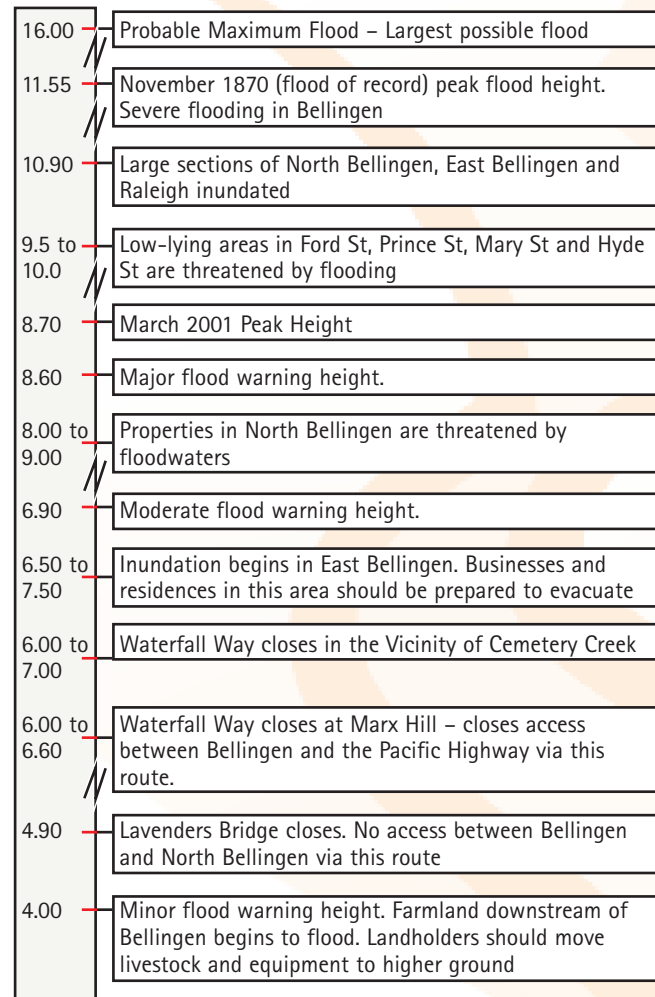


What happens in Bellingen floods?



Key heights in metres at the Bellingen town gauge

The Bureau of Meteorology provides predictions of expected flood heights in metres at the Bellingen town gauge based on received and forecast rainfall.

SES flood bulletins provide information on what may happen at the predicted height and what actions are required to protect yourself and your property. It is important to know the height that affects your property

Prepare yourself

Some basic measures you can take right now include keeping a list of emergency numbers near the telephone and assembling an emergency kit.

Your emergency kit should contain at all times:

- A portable radio with spare batteries
- A torch with spare batteries
- A first aid kit
- Rubber gloves
- Candles and waterproof matches
- A waterproof bag for valuables
- Emergency contact numbers

When flooding is likely, place in your emergency kit:

- Important papers and photos
- A good supply of required medications
- Any special requirements for babies and the disabled, infirm or elderly
- Strong shoes
- Fresh food and drinks

BUSINESSES:

Your business should have a Business FloodSafe Plan. A copy of the plan is available for download on the SES website. Keep a copy of your Business FloodSafe Toolkit handy and ensure that the Business FloodSafe Plan it contains is complete and up to date.

You should decide to where you will move stock and equipment and how it will be transported. Keep backups of important records and store these in a flood free location.

Generally flood insurance is not available in NSW. You should check your insurance policy. Where possible ensure shop fittings can be easily moved or are able to resist water damage. Keep a supply of boxes to move stock and records if flooding is likely.



Every family should make an emergency kit.

How the SES can help you

The State Emergency Service is responsible for dealing with flood emergencies in NSW. This includes planning for floods and educating people about how to protect themselves and their property.

During floods, the SES is responsible for flood information, safety advice, evacuation, rescue and providing essentials to people cut off by flood waters.

FOR EMERGENCY HELP IN FLOODS AND STORMS CALL THE SES ON

132 500

SES web site	www.ses.nsw.gov.au
Bellingen SES	02 6655 1188
Bellingen Shire Council (business hours)	02 6655 7300
Bureau of Meteorology website	www.bom.gov.au



Protecting yourself from a flood

Top location: Lavenders Bridge, Bellingen closed by floods
Bottom location: Flooded shop, Bellingen



Bellingen

Are you at risk from floods?

Flooding is a significant problem in the Bellingen area. Flooding of some degree occurs, on average once or twice per year. The major flood warning height of 8.2m on the Bellingen town gauge is reached about once every six or seven years. Most recently floods affected the Bellingen Valley in 2001, 2004 and 2006. The flood of record was in November 1870 when the Bellingen River peaked at 11.55m resulting in severe flooding in Bellingen. Floods exceeding this height should be viewed as inevitable and would rise more rapidly and have faster flowing floodwaters.

The town of Bellingen is divided in two when the bridge connecting North Bellingen and Bellingen is submerged at 4.9m on the Bellingen town gauge. In major flooding the bridge closure can last for several days.

The entire community of Bellingen can become isolated by floods. The SES has well developed and practiced plans for the resupply of Bellingen. *Areas at specific risk of flooding include:*

NORTH BELLINGEN: Low-lying areas south of Wheatley Street and east of Hammond Street, including Black St and the Showgrounds.

Floodwaters backup the creek to the west of Lyon St causing inundation of low lying properties upstream of Wheatley St in relatively small flood events. In severe floods, Hammond and Dowle Streets would experience high-velocity flows. Floodwaters initially begin to threaten properties in North Bellingen after 8 metres on the Bellingen town gauge.

BELLINGEN: Connell Park and a small number of properties in Mary, Hyde, Church, Prince, Bowra, South, Rawson, Park and Watson Streets and Connell Place. Flooding from the Bellinger River begins to effect properties in this area between 9.5 and 10 metres on the Bellingen town gauge. Property inundation in the area generally occurs as a result of the backing up of floodwaters into Cemetery Creek.

EAST BELLINGEN: Residential and commercial properties in Deopel and Cahill Streets are affected in events reaching 6.5 to 7.5m on the Bellingen Town gauge. In severe events floodwaters could be deep and fast-flowing.

Flooding can also occur in low-lying sections of the downstream communities of Repton and Raleigh

You must be ready to evacuate when a significant flood is approaching. Deciding to remain in your home or business when it is surrounded by flood waters or has water over floor level can be dangerous. Flooding may last for several days. Your home or business may become a refuge for vermin, snakes and spiders. There may be no water, sewerage, power, telephone or other services for several weeks, and you may be unable to call for help in an emergency.

Stay informed

Bellingen SES Unit can give you information on what you can do to reduce the effects of flooding on your family and your property.

Bellingen Shire Council may be able to provide information on the height at which your property is flooded.

This brochure and general information on preparing for floods can be found at the SES website at www.ses.nsw.gov.au

How you will be advised of a coming flood

Flood information including flood forecasts, road closures, and advice on evacuations and property protection will be broadcast over local radio stations:

2BBB FM 93.3

2CS FM 106.3

ABC FM 92.3

If evacuation of residents from towns and villages becomes necessary, the SES and other emergency services may doorknock to advise residents and businesses on what to do.

Warning of a predicted flood could be short. Areas affected by localised flash flooding may have little or no warning. You should use any time after receiving a warning to prepare your property and not leave preparations until the last minute.

Bureau of Meteorology flood predictions and river height information are available on their website www.bom.gov.au

Location: Bellingen River gauge



Location: Bellingen Golf Club

When flooding is likely

RESIDENCES

- Stack your possessions on benches and tables, placing electrical items on top
- Secure objects that are likely to float and cause damage
- Relocate waste containers, chemicals and poisons well above floor level
- Locate important papers, valuables and mementoes, put them in your emergency kit and take them with you when you evacuate
- Check if neighbours need help
- Locate and prepare pets for possible evacuation
- Move livestock, especially horses, to high ground

BUSINESSES

In addition businesses should:

- Activate their Business FloodSafe Plan
- Where possible remove stock, records and equipment to high ground or stack on benches and tables, placing electrical items on top
- Act early, as roads may become congested or close
- Ensure employees are able to get home before evacuation routes are closed

During a flood

- Never drive, walk or ride through flood water – this is the main cause of death during floods as water may be deeper or faster flowing than people think and contain hidden snags and debris
- Keep listening to a local radio station for further information and advice
- Keep in contact with your neighbours
- Be prepared to evacuate if advised

If you need to evacuate

- Take your emergency kit with you
- Turn off the electricity and water as you leave and turn off and secure gas bottles
- You will be advised which evacuation centre to go to
- Don't leave your pets behind – they may die. Put them on leads or in pet containers. Dogs should be muzzled.

When you evacuate

You must leave well before roads to high ground are closed by flood water.

Proceed to the evacuation centre you are asked to go to. Help will be available at an evacuation centre established by the Department of Community Services (DoCS).

Assistance will include:

- Temporary accommodation
- Financial help
- Personal support
- Refreshments and meals
- Clothing and personal needs
- Help in contacting family and friends

Assistance for animals

The NSW Department of Primary Industries provides assistance for livestock, companion animals and wildlife during floods. This may include emergency supply or delivery of fodder to stranded livestock and evacuation of pets and livestock.