

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Saturday, 14 May 2022 10:58:17 AM

Your details

Title Mrs

First name Fay

Last name Ross

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 In the early hours of 28 February our home was inundated by metres of floodwater, we have lived there for 38 years this has never happened before. There was very little warning, at 1am no flood by 4am the water was up to the street sign. We put our pets, 2 backpacks and ourselves into the roof cavity. We could hear neighbours calling for help, had brief phone contact with one next

door neighbour, who was on her bed surrounded by water. We could see a 93yr old neighbour up to his chest and getting no response from SES. Finally private boat rescued our neighbour, several hours later they returned and picked up next door neighbours. Finally after over 6 hours in the ceiling my husband managed to flag down a private boat and we were able to get in, that boat had 7 adults, 2 children & a dog in it. Those guys were magnificent, without them we may not be here today. For most of the time we were in the ceiling we could hear cries for help, neighbours were on roofs, or hanging onto the guttering. Our neighbour on the other side, fell while get into the rescue boat, was in the flood water, he suffered broken ribs and died a month later. We had been neighbours and friends for 38 years. Mobile reception was not good, this needs to be improved, SES need a better phone system, so when there's a heavy need calls can be answered. I Kept getting a recording telling me to call back later! We lost every material possession we owned, apart from a car & caravan we'd moved to higher ground the day before. I am 77 my husband is 80 we can't go through an experience like this again.

The water wasn't like a normal flood, rises slowly then disappears, this was a raging torrent of mud, no one could survive who entered it. It was a terrifying experience, the water came from West of our property trying to get to the river, houses were being lifted up and dropped metres away from their footings, vehicles normally on high ground were inundated. This was not a normal flood, this was a catastrophic event.

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

One of the contributing factors in our case was the way council has constructed the industrial area behind our home, a huge hole was dug for stormwater to flow into, it then would enter

Hollingworth Creek, except in flood time Hollingworth Creek overflowed as soon as the flood gates were closed, the hole filled up and formed a whirlpool effect. A very messy diversionary channel was dug behind the industrial estate, it goes nowhere! It was dug to divert water away from the airport, well it diverted it all over South Lismore. Fill was brought into the industrial area to build up building blocks, with councils full knowledge, this has also contributed to the water flow.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Lismore needs a series of flood sirens, not just one on the CBD side of the river. When the wind is blowing from the West no sound comes across the river, we didn't hear it this flood, no in 2017.

1.3 Response to floods

NSW Government response to this flood was pathetic, nearly 2 weeks before anything happened, the community was left to fend for itself. When the army did arrive the poor soldiers didn't have the training to operate some of the simple equipment they had (pressure hoses) Clean up took far too long with local council left to deal with far more than they should have. Can't believe a State Government doesn't have a disaster plan, an absolute disgrace.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

We are fortunate, we are able to live in our daughter's house, our neighbours are living in caravans, or camping in their homes. There is no alternative, there is nowhere to go. Our whole CBD is destroyed, power isn't on in the main block yet, 3 months later!! Most of the support is through community. We still don't know if we have insurance cover, we can't move on, we can't get repairs happening. Our transition from incident to where we are now is very small.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Flood mitigation, move the water inland, build more dams so water can be diverted and saved to be used later, the river needs dredging on a regular basis.

1.6 Any other matters

I have no problem with local SES. But SES in Wollongong where I believe the flood effort was

being directed from was woeful, trying to stop private boats was criminal, without them the loss of life would have been huge. The guys in the boats need commendations for the job they did. without them we may not have survived.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [flo photo.jpg](#)
 - [flood phot.jpg](#)
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