

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 6 April 2022 2:01:27 PM

Your details

Title

First name

Last name

Email

Submission details

I am making this submission as A resident in a flood-affected area

Submission type I am making a personal submission

Consent to make submission public I would like this submission to remain anonymous

Share your experience or tell your story

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#)

1.1 Causes and contributing factors Road building works undertaken in the region that did NOT factor floods into the plans, effectively turning the low lying areas of the Northern Rivers region into a giant dam. Failure to adequately support the BoM and other

organisations through systematic 'cost cutting'; failure to adequately fund SES and other organisations through intentional, deliberate 'cost cutting' that resulted in deaths (which is probably why the REAL death count is being suppressed).

1.2 Preparation and planning

Sub par on every level. Failure to plan for a mass evacuation scenario; failure to properly fund SES and other organisations to adequately mobilise for this level of catastrophe. Failure to have a comprehensive STATE AND NATIONAL DISASTER PLAN that links ALL responders and vital parties within MOMENTS OF ACTIVATION- five weeks on and the various departments STILL can't talk to one another effectively. Total failure of responding bodies- the DCJ failed Lismore utterly then came sweeping back in with an attitude of contempt for those that had banded together to SAVE LIVES, while have ZERO ability to action REAL help in the situation. ZERO emergency accommodation planning and implementation- the govt's response was 'throw money at the issue and gaslight everyone who is pointing out the utter failures', which has seen thousands left without adequate and safe interim housing and support.

1.3 Response to floods

Zero stars, utterly do not recommend: it seems that the official responding bodies managed to find EVERY point of failure possible and nail them accurately. The Lismore region was left with untrained but dedicated LOCALS rescuing individuals while being told by the SES NOT to go on with the rescues- fortunately that's never going to happen again because we've learned the hard way that the SES will let people die. The 'authorities' appear to have intentionally made things as *utterly difficult as possible* after the floods; families were traumatised while in utterly inadequate 'emergency shelters', there was ZERO ability to organise things like indoor tents for family safety, adequate security within the emergency shelters had to be organised by non-official responders (that the DCJ promptly booted out when the responsible individual finally

made it back to Lismore and needed to bolster their own image and professional marketing front), it took DAYS for the ADF to hit the ground and when they did they were wandering around with ZERO organisation and effectiveness. The SES was next to useless, we had to CROWDFUND helicopter rescues because the 'official' SES authorities had THREE TIMES knocked back the ADF's offer of helicopters, as did the Federal govt. People *died* because of this (yes, locals KNOW that the official death figures are lies, I personally know an individual who pulled 8 BODIES out on that first night) and others are telling their OWN horror stories of pulling dead people out of their houses. WE KNOW how huge the failure here has been. Want to talk about the ableist and ageist gaslighting and ridiculous levels of expectation from the 'authorities' to the situation? Try 'get to the SCU' when even ABLED INDIVIDUALS couldn't find 'V block'- zero SIGNAGE, directions, *nothing*- was that the intention? That the locals in need would just give up out of sheer despair?

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Zero stars, absolutely do not recommend- the flood unhomed being bounced like rubber balls from one 'emergency temp accommodation' place to the next, NO effective temp housing strategy, NO ADF tent city, NO organised mental health support (just another thing the 'officials' left to the locals to organise, go figure)- the gaslighting BS from the DCJ that locals got in terms of 'support' (shoved out the door clutching a bunch of phone numbers that were Roads to Nowhere in terms of accommodation and actual support), emergency accommodations shut down prematurely everywhere because 'it's all good now' when it WAS FAR FROM OK.

1.5 Recovery from floods

LOL- what 'recovery'? You mean the scattering of the community across NSW because *housing* is no longer available in the region? You mean the interminable and ridiculous levels of paperwork that individuals who've just lost *everything* are meant to be able to provide in

order to access 'grants' so that they can keep some kind of roof over their heads? The systemic lack of housing that the successive govts have steadfastly refused to address? The level of sickness that has been breaking out here because of the mountainous piles of garbage in front of drowned homes? The rinse and repeat of all of this in the second flood? The reliance on LOCAL ORGANISATIONS over 'official' facades of uselessness? The way we're mobilising in the face of MORE PREDICTED RAIN because we KNOW the 'official' responses are going to be nonexistent? The suicides that are occurring in our farming sector because older farmers know they'll *never* recover from this level of wipeout? The older, disabled individuals that died in their roof cavities because they weren't strong enough to beat their way out of their roof?

Yeah. We're living ALL of this and in the meanwhile, the Federal Govt is gaslighting the community with 'if you don't want rental stress, buy a home'.

1.6 Any other matters

We NEED a CIVILIAN, well funded, well trained National response unit that has the ability to respond within less than an HOUR to this level of emergency; there's so many better planners, tacticians, logistics managers, whole systems engineers and other individuals with the ABILITY to get this happening that is present on ANY level of 'govt'. We need ADF tent cities that can be set up within HOURS of a disaster, so that traumatised single mothers aren't dealing with being *sexually assaulted* in the 'emergency evac' centres, or dealing with individuals who are having mental health crisis, or drug related situations. It's not HARD to create an effective, efficient response to this level of disaster, but the 'official' organisations have demonstrated their utter lack of ability to do it so we need a CIVILIAN organisation: black water trained individuals who KNOW how to safely go out into floods; houses that have escape hatches IN THE ROOF; mobile ground units that are equipped

and ready to go into the community once the water has receded, aged and disability care specialists who are sensitive to the needs of our elderly residents in need- I'm not 'officially' trained and *I* could come up with a better plan than all the massively funded 'official' organisations combined have been able to put together. I don't want 'officials' involved in this region any more, I want LOCALS who have *proven* their ability to organise- try looking at the Koori Mail response, or Sally Flannery, Elly Bird et al- we currently have *councillors* on the Lismore Council that have been using the situation to promote their own particular biases and schemes while in the meantime we're STILL crowdfunding rescues and food drops.

This experience has been the straw that broke the camel's back for me when it comes to the political and organisational landscape in this country- I know now that 'authorities' can't be trusted to do ANYTHING with the inhabitants in mind. Our entire region has PTSD and 'the govt' is still playing politics with disaster.

Supporting documents or images
