

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Tuesday, 10 May 2022 9:36:15 AM

Your details

Title Ms

First name Cathie

Last name Dowling

Email

Postcode 2484

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

Your story Cathie (66) and Bob (74), McLeod Street, CONDONG NSW 2484

River reached 5.11 metres above mean high water mark at 3:19pm on 28 February (Cathie's birthday).

Flood waters entered the lower, original front

section of our house. Our house has been here for 144 years, and we believe that this is the first time flood waters have inundated the house.

Our car and caravan were at the highest point in McLeod Street, (above flood level in 2017) and both were inundated and have been 'written off'. Both were covered by insurance.

We were prepared for the flood levels of 2017 and are fortunate to have not lost the majority of our personal possessions.

We have recovered well and apart from mud removal in our back yard (which is scheduled for this weekend, depending on the rain!!!) are happily getting on with normal life.

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

Rain and more rain!

Not enough information from any source that this was to be a significant flood.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Local council could, each wet season, letter box drop, the flood preparation 'Its Storm Season', 'Are You Ready' information which is available on line on the Council website.

Not everyone has computers. It is not enough to assume all residents check the Council website, or have their own plan. The flood preparation 'Its Storm Season', 'Are You Ready' information needs to be a letter box drop circulated by the SES again when a significant rain event is forecast.

I believe that this is done for bush fire areas.

Information package needs to include addresses of evacuation centers. Siren screaming, loud hailers blaring 'evacuate now' are not helpful to

calmly assessing what to do and where to go in an emergency.

A high ground designated car / caravan / trailer park could be allocated for at risk properties, with information notified to all those 'at risk' properties of its location and availability as soon as the significant weather event is forecast. Shuttle buses could be provided for residents to park car / caravans / trailers and be able to return to their properties.

SES could be on the ground, BEFORE the flood, assisting 'at risk' residents to prepare for the upcoming event. Moving, lifting, organising, driving shuttle bus, ensuring 'at risk' residents have enough supplies.

It would be good to have a Council employee who locals know of (in 'Its Storm Season', 'Are You Ready' information package) and could contact at any time during flood emergencies. And a residential street co-ordinator who is notified of an upcoming event that can inform everyone to get prepared.

The local radio station could be returned. They were critical in previous times of keeping the local community informed of the upcoming weather events and making sure residents had the correct information on the river heights.

The council, in collaboration with the community, needs to be proactive in ensuring preparation for flooding events is distributed to all 'at risk' residents. A flood information package, 'Its Storm Season', 'Are You Ready' could be included in all real estate sales documentation and rental agreements.

Courses could be run to familiarise residents of the flood risk in the valley and might include flood storage solutions and flood clean-up hints.

A register of persons who can and are willing to repair flood damaged goods, as in, electrical, motorised garden tools, boat motors, etc., would be a great idea to be included in the 'Its Storm Season', 'Are You Ready' information.

1.3 Response to floods

SES messages to evacuate should be BEFORE the flood peaks. We have experienced 10, 4 metre plus above high water mark floods, in our 16 years as residents of McLeod Street, and all but one message to evacuate came after the flood has peaked and when it is too late to safely evacuate to any where.

The strangest message was to our land line to inform us that it was safe to return to our property!

SES flood victim rescues, need to be done calmly, slowly, safely. Many residents of McLeod Street had major damage to their properties only after the rescue boats 'belted' down the river. The 40 odd number of jet skis should have been told to stay away. They just caused wave after wave which did more damage to all ready inundated properties.

I wish to complain about the amphibious vehicle with SES personnel on board, that went up and down McLeod Street several times following the flood and did not appear to offer anyone assistance.

I am sad to report an SES person who told me to "get over myself" when I asked them to slow down and stop causing waves.

The Tweed Shire Council Media Release of 1/3/2022, which I have read (in recent weeks) on the Council website, was not received or heard by many residents when they needed it, as evidence in the method of the flood damaged

goods in the street. We did not know of the vital information in the Media Release, as we had no power for 5 days, no internet, not much phone signal and were very busy assessing the damage to our property. We were unable to use our mobile internet, as the risk of having no charged phone for emergency was a concern.

Again, maybe SES personnel could door knock and delivery Media Releases and check on residents at the same time.

The Media Release had information on the throwing out of flood damaged goods. Obviously NO-ONE got the information as the 'Chuck out' was a shocking and shameful waste. Part of the pre-flood information package 'Its Storm Season', 'Are You Ready' should include instructions on the placement of flood damaged items.

Electrical, metal, furniture, bikes, timber, cloth, food, need to be in separate piles.

It would be a good idea to ensure that soooo much damaged goods are never thrown out again after a flood and re-introduced the twice annual 'big' rubbish collections. These collection enabled recycling companies to save many items and encouraged residents not to store many items no longer needed.

Co-ordination of food and water. How amazing was the donations of food and water. What a terrible shame, as we had no power for five days, we were unable to store any of the overwhelming amounts that were being delivered. It would be lovely now, 9 weeks and hours of mud moving later to be surprised by a donated meal. Pre-planned co-ordination of food and water deliveries needs to happen to prevent waste of food and donators generous efforts.

Volunteers are wonderful people, but it was terribly sad to have to turn away so many who, had there been better co-ordination, could have helped many, many others.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

We just get on with the clean up process.

1.5 Recovery from floods

We have recovered, just waiting for the insurance companies to finalise our car and caravan. Caravan, will unfortunately, be more than a year's wait to be replaced.

We have had brief moments of worry about the future, but hope with better flood safe storage and storm forecasting, we will be able to remain residents of McLeod Street, CONDONG for many years to come.

1.6 Any other matters

I am not sure if this was the sort of information you were after, but it is the summary of things we have noted over our years in Condong.

Supporting documents or images
