

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 26 May 2022 9:11:05 PM
Attachments: [38D9A855-F81E-4A86-BFF5-8FCCB2021144.png](#)

Your details

Title Miss

First name Olivia

Last name Brown

Email

Postcode 2471

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, a then 18 year old was looking after my family property aswell as my 10 year old brother and 15 year old sister just outside of Coraki. Dad has passed and mum is an nation renowned vet who was in town (casino) at her work, flood out from home. We live on the river, so naturally I stayed up all night watching the river, I knew it would

break, but our idea of the river bank 'breaking', was it slightly running off into the paddocks. I stayed up just in case I had to move the cattle to a better paddock, I had already prepared the some 17 dogs in my care. Come Monday morning, at approximately 6am, the banks broke, already worst than what they had ever done before in my families 20 years living here. My neighbours brought their four horses into our big set of stables as their property was going under from the torrential rain we were experiencing. Water started flowing through the stables, something that had never happened before. My neighbour asked if this was normal, I said no, but said it will be okay, I didn't know what soon happened, could even occur. Within 20mins I was in the back paddock all alone trying to move our cattle and one of the horses. In waist deep water, I knew I was in trouble. I took my sandals off because I knew they would cause me to trip over, and if I did trip, I wouldn't be getting back up from the rapids around me. I clung onto the barbed wirer, hoping I wouldn't become a victim of the waters. I eventually got the cattle and horse into the front paddock where they simply swam over the fence and onto the road, which was the highest point around. Once I got back to the stables, I was in doubt that it would get worst, my neighbour looked into my eyes and said, "we need to get out of here". We instantly put the horse float on a car, a dog trailer on another and shoved all 17 dogs where ever they would fit into different cars. My neighbours led their horses to the road and tied them up, my 5 were in a front paddock, slowly going under. I chucked food in the car and my two siblings, thinking we would simply drive to the Coraki evacuation centre. When we drove down the driveway, through the rapids and out onto the road, we were instantly cut off in both directions. The nearby neighbours also had their cars out on the road and were cut off both sides of them, a raging current in between us. So much had happened from now, my cattle swam into a fence

that was locked by a code, I finally got the code just as their noses were going under. My 80+ year old neighbours were trying so hard to move their cattle, I new I should've helped them but my four other horses were about to drown. A neighbour and I cut the fences, the horses obviously had no idea and they were so terrified. We held hands and slowly made our way through the chest deep water trying to catch them. They were so scared, they kept running away from us into deeper water. I broke down crying, I knew that they would drown and I was so exhausted that I was on the verge of collapsing. My animals mean the world to me, my neighbour knew that. He eventually caught one of the horses and they all followed us to the road. While we were doing this, my neighbours wife let their horses go, thinking they would stay with mine. They all ran for home, we still haven't found them. Now my horses and cattle were on the road, not safe, but the safest place possible, I had 17 dogs to worry about. I was bleeding badly from my legs and feet yet I couldn't feel a single thing. My elderly neighbours house is higher than mine, I carried each dog over to there veranda and we now just sat inside, crying, trying to figure out what to do. There was no reception, we had 4 adults and 6 children, one of the children being 2years old. My neighboured prepared us for going in the water, everyone took off all heavy clothes and we tried to find life jackets. I wasn't scared of dying, I was scared of my animals dying. They only thing on my mind was my animals. I had five chihuahuas, a French bulldog and my late dads 15 yr old kelpie that I was in no way leaving. Through all this my mum was in the dark, she had no idea just how severe everything was but knew we were in danger. She was at the police station organising a helicopter. They couldn't see the house and there wasn't a single bit of land in sight for them to land at. We waited 7 hours before a searching SES boat saw us. My heart dropped at the fact I had to leave. We squashed our chihuahuas into school bags, I

grabbed my dad's dog and someone else had the frenchie. I took 7 dogs and left 10. Getting on the boat was the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life. I left behind my entire world and didn't know how much of it I'd come back to. The boat ride was so scary, we picked up so many more stranded people, sitting on their roofs, on their water tanks. We were so overloaded. Once we got to the SES headquarters, the rising water was about to come into their shed. A police officer drove us all through water to the evacuation centre, by now it was dark. I had 7 dogs, no leads, no collars. I door-knocked every house that wasn't submerged, people gave me towels, clothes baskets and rope. I completely broke down, I explained to a lady who comforted me that I was all alone with my two younger siblings and 7 dogs, I told her that I fought all day to save what I could and had to leave it all behind. The amazing woman let me use the back of her car in the canopy to put the dogs. I checked them all throughout the night and sat by them for the next few days, I couldn't lose them too. We got few next to nothing, there was no water either. The rations we did get, I gave mine to my brother or my dogs, I didn't eat for days. 3 days later my neighbour called me in a frantic telling me to get to the road. My late dad's friend was here to take us by boat back to casino where my mum and older sister were. I was so terrified of boats now but I needed to see mum. We took two boats all the way to Ellengown and then drove a short distance to casino. We got dropped off to my mum's vet however she was out saving some of our other cattle. Us kids have never ran to the fridge so fast in our lives. Mum and my elder sister soon arrived, we ran out to their car, we grabbed her and all hugged, we all hysterically broke down, I have never been so overcome with emotions. A couple days later my mum and I were lucky enough to get a helicopter home, the roads were still closed off. We got dropped on the road and walked up the destroyed driveway. We knew the house went

under, we didn't care, we just wanted to see our animals. Miraculously, we walked up the driveway to 5 horses, the 2 birds that I let go in my bedroom, the cats, a few cattle that didn't get washed away and most importantly, the 10 dogs that I left behind.

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	The new Highway at Woodburn is a dam. I didn't let the water escape.
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1.2 Preparation and planning	There was no planning or preparing. We had no idea that what happened was even possible.
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Supporting documents or images

Attach files	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3AC20E34-6D66-4A60-8293-A5081AA52456.jpeg• 17501E2C-3336-4064-A88A-20D7F7BAB056.jpeg• 38D9A855-F81E-4A86-BFF5-8FCCB2021144.png
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A pink rectangular sign is partially submerged in a body of brownish water. The sign has the text "WELCOME TO" at the top, "CORAKI" in large bold letters in the middle, and "THE MEETING OF THE WATERS" at the bottom. The sign is reflected in the water. In the background, there are green trees and a white house with a green roof.

WELCOME TO
CORAKI
THE MEETING OF THE WATERS



