

**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

Date: 19 October 2011

Name of Witness: Andrew Jason Wyatt

Address of Witness: [REDACTED] Allen Street, Moffat Beach

Occupation: Area Director

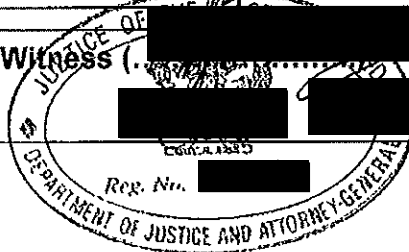
Division: Emergency Management Queensland  
Department of Community Safety

Telephone: (Work) [REDACTED] (Mobile) [REDACTED]

1. I, Andrew Jason Wyatt, Area Director, Sunshine Coast, Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), Department of Community Safety state:
2. I have been involved in the emergency services environment as a volunteer and as a paid staff member for the past twenty four years. I commenced full time employment with the Department of Emergency Services (now the Department Community Safety) in 2002. During my career with the Department I have held several positions including Support Officer, District Training Coordinator, Training Development Officer, Acting Senior Program Officer, Regional Training and Equipment Coordinator and Area Director.
3. I have extensive disaster management and operational experience. I have had nearly ten years experience within EMQ and I was involved in the Cyclone Larry event. I have participated in events in Victoria and most major events in the past ten years that have occurred in Queensland. I have been deployed to assist with the management of many major events that have occurred in Queensland and interstate.
4. I have worked in the North Coast Region for the past four years and have performed my current role as Area Director for the past two years.
5. I hold a significant number of qualifications and have attached a copy of my learning history which details my training and qualifications now marked "AJW 1".

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Witness (.....) [REDACTED] JP/Solicitor/Commissioner for Declarations:



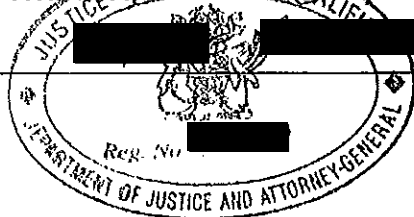
ANDREW WYATT

AREA DIRECTOR

1. His role and position within Emergency Management Queensland (EMQ), including information about their direct supervisor and the person to whom they report in a disaster.
6. In my current role as Area Director I am responsible for providing disaster management advice, training and support to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council and Sunshine Coast Disaster District. I am also responsible for the management and support of 12 State Emergency Service (SES) Groups which contain a total of 366 SES volunteers in the Sunshine Coast area. I manage and support all of the human resource issues, provision of equipment, workplace health and safety, complaints resolutions, disciplinary action associated with the SES, ensuring they are appropriately trained, co-ordinate maintenance of their facilities and I refer that to the relevant local Council for action. My immediate supervisor and the person who I report to during disaster events is EMQ Regional Director [REDACTED].
2. The SES unit with their region/including details (if known) of any paid SES members within their region.
7. As the Area Director for the Sunshine Coast I am responsible for the management, support and oversight of the State Emergency Service in my Area. The Sunshine Coast Area comprises 3 SES Units. The Sunshine Coast North Unit, Sunshine Coast Central Unit and Sunshine Coast South Unit. Each SES Unit has 4 SES Groups attached to it. There are three (3) Local Controllers in the Sunshine Coast Area and they each receive an honorarium of \$10,000 per year from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.
8. The adequacy of current SES volunteer numbers (including any issues with recruitment and retention of members), level of training and equipment and resources available to SES units within their area/region.
9. The Sunshine Coast Area is quite large and has a population of approximately 380,000. The recruitment and retention of SES volunteers can be seasonal and problematic. I do not believe that the current number of SES volunteers on the Sunshine Coast is adequate. While some of the larger SES Groups like Caloundra and Maroochydore have what appears to be adequate numbers on the books, other SES Groups fall well short of the required number. Large SES groups like Maroochydore have approximately 70 volunteers but when an event occurs we can only actually rely on getting 20 to 30 volunteers. I think Maroochydore and the other large SES Groups should have available 50 SES volunteers to be sustainable. The SES Groups are able to manage operations through the quiet periods of the year but during extended periods of operational

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activity the number of volunteers who are available cannot be sustained. During the winter months SES membership numbers appear to decline due to the reduction in operational activity. The recruitment and retention of volunteers remains an ongoing challenge. SES facilities also have an impact on the retention of SES Volunteers. Some facilities are small with limited capacity to store equipment and conduct training. Other facilities do not have basic amenities like toilets, showers, washing facilities or running water. These issues contribute to the poor retention of SES volunteers.

10. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council provides and maintains 13 SES buildings and 23 vehicles for the SES. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council also provides fuel for the vehicles, computers and internet connections for the SES Buildings as well as mobile telephones for the SES Executives and SES Duty officers. Emergency Management Queensland provides all necessary equipment to enable the SES to perform their agreed functions. I am not aware of any issues in relation to the supply of equipment to the SES groups that I support.

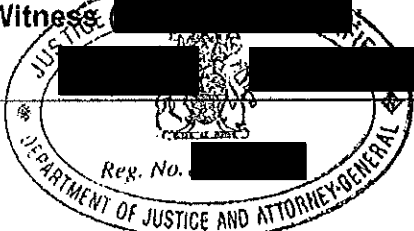
11. EMQ North Coast Region supports 19 SES Units comprising of 52 SES Groups with 1337 SES volunteers. Currently we have four training staff dedicated to assisting with the training of these volunteers. In order to appropriately train SES volunteers, EMQ relies heavily on volunteers training volunteers. This is also problematic as EMQ has not yet finalised the new version of the 'Train the Trainer' program. There have been all sorts of rule changes by the Department of Education and Training and the 'Train the Trainer' program needs to be updated to reflect these changes. I believe the changes are currently in the process of being made by EMQ and the release of the new version is due this year. There is currently a shortage of volunteer trainers and the training staff are spending much of their time delivering training and developing the capability of SES volunteer trainers.

4. **The mechanisms for receiving requests for assistance and the process for, and their role in, managing requests for assistance, including the prioritisation and/or management of competing requests for assistance.**

12. There are a number of ways the SES receive requests for assistance. The public can contact the SES through the Smart Services Call Centre on 132 500. The SES can also receive requests directly from the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and Queensland Ambulance Service. The SES may receive telephone calls directly from the public. The public may simply call into the SES facility in person to ask for assistance.

13. SES teams, while working in the field, may be approached by members of the public to request assistance or the Local Disaster Coordination Centre, through the SES Liaison Officer, may request the SES to undertake tasks.

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 Reg. No. [Redacted]	[Redacted] ANDREW WYATT

14. Regardless of how the request is received, all SES requests for assistance are entered into Request for Assistance online (RFA). RFA is an application that allows the SES to record, task, manage and monitor operations on a normal everyday basis as well as larger scale events.

15. RFA is utilised to help the SES track the status of requests from the public and other agencies, create, task and manage teams, sort tasks by damage, street, suburbs, track and record resources, give up to the minute statistics, accurate reporting and minimise manual paper work.

16. To improve efficiency of disaster management during local and major events DCS has integrated RFA online into Smart Services Queensland call centre.

17. This means calls received from the public via 132500 can be entered straight into RFA online by Smart Services Queensland staff.

18. Benefits of RFA include:

- Reduction in duplicate data entry
- Avoiding double handling of RFA information
- Reduction in general errors and selection of incorrect regions
- Provision of more detailed and up to the minute information
- Reduction in SES response times.

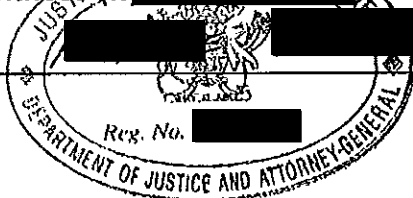
19. As the Area Director I am required to monitor SES operations in my area of responsibility and ensure that the SES are appropriately resourced and responds to the requests in a timely and appropriate manner. I am also responsible to ensure the SES is operating in line with the strategic direction set by the Local Disaster Management Group. It is also my responsibility to ensure the Strategic Direction and LDMG priorities are communicated to the volunteer Local Controllers.

20. The management of requests for assistance is the responsibility of the volunteer Local Controllers, however during the floods I was deployed to Bundaberg as the Incident Controller in the Incident Management Team (IMT) to assist with the prioritisation and tasking of requests as the volunteers were fatigued and overwhelmed by the volume of tasks received.

21. The North Coast Region has also implemented a Regional Operations Centre. During events the Regional Operations Centre (ROC) is activated to monitor, manage, and assist with the prioritisation tasking. The Regional Operations Centre also ensures that the SES Groups have the necessary resources to enable them to complete the tasks in an appropriate and timely manner and ensures the SES is operating in line with the Strategic direction set by the Local

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Disaster Management Group. The ROC was operational during the 2010/2011 Flood event and assisted the SES Groups in the North Coast Region.

5. **Their authority for, and role in, the tasking and deployment of SES members, including local controller tasking/deployment, both when a disaster is declared and at other times.**

22. The SES Local Controllers are responsible for tasking their SES members in the Sunshine Coast Area. The Local Controllers are responsible for sourcing and activating their volunteers. As the Area Director I am responsible for the general oversight of SES activities on the Sunshine Coast as well as making sure the legislative requirements are met. I achieve this by ensuring the SES Local Controllers perform their functions efficiently and effectively and in line with the SES Operations Doctrine.

23. When SES Volunteers are deployed to other areas an EMQ Liaison Officer is deployed to manage and support the SES taskforce. The receiving Incident management team in the impacted area is responsible for setting priorities and tasking the SES volunteers.

6. **Whether any SES members within their area/region were deployed to another area/region during the 2010/2011 floods and, if so, the process by which this occurred and their role in it.**

24. During the flood events earlier this year several SES volunteers from the Sunshine Coast were deployed to other areas of the State to provide assistance. The North Coast Region appointed Area Director [REDACTED] as the Deployment Officer. Area Director [REDACTED] worked with the Local Controllers in the North Coast Region to put together the task forces that were deployed. The North Coast Region has developed a Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for the management of deployments and task forces.

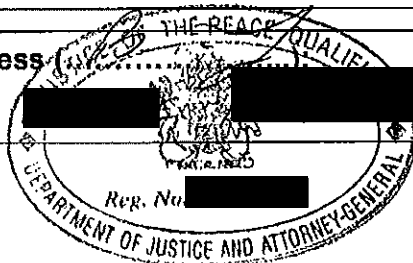
25. I was not personally involved in putting together the deployments for the 2010/2011 flood event as I was deployed to Bundaberg to manage the SES Incident Management Team and then deployed to St George to assist the Balonne Shire Local Disaster Management Group.

7. **Whether there are any SES units in their area with more than one Local Controller, and, where this is the case, a description of:**

26. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council area comprises three SES Units. The Sunshine Coast North Unit, Sunshine Coast Central Unit and Sunshine Coast South Unit. Each SES Unit is managed by a Local Controller.

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a) **the history of this arrangement and how it works in practice (in view of the combined effect of sections 84A and 85 of the Disaster Management Act 2003);**

27. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council is made up of the old Caloundra, Maroochy and Noosa Councils. Prior to amalgamations of Local Government each Council area had a single Local Controller. After the council amalgamations in 2008 the new Sunshine Coast Regional Council decided to maintain the old structure and rename the Units to Sunshine Coast North, Sunshine Coast South and Sunshine Coast Central. The Local Controllers report directly to me as the Area Director and I refer any issues to the Sunshine Coast Regional Council for necessary action.

b) **how SES members are tasked and deployed in that unit;**

28. On a day to day basis the SES Members are tasked or deployed by the Local Controller or Duty officer through a Request for Assistance (RFA).

29. During the Flood event EMQ made the decision to deploy volunteers to other parts of the State. Deployments were managed in the North Coast Region through the appointment of a Deployment Management Officer.

c) **the person ultimately responsible for that SES unit during a disaster;**

30. The person responsible for the SES Units during an event is the Volunteer Local Controller with the support of myself as the Area Director. When volunteers are deployed to other areas in the state the EMQ Liaison officer is responsible the SES Volunteers they accompany. Tasking is undertaken by the Incident Management Team in the receiving area.

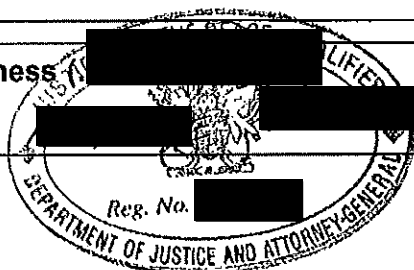
d) **how communications are coordinated among the various local controllers for SES unit during a disaster and the process of communicating with the local disaster coordinator;**

31. In the past, communication between the SES and the Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC) has been poor. The Local Disaster Coordination Centre has relied solely on information provided by the EMQ Liaison officer in the LDCC.

32. Following the recent events I identified a Deputy Local Controller who has been trained to work in the Local Disaster Coordination Centre as a dedicated SES Liaison Officer. This person has been trained in the use of RFA Online and is able to provide the Local Disaster Coordinator with accurate up to date information on SES activities in the Council Area.

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33. The SES Liaison Officer maintains contact with the three Local Controllers and the Regional Operations Centre. The SES Liaison Officer provides a conduit between the Local Disaster Coordinator and the appropriate Local Controller in relation to requests for information and the provision of information and liaises with the Regional Operations Centre if additional equipment or resources are required.

e) **whether or not this arrangement is considered effective and/or whether or not it may be subject to review or amendment.**

34. While this arrangement has not been tested operationally, the arrangement was tested during a recent exercise and early indications are that it will be effective in creating an appropriate communication link between the SES in the field and the Local Disaster Coordination Centre. This new process will be implemented and monitored during this year's wet season.

8. **The nature of their contact and coordination with any Local Disaster Coordinator, Local Disaster Coordination Centre, Local Disaster Management Group, and other EMQ officers during the 2010/2011 floods.**

35. During the 2010/2011 floods I worked closely with my fellow EMQ officers in Bundaberg and St George. In Bundaberg I worked with my Regional training staff to manage the tasking of SES in the Bundaberg Incident Management Team (IMT)

36. In St George I worked very closely with the Local Disaster Coordinator Mr Scott Norman and the Balonne Shire Local Disaster Management Group. During the 2010/2011 flood event I provided advice and Support to the Balonne Shire Local Disaster Coordinator and the Local Disaster Management Group. I also assisted the Balonne Shire Council with the coordination of Resupply activities in the area.

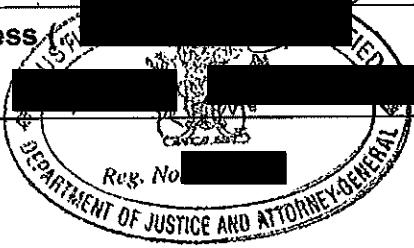
37. During the flood events I liaised with the Regional Directors and Area Directors who were responsible for the impacted area. I also worked with other EMQ Area Directors and Administration support staff who were deployed to St George to assist the Balonne Shire LDMG.

9. **Any instances, during the 2010/2011 floods, where EMQ's requirements or expectations of the SES differed from those of the Local Disaster Management Group or Local Disaster Coordinator, and how these issues were managed.**

38. I am not aware of any situations during the 2010/2011 flood events where EMQ's requirements or expectations of the SES differed from the Local Disaster Management Group or Local Disaster Coordinator. As an Area Director working

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in the IMT's and Local Disaster Coordination Centres I ensured the strategic priorities of the LDC were communicated to the SES Local Controllers and/or Incident Management Teams.

**10. The Government (State and State/Commonwealth) funding programs accessed by SES units within their area in the financial years 2009-10 and 2010-11, and their role in all aspects of the funding application process and administration of this funding.**

39. Please refer to the attachment marked "AJW 2" for a list of funding applications to the SES Non-recurrent subsidy for Sunshine Coast SES Groups. As the Area Director and Acting Regional Director I have been required to make comments and set priorities to assist the selection committee with the assessment of the applications.

40. I am also aware that SES Groups within the Sunshine Coast Area have been successful in obtaining grants for equipment through the gaming machine benefit fund. The Sunshine Coast North SES Unit recently received \$13,000 to air condition SES facilities at Pomona, Cooroy and Boreen Point. SES Groups in the Sunshine Coast Area have also received small grants of up to \$1,000 from NRMA to purchase equipment to assist with their response to storm damage requests for assistance.

**11. Whether or not issues have been raised with them directly by SES members about the level of funding provided by the State Government, including any suggestions by SES members about how the funding arrangement could be improved.**

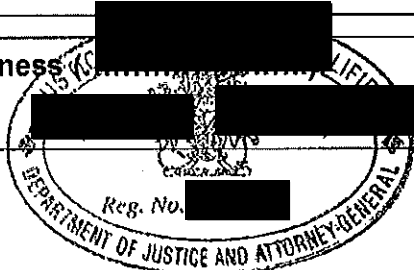
41. I have received general comments from SES members about the perceived lack of funding the SES receives in comparison to other emergency services. SES Local Controllers have also made comment about the fact they have to raise funds to support their activities. Local Controllers would like to see the funding arrangements improved so they did not have to raise funds at all.

42. Some SES Groups have an Incorporated Support Group that raises funds for the SES. There are two main issues I see with these support Groups:

- The Support Groups can raise funds when they like and how they like and are not accountable to EMQ or the Council.
- SES Support Groups can purchase equipment with the raised funds that may not be approved for use by EMQ or require ongoing financial support or expensive maintenance. EMQ and the Council have little or no control over support groups or the equipment they purchase.

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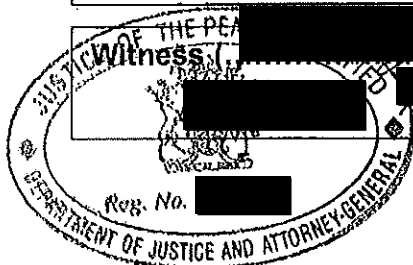
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12. The results of any assessment or debrief within their area relating to the performance of the SES units during the 2010/2011 floods.
43. Following the Flood Event of 2010/2011 a debrief was conducted. There were no issues raised in relation to the performance of the SES during the event.
44. Discussions were held in relation to the command and control of the SES. While there was no resolution to this issue the SES Local Controllers felt this was an area that needed further work and clarification.
45. Discussions were held in relation to the supply and distribution of sandbags. I have been working with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to look at establishing strategic locations on the coast where the public can collect sandbags in an effort to try and reduce some of the work load on the SES volunteers in relation to the filling and delivery of sandbags.
46. Discussions were held in relation to the use of RFA Online and the need for additional RFA Online Operators. EMQ training officers have been working to train additional RFA Online operators in preparation for the upcoming season.
47. When Task Forces were deployed to other areas of the State much of the administration and coordination was left to the EMQ Task Force Liaison Officer. Liaison Officers have limited capacity to resolve issues in the receiving region prior to arrival. Discussions were held in relation to appointing a staging manager. The staging manager could be in place prior to the arrival of the task force and could confirm all administrative arrangements and provide a meet and greet service at the point of arrival.
48. The same is needed when Task Forces deploy home. The aim is to ensure that all arrivals and departures into/out of the region go smoothly and that problems and issues in relation to accommodation, meals, laundry, boarding passes and transport are resolved before problems arise.
13. Any other observations on the structure, funding and command and control arrangement of the SES generally and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 floods, including possible areas for improvement, and any improvements made, or proposed to be made, in any of these aspects following the 2010/2011 floods.
49. As the Area Director I am responsible for the management and support of the SES Groups in my area. This involves being responsible for the governance framework, management and administration of the SES, including human resource management, administration of equipment and resources. The Sunshine Coast Council is responsible for the provision of SES land, buildings,

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vehicles, IT equipment, telephones and office consumables as well as providing an operational call out budget and honorariums for the local controllers. I am also responsible for ensuring the SES Members are appropriately trained and equipped to perform their agreed functions.

50. Please see the attachment called Organisation Performance Committee Agenda marked "AJW 3" for further information about how the SES is structured, managed and funded in the Sunshine Coast Council Area.
51. Command and Control of the SES is an area that causes constant confusion and is problematic. EMQ is responsible for all of the human resource related issues associated with the SES Volunteers however during operational periods does not have the authority to command the SES. It is confusing for the volunteers to have two lines of authority. For ease of operation and coordination it would be far more effective to have a structure with a single reporting line.
52. On several occasions during the flood events EMQ staff were deployed to manage the coordination of SES activities and tasks. This was mainly due to the fact that the Volunteer Local Controllers were overwhelmed by the volume of tasks and were not able to effectively manage the tasks at hand.
53. EMQ has the authority to deploy SES volunteers and during the floods arranged for SES volunteers to be deployed to other areas. In order to transport the SES volunteers approval was required from the Local Council to utilise an SES vehicle to transport them. In most cases the vehicles are purchased by the Local Council and registered by the State Government.
54. There are also issues in relation to other equipment like SES Flood Boats. The State Government purchases and registers the boats and then informally gifts the boat to the Local Council. The Council is then responsible for fuel and maintenance costs associated with the vessels. EMQ provides all associated equipment for the boat such as life jackets and other safety equipment. EMQ also provides the training for Flood Boat operators. EMQ does not have the authority to deploy flood boats from one area to another during operations without prior approval from the Local Government.

Justices Act 1886

I acknowledge by virtue of Section 110A(6)(c)(ii) of the Justices Act 1886 that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 19/10//2011 and contained in the pages numbered 1 to 8 is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and
- (2) I make it knowing that, if it were admitted as evidence, I may be liable to prosecution for stating anything that I know is false.

..... Signature

Signed at CAROUNDRA, this 19 day of October 2011

