

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Saturday, 7 May 2022 3:47:03 AM
Attachments: [docx](#)

Your details

Title Mr

First name Adrian

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Email

Postcode 2472

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 give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.1 Causes and contributing the old highway flooded from inland of the river

factors

1.2 Preparation and planning

Not enough warning nor about the severity or swiftness

1.3 Response to floods

no one know where Baraang Drive was

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

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[docx](#)

I got back into my place at Broadwater the morning of the 7th March.

The first thing we had to do was drag two cars out of the driveway so we could remove the dead cow wedged between the carport and the fence. She had drowned at some point and was bloated and stinking.



As we winched her up the drive her hide was peeling off and her hooves were left like cut fingernails on my front lawn.

Both our cars were inundated and were eventually dragged away to be written off. my girlfriend's car had the windscreen and bonnet smashed in by the dying cow.





Both cars were there because the evacuation warning came after Baraang Drive (the old Pacific Highway) was already unpassable. Two hours after the evacuation SMS came on the night of the 28th, the road was waist deep in water.

I believe the water over _____ occurred before the riverine flooding of Riley Hill Road.

I hadn't been in Broadwater for very long. I bought in December, moved in in January and the house was ceiling high in water by February end.

I was starting again, after a 26 year marriage had ended.

I wanted to grow old in that house.

Instead, we watched my house disappear under the rising waters after Amanda and I had waded across the road and climbed up on the balcony of a neighbour across the road.

It wasn't raining by this point. It didn't need to be.



We watched as the stairs to that second floor balcony disappeared all night. My last ditch was my single kayak and a length of rope for the two of us. The night was spent listening to cattle bellowing and drowning, people in caravans banging on the walls and yelling for help and the sounds of fences groaning and cracking. By morning I had one step down to get on my kayak.

This was beyond surreal.

I paddled up and down the street to the houses of people I knew, to others I had merely waved at and to the houses of people I had never met. We were all ok.

Stunned by the volume of water, the speed of the inundation and the unfolding catastrophe. But OK.

I don't know what happened to the people banging on the caravans all night. I suspect they are no longer with us.

, my neighbour had been in Broadwater since he was a child. He is retired and had seen the 1954 and the 1974 floods. Nothing prepared him for this. He needed help getting out of his house and into his boat. , a newly retired electrician up the road, had moved his cars and work truck up onto high ground. All were submerged.

Another 'beginning' consigned to the floods.

We had phoned 000 at dawn, they wanted to know the nearest cross street and no one knew where Baraang Drive was. Someone forgot to tell google maps the name had changed I suspect.

The first boat that arrived was a couple of local blokes from Evan Head. Any sort of 'emergency services' were at least an hour later. I directed the boat and the many that followed, as best I could, to my stranded neighbours. There were older people, people with kids, people with disabilities. They needed to go first.

and got us out in their tinny. Quiet, happy blokes who ferried us up the road to the bottom of the Broadwater Hill. I gave them my rope and had left the kayak tied up on porch.

I think and I were the last out of the old highway at South Broady. The residents of Rileys Hill just kept coming and coming by boat.

We climbed to the top of the hill, dumped the two bags of stuff we had grabbed on the way across the road the night before and it started to rain.

The hill climb from where the boats were dropping people off became more and more treacherous and the rain continued. The grass was slippery on the 45* slope and got more churned up with every boatload of refugees. Every second boat had a dog in it. Every dog had a shit as it got out of the boat.

We were there for a couple of hours helping older folk, families with babies, cats, dogs and birds, up that slippery slope to place of safety. All were in disbelief, some were already grieving. A mother just wanted to talk to her kids who were with their father, and he wouldn't answer the phone. She was visibly distressed but just wanted to tell the kids she was OK and hear their voices I suspect.

There were a lot of people on that hill. Communications weren't great and continued to deteriorate badly over the next few days.

and I got another boat to the new roundabout at the M1. This was apparently a boat ramp now. I remember commenting, that the road was a much better ride now it was covered in water. It had previously been badly potholed. We boated up the road, navigating our way up the double white line, by keeping the tops of road signs to our left and to our right. There was no other landmarks visible.

A mate came and got us and brought us back into Ballina where has a house. She had been staying at mine because she was having a kitchen renovation done. We moved into a house with no kitchen, no laundry a one functional bedroom. We lived like that for a month as trades were busy doing more important stuff.

After getting back to the house, and I borrowed a neighbours car, borrowed some work clothes and went to work at the evacuated Ballina Hospital that was functioning at Xavier school. We did a few shifts there and then worked in the ED as patients slowly trickled back in, and the hospital in Cherry St became a hospital again. We are both Registered Nurses.

Aside from the cow, getting back into the house was traumatic. The lounge room was in the kitchen, the fridge was in the laundry and everything was beyond filthy

There were a lot of things that didn't really matter.

There was many, many things that did.

A book collection of a lifetime- literally. Books of my mother's mother, that I had read as a child, that I had read to my children and wanted to read to my grandchildren. 'Esme' had been given a new book every year, each inscribed with the date and the occasion.

The Billabong series was written by Mary Grant Bruce. The earliest book I has was Christmas 1912. Signed first edition copies from my favourite authors and just about every Stephen King book ever written.



I never want to own a book again.

I had long resisted going digital as I loved the tactile bit of reading a book. I guess something will have to give, but I will miss finding an old bookmark in an old book a remembering the

time and place you first discovered the wonders within the pages. My bookmarks were often boarding passes or sometimes the book receipt itself, before they made them to fade.

Both my parents are gone now. Have been for many years. At 56 I guess that's pretty young. 100 years ago it would have been pretty normal. Their things were still around me.

I have a few muddied things left of theirs. Some I can't clean, others I don't want to. The old family clock from the house in Maclean needs a professional to look at it. It is an Ansonia. My hands wound it, my father's hands, his fathers and my great grandfather hands wound it.

I reached back in time whenever I picked up that key to keep that clock going for another week. It gave me a sense of place.

And I have it still. Like my house it is still standing. A bit battered, but upright none the less.



I found this 'builders graffiti' tearing out sodden walls. Some WW2 digger may have lived here straight after the war and worked at the mill.

The recovery phase of this process is arduous and ongoing. I am not the resilient man I once was. After 30 plus years in Emergency Departments, not a lot bothered me prior to this.

Now I find myself easily moved to tears, mostly by the kindness of strangers and the plight of others.

Many people affected by this event weren't in the best shape beforehand. If they had little, now they have nothing.

I have a roof over my head, more work than I need and am surrounded and loved by many.

If we were to make things 'better' next time. And there will be a next time.

- Fix the warning systems
- Give the Bureau of Meteorology whatever they want.

- Let the locals back into the response teams. The 700 km long screwdriver doesn't work without good local knowledge built up over generations
- Fund the SES and the RFS properly. I'm not going to buy any more SES and RFS raffle tickets. Governments are getting disaster response (fire and flood) for free in the majority

I'll happily buy raffle tickets for air force jets and navy submarines.

The volunteers that came and helped me clean up were great. Overwhelming kind and generous. In their enthusiasm they also took and consigned to my front verge, many things that I treasured and would have like to have kept.

I think it was the Premier of NSW that mentioned that it was good to see the rubbish getting leaned up. That 'rubbish' was the evidence of my being.

I was truly sad when the contractors came to clean it up. I'm not sure what was harder.

Seeing your life on the verge, in ruins, day after day, or seeing it picked up and placed in the back of a truck.

The contractor who was doing my pile climbed out down of his digger and just gave me a hug as I was visibly distressed. He didn't need to but he just did.

It had to happen but it wasn't a relief. It was a final reality in the surreality of two weeks.

- Maybe we could have some sort of identifying tag at the front door that just says 'I need some time with what's left of my stuff.'
- Day 0, means I'm here but I don't need your enthusiasm and energy just yet"
- Day 1 means yep I could do with a hand
- Day 2 hose me out

I think I could have stayed at Day 0 for about a week, while I found the little things that were meaningful.

- Make the communication infrastructure more secure. When people needed to communicate most badly all levels of communication failed. No internet, no mobile, no one has a land line any more.

I came into town, wanted to work / was needed at work and to make the choice between socks and underpants, because that's all the cash I had.

I chose socks by the way.

Thanks for the opportunity