

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 18 May 2022 10:22:01 AM

Your details

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Submission details

I am making this submission as	A resident in a flood-affected area
Submission type	I am making a personal submission
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	N/A
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	N/A
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

We live on the Peninsula in the Ballina Shire known as South Ballina. River Road starts from East Wardell and goes up to South Ballina. We live in Empire Vale and at 6am heard Wardell was to be evacuated. My husband drove down our road, Moylans Lane Empire Vale which at the time was not flooded but River Road was so we had no means of leaving.

The Cane and soy bean field were underwater from the drenching rain we had for the past 5 days.

The drains were full but not overflowing. By lunch time on Monday 28/02/2022 the water was in our back garden and across Moylans Lane. Some local people came by in a private boat and asked if we wanted to leave. We did and were evacuated to Wardell Evacuation Centre.

Everyone running the centre were local volunteers and were doing a wonderful job.

Wednesday morning 1/04/2022 it was announced the centre was closing. People were being moved away from their area and it was traumatic. My husband found a local commercial fisherman and he took us up the river to Ballina Town where we stayed with friends in East Ballina for the next 5 days. My husband is 76 and I am 74.

We were told prior to the flood our house wouldn't get water in by locals who had lived here generations. We got 20cms of water in enough to have carpets ruined and electrical items. We got into the house when the river started to subside. And commenced a big clean-up with help from volunteers. Had the electricity put back on and are more fortunate than others as we can now live back at home.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.1 Causes and contributing

Caused by very heavy rain and very little human activity in our area. Flood gates need to be

factors

maintained, drains cleared regularly, the mouth of the river dredged at least every 4-5 years and river banks maintained from Coraki to Ballina

1.2 Preparation and planning

Government agencies should have policies in place for such rain events. The defence forces should be brought in earlier.

All stakeholders were caught unawares eg Ballina Council, SES not enough equipment or volunteers to deal with such enormity. Local fishermen came to rescue people in remote areas.

Because of the short notice to evacuate, which hadn't really reached us it was too late to sandbag

Rain events can be monitored for the Northern Rivers floodplains because of the heavy rain in the mountains behind on the Queensland/NSW border. As soon as there is a rain event in the mountains action should be started to warn people further down the river and make safe evacuations.

1.3 Response to floods

Public warnings should be made on various forms of communication as not everyone sits on Facebook. Our local ABC is very good at warnings but not enough information as to which roads are flooded or to be potentially flooded. Probably an SMS message would be a preferable option.

From 2/04/2022 we had no telephone communication for 5 days. That is not good enough.

Because our area was virtually forgotten we couldn't get out by road. If we had had an SMS message the day before we would have been fine and could have driven our cars out and got ourselves out before the town of Ballina flooded too.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

The community were very good, those that had not been flooded helped considerably to those that had been flooded.

The Ballina Shire Council did an excellent job of cleaning up rubbish on the roadside from homes.

Government funding helped as did various charities

Insurance companies were not as helpful and as most people lost cars as well as accommodation the insurance companies could have paid out quicker than what they did.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Ballina town is built on a floodplain, and while it had never flooded before this is a warning for the future.

Aged care facilities should be placed off the floodplain.

Large housing developments should have green buffer zones between. Homes are too close and concrete replacing green areas exacerbates the flow of water.

1.6 Any other matters

Floodplain areas should have a Flood Management Plan that must encompass all residents whether they live/work in flood zone or not. Those in a council LGA that don't live in a flood zone should be commandeered as assistants to those who are in the flood zone and trained appropriately.

SES Staff should all be trained and there should be some regular paid staff who can train and guide volunteers in such events where required.

Supporting documents or images
