



Yamba and Palmers Island

October 2025

History of Flooding

Be flood aware

Yamba sits at the mouth of the Clarence River, the largest coastal river system in NSW.

Flooding occurs when riverbanks overflow. This area is at risk from river flooding, ocean surges and intense local rainfall.

Single road access means that there is a chance of being cut off very quickly, even before floodwater enters homes because the town is flat and the creeks and drains are affected by tides.

Recent floods in 1996, 2001, 2009 and 2022 caused significant disruption. In 2022 Yamba experienced 538mm in 36 hours causing severe street and property flooding.

Palmers Island, immediately upstream isolates often. Low-lying homes and tourist accommodation sites (Fishing Haven area) need to evacuate early when Maclean gauge levels reach moderate levels.

Areas near Wooloweyah Lagoon may flood, isolating rural properties and impacting livestock.



Yamba Flood 2022

Image credit: Debrah Novak

Isolation and consequences

Yamba Road often floods in several low-lying spots, which can cut the town off. Minor floods can make sections impassable, especially when tides are high. When rain falls upstream and rivers rise, combined with coastal tides, it can take hours or even days for the water to drain — this is most noticeable in West Yamba.

The Iluka–Woombah–Pacific Highway route may also be affected. Low bridges can be unsafe or impassable during floods which limits alternative access routes.

Residents and visitors should move early when advised. Once isolation occurs, emergency access is limited and response times increase, complicating medical emergencies, supply deliveries and evacuation of people.

Every flood is different. While NSW SES can provide guidance on what may occur in future floods, it's important to remember that predictions are not guarantees.



Yamba Flood 2022

Image credit: Debrah Novak



Flood Information: Maclean Gauge

This information was gathered from historical flood data, local flood plans, and flood studies.

Height at gauge	Expected consequence
3.55m	Shores Drive and Golding Street properties impacted.
3.18m	Significant flooding may be experienced in Palmers Island and Yamba.
2.50m	Major Flood Level.
2.40m	Depending on tides, inundation may start to occur in The Halyard, Telopea Street, Melaleuca Drive, Yamba Road near Coles, Wooli Street, Carrs Drive, West Yamba including Yamba Plaza, Endeavour Street and Deering Street. Other areas affected are Golding Street and Cook Street and Shores Drive.
2.20m	Moderate Flood Level. Flooding starts in Palmers Island through canefields and storm water drains. Water may start to enter the lower area of Fishing Haven Caravan Park.
2.10m	Yamba Road closes at the southern approach to Harwood Bridge and at the intersection of Palmers Channel South Bank Road, this isolates the town of Yamba.
1.60m	Minor Flood Level.

Australian Warning System (AWS)

The Australian Warning System (AWS) is a national approach to help everyone easily identify the type of hazard and warning level. You may not always receive an official warning. If you notice the natural signs like rushing or pooling water, and heavy or prolonged rainfall - don't wait, leave low-lying areas if it's safe to do so.

Advice

There is a heightened level of threat.
Stay up to date as the situation changes.

- 🔊 Action Statements
- Stay informed
- Monitor conditions
- Reduced threat - Return with caution

Watch and Act

Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.

- 🔊 Action Statements
- Do not enter floodwater
- Prepare to isolate
- Prepare to evacuate
- Avoid the area

Emergency Warning

You may be in danger and need to take action immediately.

- 🔊 Action Statements
- Evacuate now / Evacuate before (time)
- Shelter now
- Move to higher ground



Download the Hazards Near Me app

Hazards Near Me NSW shows current information about local emergencies, including floods, storms and tsunamis, and advice on what to do to stay safe.

Set your **Watch Zones** and stay informed with notifications for new incidents and when information changes.

Scan the QR code to download

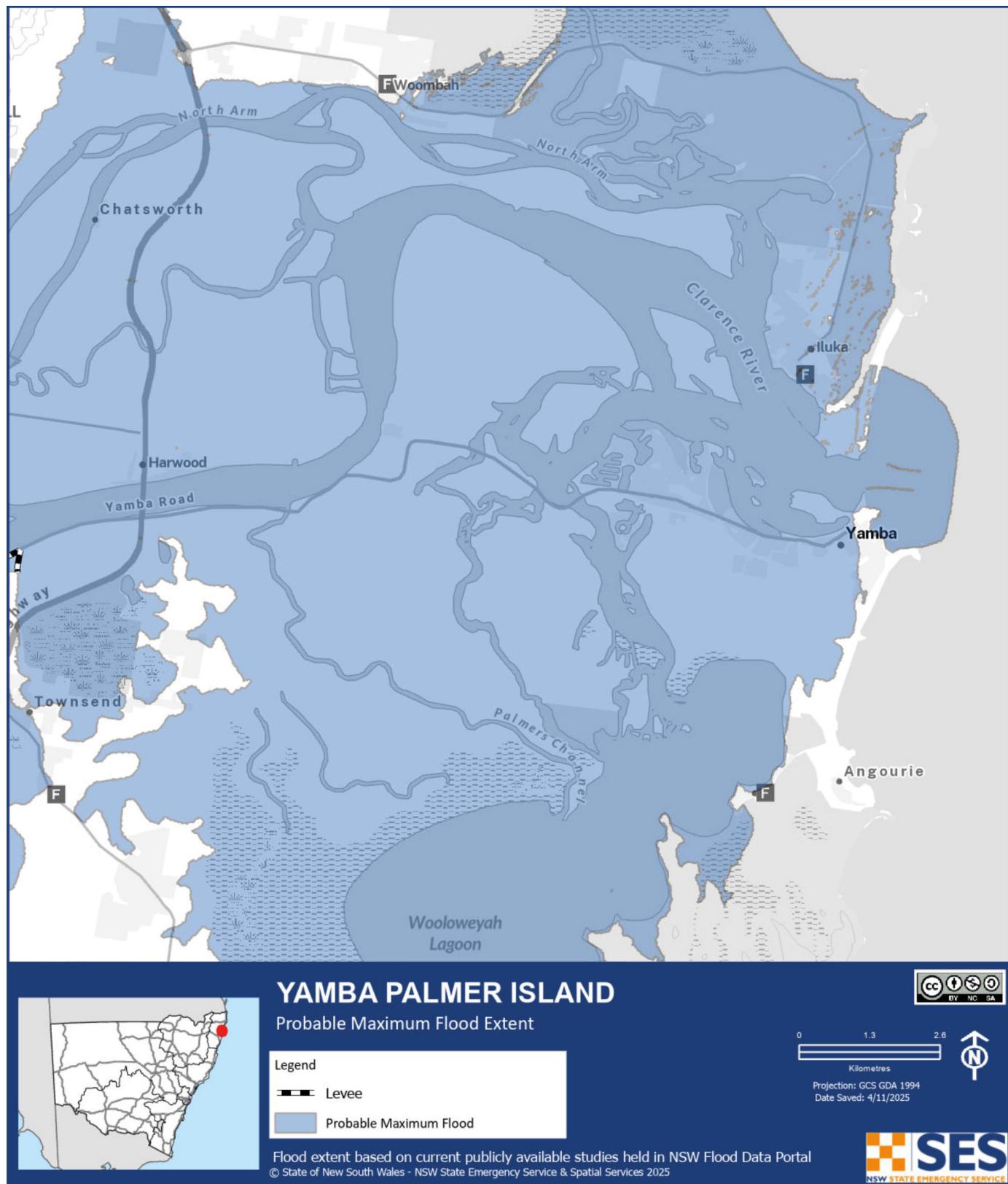


Yamba and Palmers Island Flood Risk

Probable Maximum Flood (PMF)

Probable Maximum flood (PMF) is the largest flood that could conceivably be expected to occur at a particular location, usually estimated from probable maximum rainfall. The PMF defines the maximum extent of flood prone land, that is, the floodplain. If this occurs, widespread isolation and deep hazardous floodwater across the floodplain can last for several days.

At the Maclean gauge, the PMF is estimated to be 8.56m.



If a flood exceeds the extent indicated on this map, NSW SES is not liable for any loss suffered as a result of reliance on this map.

Get Prepared in the Clarence Valley Floodplain

These actions will help prepare your household for floods.
Being prepared can save lives.

How to prepare for flood:

- Know where to get updates and warnings**
 - Bureau of Meteorology: local weather updates.
 - NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES): information on floods and storms.
 - ABC Radio: the official emergency broadcaster.

Prepare an emergency bag

What to pack:

1. Health care items like medications and prescriptions.
2. Copies of your important documents (hard copies or stored digitally).
3. Important valuables and momentos.
4. Important phone numbers.
5. Radio, torch and batteries.
6. Clothing and personal items.

Make a plan if you need to evacuate

Know where you will go, how you will get there, what evacuation routes you can use, what you will do with your animals, and how you will manage your health.

Share your plan

Talk with your relatives, friends, and neighbours about what you will do if you need to evacuate.

What to do during a flood:

- Follow NSW SES Flood Advice and Emergency Warnings**
 - Listen to your local ABC radio station for up to date flood information and advice.
 - Follow advice from NSW SES if you are asked to evacuate, don't wait until it is too late.

Take your emergency bag

- This should include your medications, prescriptions and any assistance equipment.

Take your animals

- Put them on leads or in pet carriers.

Know where to go

- Follow advice on evacuations and check live traffic information.
- Make your way to relatives or friends if you can.
- Official evacuation centres will be announced at the time of the emergency.

Look out for each other

- Share information with family, friends, and neighbours and help each other or those who may need assistance.

Key Contact Information

Police, Fire and Ambulance

Triple Zero (000) for life-threatening emergencies.

NSW SES

132 500 for emergency assistance in a flood, storm or tsunami.

LiveTraffic

livetraffic.com for local road information

Clarence Valley Council

Customer Service (02) 6643 0200
After Hours Emergency (02) 6626 6858

Clarence Valley Disaster Dashboard

<https://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au/disasterdashboard>

Radio Stations

ABC North Coast - 94.5FM / 738AM
2GF Grafton/Maclean - 1206 AM / 103.9 FM
Radio 2NR ABC - 738 AM

Local Land Services

1300 795 299
lls.nsw.gov.au



To learn more visit
ses.nsw.gov.au/northernrivers