

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 20 May 2022 1:21:16 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

Owing my property for 20 years in Lismore and my 98 year old neighbour who has lived there for over 45 years. She was there during the largest flood in 1974. She always told me she had to evacuated from her home into my property as my property did not flood.
I was home during the 2017 flood and watched the water come up the road and enter the lower

garage level of my property. The water moved very slow and it took many hours for it to reach the top level and I continued to remain home upstairs safe and dry.

During the Sunday before the February 28th flood, I spent the day assisting my workplace into preparing for a flood and moving stuff higher up, then returned home to move my car to much higher and safe location. I moved all my possessions and belongings upstairs safe as per the 2017 level before. My friend came around and assisted me into moving my washing machine upstairs and many other neighbours had no trolley and requested if we could move their machines as well. (We moved 5 different peoples machines up)

A neighbours partner who is part of the ses came hold and told me the ses believed it perhaps could reach 2017 flood height or just below, yet they were told they were not allowed to release this information. I stated the 2017 flood is below the living area, so felt no fear.

I went to sleep at 2:30am after staying awake to see if the levee wall would break as the SMS and SES messages were advising the wall would breach at 6am, people online in Facebook groups who could see the water level were saying they thought much earlier at 4 or 4am. So after 2:30 I had read the wall breached at 2am, and water was high outside so I was stuck in my home. (No fear at this stage as the water may only get in my garage again)

At 2:30 I decided to get some sleep as it would be a work day and WFH in the morning.

I woke up about 4am and went outside to see the water height was under my property around my waist height. So I decided to have a snack and check the Facebook pages to see how it was going. Just just than 30 minutes later I decided to go outside and look at the water again.

It had risen half a meter in less than 30 minutes,

I knew then we could be in some trouble and the water might come ankle deep inside so I warned the neighbour (who was looking outside as well) to start lifting things on tables and up high, and then to go knocking on doors of the other units (when he had finished)

I was still lifting electrical equipment up high when another neighbour came to ask me what we would do. I told him to lift his things as well.

After this I was standing outside as I video taped the dirty water entering into my upstairs living space. I was shocked and frozen for a few minutes as I thought, how could this happen when it has never happened before that water enters upstairs.

The second neighbour came in knee high water to ask me what were going to do and I said "climb on the roof" to which he replied " am not physically able to do that".

So I attempted to call the SES 4 times to report our location, as I knew he would be at risk. 4 times calling the SES and selecting option 2 for Lismore for the call to just hang up straight away. (I still have no idea why it does redirect to other centres across the country)

After the 4th time I contacted 000 as I was at fear of his life if he could not get on the roof.

I was thinking informed 25 minutes later by voicemail that the SES would not be able to come and save him or us until 4 or 5 hours (I still have this message).

4 of us all stood in waist high water until a neighbour who lived across the street brought a boat past 1.5 hours later. The boat's motor was dead as it had been half sunk in the quickly rising flood water, so they allowed the older neighbour into the boat and told us if we wanted

to get out we would have to swim.
My mother had already contacted me by sms
and told me not to swim in the water.

I gave the options a 20 second thought and
handed the boat my small bag with keys, mobile
phone, wallet and 1 pair of clean clothes and
jumped in the water holding onto the back of the
boat and kicked my legs to make the boat move.

The boat was moved 2 street blocks away by 2
broken oars and 2 people holding on to the back
and kicking. (Luckily there was nothing under the
water we were cut or injured by)
This took about 40 minutes, until freedom from
the water.

My mother drove down to collect me from the
edge of the water.

Unfortunately the stress of this flood and my
belongings bringing totally lost were too much for
my mother and 5 days later she passed away
from a heart attack.

Other than emptying the rubbish possessions
from my property there has been little progress
performed on it as the priority was to put my
mother to rest and deal with her things. She was
the only parent left alive for me.

I did have contents insurance, however as the
garage area flooded before it was deemed a
flood risk by the insurance company and flood
cover was very expensive.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [inbound3511828249467140611.jpg](#)

