

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Thursday, 19 May 2022 6:46:45 AM

## Your details

Title	Ms
First name	Virginia
Last name	Hill Seymour
Email	[REDACTED]
Postcode	2480

## 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	After observing the prevailing weather and having been informed by the SES that there was an expectation that there would be minor to major flooding of the Wilson River at some stage from the 28th February I prepared my house accordingly. Nothing stored under the house except a ride -on mower, washing machine and a hot water service. Garbage Bins , Gardening
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tools and Gas Bottles are the other things that live down (i tied these down and figured they survive).

My Gate level is 10.35m, my house floor level is 12.91m that is 500 mm above the 1 in 100 of 12.4m. The 2017 (11.6m) Flood entered my yard by 1.1m, the 1974 Flood (12.2m) I am not sure (1.85m?) because i was 4 years old but i don't think that it came in the house. Point being that these previous mega floods as a worst case benchmark while catastrophic in the own right, they have never entered the house.

After being satisfied that all was prepared for the expectant flood, I evacuated, my friend [REDACTED] was at the house when i left, her plan was to go and stay with her friend at lismore heights (higher ground).

At 5.39pm Sunday 27th I received "SES FLOOD EVACUATION WARNING for low lying parts of Lismore. Evacuations are likely sometime on Monday 28th February 2022. Prepare now. Listen to the radio. [www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au) or Tel 132500" - It was raining a lot.

Watching the weather eventually i went to bed about 10.30pm and woke up 5.00AM to the sound of continued rain. I picked up my phone and saw that i had 2 messages.

FIRST message at 12.45 am "SES EMERGENCY FLOOD ADVICE. FOR OUR SAFETY EVACUATE TO HIGH GROUND NOW ONLY IF SAFE TO DO SO. AN EVACUATION CENTRE IS OPEN AT SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY P BUILDING, RIFLE RANGE ROAD, ONLY TRAVEL VIA KEEN ST, LEYCESTER ST AND NEW BALLINA ROAD VIA LISMORE HEIGHTS (specified roads), DO NOT ENTER FLOOD WATERS, FLOODING AROUND THE 1974 LEVEL POSSIBLE. LISMORE LEVEE WILL OVERTOP. THIS IS A

LIFE THREATENING SITUATION! RISK TO LIFE IMMINENT. THIS IS A RAPIDLY EVOLVING SCENARIO. FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CALL 000.

Second Message: at 4.26 am "WATER IS IN THE HOUSE" from [REDACTED] who apparently did not evacuate as planned.

I immediately phoned [REDACTED] who i could hear was terrified. I heard her 16yr old cat howling in the cat box, also terrified. i got off the phone and tried to raise the alert that [REDACTED] was at the house and needed rescuing.

I called the SES to no avail. I called 000 and spoke with police (they said that they would take the report). Then i got onto face book and there i saw the horror unfolding, so many others in the same position as my friend [REDACTED]. I posted and kept re-posting on facebook (FB) that she needed rescuing as i could see the community were coordinating rescues. I kept calling [REDACTED] back to check in and keep her posted. i last spoke to her at 8.30 am - she was standing on a kitchen bench in knee deep water. We lost contact.

I called the SES again to no avail - i called 000 again , the police said don't call back unless i have new information. I went to the evacuation centers i searched for [REDACTED], I posted on FB that if any one new of her rescue to let me know or get her to contact me.

Basically i spent the whole day helping at the evacuation center(s) while hoping that i would find [REDACTED] real soon. It wasn't just [REDACTED] that i was worried about, it was all my friends and community that i knew were effected. During the day i heard so many stories of the similar horror experience. I eventually heard from [REDACTED] at 4.10 pm via a short text message from her to say that she was safe, she had been rescued at 11.00 am.

It was then 4 Days before i could gain access across town to my house, i didn't even know if it would still be there after all of the stories i had heard. I filled the anxious wait helping at the evacuation centers, what a disaster, the adrenaline carrying everyone through. Everyone was pretty much in shock.

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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

Climate Change (change like we have observed every other epoch before this) and human accelerated.

Terrible -flood plain management including denuded land including riparian areas, toxic substances stored in flood plain, objects that can projectile in flood water (shipping containers etc).

Lack of social equity , Housing affordability- (generally speaking those that live (owner occupier or rent) are of low income and do not really have a choice and would need meaningful assistance to move out of the flood prone land.

Inaction with being proactive and moving off the flood plain.

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### 1.2 Preparation and planning

Broader - planned retreat of residences from flood prone land NOW (not the pretend unfunded plan that is currently in place and not in ten years from now)

Households better equipped with Flood Plan and encouragement to keep a flood emergency kit with comms, first aid, inflatables, torch etc.

Direct real-time communication an river and weather conditions in the upper catchments

to Inform timing and response on flood prone land.

Community strongly encouraged to evacuate earlier.

People in the community that require assistance to evacuate eg; people with disabilities, elderly people, registered on a list - get "buddied", checked on, assisted.

Perhaps a program to develop a stronger neighborhood program, smaller town groups

Town meeting well in advance (DAYS) of a developing system - the SES held a town meeting prior to a recent severe weather event event that did not eventuate. it was good to have this to set up a plan and provide the community with clear direction to prepare.

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### **1.5 Recovery from floods**

Paid leave to attend to personal recovery and project management

Funding to support the grass roots local resilience groups that are providing valuable support for the community, eg: koori mail, resilience lismore, trees not bombs cafe (i know there are more- these three stand out

Bulk buying Group (cooperative) for building materials required to recover

registry for out of town contractors wanting to list to conduct flood related repairs perhaps and app like "airtasker" to link the jobs with the workers.

Billeting system (i guess an Airbnb style app) for emergency housing, trades, / volunteers

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### **1.6 Any other matters**

The unnecessary destruction caused by "mud

Army" at the risk of sounding ungrateful, they need inductions or training or something. They smashed my front windows with a sledge hammer so that they could throw out furniture, what was thrown out the window smashed and broke my staircase, stain glass doors on the rubbish pile. basically \$1000s more in damage.

Fraudsters and an scam contractors taking advantage

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### **Supporting documents or images**

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