

From: [Redacted]
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 7 April 2022 3:16:56 PM



Your details

Title

First name

Last name

Email

Postcode

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

Your story We live in Goonellabah (the hill to the north east of Lismore's centre), so were not directly impacted by the flooding. Nevertheless, our family members have experienced the following in association with the flood crisis: 1. a leaking roof from storm damage; 2. loss of employment in a flood affected business; 3. the traumatic impact of the flooding and the interruptions to

routine activity such as school, therapy sessions and other activities on a child who is autistic and who consequently became extremely anxious, with behavioural issues that have drained her parents; 4. the traumatic impact of having flood refugees staying in a family member's home and abusing his hospitality by using drugs on his premises; 5. the ongoing loss of the business facilities and amenities upon which we rely; 6. extreme shortages initially, and limited supplies subsequently, of basic goods obtainable in the local Goonellabah supermarkets, which were forced to service the entire Lismore population in the aftermath of the floods. Even now, by the end of each day there are usually shortages of basic foodstuffs such as bread and milk; 7. extreme traffic congestion in association with the demands on the local supermarkets and petrol stations; 8. the massive damage to all local roads, with the exception of the main highway through town, which has resulted in damage to cars; 8. the impact of the increasing mental health issues on family members who work in constant contact with the public, as, for example, customers demanded access in a pharmacy to medications for which their prescriptions were lost in the floods and became aggressive when informed that until another prescription was obtained, those drugs could not be supplied; 9. confusion about and inability to pay rent on time due to the closure of banks and real estate agencies, giving rise to even more mental anguish.

Whilst those directly impacted by the floods have obviously experienced, and continue to experience, so much more trauma and hardship than our family has, I submit this in the hope that it is realised that the impact of such flooding is even more widespread and lasting than the more acute and sensational, genuinely tragic dramas, that so many endure. It breaks my heart to go into town even now, and to witness the harm that these floods have caused to so many, but the

need to care for my own affected family members has meant I've felt powerless to assist in the voluntary community effort, which has been vital to our people.

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

I believe it's beyond doubt that climate change is the main contributing factor to the severity of this year's massive rainfall and flooding. The models have predicted both extreme flooding and extreme drought, and the droughts, bushfires and now the floods have matched the predicted scenarios, and are likely to become more extreme in future. However, I do not believe that climate change is purely the outcome of our greenhouse emissions. It is also associated with the deforestation of the country, which changes the nature of the water cycle, and with inappropriate land and water management techniques. We need to adopt regenerative, sustainable practices in all aspects of our living, as soon as possible, as well as developing sustainable energy industries in place of coal and gas.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Very poor. It has long been known that the levee built in Lismore would not protect us from floods of the magnitude we've had, and despite Lismore's history and the awareness that flooding could get worse over time, it has been a 'business as usual' scenario prior to these floods, with little or no effort being made towards developing a more flood-resilient town.

1.3 Response to floods

The SES made the call to evacuate too late, gave assurances of safety too early. The nature of official responses to and preparations for the possibility of flooding need to be planned and established well in advance of the actual event, based on local knowledge rather than only on

information and predictions from the Bureau of Meteorology. If it were not for the willingness and incredible activity of local volunteers, there would have been many, many more deaths and far, far more suffering amongst local residents. The most outstanding responses have come from a few individuals, such as one of our local councillors, Elly Bird, who helps to manage the Resilient Lismore group that has essentially been responsible for addressing the community needs at this time, but so many people are contributing their time, energy and skills to the townspeople that their efforts put to shame the slower and inadequate responses from the federal and state governments (although we do very much appreciate the incredible efforts made by our local state MP, Janelle Saffin, and the recent visits and concern expressed by the Premier, Dominic Perrotet).

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Very slow, and wearing on all of us, not just those directly impacted by the flooding. The homelessness and mental health issues that are now rampant in our area mean that real recovery may not happen within the lifetime of some of our people. No matter what strategies are adopted to mitigate future flood impacts, there is a need for clear direction and support to relocate flood-prone homes and businesses as soon as possible so that, in future, the impacts of floods are limited to a smaller section of the community. It's a case of the governments needing to be willing to invest wisely now in these measures in order to avoid the economic, social and political costs of not doing so.

1.5 Recovery from floods

We long for recovery! It still seems such a distant objective!

1.6 Any other matters

Building one or more dams upstream of the river, and raising the height of the levee, will not prevent flooding of enormous magnitude, like those we've just had. Indeed, raising the levee would make things worse for the flood-prone areas outside the Lismore CBD. There needs to

be clear leadership and direction to open up new land for housing in more elevated areas and to relocate the town centre so that it's out of flood, and support for those who've lost everything to be motivated and have the means to undertake relocation. There needs to be much greater support for mental health issues arising from the various traumas associated with flooding and loss.

Supporting documents or images
