

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 24 June 2022 8:05:25 PM

Your details

Title Mr

First name Ross

Last name Laing

Email

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Submission details

I am making this submission as A primary producer

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 own a property at Swan Bay near Woodburn in close proximity to the Richmond River, used for the production of beef cattle. I took up attendance in 2016 and in consultation with local old timers built sheds, covered cattle yards and residence to the the height of the 1954 flood, the highest flood on record at the time. In the flood subject to the inquiry I evacuated

most cattle and horses but due to the extreme rapid rate of rising water was unable to remove any machinery, equipment and residential goods. The flood waters rose 2.2 m above the highest ground on the property. My losses are in the order of \$200,000.

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

In the time since the floods I have been advised of a number of facts by a number of old timers that should be further investigated to ascertain their impact on the extreme height of the recent flood as opposed to any previous flood.

1. At the time of the previous record floods 1974 and 1954 numerous dredging operations existed on the Richmond River causing the depth of the river to be around two thirds deeper. Current example is the river depth at Coraki. At present it is around 2m deep. At the time of dredging it was reported to be 6m. There is a similar case in point at Swan Bay near York's Marine. Obviously a 6m deep river has the capacity to carry away a far greater volume of water and retaining that water inside the banks of the river in a flood than a 2 m deep river and would surely cause smaller flood height all round. If dredging sand is a profitable business, increasing the depth of the river would be a cost positive flood mitigation measure.

2. In the swan bay basin local rainfall causes local flooding from a build up of run off from water ways and drains but is unable to get away before the flood water ever comes down the river.

In previous time councils were responsible for cleaning major drains and these where well maintained. Local land owners maintained the smallest drains on properties and water was drained very efficiently. In the three days it takes flood water to arrive from Lismore the local water would have drained away and not compounded

the flooding rivers overflow.

Currently this is not the case. Council maintains no drains and the application process is onerous for local land holders to get approval to clean drains on their own property. Consequently most drains are in disrepair and local water backs up for weeks and requires only a little flood overflow to cause major flooding.

Removing any DA for drain cleaning would be a simple fix to allow local land holders to deal with this mitigating factor.

3. Could some investigation be made into the fact that the recently built highway on the eastern side of Woodburn was originally designed to be a bridge structure as it is on the eastern side of Kempsey. My understanding is that this was the original design. Why was this changed If this type of bridge structure was deemed necessary by the planning studies.

Supporting documents or images
