

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, 20 May 2022 11:22:41 PM

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## Your details

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**Title** Ms

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**First name** Kathryn

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**Last name** Walker

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**Email**

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**Postcode** 2482

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## Submission details

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**I am making this submission as** A resident in a flood-affected area

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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 live in Mullumbimby. Water rose about a metre up my foundations, but fortunately not into my house. However, the mould growing on every surface is very disheartening.  
I will leave it to others to make a full response to this flood enquiry. I only wish to briefly address a few points that relate to my own experience (see below):

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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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### 1.1 Causes and contributing factors

My property has only flooded twice in the fifteen years I have lived here, both times occurring since the development of the Tallowood Ridge housing estate. There was community and council resistance to this development for a number of reasons, but council was bypassed and the developers went straight to the Land and Environment Court of NSW and were allowed to proceed. This seems to be a popular and effective pathway for development.

My concern is that insufficient consideration is taken for storm water runoff. Water that might have once partially soaked into the ground, now runs off roofs and driveways and over reshaped topography. In my case, it had nowhere to escape, forming an enormous lake behind my house.

Developments must be made with one in x-hundred year floods in mind, as we have had three such floods in the last five years in my area.

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### 1.2 Preparation and planning

In a serious flood, the town (and whole region) is broken up into small, cut-off pieces. Services such as evacuation centres cannot be reached. Telephony and power outages add to this isolation. NBN and the mobile phone network, both already so patchy, were cut off completely for days. At times, the only way I could get any news was word of mouth or listening to my car radio. Better communication is crucial.

Having seen the crippling and divisive effect of politics on our COVID response (causing vaccine and mask-wearing hesitancy), I think it is crucial that our disaster response planning is isolated as much as possible from political wrangling.

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### 1.3 Response to

In my limited experience, the emergency

**floods**

response was an entirely improvised volunteer response. Inspiring, but woefully inadequate.

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**1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery**

State and Federal response to recovery was appalling, inadequate and far too slow.

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**1.5 Recovery from floods**

Three months on, Mullumbimby looks completely normal, but it is not. We were experiencing a housing crisis before the floods, but now homelessness is an epidemic: whole families being split into smaller groups to be accommodated somewhere, couch surfing, sleeping in cars. I know several families who have had no choice but to move out of the area.

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**Supporting documents or images**

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