

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Thursday, 19 May 2022 8:47:01 PM

## 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

## 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**

Climate change.  
Reliance on the 0.1%AEP (plus small freeboard) as the minimum habitable floor level, when we

only have 250 yrs of flood height data and climate change is already happening.  
 Legacy planning issues.  
 Telecommunication outages.  
 Mixed messages from SES (i.e. to evacuate, safe to return, evacuate all within 24 hrs).  
 SES/ risk management decisions being made from outside the regional area (e.g. from Sydney).  
 Lack of maintenance of local stormwater infrastructure (flood gates in South Golden Beach).  
 People living in converted garages (below minimum habitable floor level).

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### **1.2 Preparation and planning**

- Expectation that “major” flooding (as per SES warning) would only be the equivalent of the 2017 flood height.
- lack of, and specificity of telecommunications (ie some people don’t revive SES warnings, and most of them are generic).
- lack of maintenance of stormwater infrastructure in South Golden Beach.
- lack of alternative power supply for flood pumps in South Golden Beach.
- inaccessibility of Ocean Shores evacuation centre to South Golden Beach and North Ocean Shores residents.
- lack of planning for Ocean Shores evacuation centre. No staff. Reliance on volunteers. No plan for food, medical support. No enforcement (eg of Covid restrictions like masks/ hand sanitizer).

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### **1.3 Response to floods**

- no outside help whatsoever in the first 4-5 days. All the major work was done in the first 3 days. It still took weeks for the army to assist in South Golden Beach.
- South Golden Beach and North Ocean Shores were forgotten amongst the catastrophe of Lismore.
- community led support efforts saved the community. Neighbours feeding/housing each other, washing, cleaning each others homes,

minding each other's children,  
- lack of power, limited (and potentially contaminated) water supply.  
- complete lack of availability of food, water, fuel and medical supplies in the first week.  
- evacuation centre standup and stay down (just keep it open u til the risk event has well and truely passed).

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**1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery**

The community was well on their way to recovery after helping each other for days before any one else came to help with the "incident response". How can we help neighbouring countries during natural disasters etc so quickly, an how come they can help us so quickly but it takes so long for our own Country to help us out?

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**1.5 Recovery from floods**

- slow response from insurers leaving people in limbo as to what can be done with their home (fix or demolish and whether or not a claim will be approved).  
- lack of guidance on how to build back better.  
- funding assistance: seems rikdiculouz that grants should even be available when it isn't a "natural@ disaster. Money should instead be rerouted to buy-back/land swap deals to make better of bad legacy planning issues.  
- disaster funding claims equal for those in same postcode, regardless of impact on individuals.

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**1.6 Any other matters**

My son had an accident (split the back of his head open on a dirty pit grate). Due to the lack of communications, I was unable to call 000 or 112 (the emergency number that uses any network available). I had to hitchhike with two upset kids (one bleeding profusely) to the medical centre (which was closed) and then to the Ocean Shores evacuation centre at Ocean Shores Country Club (as the hospital was inaccessible due to flooding on the freeway). The first aid officer couldn't be found as he was voluntarily performing a. Number of roles that day, and I had to rely on an 85 year old retired nurse to start providing first aid response until the first aid

officer could be found. Why are there no dedicated evacuation staff including medical staff etc at the evacuation centres? I've since heard horror stories of child molestation and physical violence at the Lismore evacuation centre. Could we learn how to run these better off our Pacific Island neighbours?

Also, we need evacuation centres that are safe (not like Mullumbimby and Ballina evacuation centres which were flooded) and also accessible.

We need a local evacuation centre in North Ocean Shores.

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### **Supporting documents or images**

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