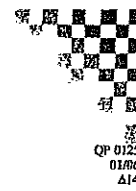




QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: _____

Statement no: One Date: 08/02/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

Date of birth: [redacted] Age: [redacted] Occupation: Semi-retired

Police officer taking statement

Name: KHAILE, Symsia Leigh

Rank: Detective Senior Constable Reg. no.: 11199

Region/Command/Division: State Crime Operations Command Station: State Flying Squad

Statement:

Kathleen Elizabeth MAHON states:

1. I am a [redacted] year old Married Mother and Grandmother. I am semi-retired and now live at [redacted] Toowoomba with my Husband John Francis MAHON and son Bradley MAHON. This is only a temporary address after the flooding incident in Grantham on 10th January 2011.
2. My contact phone numbers are [redacted] and [redacted] My email address is [redacted]
3. John and I used to live at [redacted] Grantham. We had lived at this address for 21 years. Prior to this address, we lived at 7 Harris Street Grantham for 15 years. I have lived in Grantham all my life. I am very familiar with Grantham and have extensive local knowledge in relation to flooding and water levels throughout the town. We no longer live on Gatton-Helidon Road as our home was extensively affected by flooding on the 10th January 2011.
4. During the 1974 floods, I lived at 34 Charles Road, Grantham which was a farm roughly opposite 1472 Gatton-Helidon Road. On the day that

Exhibit Number: 181
QFCI
Date: 29/4/11
JM

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preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

Grantham flooded, I was in Sydney and I remember my Dad ringing me and telling me that the fruit shop had gone with the flood and the whole town had been flooded.

5. Every year that we had rain while I was young, we always knew to keep our eye on the stormwater drain which is on the corner of William Street and Anzac Avenue on the Northern side of the Warrego Highway. We would just walk out of the butcher shop and when it got to a certain point, we would know to warn people and start preparing to get out. We always had time to do what we needed to do. We would speak with the school to get parents organised to get their kids out. We would've had roughly an hour to get prepared and to get out and move our belongings.
6. Our property at [REDACTED] Grantham is 1 ¼ acres, there is a post and rail fence all around and a large shed. The house was built a lot higher than the 1974 flood level. The property is flat except for where the house is built. Entrance to the property is via a gravel driveway from Gatton-Helidon Road, this would be about four (4) car lengths. The neighbours (Anne and David JAMES) on the Western side are on an acre, the neighbours on the Eastern side (Wayne and Dell SIPPEL) are on two (2) one-acre blocks. The railway line is behind our property.
7. Lockyer Creek is about ½ to ¾ of a kilometre to the south from our property. In between our property and Lockyer Creek there are farming areas. In the time John and I had lived at Gatton-Helidon Road, I have never seen water come from this direction. I have only ever known that water had only reached below the dairy shed during previous big floods.
8. My Dad (Wendell CHARLES) had always told us that if we saw water breaking from the Western side of the farm house near the dairy shed to head to the railway line as it was the highest point around us. Dad always used to talk about the 1893 flood and that the only areas visible in

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

Grantham were the School Hill and the hill south of Harris Street – Cargill's Hill.

9. In the weeks leading up to the 10th January 2011, I just remember there was rain for weeks and weeks. All the creeks were full and the ground was full. I remember saying we were going to see another 1974 flood. I remember seeing thousands of worms coming up out of the ground and onto the veranda.
10. We had seen lots of water down on the back yard but this was just normal storm water – on the Western side of the yard. On Boxing Day, the 26th December 2010, our daughter – Andrea, went to drive her car into the shed but ended up getting it bogged about 30 centimetres. This was just how wet the ground was. We've never had trouble like that before and I kept thinking that we were going to get another 1974 flood.
11. I also remember seeing about six (6) birds dying on the ground at the same time in our backyard. They were only young ones that looked like they had just fallen out of their nest. It looked like the wet weather had really affected their nests. This was very unusual and I had never seen this before.
12. Leading up to the 10th January 2011, I just remember more and more rain. The rain was every day and was just constant. Occasionally, we'd see the sun. It was very unusual for Grantham weather.
13. The week before, we went to Mum's place (Betty CHARLES) and put Mum's mower in the trailer to get it up high just in case it did flood. We were nearly going to put her car up high as well but didn't as we thought if we had to, we'd come back during the night to take care of this.
14. The Sunday night the 9th, there was a fairly big flood. We drove around for quite a while checking on the creek levels. We did this a couple of times.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

We were quite worried this night as the water was getting closer. The water had gotten into our Son's mate's (Paul LINDENMAYER) yard.

15. A lot of people were out of their houses this night talking about the water levels and checking the levels at Sandy Creek. About 10pm, I remember seeing an Asian woman still in her car at some point on the Sandy Creek Bridge. The water was half way up the headlights of her vehicle. I also remember seeing the partner of Danny MAGUIRE, the rural fire brigade volunteer in Grantham, at the 'water over the road' sign. John and Brad then organised to go down and push the Asian lady out of the water in our Nissan Navara.
16. We ended up going back home – after we knew the water wasn't going to get any higher. This would've been about 1.30am. John and I then just had a cup of tea and got ready for bed.
17. The following morning, on the 10th January 2011 our son Brad got up early – about 5am – to check the creek before he went to work. I had gotten up early as well. Brad left a bit early in case it was flooded somewhere along the way. I'm pretty sure it was raining that morning.
18. During that morning, I would've attended to normal household duties including the washing. Nothing really stands out to me.
19. About 12.30pm, my daughter Jessica and Andrea and Andrea's two (2) sons Liam and Eaclan came to my home with lunch. There wasn't much rain at this time from memory. I remember that Andrea received a phone call from her partner (Ben BUCKLER) who was working in Toowoomba at Endeavour. Andrea later told me that the conversation was about his workplace getting flooded and he thought she might be in trouble at her home which was [REDACTED]

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

20. We were then alerted to Toowoomba having lots of water. We then went down and had a look at Sandy Creek at the railway bridge. There was water everywhere and it was slowly coming up. The water was higher than what it was the Sunday lunch time.
21. We ended up talking to people who were also there. While we were standing there, we could see the water coming higher and higher. I then told Anna WEST and her fiancé that they should get out of Grantham as the creek was coming up and they would get stuck in Grantham.
22. We then tried to get home and said to Andrea and Jess to get back home to Toowoomba. We were thinking that it was going to flood again.
23. It would've been about mid afternoon, that we eventually got home. John still had the UHF on. Andrea has a UHF in her Patrol. I was just getting out of the car and heard Andrea say "Dad, can you come and check out this water, I'm a bit worried about going through it, it looks a bit deep".
24. John and I then met Andrea and Jess up at Flagstone Creek and Gatton-Helidon Road intersection. We drove up to the water. The water was half over the right hand side of the road. We pulled up there. We met some people that had travelled down from Toowoomba and they told us that Withcott was flooding and told us not to go any further.
25. We then turned around and started heading down to Mum's. We got to Dinner Corner and John looked over to the right. John then said "Look at the creek I can see the creek". You can never see the creek from Dinner Corner. I payed no more attention to this and we went down to Mum's at [REDACTED] Grantham.
26. While driving, we heard over the UHF that the water was over the bridge at Helidon. When we heard this John said "Bullshit, it never goes over that bridge". [REDACTED]

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

27. We get to Mum's to check on her. Rachelle (our second daughter) called us on the phone. She said "Mum, I've just seen a warning on tv about a wall of water in Toowoomba". She told me that she quickly got on the internet and on the Police website and saw the warning. Rachelle said that she thought the wall of water in Toowoomba was coming towards us. She told me to get home and to get as high as I could. Rachelle gave me all the warnings on the Police website – about not drinking the water, blocking the toilet and opening doors.
28. Because I wasn't really paying attention, Rachelle started yelling "Mum, can you please listen to me, get as high as you can". She knew I was at Mum's house. She really started to panic. I told John about the conversation. Within a second of hanging up, my nephew – Michael - rang. He was at the bridge at Helidon and was going to go back to Gatton over the bypass. He said "Aunt, I'm at the bridge at Helidon. It's higher than anyone's ever seen. Can you get grandma and get to higher ground".
29. We tried to get Mum to come with us but she refused. She said she was staying with the dogs. Mum told me that all the power was out at this time. With that, Andrea, Jess and the two (2) boys were in one (1) car and John and I were in our car and we went home.
30. Andrea parked at the front of the garage. We put our car in the garage after unlocking it. I shut the roller doors after everyone got in.
31. We then unlocked the internal door in the garage area to the house and went into the house. The office phone rang. I answered the phone and spoke to Dave JAMES and spoke with him about the wall of water coming. He didn't believe me and commented about that I sounded as though I was panicking. I then had to get John to convince Dave that a wall of water was coming.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth**

32. I then unlocked the laundry door and the pool yard door. John was still convincing Dave at this time.

33. Andrea and I then saw the water coming around the pool yard. We just saw water coming around the back of the house and from towards the SIPPEL's house. I then took photos of this. This is the railway side of the house. John then went to the shed to get the generator as he was worried about the power.

I am able to produce these photos which I have referred to in my evidence to the Court


34. Andrea and I then get the flotation rings for the two (2) boys and the inflatable boat. We took these items inside just in case. We were starting to get worried at this time.

35. I then heard John screaming "Come and have a look at this" and screaming out to Dave next door "Dave, get out get high".


36. We then went outside to see what John was screaming about. All I could see was all the water coming across the farm towards us. It was coming the other way as well from the Western side down the highway.

37. The girls and I grabbed our handbags. I threw mine on the top shelf of the cupboard in the office. I was just thinking to get it as high as I could. I locked the door and then went inside.

38. I remember hearing John yelling "Get some towels and we'll put them at the door". By the time John got half way back to the kitchen, this would've been about 20 feet and took him about five (5) seconds the water was already up to his knees.



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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth**

39. Within a couple of minutes, there was busting and banging. Things were breaking, I could hear glass smashing. We put the kids on the kitchen bench – the breakfast bar and told the girls to get up there with them. John and I then stood on two (2) kitchen chairs so that we could hold them. While we were doing this, the fridge in front of us went bang, down and we could hear everything else in the house banging and busting. The water just came instantly up the hallway. It just took over the house. All of the doors except the front door broke in half.
40. The lounges – we have two (2) lounge rooms – in both rooms just rose up and went in circles like it was boiling. The water was turning everything in circles. This was happening to the dining table as well. It's a huge table that seats about twenty (20) people and very heavy. The water just lifted it up and moved it.
41. We're still standing on the chairs. My phone rang and it was Rachelle. I told her what was happening. In the time I was talking to her, the water was up to my chest. I told Rachelle to tell all the family that we love them and that we were going to try to get outside and on the roof but if we couldn't do this, we didn't know what was going to happen. We thought at that minute, we were going to die. We all said the Lord's Prayer. All this happened in the space of minutes.
42. Rachelle rang me back shortly after this and said "Mum, the choppers are coming".
43. With that, I got my camera and my phone and threw it in the highest cupboard on top of the stove. We had no more contact with anyone after that.
44. We all said goodbye to everyone in the house because we thought that was going to be the last time together.


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: **MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth**

45. We have large double glass doors to the pool yard that were right beside us. The water on the inside of the house was up to at least chest height, on the outside, the water was higher than this and starting to buckle the glass doors. We knew then that we had to get outside.
46. We got the boys and girls off the kitchen bench. John got everyone to stand behind him just to try and stop the gush of water coming inside. We put the boys in the boat so that we knew they'd be safe and not drown. We all hung onto the boat so that the pressure of the water wouldn't make them float away.
47. As we got out the doors, the big glass sliding doors in the next room busted out from the inside. This was caused from all the water gushing through the house and flowing in that direction. At this time, everything from the inside of the house started floating outside.
48. We thought we would get to the railway line and started heading that way. When I looked up towards the railway line, I could see a big torrent of water between us and the railway line. With that, we decided to try and get on the roof. I didn't think we could get on the roof. Jess got on the pool gate by climbing up on the pool gate posts. She then used this position to get up onto the roof.
49. We then started getting the boys up on the roof. Once Jess had the boys on the roof, she took them away from the edge. Andrea then tried to get up on the roof but couldn't physically lift herself up. I then thought about getting a squatters chair and using this to help Andrea up onto the roof. She eventually got herself up on the roof. We were worried about the patio roof being able to hold the weight of everyone and told them to move up to the highest part of the house roof.
50. At this stage the water was still coming up and we didn't know how high it was going to get.


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

51. I said to the girls that John and I would be right holding onto the squatters chair and the pool fence. Jess then came over the edge and told us that we were getting up on the roof no matter what.
52. I got on the squatters chair then. John was holding the chair and after a few goes, I got onto the roof as well. I then told John that he had to get up as well. I saw John try to get up on the roof by trying to manoeuvre our outdoor table and climb up this but he wasn't able to. He couldn't physically pull his own weight up.
53. John then tried another corner of the house to climb up onto the roof. The roof line is lower in this area that he tried. I saw a big brown snake appear on a bale of hay. This stopped John trying to get up on the roof section, then he came back to the area where we all got up on the roof at. John then stood on the table holding onto the gutter. The girls were screaming at me to get higher up on the roof but I wanted to stay and make sure John was going to get up on the roof.
54. I eventually went up with the girls to the highest point of the roof. John was still holding onto the gutter.
55. I heard a helicopter and told the boys that the helicopter was coming for us. It ended up being the news helicopter. It circled a couple of times. The fourth chopper we saw was a red chopper and we knew it was a rescue chopper.
56. The chopper just came in. The fella was being lowered as the chopper was getting closer. He was $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down and coming very fast.
57. The rescuer pointed to Locky and then they put the thing over him and then they started lifting him up into the chopper. Then they came back and


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

pointed to Liam and motioned again as to how Liam was to stand in order to be rescued. Then Liam went up. Then they were going to take Andrea as she was their Mother.

58. At this point, as they were coming down I started flying off the roof. Jess then grabbed me to stop me from flying off the roof. This was because of the wind coming from the helicopter – the down draft. I was then lifted up off the roof and rescued.
59. I was then sitting in the chopper. Two (2) men in the chopper were each holding Locky and Liam. As they were going back down, I saw Dave JAMES clinging to the gutter next door. I then tapped the man holding Liam to let him know about Dave.
60. Then next thing, Jessie was in the chopper. Then within minutes, Andrea was in. Then they moved position and picked up Dave. Then I think Jess said “What about Dad, Dad’s left back down on the gutter”. She was motioning down to the house. I think the rescuers then motioned to John that they would return. We were told by one of the rescuers that it was a full chopper and that they would return. At this time there was eleven (11) of us in it.
61. They then took us to FULLERTON’s house and quickly dropped us out. They left the Doctor’s with us. By that time, John FULLERTON was at the fence and was holding the barb wire open so that we could all get through and get up to the house.
62. We were all checked over by the Doctor. We were just wet and muddy and dirty. Betty FULLERTON then attended to everyone with towels, drinks etc.
63. As soon as we were dropped off, the chopper went back instantly. When the next chopper came back I saw the KEEP’s come. We were down


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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

waiting for the chopper thinking John would be in that lot. Stacey and Matthew KEEP then collapsed.

64. I was walking back to the house and got as far as the fence and Matthew came up to me. He told me that they had just lost their little girl – Jessica – and that he thought they'd also lost everyone else in their house. At this time, I was consoling Matthew about what had happened and talked to him about this.
65. Jess was then writing down everyone's name who was rescued. I think I went inside.
66. It was at least an hour after I was rescued that John was brought up. I'm not really sure on the time. I remember Jess calling out that John was there. We all went running down and we knew he was safe then.
67. Matthew was really distraught at this time because no more of his family had been rescued.
68. I then saw the OTTO's come. Mrs OTTO was really bad – she was lucky to be alive. The Doctor's got her in a bed.
69. Jess just continued getting everyone's name. As everyone arrived, the Doctor's kept checking everybody. Andrea started providing cups of tea and food for everyone.
70. Matthew then came up to me and asked if he could try my shoes on. I had a feeling that he wanted to get back to his house so I said no. Then he just left and took off. He was gone for about three (3) hours. It was dark when he got back. I could see that he had a small child in his arms – it looked like he was only about three (3) years old.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

71. We were told by the Doctor that we might have to stay at the FULLERTON's for the night.
72. We were told that the chopper had to leave and re-fuel and then take Stacey to hospital as they thought she might lose the baby as she was six (6) months pregnant.
73. I think it was about 10pm that all these utes arrived. It was the KLUCK's – all the boys have got utes. We all piled into the utes and were taken to the Helidon Hotel. When we got there, a few people were there waiting for us.
74. About ten (10) minutes later, the power came on and we were then taken to the Community Hall. We just walked in the hall and then the hall started to be filled with mattresses for people so that we had somewhere to sleep. Food and clothing all started to come in.
75. We didn't sleep at all that night. We just sat up all night talking to people and then realising people that made it.
76. At about 3pm on Tuesday, we left the Hall and headed to Toowoomba after hearing that we had a four-wheel drive and also hearing that the road was open. We then went to Andrea and Matt's house on Healy Street, Toowoomba and stayed there for two (2) weeks.
77. We then stayed in a self-contained unit for two (2) weeks and then we moved to [REDACTED] where we currently live.
78. We ended up going back to our house a day before they opened it up as we had to get our guns out of the safe. This was on the following Monday. I walked into the house and picked up a gold bangle that John had given me. We had difficulty getting in the front door because of all the mud. There was debris and thick mud everywhere.

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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: MAHON, Kathleen Elizabeth

79. There were contents just strewn throughout and damaged. Everything was everywhere. Mud and water had gone everywhere. I just went in and got what I could and got out.

80. We are unsure as to whether we will be able to rebuild as we have been told that we have to wait until the concrete slab completely dries to see whether cracks develop any further in this.

81. We had house and contents insurance for our property through Suncorp Insurance – it's actually through a Broker and I think Vero Insurance are the underwriters.

82. On 8th February 2011, I attended at Toowoomba Police Station and provided this statement to Detective Senior Constable Sym KHAILE.

[Redacted]
Kathleen Elizabeth MAHON

Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of section 110A(5)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 08/02/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 14 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.

..... [Redacted] Signature

Signed atTOOWOOMBA....this.....8th....day of....FEBRUARY....2011....

[Redacted]
(Witness's signature)

[Redacted]
(Justice of the Peace (Qual.)/
Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

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(Signature of police officer
preparing statement)