

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
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Your details

Title	Miss
First name	Katie
Last name	Magriplis
Email	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	2480

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	<p>We live on one of the main roads connecting the village of The Channon to Nimbin Road in Goolmangar. This road, Pinchin Road, regularly floods in several places, so we were prepared to have limited access to goods and services for a few days.</p> <p>On the morning of the 28 February, what we woke up to was nothing we could've expected.</p>
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Several of our neighbours had escaped their houses from rapidly rising flood waters in the early hours of the morning. There was no power or mobile reception, and the capacity for landline phones has all but disappeared in our area. Our only access to information was via the radio in the car. I was able to find 1 bar of 3G mobile reception, but it would drop in and out, and it was only enough to make short phone calls - we were unable to access the internet or send and receive text messages.

Upon hearing the flood water peaks in Lismore, I became terrified for the safety of the students I teach at Richmond River High campus, and for many of my friends and colleagues. Without power, we have no water, so the next few days was spent making sure we had clean water and securing the food we had. A lot of our food spoiled, because we've never had a power outage and flood simultaneously in the 13 years we've lived here.

The lack of telecommunications became the most difficult factor in the first week. We couldn't access any of the information or services mentioned on the radio without decent phone reception. We knew fuel and food were in short supply, and due to where we live we couldn't risk driving around to source either of these things as my partner and I each only had around one quarter of a tank of fuel in our cars. ABC local radio was a huge lifeline during this period. I was able to make phone calls briefly, and my mother (who resides in Newcastle) had to organise emergency food supplies to us and our neighbours as we had no other way of getting food. It seemed crazy that she could organise in an hour what we had been unable to do in 5 days. The power was off for three days, but our phone and internet were out for 11 days.

The ongoing significant impact on my family continues. Whilst we didn't lose our homes, both of my daughters lost their school (they attend Blakebrook public school) and my partner and I both work at Richmond River High, which as of 3

months later, we still have no certainty about its future. I have chronic medical conditions that have worsened and need more serious treatment as I have been unable to easily access necessary health care as many of my doctors and allied health services were heavily impacted by floods. My whole family are deeply traumatised by the flood disaster, and it feels like there is little understanding by people outside of the region of the ongoing physical and mental health impacts, and how long it's actually going to take to return to some version of normal.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

This is still happening. In my circumstances, my kids are temporarily displaced at their school, and I continue to struggle at work helping my students cope and supporting colleagues as well as dealing with the complete loss of years worth of teaching resources. We are currently teaching in ill-equipped classrooms with little resources. The working conditions would have to be a breach of WHS to be honest. The ongoing weather conditions are hampering the transition to our "pop-up school" for Richmond River High staff and students, but to hear that a local Catholic school has leased and begun refurbishment of space at Southern Cross Uni has felt like an additional blow to our school community.

1.5 Recovery from floods

There seems to be a slow moving response to road repairs. My road, Pinchin Road, is now the only road to access The Channon from Nimbin, Keerong and Koonorigan, which has impacted school bus services and the condition of the road is appalling and incredibly dangerous. Housing assistance has also been incredibly slow, and it feels like the recovery is just as traumatic as the flood disaster itself. There has been minimal tangible support for educators, despite us being

really on the frontline of assisting children and families in Lismore.

Supporting documents or images
