

**From:**  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Northern Rivers Flood Inquiry 2022  
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To Mary O'Kane and Michael Fuller and any other interested parties:

Our home remained dry....That could be the end of the story right there. It's a sentence that I feel guilty writing. Our home stayed dry while others became submerged in raging flood waters, their occupants watching the waters rise fast and increase in turbulence. They sheltered on roofs, while we sat dry and merely worried about Lismore and our garden. (So much guilt about that that last one.....)

But... the crunch for us came on 1st March as we went to leave our little safe place to buy food. The mud was thick and slippery....I didn't make it to the car. My right leg folded under me and it has now been eight weeks with a broken ankle. We didn't know it was broken till a week later when we could access x ray facilities at Lismore Hospital.

We are the lucky ones.

The stories of survival continue to be told and I still break down in tears when we drive into Lismore and come to the realization ....that the town just isn't there anymore... the Library, where we spent time carefully choosing books, the many choices of eating places that provided a little bite to eat... just the heartbreaking emptiness of the once thriving streets and then, past all those empty houses, bent and muddy and broken.

The crisis driven heroism, generosity and outpouring of care and love shown by the immediate community is now legendary... and folks arrived from everywhere around the country, to bog in and clean up what they could, feed who they could and listen. Always listen...sometimes it was all they could do.

Eight weeks on and Lismore is trying to put on a brave face... a few little shops have tentatively opened up with evidence of their recent history front and centre. But I think this is driven by a love of their community's emotional welfare as much as the need to service loans which are now realistically unserviceable.

I haven't been able to assist anyone, I'm totally reliant on my husband. The guilt about that sometimes is overwhelming...

In the end, we are in the throes of a communal trauma. The onset of communal and individual depression will come on soon, slowly increasing, in direct proportion to the eventual removal of care and assistance. That is the danger to come...it will sneak up on people who mistakenly believe that they are over the worst of a disaster.

The anger and disillusionment regarding the lack of immediate help during the worst flood in recorded history is still fresh, as is the lack of stable emergency housing for all those in need, even now, 8 weeks on. There needs to be a comprehensive review of the inadequacies during and immediately after the disaster, and new protocols formalized to assist people in danger. The lack of communication was a huge problem that could easily have resulted in more loss of life. This remained a problem for weeks after the event and resulted in some people left injured and isolated for days. Likewise, the lack of coordination between the various agencies left those

seeking immediate help confused without a central access point, at a time when clarity was paramount.

The provision of immediate shelter to those subsequently made homeless due to events of this nature is an area which could be outsourced to either festival outfitters, or the armed forces, who should be able to erect a temporary tent city without a problem.

A plan, many plans, initiated by locals and possibly improved and or modified by experts, need to be examined, groups initiated ...in order to give form and purpose to their future.

Yours in anticipation of an in -depth and fearless review

These are just my earliest thoughts, unashamedly colored by the sometimes harrowing, always moving stories from the local facebook group 'Resilient Lismore (Lismore Helping Hands).'

Sent from my Galaxy