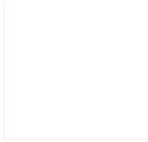


From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 24 June 2022 11:47:10 PM



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

In the months leading up to the February 2022 flood it was raining constantly. Driving along the highway to work in torrential rain had become a constant. It was wearing me down. Some days it took a lot courage to go to work. Would i be able to get home to Mullum. Some days i took risks i shouldn't have. I just wanted to get home and be comfortable and dry.

Then in the week before the big flood i was unable to get to work twice. The access roads out of Mullum were flooded.

On Sunday morning of the 27/02/2022 it was raining heavily. It had rained heavily all night. I saw a post on a Face Book page from the previous day. A video taken on the 26/02/2022 of Upper Main Road. It was no longer a road but a river. A wide, brown expanse of fast moving water. All coming down here to Mullum.

I saw parts of Lismore were being told to prepare for flooding. Posts on a FB page asking if roads in and out of Mullum were still accessible. I figured i had slim chances of getting to work and zero of getting home. I called into work and told them i couldn't get in. I went for a drive around Mullum. Everywhere i looked was full of water. Every available space for water to go was pooling with water. It was going to flood.

I spent the day lifting things in my shed which is also my laundry. I lifted every thing above the 2017 level. Water did not come into my house in 2017 but it entered my shed. I went for a walk to check the river, i checked the tide times and river heights. I felt i was well prepared. I brought some things inside.

In the evening i told my neighbours i was moving my car. We went in a convey together. I told other neighbours to move their cars and raise things up from low lying sheds. People living in Streets close to the river had been told to evacuate. Streets that don't flood.

At 8.30 pm the rain started to really kick in. I stayed up.

At 11 pm I checked the BOM warnings and river heights. Minor Flood warning for the Brunswick River in Mullumbimby. Next warning 2:15 am.

At 12 pm my friend messaged me " the river has just broke it's banks.

I go to look outside. There is no water in my garden. I watch a movie and drink tea,

At 1 am i decide i will sleep a bit. I set the alarm for 3 am. I get up first and check outside. The water is covering my bottom step. It has come

into my yard. That was fast. I check the tide times again. Thinking i must have got them wrong. It must be high tide now. The tide usually covers my bottom step at high tide. It is low tide though. High tide is 7 hours away and is 1.85 metres. I can't sleep.

I drink lots of tea.

2 am the water is covering the second step at the back. I check the side entrance, the water is covering the bottom step and going down the driveway, across the road. It is moving fast. The water in my toilet is rising.

3 am i check the BOM warnings, Major Flooding for the Brunswick River at Mullumbimby.

Evacuate now! How do i evacuate and where do i evacuate too?

I check outside the water is covering my third step at the back. It is covering the third step at the side entrance. It is rising fast. It is already in my shed. I have never seen it like this. I think it is going to come inside. I have to convince myself of this by talking to myself out loud. I check the steps again. I make a coffee. I start to raise things.

5 am the water is over the top steps. it is lapping my back entrance. It is about to come in.

I am tired from raising stuff. I can't do it any more on my own, i am scared.

I ring my daughter. No answer.

I ring my son. No answer.

I ring my neighbours. No answer. Who keeps their phone on silent during a flood?

The water starts to run over my toilet. It makes a little trickle over one side and runs neatly into a drain. Like a little toilet river. No cascading sewerage as expected. A win.

I see neighbours torches shining outside in the dark.

I am anxious high tide is hours away. How high will it come. I lay down to calm myself. I have never felt this level of anxiety before.

The gas bottles have risen and are bashing against the side of the house.

6 am it is getting light and all around is a vast

expanse of brown water. The branches of the Mango tree that i stood under the day before are submerged in brown water. So surreal. The water is moving fast and there is a sudden smell of chemicals in the water. Something has knocked over in the shed. Maybe petrol. I realise if the water comes in my home with that smell it will be uninhabitable.

I ring my daughter again. No answer

I ring my son. No answer

I ring my neighbours. They answer. What is they ask? Get up and look around i say. I hear them screaming. They call back, water is in the house, what should we do? I tell them to lift and salvage what they can and come to my house.

The water is moving fast now. I see a day bed float down the side of neighbours house. Days later it took four of us to lift that bed on the road but that morning the water carried it along with no effort. Wheelie bins float by and organic debris.

7 am the water seems to start to go down, i see the wood beneath my deck.

My daughter rings me.

I start to fall apart crying, i tell her i am scared, that the water will come in this time and that i never want to do this again.

8.30 am i remember i have to go to work. I call in and tell them i am surrounded by water. The whole region is surrounded they say.

I relax a bit maybe it won't come in and it will just go down.

9 am my friend in Byron is messaging me.

Telling me to get out. Too evacuate. The water is going down i tell her. How do i evacuate i ask her and where to. Get out she says.

10 am the water starts to rise again. It rises fast. It lifts a vintage kitchen chair and i watch it float off into the murky brown water. It starts to cover one side of the deck and then the front. It looks like a sinking ship. Hard to believe it is my home this is happening too.

The water starts to seep in under the glass doors at the back.

I am tired. I want to sleep but i don't want to stay and watch the water come in my home.

I grab my bag and leave, the steps are slippery with mud and it is hard to navigate my way down them. The water is upto the top of my thighs. A fence has come down and is blocking my driveway. I step over it. It is hard to walk through the water. When i get to the road the current is strong. I think about going back. This is crazy walking through this. I walk down the laneway. It is hard to lift my legs against the current. At every cross road the current is really strong. It takes me ages to walk. I get to Burringbar Street. The CBD is flooded. The CBD never floods. This is so surreal.

I get to the RSL. Our designated evacuation centre. The water goes up to the top steps. Our evacuation centre is surrounded by water. It is muddy and slippery and i struggle to get up the steps. No one meets me. I am cold and wet and need a towel. A TV is on. Images of people on roof tops in Lismore. A woman sitting at a table drinking tea tells me her street flooded but her house didn't. She moved her car at dawn and was rescued by boats. She is dry and warm. I am wet and cold. No one came for us. I walked. I find my neighbours. The RSL starts to slowly fill up. Shocked person after shocked person in Kayaks and boats arrive to the front of the RSL which itself is surrounded by water. A man plugs a guitar into an amp and starts playing. I feel like pulling the cord out of the amp, telling him it is not a gig. It is getting really noisy now. People are arriving with dogs. from the bookstore arrives, she looks devastated. tells me her fathers house, her house and the shop all flooded. Her fathers house and the shop have never flooded.

There are dogs barking and fighting. I can't handle it. I tell my neighbour i am leaving. We walk home together. There is no water to walk through from the RSL to about 4 houses before Train St. The whole area after that is submerged in brown water. Station Street, Stuart Street, Mill

Street and Train Street are all under water. The whole block and beyond.

When i get home the water has dropped about half a step. The water has come into the back of my home by about 2 - 3 metres. There is a thin film of mud on the floor. I slip in it. I wish i hadn't of left now.

I leave again and walk to my girlfriends across heritage bridge. I walk down streets that were told to evacuate. Near the river. There is no water in the yards. No water in the street.

I get to my girlfriends and sleep for 13 hours.

In the days proceeding the floods the community response is overwhelming.

Car loads of young people come from Bryon Bay. Help me clean mud out of my shed, scrape wheel barrow loads out and hose it out. Help me throw belongings. Nothing is salvageable. It is all covered in mud. It stinks. they counsel me.

People come from all over to help. Glen Innes, Geelong, Melbourne, the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

They drive down my street with food, water and snacks, people have boot loads of cleaning products and gift packs of essentials. At the end of the day they drive around with esky's full of cold beers to hand out.

The Mullumbimby Civic centre becomes a volunteer hub. Without any way of communicating they set up a response centre. It is run like a military operation. Helicopters are sent out to the hinterland with supplies and rescue missions.

I am amazed by the community response and fell very proud of my town. Much of the focus goes to other areas and while Mullum feels like it is forgotten. The recovery is all people talk about still.

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

- [20220228_075146_0.jpg](#)
 - [20220301_132316.jpg](#)
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