

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

Name: Ms Tamarah Knox

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To Whom It May Concern,

I write with a further submission to the NSW Upper House Flood Inquiry and specifically the impact of flooding at Ross Lane, Lennox Head within the Ballina Shire LGA.

My family has lived on a property on Ross Lane for almost 40 years and have seen the changes in floods in that time particularly in the past 10 years but more so the past five years. This noted change also coincides with the change in responsibility for the drainage network that feeds into Deadman's Creek on Ross Lane and then into North Creek and the Richmond River. The Newrybar Valley Cane Growers Union previously was responsible for drain maintenance and this included the mechanical cleaning of the drain network. Since the drain network maintenance responsibility was moved to Rous County Council and Ballina Shire Council, the mechanical cleaning of the drains has not occurred in the past 10 years. During that time, the flooding frequency of Ross Lane has increased, and the level of the flood has also increased to heights experienced on two occasions in March 2022. These weren't just higher than previous, they were absolutely beyond anything experienced and the poor maintenance of the drainage network exacerbated the flood impacts on my family's property and many other families and properties on Ross Lane with people experiencing water inundation to their homes, sheds, machinery and vehicles.

While the floods experienced in March 2022 were record levels, had the drain network worked as it should and drained water away the impact to my family's property on 30 March and others would not have been so severe. Water from the flood of 1 March would have drained away instead of still being in the Deadman's Creek and the drain network when the second weather event happened. The drainage of the water is so poor, it now takes three weeks for water to recede off my family's property thus creating black water. When this finally enters the drain network it is far more dirty entering North Creek. We have now also seen weed from the creek and drains grow on our property as it floods so frequently having flooded six times in 2022 as at 30 May. It has flooded more than a dozen times in the past 12 months.

Also, in the past 10 years there has been three studies into the drain network and North Creek with no action to addressing the lack of drainage that occurs. Floods gates are full of mud and debris, drains are blocked, culverts are partially blocked and the drains are full of plant life and mud. Meanwhile, people's properties are flooding as more studies or Catchment Plans or Coastal Management Plans are done. Action **MUST** be taken now to address the drainage network before more weather events further impact properties and cause further trauma and financial impact to residents.

Concerns regarding acid sulphate can be addressed with lime but also raise the question of a hypocritical concern when the Lismore Sewerage Plant continues to release raw sewerage into the Richmond River. If this can continue why does acid sulphate prevent action when there are measures to counteract it. Government bureaucracy and red tape is all that is preventing action being taken with property owners prepared to do the work themselves if that was what was necessary to achieve a drainage network that actually drains the water away.

I am seeking Rous County Council, Ballina Shire Council and the NSW Government notably the Departments of Primary Industry and National Parks to work together and take action instead of pointing the finger at someone else whilst your citizens experience a crisis that can be avoided or at the very least less impactful. When floods occur, centimetres can matter when it comes to saving properties, livelihoods and lives. Please listen to the local landowners who have lived on and farmed the land for decades, that comprehensively understand the drain network and what is necessary to once again have a functioning system. Please mechanically clean the Deadman's Creek and North Creek drain network immediately to ensure local residents avoid the fate of their neighbours in Lismore, Wardell, Woodburn and Broadwater.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide a submission. I look forward to seeing action occur in the immediate near future.

I would be pleased to be available for further contact from any Council or State Government representatives if required to achieve a solution.

Yours sincerely

Tamarah Knox