

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, 20 May 2022 2:38:20 PM

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## Your details

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**Title** Dr

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**First name** Jane

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**Last name** Loveday

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**Email**

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**Postcode** 2484

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## Submission details

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**I am making this submission as** Other

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**Submission type** I am making a personal submission

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**Consent to make submission public** I give my consent for this submission to be made public

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## Share your experience or tell your story

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**Your story** I am putting in a submission on behalf of my late father Stan Hitchins who resided in Murwillumbah for 60 years. I want to describe how things were done in the 'olden days'.

Stan was a local high school science teacher and a volunteer of the Murwillumbah SES. He very much believed in the collection and use of

data to drive decision making. He volunteered in the SES during times of potential flooding, spending many long hours in the control centre in town during these times. He had a network of local farmers who lived in the catchment areas and who had creeks running through their properties. He would radio them or they would radio him frequently throughout the crisis and update him with the heights of their creek at specific times. Stan would use this data to produce a flood nomograph which allowed him to predict the time and height of the river in the main town. Every hour or so he'd broadcast a message over the local radio station 2MW to advise the community of the current river and creek heights and advise as to whether the river was likely to break the levy bank and flood the town – essential information for the local businesses who must decide whether to lift their floor stock or not.

After doing this for many years, Stan eventually retired from this volunteer position and the flood level predictions were taken over by city based bureaucracies with little local knowledge. Whilst I do not know if Stan's predictions were more accurate than the current ones, I think it is important that local knowledge and the sense of community working together should not be lost. I know he passed on his graphs and knowledge to a number of other local volunteers but this ultimately became redundant as the flood management was removed from local hands and there became a disconnect between management and community.

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### **Terms of Reference (optional)**

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

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### **Supporting documents or images**

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