

I've lived in Lismore since 1989. I know about floods. I bought my house because it was 4.2 meters above the highest flood on record. I thought I was safe but I was caught out and totally unprepared for the height of the first of the 2022 floods. Unlike so many Lismorons I have building insurance but had no house contents cover.

I, like most, thought that this extraordinary 42% increase in flooding was due to a high tide, a 'rain bomb', incessant rain over days or weeks or almost a half century of adverse, sustained climate change compressed into one month.

Sure, these factors may have slightly impacted these flood levels but this calamity Mick, is a monumental, clueless man-made stuff up.

I started to research why this aberrant occurred and found it an interesting coincidence that the earth mounds on which the newly constructed Pacific Highway was built across the Woodburn flood plain were set at 4.2 m, and that height exactly matched the increase recorded in the first of the latest floods that inundated my house at Lismore (see photo of the telegraph pole outside of my house below).

Well, since then I've found that many of the old school farmers at Woodburn were screaming themselves hoarse to get the NSW RTA to ensure that the Pacific Highway was put on pylons through the flood plain as it was through the Macksville bypass, but no, they ignored this advice and decided on compacted earth mounds as they were a far better design solution, and much cheaper.

I think we need to get some names here. Who gave the tick to mounded earth vs pylons on a well known major flood plain. Who was the 'independent' hydrological engineer who did the sums and what data did he use, actual or hypothetical, to determine the flood impact was 300mm (2") and not 4.2 meters given floods topped the highway in parts and who designed the miniature culverts to deal with the said flooding. What was the economics of both designs or was a pylon based buildup even considered or costed.

This is a monumental stuff up Mick and it's going to be big and very expensive for the NSW government. There is a class action being set up right now so please take care looking at these issues Mick. It could very well get ugly.

I could go on about the time it took for emergency service to respond to the crisis and it's scarce local resources. I could go on about how long it's taking for the State to get money to owners so they can get their houses habitable again as it's 10 weeks and the red take has not yielded a cracker as yet. I could go on at the attitude of public servants who could not accept or respond to the legitimate claims. I could even go on about the NSW government setting up a corporation to further slow the response to needs that exist NOW, not in a few years time when the corporation is fully staffed, funded and operational. It's a typical bullshit public servant response to an immediate need. I was at Darwin in 1976 and within days they had a full response in train. Now on 5th May we have exactly zip up and running to get people housed and the city back in business. The place is still a ghost town and likely dead. Mate, this place is bugged. It's built in a flood plain. It's going to flood again and the levels are going to be at this new height regularly and its damage much more severe. The CBD dike is a failure. It's another dumb public servant response to an engineering problem.

You either accept the fact it's a flood plain or you relocate the town, and not to the golf course for gods sake. It's got to be toward Alstonville. The rest and most to the west is either too hilly or flood plain.

This may seem to be an easy gig for a distinguished semi retired Plod and sometime colorful racing identity but be careful Mick as this will need a prudent, considered response. And if you can't give them that then play safe and go with a complete city relocation. You can't go wrong with that approach.

Cheers,

Lismore.

