

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Saturday, 25 June 2022 2:43:36 PM

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## Your details

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**Title** Mr

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**First name** Thomas

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**Last name** Bowers

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**Email**

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**Postcode** 2478

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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** Our home is on Dolphin Drive in the Ballina Quays and was flooded on 1Mar22 as the flood waters moved downriver from Lismore. We could not get back into the property for 4 days following as the water levels remained elevated on surrounding roads. I'm curious if this was preventable as conceptually if one were to restrict / slow the flow of water from upstream as

Ballina approaches high (king) tides, and then removes the restriction as the tide subsides, the flooding may have been reduced or eliminated entirely in Ballina.

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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

The flooding of our area was as a result of floodwaters moving downstream in the Richmond River. This excess water met the king tide from the ocean on the afternoon of 1Mar22 culminating in extensive flooding to the Ballina area. If these floodwaters had been restricted as high tide approached, and then had the restriction removed following the high (king) tides we may not have had the flooding experienced.

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### 1.2 Preparation and planning

I once worked on the construction of a twin unit nuclear power plant and they used large (3.6M and 4.9M) ocean discharge pipes to remove the plant's cooling water to the ocean, just over 1km to sea. Conceptually using something similar to move water from upstream of Ballina directly to the ocean would also mitigate the flooding issue that Ballina experienced. If we use the 1Mar22 flood as a guide, this process would allow for the pumping of the excess water offshore, but would only be required when the tides were incoming and approaching the high.

With respect to restricting the flow of water coming downstream in the Richmond as one approaches high tide, it may be as simple as drawing a restrictive net across the river at a relatively narrow point, and not restricting the top metre or so, such that floating debris will not get caught up in it.

Both of the above come at an expense, but when we consider the expense associated with the flooding of hundreds or thousands of homes and businesses, the cost / benefit analysis may stack up.

Last but perhaps most importantly, flood

avoidance needs to be kept in front of mind in town planning, and to be frank it hasn't been. Ballina Shire Council has been approving developments on areas that were once wetlands and raising the land height requirements of all new developments while sticking their head in the sand about where all of the water is to go, be that from rainfall or flood. Is the incentive for new development so great that we ignore the obvious consequences of flood prevention? This seems exceedingly ignorant to me and reflects very poor planning.

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### **1.3 Response to floods**

Though the flood response was commendable in so many respects, I'd suggest that more coordinated action would be quite beneficial. I had about half a dozen different groups come to my home asking if I needed assistance. If there was a well communicated mechanism for people to register when they need assistance, the level of assistance, and the urgency of the request it may assist significantly. Likewise it would have been handy to know what assistance was available. Personally I would not call the SES to ask them to remove wet carpet from my home when I know that they had far more important and urgent things to attend to, but when the footy club turned up at the door and offered to rip out the saturated carpet in my livingroom, I gratefully accepted the offer. Perhaps if a common register listed common needs (such as ripping out carpet), then "helpers" who are willing and capable of doing those tasks could link up to fulfil the need.

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### **1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery**

I'm pretty forgiving in this regard given the number of homes which were inundated but the (CGU) insurance assessor for our home repairs just showed up on 21Jun22, over 3.5 months after I reported that we had been flooded and registered a claim. Now we await the report and in the meantime we are in limbo about how to plan our future. We are far more fortunate than so many others in that our home is still liveable, but I can't help but wonder if there is room for

improvement in this area.

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**1.5 Recovery from floods**

Many, including us, have yet to begin ripping out walls, etc and still have damaged goods to dispose of yet the Ballina Shire Waste Facility has stated that they will no longer take flood damaged goods for free. While it was absolutely magnificent that they so comprehensively addressed the immediate needs following the flood, it would be nice if consideration were given to residents who are in the queue for flood repairs and have yet to have them get underway.

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**1.6 Any other matters**

As a community I was overwhelmed with the support people were providing to each other, and many still are.

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**Supporting documents or images**

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**Attach files**

- [20220301 Ballina Quays Aerial.jpeg](#)
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