

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Monday, 16 May 2022 8:07:52 PM
Attachments: [Flood Enquiry Meeting.docx](#)

Your details

Title	Mr
First name	Jim
Last name	McCormack
Email	
Postcode	2471

Submission details

I am making this submission as	Emergency services personnel
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	Self evacuated at 2230 hrs 28/2/22 .Sat in a boat for 6hours waiting for daylight to go to Woodburn evac centre
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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	Lack of communication between IMT and Local Units.No real use by IMT of Local knowledge. Poor Info from BOM(23 hrs before predicted peak for Woodburn Changed,)Plesae refer to Woodburn SES document after meeting with you on May 1st.
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1.2 Preparation and planning	Need more Flood intel from Bungawalbyn Catchment area ,ie more telemetric flood gauges and rain gauges. Need Telemetric Gauge at Broadwater. Need a complete revamp of flood mitigation measures,particularly getting rid od fixed weir on Tuckombil Canal
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1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery	Was pretty Good
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1.5 Recovery from floods	Less Red tape in applying for Grants
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1.6 Any other matters	Flood Mitigation has been negleted for many years .No drain cleaning, No maintenance on flood gatesno one willing to accept responsibility,a lot of buck passing
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Supporting documents or images

Attach files	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flood Enquiry Meeting.docx
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Woodburn SES Meeting .Flood Enquiry 1st May 2022

Present Ashley , Bruce , Regan , Jim

Introductions Commander .

Overview of River Catchment Jim

Main arm of Richmond River, Area of catchment 2716 square km

Towns Kyogle, Casino, Coraki

Wilsons River Area of catchment 1587 square km

Towns Lismore ,Coraki

Bungawalbyn Creek catchment Area 2589 square km

26 creeks ,mostly unnamed flow into Bungawalbyn creek,. Catchment begins Mongorrie, Whiporie ,Busby's Flat,Rappville areas. Bungy Creek joins Richmond River at Bungawalbyn Junction about 5km Below Coraki.Only 2 automatic rain Gauges on entire catchment and only 2 telemetric gauges on .Bungawalbyn creek, both recent around 2015

Only 2 outlets for the entire catchment ,Ballina and Evans Head.

Woodburn SES's Response Ashley.Bruce,Regan,Jim

Positives

No Deaths in Lower River

Great work by Adam Bailey ,Local police officer in Initial stages of the Rescue operation.

Community Spirit, Community pulling together

Flotilla of private boats and Volunteer members of the public and the many rescues they performed.

Mateship and Co-operation from most members of the public

Response agencies, SES,RFS,Fire & Rescue,Police,Health Ambulance working together

Support from individuals and Groups of people from near and far "The Mud Army"

The Defence Forces ,particularly the Army

Establishment of Hubs and the work of many Hub Volunteers.

Establishment of Recovery Centres

Generosity of wider General Public

Areas for Improvement Ashley, Bruce Regan ,Jim

Bureau of Meterology

From 2:30 am Monday 28th Feb Bom had stated that Woodburn Peak may reach around 5.3metres.This warning was unchanged in subsequent flood bulletins for the next 23 hours,ie until 1:30 am on Tuesday 1st March.

Flood intelligence in Bungawalbyn Catchment. Need more Gauges,both rain and telemetric river gauges,Who is responsible,Public Works,BOM,Manly Hydraulics,Rous Water,RVC. In past lots of buck passing between these agencies as to who is responsible.

State emergency Service

Lack of Communication from IMT's to Local SES headquarters, No Updates

No real use by IMT of extensive Local knowledge of individual units

No communication re help coming from Outside area teams or other agencies. These just periodically arrived with no logistical support

Possible solution .Restructure SES back into smaller Regions where paid staff and volunteer members build relationships and rapport and know and support each other and work together to assist the community.

Challenges for Woodburn SES members. .Many of our members impacted,6 of us lost our own homes ,were isolated and unable to get to rest of our team and assist in the operation .Only one member lives in the township of Woodburn.

Perceived lack of understanding of some State Headquarters SES personnel of Volunteer culturalism. Ie the fact that we are Volunteers and have families, jobs and other interests and commitments in our lives,

Real need for a telemetric River Gauge at Broadwater so that Broadwater Residents can monitor river rises.

Improvements to Flood Mitigation Measures Currently managed by Rous Water.

There has been a complete lack of real measures over many of the past years. Has been lots of talk fests

The temporary Fixed Weir in Tuckombil Canal needs to be revisited. It was installed in 2001, 21 years ago as a temporary measure and impedes the first 3 or 4 days of flood water escaping out Tuckombil Canal into Evans river and then into the Pacific Ocean at Evans Head. Previous Structure was a rubber Fabri Dam, able to be deflated to below the low tide river level.

Flood Gates on Flood Drains. Many are unable to be opened. Lack of Maintenance

Flood Drains rarely cleaned inhibiting flow of water.

Cosmetic work such as mowing and whipper snipping of flood drain headwalls appears only work done

Did The new Pacific Motorway (M1) act as a dam?

While it certainly didn't cause the flooding we experienced it accentuated the flooding situation, Longer duration and Depth affected.

Recovery Issues Issues around getting money

The red tape and bureaucratic requests often required from Government and other agencies when flood affected people apply for money or other requests. eg Often asked for receipts of equipment you lost and are replacing shows no real understanding of what people lost and went through as these receipts lost in the flood.

Lack of Empathy of many Insurance Companies

Communication Infrastructure ie poor mobile phone reception, poor internet connections

Positive and Negative uses of Social Media

Future planning ??Where To from Here?