

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 26 June 2022 11:14:26 PM
Attachments: [F3BC3B1D-2A00-47BE-B436-4C4BA9C025DC.jpg.pdf](#)
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Your details

Title	Mrs
First name	Debra
Last name	Van Den Berg
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	Re: 2022 NSW Food Inquiry
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On behalf of both my husband and myself, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the 2022 NSW Flood Inquiry.

There are some key points / issues that we

would like to identify for your inquiry into the recent flood event in Northern NSW.

Background:

We live at a village called The Channon which is located 25 kms north of Lismore and lies in the “catchment” area of rivers and creeks that feed into the Lismore basin.

We have lived and worked in Lismore since arriving at The Channon in 1979 and farm macadamia nuts having reared our four now adult children at local and Lismore schools. We are well used to storms and extreme rain events that inevitably lead up to flood events in the local area.

In our experience, the weather event in the days before and in particular, in the weekend leading up to the 28th February 2022 floods was typical of a weather event that was going to result in major flooding in the downstream areas of Lismore and onwards to the coastal areas.

We have observed many changes over the years while living in the area particularly in the monitoring of river and creek heights during these events, actual rainfall and what this means to already swollen waterways. In earlier years i.e. in the 1980s and 90s, rainfall from the catchment areas was reported manually by local residents to the SES. What was observed by “locals’ knowledge” who watched the river heights, recorded rainfall in personal rain gauges, can be very predictive of severe floods. From our perspective, information from state authorities for the 28th February flood event seemed to be slow to alert the impending risk of serious, severe flooding in Lismore.

There were three significant reasons that it was obvious there would be a severe flood event into the Lismore basin and beyond. Firstly, there had been constant heavy rain since 25th December 2021 so the ground was already saturated,

creeks were swollen. Secondly, there had been 800mm plus of rain in the 24 hour period in The Channon (our rain gauge overflowed) and surrounds on the day prior to the 28 February flood. And thirdly, the low pressure system that hung over Brisbane was not moving, it sat over Brisbane dumping rain and was moving south to the Northern Rivers area in NSW eventually. This rain depression resulted in enormous rainfall in the catchment. It was reminiscent of the stories of the severe 1974 flood of Northern NSW.

There are some key points / issues that we would like to identify that impacted us personally to be considered in your inquiry into the recent flood event in Northern NSW.

Electricity:

Power supply failed the day of the flood on 28th February and there was no communication or advice on when services would be restored. Fortunately we had a petrol powered generator but quickly ran out of fuel to run the generator. Power supply was restored twelve days after the flood and we were very grateful, however there were constant faults once supply was restored and the power supply companies failed to let us know of what was occurring. Keep in mind that when electricity supply ceases in rural areas this also means that water supply to the residence ceases as water pumps are run on electricity, so we are unable to run water to taps, showers and toilets - so no working toilets.

Communication:

Emergency communication is through the local ABC radio. As electricity and internet failed immediately the day of the flood meant that we are unable to listen to any advice or warnings on the local ABC radio. Emergency communication failed, the only time that we could listen to the radio was when we ran our generator or during early hours of the morning when we gratefully

heard Joanne Shoebridge on ABC Lismore with her tireless efforts to keep the community informed.

Telecommunications:

Internet and mobile phone connection failed, we had no idea of the severity of the flood in Lismore in the first few days as we did not have any communication.

Supply was 3G only and this situation lasted for nearly one month.

The main issue was lack of information on proposed repairs to the telecommunication system, we were not informed of progress.

Transport:

Road infrastructure and maintenance is historically poor in this local regional area. However, road conditions are shocking now since the floods and the road systems have failed.

Damaged roads contribute to vehicle damage at a time where tyre businesses were affected, so people are unable to get repairs and had to meet more costs when they are already under financial stress.

Personally, we were unable to run our farming business - unable to receive farm supplies of fertiliser, fuel as delivery supply trucks are unable to travel the damaged road. There has been a landslip on our public access road that blocked the road to any exit or entry. We were unable to leave the property and emergency services were unable to reach the residents of the road.

Overall, there was and continues to be a sense of hopelessness, we are unsure of when road repairs are to occur, now it has been four months since the floods and rains the road conditions are critical. This causes a feeling of isolation as family and friends find it hard to visit due to the poor road conditions as they fear damage to their own cars.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.5 Recovery from floods Development of flood free housing:

There has not been any mention of using the Northern Lismore Plateau area in the northern suburbs of Lismore (Dunoon Road) where development had started in 2019 but has now ceased. This would be a perfect location to rehouse those affected by floods in South and North Lismore and maintain the connectedness of the north and south Lismore communities. There needs to be careful consideration of using up valuable rural farm land when deciding on the future of housing. Road infrastructure, sewage, water supply, transport, amongst many things are critical when relocating whole communities distances from the central Lismore city and suburbs.

The Lismore CBD needs to become a modern city. We love Lismore, it has been a workplace, our schools for our children, sporting facilities and a great community. It deserves and needs to be fixed.

We would like to suggest good planning, it is a perfect opportunity to have experts to design a modern Lismore CBD but maintaining the character of the city, for example, the fascades. Use of underground parking in the CBD with elevated shops and businesses on a permanent basis.

Social amenities should be reflected in greening the community, extending the flood areas of North and South Lismore to enhance parks and community areas.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [F3BC3B1D-2A00-47BE-B436-4C4BA9C025DC.jpg.pdf](#)

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ROBERTSON BRIDGE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN