



Overview

The Northern Rivers is a 'hotspot' for natural disasters, but not much is known about the impact of these events on mental health.

The survey findings show the mental health impact was greatest for people who were affected by the flood in a number of ways, and for those still displaced from their homes after six months.

We are working with community and government agencies to make sure this information is used to improve recovery and preparedness in future.

Survey analysis is continuing, looking into resilience factors and community connections and the flood impact on specific sectors of the community.



Thank you

Thank you to everyone who took part in this survey.

The Community Advisory Groups in Lismore and Murwillumbah include representatives from community and business organisations, government and non-government agencies, elected representatives, the education sector, emergency services, relief agencies, and residents' groups.

This project is supported by funding from the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University, University of Wollongong, The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and the Northern NSW Local Health District.

Do you want to talk to someone confidentially about the flood or how things are going now?

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Beyondblue: 1300 224 636

For young people up to 25 years

Headspace office Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm

Lismore: 02 6625 0200

Tweed Heads: 07 5589 8700

Or online counselling at: eheadspace.org.au between 9am- 1am



A Community Resilience Project

COMMUNITY RECOVERY AFTER FLOOD

INITIAL SURVEY FINDINGS

In March/April 2017 rainfall from Cyclone Debbie caused devastating flooding across the Northern Rivers.

Since then the University Centre for Rural Health has been working with community and government organisations to get a better understanding of the impact of the floods on mental health and wellbeing.

Six months after the flood, more than 2500 people responded to our survey – telling us about their flood experience, health and wellbeing and community life.

Inside are some of the most important initial findings from the survey.



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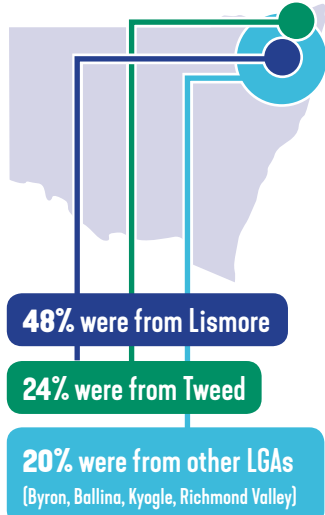
Who took part in the survey

More than **2,500** people responded to the survey

60% were women

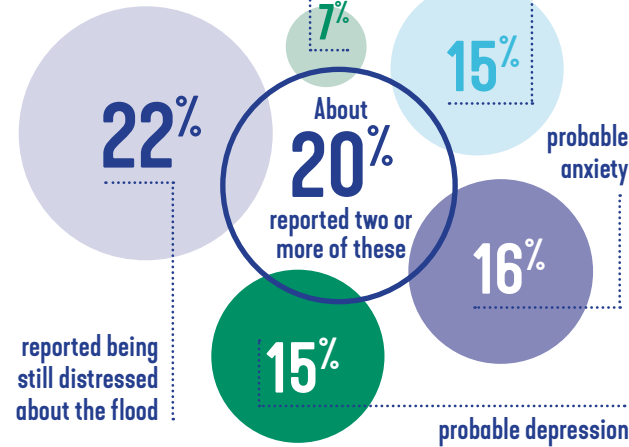
8% were farmers

31% were business owners



How people were affected

Of all respondents:



What was flooded

Almost all people who took part in the survey reported infrastructure damage somewhere

About 1 in 5 reported flood damage inside their homes

More than 75% reported flood damage to their suburb

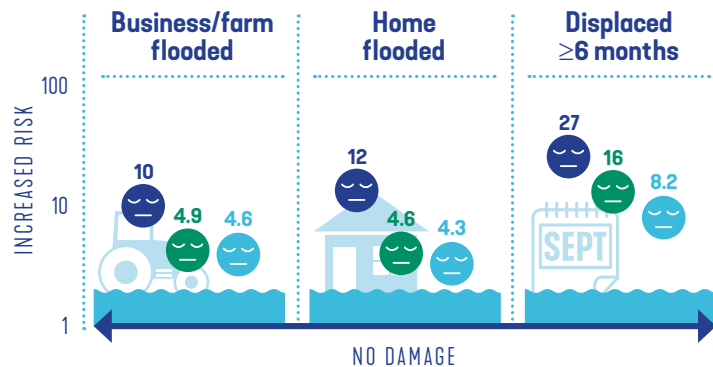
About 1 in 6 reported flood damage to their business or farm



Flood Impact on mental health

Flood damage and risk to mental health, compared to no damage

☹️ Probable PTSD 😬 Probable anxiety 😞 Probable depression



There was higher mental health risk for those whose properties were flooded compared to those reporting no damage

Mental health risk increased the longer a person was displaced
4% of respondents were still displaced from their homes ≥6 months

The risk of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is 27 times higher for those displaced for six months or more

Number of sites* flooded and risk of PTSD

*We asked about flood damage to suburb/outside the home/inside the home/business or farm/home of family or friend



Mental health risk increased with number of sites damaged

Higher risk for people who reported 3 or more sites damaged

Mental health risk was higher for those on pensions and other income support