

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Wednesday, 4 May 2022 6:16:09 PM

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## Your details

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**Title** Ms

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**First name** Suzanne

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**Last name** Mills

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**Email**

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**Postcode** 2484

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## Submission details

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**I am making this submission as** A resident in a flood-affected area

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**Submission type** I am making a personal submission

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**Consent to make submission public** I give my consent for this submission to be made public

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## Share your experience or tell your story

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**Your story** We live on Tweed Valley Way, South Murwillumbah, across from the South Murwillumbah Infant School (no longer used as a school).  
In 2017 we just scraped through not having the water come into our top floor, by approximately 5 cm, our downstairs room and laundry was trashed. We lost 2 personal cars, 1 work van and

2 motorbikes and lots of work tools and equipment. These were not saved due to the belief we were safe from flooding, plus we had no time as the Blacks Drain blew out around midnight and in 2 hours, at 2am, we were woken by neighbours saying we were already halfway under.

After 2017, believing that that was a 1 in 100 year flood, as was announced, decided we would stay and renovate. Over the past 5 years we have poured our hearts and souls into this beautiful old house.

Jump to Sunday the 27th February 2022, a meisley 5 years later, just 1 month short of the anniversary of 2017 flood. As we watched the water rise in the river we decided this time, without receiving any evacuation messages, there was 1 SES vehicle who announced something further south but nothing at our end of the row of houses, to start moving our vehicles up our driveway so we can get them out if required, we finally had to park them on the road, due to continuing rising water, making it a single lane road, but thats ok, no one could get through anyway, as South and North were blocked. All day and all through the night, with out a wink of sleep, we lifted everything we could to the top level or put it in our work vehicles. This was not easy as my partner has a recent hernia. We still didn't know if the things on the back deck would be safe. Somethings just had to be left under the house and sacrificed.

Keeping an eye on the level until it finally came into our top floor, approximately 100mm. We gathered up the dog and 2 cats (who were highly stressed) and sat in our car until daybreak. We took a walk down to Blacks Drain at 4 am only to witness once again the Murwillumbah River pouring over the newly built drain like rapids. Adding to this deluge of water was the councils town water pumping out 1000's of litres of water as the pipe had broken.

Thankfully I was able to contact the Department of Education where we were given permission to break into the building so that roughly 20 people could find a dry spot to rest and wait out the time till they could inspect their homes. As we on the South side, between Smith St and Blacks Drain have no official evacuation centre and by the time we have used every last minute to lift our belongs as high as we could it is too late to get to the "official" evacuation centre in the main centre, the TAFE.

Since the flood we have had basically no internet, near on 2 weeks, which makes it extremely hard to do our work, mine is run through an app. I have to pay my partners staff through an App, which means I have to drive over to town (approx 4 klm) to do any work involving the apps. The phone reception is also atrocious, with drop outs or not even ringing.

We believe that, after speaking to a local who has lived here all his life, 60 years, and uses one of the old sheds near our house, that the flooding on the South side, and particularly where we are, has never flooded like it has in both 2017 and now even higher in 2022, it has only encroached on our back driveway about half way up, still meters from the house. What has changed to make this happen? To make the levels rise well over 3 meters. There are a few factors, the main one is the levy wall. Council built a wall in the 1970's to protect the CBD, and then built it higher in the early 1990's when the river nearly tipped over it, and which it failed to do this time. Will you raise it again? We on the south side have become Councils "sacrificial lambs", not only being us mere house holders, but numerous business, which may even out number those in the CBD.

Also the old railway line is causing flood water to dam up as it cant get through under the old bridge fast enough amd the so called cause way near the tank supplier clogs up with cars, tanks

and debris which also causes damming. The new "rail trail" needs to be lowered to ground level for a long stretch so water can get away to the flood plain.

You CAN NOT fight mother nature. You CAN NOT control a raging river, she WILL go where SHE wants. Your wall has caused more heart ache than its reduced, I believe.

We love this old house of ours, we love our neighbours, we want to stay, but we want to be safe and have the peace of mind that our homes will be safe from further flooding.

In 1990 the levee was raised and TSC paid 100% of the cost to raise some of the houses due "the small increase in flood levels for south Murwillumbah". Council itself has admitted that building the levee would cause more flooding in South Murwillumbah.

I have been made aware of the Voluntary House Lifting Scheme, approved in 2020, after the 2017 event. How many of the people affected by the 2017 floods, and were eligible, have moved away? How many of these people even knew about the scheme?

How many of these people could afford a third of the cost? Which you estimated at \$90,000, but we've just been quoted \$40 - \$50K. How many of these people actually got approved to have their houses raised and went ahead with it? The answer to the last question is 2. Why? Because State Gov. Can only afford 2 per year. There was 10 houses short listed, so that leaves 8. So its going to take 4 years for the remaining houses to be done. Out of those 8 houses how many are now, after this flood event, going to finally throw up their hands up and say "I'm done". Now, Council, you have even more houses that have been inundated with flood water. What is going to be offered to them? A Voluntary House Raising scheme that will take years to come to fruition? How many more floods

do we have to go through before its our turn to be raised?

I would like to see this being offered to the 2022 victims. #cuttheredtape  
#liftusup #takedownthewall #sacraficiallambs  
#lowerrailtrail

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## Terms of Reference (optional)

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

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### 1.1 Causes and contributing factors

Blacks drain busting again and railway line causes damming

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### 1.2 Preparation and planning

Put as much as we could in work vehicles also up on deck ontop of tables, spa, bbq chairs. Packed food, bedding, animals to take to school across the road

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## Supporting documents or images

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### Attach files

- [inbound4565115673314994419.jpg](#)
  - [inbound4110056861097828223.jpg](#)
  - [inbound4123836666678192756.jpg](#)
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