

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 8 May 2022 4:35:10 PM

Your details

Title Mr

First name Robert

Last name Hayes

Email

Postcode 2473

Submission details

I am making this submission as Other

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 am a father and a long time resident of the far north coast of NSW Particularly Evans Head where we have raised our children . Our family have had four children directly impacted by this Catastrophic event , spread across three towns, one daughter in Lismore, one daughter in Coraki and another daughter and a son in Woodburn [They all have mortgages and young families . All

four of them have houses with floor levels based on a 100 year design flood event + 500mm freeboard [or higher] They all were inundated by between 700 and 1000mm of flood water. None of them were insured for flood due the excessive cost of this type of insurance. They also took into consideration the specialised flood modelling used by the NSW Department of Primary Industry & Environment inclusive of a built in freeboard safety factor. They have 6 houses extensively damaged between them as well as lost all their cars, work vehicles , tools and equipment as well as all their personal household items. They are now all located in rental properties and some are housed with family

I have also been a councillor on Richmond Valley Council for 10 years and have been across this event since day one so i am also a fair representative of the Lower river towns of the Richmond Valley Council , i have been hands on ,with the clean up, meetings with representatives of all levels of Government from day one until now . My roll as Councillor has put me in a position to make recommendations to council to be forwarded to State & Federal Governments for their consideration , some examples follow ; I took this Notice of Motion to the 2022 April Ordinary Richmond Valley Council Meeting and it was supported unanimously

I would like to recommend that Council makes a submission to any Inquiry, inclusive of representation of long-time local residents, agricultural groups and business organisations. Also, a full review of the flooding impacts in the vicinity of the Motorway rea,be included and design changes made, in conjunction with flood Mitigation measures to relieve the lower river of these impacts in the future.

I also asked that recommendations were added to agenda item 14.1 FLOOD RECOVERY UPDATE REPORT at the 2022 April Ordinary Richmond Valley Council Meeting and the following additions were supported unanimously

1/ That Council notes the information provided in this report.

2/ Forwards a copy of this agenda item to both our local members inclusive of the following four recommendations to further enhance the urgency of the information contained in the documents already with the state and federal governments

3/Council makes further and more vigorous representation to Federal and NSW Governments on behalf of our community for significant and ongoing financial support delivered in a timely manner for the Richmond Valley, following on from the two major floods that have destroyed people's lives.

4/Inform both levels of government, that community Members affected by these floods are overwhelmed and disgruntled by the need to deal with multiple agencies in order to access financial assistance to aide their recovery from these catastrophic events.

5/Make them aware that financial assistance needs to be released quickly and directly to affected residents, business and adjoining agricultural industries; OR; small towns like Coraki, Woodburn & Broadwater and their surrounding areas will not recover.

6/ That, the effort of the RVC to fund, repair and restore infrastructure in these towns will be wasted if the residents who make up these towns don't have the financial resources to recover and move forward.

I have personally handed a copy of these recommendations to our local Federal member Mr Kevin Hogan

I am also on the Woodburn Recovery & Advisory Group

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.1 Causes and

There is no doubt that the weather events were

contributing factors

catastrophic events , rainfall in the catchments was massive which has led to the flooding in the lower Richmond River towns of Coraki, Woodburn , Broadwater, Wardell & Ballina. I am of the opinion as are a lot of other long time residents and farmers in these areas , that ! these floods cold have been 1 - 1.5 m lower at the peak if flood mitigation works had been in place prior, as follows:

1/The permanent fabridam set up across the Tuckombil Canal that links the Richmond River with the Ocean via swampy creek and then into the Evans River was non existent.

2/ Other outlets to the ocean were in place , an example of this would be a channel at Boundary creek located between Broadwater and Wardell and the same to the South via Jerusalem creek ocean outlet

A combination of these mitigation works would have resulted in less water in the Richmond River leading up to and during the 2 x flood events

The impact on the five towns and the surrounding farm lands would have been a lot less and water would have only entered some properties that were below the 100 year flood level. The new M1 Highway around Broadwater and Woodburn in my opinion caused the water to double back into these towns and hindered the time it took for the water to recede.

1.2 Preparation and planning

The predicted peak flood heights throughout both events were never correct or up to date. we were told many times that the water had peaked and within 30 mins it had risen another 160mm this went on and on

The SES went off duty at a time when people needed rescuing , if it was not for the local policeman in Woodburn [Aam Bailey and his self appointed assistant from the local community [Emma Salmi] a lot of people would not have got out of their flooded properties.

1.3 Response to floods

Local Councils response, Excellent
Army, Excellent

State Government , at first when The Premier Dominic Perrottet visited local towns including Woodburn we thought he listened and was sympathetic, but to this day very little in way of financial assistance has hit the ground , i have just been informed that the money his government has promised has only had a distribution rate of 8%

Federal Government; Still waiting as we are in caretaker mode , which is a very poor excuse Insurance companies; very slow with responses to anything

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

The recovery centres set up in each town have supplied and organised the day to day resources needed to house and feed displaced people
The rubbish clean-up has been well organised and promoted by local councils

1.5 Recovery from floods

Get the grant money to the affected residents , abolish the ridiculous red tape and assist them further in getting back into their own homes [at the least give them some mobile housing [caravans in conjunction with a few rooms in their homes] that can be set up in their own properties so that they can work on the repairs needed , in a familiar environment with neighbours and not have them spread across the country side in makeshift camps , use that money to supply this need

1.6 Any other matters

Displaced community members need to be back on their properties as soon as possible , all funding should be directed this way , Each town and their business communities will begin to recover quicker when residents return.
Then;
Flood mitigation works should be the number one priority
A National insurance scheme needs to be established to protect these areas into the future, so that people have confidence to return to their family homes and pre flood lifestyles
The Towns Of Coraki , Woodburn and Broadwater should not be forgotten just because

they are smaller towns located in the Richmond Valley Council and not as recognised as their adjoining so called regional towns Lismore & Ballina who have had a large part of the media coverage during these events

Supporting documents or images
