

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 23 June 2022 3:34:59 PM
Attachments: [\[redacted\]_2022 NSW Flood Inquiry Submission Our Story.pdf](#)

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 submitting on behalf of my organisation

Organisation making the submission (if applicable)

Your position in the organisation (if applicable)

Consent to make submission public I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story

, NSW

Our Story: Summary

Our building is located at

and was constructed in 2009, consisting of 14 units with an inground pool and an underground basement garage. This building was impacted by the floods in February 2022 and by the heavy rains in 2020. In addition, whenever Kingscliff experiences heavy rain our basement and pumping system is impacted. We are providing this submission to provide some context that may assist the NSW Flood Inquiry to understand the history of our building and ongoing issues we face when there are heavy rains.

The floods of February 2022 saw water pooling in our basement garage and residents' storage cages. We also experienced ground water bubbling up and entering our basement garage from pylons and our rear external stairs. This is after we undertook major flood remediation works as documented in the attachment in 2020.

The 2020 flooding of our basement garage resulted in the Owners Corporation spending over \$32,000 in investigative, restorative, and preventative measures. This work included the installation of grates to direct rainwater to our basement garage channels and a pump being installed in our lift well. As per the building design, the stormwater from our building ended up in the street gutter and ran along for almost 170 metres before going down a Council stormwater drain outside

This continued for months after the rain had ceased.

As we were unsure of why this was occurring, we investigated further to find out that our basement garage is the lowest point for many blocks, and as the water table became saturated and rose our building pump system was

responding to all the additional water. The ongoing pumping out of water to the stormwater drain created a green sludge/slime in the gutter along _____, which is a safety hazard.

As we have experienced a wet weather system this summer, this water outflow has been consistent since December 2021. At the time of writing this submission in June 2022 our electric pumps are still dealing with the saturated water table.

It is possible that the construction that has been approved and occurred on the adjoining blocks at _____ has changed the water course and water table. As such, there is serious concern about the impact of the planned developments which are part of the Gales Kingscliff Master Plan proposal and that they may exacerbate the water course and water table problem. As a reference point, in the Summary section of the attachment there is an old Google Earth image from around 2014-2015 showing the location of _____ and surrounding streets/blocks:

In conclusion, we invite an inspection of _____ to gain a better understanding of the challenges we face and to work with us to address the public health and safety problem created by the apparent change to the water course and water table.

PLEASE READ our complete story which is outlined in the submission attachment which includes a number of photos to support the following sections of our story - Summary, Background, Impact of Flooding in 2020, Impact of Flooding in 2022 and Our Ongoing Concerns.

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

Refer to attachment

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

•

[_2022 NSW Flood Inquiry Submission_Our Story.pdf](#)

2022 NSW FLOOD INQUIRY SUBMISSION – June 2022

OUR STORY

Summary

Our building is located at [REDACTED] and was constructed in 2009, consisting of 14 units with an inground pool and an underground basement garage. This building was impacted by the floods in February 2022 and by the heavy rains in 2020. In addition, whenever Kingscliff experiences heavy rain our basement and pumping system is impacted. We are providing this submission to provide some context that may assist the NSW Flood Inquiry to understand the history of our building and ongoing issues we face when there are heavy rains.

The floods of February 2022 saw water pooling in our basement garage and residents' storage cages. We also experienced ground water bubbling up and entering our basement garage from pylons and our rear external stairs. This is after we undertook major flood remediation works as documented in the attachment in 2020.

The 2020 flooding of our basement garage resulted in the Owners Corporation spending over \$32,000 in investigative, restorative, and preventative measures. This work included the installation of grates to direct rainwater to our basement garage channels and a pump being installed in our lift well. As per the building design, the stormwater from our building ended up in the street gutter and ran along for almost 170 metres before going down a Council stormwater drain outside [REDACTED]. This continued for months after the rain had ceased.

As we were unsure of why this was occurring, we investigated further to find out that our basement garage is the lowest point for many blocks, and as the water table became saturated and rose our building pump system was responding to all the additional water. The ongoing pumping out of water to the stormwater drain created a green sludge/slime in the gutter along [REDACTED], which is a safety hazard.

As we have experienced a wet weather system this summer, this water outflow has been consistent since December 2021. At the time of writing this submission in June 2022 our electric pump are still dealing with the saturated water table.

It is possible that the construction that has been approved and occurred on the adjoining blocks at [REDACTED] has changed the water course and water table. As such, there is serious concern about the impact of the planned developments which are part of the Gales Kingscliff Master Plan proposal and that they may exacerbate the water course and water table problem. As a reference point, the following is an old Google Earth image from around 2014-2015 showing the location of [REDACTED] and surrounding streets/blocks:



Image 1: Construction in surrounding streets/ blocks circa 2014-2015

In conclusion, we invite an inspection of _____ to gain a better understanding of the challenges we face and to work with us to address the public health and safety problem created by the apparent change to the water course and water table.

Background

The building at _____ has experienced a change to the water table level and inundation of stormwater commencing in 2020. The building at _____ was constructed in 2009 and consists of 14 units with an inground pool and an underground basement garage.

The stormwater design of the building includes two infiltration tanks, one at the rear (west) of the property and the other at the front (east) of the property. Rainwater collected on the roof and in other drains collect in a stormwater pit under the parking area in the basement. The pit is fitted with a pump which has a float. Once the float is activated the water is pumped up to the infiltration tank at the front (east) of the property. Once this tank reaches a trigger point, the water is pumped out into the street to the gutter along Kingscliff Street where it then commences to run down the gutter in a northerly direction. The water runs along the gutter until it reaches the first Council stormwater drain which is at least 170 metres away, outside _____. During and following periods of heavy rain, the stormwater from the stormwater pit can pump into the street gutter almost continuously for weeks or months and creates a green sludge/slime in some areas along the street gutter which is a public safety hazard.

Impact of Flooding in 2020

Our recent experiences with heavy rains and flooding commenced in 2020 and the Owners Corporation has since spent over \$32,000 in investigative, restorative, and preventative measures:

2020 – January - For the first time, significant water started to enter the basement garage from underground entering the lift well overrun and bubbling up around the pillars in the basement.

2020 – March – Floodworks Pty Ltd was engaged to undertake an assessment of the water ingress into the basement. A report was prepared by _____, Principal

Environmental Engineer from [redacted] and as a result, a concept Stormwater drain system was designed and implemented. The summary in the report from [redacted] was that:

- The ground water table was higher than the level of the Basement carpark resulting in positive groundwater discharge into the Basement area. Water was bubbling at joint locations at the Masonary wall, Piers, Pipework and general seepage through the Masonary wall.
- The surface levels of the subject site grade from [redacted] to the rear (west). There is no outlet location at the rear of the property with the intent that all stormwater be infiltrated. This system however does not operate as intended during times of elevated groundwater levels as was observed in Infiltration Tank 2 with a standing water level of 750mm.
- It was noted that seepage into the Basement carpark was a recent phenomenon.
- He was unsure why ground water levels may have changed for the site.

The water had penetrated the lift well overrun, with a report from a tenant that the water could be heard “lapping at the base of the lift carriage” when it was at the basement level. The water was pumped from the lift well, repairs to the lift were undertaken and preventive action taken:

- A submersible bilge pump was installed in the lift well as [redacted] concluded that “Water is most likely originating from ground water seepage into the lift well from an elevated water table resulting from recent heavy rains.”
- The lift well overrun was negatively waterproofed

Impact of Flooding in 2022

2022 – March – The flooding experienced was in the garage basement and the storage cages but was not as severe as the flooding we experienced in 2020. The waterproofing of the lift well helped to keep water out of the lift well overrun and water entering the lift well was pumped out by the submersible bilge pump. However, flood waters were experienced in the adjoining properties of [redacted] and only being held back by the common block wall shared with them and [redacted] – photos of 2022 flooding below.



Image 2: View looking to the end of [redacted] taken (2022)



Image 3: Flood waters – [redacted] (2022)

Our Ongoing Concerns

Health & Safety – Building Occupants

At any time when the stormwater pumps in our basement are unable to handle the amount of water collecting in the stormwater pit, the water inundates the back of the basement garage. The impact of this is that occupants' items in their storage cages up to the level of the water become waterlogged and the cars parked in this area sit in water. Retrieval of these vehicles from the basement garage presents a safety hazard to occupants.

Health & Safety - Pedestrians

As mentioned previously, during and following periods of heavy rain, the stormwater from the stormwater pit in the basement garage can pump into the street gutter almost continuously for weeks or months and can create a green sludge/slime in some areas along the street gutter which is a safety hazard.

Future Development in the Surrounding Area

There has been a lot of development in the surrounding blocks to [redacted]. In particular, there have been two (2) adjoining builds that involve subterranean works:

- [redacted] Block of 6 townhouses on the corner of [redacted] & [redacted] completed in 2016 with a pool which is partially inground and a below ground basement garage.
- [redacted] – Block of two units completed in 2020 with one having an inground swimming pool which runs along the northern boundary of [redacted].

It is possible that the construction that has been approved and occurred on these adjoining blocks has changed the water course and water table.

As such, there is serious concern about the impact of the planned developments which are part of the Gales Kingscliff Master Plan proposal and that they may exacerbate the water course and water table problem.



Image 4: Water run off to stormwater drain at [redacted] (May 2022)



Image 5: View from balcony of unit looking to the end of [redacted] after the water had receded approx. 25cm as per water mark on wall.