

14

14 Flood-related deaths

14.1 The Commission's review of systemic issues

In the 2010/2011 floods, which affected more than 78 per cent of Queensland, 33 people died;¹ another three are still missing. While flood-related fatalities occurred throughout the state, the highest concentration of deaths occurred in the Lockyer Valley area, where 16 people died and the three people who remain missing were lost.

The Commission reviewed the information it obtained in respect of those deaths to establish whether the surrounding circumstances revealed any matter within its terms of reference on which it could usefully make recommendations. Because of the urgency attached, those recommendations, which were designed to reduce the likelihood of similar tragedies, were made in its interim report, although police investigations into some of the deaths were yet to be completed. The Commission did not, in the interim report, describe the circumstances of the deaths, with two exceptions.² It is appropriate in this report to provide a record of the deaths which occurred in the floods, with a broad indication of how they occurred and details of the recommendations made in the interim report to deal with systemic issues raised about preparation for and response to flooding.

In undertaking its review of flood-related deaths, the Commission benefited from the co-operation of the State Coroner³ and the Queensland Police Service. Flood-related deaths must be investigated by a coroner under the *Coroners Act 2003*.⁴ Given the significant loss of life in the Lockyer Valley area, the Queensland Police Service established a task force to investigate the deaths in the Southern Police Region (which includes the outskirts of Ipswich, Toowoomba, and the Lockyer Valley area) and provided a comprehensive report to the State Coroner's office.

Between 31 October 2011 and 2 November 2011 the State Coroner conducted an inquest into 21 of the flood-related deaths and the three suspected deaths (of the individuals still missing). The inquest so far as it concerned one death, that of a child, Jesse Wickman, at Minden, was adjourned to the week commencing 27 February 2012.

Police officers in the relevant police regions have investigated the other flood-related deaths that occurred throughout Queensland, forwarding their reports to the responsible coroners' offices. Some of these deaths have yet to be the subject of coronial hearings.

14.2 The circumstances of 2010/2011 flood-related deaths

Details of the deaths and the recommendations which have stemmed from the Commission's review of them appear in the five sections which follow.

14.2.1 Deaths during activities in flooded waterways

Seven of the 33 flood-related deaths occurred while the deceased were swimming or kayaking in, diving into or walking through, flooded waterways. It is a particularly tragic circumstance that four of the seven people who died were under 21 years of age. Some of the deaths were avoidable with a greater exercise of judgement; some of those who died were taken by surprise by rising floodwaters. The Commission did not make any recommendation arising out of the facts of these deaths. As section 3.5.1 of the interim report noted, the SES Natural Hazards Children's Awareness and Education Program had already launched a national education program which included information to discourage children from swimming in flooded creeks. The Commission is aware, too, that state and local governments provide warnings about the hazards of waterways in State Forests and National Parks. Details of each of those deaths follow.

Che-Nezce Perrie Shepherd, who was 17 years old, was swimming with friends on 12 December 2010 in Alligator Creek in Cape Bowling Green National Park. Her leg became trapped between rocks while she was sliding down rapids; her friends and others who tried to help could not extricate her. Heavy rainfall in the area caused the water level in Alligator Creek to rise rapidly, drowning Ms Shepherd as she remained unable to free herself. Ms Shepherd's friends had difficulty contacting emergency services because of the lack of phone reception in that part of the park, and the area was accessible only on foot.

Dale Justin Peake, 29 years of age, was kayaking at Barron Falls, Kuranda on 15 December 2010. He was an experienced kayaker who had checked his safety equipment and discussed his planned route with his friends. He kayaked down one of the falls, but was not seen to surface at the bottom. Mr Peake's body and kayak were recovered the following day; an autopsy showed that he had drowned. The area had been subject to heavy rainfall over the previous few weeks and the water levels were higher than usual.

Andrew Donald Devencorn was 20 years of age. On 20 December 2010 he jumped into the Brisbane River at Sherwood Forest Park for a swim. He was last seen being washed downstream in a strong current. Mr Devencorn's body was located three days later at Canoe Reach, Yeronga.

Nelson Simon Gutchen, a man of 50, left his niece's house after Christmas dinner, intending to visit a friend. To reach his destination he tried to cross a flooded footbridge over Granite Creek. His body was found in the creek three days later; he had drowned.

Berlene Faye Murray, a 19 year old girl, jumped from a bridge railing into Barambah Creek at Cherbourg on 8 January 2011. The creek was flooded and the current strong. Ms Murray's body was found 200 metres downstream the same day.

Navina Friedericke Villinger was a German 19 year old, holidaying in Queensland. On the late afternoon of 10 January 2011, she and some friends visited Granite Gorge Nature Park, near Mareeba. She and a friend were wading in rapidly flowing water. Her friend heard her call for help just before she disappeared beneath the water. Searches by police, SES members and a Queensland Fire and Rescue Service swift water rescue team that evening and night were unsuccessful. It was not until two days later that Ms Villinger's body was found. An autopsy showed that she had drowned.

Van Toan Giang was 25 years old when, on 13 January 2011, he drowned attempting to reach his workplace. He disappeared while trying to swim across floodwaters covering Bowhill Road, Willawong, at about 7.15 am to reach his place of employment. His body was found in the floodwaters later that morning.

14.2.2 Deaths of people in vehicles on flooded roads and crossings

Almost a quarter of the deaths in Queensland during the 2010/2011 floods occurred while people were trying to drive through floodwaters on roads or causeways. Two of those killed were passengers. All but one of the deaths occurred in rural Queensland. In some instances, the lack of information about road conditions ahead may have been a factor in the decision to attempt to drive through floodwaters, although in other cases, warning signs seem to have been disregarded. Section 3.5 of the Commission's interim report addresses the need for community education about the hazards for the community in floods, while section 4.1.5 of the interim report deals with information about road conditions and closures. The relevant recommendations in the Commission's interim report for community education about the dangers of driving through floodwaters (recommendations 3.15 – 3.18) and recommendations in relation to road condition information (recommendations 4.25, 4.26, 4.27 and 4.28) are set out below.

Given the experience of 2010/2011, it was distressing in early February 2012 to see another tragic death in similar circumstances in flooding in Roma. As well, during flooding in south-east Queensland in January of this year, there were a number of cases in which the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service had to retrieve people from cars in floodwaters. There seems to be a lack of understanding that water across roadways may be not only deep, but swift-flowing; it is not necessarily a simple matter of wading from a stalled car to dry land. It is to be hoped that the 'If it's flooded, forget it' campaign begun in this wet season eventually penetrates public consciousness sufficiently to make such incidents the very rare exception, rather than worryingly common.

The circumstances of individuals' deaths in vehicles submerged or swept away by floodwaters are as follows.

Kay Lorraine Joy, a 55 year old woman, left her home in the morning of 30 November 2010 to travel to Dysart. There had been a great deal of rain in the Dysart area over the previous days, and rain continued to fall heavily that day. Many roads were cut; the local council had erected 'road closed' signs on flooded roads. Mrs Joy's vehicle became stuck in floodwaters in the middle of a creek crossing where 'road closed' signs were in place. The water at the crossing was flowing rapidly, about one metre high and 15 metres wide. Police and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service officers were unable to reach Mrs Joy. Her body was recovered the following day.

Alan William Kane, 81 years of age, attempted to drive across a flooded causeway crossing Station Creek near his home at Bajool on the evening of 3 December 2010. A witness saw his car swept away into the creek. It floated for some distance before disappearing under the water, which was muddy, deep and flowing rapidly. Mr Kane was found in the vehicle, drowned, the next day. According to the police who investigated the accident, the water at the causeway was between one and two metres higher than its normal level. There were no warning signs at the causeway; according to the Rockhampton Regional Council, the creek rises and falls so quickly that there is little opportunity to erect temporary signs. Because of its low traffic volume, the local community was familiar with its propensity to flood: local people regularly used the causeway although the creek was flowing over it.

Richard Christian Baker was a 58 year old transport driver. He was carrying stock to a location near Clermont on 7 December 2010 when he drove his truck into a flooded causeway which reportedly had about two metres of water over it. The truck was swept away and was found the following day with Mr Baker's body in it, 50 to 60 metres from the causeway, in five metres of water.

Donna Marie Chong was 41 years of age. On 1 January 2011, she was travelling with her husband, her two children and nephew to Burketown in a four wheel drive vehicle, in convoy with another family, also in a four wheel drive. The second family consisted of two adults and two children; the parents and siblings of Ms Chong's nephew travelling in her vehicle. At about 7.00 pm they arrived at the Leichardt River crossing, about 71 kilometres south-east of Burketown. The crossing is a cement causeway about 200 metres wide, with guide markings. Ms Chong's husband, who was driving, saw a marker indicating the water depth was 200 millimetres and entered the crossing. Some way on he saw a second marker indicating that it was 500 millimetres, and decided to turn back. As he tried to put the vehicle in reverse, its front right wheel slipped off the causeway into deep water and it started to float away. He and Ms Chong got themselves and the children out of the vehicle. Ms Chong's husband managed to hold on to a tree with two of the children. He last saw her floating past him with the third child on her back. At 8.00 pm, police were contacted; they arrived at about 8.50 pm and saw a car in the middle of the causeway. Markings indicated the water level was 700 millimetres. Everyone involved was rescued except for Ms Chong. Her body was located approximately two kilometres downstream from where she was last seen; she had drowned.

John Charles Graham, a 61 year old man, was a rear-seat passenger in a four wheel drive vehicle travelling from Victoria to Townsville on 2 January 2011. At Aramac, the vehicle's driver decided to take the Aramac Torrens Creek Road to Townsville (a shorter route), although a sign at the edge of Aramac indicated it was closed by flooding. The vehicle was washed off a single lane bridge over which water was flowing at a depth of 600 to 700 millimetres, into Cornish Creek. Both the driver and front passenger escaped the vehicle, but Mr Graham did not. His body was found three days later, out of the vehicle and some 100 metres from the bridge.

James Cole Perry was 34 years old. On 10 January he was returning with his wife and young son from the Gold Coast to Toowoomba. At about 3.00 pm, near Helidon, on the Warrego Highway they encountered water across the road. Mr Perry initially drove their station wagon into the water, thinking it was not deep, before attempting to reverse out of it. The vehicle stalled and was washed off the highway. It floated towards Lockyer Creek. As the water rose on the vehicle, its three occupants climbed onto its roof; but they were forced to jump from it into floodwaters as it neared downed power lines. Mr Perry's wife last saw her husband holding their son and the vehicle. She was

able to catch hold of a tree and was eventually rescued. Her son was found alive, holding onto the top of a cattle feed bin well down Lockyer Creek towards Grantham. Mr Perry has not been found; it seems he was able to save his son, but not himself.

Robert Gregory Bromage was 50 years old. In the early hours of 11 January 2011, he set off in his sedan to buy food. His movements after that are not known; at about 8.30 am he used his mobile phone to call a mechanical repairs business. At just after 10.00 am that morning a police officer saw his car being washed along in floodwaters at Karrabin. An immediate search did not find him, but the following day the car was found, with Mr Bromage's body inside it.

Robert John Kelly, a man aged 30, intended to drive his station wagon from Toowoomba to Gracemere, near Rockhampton. Many of the roads he had to travel on were flooded. Shortly after 2.00 pm on 12 January 2011, he telephoned a friend and said he was about five hours away from Rockhampton. The call ended abruptly when Mr Kelly said that he had just hit water. The friend tried, unsuccessfully, to call him back. Mr Kelly was found the next day, in his submerged vehicle in Myall Creek along the Brymaroo Irvingdale Rd, Brymaroo.

Interim report recommendations in relation to driving through floodwaters

- 3.15 Before the next wet season, the Queensland Government should conduct a public education campaign about the dangers of driving into floodwaters.
- 3.16 The campaign should use various media and be designed to reach as many people as possible.
- 3.17 The National Emergency Management Committee should, as part of its education initiatives, consider developing a national public education campaign about the dangers of driving into floodwaters, using various media and commencing, if possible, before the next wet season.
- 3.18 The Queensland and Commonwealth governments should liaise to ensure a consistent message is delivered to the public.

Interim report recommendations in relation to road conditions and closure information

- 4.25 The Department of Transport and Main Roads, in its capacity as primary provider of information about road conditions to the public, should continue to improve the accuracy of road condition information and the timeliness of its distribution to the public and other agencies.
- 4.26 The Department of Transport and Main Roads should identify and include local road names when reporting road conditions.
- 4.27 The Queensland Government should work with the New South Wales Government to co-ordinate road condition reporting procedures to inform local councils and road users of interstate road conditions in a variety of different ways.
- 4.28 In rural and remote areas where telecommunications are not effective, measures that do not rely on internet and mobile telephone services should be implemented to inform the travelling public of road conditions ahead, for example:
 - signs with detailed information
 - providing tourist information centres and tourist radio stations with information on road conditions.

14.2.3 The deaths in flash flooding in Toowoomba on 10 January 2011

Donna Maree Rice, who was 43, and her 13 year old son, Jordan, drowned on 10 January 2011 after their vehicle was inundated by floodwaters while stalled at a Toowoomba intersection. Their call, through the '000' emergency number, to the police met with no appropriate response. Evidence was called about those events in the Commission's public hearings held in Toowoomba⁵ and Brisbane.⁶ The circumstances are set out in more detail in section 5.4.3 of the Commission's interim report. That section dealt with the issues identified in relation to emergency call procedures. The following recommendation stemmed from the Commission's examination of the deaths of Mrs Rice and her son.

Interim report recommendation in relation to emergency call-taker training

- 5.38 Queensland Police Service call-takers across the state should be trained to a uniform standard, consistent with the standard of training provided by the Brisbane Police Communications Centre.

14.2.4 The deaths in the Lockyer Valley region on 10 January 2011

Chapter 7 of the interim report deals with events of 10 January in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley. Among other aspects, the Commission investigated the issue of warnings for residents of the Lockyer Valley. The interim report's recommendations about warnings (recommendations 3.13, 4.9 – 4.12) appear below.

Four of the people who died at Grantham suffered from mobility problems; three relied on walking aids. Two recommendations made by the Commission in the interim report (recommendations 5.65 and 5.66) concerned the issue of evacuation of people suffering from lack of mobility. They are also reproduced below.

Sandra Christine Matthews, 46 years of age, and her husband, Steven Noel Matthews, 56 years of age, were at their home at Spring Bluff on 10 January 2011 with their son and daughter, aged 20 and 15 respectively. The Spring Bluff area had been subjected to heavy rainfall throughout December 2010 and early January 2011. Between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm, the rain was extremely heavy, and Murphys Creek, which ran next to the Matthews' property, began to rise and entered the house. The Matthews children were able to get into the ceiling cavity, but their parents were swept away when the water demolished the eastern wall of the house. The bodies of Mr and Mrs Matthews were found later that day, about two kilometres downstream.

Selwyn Hector Schefe, 52 years old, his wife, and six year old daughter Katie Louise Schefe, lived at Watts Road Murphys Creek, in a house about 20 metres from the creek. On the afternoon of 10 January, the water came rapidly up from the creek and into the house. Mr and Mrs Schefe decided to evacuate. With difficulty because of the water's pressure, they managed to get their daughter out of the house. The three climbed into the rear tray of their utility, parked outside. The vehicle itself began to float away. Mrs Schefe was thrown out of the tray when it suddenly tilted. She last saw her husband still in the utility's tray, holding Katie. Both were drowned; Katie's body was found in Murphys Creek, about 3.5 kilometres downstream; Mr Schefe's body was found 50 kilometres away.

Sylvia Helen Baillie was 72 years old and lived on Murphys Creek Road at Postman's Ridge. Her house was between 10 and 20 metres from Rocky Creek. Mrs Baillie was concerned about water rising fast from the creek on the afternoon of 10 January, and was making preparations to evacuate. She was last seen at her front door at about 2.10 pm on 10 January, just before water engulfed the house, demolishing a wall, and swept it away. Mrs Baillie's body was found in Grantham, about 15.5 kilometres away.

Bruce William George Warhurst, a sixty year old man also lived at Murphys Creek Road, Postman's Ridge with his family on a property which adjoined Rocky Creek. The house itself was between 60 and 80 metres from the creek. At 2.08 pm on 10 January he spoke to his wife, who was stranded in her vehicle by landslides on the Toowoomba range. A witness saw Rocky Creek burst its banks at about 2.30 pm; Mr Warhurst was moving around the house. Shortly after, the same witness saw a wave of water from the creek wash the Warhurst house away. Mr Warhurst's body was found six kilometres away, at Helidon Spa.

Reinskje (Regina) Van der Werff suffered from a number of conditions which affected her mobility, and used a walking frame. She was 82 years old. On the afternoon of 10 January, she was at home with her daughter, grandson and three great-grandchildren at their residence on the Gatton-Helidon Road at Grantham. At about 3.00 pm, a male relative rang to advise the family that they should get onto the roof of their house because there was a lot of water coming towards Grantham. It was impossible for Mrs Van der Werff to climb a ladder; her daughter managed as best she could by helping her onto a table before getting herself and her children onto the roof, from where they were later rescued by helicopter. The water rose to within a metre of the ceiling. Mrs Van der Werff's body was found some days later, still in the house.

Bruce Allan Marshall, 66 years of age, also lived on the Gatton-Helidon Road with his wife and son, in a low-set house. He too suffered from medical conditions affecting his mobility. On 10 January, his wife and son had gone to Toowoomba. At 4.03 pm, Mr Marshall telephoned his daughter. In the course of their conversation, he told her that water had reached the top step of the house and was starting to come up through the floor boards; he was going to ring the SES for assistance. That conversation was followed by a number of calls made by Mr Marshall to the '000' emergency number, which were put through to police, the last at 4.18 pm. In those calls, Mr Marshall

gave an account of increasing desperation: the water had come up to his waist, then to his shoulders; he could not get out of the house. His body was found in the house on the following day.

Llync-Chiann Armana Omega Clarke-Jibson, 31 years old, and her children, Jocelyn Elenor Jibson, aged five, and Garry Daniel Jibson, aged 11, died in an attempt to escape the flooding which hit Grantham on 10 January. Ms Jibson's husband, Daniel McGuire, was a member of the Grantham Rural Fire Service. He attempted to evacuate the family in a rural fire truck. Water hit the truck, washing it off the roadway. It rapidly became inundated. Mr McGuire managed to save son Zachary, aged seven, but he was unable to rescue the other members of the family, who were trapped in the truck. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service members found the truck, and the bodies of Ms Jibson, Jocelyn and Garry, in the truck, that night.

Jean Gurr was an 88 year old widow, who, like the McGuire family, lived on the Gatton-Helidon Road. Mrs Gurr walked with the aid of a walking stick. On the afternoon of 10 January she made two unanswered telephone calls to a family member, at 4.05 pm and 4.10 pm. Her house, which was on stumps about half a metre high, was completely inundated. Mrs Gurr's body was found in it that night.

Pauline Lesley Magner, 65 years old, Dawn Margaret Radke, 56 years old, and their 23 month old granddaughter Jessica Lily-Ann Keep, were lost after floodwaters rushed through the low-set house of Jessica's parents, Stacy and Matthew Keep, in Railway Street, Grantham. Mrs Keep, who had Jessica in her arms, was swept outside the house and carried by the waters to the railway line, where the pressure of the water tore the child from her mother's arms. Her body was not found until nearly two weeks later, many kilometres away on the bank of Lockyer Creek. Mrs Radke and Mrs Magner were also swept away; Mrs Magner's body was found, Mrs Radke's was not.

Brenda May Ross, 56 years old, and her partner, Christopher John Face, 63 years old, were at their house at 8 Anzac Avenue, Grantham, with Mrs Ross's 25 year old son Joshua Adam Ross, on the afternoon of 10 January. Mrs Ross's mobility was very limited: she used a walking frame and sometimes a wheelchair. At 4.27 pm, Mrs Ross made an emergency call, saying in the course of it that water was up her knees. During the call, her son told the operator that the house was giving way to the floodwaters, and that his mother was disabled and could not be moved. Minutes later, Mrs Ross' sister telephoned her. Mrs Ross told her that she was sitting on her bed, and that the water was knee deep around her. Joshua Ross told his aunt that the floodwaters had caused damage to the internal walls of the house. He could see the floodwaters inundating other rooms. The house was creaking and the walls shaking. A witness saw the house 'implode' under the pressure of the water; it was completely demolished. The bodies of Mrs Ross and her son Joshua Ross were recovered in the vicinity of Grantham; the body of her partner, Mr Face has not been recovered.

Interim report recommendations in relation to warnings

- 3.13 Before the next wet season, local governments susceptible to flooding should conduct community education programs which provide local information about (at least) the following topics:
 - the measures households should take to prepare for flooding
 - the roles and functions of the SES and details of how to contact and join it
 - whom to contact if assistance is needed during a flood
 - contact details for emergency services in the area
 - the types of warnings that are used in the area, what they mean and what to do in the event of a warning
 - where and how to obtain information before, during and after a disaster
 - what is likely to happen during a disaster (for example, power outages and road closures)
 - evacuation
 - measures available for groups who require particular assistance (for example, the elderly, ill and people with a disability).
- 4.9 A siren may be appropriate in smaller towns or rural communities susceptible to flash flooding. If councils rely on sirens to warn residents, they should ensure that the community understands the meaning of the siren.
- 4.10 Councils, with the assistance of the Bureau of Meteorology, should examine the feasibility of and priorities for installing additional river height and rainfall gauges in areas of identified need.

- 4.11 Councils, with the assistance of the Bureau of Meteorology, should consider the susceptibility of their regions to flash flooding, and whether it is feasible and necessary to acquire and operate an automated local evaluation in real time system (ALERT system) for particular waterways.
- 4.12 The Queensland Government should consider assisting less well-resourced councils to fund the installation of an ALERT system where a case is made for its adoption.
- 4.29 The Bureau of Meteorology should endeavour to make clear the areas actually covered by its warnings, and specify what may be expected in particular areas, so that the relevance and significance of any warning is obvious to residents of the area at risk.
- 7.2 Lockyer Valley Regional Council should investigate the feasibility of installing alarm-activating gauges in the creeks at Spring Bluff, Murphys Creek and other communities where communications systems are poor and there is a risk of rapid and unexpected water rise.

Interim report recommendations concerning evacuation of people suffering from lack of mobility

- 5.65 Councils should identify organisations (for example, Meals on Wheels and Bluecare) that provide services to people in the community who may be unable to evacuate without assistance. Councils should include the contact details of these organisations in their evacuation sub-plans.
- 5.66 Councils should work with these service providers to identify: the number of people who may require assisted evacuation; the general nature of their needs, including any necessary medical supplies and equipment; warning message formats and dissemination; increased timeframes needed for evacuation; transportation requirements; and shelter requirements. Councils should include this information in their evacuation sub-plans.

14.2.5 Death of a child during a rescue attempt on 11 January 2011

Jesse Joshua Wickman was four years old. On 11 January, his parents were trying to evacuate their family from their home at Minden in advance of expected flooding. Both Mr and Mrs Wickman were driving four wheel drive vehicles; Mr Wickman was driving ahead. Mrs Wickman had their two small children with her. Before they had left the town, Mrs Wickman's vehicle stalled in floodwater across the Warrego Highway. She and the children got out of it, but the current prevented them from making their way to higher ground, and the vehicle itself started to move. Mr Wickman was able to reach them on foot and place the children on the bonnet before he and his wife climbed up as well. Not long after, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service swift water rescue officers arrived. They made their way, with considerable difficulty, through the fast-flowing water to the family. They brought with them four adult sized personal floatation devices which they fitted to each of the two adults and the children. Mr and Mrs Wickman and one child were safely brought to dry land, but Jesse was carried away by the water. His body was found, still wearing the personal floatation device, in Minden that afternoon.

Although the precise circumstances of Jesse Wickman's death had, at the time the interim report was prepared, yet to be the subject of an inquest, having regard to the information which was then available, the Commission made a recommendation in relation to the availability of child-sized personal floatation devices. Other more general recommendations in relation to swift water rescue may also prove relevant.

Interim report recommendations in relation to swift water rescue safety

- 5.13 The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service should revise the Operations Doctrine to clarify:
- how many Level 2 swift water rescue technicians and Level 1 support personnel are required to safely perform a swift water rescue
 - the options available to an incident controller at a swift water incident with fewer than the required personnel and what considerations they should take into account in their decision-making.
- 5.19 The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service should purchase waterproof radio equipment that:
- is appropriate for swift water and normal fire fighting environments
 - will attach securely to firefighters in a way that does not hamper their operations.
- 5.23 Every rescue appliance should carry personal floatation devices suitably sized for children or infants.

The Commission hopes that the recommendations will, as they are put into effect, result in improved individual safety in flood conditions, so that Queensland never again experiences loss of life through flooding on the scale that it did in the 2010/2011 wet season.

(Endnotes)

- 1 The Commission's interim report referred to a figure of 35. Police investigations have led to the conclusion that two of those deaths were not, in fact, flood-related, and they are not, in consequence, discussed in this report.

- 2 The deaths of Donna Rice and her son Jordan were the subject of section 5.4.3 of the interim report.

- 3 The Commissioner had agreed with the State Coroner at the beginning of the work of the Commission that broader systemic questions of the preparation for and response to the flood events fell within the Commission's terms of reference; those issues, where directly raised by the circumstances of particular deaths, would be examined by the Commission. Matters set out under section 45 of the *Coroners Act 2003* – the event of the death; the identity of the deceased; how, when and where he or she died; and the immediate cause of death – remained for the Coroner.

- 4 Section 11, *Coroners Act 2003*.

- 5 19 April 2011.

- 6 11 May 2011.
