

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Saturday, 21 May 2022 8:01:08 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

**Your story**

Ballina.

When the official notification for “low lying parts of Ballina” to evacuate was received. All residents in Ballina Island were left scratching their heads. Ballina is low lying. Are we being told to evacuate all of Ballina Island, West Ballina, and North Ballina? This instruction was confusing and time was wasted trying to work

out where was 'low'.

I evacuated to a friends house, and took my elderly parents out of aged care to my brother.

I work in education, as a senior leader. I arrived at a High School at 5am to assist. It was a confused mess. No SES. No Police. No disaster management. We (school staff, and others from the same school system) identified the risk factors and began working effectively on problem solving the basics (food, showers, bedding, etc). Doctors and pharmacists arrived to assist (they were awesome!).

Over the next four days, we did not see SES or Police at all. The school staff were the managers of the site. We required paid security overnight. We had aged care residents, caravan park residents, families fleeing violence, high needs young adults, mental health wards, homeless and many others. The night times presented very real concerns for safety.

When the government employee (manager of disaster welfare, DCJ) did arrive, she was aggressive, rude and belittling to both the school staff and the displaced persons. (Ie. Yelled in the face of a deaf Individual refused to 'believe' she was deaf). Her communication skills were seriously lacking. She demonstrated a lack of measured response.

When the decision was made to close this site, the displaced persons were not given an opportunity to have their questions answered. They were spoken to rudely and no empathy was shown for the delicate nature of their well-being. They left the site feeling fragile and abandoned. They were sent to another site which was not opened.

The staff at the school packed up all beds and bedding and raced into town to start setting up

the new site. All food was packed and also sent into the new venue (which did not have a kitchen).

It is my belief DCJ need to improve their training for members of the disaster recovery team. I believe schools should be the preferred evacuation site. I believe an organizational plan should be developed (ie layout of large spaces for bedding, cleaning procedures, etc). The community knows how to step up when required. School staff know how to organise, communicate, and manage large disorganized crowds. Schools are also practiced at initial responses during a crisis.

I am grateful for the community I live in!

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### **Terms of Reference (optional)**

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

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### **Supporting documents or images**

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