

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 1 June 2022 3:42:23 PM

Your details

Title Mr

First name Doug

Last name Foskey

Email

Postcode 2480

Submission details

I am making this submission as A business owner

Submission type I am making a personal submission

Your position in the organisation (if applicable) Residential Rental Property owner

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 Hi,
I built 2 of Home units suitable for persons with a Disability about 5 years ago. These units are near the Wyrallah Rd shops in Lismore, & were

on the flood fringe. We built expecting floods, but not at the level encountered. (Floor levels 900 above 12.04M). The flood went through just below the fans, 2.4 higher than 12.04M level. My poor tenants lost everything, & my building was uninsured for Flood. (Too expensive, & I had 900 freeboard!). My building was assessed by the Insurance company, & even though the verbal report was good, the written report did not reflect the verbal conversation. I was lucky because the building was constructed with a ventilated air gap between the wall skins, so the flood water was not trapped in the wall cavity (as an aside, I would recommend this for buildings in flood areas) This meant the Gyprock was not pushed off the walls by water pressure, & once the walls (& floors etc) were cleaned & treated for mould, & dried, & the power was restored to the power board, the tenants were allowed to move back in. (after 2.5 weeks). This flood has cost us, as owners, lost rent as well as repairs that probably total \$50,000. So far, I have been unable to claim off any Government scheme.

Other Building issues found by the flood were a safe egress from upper levels (The restricted windows for safety of children causes a problem in flood areas). Also Sloar PV systems in Flood areas need to be safe when waters rise. There is the potential of 600V dc when waters rise & the sun is out. Automatic panel isolators are required, but currently I have not found any suitable devices except the SolarEdge system. (My system is Fronius String inverter).

On another issue, the Communications system (Phones, Internet, etc) need to be made more disaster protected. We lost Internet at our out of flood home for some time, so losing phone communication as well. This needs sorting urgently. The current system is adversely effected by both Flood & fire (as well as vandalism in Mullum...). My background is Telecommunications. Many Mobile phone towers are interconnected by microwave links, & powered by the grid with a few days backup. I

feel towers should have 28 days backup, with interconnections at least duplicated. The ideal would be Fibre cable interconnects, with Microwave or satellite backup. The batteries should be Solar PV backed as well. All infrastructure should be fire & flood resilient. Also any hardware associated with communications should be built to be fire & flood resilient (eg the Privately owned switching at Woodburn). Anecdotally, I have heard many stories of the Mud Army throwing out owners goods. This can be mementoes, or furniture or goods that potentially could be cleaned & re-used. Also, when the goods are removed from the dwelling, I feel some sorting could be undertaken to reduce the work of the rubbish clearers. Even pre-sorting metal items & white goods would help. Many clothes & homewares could be cleaned & re-used. I pulled many Fluoro tubes from the heaps (a risk of Mercury pollution, as well as broken glass). More care, & possibly training of the Mud Army?

I also wish to commend the Koorie Mail, an organisation that stepped up to assist many people affected by the flood. That organisation filled many gaps the Resilient organisation missed, or could not fill. Also all the private boat owners & residents who rescued many people.

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

Design for Flood affected areas: I feel there needs to be grants to owners to ensure buildings are safe for occupants. Safe egress to roof is one consideration, as well as Solar PV safety. Recommended materials & building techniques for building or major renovations.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Communication system resilience: Duplicate interlinks between Communication towers, as well as much longer system backup (28 days backup?)

1.3 Response to floods

In 1967 the army was transported to Darwin in 24 hours. We waited far too long. More infrastructure is required, including more community areas that can be re-purposed in times of disaster.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

A suggestion that one form be used for all the grants available, both State & Federal, then the forms could be reviewed by a panel who might request more information or directly forward to the Govt department most appropriate for a grant. This would reduce incorrect requests, as well as reduce paperwork for stressed residents & business owners. Businesses need more help: I have not spoken to a successful applicant for the \$50000 grant.

1.5 Recovery from floods

I feel there needs to be a rethink on increasing the population density on rural land. Subdivision of land not prime agriculture land could be considered. I would like to see clustered housing on rural land on community title (for example 3 clustered houses sharing a property, to stop reduction of prime agriculture land.)

Supporting documents or images
