

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Tuesday, 12 April 2022 11:47:20 AM

Your details

Title

First name

Last name

Email

Postcode

Submission details

I am making this submission as A resident in a flood-affected area

Submission type I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story I have lived and farmed on the flood plain for 44 years, so am not unprepared for, or inexperienced with floods. (My husband's family have been here since the late 1800's.) The 2017 flood was over a metre higher than any flood ever experienced in the family's recorded history. This 2022 was 20-30cm higher again (depending on where one is on the farm).

After 2017 we made significant changes and raised our flood mounds for vehicles and animals to above the 2017 level. The raising was still too low for 2022 and meant our farm machinery was saved, but two cars were written off. Very sadly 3 horses and 9 cattle drowned - the first time we have ever lost livestock in a flood.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#)

1.1 Causes and contributing factors

1a. On our arm of the Tweed R there have been two large housing developments constructed in the last 20 years, which entailed significant filling and reshaping of the natural landscape. These have contributed significantly to the raised water levels experienced by all farmers along the Rous R. In 2022 the Rous peaked 1m lower than in 2017. If it had reached, or exceeded the 2017 level I would not be here submitting this to you.

1b. The BoM did not mention Murwillumbah in its flood updates until there was major flooding occurring. There were no updates on what was happening in the catchment of the Tweed re either rainfall totals or river heights. All we continuously heard on the ABC was Tumbulgum, and later Chinderah. That is of absolutely no help whatsoever to farmers up and down the flood plain in trying to understand what is happening. With electricity, telephone, internet disrupted most people were totally reliant on the old battery operated transistor radio [you ask - what is that?] for information. There was a great failure by the BoM to provide anything useful.

1c. Two daughters spent all of 28.2.2022 trying to contact the SES to ask that "3 old folk" be evacuated. They were unable to get through to the 13number. Late in the afternoon of 28.2.2022 our daughter in Hobart made the decision to call 000 and ask for "3 old folk - 1 with significant medical conditions" to be evacuated urgently. She then contacted us to pack our backpacks and be ready for evacuation. We are still waiting

to be rescued - and have had no one contact us or check in on us since.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Every flood we pack up the entire farm and houses in anticipation of an inundation. For 30 years our preparations were more than satisfactory and we lost nothing (other than a few years off our lives with the physicality of the work and lifting required).

Having 2017 over a metre higher and 2022 higher again gives us no confidence going forward that we will be able to adequately prepare for floods - even though we will raise everything higher again.

1.3 Response to floods

1e. No one: no SES, fire brigade, army, council, mud-army, random volunteers, etc came to assist in the clean-up. Unless one lives on the bitumen road in town there is absolutely no assistance whatsoever.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

We are very thankful to our electrician, pump technician & plumber who came as soon as they were able to access the farm to begin the process of restoring power and water to houses and farm buildings. If we did not have such wonderful local tradies, I expect that as with the SES and 000 we would still be waiting...

1.5 Recovery from floods

The recovery on the farm will go on for years. Much had not recovered well since 2017. This coming season we will harvest 40%-50% of a 'normal' crop. Paddocks will have to be replanted earlier than they should be. Urgent necessary repairs and maintenance will take more than a year - due to labour and supply chain issues. These were already a big problem to operations before the flood and have been exacerbated since. Financial viability is hard to gauge. We are incredibly thankful for the \$75,000 grant, but recovery costs will exceed that.

1.6 Any other matters

2c. Electronic monitoring of rivers and streams is wonderful when it works and people are able to access the data. A total, total disaster in a major flood when power, telephone and internet are

unavailable.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [20220228_180104.jpg](#)
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