

NSW Independent Flood Inquiry
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May 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

My husband and I own a 200 acre cattle and macadamia farm on the east of the new highway.

My parents and grandparents farmed this land before us. They have experienced lots of floods in their farming lives too. They inform us they never experienced water laying for so long on our property as this and last year's floods (2021/2022).

As the new highway was built in a drought this and last year's floods are the first for the new highway to experience its devastating effects for lots of people and their livelihoods.

On the 27th February 2022 James Creek was overtopping its banks, and could not handle the volume of water coming from Townsend, through the Yaegl Nature Reserve, along the edge of the new highway wall with no escape area's under the highway.

This acted as a levee directing water to James Creek then out to the Clarence River. The water could not escape quickly then built up onto our property.

28th February 2022 we are in full flood again for the 2nd year running. All our 110 head of cattle we had to move to our small area on the hill around our house.

About ¾ of 200 acres is inundated with flood waters and this means we will run out of feed very fast.

A lot of our macadamias area fully under water too. We are only just starting out with macadamia trees which we have planted 600 trees and had planned to plant more this year but with the water holding for so long on our property this is now impossible.

We have a loss of around 150 trees this year to replace if something could be done about the water getting away quicker in these devastating times.

Our farm/paddocks are holding water like a big lake with the M1 on the west and our hills are on the east, Yaegl Nature Reserve on the south and James Creek running out into the Clarence River on our north. Please refer to photos on page 3.

When water lays for long periods it deoxygenates (black water) then nothing can survive in it. All of Yaegls native wildlife ie echidna's, kangaroos, goanna's, dingoes snakes etc struggle to survive including the fish in James Creek.

The February 2022 flood we got 548 mm rain over a couple of days. It took a week for the water to drop to last years (March 2021) full flood height.

2 weeks on we still have 2 metres of water on our ridges and along creek banks so water is deeper in some areas as the ridges are first to come out.

3 ½ weeks water is just getting off our bridge to our other farm over the creek and off the ridges, water holding this long kills all our grasses which means no feed for cattle over the winter.

Our lower areas are still holding water after the first flood as we still have water flow coming from Townsend through the edge of the Yaegl Nature Reserve along edge of the new highway wall into RMS Drains.

These drains aren't big enough to handle the volume of water that go into the mitigation drains which go to a flood gate into James Creek. These were recently changed to aluminium flap on a gate which is working great but for the volume of water coming through the Yaegl Nature Reserve with no other escape paths as highway wall has no drainage area's it struggles to empty.

We were very fortunate to get this year flood relief bales (Need For Feed) to keep the cattle going until we sell the calves and organise some lease paddocks for them. As with our small portion of land we have left out the flood waters and lots of stock they are up to their knees in mud.

Then about 5 weeks after the February flood on the 31st March 2022 we got another 275 mm rain over 3 days. It was a small flood but puts water levels back up again. It takes about two weeks this time for the water to get off the ridges.

Now we have planted winter grasses on our ridges in hope we don't get another flood to lose it all.

We still have water laying in our low grazing areas 8 weeks after the first flood as water is still rushing out of the Yaegl Nature Reserve along the edge of the M1 wall. These flood waters are unable to pass through because the RMS Drains are too small to cope with the amount of water overtopping onto our grazing land.

This then enters James Creek which is still brimming and overtopping onto our land as it can't handle this amount of water with limited passage.

The RMS changed the natural water flow when they built the new M1. Before the new M1 the top level of the flood waters use to flow over top of the highway straight into the Clarence River which bypassed the drains, creeks, floodgates, tides, big seas etc.

The new M1 needs more passageways for water to flow under so it isn't like a big dam wall. The water then can escape quicker with less devastating effects on people and their livelihoods.

When they built the new M1 the RMS said they were only allowed to put 5% more water across our farm, we believe we have received around 50%.

Thankyou for the opportunity to make a submission to explain our point of view and the devastating impacts this has had on our livelihood.

James Creek NSW 2463

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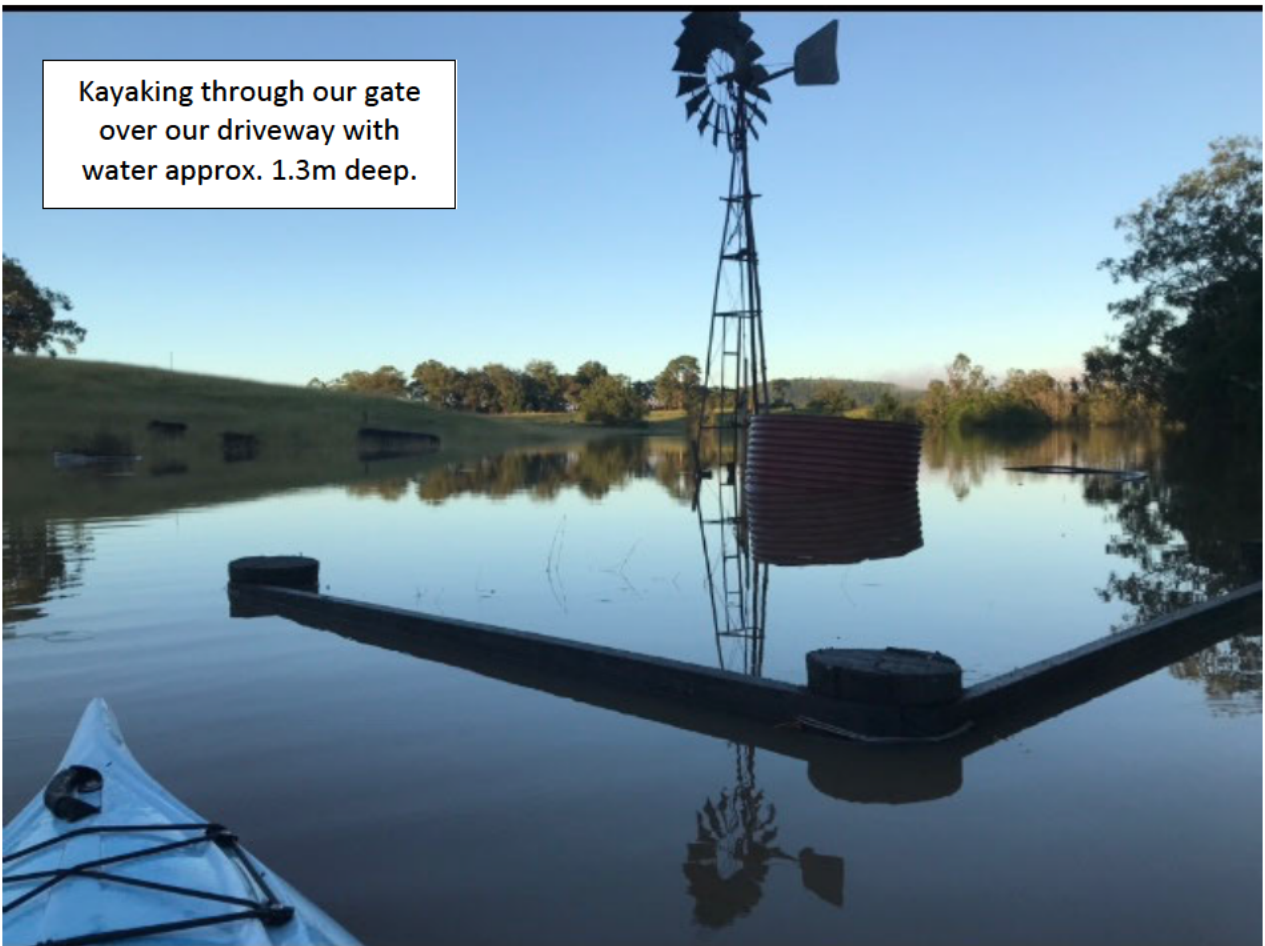
Looking towards the new Harwood Bridge along our fenceline.



Travelling by boat in the floodwaters around our property to check on cattle.
In the distance, you can see a car heading south on the M1.



Kayaking through our gate
over our driveway with
water approx. 1.3m deep.



Aerial shot of our cattle property under flood
in March 2021. The red outline is a rough
indication of our boundaries. As you can see
much of our paddocks was impacted and
cattle needed to be onto the hill and out of
flood waters.

