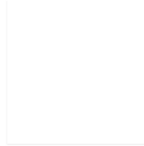


From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 20 May 2022 6:13:34 PM



Your details

Title	Mr
First name	Scott
Last name	Robinson
Email	<input type="text"/>
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	<p>My family have lived in the Woodburn and surrounding area for generations being part of the first settlers in the area. I've grown up with floods and the stories of the great floods of 1954 and 1974 and know the heights of these floods by landmarks and depths. Initially we were looking at 250mm for our area and with already sodden grounds we put in place our normal flood</p>
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plan , moving our cattle to our hilly bush block, lifting all our lower equipment to higher ground, moving our tractors and implements to our areas above the 54 height as well as our vehicle's. What eventuated was something none of us could ever conceive. I had been watching the water rise during the day but noticed differences ,colour direction of travel and rate of rise. That night we went to bed knowing it was still rising but still below the 54 height when we went to check in the early hours of the morning the waters had risen rapidly and well above the 54 height as it was halfway up our stairs on our two story house. I had to swim to get to my boat that was still in my carport and release it from its trailer then paddle it to our front steps . I knew at this point my parents maybe in trouble but i could not contact them but knowing they had a boat i was concerned but not overly worried. At around 10am we left our house by boat it was about 200mm from going in our second story. The enormity of the event really hit when travelling to Woodburn by boat across our cane fields where crops once stood less then 24hrs before and pastures where our livestock grazed and those long spoken landmarks no longer to be seen. When we pulled the boat up at the hill in Woodburn at the school and made our way to the assembly area we met my parents to find that their boat had become stuck under there carport and had to be rescued by a family friend standing in waist deep water in their second story. As a member of the Rural Fire Service i spent the next week helping my SES counterparts doing flood pick ups of stranded people and food drops to those that were still safe.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.1 Causes and contributing

The first weather event/flood in its initial stage was out of anyone's control but numerous

factors

factors came to play The design of the new Pacific Motorway did not allow for the free flow of water across the flood plain with insufficient piping under it. I was involved in the flood mitigation focus group as part of the design works. The group did not believe there was enough drainage under the new motorway this was then taken to a independent hydrologist by project team who agreed with us as the original modelling was based of the drains and pipes being 100% clean and unrestricted which was agreed would never happen so more piping was added to the design but from what i have seen never was added in construction . The water from the flood travelled in different directions to what it had ever done before the Motorway. Added to this the time taken for the water to recede was much longer then it had taken ever before from both the first and second flood. Other factors has been the total lack of maintenance to the existing flood mitigation infrastructure by ROUS. Drains that have not been cleaned, Flood gate control taken away from farmers who would open and shut them as required and not be left open because its a weekend .

The 1.8m fixed concrete weir on the Tuckombil canal needs to be removed and replaced once again with a Fabridam structure. The restriction this causes to water flow is immense when the Tuckombil canal river gauge reads say 4m you have to minus 1.8m off that in flow . So instead of 4m deep of flow you end up with 2.2m of flow relieving the Swan Bay basin and Woodburn area this can make a big difference to peoples homes and to farmers crop and pastures as well as aquatic life as the longer the water sits the more chance of a black water event.

The lack of maintenance to the levy system is also evident in the Bungawalbin area It is quite common knowledge that you do not allow trees to grow on dam walls as there roots compromise the integrity of the wall and allows water to enter which weakens the structure and they fail. This

has been the case over the last few flood events and has caused the unnecessary damage and loss to the people living in the Bungawalbin and Swan Bay Basin areas.

1.2 Preparation and planning

There needs to be more automated river height gauges in the Richmond Valley Catchment to allow for better forecast and predictions of river height and earlier warnings to residents in the catchments to assist the SES to provide the best service they can.

A review of evacuation centres with purpose areas set aside with back up power and communications.

In the case of Woodburn if the school was to be the evacuation point then a generator could be installed to power both the school and the telephone exchange thus keeping communications up for emergency services as this was a huge problem for the SES and others during the first event.

1.3 Response to floods

More gauges would assist in giving earlier warnings to the community because just like fires there are only so many red trucks to houses its the same case there are only so many yellow boats to houses.

1.5 Recovery from floods

What has made it harder for most is the speed at which insurance company's have responded and the uncertainty of coverage and speed of payment and unrealistic requests.

Their dragging their feet has had an impact on peoples mental health compounding the despair and uncertainty in their and their families lives.

1.6 Any other matters

Weather or not you are covered by flood or not by your insurance policy when the water exceeds the heights of the highest know flood by 2m+ there should be at least partial cover for the policy holder to cover the second story and not the ground level.

Most houses in the area second stories are at least 1m+ above the highest know flood that along with the exorbitant price of flood cover is

why residents don't have it and are prepared to wear the loss of their ground level as we know we are on a flood plain.

Why is it that there is such a difference between insurance company's for flood insurance to start with as i have been made aware that some banks offer affordable flood insurance to their customers.

Supporting documents or images
