

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 19 May 2022 5:48:23 PM

Your details

Title Mr

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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

Organisation making the submission (if applicable) N/a

Your position in the organisation (if applicable) N/a

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 grew up in Coraki, lived many years in the Hawkesbury district of Sydney and my wife and I have lived on _____ in Girards Hill Lismore for over 10 years, so I'm quite used to floods and their effects, both short and long term. The physical, emotional, economic and social ramifications of the natural disaster that we experienced on 28th February this year is something I have never experienced in my 68yrs. Whilst our reality is that we will continue to flood, my prayer is that all three levels of Government provide the foresight, collaborative engagement with locals and resources to minimise the destructive effects of major flooding. We can't stop floods but we can surely make provision for making our region and communities more flood-resistant.

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

- global-warming
- inadequate diversion or retention in upper-catchment area of destructive volumes of floodwater
- inadequate levee-height around Lismore CBD
- inconsistent building regulations in regards to floor-height and location of residential and commercial buildings
- no strategic plan to keep major river systems regularly dredged in critical locations
- inadequate existing stormwater drainage system unable to effectively and effectively carry large volumes of stormwater from Lismore CBD and environs (way too small and largely neglected)
- not enough reliance on, nor credence given to, local knowledge in regards to water levels in the upper catchment during significant rain events
- ineffective and poorly resourced local SES during those critical initial hours of a natural

catastrophe

- use of inappropriate building materials in a designated regular flood area (eg. plaster board, fibre-board, mdf, some insulation products, carpet, anything unnecessarily porous, etc)
- positioning of electrical outlets and power-boxes/meters above regular flood-levels

1.2 Preparation and planning

Most businesses in the CBD were flood-ready given our experience of the 2017 flood. Cruelly this made no difference when smashed by the February mega-flood! Previous LCC's need to shoulder some blame also for the lack of maintenance and improvements to such responsibilities as dredging, levee-height, stormwater drains, water pumps and building requirements. There are very practical and achievable initiatives that can be implemented to minimise flood effects. Sadly and with no disrespect to our local SES volunteers, they are pitifully prepared or resourced to effectively respond to the natural catastrophe that hit us in February.

1.3 Response to floods

As I stated previously, our local SES is not adequately resourced or prepared to offer real assistance when it is critically needed in an event such as the February mega-flood. It was left to many fine local community members to enact rescues, evacuations, provide food and shelter for the huge number of poor souls immediately and disastrously effected by the mega-flood. A better way must be and can be found.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

This phase was a little more comforting, though many locals would rightly argue that the response should've been and could've been far prompter. The eventual provision of shelter, etc at SCU Lismore was just adequate but more needs to be done to triage those community members with mental health issues or dug dependencies into more appropriate temporary accommodation where they can receive more specialist care. A big thanks to our local Red

Cross here in particular. Minimising trauma at this stage must be a high priority for everyone affected so planning and provisos appropriate evacuation centres needs to be carefully considered.

1.5 Recovery from floods

The clean-up and reinstallation of power has been nothing short of amazing and incredibly encouraging to those still traumatised by this catastrophe. Great job! Also the many businesses working 24/7 to refit, restock and reopen has been miraculous and energising for the entire community. Also the formation of the Reconstruction Commission(?), combined with the genuine desire for our Mayor and State Premier to rebuild this community, both physically and figuratively, is inspiring.

1.6 Any other matters

I don't profess to be a geophysicist, engineer, economist or town-planner, but I'd like to share some thoughts on what can be done to make Lismore and other towns, a model for how to live in flood-affected areas;

1) regulate how buildings in the CBD are constructed and the building materials they need to use (as most buildings in the CBD are on two levels, it also possible to move the business to the upper floor, creating a safe flood-height whilst using the existing lower level for parking and temporary storage? Centro in Keen St is a perfect example of gutting the lower storey, thus providing more parking and temporary storage and relocating previous businesses to pre-flood, unoccupied shop areas).

2) encourage businesses where appropriate to formulate a "roll-in roll-out" system of displaying their products so that in the event of major flooding that can efficiently remove their products off-site to higher ground. Also help businesses install lifts or gantries to place products in roof-cavity out of 2017 flood-level.

3) investigate the further connected expansion of Lismore Square, at a level higher than the mega-flood, that extends westward to Dawson Street and links with the existing CBD

4) investigate the feasibility of creating channels, holding areas, dams etc on floodplain to contain and / or divert immense amounts of water safely and equitably.

5) increase the volume of existing stormwater drains around town four-fold whilst further creating channels to evacuate and divert run-off from Goonellabah and Lismore Heights from the CBD

6) create a Flood Response Team stationed in Lismore and manned mostly by trained local community members, whose specific brief is to alert and respond to flood events. Their headquarters need to be in a flood unaffected location! Additionally flood monitoring needs be done on at least an hourly basis with information gleaned from local members who form part of this team and reside in critical areas of the upper catchment and floodplain. This group must be well resourced and able to respond to any flood-related emergency quickly and efficiently.

7) support and stored resources for evacuation centres that are able to sensitively and appropriately cater to the diverse folk they will find need their services.

8) the creation of a Government supported community flood-insurance scheme that is both affordable and equitable, similar to those successfully established in Tropical QLD and elsewhere.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts. This is a wonderful community that deserves all the assistance it can get.

Supporting documents or images
