

**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Friday, 20 May 2022 2:06:42 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**

This was an extreme weather event. These events have been repeatedly predicted by the International Panel on Climate Change in

response to human-induced climate change as a result of the burning of fossil fuels. Such weather events are now part of our 'new normal' and has been dubbed the Anthropocene. Without immediate action to transition from a fossil fuel based economy, we are going to repeatedly experience the events of 2022.

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### **1.2 Preparation and planning**

The creation of the CBD levee was a factor in the extremity of this event for areas of north and south Lismore. This was identified in the planning documents prior to the construction of the levee and was a key factor in community opposition at the time. In floods prior to the construction of the levee it was far easier for people to gauge what the river was doing as flood waters slowly enter areas. This was also a contributing factor to the problems caused in 2017 event because the community had a false sense of security and had forgotten what a major flood event does to Lismore.

Models of the flood water show huge discrepancies in height above ground levels from the North (Numulgi) to the south (Gundarimbah). I have not seen any modelling done by council or agency staff but I constructed my own GIS model using data from council staff and aerial imagery from immediately following the flood peak and was astounded by the variance in height.

With all due respect to the SES, it seems hopelessly inadequate that a flood town has such a poorly resourced SES and that the HQ was inundated. Why were communications so poor? 000 and SES numbers not working! In the days following, no communications available as well

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### **1.3 Response to floods**

Not being able to contact SES or police on the 000 number to arrange a rescue was scary! We were left on our own.

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### **1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery**

Way to slow to have the support of the Commonwealth government and the army. The fact that the PM did not speak with people on the ground speaks volumes to me.

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**1.5 Recovery from floods**

We need some very strong leadership on recovery and three months on....it has not happened. I appreciate that you are seeking input and consulting but people are being forced back into homes and businesses in the flood zone out of necessity, when we clearly need a new option. Doing the same thing over and over is just stupidity. I understand why it is happening because we are not being given another option. The CBD must move and land swap / buy backs offered as a matter of urgency. The Golf Course and University Lands are the most suitable locations for a new CBD (with housing options) and planning for this needs to commence. We will not have the support from the wider community when our town floods again and we know it will flood again with increasing ferocity and frequency. The costs will be huge, but the ongoing costs associated with inaction will be bigger. There are no engineering solutions that will work and retreat is the sensible option. The rhetoric coming from Kevin Hogan about the CSIRO study outcomes (a study that has not been done) eluding to water storages and levees is a complete furphy and needs to be acknowledged as such. We need leadership on recovery!

**1.6 Any other matters**

Happy to provide our GIS models and expertise as an academic at SCU but I would hope that you have been using GIS all along as it is a key tool in disaster response and planning. I make this submission as a Lismore resident not as a staff member of the University.

**Supporting documents or images**

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