

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Saturday, 9 April 2022 5:19:18 PM

Your details

Title Ms

First name Carolynne

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Email

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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 My rented Unit at Lismore CBD was flooded in the first flood of February 2022. I left my rented Unit upon receiving the SES evacuation order and proceeded to go to the Southern Cross University (SCU) Evac Cntr. I took very little with me because I am on a Cntrlnk Disability Pension and couldn't carry much as I have no car. I stayed at the SCU Evac Cntr for about a week,

but didn't feel safe there because I was bullied by some NSW Gov Employees who were in charge of the organisation of the SCU Evac Cntr. These particular Gov officials seem to be out of their depth (and ill prepared) in dealing with this tragic event and the overwhelming trauma and stress of the situation. I was constantly threatened by them by their statements of, at any time they have the authority to kick me out of the space where I was staying and sleeping, where my only option could have possibly been sleeping outside on the university grounds (because of overcrowding). These sorts of threats stressed me so much that I broke down in tears and had to see an Evac Cntr Counsellor to communicate and mediate with the NSW Gov Officials, to tell them to stop threatening me with eviction. These threats affected me so much because I had already realised, due to hearing the height of the flood, that all my household contents (everything I owned) was underwater, hence, I lost everything and was now homeless. The Student Common Room space was the only place I had left, and to be evicted to sleeping under a tree on the Uni grounds would have been psychologically devastating for me. My older age, disability and physical health would not been able to deal with it.

I am an enrolled student studying at SCU and had a ID card key that gives me the authority to enter the Student Common Room, upon which I was staying and sleeping in within the SCU Evac Cntr. The NSW Gov officials had a beef about this for some reason, therefore, formulated a negative judgement towards me, justifying the constant eviction threats from the Student Common Room space. The reasons for these threats were never explained to me. I tried to reason with them (begging them to not kick me out) but to no avail. I felt powerless, vulnerable, fearful and not protected. I shared the Student Common Room space with other evacuees that the NSW Gov officials brought in, and we all

seem to be getting along and helping one and another. Why the NSW Gov official were projecting thier stress particularly against me, to this day, I still don't fully understand. I am still very traumatised by this experience.

So, I left the SCU Evac Cntr when I got the help of family who helped me to throw out all my flood damaged goods at my Unit and salvage very little personal items eg photos etc. I then left Lismore to stay with family in Brisbane temporarily in thier one bdrm Unit for the next few months, and hopefully be able to find permanent accommodation somewhere soon.

Because I had to jump the border as there was nowhere else that I could go, I am finding it very hard to access the supports that I need, ie, to access the supports for a flood affected person in the NSW flood I have to be in NSW and I can't access any supports in Brisbane Qld because I am not a permanent resident. So I am homeless, as I am staying temporarily and sleeping on a make shift mattress couch, hence, I am in no-mans land (or no-womans land). I feel very isolated and alone and not truly supported by the NSW Gov Services. Right at the moment, I am trying to seek counselling to cope with this ordeal.

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

Lack of skills of NSW Gov employees regarding dealing with traumatic events and traumatised people affected from these events.

Lack of NSW Gov Services that caters to individual's unique experiences and circumstances in regards to the traumatic event and its after effects.

1.2 Preparation

NSW Gov employees could be trained in

and planning

counselling techniques.

An online system could be set up to access supports for people that had to jump the border and live temporarily in Qld and can't get back to NSW because of lack of finance and accommodation.

NSW Gov Services Grants and Supports should take into consideration those that had to jump over the border, and adjust the requirements accordingly.

1.3 Response to floods

Access to supports regarding mental health, financial supports and permanent accommodation in NSW and QLD

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Access to supports regarding mental health, financial supports and permanent accommodation in NSW and QLD

1.5 Recovery from floods

Access to supports regarding mental health, financial supports and permanent accommodation in NSW and QLD

1.6 Any other matters

Please help

Supporting documents or images
