

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 21 April 2022 11:50:55 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 It was 5:30am on the Sunday 27th March 2022. My alarm had gone off to get ready for work. It was raining, nothing to bad or to be worried about. I arrived to work at 7:00am. Within an hour of being at work, the rain had become really heavy, torrential even and seemed like it was set in for the day! By 9:30 am I left work and went home to start preparing my house for possible

storm water rising. Not really knowing what we were in for.

The hours had past and the rain was absolutely torrential. We moved as much as we could upstairs(our front door is located downstairs and we are also a dwelling downstairs).

We went food shopping to tie us over for a few days ,just incase. We relocated 2 of our 3 cars to higher ground along with our elderly dog who is 13yrs old. As the time went on in the afternoon it was apparent the rain wasn't stopping. The drains were overflowing and our road was covered in water. The water was not moving anywhere but up.

We reassured the kids it would only be like the 2017 storm(we have teens, 13 & 17).

We charged our phones grabbed what torches we had just in case the power would cut.

We were watching all social media outlets, Higgins Storm chasing, BOM, Facebook updates. Not many updates at all.

By 9:30pm there weren't many updates on social media.

No Emergency services had come past our house or street to door knock to evacuate us so we thought we were OK to stay put!!

Midnight (28/2/2022) came and the water was still all over the road. I had decided to get a bit of sleep as I had been up since 5:30am the morning before. I couldn't sleep much(maybe an hour or so). The updates were coming in as a possible 1974 event. Even then we thought that we were ok as it is still below our second story floor. (our floor is 12.77m) the 1974 event was at 12.2. Some 50cm below. There was also no way out as all the roads were cut.

The rain was not going away anytime soon. The rain was so torrential and we have never seen rain like this before.

By 3:30am (28.2.22), the reports has stated the levee had overtopped at 1:06am. Nothing had reached us yet.

We all went outside and and could see flashing lights reflecting on the school fence diagonal to us(OLHC). My husband and son went to investigate. It was a car, the water has started to slowly engulfed the car like a toy car in a bath. At this very moment we knew the water was coming and we would be stuck in our house for a few days. We weren't worried as it was only going to be a 1974 event!

By 3:54am the water had reached our driveway like a tsunami rushing down the street.

Within 4 minutes the water had reached our second step(we have internal stairs) in our house.

We went upstairs to wait and watch what was going to happen next.

The reports on Facebook were now at a level of 13+mtres. We knew then that this would reach inside our second story. All we could was wait, wait for the water to rise. As the minutes past the water was engulfing each step so quickly. 3 steps, 4 steps eg were disappearing fast! It had surpassed the 2017 event and was now on the landing of our staircase and creeping it's way around onto the last 8 stairs before it would hit inside the second story.

We told our kids to gather the absolute essential items that meant most to them. We each had a back packed of clothes. We moved our documents into our roof cavity.

Next the power went out. The water had reached our power box outside. My kids were in absolute panic. We had to calm them and told them we would be ok(really we didn't know if we would be ok).

My husband and I looked at each other and said ok, "we need to call Ses and 000". I called SES

and my daughter called 000.

I couldn't get through to them and requested a call back from them.(no call back eventuated) Somehow with luck my daughter had got through to a lady on the other end of the 000 call. She asked for our info, address, how many in the family and if we were ok. (of course we weren't ok, we needed help)

All she could say was "stay put and stay safe. You have been put on a list to be rescued at first light as it was too dangerous in the dark. The phone call ended.
NO ONE WAS COMING FOR US!!

Panic had set in, but my husband and I had to put on a brave face for the kids. We were constantly reassuring them that things would be ok and someone will come and get us. When honestly no one was .

It was close to 6am and there was 2 steps left of our staircase before it would reach inside. We looked out the window and all we could see in the distance was water, a sea of water and nowhere to turn to!

I had gone to our room and as I was near my sons room I could see a shiny glare on the ground. I whoosed my foot over it. In that very moment I knew it was water coming up through our floor boards. It was entering our second story of our house. We knew we were in trouble and had no idea as to how high the water would rise to.

Plan B- disregard our clothing and down grade to a woolworths shopping bag each(somewhat water proof and easy to carry).

Early in the night my husband had put a ladder on our carport should the situation turn bad and we need to get out of the house. Honestly not knowing we would need this ladder at a later time.

The second story begins to fill fast. From ankle

deep to knee deep within less than 15 mins.

My kids were hysterical!! We could not console them. I myself had to dig deep and not show them I was beyond scared for our lives and falling apart on the inside.

My kids kept say "mum, we going to drown and die, what are we going to do"

I didn't know how to answer them because I had the same feeling. We are going to die before anyone can reach us.

I made the call to my mum and dad, telling them I love them and that were had knee deep water in the house and we were about head onto the roof.

You could hear the terror in her voice, of not being able to help us. I had to stay strong in that phone call and reassure her we were going to be ok(when really I thought that, that would be the last time I would hear her voice before we all die...

6:30am , we grabbed our plastic bag each along with our 2 cats. We waded through the water not knowing what was floating underneath the water and exited the house via the window onto our carport where my husband had the ladder to be able to get on the roof.

We first told our son to climb the ladder and hop on the roof. We passed the cats to him.

Next our daughter climbed the ladder and hopped on the roof.

Next was my turn, slowly making my way up each step to get on the roof.

My husband then proceeded up the ladder and onto the roof. We have solar panels on our roof(very slippery from the rain) so we all had to climb over them to make it to the pitch of the roof.(we had no flat spots on our roof and the only thing that stopped us all from sliding down off the roof was the solar panels)

My 2 kids and I huddled together. My husband

pacing up and down the roof and was in obvious distress not being able to save his himself let alone his whole family.

As we sat there and we looked around all the houses. Some houses we could see people had the same idea as us(they too had climbed on their rooves)

It was still raining. No end to what seemed like days and days of rain.

The rain was still bucketing down, the wind had picked aswell.

My kids were saturated and cold. Nothing we did could shield us from the rain or wind. We just had to sit there and wait.

The water was still rising at a quick rate. We watched as the windows on the houses across the street were going under.

We didn't know when this would stop and if the water would get us on the roof(we had a few metres before it hit the roof)

As I sit there wiping the water away from my face, every second ,my tears were shielded by the rain falling down my face.

As the hours past, it was obvious no one was coming for us or our neighbours.

The helicopters were circling around us. It was obvious they weren't going to save us either.

I lied on the roof facing away from the family and shed tears, many tears shielded by the rain. I thought to myself ,this was it, this is where my husband my kids and I were going to die. Never had I ever had that thought cross my mind until that very moment

As we sat there we could hear noises, people screaming for help, people bashing their tin rooves trying to escape. Those sounds will never leave my mind and something we will have to live with for the rest of our lives!!

It was 9:30am and a boat had come down our street. We thought great we may actually get saved. It was police rescue(our neighbour next door is senior Sargent at the police station). She had made numerous calls to get help as she had her grandson and daughter with her.

They were there to rescue her and her family. There was enough room on the boat for us too. We descended down our roof and one by one we entered the boat. We were saved. 8 people were saved from this trip. As we made our way down our street (which is now just copious amounts of water) we could see our neighbours begging to be saved too. This will always stay with me as why was I saved before them. They spent many more hours on their rooves after we were saved. It was absolutely crushing and I suffer from guilt because of this!

We make our way in the boat over Riverview Park and into the river. The river that has just engulfed the whole of Lismore.

This was scary as we were heading upstream of this river. This river that was travelling the opposite direction of is at such a high speed. I was worried if the boat had capsized we wouldn't survive the trip.

We were told to hold on as we were about to go over a huge branch, a branch which could capsize us. I was crying, my daughter was crying. We still weren't out of the woods yet. As we make our way up the river and towards the Ballina street bridge, we could see people on the bridge trapped and waited to be ferried to Ballina street and high ground. Once again guilt set in. Why was I save and they were still waiting .

We made our way down Ballina Street. Every house and business was engulfed. All the way past their rooves. Water was everywhere, no matter which way you look, there was just water.

I begged all the boats we saw to please go to South Lismore and save our neighbours, I was

crying at this stage.

As we slowed down we reached the rescue point. The point where we could set foot on solid ground, solid ground that wasn't engulfed with water.

At that moment we realised just how serious this situation was and the sheer amount of people in water craft ferrying people to safety. These people are truly amazing and need to be recognised for their efforts, for risking their lives to save ours .

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

We have 3 Levees which affect us.
The CBD levee
The river view park levee
The south Lismore levee behind us which had only been done months before hand. They spent 8 Million dollars on creating a channel for the water to divert behind us. This only made the situation worse. We had water engulf us from all directions in south Lismore.

1.2 Preparation and planning

We planned for this but that wasn't enough as we all got inundated with water.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

There was not enough response to help saving lives from our SES(they only have 2 boats to service Lismore)
More boats are needed for the future.
000 couldn't help.
We need more people on the ground in these situations not people in an office hours away from our town.

1.5 Recovery from floods

We need more assistance with funding. All these grants and basically no one is eligible! Or we have to jump through hoops to be approved for them. Cut the red tape and make it more easy. I spent hours at a hub in town and told I wasn't eligible for anything. The government needs to help more

1.6 Any other matters

More resources are needed for these situations. BOM was hopeless with updates. These people are hours away. Why can't we have a unit in Lismore monitoring this not in Wollongong or where ever these people are.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [inbound5134867007327291264.jpg](#)
 - [inbound1766260258710780486.jpg](#)
 - [inbound5173767601089703681.jpg](#)
-

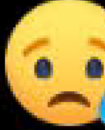






MEDIA-MODE

7 HOURS AGO


[View original post](#)

   28

2 comments

 Like

 Comment

 Share



