townsville event - huge and lots of  
3 deployments coming in to assist, hundreds of additional  
4 volunteers, that was moved off site. A bare room, just set  
5 it up. Everybody knew the basic structure of an Incident  
6 Management Team, we just made it bigger. Necessity is the  
7 mother of invention.

8  
9 MR McGARRITY: Q. If we move on to 36 then. A few issues  
10 have been raised in respect of the floods whereby there  
11 were deployments to particular regions where there may or  
12 may not have been enough consultation with the receiving  
13 local controller.

14 A. Yes.

15  
16 Q. Could you maybe talk us through, in practical terms,  
17 what is supposed to happen in terms of consultation with  
18 the receiving area before deployment?

19 A. Yes. Again, there are two ways in which a deployment  
20 will be raised. One is through a request and that would  
21 be, if you like, an outcome of the Incident Management Team  
22 in operation saying we have 500 jobs and 20 SES volunteers,  
23 that will take us three weeks to finish. That's not good  
24 enough; we need more volunteers in. So that would be one  
25 way in which that would occur.

26  
27           The second is either at the local, district or State  
28 level, the operations of the coordination centres there -  
29 which may have access to more information or different  
30 information - may, in fact, wish to proactively pre-deploy  
31 or stand up a deployment in anticipation of a future event  
32 or future request.

33  
34           That's where the confusion can occur. In an ideal  
35 world, that is where the liaison officer network should be  
36 working. So, State would say we have information from the  
37 Bureau and we have information from other sources that  
38 indicate we are going to have a flood somewhere else. You  
39 are already stretched because you have a flood event here.  
40 We are going to move forward or stand up or pre-deploy 20  
41 SES volunteers to wherever.

42  
43           Again in an ideal world, that should go back down  
44 through the disaster management system, should find its way  
45 to the Local Disaster Coordination Centre, the SES liaison  
46 officer should then identify that and feed that information  
47 back in to the local controller.

1  
2 Sometimes there are competing interests at play. The  
3 local controller is looking at a fairly narrow view and  
4 saying why do I need more people, whereas other people are  
5 making risk assessments. As always, you are better to make  
6 the decision and not need it than to get caught out not  
7 having made the decision and then having to catch up.  
8

9 There are issues of course, very practical issues,  
10 that the local controller may be able to bring to the table  
11 to influence that decision, such as where are these people  
12 going to stay and how are we going to feed them. There may  
13 be some really practical issues that would moderate that  
14 decision, so we may pre-deploy but not to Condamine, we may  
15 pre-deploy to Toowoomba so they're only a hop away from  
16 where they need to be but we can accommodate them.  
17

18 Q. But under current arrangements, is it mandatory to  
19 discuss with the local controller --

20 A. It's not mandatory.  
21

22 Q. It's not mandatory?

23 A. No. It's good practice.  
24

25 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 37 I think we have dealt with. In  
26 terms of your statement at paragraphs 80 to 83 --

27 A. Oh, the infamous diagram.  
28

29 Q. Yes. Attachment 9 I think it is. You are talking  
30 there about a need for better integration of SES and EMQ  
31 into the disaster management side of things when the LDCC  
32 is activated in a major disaster. The solutions you have  
33 suggested and the red arrows that appear there are  
34 essentially communication issues, are they not?

35 A. Absolutely, yes.  
36

37 Q. Does that highlight the need for the liaison officer?

38 A. Yes.  
39

40 Q. This is the key issue with liaison?

41 A. Absolutely, yes. There are two ways that this can be  
42 facilitated and I think both of them need to operate in  
43 concert. One is people, and people with knowledge. So,  
44 liaison officers in the appropriate places but liaison  
45 officers who actually understand the environment, who are  
46 not there just because they happened to have the right  
47 coloured shirt on. Experienced people. Some of your best

1 people actually have to get off the tools and be part of  
2 the management.

3

4 The second thing is that there is an opportunity for  
5 an enhanced systems environment, and we have talked about  
6 the all hazards information management program. It's not a  
7 system, it's a series of little products that will come  
8 together to actually provide a network that will enable  
9 information to flow more readily.

10

11 I think those two things - common operating pictures,  
12 so everybody is seeing the same information at the same  
13 time for the same purpose.

14

15 Q. This is AIIMS?

16 A. Yes, and then people to actually interpret that data;  
17 what does this mean for this stream. So, for the SES, is  
18 there information in that - in all of this data that's  
19 flowing around and the decisions that get made, is there  
20 something there that is relevant to the SES? Then the  
21 question should go to the SES liaison officer: What does  
22 this mean for you guys? No, that's fine; just give me  
23 that and we can progress that. Or no, this is a major  
24 problem; we need something; we can't do that. Whatever it  
25 might be.

26

27 Q. That data interpretation function you are talking  
28 about, that is a disaster management role?

29

A. Yes, it is.

30

31 Q. So that occurs --

32 A. It's taking the expertise out of the line agency and  
33 dropping it into the disaster management arrangements, to  
34 enable better decision making based on reality, if you  
35 like. Rather than making assumptions about what we think  
36 the SES can do, have someone from the SES at the table who  
37 can actually say, yes we can do that.

38

39 Q. That is the liaison officer function?

40

A. That is the liaison officer role, yes.

41

42 Q. The liaison officer would be in the LDCC?

43

A. Yes.

44

45 Q. Is there any specific training on offer for liaison  
46 officer roles for SES volunteers?

47

A. No. It's inferred in the - working in a coordination

1 centre, that's part of the function. So, there's nothing  
2 specific. Could there be? Yes. I think it is an  
3 important role and probably discrete enough that there is  
4 probably an element of interpretation of, yes, you  
5 understand the environment you are working in but your  
6 specific role in that and what are the skills you need to  
7 complete that role.

8  
9 Q. One of the impressions that I have from the evidence  
10 has been that sometimes there is a perception that EMQ and  
11 SES are somehow operating in parallel to the disaster  
12 management arrangements. I take away from this morning's  
13 discussion that that's not so. You have your disaster  
14 management there and your SES, sort of, sitting down there  
15 as one of a number?

16 A. Yes.

17  
18 Q. But that feeding in, that communication flow, is  
19 all-important?

20 A. Yes.

21  
22 Q. That is where these liaison people come in?

23 A. That's why we have to deal with those three elements  
24 of command, control and coordination and they have to be  
25 dealt with almost concurrently, because all of those things  
26 are operating in a disaster environment all of the time.  
27 It's different to - most of the models come from either the  
28 military or the police, or somewhere. Ours, in disaster  
29 management, is fundamentally different because you have a  
30 combination of command and control people and management  
31 people all at the table at the same time and all with  
32 equally important tasks to do.

33  
34 Now, the Department of Communities is absolutely  
35 critical to the response to a disaster, but don't put them  
36 in a command and control structure because they will fight  
37 and become ineffective, because they manage themselves in a  
38 different way. So, this concept of coordination is  
39 absolutely critical in a disaster management environment,  
40 whereas command is critical in a military environment.

41  
42 There are very different approaches to these things  
43 and you have to actually look at the cohort of  
44 organisations that you are trying to harness and point in  
45 the right direction for a common purpose and what is the  
46 best mechanism to actually pull all that together and  
47 deliver something.

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Q. Just so we are clear about this, coordination is a function of disaster management; command and control is a function of operational response?

A. Yes. There's an element of command and control in disaster management but only a couple of people have it. The share of the SDMG and the district disaster coordinators, they are the only ones who can actually give a direction. They can say I don't care what any of you say, this is what's going to happen and I will write that down and that is what you will do. Everything else is based on cooperation and collaboration.

MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on the liaison officers, where they currently are in place in the system, are they nominated by the local controller to be the liaison officer?

A. That should be the practice.

Q. That's how the practice should work, in effect?

A. That's right.

MR BAILEY: Q. Is that occurring?

A. Yes and no. I'm sure there are Local Disaster Management Groups that operate without an SES liaison officer.

MR McGARRITY: Q. The local controller would effectively say this person has the experience, the skills, they can contribute to the LDCC, LDMG - whatever you want; I trust their judgment and that's why they are the nominated liaison person?

A. Yes.

MR BAILEY: Q. Moving on to funding - unless there is anything else you wanted to say?

A. No.

Q. Question 38. I notice you are leafing through some documents. Is there anything arising out of any of those?

A. Yes. That is some information that was actually prepared out of other documents for the Commission but I am happy to make that available. It simply takes you through some of the more detailed operational process basis for those funding programs. This one is actually talking about the recurrent and non-recurrent. I guess the observation around the non-recurrent is that it is consistently oversubscribed; there are more requests than there are

1 dollars available to meet those requests.

2

3 Q. How oversubscribed is it?

4 A. Well, there's another question about the \$700,000  
5 later on, which is at question --

6

7 MR [REDACTED] 49.

8

9 THE INTERVIEWEE: -- 49. That was \$734,000. If I could  
10 deal with that question quickly because it is, I guess,  
11 relevant. That money was a windfall to EMQ based on the  
12 cessation of a Federal Government program, where we  
13 received advice that the program was going to cease in a  
14 particular year, the money had been utilised for a  
15 continuing program of work and we went to Treasury and were  
16 funded for its continuation through consolidated revenue  
17 for the State. The Commonwealth came back and said, oh, we  
18 will pay you the money again in this year and finish the  
19 program the following year. So, we had a windfall of  
20 \$730,000-odd. That money was applied to the programs that  
21 were requested in that year but not funded.

22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. The non-recurrent?

24

25 A. Yes. So there was something like \$300,000 available  
26 and we had in excess of \$700,000 of additional funding that  
27 was requested in that year.

27

28 Q. Was that disbursed in that year?

29

30 A. Yes.

30

31 Q. Fully disbursed?

32

33 A. Fully disbursed, yes.

33

34 Q. Was it still oversubscribed?

35

36 A. Slightly. I don't think we got to finish all of them  
37 but we got the lion's share done that year. But I guess  
38 the other thing is because there are - I mean, we can  
39 basically do two or three building grants and about seven  
40 or eight vehicle grants. There are in excess of 300 units  
41 and groups around the State, so it doesn't take much maths  
42 to work out and, by any analysis, some of the accommodation  
43 is substandard.

43

44 MR McGARRITY: Q. That funding of \$734,000 from the  
45 Commonwealth was received under the auspices of which  
46 program?

47

47 A. It was called the State Support Package, which wasn't

1 directly for the SES but, given that it came with no  
2 strings attached - the Commonwealth said, we weren't going  
3 to give you this money, we are now going to give it to you,  
4 you can use it for whatever purposes you wish in the  
5 disaster management environment. It wasn't specific  
6 purpose funding.

7  
8 Q. But it was for disaster management?

9 A. Yes, and we chose to apply it to the SES to meet those  
10 grants. I think the documentation I have given you  
11 actually steps you through the processes, and so on, for  
12 each of those grants.

13  
14 MR BAILEY: Q. That is in response, really, to question  
15 38?

16 A. 38, yes.

17  
18 Q. Question 39: Is funding administered directly between  
19 the local controller and EMQ's grants and subsidies team or  
20 is it channelled through the council?

21 A. All of the non-recurrent grants go through local  
22 council simply because local controllers don't have the  
23 governance or administration to deal with that. They don't  
24 all have bank accounts, and so on, and it's not an  
25 expectation that we would have on a local controller to  
26 administer substantial amounts of money. So it's a much  
27 stronger governance arrangement to provide it to local  
28 government. The executive allowances that are paid and the  
29 modest allowances for out-of-pocket expenses, that's done  
30 direct with each member.

31  
32 Q. The recurrent funding obviously goes directly to the  
33 council as well?

34 A. Yes.

35  
36 Q. In relation to those recurrent subsidies, question 40,  
37 are they tied in any way? Do they have strings attached?

38 A. Well, they are tied to the purposes which the  
39 application seeks. We don't have a formal audit program  
40 but our regions are made aware. So when local government  
41 gets the grant for the building, the region is made aware  
42 and we work with council to progress those grants.

43  
44 I think the question goes to are they monitored?  
45 There is not a formal process of auditing and monitoring;  
46 it is, I guess, to some extent a trust relationship. But  
47 there is, I guess, some oversight that the money actually

1 gets spent on what it was applied for.

2

3 Q. Leading on to question 41, you might have regard to  
4 what you have said at paragraph 31 of your statement as  
5 well, because there you discuss the criteria used to  
6 determine the amount that is payable in relation to the  
7 recurrent subsidies.

8 A. Yes.

9

10 Q. I just want to take you as well to attachment 5.  
11 This, at some level, gets back to something we were talking  
12 about very much at the outset, about the structuring of SES  
13 units versus groups, and forth. Attachment 5 seems to  
14 indicate that regional councils receive these subsidies  
15 based on the number of units they have and there are  
16 councils with multiple units, as opposed to a single unit  
17 and a number of subgroups. On that basis, it appears that  
18 they have the subsidy paid a number of times rather than  
19 just once.

20 A. Mmm.

21

22 Q. For example, you can see Bundaberg Regional Council  
23 has subsidies paid for Bundaberg City, Burnett Shire, Isis  
24 Shire and Kolan Shire, which are the pre-amalgamation  
25 council areas.

26 A. Yes.

27

28 Q. That appears to be an anomalous sort of arrangement.

29 A. Yes.

30

31 Q. By comparison, Brisbane has one unit and it receives  
32 one subsidy payment.

33 A. Yes.

34

35 Q. Admittedly it is a large and well-resourced council  
36 but it is somewhat inequitable; would you agree?

37 A. Yes, it is. The basis of taking that approach was  
38 that during amalgamations the determination was made that  
39 no council would be disadvantaged by virtue of  
40 amalgamation. So, if the SES received \$21,000 in  
41 pre-amalgamation terms, then they would receive \$21,000  
42 post-amalgamation.

43

44 There was little in the way of equity in the  
45 distribution prior to that. It was a blanket fee. By  
46 design - it's a modest amount of money and, by design, it  
47 was to try to cover things like general administration, and

1 so on, printer cartridges, paper, and that sort of thing.  
2 It hasn't been increased in line with CPI or any other  
3 function of inflation over time, so its purchasing power  
4 has certainly eroded over time.

5  
6 There is probably an argument to be made that a model  
7 similar to Victoria, where they actually categorise their  
8 groups and units into, for the sake of argument, small  
9 medium and large, and then there's funding streams that  
10 attach themselves to them.

11  
12 Q. In terms of the amalgamation strategy, which was that  
13 no-one is going to be worse off, is there any sort of  
14 sunset clause on those arrangements?

15 A. No. That was the decision taken at that time and it  
16 was an administrative decision.

17  
18 Q. Taken by whom?

19 A. By me.

20  
21 Q. Is there any plan, if you will, to reconfigure these  
22 arrangements in any way?

23 A. The difficulty is that the budget is what it is and to  
24 reconfigure them in any meaningful way, there is simply not  
25 enough in that pot to provide a meaningful solution to that  
26 problem.

27  
28 Q. When I say reconfigure, I suppose I am moving into  
29 question 43 which is, for example, could the total amount  
30 of available funding for a particular SES unit be  
31 proportionate, say, to the risk profile of the area? Could  
32 it be weighted in terms of the resources of the council  
33 generally? Are there other --

34 A. Yes. I think, yes, there are. Again, there would  
35 need to be some more detailed analysis of how that might  
36 occur and certainly that would need to be attached to a  
37 stream of funding. I think the only outcome that you would  
38 arrive at from that analysis is that it would cost you more  
39 money. I don't think there's anything that you would  
40 arrive at that would cost you less money than is currently  
41 available in the budget for this purpose.

42  
43 Q. Which is to say \$480,000 per annum?

44 A. Yes.

45  
46 Q. Which is fixed over the four-year budgetary cycle, did  
47 you say?

1 A. Well, budgets occur on an annual basis but budgets are  
2 based on a zero, so basically you start off from the  
3 position that you will get what you got last year, if it's  
4 recurrent, and then any new money has to come through  
5 submissions and requests.

6

7 Q. Do you see that these arrangements are anomalous when  
8 compared to the intent of the structure that is implied by  
9 the Disaster Management Act?

10 A. Yes.

11

12 Q. That there would be --

13 A. I think that the arrangements are inconsistent with  
14 the current structure of local government,  
15 post-amalgamation in particular.

16

17 MR McGARRITY: Q. Would this all be made a lot easier if  
18 the various units that operated under one local government  
19 were combined into one unit, let's say? I'm not talking  
20 here about having one local controller, I'm talking about  
21 an amalgamation of units, as such, given that the intent of  
22 the legislation seems to be that those transitional  
23 arrangements, whereby several units could exist under  
24 post-amalgamation circumstances, would perhaps come to an  
25 end eventually?

26 A. Yes. Look, I don't know that that's necessarily the  
27 answer. I think the answer lies more in what you indicated  
28 in the earlier part: what is the risk profile that that  
29 local government faces; what are the unique conditions,  
30 perhaps of distance, of numbers of units, or whatever it  
31 might be that are unique to that particular local  
32 government; how then do you arrive at some formula that  
33 says these conditions equate to this level of funding.

34

35 Q. Is that something that the Statewide Natural Hazard  
36 Risk assessment tool might be used to --

37 A. It could be.

38

39 Q. But it hasn't been --

40 A. No.

41

42 Q. -- suggested as yet?

43 A. No. As I say, its primary purpose is around disaster  
44 management and planning for disaster management generally,  
45 not for the SES specifically.

46

47 MR BAILEY: Q. Since these questions were committed to

1 paper, we have had some input from LGAQ which suggests that  
2 there are variations in funding arrangements; there's no  
3 agreed funding formula. I am not entirely sure what is  
4 meant by that because there seems to be a formula here that  
5 you have articulated for the recurrent arrangements. But  
6 the essence of what I want to get to is that there seems to  
7 be an implicit suggestion that funding arrangements could  
8 be based on functions of the local SES unit, demography of  
9 the local community, or identified hazard risk landscape.  
10 Is that a preferable way to approach it, as opposed to what  
11 we have here in paragraph 31 of your statement?

12 A. I guess we need to contextualise all of the comments  
13 around this; that is, under the current arrangements the  
14 funding for the SES is a mutual obligation between the  
15 State and local government. All we are talking about at  
16 the moment is the State's commitment, and that's fine, but  
17 I just think we need to be clear that there are obligations  
18 on local government to support the SES as well.

19  
20 I think the issues that we just spoke about before  
21 would go to answering the question that's raised by LGAQ.  
22 What is the complexity, what are the conditions or  
23 circumstances of a particular local government, and how  
24 might we be able to articulate it in some form of algorithm  
25 that leads to the finance. That would have been a function  
26 of what the available budget is. If it remains at the  
27 \$400,000-odd mark, then how do we cut that pie up? Whether  
28 we make the pie bigger or smaller, I think, is a different  
29 question.

30  
31 Q. The question I am asking is how do you cut the pie up  
32 because the current arrangement seems to be anomalous,  
33 that's all.

34 A. Yes, and what I'm saying is I think that moving down  
35 the path of having a risk-based approach to it would be a  
36 better outcome, but I wouldn't like that to simply  
37 automatically suggest that a consequence of that outcome is  
38 more money, because I don't have access to more money.

39  
40 Q. I see what you are saying. We might have been at  
41 cross-purposes there.

42 A. Yes.

43  
44 Q. No, I wasn't implying that you would have a bigger pot  
45 or a bigger pie. I'm looking at how the pie gets cut up at  
46 the moment, and it seems a bit odd.

47 A. Yes, and I am agreeing that I think some form of

1 risk-based approach to that, which takes account of the  
2 unique circumstances of local government, would be  
3 something worthy of consideration.  
4

5 Q. Irrespective of the size of the pie?

6 A. Yes.  
7

8 Q. Who would best be positioned to do that?

9 A. We would have to lead it, I would think, but we would  
10 need to do that in conjunction, probably, with LGAQ as the  
11 representative of council.  
12

13 MR McGARRITY: Q. Is that something that EMQ is looking at  
14 progressing, a different way of --

15 A. Not actively at the moment but it is something that  
16 has been exercising our mind for some time.  
17

18 Q. I think you mentioned Victoria, was it, which operates  
19 on a risk-based --

20 A. Yes.  
21

22 MR BAILEY: Q. Obviously we are only talking about one  
23 component of the funding?

24 A. Yes, absolutely.  
25

26 MR McGARRITY: Q. I think we can go to question 45, the  
27 sponsorship arrangements that exist with the private sector  
28 and, specifically, there has been mention of NRMA, the  
29 insurance providers. Would you be able to give us just a  
30 few details about the operations of that arrangement,  
31 considering certain arrangements such as this occur in  
32 other jurisdictions and has there been any commentary on  
33 the appropriateness of a commercial entity providing  
34 support?

35 A. There is a commercial sponsorship arrangement in New  
36 South Wales and Victoria; AAMI in Victoria and NRMA, the  
37 same as us, in New South Wales. The arrangement is covered  
38 by the State Sponsorship Policy. The State government has  
39 a policy for sponsorship of State government entities,  
40 instrumentalities, and so on, and it is complying with  
41 that.  
42

43 As I have indicated in my evidence, the contractual  
44 arrangements with NRMA are commercial in-confidence and  
45 NRMA are particularly protective of those commercial  
46 arrangements, so I would seek not to divulge the quantum of  
47 the arrangement. I guess it's up to you. If you need that

1 then we would probably have to go through something a  
2 little more formal in order to provide that. So, I can  
3 leave that with you. I'm not seeking to be obstructive --  
4

5 Q. Of course.

6 A. -- but we signed a contract in good faith and I know  
7 that NRMA are particularly concerned that that might become  
8 part of - fall into the public domain.  
9

10 The sponsorship is a combination of in-kind and direct  
11 financial support. The in-kind is principally around  
12 assisting with community education. So, they will produce  
13 advertisements around storm season that have messages that  
14 we concur with and support, but it allows them to attach  
15 their brand to those messages and have tag lines that serve  
16 their commercial interests.  
17

18 They also provide us cash that is tied, but fairly  
19 loosely. It's not an enormous amount of string, but it's  
20 for the benefit of the SES, so we usually provide  
21 equipment, support for SES week, those sorts of things.  
22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. Would that go into the non-recurrent pot?

24 A. No, no. It doesn't go into that directly. We might  
25 fund equipment for the SES just through our general  
26 equipment appropriation, we might apply it to an activity  
27 that promotes or supports the SES. They were involved in  
28 Can You Survive For Three Days, the house with the two  
29 young kids tweeting and facebooking, and so on, in  
30 Reddcliff Place. So, a range of activities that raise the  
31 profile of the SES and raise the profile of disaster  
32 management.  
33

34 MR McGARRITY: Q. Do you have the ultimate decision as to  
35 how that money is spent?

36 A. The cash, yes.  
37

38 Q. Whatever need there is, it's directed towards that?

39 A. That's right, yes.  
40

41 MR BAILEY: Q. I might just drop back to question 44 and  
42 perhaps get a response from you about that. I saw you had  
43 something written down, so I will see what you have to say.

44 A. Again, the legislation is, I think, somewhat fraught.  
45 Introduction of legislation of that nature would require, I  
46 think, significant consultation with those stakeholders and  
47 I think a lot of consideration would need to go into

1 anything that went down that line.

2

3 Having said that, the positive is - as with the other  
4 issues we have talked about - that if there is uncertainty  
5 then providing clarity is a good thing. We have to be  
6 careful that in the attempt to provide clarity, we don't  
7 actually destroy the intent. Whilst there are always areas  
8 where we may have different views, and so on, to our  
9 colleagues in local government, we do have a system that,  
10 when something happens, works. I'd just caution that we  
11 are practical in the way that we might progress any  
12 recommendations in that area.

13

14 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can we take from that that you would not  
15 be supportive of a definite legislative obligation?

16 A. Not unless we could have a genuine negotiated outcome;  
17 that position was agreed against all the key stakeholders.  
18 That would deliver the best outcome.

19

20 Q. You are talking about extensive consultation with --

21 A. Yes.

22

23 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 46: Does EMQ monitor local  
24 government applications for SES funding and identify those  
25 local governments that may not be accessing the funding  
26 program?

27 A. Again, in --

28

29 Q. I suppose we should be clear that we are talking about  
30 non-recurrent.

31 A. Yes. In a formal sense, do we have a program to do  
32 that? No. EMQ is working with individual units, is  
33 working with individual governments, as needs are  
34 identified. If those programs haven't potentially been  
35 identified by local government as an opportunity or a  
36 solution to those problems, our people will certainly raise  
37 that and we will provide assistance in the development, and  
38 so on, of an application under those programs. It's  
39 really, again, a best-intent approach to that, with our  
40 people working with both the volunteers and the local  
41 government.

42

43 MR McGARRITY: Q. Again, you are using the local knowledge  
44 of EMQ area and regional directors to assist where that  
45 need arises?

46 A. Yes, that's right.

47

1 MR BAILEY: Q. But how much do you push it when the  
2 program is oversubscribed anyway? You go to the effort of  
3 making an application that can't be fulfilled.  
4 A. Yes, that's been raised with me and my response to  
5 people is, well, there's only one way to assure you don't  
6 get the grant and that is don't apply for it. If you have  
7 a genuine need --  
8  
9 Q. You have to ask.  
10 A. -- then your need will be considered in a priority  
11 sense or a merit-based sense with other applicants. If you  
12 are the highest need, you will get the money.  
13  
14 Q. On that issue, when you have all these applications,  
15 how are they prioritised? How are the merits identified?  
16 Who gets to the top of the heap?  
17 A. There is a process that's gone through and it is  
18 guided by a set of principles to score. There's a group  
19 that comes together, an assessment team, and they have some  
20 rules around how they should conduct that assessment and  
21 undertake it and rank each of the applications.  
22  
23 Q. That assessment team is within EMQ?  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. Who is on the team?  
27 A. Oh, I would have to give that to you separately.  
28  
29 MR McGARRITY: Q. Can we get a copy of those rules that  
30 you referred to?  
31 A. Yes.  
32  
33 MR BAILEY: Q. Does the team make recommendations?  
34 A. Yes, they make recommendations to me.  
35  
36 Q. And you sign off on that?  
37 A. Yes.  
38  
39 MR McGARRITY: Q. Presumably the applications also have  
40 some comments from the regional directors before they go to  
41 EMQ; is that correct?  
42 A. Yes. We seek input, both formal and informal.  
43  
44 Q. I suppose that leads on to question 47 about the input  
45 from EMQ officers, area and regional directors, about how  
46 funding is directed.  
47 A. The role is support and advice. We don't write the

1 application. We will provide advice to make sure the  
2 application meets the criteria or addresses the criteria,  
3 and so on, and what is the best way to form up the  
4 application, and so on, but it's a local government  
5 application.

6

7 MR BAILEY: Q. Question 48: How is the budgetary  
8 allocation for the SES determined?

9 A. Take last year's and --

10

11 Q. Same again?

12 A. Yes. I think we indicated in my formal response there  
13 are certainly opportunities for new money through the  
14 budget process and through things like election  
15 commitments, as that cycle comes around, but principally  
16 it's take last year's budget and roll it over.

17

18 MR McGARRITY: Q. Just on that point - and this might be  
19 something we might touch on later - when making submissions  
20 vis-a-vis next year's budget and, so forth, is much  
21 consideration given to the amount of fundraising that was  
22 undertaken by --

23

24

25 Q. There's no regard given to that?

26 A. No regard at all. I don't know how much they raised  
27 or where it's raised.

28

29 Q. There's no barometer as to how much extra money was  
30 required across the State?

31

32

33 MR BAILEY: Q. Does EMQ have details from the local  
34 governments as to what their financial commitment is to  
35 SES?

36

37

38 Q. Really, you are just administering your side of the  
39 equation?

40

41

42 Q. Whatever they do is a matter for them?

43

44

45 Q. But acknowledging that under the Disaster Management  
46 Act they have a general obligation to maintain a state of  
47 readiness?

1 A. Yes.  
2  
3 Q. SES is the primary way they look at doing that, or one  
4 of the ways they look at doing that?  
5 A. Yes, one of the ways they look at doing that, yes.  
6  
7 Q. Some SES units may be accessing funding sources from  
8 the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. Is that something you  
9 have any knowledge about?  
10 A. We usually provide a level of endorsement to those,  
11 but that's the extent of it.  
12  
13 Q. That fund makes its own assessment and allocation?  
14 A. Yes, they have their own assessment criteria.  
15  
16 Q. Is that part of Queensland Treasury?  
17 A. I believe so. I think it's administered through their  
18 gaming fund.  
19  
20 MR McGARRITY: Q. I think it's through (indistinct) these  
21 days.  
22 A. Yes, or the finance.  
23  
24 Q. Through Liquor Licensing, I think, perhaps, these  
25 days.  
26 A. Yes.  
27  
28 Q. When you say "endorsement", is that really an overview  
29 as to whether or not you support the application?  
30 A. Yes.  
31  
32 Q. So it may or may not be an endorsement?  
33 A. There hasn't been one that I am aware of that we have  
34 knocked back yet, but yes it's to - I guess what they are  
35 looking for is to ensure that the application is consistent  
36 with the purposes and intent of the SES.  
37  
38 MR BAILEY: Q. Those applications are prepared by the  
39 local government?  
40 A. Yes.  
41  
42 Q. Question 51: Has any work been undertaken to estimate  
43 the potential cost if the SES was totally funded by the  
44 State government?  
45 A. The answer is I think so, and I have been turning the  
46 place upside down because there was some work done in 2007,  
47 not specifically for that purpose, but I understand or my

1 recollection is that it was a question that was asked.  
2 Somebody had a recollection that there was a disc that did  
3 have some work around that on it. It is not in the report  
4 that I have found and, if you will bear with me, I will  
5 continue to search for that. If I find it, I will give it  
6 to you; if I can't find it, I will let you know.

7  
8 MR McGARRITY: Q. Do you know who posed the question  
9 initially?

10 A. I think it was me. The work wasn't being done for  
11 that purpose, I think that's why it didn't find its way  
12 into the final report. But I think it was a question that  
13 was of interest, certainly to me and some other people, and  
14 it was something that probably could have been done as an  
15 adjunct to the work. I can't recall - and the veracity of  
16 the output is probably not absolutely ironclad, but it  
17 might give an indication.

18  
19 Q. That leads on to the next part of that question: Is it  
20 possible to even put an estimate on what total State  
21 funding might be?

22 A. Yes, you could. It would require work. What I think  
23 would need to happen is that it would need to be a proper  
24 accounting based assessment, so there will be assets, there  
25 will be depreciation, there will be a whole range of  
26 tangible and intangible - cash and other elements of that.  
27 I think we would need to be able - if we were going to go  
28 down that path, it would need to be done properly so that  
29 we actually got a realistic assessment of what the cash  
30 contribution and what the in-kind and other intangible  
31 contributions might be.

32  
33 Q. Would you have any idea about the total cost in other  
34 States? I know it's hard to compare apples with oranges  
35 but just to get an idea?

36 A. See, even there - in New South Wales, the budget for  
37 the SES is something in the order of \$100 million, by  
38 memory. I would need to confirm that. But that doesn't  
39 take account that local government still provides many of  
40 the built assets for SES accommodation, and so on. If you  
41 take into account the accommodation - which is probably, in  
42 terms of an asset base, the most valuable part of the SES -  
43 it might be a couple of hundred million dollars in total.  
44 I don't know. But that's why I say if we wanted to do that  
45 exercise, I think we would have to do it right and set up  
46 the criteria by which we did it. Then if we wanted to  
47 compare that to other States, then we'd have to be provided

1 that criteria.

2

3 Q. So it can be done but it's very complex?

4 A. It's time-consuming, probably costly and complex.

5

6 MR BAILEY: Q. Do you have a view about complete State  
7 responsibility for funding here in Queensland?

8 A. I would not be supportive at all. I think there are  
9 enormous benefits that come from a construct of mutual  
10 obligation/mutual benefit. The local government is  
11 squarely entrenched in our Disaster Management Act and,  
12 therefore, the SES, because that's where it resides. I  
13 think that brings enormous benefit to the level of support  
14 that is provided to the SES, it ensures that there is local  
15 content, that this is not something that's run from afar,  
16 that it's actually run with significant local knowledge and  
17 significant local interest.

18

19 When the SES is deployed, whilst the local government  
20 doesn't have a direct command role or a deployment role,  
21 they do bring to the table an enormous amount of local  
22 knowledge that is incredibly useful and supportive to the  
23 SES in doing their work. I would absolutely hate to see  
24 any set of arrangements that went to the heart of the  
25 concept of mutual obligation/mutual benefit.

26

27 Q. Do you have any general comments about the level of  
28 funding, from the State's perspective or EMQ's perspective,  
29 or the current funding programs and how they are  
30 administered?

31 A. Are we talking about total funding support for the SES  
32 or just the recurrent and non-recurrent funding programs?

33

34 Q. Well, in general, yes. Total support.

35 A. Any organisation that doesn't seek more, I guess, is  
36 not trying. The SES, along with every other instrument of  
37 the State, will compete for scarce funding through the  
38 budget cycles. We put forward through the Cabinet process  
39 our bids and they get supported or not, as is the case with  
40 other elements.

41

42 MR McGARRITY: Q. With the fundraising - I know it's a  
43 function under the Act of SES - is it appropriate for that  
44 to continue as has been the case, in that some members have  
45 suggested they have spent a lot of time and effort having  
46 to fundraise because there simply is not enough money from  
47 the government to support the units. Do you have any ideas

1 about how that impost could be lessened on those people?  
2 A. Well, the only way that I can see it's lessened is  
3 more direct funding, but we don't necessarily understand in  
4 total what the quantum of that might be.

5

6 Q. Would that be important, to try and get a handle on  
7 the quantum, the types of sums we are talking about in  
8 terms of fundraising needs, particularly thinking in the  
9 future when making submissions to the CBRC, and so forth,  
10 for more money?

11 A. Yes. I guess the problem around us having ongoing  
12 visibility of that is that it actually drives then an  
13 obligation that we would need to manage and administer  
14 those funds in some way. There would be an obligation on  
15 the State to ensure that those fundraising activities were  
16 managed appropriately, that the accounts were audited, and  
17 what have you. That would bring an enormous impost onto  
18 the paid staff of EMQ. It's one which we are probably not  
19 competent to undertake at the moment, so we would have to  
20 find ways to do that. All I can see is an awful lot of  
21 cost.

22

23 Q. I guess what I am trying to get at is can we use the  
24 numbers that are raised through fundraising activities by  
25 volunteers and come to some sort of arrangement whereby the  
26 State says we think this has taken too much time and effort  
27 on behalf of volunteers, we see there is an issue here,  
28 there is a discrepancy in fundraising, we will meet you  
29 halfway - or something like that? Is that something that  
30 could be worked on or is it appropriate to continue under  
31 the same model, where fundraising can just take place,  
32 dependent upon the particular unit?

33 A. I'm sure there are a number of volunteers who,  
34 whatever the case, will continue to fundraise, so I don't  
35 know that it is going to solve the problem that has been  
36 presented to you. The quantum of fundraising is probably,  
37 in the scheme of things, fairly small. Some of them might  
38 be talking about several thousand dollars but, in the  
39 scheme of running the whole SES, even in aggregate, that's  
40 not an enormous amount. It's a difficult question because  
41 I can't really --

42

43 Q. That's why I'm asking you. I don't know the answer.

44 A. Yes. It could be an awful lot of work for no value.  
45 I don't have an answer, quite frankly.

46

47 MR BAILEY: Q. Just on the fundraising activities side of

1 things, is there a new policy being developed and has it  
2 been distributed?

3 A. No, it hasn't. There was correspondence from our  
4 regions to all units to advise them of the changes, but  
5 there has been no doctrine or administrative instrument  
6 developed as yet.

7

8 Q. Question 54: Some local governments have instituted a  
9 local levy, with some of the money being used to support  
10 disaster management; for example, Mackay. Is this an  
11 option that you support?

12 A. It's really a matter of government policy. A levy is  
13 a new tax. That's a matter of government policy. It's not  
14 really something that I am able to comment on.

15

16 MR McGARRITY: Q. We did receive from various people some  
17 suggestions that perhaps there could be a paid arrangement  
18 in place in the SES that parallels that in the Rural Fire  
19 Service or the auxiliary fire service. I think the people  
20 who said the Rural Fire Service might have been referring  
21 to the auxiliary fire service?

22 A. There is in my - not from the Queensland Fire and  
23 Rescue Service, but my understanding - and I have asked the  
24 question - is other than a similar arrangement that we  
25 provide for training, occasionally paying trainers on a  
26 casual basis, there is no remuneration stream for Rural  
27 Fire Service.

28

29 Q. Just to clarify then, we are referring to auxiliary  
30 fire service operators?

31 A. Yes. Auxiliaries are not volunteers, they are  
32 part-time employees, so we are talking about a  
33 fundamentally different set of arrangements.

34

35 Q. Do you know where that operates specifically? Is it  
36 the case that they get paid on an hourly call-out basis?

37 A. Yes, I think so and that's only for urban. This is in  
38 addition to urban fire fighting arrangements in smaller  
39 communities where they might have auxiliaries to meet a  
40 night shift, for example. Again, I'm not 100 percent  
41 across the arrangement but it's either to meet a part-time  
42 arrangement where no urban fire fighting exists or to  
43 augment a limited service that's not a 24/7 like you would  
44 find in a major centre.

45

46 Q. Basically, the difference is there were two  
47 fundamental --

1 A. One is an employment arrangement, the other is a  
2 volunteer arrangement. The Rural Fire Service is like the  
3 SES; it's a volunteer service. Auxiliaries are simply  
4 part-time employees.  
5

6 MR BAILEY: Q. One of the suggestions that has arisen in  
7 the context of some feedback via LGAQ is that the  
8 registration and insurance of vehicles can create confusion  
9 about ownership of those assets. Is that something you can  
10 comment on?

11 A. Yes, it can and I guess EMQ might have contributed to  
12 the confusion some time ago. There was an effort for EMQ  
13 to actually own some of the SES assets, so to hold those  
14 assets on our books. When I took over in this role, that  
15 was very concerning for me. We had no budget for  
16 depreciation, we had no capacity to manage those assets and  
17 we had a very mixed arrangement.  
18

19 Previously or historically, equipment that would fall  
20 into the category of an asset was always dealt with by a  
21 grant process to local government, so that the asset would  
22 vest in local government, would sit on local government's  
23 accounts and the ongoing operational expenses would be met  
24 by local government. I have reinstituted that as a policy  
25 position for EMQ.  
26

27 We do have a budget to meet the registration and  
28 insurance costa of vehicles and I absolutely can see that  
29 that might cause confusion. Well, if the asset is  
30 registered through the State, then the State actually owns  
31 the asset. If that's causing any level of anguish in local  
32 government then I am happy to look at an arrangement.  
33 Perhaps we can provide that money by way of grant as well  
34 rather than do direct registration.  
35

36 Q. On this topic, I just want to turn back to the MOA  
37 because there are some passages in there that relate to it.  
38 Under the heading Equipment in section 5.1 on page 7, one  
39 of the obligations undertaken by EMQ is to determine with  
40 local governments the agreed arrangements for registration  
41 of vehicles and to determine the most efficient and  
42 cost-effective means of insuring all vehicles. That leaves  
43 the whole issue pretty open-ended.  
44

45 However, if you go further into the MOA under Local  
46 Government Undertakings, in section 5.2 under the heading  
47 Support, one of the things that they take on board is the

1 provision of or access to registered and insured vehicles.  
2 What ultimately is contemplated by all of that?

3 A. It may be a clumsy way of describing it. The first  
4 part that you mentioned is by agreement, to determine whom  
5 will be responsible for the registration and insurance of  
6 the vehicles. I think one of the drivers of that is that  
7 local government can get access to concessional  
8 registration and we can't, so it may in fact be cheaper for  
9 them to do it. Also, I think there have been occasions  
10 where we have both registered the same vehicle. So, I  
11 think it was simply to avoid the confusion and the  
12 inefficiencies that that might cause.

13  
14 I think the second element is around - the vehicle,  
15 the asset, is vested in local government but it's for the  
16 purposes of the SES, so it's just to ensure that local  
17 government makes the vehicle available for SES activation  
18 as is required. So, they don't think that it just simply  
19 becomes part of the council fleet.

20  
21 I guess the other point is that that document is the  
22 starting point for a negotiation. So if any of those  
23 issues --

24  
25 Q. You would expect that to be ironed out in the local  
26 arrangements?

27 A. Yes, and LGAQ were party to the construct of that  
28 document as well.

29  
30 Q. What hope is there for a consistent position on that?

31 A. I think, as I previously said, striking an agreement  
32 with 73 councils is going to get you certainly, if not 73,  
33 a significant variety of outcomes.

34  
35 Q. I have heard the expression used in relation to the  
36 European financial crisis that it's like herding cats.

37 A. Yes.

38  
39 Q. The only other thing I wanted to raise arising out of  
40 the EMQ input was that in major operations where there is  
41 deployment outside of a home base, if you like, using a  
42 combination of State-owned and additional council  
43 resources, there are complex cost recovery arrangements.  
44 Are you able to, perhaps, interpret what that might mean or  
45 explain what they might be referring to there?

46 A. It may be the NDRRA arrangements, Natural Disaster  
47 Relief and Recovery Arrangements. They're jointly

1 Commonwealth and State funded. They are designed to meet  
2 the cost of responding to asset damage, and some other  
3 things, as a consequence of disasters. I am struggling to  
4 think of what they're actually referring to. Can I just  
5 have a look at that?  
6

7 Q. Sure. It is that paragraph there. It seems to be  
8 referring to it in the context of insurance and  
9 registration, and things of that nature.

10 A. Yes. It may have something to do with - see, the  
11 usual costs of an operation, so your sunk costs, are not  
12 recoverable but additional costs are. So, if there is a  
13 confusion about ownership for a vehicle that goes outside  
14 one council area and into another, who makes the claim;  
15 that might be what they're getting to.  
16

17 MR McGARRITY: Q. So things like fuel, perhaps?

18 A. Yes, but even, you know, is there a cost associated  
19 with the vehicle. I'm struggling to come up with --  
20

21 MR BAILEY: Q. All right. We will just move on to the  
22 topic of local controllers. Question 56: What are the  
23 arguments for and against local controllers, in particular,  
24 being paid?

25 A. There are a number of local controllers who are paid  
26 by local government.  
27

28 Q. I suppose we are getting at the idea of a full-time  
29 salaried position rather than honorarium?

30 A. Yes. It would appear that the purpose of making the  
31 payment is more - I certainly don't mean this to be  
32 gratuitous, but it's more about the role undertaking the  
33 administration of the issues that sheet back home to  
34 council in terms of their obligations, their governance,  
35 their administration. So, for the bigger councils that  
36 provide substantial financial support, they obviously want  
37 some level of control around that, as is entirely  
38 appropriate, and the paid controller often, I think, spends  
39 much of their time in that space.  
40

41 MR McGARRITY: Q. So that is non-operational?

42 A. I'm not saying it's absolutely. I'm sure --  
43

44 Q. But the --

45 A. But I think that there is a significant element to  
46 that. There is then the issues of employment because the  
47 local controller is employed under a role description that

1 we provide. There is some opportunity to negotiate, for  
2 there to be some variation in that, but that role  
3 description describes the role of local controller, not the  
4 role of someone administering or managing assets and other  
5 things on behalf of council.  
6

7 I think there then becomes the opportunity for some  
8 confusion as to what the role is and how the role is  
9 fulfilled, and potentially becoming an instrument of local  
10 government rather than an instrument - as designed, mutual  
11 obligation/mutual benefit - between the State and local  
12 government.  
13

14 Now, that is certainly not the case in all  
15 circumstances and there are a number of paid local  
16 controllers who are absolutely wonderful and a number who  
17 probably fulfil their roles to council very well.  
18

19 The other thing about paid controllers is that you are  
20 going to absolutely end up again - if we were to go down  
21 that path, Carpentaria Shire, Paroo Shire, Bulloo Shire are  
22 not going to have sufficient for a paid local controller to  
23 manage an SES in their patches. All of the indigenous  
24 councils in the Cape, and so on, would probably be in the  
25 same boat and certainly would not have the financial  
26 capacity to meet that cost. So, you would end up again  
27 with a multispeed system. There are big councils, there  
28 are medium-sized councils and there are very, very small  
29 councils. It's not to say that you can't design an outcome  
30 but it would probably be a complex and, again, potentially  
31 confusing outcome.  
32

33 Is there, in fact, two roles here? Is there a role of  
34 being the volunteer local controller for the SES and, in  
35 some instances, is there a role of administering and  
36 managing councils' contribution and councils' financial  
37 commitment? Do those two things necessarily need to be one  
38 and the same? For example, the Gold Coast have previously  
39 had a paid local controller; they now have a volunteer  
40 local controller and a paid administer.  
41

42 MR BAILEY: Q. Of SES council assets?

43 A. That's right. So, the administrator does all of the  
44 paperwork, completes all of the financial requirements, all  
45 of those sorts of things.  
46

47 MR McGARRITY: Q. What is your view on that model?

1 A. In my opinion, that's probably - may be better.

2

3 Q. May be better than having a full-time paid --

4 A. Than having a full-time paid local controller. What  
5 you then start to get is "I'm a paid controller", "I'm a  
6 volunteer controller but I have the same volunteer  
7 responsibilities." It's, again, a little inequitable. I  
8 don't know that we can arrive at an arrangement where  
9 everybody is paid. Even if we were to pay people  
10 part-time, that again brings an obligation and it brings a  
11 whole range of HR issues. Many of those local controllers  
12 who are volunteers may not be able to commit to what is  
13 necessarily required under a paid arrangement. A number  
14 would not want to be paid.

15

16 Q. If there were a suggestion that there should be some  
17 paid controllers or there should be consideration of paid  
18 full-time local controllers in some areas, what type of  
19 factors would need to be considered by a local government  
20 to determine if they should have a full-time local  
21 controller?

22 A. Their capacity to pay.

23

24 Q. Aside from that? Are we looking at number of  
25 activations or are we looking at the number of people --

26 A. I don't think so. I don't think that's a  
27 consideration at the moment. I think it's a risk decision  
28 based on protecting both reputation and interest. I  
29 actually have a role description for a local controller, if  
30 that would be of any help? I might have already given it  
31 to you (handed).

32

33 MR BAILEY: Thank you. We have Business Management  
34 Directives, Volunteer Executive Appointments BMH 14.0.

35

36 THE INTERVIEWEE: One of the attachments to that is a role  
37 description.

38

39 MR BAILEY: Q. Do you have any comment on the fact that  
40 local controllers are performing functions that involve  
41 statutory responsibilities, given that they are volunteers?

42 A. Yes, they're volunteers but they apply for the role  
43 and they apply for the role in the full understanding of  
44 what comes with it and they are selected on the basis of  
45 merit. So, no, I don't have a concern. People are going  
46 in, at least, with their eyes open as to what the  
47 requirements of the role are.

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MR McGARRITY: Q. I just thought of something, if we could flick back to the previous discussion about local controllers. If some local governments are of the view that they probably do require a full-time local controller, do you have a position on whether that should be totally funded by the local government, given that it is their decision, or should that position be either fully State funded or in some way State funded?

A. No, it should be funded by local government.

Q. Completely?

A. Yes.

Q. Because they have made the decision --

A. I have no requirement for a paid local controller.

Q. Anywhere around the State?

A. No. Therefore, if local government, as I say, have assessed the risk and they believe they need an employee, then I think that is their call.

MR BAILEY: Q. Just moving on to question 59, and I think we have touched on this already: Should there be only one local controller for a local government area? There has been some discussion to that effect already. Is there anything you would care to add to that?

A. Again, I think our conversation was around it's not so much what you call them, it's around do you have a consistent structure to deal with it, and are the roles, responsibilities and obligations of those various roles clearly understood and common across the State. I think it's less about what they're called and more about having a common approach to it.

MR McGARRITY: Q. Just from your experience, is there the potential for some conflict in particular areas where you may currently have four or five local controllers but there may have been a determination that we'll just have one local controller? I'm thinking here about cultural issues, which you have referred to in the past. Is that something that you think might cause problems?

A. It's potentially a bit of a storm in a teacup. We have talked about the Toowoomba example and certainly a number of people did have their noses a little out of joint. I think that will probably blow over in time. I'm hopeful that it won't become an entrenched and endemic

1 position, and that people will understand that the role  
2 hasn't really changed at all, it's just the name that  
3 they're called. I think if we were to go down that path of  
4 making some changes that did impact on some people's roles,  
5 that it's something that we can manage, maybe without --  
6

7 Q. Incidentally, just on the Toowoomba point, do you know  
8 if their controller is --

9 A. Paid.

10

11 Q. -- paid? Is it?

12 A. Yes.

13

14 Q. Full-time?

15 A. Yes.

16

17 MR BAILEY: Q. Just in relation to the transitional  
18 arrangements under the Disaster Management Act, it provided  
19 that if there was an SES unit in existence before, it  
20 continues to be in existence; if there was a local  
21 controller, there's still a local controller. It has  
22 effectively preserved the status quo.

23 A. Yes.

24

25 Q. How do you get out of that? Where does it go from  
26 here, or is that just an open-ended transitional provision?

27 A. No, I don't - well. I don't believe that it's  
28 open-ended.

29

30 Q. One of the comments made - sorry. If you will just  
31 bear with me for a moment. In relation to SES units, for  
32 example, under section 173 of the Disaster Management Act,  
33 subsection 1 says:

34

35 *This section applies to a group of SES*  
36 *members who immediately before the*  
37 *commencement were an SES unit for a local*  
38 *government area.*

39

40 Subsection 2:

41

42 *From the commencement, the group continues*  
43 *as an SES unit for the local government*  
44 *area as if established under new section*  
45 *84(a) until the unit's establishment ends*  
46 *under that section.*

47

1 So, is there anything being done in terms of --

2 A. No.

3

4 Q. -- ending the establishment?

5 A. Not at this stage, no. Again, I guess we are also  
6 waiting for any recommendations that come. I mean, we  
7 didn't want to move - put a position on the table and then  
8 have a different position next year. So, I guess we're all  
9 in a little bit of a hiatus in terms of some of those  
10 bigger structural and strategic issues.

11

12 Q. Just moving on to the final topic heading, Equipment,  
13 question 60: Is it reasonable for SES vehicles to be  
14 fitted with audible and visual warning devices to identify  
15 them as emergency personnel?

16 A. I'm assuming that this has come not from visual  
17 warning devices but, specifically, blue and red warning  
18 devices. Audible? I don't believe so. The SES vehicles  
19 have no need for sirens on them at all. Red and blue  
20 flashing lights? That's a matter that is at the discretion  
21 of the Queensland Commissioner of Police. A request has  
22 been forwarded to him some time ago. The determination was  
23 that they saw no proper reason why the SES should have blue  
24 and white flashing lights.

25

26 They do have orange lights. I understand that in many  
27 areas orange lights are probably on more vehicles than they  
28 aren't, particularly in the mining parts of the State, and  
29 that everybody has become attuned to orange lights.

30

31 Q. Tow trucks and traffic management vehicles and --

32 A. That's right, yes. But there is - I mean, they are a  
33 visual warning device, they do attract attention. A lot of  
34 the stuff that we do where warning lights are needed is  
35 also done in conjunction with Fire or Police and they have  
36 their lights as well.

37

38 MR McGARRITY: Q. The status quo is sufficient, as you see  
39 it?

40 A. Yes. It's not one that I am going to fight to the  
41 death for.

42

43 MR BAILEY: Q. Has EMQ conducted an equipment audit and  
44 replenished supply in preparation for the 2011/2012 wet  
45 season?

46 A. Yes. We have looked at - each SES unit has a small  
47 holding of things so that they can make an immediate

1 response and those things have been replenished. Do I have  
2 a Statewide audit of every SES unit and the equipment they  
3 hold? No, I don't.

4  
5 We do have a series of caches and stores around the  
6 State and all of those have been replenished. I can tell  
7 you that we have in stock 11,169 tarpaulins, 260,375  
8 sandbags, 47 ladders, 67 generators and 119 chainsaws, as  
9 the key items of equipment that are in addition to  
10 equipment that has been issued. So, this is ready to be  
11 deployed immediately.

12  
13 We also have arrangements with the Commonwealth and  
14 other jurisdictions to borrow or acquire additional, so we  
15 don't hold everything in stock but have arrangements where  
16 we can rapidly access it, if needed.

17  
18 MR McGARRITY: Q. Those equipment audits in the regions,  
19 are they conducted by area directors?

20 A. Yes.

21  
22 MR BAILEY: Q. The caches are at Beenleigh and Townsville,  
23 are they?

24 A. No. We have just acquired a major facility at Ormeau/  
25 Beenleigh, and we are in the process of attempting to  
26 purchase or build - we are yet to decide - in Townsville,  
27 so that doesn't exist. But each of the regions have got  
28 caches of varying sizes that they hold stock in. Some of  
29 them are quite significant. It's a small warehouse or one  
30 of those double-doored facilities in a multi warehouse  
31 facility.

32  
33 MR BAILEY: I think that's everything we wanted to cover.  
34 Thanks for your time, Bruce.

35  
36 THE INTERVIEWEE: It was a pleasure and I hope it has been  
37 useful.

38  
39 MR McGARRITY: Yes.

40  
41 THE INTERVIEWEE: We are very supportive, obviously, of  
42 getting an outcome from what has been a very extensive set  
43 of deliberations, and so on. So, if there is anything,  
44 even informally, if there is just clarification - I hope  
45 I'm not speaking out of turn.

46  
47 MR [REDACTED] No, no, not at all.

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THE INTERVIEWEE: I am happy to deal with things. If there is something that requires clarification, I would rather deal with it and get it done than have it go through into recommendations and be misunderstood, or what have you. So, I am happy to make myself available at any time.

MR [REDACTED] Can I just clarify a couple of things which I think Bruce indicated he would try and get to you. I think one was the funding criteria of the assessment team.

MR BAILEY: The non-recurrent assessment team rules.

MR [REDACTED] Those rules or criteria.

THE INTERVIEWEE: Who is on the team and what are the criteria.

MR [REDACTED] And I think you were going to continue your search for the work, perhaps done in 2007, for the estimate of what might be total State funding of the SES. That's assuming - subject to you locating anything.

THE INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I don't think it will answer the question of total State funding. I think the question was asked more about can we make an assessment of what we believe the council contributions are, but that will be the lion's share of it.

MR [REDACTED] Bruce can just channel that to me and I can pass that on.

MR BAILEY: Thank you.

**AT 12.55PM, THE INTERVIEW CONCLUDED.**

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