IN THE MATTER OF THE INQUIRIES ACT 2014

**AND IN THE MATTER OF A BOARD OF INQUIRY
INTO THE MCCRAE LANDSLIDE**

**ENTITY: SOUTH EAST WATER
CORPORATION**

WITNESS STATEMENT OF DECLAN MCCREESH

I, **DECLAN MCCREESH**, Group Manager Network Operations, South East Water Corporation of 101 Wells Street, Frankston, in the State of Victoria say:

1.   I am the Group Manager of Network Operations of South East Water Corporation (**SEW**).

2.   I have held this position at SEW since April 2021.

3.   I have a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil), which I obtained in 1995 from Monash University.

4.   As my first job after leaving University was at SEW, I have 29 years' of experience in the water industry.

5.   My role at SEW is to manage four teams; Water Operations, Sewer Operations, Water Quality and Compliance & Inspections. This involves managing 44 employees between my teams.

6.   On 23 May 2025 the Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide served upon SEW's lawyers, a Request to Produce Second Witness Statement, which required SEW to provide a statement in response to the questions set out in that document.

7.   The information in this Statement is based upon my personal knowledge, or information I have obtained from the business records of SEW or other employees where necessary. I believe the information to be true.

8.   This Statement is structured in the order of questions set out in the Second List of Questions for South East Water Corporation (SEW) that I am appropriately qualified to respond to on behalf of SEW as a long-term, experienced user of Montage.

Question 9 – Provide an overview of the purpose and key aspects of a Montage record or Task Summary. In particular, identify:

a.   who is capable of inputting data directly into the Montage system; and

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b.   whether work undertaken by contractors of SEW are recorded in the Montage system. If not, describe how work undertaken by SEW's contractors is reported.

Overview

9.   Montage is SEW's bespoke works management system, consisting of a collection of Web Services and Windows Services connected to a SQL database. It came into effect in late 2009 to aid in the management of work related to SEW's assets and customers. It can be used to generate and track work requests, capture data associated with work undertaken, record responses to customer complaints, undertake basic analysis through the use of in-built reporting queries, as well as manage contractor payments for completed work. It was a successor to another bespoke solution called Waterlog, which was developed not long after the establishment of SEW as an authority in 1995.

10.   The Montage graphical user interface includes multiple screens with dropdown options, discrete data entry fields and pre-programmed reporting. SEW uses the digital version for day-to-day use and does not typically print Montage records. The printed version can be better described as a 'text dump' into a word document.

11.   A work order is produced in Montage through a creation of a 'Job'. A Job can consist of one to many 'Tasks'. A Job is a response to an event, such as a report of a problem or a work request. A Task is one or more activities that are necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Job. Tasks can be created, awarded, allocated, tracked, and closed independently of each other. A Job/Task reference in Montage is recorded in numerical format: e.g. 123000/001, with the first numerical sequence 123000 being the Job number, and the second numerical sequence 001 referencing the Task number. A Job may have multiple tasks relating to the investigation, rectification and payment of works,

12.   Montage is accessed via either an 'Office Terminal' or a 'Field Terminal' (also referred to as an Office Client and a Field Client). An office terminal is usually a laptop or desktop computer connected in an office environment (at the premises of either SEW or one of its maintenance contractors). A Field Terminal is a ruggedised laptop (e.g. a Toughbook) for use outside of an office environment, e.g. onsite where the work is taking place. A mobile field terminal (**MFT**) application was also developed for use on smartphones; however, it had limited functionality when compared to a Field Terminal, as well as challenges in developing a solution for different platforms (e.g. iOS, Android etc) and was not widely adopted across the business due to this.

13.   There can be multiple sources for the creation of a Job. This can be either through a customer telephone call, email or digital notification (e.g. 'Snap, Send, Solve'), or through SEW's staff directly. Most of the Jobs that originate from a customer come through to the Faults and Emergencies team, where the trained operators will triage the information to

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determine the appropriate Job Category Class Type and priority. Similarly, where a Job has come through SEW's staff directly, the employee will undertake the triage and classification process. SEW's contractors cannot create their own Jobs, but they can report information back to SEW that might result in the creation of a new Job or an additional Task on an existing Job.

14. When a Job and its first Task is created, the Job creator is required to enter:

   a. An address or a facility/asset number (e.g. WR174 for Water Reservoir No 174); and

   b. A 'Category/Class/Type' (**CCT**) at both the Job level and the Task level.

      i. A Job CCT is a hierarchy used to describe the nature of the problem or service request.

      ii. A Task Request CCT is a hierarchy used to describe the forecast works to resolve the Job.

   c. Once the Task Request CCT is entered, the Job Creator enters a 'Priority'. Priority levels are set out in the maintenance service agreements between SEW and its maintenance contractors. Some of the priorities are pre-determined based on the selected Task Category Class and Types e.g. a task with a Request CCT of *Water Network – Water Main – Repair of leak in nature strip* will be automatically assigned a priority of 5 (Start within 1 day). Similarly, a Request CCT of *Water Network – Water Main – Repair of burst in naturestrip* is automatically assigned a priority of 1 (Start within 1 hour). The logic being that a burst is more severe than a leak and therefore requires a faster response. The person creating the task can over-ride the automatic selection and choose an alternate priority if they wish (e.g. a customer has an internal leak inside their property and requires a faster response to fix a defective stop tap at their meter assembly, which are automatically assigned a priority of 7 – finish within 7 days).

15. Within each Task, there is a free text field for capturing the 'Request Details', which will be populated by the Task creator and will outline the work to be done, or the issue to be investigated. There is also another free text field called 'Task Story', which will be populated by the person undertaking the Task. Comments can also be entered here at any time by anyone employed by SEW or engaged by a maintenance contractor who has 'write' permissions within Montage.

16. A person who completes the work required on a Task enters an Action Taken CCT, which describes the action taken to resolve the Task.

17. An example of an Action Taken CCT (with the associated Job and Taks Request CCTs) would be:

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      a.   **Job CCT**: 1 Water Network - Leak Detection – Investigation;

      b.   **Task Request CCT**: Water Network - Leak Detection - Leak Investigation;

      c.   **Action Taken CCT**: Water Network - Leak Detection – Water Sampling.

18.   Failure details (if any) are entered by the maintenance contractor when all works associated with completing the Task are finished via a similar CCT hierarchy:

      a.   **What**: Generic reference to the type of asset (e.g. Water Main).

      b.   **Mode**: Asset component that failed OR how the asset failed (e.g. a longitudinal split in a Water Main).

      c.   **Cause**: The actual cause of the failure (e.g. tree roots).

19.   An example of Failure Details CCT would be: *1 Water Stop Tap 20mm to 25mm - Leaking - Seal Failure*.

20.   SEW can retrospectively change the Failure Details CCT if it is considered to be inaccurate. Any changes made to a task after it is created will be captured in the audit log.

21.   During the life cycle of a Task, it will progress through a series of stages or 'statuses', as set out below:

      a.   On creation, the Task's status is 'UNAWARDED'.

      b.   Once one of SEW's maintenance contractors or staff has been assigned the Task, the Task's status will automatically change to 'AWARDED'.

      c.   When the contractor sends the Task to a crew via their field terminal, the Task's status automatically changes to 'ALLOCATED'.

22.   Status changes and data entered into the Task Detail or Task Story fields after a Task is awarded are time stamped and referenced to the person entering data via an office terminal or to the field terminal from which data is entered. A field terminal will have a reference associated with each crew, for example: DNf00100. When a comment is entered into Montage via this field terminal, it will be prefaced by this reference, e.g. *[FT] [DNf00100] [9/5/2025 15:37] [OFFSITE] Arrived did prestart. Found leak coming from the stoptap handle*. It also captures the date and time of the entry, as well as the status of the task at the time of entry.

23.   The crew onsite select from various different statuses that are dependent on the current status of the Task. That is, if a Task's status is ALLOCATED, then the crew may select from 1ST TRAVEL, IN TRANSIT, and WORKING OFFSITE as options.

24.   Examples of the different statuses are:

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    a.   1st TRAVEL – used to capture the first travel journey of the crew for that working shift.

    b.   IN TRANSIT – used to capture travel between different Tasks during that working shift.

    c.   INSPECTION – used to capture when a 'runner' (a single person sent to site to scope the works required) attends site.

    d.   ON SITE – used when onsite actively working on the Task.

    e.   OFF SITE – used when not actively working on the allocated Task.

    f.   ONSITE NOT WORKING – used to capture meal breaks (Mechanical & Electrical contractors only)

    g.   WORKING OFFSITE – used to record when work is actively taking place away from the Task location.

    h.   ONSITE SERVICE OK – used to indicate when water supply has been restored or a sewer blockage has been cleared, but further work remains to be done.

    i.   WAITING ON 3rd PARTY – as described, e.g. for when the crew is waiting for Council to attend and approve a tree removal.

    j.   WORK COMPLETE – used when all works associated with completing the Task are finished.

25. SEW operators viewing Montage on an office terminal can see these status changes within the Task Story if the 'show system records' box is ticked. There is also a separate field visible within the Task screen that shows the current status of each task.

26. Once all works are complete, SEW's maintenance contractor checks that all the data required under the contract has been entered and then assigns the Task a 'DATA COMPLETE' status. At this stage, the Task then gets passed back to SEW to assess for payment.

27. A SEW employee will then enter a status of 'CHECKED' if approved to pay, or 'REJECTED' if it is found that a correction or clarification is required prior to payment.

28. Once paid, the Task then moves to a status of 'CLOSED'. The Job will remain open so long as there is an active Task associated with it, i.e. any status prior to Work Complete.

29. When a Job or Task is printed, it will capture the above information in a pre-determined format and will be headed with the title 'Task Summary'. It will also capture some other fields that are not used, the facility or asset unique ID that was worked on (if entered), and

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a record of any Special Information (SI) forms used for data capture. SI forms are digital templates used to capture data relating to the Task in a structured format. The data can be selected from drop down boxes, or via the use of radio buttons. There may also be sections that allow free text to be entered. The technical specifications in SEW's maintenance services agreement set out which activities require an SI form to be completed. A Task to repair a burst water main does not require an SI form to be completed.

Who is capable of inputting data directly into the Montage system?

30.   Montage Jobs and Tasks can only be created via an office terminal by SEW employees with the appropriate permissions. These employees are mainly located within the Service Delivery Group, or the Faults & Emergencies team in the Customer Excellence Group. Some employees in other smaller teams within SEW [such as the Reliability and Sewerage Delivery team (water & sewer renewals and new pressure sewer installations) in the Liveable Water Solutions Group and Priority Plumbing (tappings and plumbing works) in Iota (a subsidiary of SEW) are also permitted to input data into Montage.

31.   Staff within the Business Technology Services team with administrator rights can also amend or adjust data via the 'back end' database of Montage.

32.   Office-based staff of SEW's maintenance contractors are granted permission to update Montage Tasks using office terminals.

33.   Field-based staff of SEW's maintenance contractor undertaking repairs are issued with a SEW-owned and maintained field terminal. These devices connect to Montage remotely and allow crews to enter updates to allocated Tasks, attach photographs, videos or other documents, enter materials used, and change the status of the Task. To capture photographs and videos, all users need to use a camera or smartphone to take the photograph or video and then manually attach them individually to the relevant Task. Due to the manual effort needed, and also due to size limitations for attachments in Montage, not all photographs and videos taken may be attached by the person working on the relevant Task. Photographs and videos not attached to a Montage Task may remain on an individual person's smartphone, be transferred to a team's record repository on SEW's Sharepoint system or to a local hard drive, or be deleted.

Whether work undertaken by contractors of SEW are recorded in the Montage system. If not, describe how work undertaken by SEW's contractors is reported

34.   Work undertaken by SEW's maintenance contractors (being Service Stream, Downer and Programmed Maintenance Services) is recorded in the Montage system. This includes any sub-contractors or specialists engaged by the maintenance contractors to perform the

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works. SEW provides access to Montage to sub-contractors on request from the maintenance contractors.

35. Other contractors such as grass cutting, tree lopping, and general plumbing services may have tasks created in Montage to capture their work; however, as they do not have field terminals, they do not enter data into Montage directly. These contractors may be engaged via either a Purchase Order or short form contract. Any information pertaining to their work such as reports, photographs, invoices etc will generally be sent by email or included on the invoice/s submitted for payment. These can be attached to a Montage task by the SEW staff member responsible for overseeing the work. As Montage has file size limits for attachments, this is not always possible. If Montage cannot be used, then these records will usually be stored within each team's record repository on SEW's Sharepoint system.

36. SEW employees may use Montage to capture work they undertake, especially if it is of a routine nature e.g. monthly site inspections at a water storage facility. These jobs are produced through a 'Periodic Task' function, which automatically creates a new Task based on a pre-determined set interval. Jobs and associated Tasks can also be created by the employee member themselves or their team leader or allocated to them through the Faults & Emergencies team.

37. Examples of work that would not be recorded in Montage may include activities by SEW employees such as equipment and material purchases, water sample collection (e.g. in response to a direct customer query about a leak when attending to another Task, or from a waterway following a sewer spill), attending training or meetings, travelling for fleet vehicle maintenance, and in-office / remote network alarm monitoring (when rostered on to perform this function).

Dated: 4 June 2025

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