

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 23 June 2022 5:58:48 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 I was away interstate when the first flood happened. My friend who was house minding for me evacuated and drove my car to higher ground therefore saving it. It was extremely stressful for me as she wasn't clear about the need to evacuate and I was powerless to save my things directly. I returned a few days later and everything was very difficult. I learned to be

grateful for small mercies..finding the path through to be able to function and salvage my things. I worked each day for 3 months to salvage my possessions. It was exhausting and I did the bulk of it by myself. Volunteers helped with some tasks but I wanted to go through my personal things myself. I heard many stories of volunteers having thrown away precious items. I was lucky to have a room to stay in for around 2 months after the first flood. In the second flood, the whole household had Covid and some of my furniture and other possessions were washed away from under my house. They had been put there so that my house could be hosed out from the mud. I later was able to recover my missing furniture from a neighbours back garden five houses away. Some of my other possessions are still missing.

Even though my house has been raised up by over 3 m, 1.8 m of floodwater enter the house. Almost all of my possessions were damaged or destroyed.

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

I think climate change and deforestation were the main causes of the flood. People have also talked a lot about the way the river used to be deeper in the past and perhaps this is a factor too as the river may have less capacity than before. I also think it is important to investigate any possible role that the new motorway to the south may have played in the flooding in terms of the water not being able to drain to the sea as previously.

1.3 Response to floods

I had a lot of help from the various Fire Brigade's in taking out my furniture from the house and hosing it out. They worked very hard. However one fireman kept referring to my muddy possessions on the floor as shit and that was quite offensive to me. I would like it if the

emergency services personnel could be further trained so to be respectful of flood victims at all times. I also had some help from the army after the first flood. Approximately 30 of them came into my property and helped very quickly to clear some major pieces of flood debris. It was really great and I know they helped a lot of people. They didn't seem to be present in the town after the second flood. We still needed help at that time but they didn't seem to be around after that. I think that the response of the community throughout the floods has been incredible. I watched the first flood unfold on TV as I was interstate and I thought it was incredible that so many people got out in their private boats to rescue other members of the community. Many of my neighbours were rescued from their roofs. It seems that the SES were not prepared at all and basically failed in their duty.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Recovery takes a long time. The community has been supportive of each other. We need a lot of help from other regions as the community are generally exhausted.

I have been homeless for nearly 4 months now. I am waiting for my house to be fixed up so that I can return to live there. It has been a very difficult time and I have been lucky to have some support from friends and neighbours in the area as I have no family in New South Wales.

1.6 Any other matters

One thing I would like to mention is about the amount of rubbish and recycling that is spread everywhere in the floods. I have three ideas that could be implemented by the local council to limit the amount of rubbish in any future floods. One idea is to have a snap lock on everybody's bin so that in a flood the bin can be actually locked quickly so that all the contents don't spread everywhere. I also think that it would be fantastic if each bin and recycling bin could be secured to the property. I have been through three floods now in Lismore and the amount of rubbish that is spread around is actually incredible. A second idea I had is that perhaps it could be a wire bin

enclosure in each street that could hold people's bins in the event of a flood. This may be costly but it is another idea I had. The third idea I had is that once a moderate flood is announced, the council could do a special rubbish collection to ensure that everybody's bins are as empty as possible if a major flood did occur. I really think that it is very important to deal with this issue is so much rubbish is spread around and takes such a lot of work to clear up afterwards. I am amazed actually that this issue doesn't seem to have been tackled at all by the council.

Also I find it incredibly disappointing that the council don't continue their recycling programs straight after the flood. For many weeks, it is common knowledge that the council sends recyclable materials to landfill. I think that it is time for this practice to cease especially as it is 2022 now and we expect more from our governments.

Another comment I would like to make is that I think it should be much more organised in terms of recovery and helpful for victims after flood. I spent weeks myself trying to find information about salvaging my possessions. It would've been extremely helpful for me if a small leaflet had have been distributed to me soon after the flood so then I had clear instructions about what to do to salvage my possessions. It was an incredibly stressful time and having to search for information constantly made it a lot worse.

I related point that I care very deeply about is the amount of electrical goods that were thrown away unnecessarily after the floods. I was very glad that I saved all of my electrical appliances such as my fridge and washing machine and everything I've tried since that time has worked perfectly. It was completely shocking to me just how much waste was generated especially electrical goods that could have been saved. I think there needs to be a lot more leadership with this in the future and a lot more education. The government should employ specialist recovery teams to help people who have been

flooded. It is not enough for our communities to rely on volunteers who are often not trained at all. People that come to assist flood victims should have adequate training both technically and also emotionally to be aware of the need to be respectful and to listen at all times to the people that they have come to try to help. They need to be aware that they are dealing with traumatised people that might find it very hard to communicate and make good decisions during that time.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [B3062B61-16BE-4647-AF78-E8291A7BD728.jpeg](#)
 - [E3E9DDC2-89D4-4CBD-8527-752F81C518F5.jpeg](#)
 - [FB266C16-0C7D-4553-905C-81F36CCC2D32.jpeg](#)
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