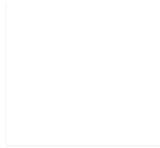


From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 13 May 2022 11:23:47 AM



Your details

Title	Mrs
First name	Shianne
Last name	Ford
Email	<input type="text"/>
Postcode	2478

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	On March 2, 2022 our home was inundated by flood water. The flood water reached a level of 250mm throughout the entire home. This was the first time the house has been flooded. We build the house in 2000 and moved in 6 April 2001.
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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 cause was the extreme weather event and the unknown that flooding would occur in areas previously not known to flood.

1.2 Preparation and planning

There was no warning that the waters approaching Ballina would be so significant that again areas not known to flood would do so. The night before the morning of the flood, a SES volunteer did attend our property about 6.30pm advising the next day would see higher water levels. This advice was heeded and we did have a plan for evacuation if needed, however, not having any exact information we did not foresee the water reaching the level it did. And our home flooding.

1.3 Response to floods

The day or days following, once the water receded enough to get back to the house everything was chaotic. There was no electricity, naturally, and phone and internet were down. The phone and internet down at this stage made the situation extremely grave. The immediate response from NSW Fire Service, from people we knew and many we did not know was gratefully appreciated. But, the lack of coordination of services, lack of advice of how to deal with the situation, what order of steps should be taken. Who provides what and where took what felt like too long to help make sense of how to respond to what had happened. In the end it was just our own actions that helped us get any sort of plan of action.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

As stated above the transition from incident to response was a bit chaotic. With no clear guidelines of how to proceed, ie what are the steps to be taken that provide the best outcome for yourself personally and the house and contents. Once things started to happen support did come in various forms. Initially the help just to clear the house of wet carpet and beds was extremely helpful. Just that alone gave you a

clearer picture of how to start the clean up. Our children, the neighbors, council and their staff were extremely helpful in clearing away flood damaged property.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Our recovery has moved along very slowly, the widespread nature of this event has slowed the response from the insurance company. We have tried to take this into account when dealing with the insurance company, who have not put any obstacles in our way, but also have not made the process seamless. I think we should have been allocated a contact team by the insurance company that was dedicated to an area or zone. They could coordinate services like assessors, remediation services etc and keep everyone informed and on the same page. A neighbor would have a remediation team, from the same insurer, visit their property one week and we would have them visit our property three weeks later.

1.6 Any other matters

Ballina does not need to flood ever again. Now that it is a known that an event like this can happen urgent steps must be taken. Ballina is a flood plain, since Ballina was founded in 1840 it has been consistently built up to the high density that it is today. Urban construction has replaced all the low lying areas that were the flood plain. Hard surface high density housing does not go hand in hand with the high rainfall area that is the Northern Rivers. Council continues to approve thousands of houses across East Ballina and Lennox Head that significantly impact on the hydrology of the area. The area that we live in was once swamp, there still is a large area of swamp surrounding West Ballina, some of which recently had a DA approved for high density over 50 living. We have built up these areas over 180 years but now climate change and injudicious town planning has caught up with us. We are like Lismore, Wardell, Coraki, Woodburn and surrounding rural areas on the end of a couple of rivers that flow through to the ocean. There is a lot to be done from

Lismore down to Ballina, a lot that has not been done and swept aside by Rous County Council. The apathy shown by Rous County Council in this has cost 5 lives in Lismore. I have lived in Lismore and Ballina since 1978, during that time have been through several floods large floods and many minor floods. Lismore City Council has also not done enough. Flood mitigation work by Lismore City Council may also have contributed to the type of floods affecting peoples houses. In their effort to protect the CBD and also build industrial land up so high in South Lismore that pushes water to residential areas. This is supported by the fact that residential areas never experiencing flood in Lismore beforehand are now flooding. Due to Ballina being the end point for the Wilsons River, Leycester Creek (which represents an extremely large catchment area) and the Richmond River it is impossible for the amount of water in an extreme weather event like this one to escape into the ocean. With the push back from tides the area will flood. With Emigrant Creek at West Ballina and North Creek at East Ballina also pushing water into the river at the junction of the river mouth it is impossible for a huge volume of water to escape through an extremely small outlet. The Richmond River and North Creek are extremely shallow and the river mouth extremely small. The river mouth needs to be widened, to make safe for boating and commercial fishing as well, lives have been lost on the bar. A wider river mouth would have multiple benefits to aide in safe boating reducing risk to lives and assisting in water release in flood events. The river mouth could be opened up to the south and similarly a flood channel could also be created at Mobbs Bay, South Ballina that could be opened during high water events. Lismore, Coraki, Wardell, Woodburn and Cabbage Tree Island along with Ballina need urgently some creative thinking to change, adjust and grow with climate change and our environment. Not rebuilding and repeating. Thank you for this opportunity to submit my

thoughts, best wishes with the inquiry Shianne

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [richmond-river-estuary-nl.jpg](#)
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