

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 1 May 2022 11:38:18 AM

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	I experienced the climate breakdown on Feb 28, 2022, from the safety of my home in Mullumbimby. The rain was like nothing I had experienced. Tuckerroo Park became a lake and the neighbourhood was cut off at Left Bank Road and Coral Avenue. My friends asked if they could come to my place at 7am in the morning. They were the only house to be flooded in Tuckerroo
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Avenue. They stayed for two weeks as we washed and dried their salvaged items. I also cared for another friend's elderly dog for those weeks while she cleaned her home with local volunteers, and again for another fortnight when she travelled interstate to avoid the trauma of the second storm a month later. I also volunteered at the Mullumbimby District Neighbourhood Centre where we cooked hundreds of meals and fed the NSW services staff as well as the many homeless and displaced people who came each day for food and assistance. I saw firsthand the great need in our community and just how much even a simple free cup of tea or coffee would make in the new reality of these people. I also saw the incredible way volunteers rose to the challenge of providing comfort and resources to flood affected locals. As a broadcaster with our community radio station BayFM 99.9, I worked with other volunteers to keep listeners abreast of developments as the situation unfolded. Our station reaches people in remote areas that other's don't and by transmitting to the Shire we kept people connected in their time of need. By interviewing subjects who had been trapped by land slips in places like Upper Huonbrook and Main Arm, I helped share stories of our community's incredible resilience and keep spirits high when many had lost everything. It was an honour to serve at this time of need and I will continue to do so into the future.

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

Climate breakdown was witnessed first hand by the people of the Northern Rivers on February 28, 2022. Many of us who have worked in the climate movement for decades have been expecting just such an event as this. The catastrophic bushfires of 2019/2020, which claimed a property that I had owned for 32 years, was another example of the impact of global

warming on our nation. Australia is one of the largest exporters of coal which, when combusted, fuels climate change. We need to take responsibility for this. It was not a natural disaster. It was what climate scientists have been telling us all along - more intense and frequent weather events as our global climate system breaks down.

1.2 Preparation and planning

The drought broke in the Northern Rivers on January 18, 2020. For over two years prior to the "rain bomb", we had many intense storms including one memorable one in December 2020. The land was saturated. And yet no-one predicted that more would follow. The drainage in Mullumbimby has been signalled out as a big factor in the flooding of the town. This was never addressed.

1.3 Response to floods

Resilient Byron was formed to respond to just such a catastrophe and their members rose to the challenge. Yet I understand they were pushed aside when NSW Services finally came to help. A community-led response is critical as we know the lie of the land, literally. Community leaders need to be respected as knowledge keepers and authority holders.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Mullumbimby District Neighbourhood Centre is staffed by people who know the community and their needs. Along with Resilient Byron and people like councillor Mark Swivel, these leaders ensured the Civic Hall was made available to the flood affected and that they could also use the Ex-Services Club opposite. Donations from the community were quick coming and this area became the natural hub for distribution of goods.

1.5 Recovery from floods

And still it rains. The ground is sodden. The roads are pot holed. People are exhausted. Government processes are confusing at best and insulting at worst. The funds that were initially made available to conservative electorates, ignoring the Labor and Greens electorates, is a politically discriminatory move

that will stick in the craw of voters on May 21.

1.6 Any other matters

Our region needs progressive 21st Century planning for similar climate events in the future. We need to cut red tape and fast track sustainable living options so that we don't lose our community. We need to stop building on flood plains and approve houses already located there to be raised. We need to open up the disused rail line for bike tracks and small eco-villages along its route. I recently spoke with a man who has patented Flood Proof Homes. You can retro fit an existing house for \$60k, save on exorbitant insurance fees and also have peace of mind. This is the kind of thinking that is required now and yet he is being fobbed off by Local Councils. Perhaps you can help make these sorts of ideas happen as a matter of urgency.

Supporting documents or images
