



**David Elliott**  
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Wednesday, 23 December 2020

*\*\*\*Editors' note: Link to vision below\*\*\**

### **STORMS AND FLOODS A VERY REAL RISK OVER CHRISTMAS**

Following severe storms, heavy rain and flooding along the North Coast, the NSW Government and the NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) are urging communities to stay vigilant, especially over the Christmas and New Year period.

Minister for Police and Emergency Services David Elliott said what recently occurred along the North Coast over the last fortnight is indicative of the type of weather that we could see during the storm season.

“Our SES volunteers responded to more than 2,800 requests for assistance from communities in the region, particularly in Lismore and Tweed Heads,” Mr Elliott said.

“What is positive to see is that many of those requests for assistance were actually community members listening to the warnings of the NSW SES and requesting sandbags as a preventative measure ahead of the floods.”

Mr Elliott added that it was vital residents listen to warnings and heed the advice.

“It doesn’t matter how well you think you know a road, or if you think you are an experienced driver – if you come across floodwater, turn around and find another way.” Mr Elliott said.

“This year alone, NSW SES volunteers have responded to more than 600 flood rescues. While many of these were people caught through no fault of their own, a lot were motorists who became trapped after they decided to drive through floodwater.”

NSW SES Commissioner Carlene York said while volunteers are prepared to spring into action when needed, residents should also make sure they are prepared.

“Planning ahead makes all the difference. If you are staying local for the holidays, prepare your home – make sure gutters are free from any blockages, trees are pruned back, and you have an emergency kit at the ready should you need to evacuate.” Commissioner York said.

“If you are going to be driving on the roads, please drive to the conditions. Check Live Traffic for updates on road closures and if you happen to come across floodwater,

never attempt to drive, walk or ride through it.”

The NSW Government is committed to supporting NSW SES volunteers with a record \$200 million budget for 2020-21 to ensure they have the resources they need to manage flood and storm emergencies, road accident rescues, bush search and rescue, and other disasters.

For information on how to prepare for storms and floods, and for current warnings, visit [ses.nsw.gov.au](http://ses.nsw.gov.au).

Link to vision available [here](#)

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