

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Wednesday, 11 May 2022 8:53:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [Tuombil Canal Issues Doc.doc](#)

---

## Your details

---

<b>Title</b>	Mr
<b>First name</b>	Bruce
<b>Last name</b>	McCormack
<b>Email</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Postcode</b>	2471

---

## Submission details

---

<b>I am making this submission as</b>	A resident in a flood-affected area
<b>Submission type</b>	I am making a personal submission
<b>Consent to make submission public</b>	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](#)

---

## Supporting documents or images

---

---

**Attach files**

---

- [Tucombil Canal Issues Doc.doc](#)

# **Tuombil Canal Issues**

## **Woodburn NSW**

Tuombil Canal is a man made canal approximately 70 metres wide by 1.5 kms long connecting Rocky Mouth Creek and the Evans River. It is located on the out skirts of the town of Woodburn in the northern rivers region of NSW. It was constructed in the 1960's as part of a flood mitigation program to assist in reducing the impact of flooding in the township of Woodburn. The project was borne after the devastating flood of February 1954, until recently the record flood for the town of Woodburn and many other towns on the Richmond River.

An integral part of this project was the “Fabridam” which was a dam wall constructed from rubber, filled with water and compressed air. Its purpose was to separate the salty water from the Evans River and the fresh water from Rocky Mouth Creek during normal times. Many rural beef producing properties are found located on the banks of Rocky Mouth Creek and the creek water is used for stock on these properties hence the need to separate the salt and fresh water.

During a flood event the Fabridam could be emptied of water and air and the rubber frame would lay flat on the bottom of Tuombil Canal allowing for the unobstructed flow of flood water from Rocky Mouth Creek to flow into the Evans River and on into the pacific ocean at Evans Head. This flood water predominately comes from Bungawalbyn Creek which, during a moderate to major flood, breaks its banks and flows through the Swan Bay and New Italy Basins and on into Rocky Mouth Creek. Before the construction of the Tuombil Canal this water flowed into the Richmond river and on into the Pacific ocean at Ballina, a journey of some 46km's. With the construction of the Tuombil Canal this flood water was now only required to travel 15km's to the Pacific ocean at Evans Head which made a huge difference to the speed flood water was able to escape from the lower Richmond river area.

Due to the deterioration of the material the Fabridam was originally constructed from, it began to fail in the late 1990's. It has now been replaced with a fixed concrete structure 1.8 metres high, which stays in place during a flood event. Considering the average height of a moderate flood is approximately 3mtrs in the canal this fixed weir represents an obstruction of 60% of the area available for flood water to escape. This concrete structure needs to be removed and another Fabridam

installed to provide an unobstructed flow of flood water out the canal.

As you are well aware the township of Woodburn has recently been devastated by a flood event 1.91mtrs above the previous record flood of 1954. While the fixed concrete structure did not cause this disaster it did contribute, as prior to the “Rain Boom” that hit the Northern Rivers from pm on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022 through to pm on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022, the Richmond River, Wilsons River and Bungawalbyn Creek were all experiencing a minor flood on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The water from this minor flood would have had a chance to escape the river system had there not been a 60% obstruction to its flow. The fact that there is an obstruction to water flow also causes a major delay in the last of the flood water being able to escape from the rural farms around Woodburn.