

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 20 May 2022 2:45:23 PM
Attachments: [Flood Inquiry Submission.pdf](#)
[Londonderry Flood March 2021 V2.pdf](#)

Your details

Title	Mr
First name	Glenn
Last name	Gardiner
Email	
Postcode	2753

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

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

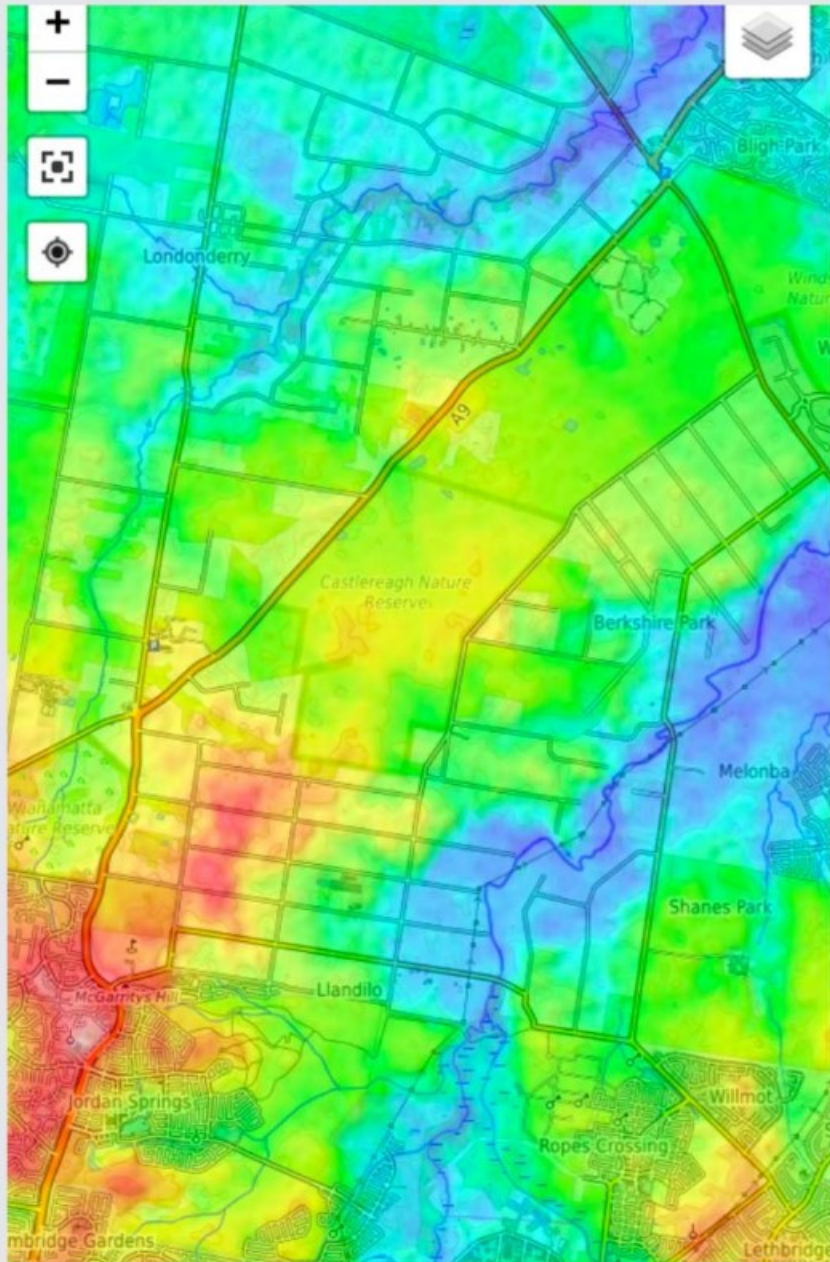
1.2 Preparation and planning	Refer to attached document for submission
-------------------------------------	---

1.3 Response to floods Refer to attached document for submission

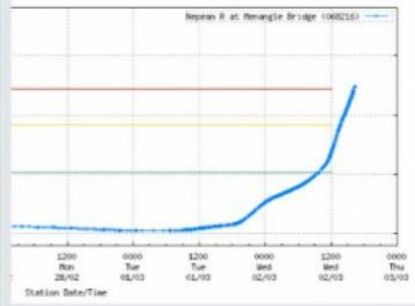
Supporting documents or images

Attach files

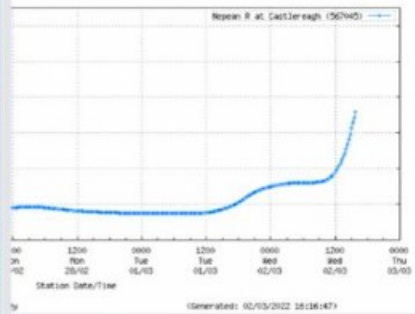
- [Flood Inquiry Submission.pdf](#)
 - [Facebook Post.jpg](#)
 - [Londonderry Flood March 2021 V2.pdf](#)
-



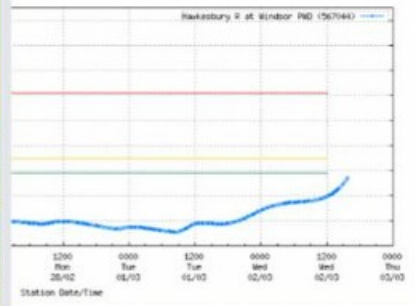
216 Name: Nepean R at Menangle
: 9.20 Major: 12.20



145 Name: Nepean R at Castlereagh



144 Name: Hawkesbury R at
7.00 Major: 12.20



Clr Glenn Gardiner

Published by Glenn Gardiner · 2 March ·

Major Hawkesbury River Flood Warning

Londonderry, Berkshire Park and Llandilo Residents in the blue areas on the map should **PREPARE NOW.**

Water will rise around South Creek and Rickabys Creek very quickly and without warning.

Nepean River at Menangle has recently hit Major flood level and Warragamba Dam is spilling. Water levels are rising very fast at Castlereagh and every tributary that needs to flow past Windsor is in flood.

All that water will need to go somewhere and that somewhere will be a backwards flow up South Creek and Rickabys Creek.

Exact timing of this is unknown and exact high water level is unknown. The Bureau of Meteorology has warned of a flood similar to last year but I suspect higher levels around the creeks because of the simultaneous local and river flooding.

It is possible that Bennett Rd will be under water as early as late tonight/early tomorrow morning.



Write a comment...



Press Enter to post.

NSW Independent Flood Inquiry

General Public Submission, by:

Glenn Gardiner

Londonderry, NSW 2753

My Background

I am a resident of Londonderry in the Local Government Area of Penrith, my residence is not directly affected by flood water, however my local community has been impacted by flood water on four occasions in the past 18 months. On each occasion I have been personally involved with assisting the community in varying capacity. I have long-standing involvement with the community including membership with the Londonderry RFS for 10 years and I hold board and committee positions with several local community organizations. In December 2021 I was elected Councillor for North Ward in Penrith City Council.

This submission is made in my name only and a connection to my position as Councillor of Penrith City Council or membership of NSW Rural Fire Service should not be considered.

Terms of Reference

1. The Inquiry is to consider and report to the Premier on the following matters:
 - a. the causes of, and factors contributing to, the frequency, intensity, timing and location of floods in NSW in the 2022 catastrophic flood event, including consideration of any role of weather, climate change, and human activity;
 - b. the preparation and planning by agencies, government, other entities and the community for floods in NSW, including the accuracy and timing of weather forecasts, current laws, emergency management plans, practices and mitigation strategies, their application and effect;
 - c. responses to floods, particularly measures to protect life, property and the environment, including:
 - i. immediate management, including the issuing and response to public warnings;
 - ii. resourcing, coordination and deployment, including with respect to the Australian Defence Force; and
 - iii. equipment and communication systems;
 - d. the transition from incident response to recovery, including the roles, structure and procedures of agencies, government, other entities and the community;
 - e. recovery from floods, including:
 - i. immediate housing, clean-up, financial support and community engagement measures; and
 - ii. longer-term community rebuilding support; and
 - iii. any other matters that the inquiry deems appropriate in relation to floods.

Submission

1. Preparation and Planning by Agencies

Relating to terms of reference 1. b. “the preparation and planning by agencies, government, other entities and the community for floods in NSW, including the accuracy and timing of weather forecasts, current laws, emergency management plans, practices and mitigation strategies, their application and effect;”

Current laws

It is my opinion, formed through personal experience, that the current laws are prohibitive of a pragmatic approach to managing and dealing with emergencies.

The State Emergency Service Act 1989 has the following key components:

20. Commissioner to control emergencies

Subject to the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989, the Commissioner is to have overall control of operations in response to an emergency to which this part applies

21. Duty to recognise authority of Commissioner and emergency officers

1. Every member of the NSW Police Force and all other members of emergency services organisations are to recognise, in connection with operations in response to an emergency to which this part applies, the authority of the Commissioner and emergency officers acting under the Commissioner's orders or the orders of the zone commander or local commander.
2. It is the duty of every such member to assist the commissioner or other emergency officer in connection with those operations

24. Offense to obstruct Commissioner or emergency officer

A person must not obstruct or hinder the Commissioner or other emergency officer, or any other person acting with the authority of the Commissioner, in the exercise of a function under this Act.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 2 years, or both.

As well intended as this legislation is it prevents, and has prevented on several occasions, local communities coming together in a pragmatic manner to help themselves in the absence of assistance provided by the Commissioner. The legislation also prevents other community organisations and local governments from providing assistance to local communities when there is an absence of direction by the Commissioner.

In March 2021 NSW SES were unresponsive to community requests and needs, as such the community rallied together to help themselves, in doing so members of Londonderry RFS were ordered to stand down until requested to assist by the Commissioner via Cumberland Zone Inspector and Penrith Council were ordered by NSW Police Nepean Local Area Command to not provide assistance until requested. Memories of this situation created caution within the Londonderry community in March 2022 when a repeat of inadequate emergency responses were noted.

In order to allow a pragmatic approach to local needs or to compensate for times when the Commissioner's resources are stretched or limited I propose an amendment to the Act whereby the following words are added in relation to Sections 20, 21 and 24:

“except where the Commissioner is unwilling or unable to provide reasonable emergency services”.

Emergency Management Plans

I consider that Emergency Management Plans do not consider long held knowledge of Hawkesbury-Nepean flood behaviour, or there is a failure in the implementation of such plans. Additionally, there is a notable absence in the rectification of identified failures, or again, a failure in the implementation of amended plans.

In March 2021 I identified and communicated failures of emergency management plans to several relevant people and key political figures in Penrith; including direct 2-way communication with the Minister for Emergency Services, I was unsuccessful in my attempt to communicate with the Commissioner of Resilience NSW. It is my understanding that my communication document was widely shared with further relevant people. The emergency management plans implemented in March 2022 showed no change in the response with respect to Rickaby's and South Creeks.

In March 2021 the Hawkesbury River flooded to a level of 12 meters at Windsor, this flooding caused a backward flow of floodwater up Rickaby's creek into Londonderry as well as up South Creek into Llandilo and Shanes Park and up Eastern Creek toward Schofields.

This pattern of flooding is well documented with historical notations dating back to 1867, which include the documented rescue in 1912 of Charles Hacket and his family from their home near what is now known as Charles Hacket Drive, St Marys. Additionally, NSW State Emergency Services have produced a video explaining, with visual flood modelling, the flooding effect of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River with reference to the "Bathtub Effect". The outcome of this "Bathtub Effect" is shown in the modelling where it depicts the upward flow of floodwater and consequential flood water inundation along Rickaby's, South and Eastern Creeks.

A number of failures were identified in the event in March 2021; including three key areas of concern:

- SES unavailable and unresponsive and Community refused assistance
- Inadequate action relating to the flooding event along Rickaby's Creek
- Inadequate preparation and response to the requirements of Londonderry's needs, particularly the supply of, and access to, sandbags

These concerns were described in detail and communicated through the use of the document in appendix named Londonderry Flood March 2021.

On 2 March 2022 Nepean River conditions were similar to the lead up to the flooding event in March 2021. At this point emergency management plans did not extend past the supply of sandbags in one central location in Penrith, some 15km away from the impending inundation.

By the afternoon of 2 March 2022, it was very obvious to me that a flood similar to March 2021 would be repeated. Throughout the afternoon and evening I unsuccessfully advocated for the issuance of a warning or order for properties around Rickaby's and South Creeks. In the evening of 2 March 2022, in the absence of official warnings to Rickaby's Creek and South Creek, I felt duty bound through reasonable foreseeability of risk to human life to publish a warning to social media.

The social media post included a brief of the known data and a prediction that Rickaby's and South Creeks will rise quickly and inundate areas in Londonderry, Berkshire Park and Llandilo in the following day, possibly overnight. This warning was widely shared and reached 10,000 people within a few hours. A copy of this warning is in appendix. I then drove around high-risk locations to ensure the message had been received. I have no knowledge of any requirements to rescue any flood

inundated people or animals in the localities of my warning area – in stark contrast to the flooding event of March 2021.

The following morning Hawkesbury River reached 11 meters at Windsor and water began inundating homes on Bennet Rd, Londonderry from about 5am. At about 8am an Evacuation Warning (not Order) was issued for the entirety of Londonderry, but not areas along South Creek. This Warning was later amended to read “low lying areas of Londonderry” but did not provide any further details. Londonderry has a population of approximately 4,000 people across an area of 36 km², consequently, this warning created significant confusion in the local community.

By about 10am television news programs were broadcasting live footage of rescues from properties along South Creek in Shanes Park and Werrington. These locations were not specifically named in my warning nor was there any official warning. The Werrington rescue is particularly noteworthy, a Defence Force Helicopter was used to lift occupants to safety from house on Water St, roughly 500 meters away from where Charles Hacket required to be rescued in 1912. A warning was never issued for these areas that required rescues.

The experiences described above form the basis of a reasonable argument that Emergency Management Plans do not consider well documented historical learnings and systems are not in place to continually improve the Emergency Management Plans following feedback from the community, or the Emergency Management Plans are not implemented adequately.

2. Responses to Floods

Relating to terms of reference 1. c. “responses to floods, particularly measures to protect life, property and the environment, including: i. immediate management, including the issuing and response to public warnings; ii. resourcing, coordination and deployment, including with respect to the Australian Defence Force; and iii. equipment and communication systems;”

Immediate Management

With respect to Rickaby’s and South Creeks and with reference to the examples provided above Flood Evacuation Warnings and Flood Evacuation Orders have been either non-existent or have arrived after the inundation of flood water, which has led to the requirement to rescue people and animals from flood inundated properties.

Following the identification and communication of emergency service failures in the flooding event of March 2021, as detailed above, the flooding event of 3 March 2022 demonstrated no signs of improvement or change in approach to the management of the flood.

Resourcing, Coordinating and Deployment

With respect to Rickaby’s and South Creeks and with reference to the examples provided above, there have been no, or very limited resources coordinated or deployed to the areas around Rickaby’s and South Creeks within the Penrith Local Government Area.

The emergency responses provided to Rickaby’s and South Creeks in March 2022 would be considered unsatisfactory given the information collected and knowledge developed over 155 years and particularly unsatisfactory given the feedback I provided following the March 2021 flooding event.

Appendices

1. Londonderry Flood March 2021
2. Social Media Post

Londonderry Flood – March 2021

There are three key areas of concern, these include:

- SES unavailable and unresponsive and Community refused assistance
- Inadequate action relating to the flooding event along Rickaby's Creek
- Inadequate preparation and response to the requirements of Londonderry's needs, particularly the supply of, and access to, sandbags

All information provided below is certifiable with documented evidence or is information that is available on the public record.

To better understand the situation that led to the events of Tuesday, 23 March 2021 (next section) the timeline of two separate yet connected events have been provided on following pages.

SES unavailable and unresponsive and Community refused assistance

At About 12pm 23/3/21 I met a lady that had been helping the community along with her partner and another local man. In the absence of SES, they were driving around flood affected areas checking on the welfare of Londonderry residents and delivering sandbags sourced from Windsor. The Lady was set up in the carpark of Londonderry Neighbourhood Centre where she was coordinating her efforts.

Upon meeting her she mentioned that she had been trying to obtain access to the community hall for use as a point of collection for donations and distribution of those donations for displaced people and animals within the local area. She had many lined-up donations and records of necessities including dog food, blankets, clothes, lunch box items for kids, stock feed, toiletries, feminine hygiene products etc

Her issue was that Penrith City Council would not permit her access because she was not a community organisation. I got myself involved and contacted a Penrith City Councillor and nominated Londonderry RFS as the responsible organisation as they occupy the building directly behind and had a crew present with the station open. At 12:49 I informed Officer in Charge of Londonderry RFS of my nominating them. I was informed by the Councillor that this would be adequate to have the hall opened and someone would be there soon with the keys.

The keys never arrived but instead at 2:50pm I received a call from the Officer in Charge telling me that they have been ordered by the Inspector of Cumberland Zone Fire Control to stand down, to return all appliances and personnel to the station, at the request of the Commissioner. Reasons given were that SES were the lead authority and RFS have not been requested or instructed to undertake this activity. This conversation also included questions about who I was, what I was doing and notifications that complaints had been sent to the Prime Minister's office – I presume because Melissa McIntosh MP was present helping with the sandbags.

I later learned that Penrith Council were instructed by Police to not open the hall.

The key issue that caused the requirement for community members to open the hall was that SES were nowhere to be seen and were not responsive to phone calls. We all understand that they are extremely busy, there is no questioning that, and we are all happy to jump in and help the community when the community needs help but to have this grass roots community support shut down by bureaucracy is demoralising, heart wrenching and infuriating all at the same time.

The lady referred to above has since set up her operations at Bligh Park with the support of Hawkesbury City Council and set up a Facebook group called Hawkesbury Donation Group.

Rickaby's Creek Flood Response Timeline

Rapidly rising water as a result of floodwater from the Hawkesbury River flowing backwards up Rickaby's creek. This is a well-known attribute of a Hawkesbury River flood and is included in many SES flood videos.

Time	Source	Description
9-10pm 21/3/21	SDC Londonderry RFS	Conducted survey of flood prone land around Londonderry – found some rising water on Carrington Rd but nothing substantial
10:30pm 21/3/21	SES and FRNSW	Responded to Bennett Rd to assist with cars stuck in water
11pm 21/3/21	Amy via The Londonderry Locals (Facebook)	Posted "if you have animals or know someone with animals on Bennett Rd, it's rising rapidly and animals and livestock are drowning. The SES can only do so much as you won't be able to escape if you don't act now"
12am 22/3/21	Kirsten Rose via The Londonderry Locals (Facebook)	Posted "Attention All on the lower end of Carrington Rd we are at 157 my Nan has just woken up to water rising fast so if you're awake maybe start getting things sorted as we didn't expect this to happen so quickly"
12:30am 22/3/21	Bhadra via The Londonderry Locals (Facebook)	Posted "Bennet Rd has 2 very deep and serious flood points! Do not try to get down!! I went and helped rescue animals tonight and almost didn't get out due to a sneak flood that had crept up whilst I was parked there. I had no idea it had happened. Stay safe everyone"
1:30am 22/3/21	Jennefer Morgan via The Londonderry Locals (Facebook)	Posted "Please Help Need horse truck no floats water is too high, to get 5 horses out bennet Rd!!!
3am 22/3/21	Western Sydney NSW SES	Posted about rescuing 3 people, 25 dogs and 4 sheep on Bennett Rd
4am 22/3/21	Western Sydney NSW SES	Posted about rescuing a 5 month old infant, a child, 4 adults and 3 dogs on Bennett Rd ***Images relating to this event are found below***
7am 22/3/21	Brianna Chantelle via The Londonderry Locals (Facebook)	Posted "Bennet Rd is completely under came out to help move animals but can't get in"
6am-12pm 22/3/21	Ch7, Ch9 and Sky News	All reported live from Cnr Bennett Rd & Richmond Rd, Londonderry News coverage of Bennett Rd reproduced in US, UK and Germany
8:15am 22/3/21	Londonderry RFS	Incident Call to animal rescue 137 Bennett Rd
9:56am 22/3/21	Londonderry RFS	Incident Call to animal rescue 28-30 Bennett Rd
11:28am 22/3/21	Londonderry RFS	Incident Call to concern for welfare 5 Bowman Rd – found 4 adults and 1 child stranded on the top floor of a 2-story residence.
11:51am 22/3/21	Londonderry RFS	Incident Call to female in vehicle trapped in water on Bennett Rd – rescue by bystanders, prior to RFS arrival, was broadcast live on Ch9, possibly other channels also.
3pm 22/3/21	Western Sydney NSW SES	Issued an evacuation warning for properties backing onto Rickabys Creek along Bowman Rd, Carrington Rd and Bennett Rd
6pm 22/3/21	RFS Radio	Woman and children required rescuing from house on Bennett Rd
As at 2pm 25/03/21	My Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evacuation warning came 16 hours after initial water inundation and between 3 and 14 hours after 14 people required rescuing Evacuation order never occurred Communications and/or Welfare checks to neighbouring properties of those requiring rescue never occurred.

Londonderry Sandbag Timeline

Time	Source	Description
Afternoon 19/03/21	Penrith NSW State Emergency Service via Facebook	Posted a request for urgent assistance with sandbagging operations
4:16pm 19/03/21	Messenger Post	I offered assistance with moving sandbags and other items around if needed
4:31pm 19/03/21	Messenger Post	SES responded asking for my phone number and suggesting they may need help the following day
8:36am 20/03/21	Messenger Post	SES messaged me asking for urgent assistance.
		I posted this request to several community groups and to Clr Ross Fowler's page where it was shared many times. Approximately 100 people responded to this call.
10:03am 20/3/21	Messenger Post	I offered to set up a sandbagging depo in Londonderry either at my place or at the RFS station
10:59am 20/03/21	Messenger Post	After contacting Lindsay MP, Melissa McIntosh and Clr Ross Fowler I advised SES that both are willing and available to help with resourcing.
11:30am 20/03/21	Phone Call	Incident Controller at Penrith SES rang me to take me up on the offer. I arranged a meeting with him and Melissa McIntosh
12pm 20/03/21	Penrith SES	Melissa met with Incident Controller and conveyed to me that they had run out of sand and sandbags and had sent the volunteers home. Melissa was told that they could not source any sand and had to wait until late that night to receive sandbags
		I immediately called my neighbour, director of Penrith Quarry Materials, who arranged to have Agnes Banks Quarry opened and a truck load of sand delivered to SES, he also donated 700 sandbags which I collected and delivered to SES
Afternoon 20/03/21	Penrith SES	I stayed at Penrith SES with Melissa McIntosh for several hours helping here and there. I left with a trailer load of sandbags for people of Londonderry
4:29pm 20/03/21	SMS	I advised SES Incident Controller that I had received an offer for use of a 15 Tonne sandbag hopper, located in Londonderry and that I could arrange machines, personnel, and a location, if necessary.
6:15pm 20/03/21	Phone call	Incident Controller 2, who had taken over command from Incident Controller at SES Penrith rang me seeking out Melissa McIntosh's phone number. I informed Incident Controller 2 of my earlier offer and he said that he would know more after a weather update that he was to be given at 8pm
9:36pm 20/03/21	SMS	I sought an update from Incident Controller 2 regarding the requirements for the hopper. IC2 responded saying that there was no need for the hopper at this stage.
11pm 21/3/21		Hawkesbury river began flowing backwards up Rickaby's creek, the creek rose very rapidly, inundating many properties and creating several emergency rescue evacuations
9:48am 22/03/21	SMS	I informed Incident Controller that I still had about 100 sandbags in the trailer and that I could deliver them to wherever and whenever they are needed. IC responded by saying he managed to get a delivery the night before.
12pm 22/3/21	Londonderry Community Group (Facebook)	I received requests for sandbags on Reynolds Rd and I delivered them to several addresses

Afternoon 22/03/21	Various Facebook groups	Londonderry residents were scrambling for sandbags and many people couldn't get hold of them. Several community members began driving into Penrith and Windsor to collect and then delivering sandbags to people in need.
Morning 23/03/21	Various Facebook groups	Sandbag deliveries from volunteers continued and many calls were made to SES for assistance, the standard reply was that they are available for collection at Claremont Meadows
9:15am 23/3/21	SMS	I informed Incident Controller that I had used all those sandbags and we needed more. I requested a bulk drop to Londonderry. I received no reply
10:28 am 23/3/21	SMS	I made contact with Melissa McIntosh to see if she could contact SES to request sandbags. I requested several hundred to one thousand sandbags, as a start.
11:42am 23/3/21	SMS	Melissa informed me that she had sourced 1,000 sandbags from Rapid Relief Team and they would be delivered within the hour
12:30pm 23/3/21	Londonderry Neighbourhood Centre	Sandbags arrived in Londonderry and were dropped to the carpark of Londonderry Neighbourhood Centre and to the corner of Bennett Rd and Carrington Rd.
2:50pm 23/03/21	Officer in Charge Londonderry RFS	Informed me that he and Londonderry RFS had been ordered to stand down and cease helping until requested to do so
10:00am 24/03/21	Rimple Prasad via Londonderry Community Group (Facebook)	Called out for help with getting sandbags to 54 Bennett Rd. She was referred to SES by several people. 2 ½ hours later SES informed Rimple that they could not gain access to save her house and left
		This job was not sent back through channels and re-assigned to RFS – An RFS Cat 1 Tanker would be capable of gaining access
		I arranged to have 10 people help her move and place the bags, as required. The community members arrived on site within 15 minutes and got the job done.

Images relating to the event noted as 4am 22/03/21

This rescue occurred between midnight and 3am



<>

Home
About
Photos
Events
Videos
Posts

Western Sydney NSW SES ✓

2 d · 🌐

It doesn't get much better for a volunteer than saving a beautiful baby boy. With his mum's permission, we are very proud to share a photo of this little tacker in the arms of a [NSW SES Ryde Unit](#) volunteer. The challenging but successful Londonderry rescue saved the 5 month old infant, a child, 4 adults and 3 dogs.

We bet that he will be a volunteer in a few years. Can you see yourself in orange? <https://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-involved/volunteer/>