

**From:**  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:**  
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To Whom It May Concern,

On the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2022, I witnessed the most amazing cyclonic event in the history of the Northern Rivers of New South Wales and directly, South Lismore.

South Lismore...the suburb our council has been trying to destroy since they declared us and North Lismore "Undesirable and Unworthy" in 2001/2002, hence we lost our railway station as N.S.W State Rail is not allowed to have a station in undesirable and unworthy suburbs. And yet, our council continued to approve the build up of our flood plains for industrial estate usage - opened roads for further expansion of our flood plains.

This cyclonic event was not a flood. I have witnessed floods as many others have - for me since 1995.

Lismore has not ever flooded whilst it was raining. Usually the rain stops and we have 2 - 3 days to prepare for the water coming downstream.

Woodburn and Coraki have not ever flooded at the same time as Lismore...they usually have 2-3 days AFTER we've flooded to prepare for the water coming down to them.

Ballina does not flood!

This was not a flood event, this was an arm of a cyclone that did not form instead it tailed it's way down the whole east coast of Australia. My friend in Victoria who has sent me money to help me, flooded on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of April from the same weather event.

My views shall not be considered...however, if the east coast of Australia has moved closer to the Equator by approx. 108klms (in my humble uneducated opinion) we, from South Queensland to Port Macquaire, need to be considered tropical and no longer flood zone prone.

On the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2022, around 3am, the rain had been relentless. I got up and looked outside again. At midnight I could see my unit block's neighbour's yard's grass. By 3:38am I had measured the water was coming up one step every ten minutes and the lights went out.

I heard my neighbour who heard me out on the verandah. She sounded so scared, had no torch or light source. I assured her we would be okay that we had 80 minutes to get prepared.

I stuffed things into 3 bags...one bag had my pillow. I needed it for my jaw but that's a really long story, a novel at least.

My neighbour had been on the phone to the S.E.S who told her to stay inside. I refused to let her do that. I yelled at her to "GET OUT HERE!" She said they told her it was dangerous on the verandah in case it collapsed.

I told her..."If your fridge falls over, we only have one door, it may trap you, you have to get out here with me." I promised her I would keep her alive.

I put a chair onto the table I normally kept plants on and put my plants into my bathroom. I made put a chair on her table too. I made put her phone into a sandwich bag,

sealed and her ID and gather her medications. I couldn't believe she didn't put shoes or socks on. My priority was to keep my feet dry as with my jaw, I cannot shiver so I was aware if hypothermia got me, I would probably lose my strength and ability to stay focused.

had recently had Pancreatic Cancer surgery...with her nurse still coming to dress it daily...there was no way I was allowing her to stay in that water, no matter what the S.E.S told her.

The SES were not there! I was in charge and if she wanted to stay alive she'd better darn listen. I was not that harsh on the night nor the day...I kept her calm, I kept reminding her we were dry while others were up to the necks, drowning. My friend died, around the corner, upstream. I didn't know she was there alone, her walker couldn't move against the current, I can still hear her last breath. I have to have a break, tears have fogged my glasses.

It was not until after three S.E.S boats and four private boats ignored us - because we were dry on our chairs. They did not know the table my chair was on was made of plywood or my neighbour's of plastic, she began to float, I made her come onto my table. How she crawled through that space and I got her chair onto my table and my table held, I don't remember, I just know we were together and we were saved.

daughter, , was ringing every 10 mins asking if we were rescued. I kept assuring her we would be by the time her husband got her from Evans Head. Somehow got from Evans Head to Ballina and then Lismore and then to our driveway, just after we were rescued. He continued saving people until darkness said no more boats allowed. I kept assuring I would not let her mother die. children, and , aged 4 and 2yrs... have grown to know me...I felt a huge responsibility for a woman who does not normally talk to me. She is shy and reserved, I am not. Even with my brain damage and consistent pain, I am a good human being.

Even if I pushed all my loved ones away because I kept thinking I was going to die, way before the storm, I just thought something's going to cause me not to live and I thought it was going to be me...so I didn't want anyone crying at my funeral. I know, that is very sad. My first husband took his own life, and I was so sad with pain I could see no point of me. There are people I love who I hurt.

I survived to live a better life. I am smart. I have saved more than one life in my lifetime and in the same river.

Luckier than most, I have good friends to stay with for now. My home won't be liveable for months. I paid over \$1000 rent before I was notified to stop though that shall be held for when/if I move back in.

I have a lot more than most. I miss my stamps, sewing and art supplies collected over 40 years, no space of my own to create and be calm and not allow the stupidity of wars and governments to ignite my adrenalin hence creating words spilling out of my fingers without my brain's capacity to keep up.

I love life.

I love our world.

I love Lismore.

I love South and North Lismore.

I love the truth.  
The truth makes me dangerous.  
I won't ever forget the truth.  
That keeps me vital.  
How I kept my neighbour alive?  
That is a miracle!

I went to register as disaster affected last Monday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022, at Lismore University. I had to repeat and relive my experience to five different agencies, all in the same place, though all had their own little section. I had to write and re-write what I had lost, tick boxes as if those boxes were the ones full of my baby photos, full of my children's baby photos, full of my children's dead father's pictures... what freaking boxes have you ticked for me? Why can't I fill out those forms once, they be photocopied and people read them before they have to tell me how to feel what to think and what to do...people who did not live it, who know nothing about my experience or Marge's or anybody else's. Why was it so darn difficult to get help???

My whole suburb is gone, my whole next suburb, my whole business town... South Lismore, North Lismore, Lismore CBD...all of downstream Coraki, Bungawalbyn, Dungarubba, Wooburn, Swan Bay, Cabage Tree, Broadwater, Wardell, Ballina...etc...and then there's inland.

Nobody has anywhere to live! Landlords don't care as they want insurance and then they won't fix anything, they'll sell to council and council will again make money from our pain by approving more industrial building sites.

I lived through the Newcastle earthquake of 1989 in Hamilton, the epicentre. This cyclone event on 28/02/2022 is the scariest moment of my life. I was so scared I would fail and her mother would die. I was so scared I would fail after assuring her she was better on the chairs, tied to bottles with me than inside her unit.

I keep having nightmares falls into the water and I cannot save her, I wake gasping for air, guilty I live.

I keep having nightmares about my friend dying and about the children who were so scared as they sat on their roofs in the rain, waiting and hoping to be rescued, and some now freak out at any hint of rain. I know I do at the moment with the live satellite indicating more rain to come. I have no where to save what I managed to save.

Being homeless is more costly. I want to pay my way. I don't want my friends to be out of pocket because I need feeding and bathing and to use their water and electricity. I don't know what to do. Silly me. Of course I do, just laugh and have faith. No religion involved. I rely on me.,

If you did not live this you shall not know it, ever. And you should not want to experience anything like this. So many lives were lost, must have been - there were not enough boats to rescue everyone, we all know that Lismore only has 6, yes six, S.E.S boats - and not many know how to control a boat against such wild, strong currents.

The water did not flow normally, as per a normal flood. It was erratic and dangerously filthy. Sewage, oil, dead animals floated past, some deposited within our homes.

During the event I was calm and organised. Determined to keep Karen alive and keep

spirits up. I rang my neighbours and told them to get out their roof cavity the water was rising too fast. I rang Ibrahim from Lismore Appliances asking if he knew anyone with a boat - meanwhile, he was hanging onto the side of his building, in water, needing to be rescued. And he does not swim. At least I had earned a bronze medallion in my teens.

The aftermath is devastating. Devastation to the absolute maximum. Not one house survived for kilometres in every direction. Families are displaced and distraught.

We need help!

I am better at helping than needing help. I'd rather be a helper. My brain has good solutions to complex issues though it's rarely appreciated. I just know, I am so grateful my brain worked well that night and day!

I won't be the same very again.

The 01/03/2022 was the worst for me - I learned my youngest son was flooding, my eldest son in Qld his roof collapsed. My 2<sup>nd</sup> son, his daughter, my granddaughter became scared of storms...My friends downstream at Coraki, Swan Bay, Woodburn, Broadwater, Dungarubba....etc...to Ballina...lost everything other than their lives. I keep reminding everyone to find what to be grateful for...we're alive.

I also managed to save a knee high stack of hand written books I wrote...I am happy, but overwhelmed with the loss and the devastation.

Strangers came to help during the clean up. They stole my \$10 note out of my plastic sandwich bag wallet. They stole one of my guitars that my sons learned to play on, they stole my ladder that my father made me. They stole my ability to sort through my own belongings by distracting me and overwhelming an overwhelmed 56 year old disabled pensioner.

I don't know what to do anymore. [Submission1](#)