

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 4 May 2022 10:30:01 PM



Your details

Title	Mrs
First name	Bronwyn
Last name	Hodgins
Email	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	2479

Submission details

I am making this submission as	A member of the general public
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

Your story I am fortunate, I live in the hills of Fernleigh and my home was not flooded. However I know many people who were flood affected and I would like raise my concerns about communication difficulties and breakdowns:

1. I learned long ago the importance of listening to my local ABC when an emergency is

occurring. It has helped in during past emergencies.

The night before the first major flood in Lismore as the constant heavy rain pounded my roof and the usually dry creek bed on my property turned into a raging river I was unable to sleep. I knew a major flood was about to occur. I turned my radio on. Feeling anxious I listened all night as the emergency unfolded. The ABC was fantastic, all night giving updates and contacting SES, BOM, and all the other relevant authorities they could to keep our population informed. They also fielded calls from locals who had important info, What they were seeing and rainfall in the upper catchments. All this info was invaluable. By the early hours of the morning it was clear that this flood was going to exceed previous floods. However, many of those who really needed to know were blissfully unaware. until it was upon them.

I spoke to many people, throughout the entire event who felt uninformed, yet if they had listened to the ABC they may have avoided some damage or hardship. These days many people rely on social media for news which can sometimes be wrong and or too late. Many also looked to past flood events to inform them of what they should do this time, with devastating consequences.

Therefore I believe if we could educate people how to be better informed and also instigate an alarm system similar to tsunami or cyclone warning to inform people of any impending disaster we could reduce the impact to many.

2. Our communication services also failed during the event. The NBN and Telstra tower failed as Woodburn flooded. Mobile phone services and internet were unavailable for us for days, even 000 failed for some. The services are still failing intermittently as the infrastructure is not yet fully repaired. This is very dangerous as we are so dependent upon it.

For example: a friend of my daughters was isolated in South Ballina with no

communications, no clean water, no power and little food. She had horses to care for all in just a small area of dry land. My daughter was the first person to reach her as flood waters began to fall low enough for my daughters 4WD to drive through. This was many days after the lady was isolated by flood waters. This situation could have ended in disaster.

Again I was kept informed via ABC radio when the phones and internet were out. It was particularly helpful in finding out which roads were open. Those without power could also listen via battery powered radio, if prepared. We really need to fix communication infrastructure and plan to improve infrastructure across Australia to allow for climate change and other disasters.

3. A third communication issue is in regard to the BOM. Much of the Northern Rivers heaviest rainfall occurs in the the hills and hinterland however I believe the readings in these areas are not collected by the BOM so much of the rainfall information is underestimated. If the rainfall is underestimated in the upper catchments flood level predictions are underestimated. For example Fernleigh's rainfall is listed to be the same as Ballina, however I know it is often much higher as we routinely measure our own rainfall. More readings in these catchments will help inform the real picture and therefore help those in the lower catchments to be better prepared.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to respond to this enquirey.

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

Poor communications and insufficient rainfall recordings. Climate change.

1.2 Preparation

Having systems in place to warn the public of

and planning	impending danger. Include climate change impacts in planning.
1.3 Response to floods	We need a much faster and organised response. Be ready for the next disaster.
1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery	Way too slow. Be ready for the next disaster. Have satellite accomodation ready to go. Have temporary communication systems ready to be deployed.
1.5 Recovery from floods	Listen and assist.
1.6 Any other matters	Educate the public.

Supporting documents or images
