

INQUIRY INTO RESPONSE TO MAJOR FLOODING ACROSS NEW SOUTH WALES IN 2022

Organisation: Tyalgum District Community Association (TDCA)
Date Received: 31 May 2022



TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION [TDCA]

ABN 27 506 140 369

Our Ref: TDCA:2016066/Flood1

20 May 2022

Professor Mary O'Kane AC and Mr Michael Fuller APM
NSW Flood Inquiry 2022

By: Online Portal

Dear Professor O'Kane and Mr Fuller,

[NSW Flood Inquiry Submission 2022](#)

We refer to the NSW Flood Inquiry and make this submission in accordance with the published terms of reference.

Introduction

Tyalgum and its district is situated in the upper catchment of the Tweed River west of Murwillumbah on the Oxley River, a tributary of the Tweed River. Tyalgum village is about 20 km from Murwillumbah, has about 500 residents and the district has about 1000 residents.

Like the rest of northern NSW, an extended period of rain preceded the very heavy rainfall that caused the downstream flood events in March & April 2022. The ground was already fully saturated and nearly all rainfall became runoff.

In the upper catchments in the Tyalgum District (Tyalgum Creek, Pumpenbil and Brays Creeks) flash flooding occurred resulting in landslips that blocked roads and submerged bridges. For example, the Perkins Bridge at Tyalgum was covered in water for several hours on a number of occasions in March, April and May 2022. Tyalgum was relatively fortunate in terms of direct impact; no houses were lost. However, the deep penetration of water into the soil over a prolonged period has caused landslips and subsidence around Tyalgum, resulting in road blockages and road damage.

The most critical infrastructure damage is a major landslip a few km east of Tyalgum on Tyalgum Road that has made Tyalgum Road entirely impassable. There are two other landslips on Zara Road, just north of the village, that have destroyed half of the

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road, leaving single lane traffic open. This is the only viable access to and from the Village to the outside world.

The critical subsidence on Tyalgum Road has completely destroyed a section of about 70 m of the road. The main road access between Tyalgum and Murwillumbah is impassable. Council has suggested 6 to 12 months to fix it as per the TSC media release that may be accessed at: <https://www.tweed.gov.au/council/news-updates/latest-news/media-releases/1327384-geotech-experts-confirm-tyalgum-rd-at-risk-of-further-slippage>

The closure of Tyalgum Road, the main access road for residents of Tyalgum and District, is having a significant impact on the community at all levels. That is because Tyalgum is at the end of the Tweed Caldera, a natural cul-de-sac hemmed in by mountain ranges with only 3 ways out:

- Tyalgum Road to Murwillumbah, 23 km. It is now impassable. It is worth noting that Tyalgum Road has been steadily upgraded from a very average, narrow, bitumen road to a good quality secondary road over the last 5 to 7 years. It has been developed as the main access to and from Tyalgum for Tyalgum and District residents and prior to the flood event, carried the vast majority of The District traffic to and from Murwillumbah and beyond.
- Zara Road to Chillingham Village, north 11.4 km, then east on Numinbah Road to Murwillumbah, 15 km. Both of those roads have severe landslips with traffic reduced to single lane at 2 places on Zara Road and 1 on Numinbah Road. These roads currently provide the only viable access to Murwillumbah from Tyalgum. They were windy, narrow, bitumen roads before the floods, not suitable for high traffic loads. Zara and Numinbah roads are breaking up rapidly now that they take all the traffic from Tyalgum and District, as well as from Numinbah and Chillingham, together with all of the heavy equipment involved in the post flood maintenance and reconstruction.
- Byrrill Creek Road. This is a local access road primarily used by residents of Byrrill Creek locality. About half of this entirely gravel road has been seriously impacted by flood water. The road is in a very tenuous condition. It would not stand any significant increase in use and it requires major repair. Most people would hesitate to use the road in its current condition, and even then, only with a 4WD vehicle. It is not listed for repair on the TSC website. It is not a viable option as main access to Tyalgum.

The caldera tourist drive from Queensland brought visitors over the border from Nerang through Numinbah to Chillingham, to Tyalgum and then on to Murwillumbah, or in reverse, from the coast to Murwillumbah to Tyalgum or through Chillingham to Tyalgum. These are favoured routes for weekend motor bike riders, bus tourists, and motorists on daytrips enjoying a weekend in the country or even week-day drive into our scenic valley.

The economy of Tyalgum village is almost entirely based on visitors coming to the camping ground, the Tyalgum Hotel, the famous Flutterbies Café, the historic Tyalgum General Store, our celebrated Gelato Shop, to browse the numerous small shops or to just enjoy the old-world country ambience of an historic village. The main

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route to Tyalgum for visitors (Tyalgum Road) is now impassable, and the alternative route (Zara Road) is heavily damaged, reduced to a single lane in several places, and is rapidly deteriorating under the increased traffic load. All these issues thoroughly discourage visitors to our village.

Unsurprisingly, the visitation rate to Tyalgum has dropped dramatically; the weekend motor bike riders are close to zero, when we used to have hundreds every weekend. This is because the open roads are in very poor condition and there is no longer a through road system. The downturn in business is significant; trade has reduced as much as 40% at the Tyalgum hotel and staff hours have been reduced. If the Tyalgum Road stays shut for a prolonged period, it is likely that businesses will shut, especially for businesses that have only just survived to 2 year-long impact of covid restrictions.

For a Tyalgum resident, the trip to Murwillumbah is further, takes longer, costs more and is riskier. Many people, especially our senior citizens, are justifiably concerned at having to drive such poor roads with relatively high traffic density and with many trucks. Frustration is causing reckless behaviour in some drivers: running the single lane lights; overtaking on double lines and tailgating. It is only a matter of time before a serious accident occurs.

It is imperative that, at the very least, a single lane bypass be constructed to open Tyalgum Road as soon as practicable. A longer-term fix must also be instigated sooner rather than later. If the TSC estimate of 6 to 12 months for permanent repair is correct, then it will have dire impact on our village businesses and the wider district community. Frankly, it seems to us that the true estimate is much longer at the present pace of planning and action on other similarly damaged sites in the Tweed.

We note, for example, that the Scenic Drive Landslip has been prioritised over Tyalgum Road: <https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/council/news-updates/latest-news/media-releases/1334254-progress-made-on-scenic-drive-landslip-repair-works>

No doubt difficult decisions are being made by the TSC. But it is difficult to understand why ALL the road damage across the Tweed and the Northern rivers generally is not being managed at a state level as a single project, with serious resources being applied to recover our community from this devastating and widespread event as quickly as possible. The TSC appears to be conducting each major road repair as its own mini-project, and delays for Tyalgum and Zara Road repairs are inevitable if that continues.

Such delays will be devastating for our community. For example, the takings at Andy's service station at Brays Park, near Murwillumbah, has diminished by 25% since the Tyalgum Road closed, as it was the nearest fuelling point to Tyalgum on Tyalgum Road. Now Tyalgum residents are forced to use Zara/Numinbah Road, and do not travel past Andy's service station.

Currently, Tyalgum residents are entirely dependent on Zara and Numinbah Road for access, and continued access is very tenuous. Neither road appears to have been designed for high level traffic or constant heavy loads. Along with the constant wet weather, these roads are rapidly breaking up. The narrowness of the roads ensures

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that the wet verges are breaking away under constant and heavy traffic – they would do so even if it was dry. Subsoil moisture has softened sections and the bitumen is cracking open under traffic load. Potholes abound.

It is notable that Zara/Numinbah Road is not on the Tweed Shire Council's 'list' for repair, even though the road is in desperate need of repair:

<https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/community/roads-transport/roadworks-closures>

There doesn't seem to be a plan to deal with the landslips on Zara and Numinbah Roads. Considering the long forecasts of continued wet weather, and if further slips occurred, it is quite possible that Tyalgum would be cut off from Murwillumbah and essentially become isolated.

We do not intend any criticism of the Tweed Shire Council (TSC). The TSC are performing wonders with limited resources in just keeping the roads open, and the damage to the Shire's roads is both widespread and severe. Nevertheless, Tyalgum's access to the outside world can only be described as precarious.

The health, mental wellbeing, economy and livelihoods of Tyalgum Village, and Tyalgum and District residents are at stake should a Tyalgum Road fix or a Tyalgum Road by-pass not be instigated with all due despatch.

The TDCA has engaged in correspondence with the TSC, and we **attach** for the Inquiry's consideration the following documents:

- TDCA letter to TSC dated 5 May 2022
- TSC letter to TDCA dated 11 May 2022

We provide the following summaries of the impacts being experienced by our community on an ongoing basis. Given the damage to Tyalgum Road is extensive, and the priority for its repair seems to be low at both the TSC and State level, these impacts are current, ongoing, likely to persist for 12 months or longer, and are having a devastating impact on our community.

Specific impacts due to the closure of Tyalgum Road

Please note that all respondents agreed that their details and information could be included in this submission.

Tyalgum Hotel

Interview with proprietor.

- Bars, accommodation, bistro, events
- Trade has reduced 40%.
- Hours for all staff have been cut (13 staff).
- Much reduced requirement for accommodation.
- The previous average of 30 lunches per day has reduced to 4 or 5.
- Weekend trade has very significantly reduced because motor bike riders and tour drivers are not coming.

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- Considering closing Mondays and Tuesday due to lack of trade.

Tyalgum Ridge Retreat

Phone interview with owner

- School children bused in for week-long school camps. Also offer weekend accommodation.
- Buses bring school kids to a retreat are still coming but the drivers are not happy about Numinbah and Zara Roads.
- Week accommodation has dropped to zero; 20 to 25% of pre-flood trade.

Andy's Garage, Bray Park

Interview with Andy

- Fuel bowser. The first service station encountered when driving from Tyalgum on Tyalgum Road. It is on the outskirts of Murwillumbah. Note that there is no fuel available in Tyalgum.
- 25% reduction in fuel sales.

Steve Guinea

Phone interview with Steve.

- Trucking, fencing, landscaping.
- Trucking is 1/3rd of the business. With recent new contracts it will be 50%.
- Normally can do 8 round trips to Tyalgum per day. Now can do just 4, a 50% reduction. This is due to extra distance, much increased traffic, slower driving on poorer roads, stop lights and constantly pulling over to allow faster traffic through.
- Increased fuel use by one tank per week (350 L tank @ \$2 L = \$700).

John Bartrim

Phone message.

- Produce supplies to fruit and veg markets at Buderim, Currumbin, Cleveland, 6 days per week.
- Extra truck tank of fuel per week (~\$200)
- Two, wheel alignments required already due to poor road conditions.

Enclume Jewellery

Letter attached.

- Bespoke jewellery micro-business, sole trader, highly dependent on tourism.
- Decline in visitation to Tyalgum due to closure of Tyalgum Road and the poor-quality alternative.
- This has resulted in 80% reduction of sales. Minimal weekend sales and no weekday visitations or sales.
- Surviving with Flood relief payments of \$642 / fortnight but that will end soon. Very uncertain about immediate future.
- If road is not opened for 12 months, the future of this business is very tenuous.

Tyalgum Gelato Shop and Marco Polo Merchant Pty Ltd

Letter attached.

- Import and distribution business relying on efficient distribution from Tyalgum and Murwillumbah. Retail Gelato Shop open in Tyalgum on weekends.

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- Well known and well patronised gelato shop experiencing 50 to 70% decline in sales due to the road closure and poor access through Chillingham.
- Long term closure of Tyalgum Road will seriously undermine the operation and survival of the two businesses.

Summit Organics

Phone interview.

- Grow and supply organic fruit and veg to markets 5 or 6 times per week at New Brighton, Mullumbimby, Murwillumbah, Merrimac.
- Additional time and fuel burden for produce supply due to longer, slower route.
- Additional cost estimates annualised:
 - \$37,000 trucking – wages and fuel.
 - \$30,000 for freight costs for supply of hay, compost, road gravel, infrastructure materials and equipment.
 - \$5 to \$6,000 miscellaneous, e.g., tyres, wear, and tear on trucks.
- A staff member, who lives on the Murwillumbah side of 'The Crack', has 4 hours round trip per day. It was less than 1 hour for a round trip prior to the flood event. Costing \$100 per week increase in fuel.

Independent registered visitor accommodation

Report to the website.

- Cottage on property; short term rent; visitor accommodation.
- Normally fully booked. Since road closure they have had a significant drop in new bookings.
- Tourists depend on moving about the district and Tweed Region easily. Visitors have always provided positive feedback but now that has changed due to bad roads, poor access, stop lights and heavy traffic on secondary roads that are not suitable for the traffic load being placed upon them.

Paddington of Tyalgum

Report via email.

- Boutique women's wear shop.
- Flood event and subsequent road closure has had a huge impact on my business.
- Turn-over has been reduced by about 75%
- Foot traffic reduced by 90%.
- I manage a shop in Murwillumbah so still have to pay wages in the Tyalgum shop.

Flutterbies Cottage Cafe

Letter attached.

- Café, bakery, entertainment.
- About 70% reduction in trade since the road closure.
- Current access is very poor and deters visitors.
- Not comfortable promoting visits to Tyalgum under the current circumstances that could put people in danger.

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Soul Fire Genesis

Letter attached.

- Organic chocolate products
- Significant reduction in visitors and business.
- External orders significantly reduced because many customers affected by floods elsewhere in northern NSW and Qld.
- Concerned about becoming completely isolated should further road damage occur.

Tyalgum Licensed Post Office has made a separate submission to the inquiry.

Social Media Survey

A Facebook page was set up for people wanting to respond to the impact of the Tyalgum Road closure on themselves, their family or business: Tyalgum Road Action Campaign:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/755050705871599>

The page received 14 responses from residents from Tyalgum Village and District, include respondents from both sides of 'The Crack' (Tyalgum Road closure).

The major points made were:

- The only accessibly road, Zara and Numinbah Roads are dangerous, due to being narrow windy, potholes, heavy vehicle, increased traffic, and due to frustrated drivers running red lights, overtaking on double white lines, and tailgating.
- Increased time to get to shops, services, work, children to schools, sport, etc.
- Increase costs to drive anywhere. Fuel prices and consumption increased significantly.
- Increase wear and tear on vehicles due to poor road conditions.
- Inability to provide services due to time, costs, and danger of roads, e.g., no longer able to child mind for working daughter.
- Some low-income families live in the district due to affordable rents. The road closure has increased their costs and ability to travel.
- Some people have serious health issues and are anxious about receiving or attending medical services when needed.
- The Tyalgum economy depends on tourism and that has dropped off dramatically.
- Roads not suitable for heavy vehicles.
- Concern that should further landslips occur Tyalgum would be cut off.
- Tourism reviews are more pessimistic because access is not good, in and out, and to tour around the region.
- Holiday and overnight bookings reduced.
- For emergencies, the whole area is at much greater risk.

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- Vandalization of lights increases motorist risk.
- Pensioners struggling with budgeting are now finding it more difficult.
- No longer making social visits to Murwillumbah e.g., dinner out.
- Courier driver refused to deliver because of the road. Had to drive to Murwillumbah to collect.
- Family living is more costly and more time consuming.

If you have any questions, please contact our secretary, Mrs Rebecca McGuren.

Yours faithfully,

Tyalgum District & Community Association Inc

[Original Signed by]

Mr Mic Julien

President

Contact: Rebecca McGuren - Secretary

Email: newsletter.tdca@gmail.com

List of Attachments:

1. TSC correspondence
 - a. Letter to TSC from TDCA dated 5 May 22
 - b. Letter to TDCA from TSC dated 11 May 22
2. 2 letters
 - a. Tyalgum Gelato Shop
 - b. Kirra Springs
 - c. Flutterbies Cottage Café
 - d. Soul Fire Genesis
3. Photos
 - a. Photos 1 to 3. The damage on Tyalgum Road causing closure; colloquially called 'The Crack'.
 - b. Photo 4. The landslip shutting half of Tyalgum Road between The Crack and Tyalgum Village
 - c. Photo 5. The landslip on Numinbah Road causing half road closure.
 - d. Photo 6 and 7. The landslip on Zara Road just north of Boxsell Road. This appears to be two separate landslips but the whole of that road cutting maybe compromised.
 - e. Photo 8. The landslip near Charbray Place, .05 km from Tyalgum Village on Zara Road that has caused half road closure.



TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION [TDCA]

Attachment 1a

Our Ref: TDCA:2016066

5 May 2022

Mr Troy Green PSM
General Manager
Tweed Shire Council
PO Box 816
Murwillumbah NSW 2484

By email: tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Green,

Flood Damage - Tyalgum Road & Zara Road

We refer to the recent weather events in February and March 2022 that caused widespread infrastructure damage to the Northern Rivers Region of NSW, including the Tweed Valley.

At the outset, we would like to acknowledge the Tweed Shire Council (TSC) and its employees, and all the emergency services, including volunteer groups such as RFS and SES, and the ADF, for their enormous, even heroic, exertions during the flood events and the recovery efforts immediately afterwards. Of course, those recovery exertions are ongoing, and we are deeply appreciative of all that has been done so far.

Notwithstanding these exertions, the road infrastructure connecting Tyalgum & District with Murwillumbah remains severely damaged, with:

- Tyalgum Road being completely cut and impassable about 950m east of Van den Broek Road due to a major landslide;¹ and
- Zara Road significantly damaged in several places, and reduced to single lane access due to landslips in two places close to Tyalgum Village (opposite Charbray Place and East of Boxsell Road).
- Zara Road joins to Numinbah Road at Chillingham Village and Numinbah Road provides access to Murwillumbah. Numinbah Road is also severely affected by landslips and subsidence.

¹ <https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/council/news-updates/latest-news/media-releases/1327384-geotech-experts-confirm-tyalgum-rd-at-risk-of-further-slippage>

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Tyalgum lies at the western end of the Volcanic Caldera at the foot of Mount Warning. Due to its unique geography, there is no alternative all-weather access to anywhere other than via Tyalgum Road and Zara Road. Tyalgum is effectively sited in a cul-de-sac with only two means of all-weather access, one of which has been cut completely and the other seriously compromised and vulnerable to further damage. The landslips on Zara Road are in the same locations as previous land slips; the underlying causes of the problems in those locations have not been properly remediated in past repairs.

If there is further slippage at either of the damaged sites on Zara Road (which seems probable, even likely), then the residents of Tyalgum & District will be effectively cut-off from all essential services accessed by road: emergency services, groceries, medical support, aged care services, schools and so on. Similarly, closure of Numinbah Road would have the same consequences.

We understand that Tyalgum & District is in many respects fortunate. The direct damage in the Village & District was relatively minor, and many other Northern Rivers communities suffered far more severely during the rain and flood events. We also appreciate that whilst Tyalgum Road being cut is a huge inconvenience and impost to local residents, motor vehicle access via Zara Road remains open.

Even so, the residents and businesses of Tyalgum & District are very concerned that the vulnerability of its ongoing access to the outside world via Zara Road may not be fully appreciated outside of our District. Another weather event, even a relatively minor one, may cause further landslips on Zara Road, rendering it unsafe to vehicles. That would cut off the Village from road access almost completely. There appears to be no plan, at least no plan communicated to us by any level of government, to ensure the security of road access to and from Tyalgum & District. This is a matter of grave concern to the 545 residents of the village, and the 1000 plus residents of the district (as at the 2016 census).

The impacts of the closure of Tyalgum Road and the damage to Zara Road are significant and ongoing. The sudden decrease in tourist visitors has decimated businesses and livelihoods²; the insecurity of road access via Zara Road has negatively impacted our elderly residents; and for everybody, the journey to Murwillumbah is simply longer, slower, more risky and more expensive. This makes it more difficult for our residents to access everyday services, such as getting to school, visiting the doctor or buying groceries.

The TDCA:

- welcomes the announcement of the NSW Flood Inquiry,³ and the TDCA intends to make a submission by 20 May 22,
- welcomes the announcement of the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC),⁴ which we understand commences operation on 1 July 22, and

² Businesses have already cut opening times and staff.

³ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/flood-inquiry-submissions-portal>

⁴ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/northern-rivers-reconstruction>

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- appreciates the ongoing efforts of the Tweed Shire Council (TSC) to conduct immediate repairs and to support the safety of motorists with the installation of barriers, signage and traffic lights.

Even so, the TDCA remains deeply concerned about the ongoing vulnerability of our road infrastructure and seeks information regarding the plans for its recovery and repair.

On the last point, we would be grateful for a response on the following issues:

1. Given the establishment of the NRRC with effect from 1 July 22, is the TSC or the NRRC or some other body in charge of the projects to repair Zara and Tyalgum Roads?
2. What is the current state of the projects to reinstate both roads? Who is the project manager(s)? Has planning begun?
3. What is the priority for the repair of Tyalgum and Zara Roads in current TSC planning as compared to other damaged road infrastructure in the Shire?
4. Is there any contingency plan for the possibility of Zara Road becoming unsafe? If so, who is responsible for making that plan? What does the plan say?
5. Is there a similar contingency plan for Numinbah Road? Who is responsible and what does the plan say?
6. TDCA understands the TSC's initial estimate for repair of Tyalgum Road was 6 to 12 months. The latest update from TSC is that the 6 to 12 months is for the construction phase alone, and there is no estimate of time at all for the 'engineering solutions' being developed. Can you provide a realistic timeline for when the works will be designed, approved, commenced and completed?
7. We understand TSC has stated that there is no temporary fix available for Tyalgum Road.⁵ Have all options been considered? Pedestrian access? Bicycle access? Light vehicle access? Temporary bridges? We appreciate the landslide is dynamic, but there appears to be no meaningful consideration of alternative means of access for local residents.
8. Can we be provided a copy of the Geotech report obtained by Council on Tyalgum Road for Tyalgum community information?
9. Has Council applied for a State or Federal grant for this works? If so, please explain the grants that have been applied for in relation to both Tyalgum and Zara Roads.
10. Whether the Commonwealth & State Governments will cooperate to immediately ensure our community has safe road access to essential services? In particular, whether there is any practicable method for ensuring safe road access in the event of further landslips.

We look forward to your response by Wednesday 18 May 22, so that we can incorporate your response in our submission to the Flood Inquiry.

⁵ "A safe, temporary track near the slip cannot be built as the slope both above and below the road is relatively steep." <https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/council/news-updates/latest-news/media-releases/1327384-geotech-experts-confirm-tyalgum-rd-at-risk-of-further-slippage>

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Yours faithfully,

Tyalgum District & Community Association Inc

[Original Signed by]

Mr Mic Julien

President

Contact: Rebecca McGuren - Secretary

Email: newsletter.tdca@gmail.com

Copies:

1. The Hon. Justine Elliot MP
2. Ms Janelle Anne Saffin, MP - lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au
3. Nicole Reeve, Executive Officer - execofficer@northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au
4. Cr Chris Cherry
5. Mr David Witherdin, CEO Desig NRRC - contact@regional.nsw.gov.au
6. Cr Meredith Denis
7. Cr James Owen
8. NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Mr Sam Farraway
9. NSW Flood Inquiry - Professor Mary O'Kane AC and Michael Fuller APM - inquiry@floodinquiry.nsw.gov.au
10. Ms Mandy Nolan

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Locality	People	Motor Vehicles	Median Age
Back Creek	14	28	52
Brays Creek	71	47	51
Chillingham	232	90	39
Hopkins Creek	113	90	50
Limpinwood	215	215	54
Pumpenbil	204	161	53
Tyalgum	545	405	43
Tyalgum Creek	107	97	56
Zara	76	70	50
Total	1577	1203	

Table 1 – 2016 Census of Tyalgum & District

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>

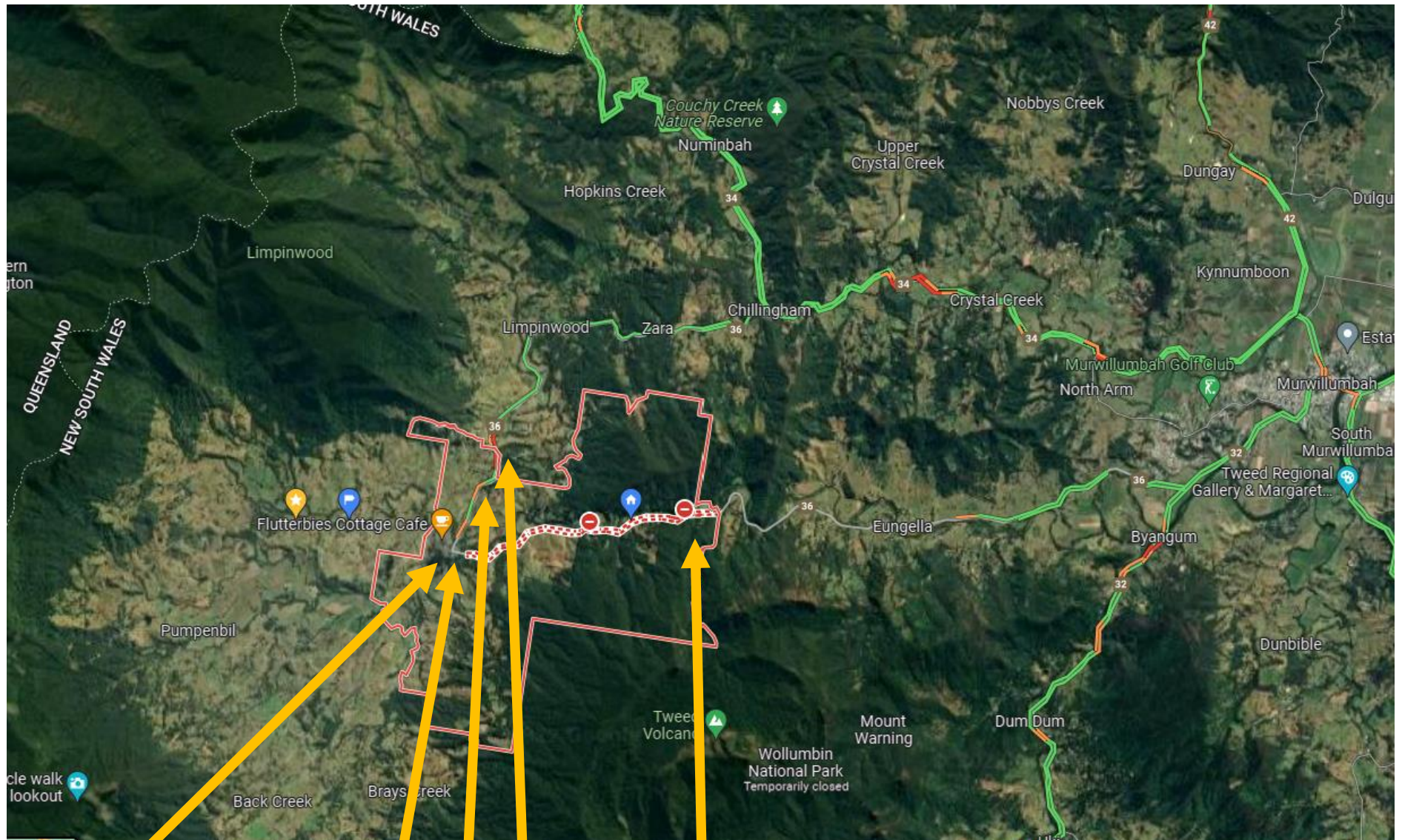
During the COVID Pandemic, long-term residents have observed a significant increase in the number of people living in Tyalgum & District, and the 2016 census data presented in the Table above is significantly out of date. There are significantly more people and motor vehicles in the Tyalgum District than these numbers suggest.

Even taking this data at face value, there are important observations to make:

- The **number of people** affected is **more than 1500** – this is a significant community that is in danger of being cut-off from services accessed by road
- There is **no alternative transport system** – travel by road is the only option, and the high level of vehicle ownership reflects our community's reliance on the motor vehicle
- The number of **daily trips** on Zara Road and Numinbah Road to Murwillumbah by **local residents** is estimated to **exceed 1,000** on Zara Road and Numinbah Road to Murwillumbah
- The addition of **tourist trips** (the life blood of Tyalgum businesses) is an additional load on **heavily damaged road infrastructure**
- The **median age** of our community is **well above the national average**, even in the villages of Tyalgum and Chillingham – the national median age is **38**.
- The consequence of an **aging community** means **increased reliance on medical services**, access to medicines, regular appointments and so on, with car the only option to access these services. **There are no doctors, chemists, dentists or anything else in Tyalgum or Chillingham.**



TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION [TDCA]



Tyalgum

Road reduced to single lane due to landslide

Road Closed due to landslide

Attachment 1b

11 May 2022

Rebecca McGuren
Secretary
Tyalgum District Community Association
PO Box 18
TYALGUM NSW 2484

tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au
www.tweed.nsw.gov.au



PO Box 816
Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Please address all communications
to the General Manager

ABN: 90 178 732 496

Via email: newsletter.tdca@gmail.com

Dear Ms McGuren

Flood Damage - Tyalgum Road and Limpinwood / Zara Roads

I refer to your letter dated 5 May 2022, from TDCA president Mic Julien.

We appreciate your acknowledgement of Council's flood response and recovery efforts to date. We have a long list of infrastructure repairs in front of us, with around 2000 individual damages logged so far. We sympathise with the Tyalgum Community, given your main road has been so severely damaged. We have many experienced engineers on staff, and this landslip is one of the worst that they have encountered, and potentially one of the most difficult repairs that will be required following this natural disaster.

All efforts are being made to ensure that the alternate sealed access between Tyalgum and Murwillumbah, being Limpinwood – Zara – Numinbah Roads remains open and in a state that remains safe and accessible for all. We understand the risks that further damage to these roads pose to the community, and agree that this must remain one of Council's top priorities in the recovery phase, along with other similar situations facing communities at Bilambil Heights, Reserve Creek and Uki.

Our response to the questions posed by TDCA are as follows:

1. Council is yet to see the scope or terms of reference for the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC). Unless advised otherwise, Council is responsible for managing the repairs to Tyalgum Road and Limpinwood-Zara Roads, as they are Council roads. We are unclear at this stage what, if any, role the NRRC might play in these works. Council has already been discussing the potential for Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to provide resource assistance to help Council manage these works. This has to date included the engagement of GHD, the geotechnical engineering consultants who have commenced their assessment of the major slip sites.
2. The first stage in fixing these landslips is the geotechnical investigations. Stage 1 investigations have been completed, where the engineers assessed the sites for their immediate risks and whether or not they remain safe to travel. This assessment confirmed that Tyalgum Road was unsafe due to the

imminent risk of further land movement. The Limpinwood-Zara slips were considered safe for single lane travel only, with appropriate barriers to ensure vehicle loadings did not worsen the slope instability. These recommendations have been followed. We await Stage 2 geotechnical assessment from GHD, which will involve drilling and soil testing, such that design alternatives can be determined. Once the Stage 2 work is complete, tender packages will be prepared to engage suitably qualified design and construction firms for the works.

3. Tyalgum Road is considered a priority “significant repair” along with Scenic Drive, Reserve Creek Road and Tweed Valley Way at Blacks Drain, as they all have similar scale and complexity of repair. Because each of these projects will have a significant lead time before construction, their “priority” does not reflect that other less critical but more straight forward repairs, such as road patching and drain clearing won’t occur beforehand. I can assure TDCA that while there may not be much action on site, the process has begun and resources have been allocated to these repairs. Limpinwood – Zara Road is not as urgent a priority, as there remains through traffic, however we agree on the critical nature of keeping these roads open so, like repairs on Kyogle Road servicing Uki, we have prioritised resources towards their repair.
4. Council is responsible for responding should Limpinwood – Zara Roads become impassable for any reason. Our plan would be a rapid response to whatever the cause of the closure might be, as we did with all isolated communities in the flood response. We are monitoring the sites weekly and will intervene or seek further expert advice if we consider the risk of closure to be increasing.
5. Numinbah Road will be managed in the same way. It will also be a priority for road maintenance, such as pothole repair. Patching of the large road scours at Boat Harbour and Edwards Lane will commence as soon as resources and weather permits.
6. We cannot provide a better time estimate for the Tyalgum Road repair at this time. There are many variables involved, such as the type and extent of the repair required, and the availability of contractors and materials. We see this as a major risk for delays, as the demand for landslip repair specialists is extremely high across the whole of South East Queensland and the Northern Rivers. If the project is likely to be delayed due to procurement issues, this may be where the NRRRC, Resilience NSW and TfNSW can assist Council.
7. Based on the first stage of geotechnical assessment there is no safe access for vehicles through the slip site. Council is obliged to follow those recommendations, so we will not be facilitating or promoting temporary access through the site. Should pedestrians or bicycles pass the road closure barriers that are in place that is at their own risk. We understand the push from Tyalgum residents for bridging of the slip e.g. a Bailey Bridge. The landslip is some 110m long and extends about 50m above the road level. The risk to any temporary bridge structure due to further movement of the ground from below or above the bridge is considered too high to ensure public safety, when there is a viable alternative access via Chillingham. We feel our limited resources are better spent on fixing Tyalgum Road and Limpinwood – Zara Roads permanently, rather than pursuing further temporary solutions at this time.

8. Council's preference is to provide updates and information to the community via updates to our website at:
<https://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/community/roads-transport/roadworks-closures> summarising rather than releasing technical documents to the community at this time.
9. Funding and grants are not the constraint for fixing these slips. The costs of reinstating the roads will be covered by Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) via Transport for NSW, even if the eventual repairs cost several million dollars. Council has received forward disaster funding from the State which we can apply to things like funding geotechnical investigations, surveys and design. The proposed solutions will be reviewed by TfNSW and approved prior to construction.
10. The Tyalgum Road landslip site has been inspected by the Australian Defence Force, NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads and the State Members for Lismore and Tweed. All are supportive of Council's approach. We will be happy to take up any further offers of assistance from the Government to project manage the repairs and/or assist with procurement and construction specialists.

In summary, while road connection to Tyalgum remains a priority for Council, that does not mean that it can be undertaken in a shorter timeframe than the 12 months we have previously advised. We understand the additional time and expense that the diversion through Chillingham imposes, however this is a safe alternate route if driving to conditions and following warning signage and traffic controls.

Please contact the undersigned on
information.

should you require further

Yours sincerely

Danny Rose
Manager Roads and Stormwater

CC: Councillors

Attachment 2a

Tyalgum Gelato Shop

Marco Polo Merchant Pty Ltd

Valentino & Carly Giannoni
15 Coolman Street
Tyalgum, NSW 2484

16 May 2022

Mic Julien

Dear Mic,

Subsequent to our discussion I would like to outline here our current situation as business owners operating from Tyalgum after the floods of February and March 2022.

We operate Tyalgum Gelato Shop and Marco Polo Merchant Pty Ltd from our residence since December 2016 and April 2017. The gelato shop business is well known in the region with usually many visitors locally and from surrounding areas.

The Marco Polo Merchant Import and Distribution business represent a significant portion of our income as we service customers Australia wide and rely on efficient transport service from our residence and access to our secondary storage facility in Murwillumbah, NSW.

Since the floods of February and March 2022 we have experienced a significant decline in business income of between 50% and 70% with continued disruptions caused by not having a main road access to our town and continued bad weather affecting the viability of the only access road through Chillingham with the road also been damaged, unsafe and constantly deteriorating.

We have received news of the proposed work plan from Tweed Shire Council on the affected main road being scheduled for at least another 12 months!

Considering it is now May 2022 and nothing has been done, even a time frame of 12 months will represent income losses that will seriously undermine the operation and survival of our two businesses.

We sincerely hope that this letter of support will help you represent the many business owners and the whole community of Tyalgum and affected areas experiencing this dire circumstance that requires a swift and prompt solution to this problem.

It hasn't been easy going through a pandemic for 2 years and still being affected by its restrictions. Now with the severe damage of 2 floods the town is cut off from resuming and taking back a sense of normality that even goes beyond our so important monetary aspect.

I trust that we have outlined our case thoroughly but in the event that you need more clarification, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours,

Valentino & Carly Giannoni

TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Attachment 2b

From: Kirra Springs
Sent: Sunday, 15 May 2022 2:55 PM
To:
Subject: Information for flood inquiry - Enclume Jewellery

Hi Mic,

Thank you for your work with this major issue.

I would have to report that my business has been severely impacted since the loss of Tyalgum road access following the February 28 floods.

There has been a significant decline in visitation to Tyalgum, which is reflecting in a major drop in sales. My figures suggest a decrease in turnover of around 80%, which would accurately reflect the decline in numbers.

Weekday tourism is practically non-existent, and with the recent weather patterns and further drastic deterioration of the alternate road via Chillingham / Crystal Creek / Numbinbah, the weekend trade is now also very minimal.

Currently my business and personal outgoings are being covered by the Centrelink flood payments (\$642/fortnight - barely enough to cover rent, let alone food or other expenses) which will end in a few week's time - leaving me in a very vulnerable position as a micro-business sole trader whose income is largely dependent on tourism to the village.

I feel quite concerned about how I am going to manage moving forward, given the current predictions of 12+ months before we see any resolution to Tyalgum Road.

With thanks
Kirra
Enclume Jewellery

TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Attachment 2c

From: Haniel Medinet
Sent: Tuesday, 17 May 2022 11:45 AM
To:
Subject: Tyalgum road closure and impact to business

Hi there Mic,

As a summary for our business Flutterbies Cottage Cafe we estimate our trade has seen an approx 70% decrease since the floods of February and March 2022 which has closed Tyalgum Road for the foreseeable future.

Whilst we have the Crystal Creek and Chillingham passage through to Murwillumbah and beyond, that road is becoming more and more disintegrated with overwhelming amounts of potholes and landslides forming as we continue to experience prolonged wet weather events. Added to this is the matter of continuous heavy daily traffic on this one road having an impact on road quality and many incidents where the road rules on this one largely one lane street are not being observed. There are incidents of traffic lights being vandalised and compromised. All of this is putting people's well-being and safety at risk.

This last weekend we had a lady so traumatised by the drive into the village via Chillingham that she had to turn around with her two small children in the car. She couldn't make her appointment with us. Of course we returned her deposit and made the gesture of goodwill.

How can we reasonably promote our business and guide people to driving out along this road, risking their safety to get to us and feel like that is okay? it's not ok and As a result business is suffering.

We feel the obligation to look out for the well-being of our customers and manage their distress on the other side if they are lucky enough to get here without turning around. This is just one example but a growing one of how our business is being impacted.

There are daily cases of customers driving along Tyalgum Road despite the signage Trying to get to only having to turn around and drive all the way back to Chillingham to get to us. The signage isn't doing the job it needs to.

Should you need any further information I am happy to expand.

Kind regards

Haniel Medinet
Flutterbies Cottage Cafe

TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Attachment 2d

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 FLOOD - IMPACT TYALGUM

Business:- Soul Fire Cocoa Genesis

18 May 2022

Business located at 21 Coolman Street via The Earth Heartbeat Shop.

Damp affected the building locally resulting in large build up of mold, which affected product requiring throw out.

Main road Murwillumbah to Tyalgum affected by land saturation with rainfall/flooding, resulting in multiple landslides and road destruction. Requires an entire rebuild. Council estimates 12 months... since then there's been a considerable reduction in people coming to the village both local and tourist/visitors, resulting in considerable loss of business.

Only alternative route via Crystal Creek, Chillingham and Limpinwood also affected by rainfall/flooding had several road drops, potholes, many areas reduced to one lane, meaning longer, sometimes dangerous journey. Most travellers and customers not wanting to risk that journey. It's even very trying for myself and locals to do the journey under these conditions.

Business loss has been considerable within the local village. Also most of the outside customers my business attends to are flood impacted as well, and therefore not ordering, and ones that are, are minimal.

My business has thrived also due to other shops and services in the village, and they are impacted by similar conditions or worse, affecting the entire microcosm of what this village has to offer, not just locally, but the larger part is due to tourism, and this has had the biggest impact.

Taking much time and energy to clean up. Requires constant clean up from mold due to constant wet and damp, even though not currently flooding.

Weather cycle has produced another mild flood resulting in even more road damage to our only route from Murwillumbah to the village making access even more dangerous and longer.... Further loss of business.

Weather cycle predictions for more flooding in days from now... My concern is total cut off... and for how long?

How and who can act more swiftly than a 12 month rebuild to the main road access for both living and business? To me, 12 months is utterly unreasonable under these circumstances.

Grayle Harlequin

Founder and Creative Director

Soul Fire Cocoa Genesis

TYALGUM DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Attachment 3. Photos of the main landslip on Tyalgum Road, the secondary Landslips on Tyalgum Road and landslips on Zara and Numinbah Roads.



Figure 1 - Tyalgum Road

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Figure 2 - Tyalgum Road

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Figure 3 - Tyalgum Road

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Figure 4 - Tyalgum Road

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Figure 5 - Numinbah Road

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Figure 6 - Zara Road

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Figure 7 - Zara Road

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Figure 8 - Zara Road opposite Charbray Place