

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

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Sirs, I attended a recent Parliamentary Sitting here in Murwillumbah. I would like to make a couple of points.

1/ I am a farmer. You people probably have no understanding of how we farmers are aligned with the weather. Part of being a good anything is "being observant" Take a police detective...he has to be observant...it is taken for granted. To be a good teacher, you must be highly observant, to use your knowledge in getting your message through to your pupils. So to be a good farmer, the weather controls every aspect of our lives. We look at cloud formation...wind direction and speed, ...we understand whether the clouds will keep the day cool, or when it will warm up.

So it disappointed me to hear so many people say...we had no warning. We could see on the weather chart how Gympie was getting a soaking, over a very wide area. We could see from the synoptic chart that this weather was going to move South to The Tweed. We could see too...if you were observant, that all catchments were going to fill to overflowing. We already had had many months of rainfall wetting the ground, so that it could accept no more water...meaning further rainfall was going to create a flood.

We could see with the big High Pressure system, that this would mean much more rain because of the onshore effect[a High rotates anti clockwise] So those of us who needed to know each day ...whether it was an optimum time to spray, to fertilise, to harvestto plough etc etc we were able to understand the situation and act appropriately. Unfortunately, the shop owners, etc etc have no need for such knowledge on a daily basis.

Saying all of this does promote using local knowledge from long established farmers.

2/ I have already mentioned that a good doctor, detective, teacher etc etc uses his skills of observation to the maximum. So, whilst The BOM must have a budget of many millions of dollars, I had one tool that they would not use.

We have 3,000 mango trees up to 40 years old. This year I needed to do a major prune. Ok observation, is not just ears, nose, eyes ...you use all senses. So this year 4 days before the first flood I met grey slugs, 75mm long, with three brown stripes along their backs climbing up the tree trunks. 4 days later came the first flood. As soon as I could I returned to the trees to carry on pruning. All went well for a while...until I saw slugs climbing to higher ground....[we are 150 ft above river height....but the slugs do not know this]. 4 days later came flood no 2. As soon as it dried out, I got back to the pruning....and after some time....days, once again these grey slugs were seen to be climbing up the mango tree trunks. 4 days later came the third flood. This time was different though. The ABC weather was telling us that's the rain had gone...that we were in for fine weather....BUT the slugs knew that this was not the case.

Now these slugs knew well before the BOM that they must make for higher ground. How they know baffles me. Obviously it must be tied in with barometric pressure....but for the slugs, probably a series of events....barometric pressure, day or night time temperature changes, wind direction....humidity....what ever...the slugs knew well before me. I can say if I see these slugs climbing, that in 4 days time we will have heavy flooding rain.

3/ These floods have done enormous damage to local roads. Some places will be cut off for many months. So it just seems unbelievable that Tweed Shire Council would itself have set out to destroy the local rail line...to create a rail trail....for TSC figures state 60 cyclists/day. Many here lost everything...all their furnishings..all their house contents...and so importantly here..their cars. If Tweed Shire Council had not been so one eyed, we would be in a different position.....they had an option to retain the rail lines for a light rail....but were blind to the fact that a time might come when the whole area needed a light rail....whether it being for no fuel....road closures due to such rain events as we have just seen. We need to base our future upon such possibilities as...a far worse pandemic...many more serious land slips cutting off whole areas....Future proofing means to be taking preparatory evasive action in preparation now...not when it happens next time.