



QUEENSLAND POLICE SERVICE  
STATEMENT OF WITNESS



Occurrence #: \_\_\_\_\_

Statement no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 04/03/2011

Statement of

Name of witness: HILL, Marcus Edward

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: Police Officer

Police officer taking statement

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: Inspector Reg. no.: 5988

Region/Command/Division: Gladstone District Station: Gladstone

Statement:

Marcus Edward HILL states:-

I am Inspector of Police normally attached to the Rockhampton District as a District Inspector. I am currently relieving as District Officer, Gladstone District and have performed that role since 28 December 2010.

I commenced employment with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) on 31 January 1984 as a Cadet. I was sworn in as Constable on 15 July 1985.

I have over twenty-five years of policing experience having served as a Constable at various locations throughout the State of Queensland including Gladstone, Blackwater, Woorabinda, Rockhampton, Emerald and Gold Coast. As a non-commissioned officer I served at Burketown (Officer In Charge), Whitsunday, Mount Isa, Legal Services Branch, Acacia Ridge (Officer In Charge) and Rockhampton where I have served since receiving my commission on 23 March 2008.

On 28 December 2010 I commenced relieving as District Officer, Gladstone District. On that date the District was responding to a significant rain and flood event with the

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## CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: HILL, Marcus Edward


Banana Shire significantly impacted by floodwaters from the Dawson River. On my arrival at Gladstone the Disaster Co-ordinator (DDC) for Gladstone District, Inspector Graham Coleman, was engaged in response operations for the flood event with the majority of attention focusing on the township of Theodore which was completely isolated by flood waters and at risk of being totally inundated.

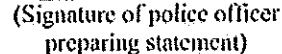
During the period 28/12/10 – 05/01/11 I performed the role of Deputy / Relief DDC until assuming the role of DDC on 06/01/11. The role and responsibilities of the Gladstone DDC is established by the *Disaster Management Act 2003* which includes the coordination of disaster operations in the disaster district whilst providing leadership, direction and guidance to the wider community and members of the District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) and the Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMG) of Gladstone and Banana.

To assist me in performing the role of DDC, I have received training by the then Department of Emergency Services in the Principles of Disaster Management, Evacuations, State Disaster Management Arrangements and have undertaken training in the Guardian Control Centre Disaster Management system. I have gained practical experience in disaster management as the QPS representative on the LDMG of the Burke Shire LDMG (1995-1997) Whitsunday Shire LDMG (1997-1999), and also as the DDC, Rockhampton District during tropical cyclone Ului (March 2010) and the response and recovery operations in relation to the grounding and subsequent oil spill on the Great Barrier Reef involving the bulk carrier, Shen Neng 1 (April 2010). I have also participated in a number of desktop and discussion exercises associated with Disaster Management.

On my arrival in Gladstone operations were underway to evacuate the entire township of Theodore by air due to the rising flood waters. Throughout the period 28-29/12/10 a total of 365 people were evacuated by helicopter from Theodore. Evacuees were taken to Moura, Theodore and Rockhampton where arrangements had been made for their accommodation.

  
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CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: HILL, Marcus Edward

Subsequent advice was also received from the Gladstone LDMG that Awoonga Dam had reached four (4) metres above the spillway and that the Gladstone Area Water Board had enacted their emergency action plan. Arrangements were made for police and SES to door knock properties which may be affected by flood waters should the dam continue to rise. The communities of Agnes Water, Baffle Creek and Rosedale remained isolated.

The height of the Awoonga Dam started to recede thereby lessening the threat against the communities of Tannum Sands and Boyne Island.

Flooding subsided in most areas over the next few days however the Dawson River continued to rise in Theodore. The township remained completely evacuated with the exception of several police officers who remained deployed to ensure the protection of public and private assets. On 04/01/11 the Dawson River receded sufficiently to allow essential services from Banana Shire and other emergency services personnel to enter Theodore and commence damage assessments.

In response to the written requirement of the Qld Floods Commission of Inquiry dated 28 February 2011, I provide the following information:

Provide details of when, how and why your role as DDC was activated including whether you took over the role during the flood events from another QPS member.

The Gladstone DDC was activated on 26/12/10 in response to the flood event occurring within the Banana Shire. During the period 26/12/10 – 06/01/11 the role of DDC was performed by Inspector Graham Coleman. During the period 28/12/10 – 06/01/11 I performed the role of Deputy / Relief DDC until formally assuming the role of DDC on 06/01/11.

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## CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: HILL, Marcus Edward

The preparation and planning undertaken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group in advance of and/or in relation to the 2010/2011 floods.

Since arriving in Gladstone on 28/12/10 my observations and experience suggests the Gladstone District Disaster Management Group (DDMG) has an established and proactive membership who meet regularly in preparation for disaster situations. During the 2010/2011 flood event all members of the DDMG were briefed in relation to the flood situation with each agency providing coordinated responses as required. DDMG meetings were undertaken as required to obtain agency operational status reports, provide an opportunity for changes in plans and/or standing operating procedures (SOP) to be communicated and to overview the operations and actions of the DDMG.

The actions undertaken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management group in respect of the 2010/2011 floods in relation to immediate management, response and recovery operations.

The DDC and DDMG through the District Disaster Co-ordination Centre (DDCC) provided an initial twenty-four hour response to manage and respond to the flood event. However as the response phase evened out the need for twenty-four hour operations diminished with the DDCC reverting to sixteen hour operations and later ten hour operations. In accordance with current arrangements the vast majority of the management, response and recovery operations were undertaken at the local level. However requests for assistance, which could not be actioned by an agency response or managed at a local level were actioned by the DDMG. The DDMG was actively involved in supporting the LDMG throughout the response phase into the recovery stage by actioning requests for assistance (RFA), providing advice, guidance and direction and assisting in maintaining communication with the affected communities.

  
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**CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: HILL, Marcus Edward**

**The actions undertaken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group in respect of the 2010/2011 floods in relation to resourcing, coordination and deployment of personnel and equipment.**

The DDMG responded to RFA from the LDMG and provided personnel and equipment as needed. This included the provision of additional SES personnel from inter and intra state to assist with clean up operations, the deployment of Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) personnel to conduct rapid damage assessments and the deployment of up to ten QPS personnel to ensure the safety and protection of public and private assets in Theodore (normally a two officer station).

Equipment in the form of vehicles and a water purification plant were also provided to the Theodore response/recovery operations through the RFA process.

Co-ordination of QPS resources was achieved through a specific logistics cell established in Rockhampton to service/support the Central Region. The logistics cell co-ordinated the deployment of human and physical resources in flood areas and met demands for resources from the Gladstone District. This proved to be very effective and reduced the impact on the DDC and DDCC operations.

**Measures taken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group to manage, maintain or reinstate the supply of essential services (water, power and communications) during the 2010/2011 floods.**

The DDMG responded to requests for assistance from the LDMG and provided assistance when required including a request to the SDCC on 05/01/11 for a water treatment plant for Theodore. A further request for assistance undertaken by the DDMG was to have telephone communications restored to the Baralaba community are after an equipment failure.

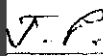
The majority of essential services were maintained and/or restored at a local level did not require the intervention or support of the DDMG.



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Measures taken by the District Disaster Coordinator and the District Disaster Management Group to inform the community about the 2010/2011 flood events and the response thereto.

Information was provided to the community by the DDC and DDMG through continual media releases and reports. During the height of the response phase a dedicated media officer from the QPS Media Unit was based with the Gladstone DDCC to allow for the timely reporting and accurate release of information.


Much of the information was released to the community through the QPS Facebook account. This provided a timely and accurate means of communicating with not only the affected communities but friends and relatives of those impacted upon by the flood event. This proved to be an extremely useful means of communication and was well accepted by the community.


In accordance with established protocols the majority of community information for those impacted by the floods was provided at a local level by the Mayor of Banana Shire or other elected representatives. At times guidance and advice was provided by the DDC.

The nature and timing of all communications between the District Disaster Co-ordinator and/or District Disaster Management Group and the Local Disaster Management Group and/or the Local Disaster Management Co-ordinator relative to the 2010/2011 flood events.

The primary method of communication with LDMG during the 2010/2011 flood event was by telephone due to the Banana Shire and the LDMG being some 115 km west of Gladstone (DDMG/DDCC). Requests for assistance or information were made by the LDMG in writing primarily through the use of e-mail. An established situation report (SITREP) timetable was in place with the LDMG providing a written SITREP to the DDCC daily at 14:00hrs or by telephone in exceptional circumstances.

  
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Communication between the LDMG and the DDCC was dependant upon the needs of each group. At times the communications were infrequent for briefing purposes whilst on other days the communications were constant including dedicated teleconferences.

The nature and timing of all communications between the District Disaster Co-ordinator and/or District Disaster Management Group and the State Disaster Management Group and/or the State Disaster Management Co-ordination Committee and/or the State Disaster Co-ordinator relative to the 2010/2011 flood events.

Communication with the SDCC was regular during the flood event through daily teleconferences at 11:00hrs. In addition, as DDC 1 was regularly contacted by the SDCC by telephone or e-mail. All requests for assistance were submitted in writing. A SITREP was also provided to the SDCC daily at 15:00hrs.


The ability and provision of services or logistical support within the Disaster Management hierarchy before and during the 2010/2011 flood events, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.

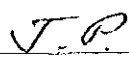
The provision of services and/or logistical support during my time as DDC Gladstone was provided upon request. All support provided was adequate and undertaken in a timely manner.

Logistical support provided by the Rockhampton Logistics Cell was invaluable and contributed to the effectiveness of the operations within the Gladstone District.

Any involvement with Commonwealth agencies, including but not limited to, Emergency Management Australia or the Australian Defence Force, in relation

  
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**to emergency response measures, personnel, equipment or services, including an assessment of the adequacy and timeliness thereof.**

An ADF Liaison Officer attached to JOSS-NQ is a member of the Gladstone DDMG. During the flood event I had regular contact with the Liaison Officer, Major Phil Duncan. Discussions included defence assistance to the civil community through the provision of helicopter support and the provision of water purification equipment for the Theodore township. I received excellent support from the ADF Liaison Officer and found his support more than adequate and timely.

I did not have cause to enlist the assistance of other commonwealth agencies.

**An assessment of the adequacy of equipment and communications systems in the District during 2010/2011 flood events.**

All equipment and communications systems within the District during the flood event were found to be adequate. However as the Gladstone DDMG has members who do not physically reside or work within the District some teleconferencing with those members was problematic. Those difficulties have now been addressed through the purchase of teleconferencing equipment.

**An assessment of the adequacy of the communities response in the District during the 2010/2011 flood events.**

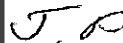
Generally the community responded well to the flood event within the Gladstone District. The community was prepared to heed warnings and directions given by the LDMG, police and emergency services. With the exception of seven persons all residents of Theodore evacuated voluntarily however once directed all persons evacuated the town.



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The significance of the flood event meant some were under prepared and expectations regarding the speed at which recovery operations would be undertaken and/or completed were on occasions misguided.

The circumstances of any human fatality within the District, including measures taken to prevent and/or respond to any such fatality, during the 2010/2011 flood events.

There were no flood related fatalities within the Gladstone Disaster District during the 2010/2011 flood event.

The measures taken within the District to protect private and public property and/or preserve vital infrastructure in connection with the 2010/2011 flood events.

Responsibility for the protection of property and assets under threat from the flood waters rested primarily with the LDMG. However the Gladstone DDMG provided support and advice to the Banana and Gladstone LDMG regarding the protection of property and public infrastructure. Some actions undertaken by LDMG included providing information to the community on flood predictions and current operations, the sandbagging of at risk properties and the provision of sandbags for private use, discontinuing the use of assets prior to inundation and the removal of assets from the inundation area and the closure of roadways to prevent damage and potential injury.

Additional police resources were also provided to Theodore, Moura and Baralaba to enable the protection of private and public assets. This was most relevant during the time the Theodore community was completely evacuated. This involved deploying up to ten officers into Theodore which was essentially completely inundated and the maintenance of twenty-four hour patrols.

Any special consideration that should be given to the District by reason of particular regional or geographic differences.

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There are no regional or geographic differences for the Gladstone Disaster District which would require special consideration.

Any feature of the Disaster preparation and planning stages or the disaster response and recovery operations which, in the opinion of the District Disaster Co-ordinator, presented particular difficulty or may require practical or legislative change to improve future disaster management in the District.

Amendments to the Disaster Management arrangements commenced on 1 November 2010 with the flood event commencing soon thereafter. This meant some of the practical operational aspects had not been fully developed. Once such issue which became apparent was the role of the DDC during recovery operations and who drives recovery from a District perspective given response and recovery operations, by necessity, overlap.

The information contained in this statement is provided on the basis of the knowledge, information and material currently available to me and my interpretation of the information sought by the requirement at this point in time.



M E HILL  
INSPECTOR



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preparing statement)

CONTINUED STATEMENT OF: HILL, Marcus Edward

OATHS ACT 1867 (DECLARATION)

I Marcus Edward HILL do solemnly and sincerely declare that:

- (1) This written statement by me dated 9 March 2011 and contained in pages numbered 1 to 11 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 I know to be false.

and I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Oaths Act 1867

.....Signature

Taken and declared before me at GLADSTONE

This 9<sup>th</sup> day of March 2011.

Witness ..... J.P.

Justice of the Peace /  
Commissioner of Declarations  
Other (Please State) .....

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Commissioner for Declarations's signature)

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