

From:
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Lismore flood
Date: Monday, 6 June 2022 10:49:13 AM

Dear Inquirers,

Apologies for being late with my input. Like most people having had the impact of the flood, trauma and cleanup have impacted the timing of my response.

Three months after the flood, the impact is still affecting my husband and I. We are now camping in our house with two electricity points on our box on our veranda. The insurer has still not said how much money they will give us for our repairs.

Our living situation is the following. Extension chords and multiple power boards assist us to have our gifted secondhand fridge working. We have a camping gas stove to cook and heat our water for dishes and bucket showers. Our niece gave us a washing machine and dryer which is now connected downstairs.

Two months of cleanup upstairs including CommInsure builders coming in to take our inner walls and insulation out and drying inside with walls and then multiple cleanups of layers of mud, helped us to move back in. I contacted the insurer to request confirmation of spraying for mould, with no reply. I then sprayed donated natural anti - mould myself.

Our walls up to the high skirting board have been removed. The water came upstairs nearly three metres higher than ever before. We prepared downstairs by lifting things on tables thinking this would be adequate. We live on near the Leicester River.

In 2017 the flood came under our house to three quarters of a metre. We had a record shop in in the town CBD. We lost equipment and many records. At home we also had a loss of belongings. My husband spent months washing records and covers during a time he was recovering from cancer treatment.

The flood records in LCC show the flood has been on our property twice before 2017 on to our land (1954 and 1974). Even the second flooding in March 2022, water did not come on our land. The 28th February event was extremely off the charts and very unprecedented in its veracity, power and depth of impact. It's power and impact took us, the neighbourhood and officials all by surprise.

On the 28/2/22 the ground was very wet and the rain had been pelting down. I received a text in the afternoon from the SES advising us to prepare to evacuate.

I had a very strong gut feeling that my husband and I should go to stay with a friend. My husband needed convincing to get out, as he was preparing a bush saw dust toilet to prepare to stay. In the end he was convinced that we could have a good nights sleep rather than trying to sleep not knowing what was about to happen. When it floods here, the sewer in South Lismore, fills with water and we can't use the toilet. The water rises in the toilet system.

Before we evacuated from our house, I went next door to ask our two neighbours if they were evacuating. To this they replied they had extra beer and were staying. Their house is higher than ours and they felt confident there would be no problem.

Our neighbours next door had to be evacuated. Before the water rose into their house, they said they smelled gas. Both went downstairs to turn off their gas bottles which were

floating in knee high water. The water rose so quickly and with such force, one had to grab on to the other and drag them both branch to branch and then to the stairs . They were rescued from their upstairs balcony by a man in his tinny.

ALL OUR NEIGHBOURS had to be rescued by a random man in his tinny. This man was rescuing himself originally, but heard cries for help. He then took people to the South Lismore School, which was the highest spot he could find. If it hadn't been for ordinary people in boats, hundreds of people would have died in our neighbourhood, in our town.

Our neighbours at the back had to be rescued. One with MD has been in hospital for three months, as there was no where else for her to go. One had to swim from a van to the house to organise putting the woman in the wheelchair up on books on the kitchen table to save her from rising water.

We parked our second car across the road at the bowling club car park, thinking the water would not impact it. As relayed by the back neighbour, a wall of water came across and down the river and the cars were all tossed around. They looked like tossed chopsticks ; together and messed up.

Our caravan which was parallel and close to our house at the back of our house. It was moved to the very back of the yard in between trees. It is still there. The army and SES won't help to move it . The ground has been too boggy and wet and a swamp.

My neighbour warned me about the impact of the flood when he returned after the water receded. He said, "We have all lost everything.". No one could have prepared us for the stench and thickness of the sewerage and mud downstairs as we opened the door to enter. Upstairs the mud permeated tossed around belongings and furniture up to the height of my neck(I am 5'8"). The cleanup seemed overwhelming.

Then thankfully came the volunteers ; family, friends and strangers who came in droves with shovels, food and cleaning supplies from the district, Sydney, Brisbane and the US, to help out. I had to catch the army to lift heavy things. Resilience NSW had two very short conversations about how we were doing .

We washed to try and save some things and not throw out everything. The mountains of flooded possessions and house interiors is a comment about our society. Yet we all lost precious and practical things. The financial and psychological cost is enormous on many levels.

Nine years ago we bought our house and renovated it. Now we are starting again. We have lost value on our land and house. Despite missing the trauma of having to be rescued in the dead of night in a small boat, we have experienced significant trauma and dislocation. What if this is a new reality with climate change?

We have our lives, but lost possessions including musical instruments and prized memorabilia. I can't think about the losses too much as it's too sad. We lost our solar battery downstairs and the possibility of buying an electric car. We really wanted to make a difference with our actions with climate change.

Climate change has impacted our lives and community. There is talk about relocating the town. Something needs to happen. 14.4 metres of water could be 16 or 17 metres next time. Our experience in the Northern Rivers needs urgent action to further protect our communities from flooding. We need local state and federal governments to urgently act on climate change.

Thanks for the inquiry.

Sincerely,