

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Tuesday, 19 April 2022 9:18:58 AM



Your details

Title

First name

Last name

Email

Postcode

Submission details

I am making this submission as Other

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 are home owners who own two rental properties in Lismore that were both flooded almost to the ceilings. We don't like the term "landlords", which perpetuates negative views on home owners who rent homes. Our houses are bottom of the market properties and we have always rented for very low rental to people who would not otherwise be able to rent elsewhere or

buy. Although people like us tend to be vilified, we are actually part of the group providing reasonably priced housing to low/no income families. We have low incomes ourselves, and although we have some assets in the form of property, these essentially represent our superannuation and savings.

The tenants in both houses had varying mental health issues. One tenant was \$8000 in debt in rent due to personal hardship, and our initially sympathetic approach to renting (unfortunately this has eroded as we have been taken advantage of).

This background is by way of arguing that non-residential home owners are tending to be ignored or vilified in this disaster. For example, in completing this form, there is no option under the drop-down menu "I am making this submission as" for non-residential home owners. This is despite a large number of flooded houses being rental properties.

While renters are clearly in a terrible situation losing possessions, many are moving away and restarting with assistance and donations. Home owners are stuck trying to figure out what they do with their buildings. They have lost their income, if they have a mortgage they will be in significant financial stress. In our case rental income is our only source of income. It will cost thousands to rebuild. There is a growing sense that these houses will be worthless assets as no one will be keen to rent or buy in these flooded areas. So we have our savings invested in housing with no income and a stranded asset.

We were insured, but not for floods as the price for flood insurance would come close to exceeding the full income from the property in any one year. Clearly this would be completely prohibitive, and would double rent prices if passed on to tenants... which would

subsequently take out all affordability from the rental market.

We actually had one of these houses on the market and it essentially “sold” the week before the flood for \$350,000 with two competing offers. Contracts were not exchanged and of course the sale fell through. We were hoping to use these funds to renovate the second house. Now we fear the whole property (both properties) are unsaleable even if we invest money into their repair - money we really don't have.

In our case we will primarily have to do the work ourselves however we already had full-time commitments in our own situation and juggling the rebuilding of two houses is an overwhelming prospect, particularly with such uncertain longer term prospects. One tenant is clearly traumatised and directing her anger at us, however we simply can't renovate any faster than is humanly possible. While we are very fortunate that our own home was minimally affected, everyone in our communities are under significant pressure and stress.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.5 Recovery from floods

We would like to make some suggestions in terms of the recovery process and what would assist in our situation.

Opening up of non flood land in areas close to residential areas and also rural areas for subdivision OR approval for two (in some cases more) houses to be built on a rural property. These policies and hence approvals need to be expedited and announcements made urgently so people can offer land for such purposes. Ideally this would target cleared underutilised farm lands, of which there are many in the hills surrounding Lismore. Areas with native

vegetation should be avoided.

Optional land buybacks for those who have a plan where they can move their house to another approved location, or sell the house to someone else. The money from the land buyback would partially cover the house removal costs.

House buy-backs in priority areas, with houses in reasonable condition being considered for relocation. Government funding could assist to move and renovate the houses which then might become publicly owned housing or resold back onto the market. This would minimise wastage of buildings which can be recycled, and would also retain the heritage values and character of Lismore's housing.

Areas that have been vacated need to be converted to sportsfields, parkland, recreation and forests. These could become a real feature of Lismore. There are large areas in Goonellabah currently set aside for sporting fields which seems wasteful when lower flood areas could fulfil this purpose.

Decisions need to be made URGENTLY. Many homeowners like ourselves are demoralised and at a loss to know what to do. Clearly renovations need to be done AFTER houses are relocated. We need leadership and decisions to be made urgently.

Supporting documents or images
