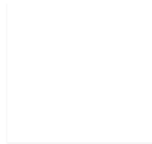


From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 22 May 2022 6:10:22 PM



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

Your story

My house in is Diadem Street, Lismore, which is near the eastern extremity of the flood zone in the Lismore basin. The living space was considered to be above the 1/100 flood levels, but the upper level of the house was almost fully submerged by the flood. My 8 year old child (who has autism) goes to school in Lismore, and is himself dealing with trauma from the his own

experience from being rescued during the flood. He goes to school locally so we have had to find temporary accomodation locally while we wait for our house to be rebuilt. I am currently paying a mortgage on a house that I can't live in, can't rent out and can't sell.

Below is a reflection that I wrote at the end of Monday 28 February:

This afternoon I went back into town to see the full extent of the damage in daylight. A helpful neighbour lent me a kayak, and I was able to row out and look around the house.

The water was up too high for me to get inside. I could see the windows to my bedroom were open, and a window to my kitchen was smashed. There was a distinct smell of petrol in the air. Wheely bins, bits of firewood, the top of our basketball ring, a few books and my washing machine were floating around the backyard. Around the far side of the house I found my two gas tanks floating like buoys. I'm glad I had the presence of mind to turn them off before I left.

I hoped to find something of sentimental value that I could salvage. But all I could find was a pack of Uno cards, bobbing up and down inside an air tight plastic container. My son told me over the weekend that he is "obsessed" with Uno - it has become his favourite card game. We had a Uno contest on Saturday and he totally cleaned me up. Now his Uno cards are all we have left of our house.

Thanks to everyone for your lovely messages today. I'm overwhelmed by your kindness and solidarity. I might not have as much stuff as I did this morning, but possessions can be replaced, and the most important thing is that we are all safe and sound.

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

1.3 Response to floods

I witnessed complete pandemonium on the morning of the 28 February flood. It was clear that local emergency services were completely overwhelmed. While the local SES did what it could, and community members were heroic, the inability of the other services such as the ADF to mobilise quickly was stark. Claims that the ADF were on the ground before the flood even commenced are frankly insulting. We saw no ADF personally in my street on the day or for days afterwards. By way of comparison, citizens from the Gold Coast and surrounding villages mobilised themselves to come down to Lismore and help however they could immediately. The first organised assistance we received was from Sikh Volunteers Australia who had travelled to Lismore from Melbourne. The ADF was first seen in our street the day after the Sikh volunteers went home.

This is not a criticism of ADF personnel, but it is a direct criticism of ADF leadership and the Federal Government who wasted precious days before authorising desperately-needed assistance. The response from the Federal Government nothing short of negligent, and it is a miracle that more lives were not lost due to their failure to mobilise resources in response to the crisis.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Access to assistance has been patchy. While received a \$3,000 payment for emergency relief, promised accomodation assistance has not been forthcoming. I am ineligible for State Government temporary accomodation assistance as I could be entitled to such assistance through my insurer. Despite promises that I would receives such assistance from my insurance company, none has been forthcoming, so I have received no accomodation assistance at all.

Residents, businesses and property owners in

Lismore and the flood-affected villages must be able to access insurance. If they can't they then will not be able to invest, and the Lismore CBD will surely be economically unviable. I do not believe this issue is being taken seriously enough by the State or Federal Governments. We need answers to insurance questions urgently.

1.6 Any other matters

This local community is dealing with multiple levels of trauma. There has not been enough consideration for providing wrap-around support services for residents - such as trauma counselling, financial advice, and violence prevention. The State Government Reconstruction Corporation appears to have a mandate to coordinate the construction of things, but does not have a mandate to coordinate the wide range of support services people need. This need to be addressed, and the Reconstruction Corporation should also provide a single-point of contact case management role for local residents.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [Kayaking.jpg](#)
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