

Statement of Witness

<i>Name of Witness</i>	MORRIS, Alan John
<i>Date of Birth</i>	
<i>Address and contact details</i>	C/o Shiloh Assemblies of God of Church, 72 Redbank Plains Road, Goodna
<i>Occupation</i>	Senior Minister
<i>Officer taking statement</i>	Detective Sergeant Stephen Platz
<i>Date taken</i>	28/04/2011

Alan John MORRIS states:

1. I am a [redacted] year old male presently residing at an address known to the Queensland Floods Commission. I am the 'Senior Minister' of the Shiloh Church (Assemblies of God) located at 72 Redbank Plains Road, Goodna. I started as Youth Pastor and later became the Senior Minister. I have performed this role for the last fourteen years.
2. Shiloh Church is a community-orientated pentecostal church with a congregation of about 500 people. As Senior Minister I manage a number of staff to run programs and church-related operations, subsequently the church has a basic leadership structure. We offer general church meetings and programs, as well as numerous community services such as development and activities classes, and a food distribution program. The church facility comprises of two buildings, one being the main auditorium which can seat around 600 people and the other is an 'Activities Building' that accommodates the church offices and numerous programs. This building contains a smaller auditorium, a number of separate rooms and a tea room with basic cooking facilities. The church has a total of six female and four male toilets plus urinals. We have no shower facilities in the centre.
3. I have had no previous dealings with the local government concerning disaster management or to have the church recognised as an official disaster recovery centre.

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4. I remember Monday the 10th day of January 2011, I was on my day off. It had been raining heavily for the last few days and I was aware from media reports that parts of Redbank and Goodna were to become inundated with water as a result of flooding from the Brisbane River. At about 11.00am I received a message from one of my staff with regards to a request from a Police Officer to open the church as an evacuation centre. I immediately contacted the Goodna Shift supervisor, Sergeant Kim KLIST and had a conversation with her. The Officer requested if I could open the church as an evacuation centre. A previously identified location was too close to the flooding and the church appeared to be the most appropriate facility in the area. I agreed to her request and a short time later I proceeded to the church.

5. I then made a number of phone calls and one of my staff members made appeals on face book requesting staff and volunteers to attend the church to assist in the management of the evacuation centre. Initially six staff arrived during the day and later we had twelve, including church volunteers in the evening. A female Police Officer was sent to the centre on this day to act as a liaison officer with community and to assist in establishing the centre. This Officer did an excellent job and generally provided presence and support.

6. From 12.30pm onwards into the afternoon forty evacuees from the local Caravan Park arrived. I then organised for the 'Activities Building' to be utilised as the recovery centre and set up several areas within this complex. These areas included a meals/sitting area with a television, bedding/sleeping area and an area for pets outside. The bringing of pets by evacuees became a major challenge as we had to erect barriers and feeding facilities. I contacted a number of vets in the area who provided supplies and assistance.

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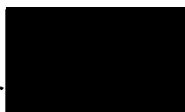


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7. During the day evacuees from flooded houses began arriving, sent or delivered by the Police and S.E.S. It was then realised we needed dinner for that evening, bedding, food for the medium term and medical supplies for the numbers of people arriving. The realisation was that these people would rely on our support for a week or more. My staff subsequently made a number of calls to people who could assist in this regard. I also delegated a number of staff to perform different roles in the recovery centre and set up a basic leadership structure. I developed this structure to run the centre directly and effectively, so decisions could be made instantly and to free me up to solve problems that would arise and to plan ahead.
8. By 8.00pm we were accommodating in excess of 90 people. Due to the increasing numbers we accompanied approximately 25 people to the Christian Outreach centre (COC) at Redbank Plains where we cared for them overnight. By the following afternoon we were able to find billets in the community for them and they did not need to return to the centre.
9. On Tuesday the 11th day of January 2011 we arranged to have the evacuees transported from the church to the Camira Community Centre about 20 minutes away in order to have showers. Shuttling one small group at a time became a daily event.
10. At 10.00am I arranged for a briefing to be provided to staff and the evacuees. These briefings continued every day and were a way of settling people and keeping them informed of current developments and progress. Also on this day we set up a register of volunteers and evacuees. By this time we had an overwhelming response from the community with general volunteers, doctors, nurses, podiatrists, counsellors and other health professionals providing assistance to the community on a volunteer basis. Over the space of the week ambulance officers promptly attended and transported people to hospital as necessary.

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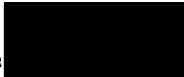


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11. By the end of this day we had begun a billeting process in order to reduce the number of people at the evacuation centre. This billeting process continued on a daily basis.
12. Because numbers were expected to peak at greater than 120 people on that Tuesday evening the Police also organised with staff from the St Augustine's college to open their school as an evacuation centre in order to reduce pressure on our centre. These premises had showers and staff allocated to assist in their management. Approximately forty people were transferred to this centre, a further one hundred remaining with us.
13. On Tuesday night we received a call from the Ipswich City Council who until now had not known we were operating. The Council Officer offered assistance but community donations had started to flow in and I advised him that we were coping well and did not require assistance at this time. I also informed the Officer of the existence of St Augustine's as a centre.
14. On Wednesday 12th day of January 2011 the Council shut St Augustine's down and advised people to go to the Ipswich Showgrounds Centre. Unfortunately, the Ipswich centre was "not convenient" for the evacuees and they returned to our centre, putting the strain back on our resources. I think it would have been a wiser decision to keep the St Augustine's centre open. In retrospect, I am sure the Officer would simply have been centralising Council's own resources, not realising that St Augustine's was established to assist us, a breakdown in communication easily avoided by a phone conversation either way.
15. The church remained officially open as an evacuation centre until Monday 17th of January 2011. By this time between 250-300 people were registered as evacuees at the centre but later billeted out. None were transferred to other centres. Unofficially, we maintained 'residents' and hosted government help organisations for a further week. Working with the Red

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Cross and Department of Housing on site suitable accommodation was found for forty now homeless people.

16. At no time was the church designated as a recovery centre prior to the flood event. Due to this, we had little time to prepare for the influx of evacuees, but with the help of dedicated staff and community volunteers we believe we were able to provide an effective service to the community. The support provided by all levels of government and the Police was very good. The Police Liaison Officer assigned to the church was excellent, providing information and reassuring displaced people during the crisis. Strong support was given by the local Police Station who provided a quick response with regards to any security incidents. On the couple of occasions we called them they were on the scene in only a couple of minutes.

17. I am aware of the criticisms directed towards the Ipswich City Council and the State Government, but I found all levels of government to be helpful and we worked well with all of them. We were visited by the Queensland Governor and the Mayor of Ipswich on the Friday the 14th, and the Premier on Monday the 17th. Our local State Member of Parliament was a regular visitor, along with other State Members, as were our local Councillors and Federal Member. From Wednesday the 12th we hosted the State Government Community Recovery Team and Centrelink for ten days as they disbursed flood relief monies. The Ipswich Business Advisory Team was also present from Monday the 17th, as was a Red Cross counsellor, Lifeline and the State Department of Housing. The Council were not aware of our existence until the Tuesday and when they did contact us they offered full assistance, but by this time we had everything under control. The Council has also since reimbursed the church for the costs of running the centre.

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18. My best suggestion is that a better counter disaster plan with regards to evacuation centres needs to be established for the future, wherever that responsibility lies. Our centre did not have the appropriate facilities to fulfil the role, no mandate and no trigger to open. However, with the help of our community and local authorities I believe the outcome was a good one.

19. I compiled a diary of the events at the evacuation centre during this period and a de-brief summary identifying some areas that can be improved upon. I am able to produce this document.

EXHIBIT: Diary of events at Shiloh Evacuation Centre and de-brief summary.

Marked Exhibit No/...

A.MORRIS

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 03/05/2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 5 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
(2) I make this statement knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating in it anything that I know is false.
..... Signature
Signed at ...Caloundra ...this...3 rd ...day of...May.....2011

Witness Signature.  Signature of Officer.....