

TUMBULGUM **GET** PREPARED!

This information is provided to help residents make decisions for future flood events

Because of its location on a flood plain at the confluence of the Tweed and Rous River systems Tumbulgum is subject to regular flooding. Each flood event is different; streets affected and depth of inundation will vary. This general information is provided to help you make decisions based on your individual circumstances. Please consider the following basic facts.

Cane drains behind the village overflow into Irving St and progressively into Bawden St; this often occurs prior to the river breaking its banks onto Riverside Drive. When all these waters meet, Tumbulgum Village is totally isolated, so decisions need to be taken and acted upon before this happens.

Exit roads north and south of the village, as well as Terranora Rd, will be underwater when the River Height on the Tumbulgum Gauge reaches 2m AHD. Australian Height Datum (AHD) is the measurement expressed in metres above mean sea level.

A Flood Watch and Flood Warning will be issued by the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) on their website and through the State Emergency Service (SES) and media when heavy rain threatens a flood event across the Tweed Valley. The SES leaflet in your Kit provides detailed information on how to read and interpret BoM rainfall and river height data.

Most homes in the Village have a habitable first floor height above the 1% ARI (Annual Recurrence Interval) i.e. 1% chance of this flood level occurring in any one year. However, many ground floor areas will be in the flood flow zone, subject to inundation, so you need to determine beforehand how floodwater will impact on your property. “My Home Flood Record” (the last page of the SES leaflet) allows you to develop a personalised record of effects of previous flood events on your property.

This information provides a basis for developing your own Flood Action Plan, which is your key to minimising risk to life, loss of property and confusion in times of stress.

Flood Action Plan

Your **Flood Action Plan** aims to manage your household’s strategies and should include:

- **People (and Pets)**
- **Property**
- **Parking**
- **Paperwork**

These headings are prompts for you to develop and document ways in which you can help yourself and we can help each other when we next face the challenge of the next flood.

The information in this Kit has been assembled by your Tumbulgum Community Action Team (CAT) to help you prepare your Flood Action Plan. We want to work with you to ensure safety of all and to minimise loss when the next flood occurs. This is why a CAT Co-ordinator will exchange contact details and other vital information with all residents to facilitate communications and information-sharing. When the BoM issues a Flood Watch for Tumbulgum – based on BoM data, forecasts, historical flood data and local input from SES – the CAT Co-ordinator for your Hub will try to contact you to share this information and to find out your plan and your needs.

People (and Pets)

Included in your Kit are several ways in which you can choose to develop and document your personal **Flood Action Plan**.

- Previous experience has shown that many residents choose to stay in their properties during a flood event, even when this means isolation. **This is not a strategy recommended by the SES.** Please consider likely loss of essential services such as power, water, phone, internet, gas, and sewerage. Communications and comfort depend on services. Of course, food and medication needs are critical.
- Make a decision about your actions in a flood event. Stay or Leave? You must consider your individual household needs. Are there children, elderly, medically dependant or disabled people who must be helped before roads become impassable?
- Don't forget your Pets. How will you feed and care for them?
- The Red Cross leaflet "Get Packing" (included in your Kit) provides an excellent checklist of things to consider when packing essentials for emergencies. The Red Cross website www.redcross.org.au/prepare provides a link to a very comprehensive booklet 'Your Emergency RediPlan'. You may wish to read, or even download to fill in personal details to help you deal with emergencies. The critical thing is to prepare a plan and know what you will do.
- Your Kit includes guidelines based on past experience about likely conditions on access roads. Please include this in considering your **Flood Action Plan** for preserving life and property.
- Share flood experiences with your neighbours and the 'old hands' to increase your flood-risk awareness and to create your **Flood Action Plan**.

Property

Residents need to make the difficult decision whether to lift/not lift possessions located at ground floor level. Individuals **Flood Action Plans** based on their property's flood history and incoming BoM data, forecasts and warnings will form the basis of this decision. SES will endeavour to provide adequate lead time for this work but it is a personal decision and responsibility. Information provided in your Kit will help you make these decisions.

Emergency Service Organisations, particularly the SES, will most likely be unable to individually assist you. They have to prioritise any requests for assistance and may be overwhelmed in a major flood so will focus on life threatening incidents. In any major flood event road access to the Village will be cut they will be unable to get to you.

NOTE: Your Kit suggests actions you can take **now** rather than wait for the next flood event.

Parking

Historically, loss of vehicles (cars, trailers, boats, motor mowers, bikes) has been a significant source of property loss in Tumbulgum floods. We have estimated that up to 200 vehicles were lost in the 2017 event.

Your Tumbulgum CAT team has developed a Village-wide strategy to help minimise this loss. We have developed a 'Flood Parking Plan' with the support of North Tumbulgum residents in flood-free areas to enable evacuation of as many as possible vehicles prior to inundation. In the past

Tumbulgum's Twohill Bridge has been utilised for flood-free parking, but (apart from being illegal and potentially impeding traffic) this is clearly not enough for the vehicles in the Village. With collaboration and forward planning it should be possible to minimise vehicle loss by adhering to the Flood Parking Plan in the leaflet provided in your Kit. Please read it carefully and join in the community's efforts to help ourselves and each other when disaster looms.

Paperwork

The SES has provided us with a waterproof emergency document holder, '**Get Ready Northern Rivers NSW!**' which we have used to hold the Kit documents. On the front there are important contact numbers and other details, as well as the opportunity to write important personal information. Please consider using this handy holder for keeping information in one place.

Inside this folder, which we are calling the Kit, your Tumbulgum CAT has included various leaflets and comments to help with your flood preparation. Some 'old hands' will have been through all this before but keeping up to date is never a bad investment.

Information about how to best manage electricity issues, gas bottles, garbage bins and our unique sewerage system during flood events has been researched and included to help you. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the material in the Kit and devote some time and thought to developing your **Flood Action Plan**.

SES Support

The SES is made up of dedicated volunteers who are there to support us in times of flooding. However, the community needs to understand that in heavy rain the Tweed Valley Catchment can experience flooding of the Valley in less than 6 hours. The upper catchment, including Tumbulgum, can quickly be isolated by inundation hence out-of-area support teams cannot be brought in to assist. Thus 50-odd local SES members must provide flood support for more than 25,000 people in a geographic area from Tumbulgum through to Numinbah in the north to Nimbin Turnoff, to Crabbes Creek in the south and to the M1 Motorway to the east.

There are limited local resources available to our SES.

Realistically, unless the community is prepared for flood events, takes advice, responds to triggers and complies with SES recommendations, local lives and property will be put at risk. So it is over to us to take responsibility for our safety and well-being. Let us co-operate to make sure that

TUMBULGUM IS PREPARED!

Prepared by your Community Action Team, December 2018