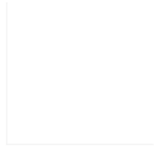


From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 22 May 2022 1:40:53 PM



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

I live in Ballina and have many friends who lost their homes, possessions and sense of safety in the flood. My house was not directly affected by the floods but my town, home and workplace were affected by the extended internet and phone outage following the February 28 floods. This caused massive disruption and hampered the emergency response, including no 000

service and no communication to arrange help for evacuees. Also, local roads and highways were cut off, preventing supplies and assistance. This just added to the massive disaster facing the community. I still can't believe that an Australian community suffered so much from the lack of a proper coordinated response - from the initial warning systems, during emergency evacuations, in the days following the floods and still there is no long term plan for housing and businesses to get back on their feet. It felt like a war zone but without the bombs - why didn't the government have a coordinated response plan? The SES and armed forces and all volunteers were amazing but it felt like a reactive uncoordinated response from largely untrained people working in horrendous and dangerous circumstances. It felt like the community had to do everything - from dangerous rescues to assisting at evacuation centres. The community response was fantastic and I'm sure no-one would hesitate to do it again but it doesn't seem right that 3 months after the floods, we are still donating goods to community run hubs, providing temporary accommodation and cleaning out people's homes. The staff from the government departments who run the centres were wonderful but they never would have worked without the help community volunteers - I and many others spent 5 days assisting evacuees at the local evacuation centre before they were given motel accommodation. I have no training in this area but found myself arranging food, bedding, health services, counselling, driving people around, looking after pets and helping people to cope. I would do it again in a heart beat but the lack of strategic response and planning was obvious and still is - why are there still thousands of people living in temporary accommodation or in tents in their soggy back yards or on the floor of their mouldy shell of a house? We do not live in a third world country but it seems like that at the moment. How do we do better in a future situation like this? There

needs to be better warning systems, emergency response procedures and recovery plans.

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 all know the rainfall was unprecedented but the flood level predictions were wrong and we had no plan to deal with the floods. No internet, phone or transport routes also made everything much harder.
1.2 Preparation and planning	As above - it feels like there was no plan. The SES was under resourced and unable to deal with the scale of response required.
1.3 Response to floods	Is a community led response the best we can do in a natural disaster?
1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery	Even now, the community is still providing donations and assistance. Where is the plan for housing and improving resilience to floods such as these?
1.5 Recovery from floods	It feels like some people and places will never recover.
1.6 Any other matters	Insurance was inadequate before the flood and will now be out of reach for most people. Where is the climate change response? How do we limit these disasters or their scale in future?

Supporting documents or images
