

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 18 May 2022 8:02:14 AM
Attachments: [Post 2022 Flood.PNG](#)
[June 2004.PNG](#)

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
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	Our house has been here since the 1890s. Up until the construction of Sherrys Bridge around 1966 the lower river-side paddock, which is floodplain, had remained largely unchanged with cattle grazing freely from the house to the paddock across the old Main Arm Road (which used to be at the level of the floodplain).
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My neighbour, who grew up in our house and remembers floods prior to the construction of the bridge, recalls the more gentle flow of flood waters turning the corner around our house in the original riverbed and over the old causeway.

The construction of Sherrys Bridge in the 1960s involved the building up of a road embankment that effectively half dammed the flood plain and, as is obvious from the photographs, fundamentally changed the flow of flood water. It is this short-sighted intervention that shows a poor understanding of flood hydrology that has caused such extensive erosion on the river bank and our property and now presents an immediate danger to Main Arm Road.

During floods the major volume of water flow has been redirected by the road embankment to flow between our house and Main Arm Road. The flow is fast and turbulent and has been causing severe erosion with increasing velocity as the eroded chasm gets deeper and larger. The most recent flood ripped out two power poles and several large mature trees. We have lost ~1000m² of land despite my best attempts at stabilisation work over the past several years, hundreds of hours of regen work and hundreds of trees planted.

Stabilising the land to prevent further destruction of land and infrastructure would require major engineering works to allow the river to flow along its original course.

Until stabilisation works Main Arm Road and our house yard are in imminent danger of further erosion and slippage into the steep walled chasm. The deep chasm (~10m deep from road level) which is half-filled with water presents an immediate danger to vehicles travelling along this unbarricaded section of Main Arm Road.

It is paramount that road building and rebuilding in the vicinity of flood plains is carefully considered to ensure that assets are adequately protected. This translates to flood resilient roads but not always flood proof roads as flood proofing roads is expensive and sometimes results in unsustainable redirection of flood water.

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

Severe erosion of river bank, private land (~1000m² eroded away) and road infrastructure as well as loss of electricity infrastructure (two power poles) caused by the 1960s construction of a large road embankment (western approach to Sherrys Bridge, Main Arm Road) that effectively dams the flood plain and redirects flood waters. If the flood waters had not been redirected by the road embankment then the damage would likely have been negligible or non-existent.

1.2 Preparation and planning

In 2017 I wrote to the Byron Shire Council following the severe flooding of that year and alerted them to the worsening erosion, causal factors and continuing risks to assets and infrastructure at this site. The Council did not respond for several months and then when they did respond to my third follow-up email they advised that they would not be taking action to mitigate these risks.

1.3 Response to floods

N/A

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

The loss of two power poles resulted in our house having no power and hence the septic system could not run. There were no emergency generators available through emergency services. Fortunately my family and I were able to stay with our neighbour who did have power and Essential Energy replaced the two power

poles to restore power within nine days of the flood. The replacement poles remain at risk of destruction in future flood events if mitigating works are not carried out.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Local and State Government agencies are now engaged and seeking a solution. The solution is likely to involve significant engineering works at great cost. It is highly likely that funding would be required from State or Federal Government to remedy the site and protect it (electrical infrastructure, road, private property) from further erosion. The current situation presents an immediate threat to road users with a steep embankment dropping 5m in height from the road into a 5m deep large body of water. The edge of the water is 2m horizontal distance from the roadside and remains unbarricaded.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [IMG_1383.JPG](#)
 - [Post 2022 Flood.PNG](#)
 - [June 2004.PNG](#)
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MAIN ARM ROAD



MAIN ARM ROAD