

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Tuesday, 26 April 2022 7:52:02 PM

Your details

Title Mr

First name Barnaby

Last name Lund

Email

Postcode 2480

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 give my consent for this submission to be made public

Share your experience or tell your story

Your story I live in Dunoon, where we recorded 775 mm in 24 hours during the 28 February flood. My parents live on a farm in Swan Bay, on the Richmond River. In 1974 and 1954, none of the buildings on the farm had flood water inside them. But as a result of the 28 February deluge, we had approximately 1.6m of water in the buildings. My family lost 75 cattle (10 of which

have been found) 6 vehicles and family possessions dating right back to the 1800s.

My stepfather is a 4th or 5th generation farmer. His ancestors settled the area in the 1800s. According to his late father, a pilot in the second world war, there used to be a plaque on a big log on the hill behind Woodburn School. This log commemorated the height of the big flood in circa 1865. It might well be that this flood was bigger than the 2022 flood. Anecdotal evidence from indigenous elders also suggests floods in the region of 15-16m flowed over Cathedral Hill in Lismore prior to European settlement. Another interesting observation is that some of the old houses in Swan Bay used to be two stories high, presumably built like that to avoid the big floods. It seems in 200 years we have vastly underestimated the potential for mega floods.

In my view, experiencing the deluge in Dunoon and the aftermath in Swan Bay helping my family gut the buildings and fix up farm, we need reassess our approach to flood events, particularly with respect to building heights, flood mitigation works and emergency response coordination.

It is clear to me that the Northern Rivers and could survive further mega floods if we have buildings that are built to withstand inundation and flood flow velocity. You only have to look to Brisbane, who have many years of adapting to floods. Many of the buildings in the CBD are now designed to accept inundation on the lower floors. Many of the shops are lined with water resistant materials that can be hosed off. Building up in flood affected communities is a common theme in Europe too. Many of the buildings there are four stories high, and have storage upstairs. It seems to me that we need to adapt to floods better, because it is clear that flood mitigation works are only effective for minor to moderate events.

I am concerned that some of the current MPs and local councillors believe engineered flood mitigation works will save Lismore. I think this overlooks the magnitude of the 28 February rainfall event across multiple LGAs. We saw extremely high rainfall in the upper catchments and across the vast Bungawalbin watershed. My parents observed the Richmond stopping at the high banks on 1 March. But it was the flow from Bungawalbin Creek coming across the top that inundated the farm. It is mind boggling in scale, seeing the area inundated and the damage caused by walls of water at Broadwater. Building dams and higher levees in the upper catchments and at Lismore will have little impact on flood flows of such magnitude, and more importantly will exacerbate the velocity of flood flows and result in more structural damage to the buildings. Also, the downstream impacts on Coraki, Swan Bay, Woodburn, Ballina and Evans Head areas needs to be carefully considered. These lands feed the people in the region and cities. We have seen significant impact with the new M1 slowing drainage of these areas. So much so that my parents farm and many others in the area were inaccessible weeks after the 28 February event and the second flood. This is unprecedented.

My last observation is that continuing to rely on BOM data, particularly for the upper catchments around Dunoon, the Channon and Nimbin is ill advised. We know that BOMs advice to the SES did not paint the full picture. This is evident because we had the mass evacuations, and people like my parents who have lived on the Richmond for many years did not even have time to move cattle to higher ground. In my view, we should be establishing a far more data rich monitoring network in the upper catchments for rainfall and stream gauging. This information, from both public and private weather stations, should be both published and radioed directly to Lismore SES unit, who should then with LCC make the call on evacuation warnings and

orders. With SES HQ in Wollongong providing support, but not making decisions for the people of the Northern Rivers.

Lastly I would like to submit that any actions taken to resume land and/or raise the height of buildings should be undertaken by the new Reconstruction corporation and councils only after close consultation with the communities they serve. Anything less will not be acceptable. We want reconstruction that honours our diverse communities values and history.

Yours sincerely,

Barnaby Lund

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images
