

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 20 May 2022 9:50:57 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

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

Climate change needs to be considered as a highly likely contributing factor to the severity of the flood. This adds weight to Australia's need to

step up on the international stage and make meaningful emissions cuts.

1.2 Preparation and planning

The Lismore SES would have had its numbers depleted as a result of COVID vaccine mandates, handicapping its response to the flood, and its capacity to save lives. This is despite COVID now being a mild disease that is generally no more dangerous than the flu.

1.3 Response to floods

I have serious concerns at the behaviour of the police and SES on Monday February 28th, with incidents occurring where they attempted to prevent people with private craft from launching rescue missions in the flooded area of Lismore, and telling them to cease their rescue activities when encountered on the water.

Given the severity of the flood, basic common sense dictates that there was a greater risk of lives being lost as a result of boats staying away from the water than participating in rescues. The SES was completely overwhelmed by the scale of the flooding, and returned some emergency calls for help days later.

Risk-aversion can cost lives when it is inappropriately applied.

I am concerned that helicopter pilots were baffled at not being tasked with post-flood rescue efforts, and that members of the public stepped in via crowdfunding to organise their own rescue efforts. This is a government responsibility.

Reference

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/baffled-pilots-say-their-helicopters-were-not-wanted-by-government-during-flood-crisis-20220312-p5a41t.html>

The government response to inland communities that were cut off by landslips was a case of too little, too late.

1.5 Recovery from

In regards to the Northern Rivers Reconstruction

floods

Corporation, I believe that it should be willing to liaise with various stakeholders, including the local community, whose majority wishes it should be willing to accept.

I do not want Lismore's character to be lost as a result of detached houses being replaced with aesthetically dubious higher-density housing, on a large scale.

Where land and/or properties are being compulsorily purchased, I very strongly believe that property owners should be paid the market value for their properties, rather than a smaller amount, as has tended to be the case in the past where the NSW Government is involved.

Where permanent housing is built to manage the loss of properties in Lismore, I would like it to be environmentally sustainable, aesthetically appealing, and designed with both the end user and community in mind.

My understanding is that the shipping container housing that has been established near Wollongbar costs \$175,000 per unit, which seems enormously expensive if true. Surely cheaper options exist. Another concern is the design of these living spaces, which at a glance do not appear to have windows of any size. I am unsure how such a space could be cooled in the summer without wasteful air conditioning.

1.6 Any other matters

The official local death toll of four from the flood is unrealistically low, given the large number of people who were rescued minutes or seconds from drowning. Persistent information circulating in the community claims that more lives were lost, and that this was not officially acknowledged.

While these claims are so far unverified, and to my knowledge no whistleblower has stepped forward, it remains that the NSW Government would have an interest in downplaying extra

mortalities given the political damage that would result.

Supporting documents or images
