

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Saturday, 21 May 2022 8:22:30 AM

Your details

Title Ms

First name Katrina

Last name Geering

Email

Postcode 2472

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 I live in an area which was supposed to be "flood free". I was told when I purchased the property the house was above the 1:100 year flood level. The old time locals had never experienced floods.

During the days leading up to the first flood we had no direct contact with the SES or any other

official. The only information we obtained was by listening to the local ABC 94.5FM. One of my neighbours rang SES on afternoon before it flooded to seek advice about evacuating and was told we were fine where we were. 12 hours later there was at least 6 ft of water through our houses and we were isolated. With a bit more warning we all could have saved our most important possessions and been better prepared. I did take some preparations late in afternoon but never expected that level of water so they were not adequate and I lost lots some of which I could have saved.

We finally received an evacuation order on our phones at about the same time the water was entering the house. It said an evacuation centre " would be set up", so it didn't give us any idea which direction to head!! By that time attempting to evacuate would have been more dangerous and we would have had to drive on FLOODED roads!! Advice contrary to what we are always given.

At no time during or after the first flood were we ever approached to check people were safe. We did not attend an evacuation centre. Neither were the houses in my locality visited to assess whether people had got out or were dead inside them. I had watched a disabled neighbours house go under and if it wasn't for the neighbours sending a boat in to check he could have been stuck in the house. As it was he and an elderly neighbour walked through rising water to a house on a hill.

We received no advice before the second flood and no SES were prepared to give any advice on staying or going. When we finally received an evacuation order it told us to travel all the way to Lennox Head!!!! You couldn't even access Lennox Head from the motorway because of the flooding. It did mention there was also an evacuation centre in Evans Head which we could

have accessed at that time (in a round about way, not directly).

After the first and second floods we did not have internet or power. This made communication almost impossible. Finding out what to do and how to go about it has been difficult. No systematic attempt has been made to alert people to what is available, who can help, where the recovery centres are, how to get to them or even what you should or shouldn't do when you finally can access your flood affected home. For those of us who haven't experienced a flood before and aren't tradies we don't know what to do and lots of well meaning people give lots of well meaning and conflicting advice!

Too much reliance seems to be put on spreading information via social media which is useless if you have lost your internet, any technology you may have owned, or not be part of the social media generation. I know many older people who still don't know what help is available or where to go. Perhaps some sort of information sheet, or newsletters which are simple, straightforward could be produced and actually be delivered to peoples doors!! Many people have remained on their properties, have not had power or internet, have not had phone reception and may have lost their phones.

Please note, not all flood effected people live in a town so there are many people slipping through the cracks. I know of older people in town who still don't know what to do, where to go and what help is available.... and then there are all these "groups" setting up. How do you know who to trust??

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.2 Preparation Above in my story

and planning

1.3 Response to floods Above in my story

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery Above, sorry couldn't see whole form and put it all in 'my story'

1.5 Recovery from floods As above

Supporting documents or images
