

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
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Submission details

I am making this submission as A member of the general public

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 Involvement in 2022 Flood Response, Outreach Food and Welfare Project

Report – Background and Activities

This project developed organically, run purely by community volunteers and in direct response to a seen need, like much of the flood response during the crisis and recovery stages.

Started on day 2, Tuesday, New City Rd, as simply a table serving coffee, tea, cake and sandwiches. It was quickly identified that this outreach hub was a positive focus point for the community in New City Rd, a place to come and have 5 minutes of normal, have a coffee and snack in the mud, and debrief.

It was also quickly identified that many flood affected community members were not leaving their houses to go and source food or support from the Civic Hall and Neighbourhood Centre. This was for many reasons, including; paralysed with shock and trauma, feeling too 'sick' to eat, physically unable to due to health (physical and mental), lost transport options, focused on the immediate task and unable to do anything else, not feeling that they were deserving of support 'so many more deserving', couldn't face the 'chaos' of the Civic Hall and Neighbourhood Centre.

Door to door welfare checks and food and water distribution were then quickly established in the immediate New City Road area, branching out to the other side of Argyle Street with a focus on the already disadvantaged Morrison Street area and then to the hard hit Pine Ave area and High School area. The project developed over the week to 2 outreach sites, New City Rd and the Mullumbimby Soccer Club canteen. We worked in arrangement with the Neighbourhood Centre and Seventh Day Adventist Church, received food from PipsPlate Project other restaurants and community donations. We distributed food on foot, door to door, via volunteers, to strategically identified affected streets and houses. The canteen hub was a great addition as we were able to scale up with access to fridges, an oven, coffee machine etc. New City Road was run under a marquee, out of eskys, and with a camp stove, it had its own simple appeal, physically in the mud with the people.

Once Mullumbimby's response moved from crisis to recovery, this model of welfare checks and food distribution was moved to Federal Hall, where welfare checks and upwards of x500 meals per day were strategically distributed door to door to the most flood affected areas of Lismore.

We still continue today as there is no other option. Lismore residents remain extremely affected, many without power and water. Living in tents and caravans on their properties, paralysed in their homes with trauma and overwhelm. There are no other services or large NGOs providing food still?

Outcomes

- Being situated in the heart of hardest hit areas meant direct access to people who were unable/unwilling to leave their houses or go far, opportunities for building relationships with these vulnerable, traumatised people, and also an opportunity to monitor for ongoing need.
- In Mullumbimby, this meant not only making sure people had food and water but also being able to access and organise services offered by the Civic Hall and Neighbourhood Centre. Albeit with no communication this meant physically going to the Centre to report needs as they arose. There didn't seem to be any immediate organised door to door welfare checking at this early stage except by us, I think this came into play maybe day 5 or 6 out of the Civic Hall activities.
- The outreach hubs were a safe place for people to meet, rest and debrief, without venturing too far from home. Once the canteen hub was established it became a place for families to come, children to play, the soccer fields were able to be utilised, as was the table and chairs of the soccer club.
- Strategic mapping exercises meant in theory no households were missed.
- This model provided one of the many

opportunities for community members to provide flood relief. As I'm sure we're all aware, many feel helpless in this situation, they have varying skills and capacity and need an organised platform to act from. Added benefit also for many was that this project was organised and delivered away from the frenetic energy of the Civic Hall and Neighbourhood Centre.

- Relationships and organisation with restaurants, particularly the PipsPlate Project, allowed us to scale up to meet the demand for food that existed.
- This project unveiled the disadvantage that exists in the community, to many volunteers who it is likely normally hidden from.
- This project alleviated pressure from the Neighbourhood Centre, we were essentially supporting the welfare and food provision core business of this organisation.
- Being entirely volunteer based and developed in a crisis, there was a real safety risk to unskilled volunteers providing essentially welfare services.

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

If you go to Lismore the only answer can be climate change. We live on flood plains, we are flood hardy and prepared. This was an entirely different beast.

1.2 Preparation and planning

I have grave concerns that Resilience NSW is a tokenistic attempt to appease the community and lull them into a false sense of the security that disaster preparation, planning and response are being addressed. Absolute abandonment is how I felt and continue to feel as we move into week 11 post flood. I felt in acutely when I arrived in Mullum to help coordinate the crisis response, who was in charge, who was coming to rescue us? No-one! And I saw it on the faces of flood victims, in the words of flood victims and in the

ongoing trauma we have as a region. Once I caught my breath I read the local and state Emergency Management Plans. Ridiculous and dangerous, completely irrelevant and unrealistic. How did this happen? No-one has said, no-one has taken responsibility for this extreme failing. The icing on the cake for me today was discovering that Resilience NSW is funding 2 that I know of emergency responder programs in my area. I signed up to Resilient Byron's Community Carer and Responder Program pre-flood with the knowledge that it was to form a network of training community members who are equipped to step up and coordinate during crisis. I've found out today that Red Cross have as well been funded. So in essence there will be two networks running in one area to respond in a disaster? Absurd. Dangerous and a further waste of volunteers' time and energy. It's not rocket science to know how to plan for a disaster is I'm not going to spell it out, but all I can say is that the lack of planning and preparation for this one has added to the communities trauma, placed many people at real risk and will hinder the recovery process greatly.

1.3 Response to floods

Expectation that I am my community will know who is in charge, who the lead agency is, and what levers they have to pull and buttons to press to scale up and respond appropriately. Including predetermined roles for others services, NGOs and the community.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Expectation that we treat our most vulnerable how we would want to be treated in a major crisis. Welfare and housing support is wrapped around them. They are actively assisted to get back on their feet. Clear pathways are put in place quickly for recovery and resumption of a 'normal' life.

1.5 Recovery from floods

This week from one post on facebook saying I had a couple of laptops and lego to donate I received over 60 DMs to my inbox. The requests are below. I am one community member. What I

can say is that the families that I visited last week to respond to the need that I could, are in a really bad way, not functioning, desperate, feeling helpless, no support. Absolutely dire housing situations, still. I'm finding that services are consistently expecting that people will be able to go to them, physically or online. The emphasis for these people needs to be on services and support going to them. In my opinion every flooded household should have been identified, not through a registration process, but by physically walking the streets. Each household should then be allocated a case manager who follows them and ensures their immediate needs are being met and they are accessing what they need to get back on their feet. Way too many people are slipping through the gaps. Here are some of the stories from my one post:

*Single Mum with two children, lost house in South Lismore. No insurance. Living in temporary accommodation and will be share housing with another woman until she can move back in, When she does needs assistance with kitchen appliances and kitchen set up

*Hi Francesca. My wife and I lost our house in the flood. We have 2 children. I seen your post. Not to sure what you have available but can we put our hand up for some./Wow that is so kind, yes we can do with some kitchen stuff. We are staying at our father in laws in goonellabah.

*McGearys Woodburn Hub, Lauren is the coordinator and has lists of specific needs for families

*Our business lost everything. Including our computers

*Hi Francesca, if you any Lego available my son and daughter had hours of fun with their Lego. Happy to provide you ID etc, our place in ...backs onto ... and went under.

Our home is inhabitable,we have no insurance cover for flood and lost everything including 3 cars. We would appreciate some small kitchen appliances.

My parents in particular my mother would love a

lap top doesn't matter how old it is. She works at a school in early intervention and this would help her so much to be able to program for the kids. Any help is great fully appreciated

Hi I just saw your post about laptops and Lego, is there a way we can access these? Myself and my 11y/o step son both lost our laptops in the floods. My 3y/o and 2 step sons also love Lego Hi Francesca, our house is located in South Lismore our kids are doing year 9 and 10 and desperately need a laptop for school work.. kids go to Richmond River high(wiped out)... also my eldest of 15 is a mad lego fan and has lost all his lego... some collectors edition but would love to replace a little bit for him.. any help is greatly appreciated thank you Thank you so much.... if it makes any difference the lego is for my sons the oldest one 15 is a mad lego fan and had collectors edition like space station and ship in a boat, my youngest 14 is autistic and used lego as a sensory tool

Hey I would absolutely love to be considered for a laptop, I've been asking Givit for one for the past 2 months but they must be pretty swamped with requests.

Hi there, my son is currently in year 8 and all his electronics were lost in the flood. I'm very interested in a computer for him if any left over

Just saw your post re lap tops etc for flooded people who lost theirs. I lost mine along with everything in these floods.

it would be amazing to have a laptop if there is one still available

I have two families I am helping in South Lismore that each need laptop. One needs laptop for kids for school and other for work.

Hi Francesca, I need small kitchen appliances. Please help if you can. I am a flood victim. Attached few pics.

We have lost everything in the last floods and told about your messages about laptops. If you have one available would be amazing my son has a disability and lost his iPad and computer

which was new at Christmas and my husband
which was new too along with another computer
and iPad

Hi there ,we could use a laptop and anything
else really, we live atand have lost everything,
thanks

Hi Francesca.I'd love a laptop for my daughters.
We lost ours in the flood in lismore

Hi Francesca, if I am not successful with a
laptop, I would to have one of your vouchers
please...like many, we lost our home of 25 years,
our 2 cars and everything we owned...starting
from scratch is not going to be easy for any of
us.... but some how we will get through
this...Cheers

"Hi Francesca, I'm using my friend's messenger
account as my devices washed away in
floods.My name is my three children and i
lived in North Lismore until the floods and are
currently in emergency accommodation in
Nimbin. Children's mother had recently bought
the kids a \$2000 computer and it along with
everything else we owned was destroyed. A
laptop for the kids school work and staying in
contact. with family interstate is exactly what is
needed being in a fluid housing situation but an
expense I just cannot afford any time in the near
future.

Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.
with family interstate is exactly what is needed
being in a fluid housing situation but an expense
I just cannot afford any time in the near future."

Hi Francesca, I was tagged in a post on FB
about some Lego :) I have a 10 year old deaf
son who loves Lego! If there is anymore still
available that would be amazing

I lost my laptop in floods along with everything
else & a laptop is the only thing I haven't been
able to get yet

Hi, I have a few families with autistic kids on my
list. They are in need of a laptop.

My name is from Coraki , wr lost everything
including our computer. Still house is not livable
and we r residing in my daughters place. Don't

know when we gonna be back as our insurance denied as as we r not flood cover. Anything u are offering will be good . This is my first time to txt someone and ask for help, very very hard , especially living not on your own place.any help will be good as we r only pensioner. Thank you soooo much in advance. Been hard but I'm trying to be strong for my husband and my kids, and 2 grandkids

Hello seen your post and my daughter need a laptop for school which has been desertification you can help please let me know thanks

Hi I live in woodburn and lost everything in the floods including my laptop. I would absolutely be so appreciative if I could replace it

Hey I seen your post on Facebook with items for flood victims I lost all ove my computers and laptops in the floods just wondering would you have one available? As would be perfect for tafe Coraki CWA Preschool need lego they have lost everything

Hi Francesca, I've just seen your post. We have lost everything in the floods and would really love and make use of a laptop to be able to keep up with work/school/home repairs. If this is still available, I'd be very interested. Thank you for offering to everyone

Hi ,I would love it if you would consider gifting a box of Lego to my 13yr daughter. Thank you

Hi, firstly Thankyou for your generous donations and offers of support. Myself and my family like many others lost our south Lismore home and all our possessions in the flood. We are desperately trying to hunt down a laptop for my sixteen year old son for his school work as not only did he lose his house and possessions but his school was destroyed so they have been operating out of demantables at another high school. He is in year 10 and due to the space at other school he can only attend 3 days per week with the other two days being classes and work delivered through google classroom.....of which he needs a computer to access. I feel he has already had so many disruptions to his learning it would be

terrible for him to get behind due to lack of access in such an important year of school I would love a laptop so my kids could all share it please

Hello, I just seen your post. Im in need of a laptop. I trying to complete year 12, and do a TAFE course. I lost my laptop in the flood. This would mean the world to me, thank you!

Hi Francesca I just saw your post with the donated items. I would love for you to consider our family for one of the laptops. Our house was severely affected by both floods the first us having to be rescued from our roof. We are a family of 4 - mum dad and 2 girls aged 12 & 8. My husband runs a garden lawn maintenance business and we lost his computer where we do all our bookwork from and are struggling using our friends/family computer. My daughter who just started year 7 lost her laptop also. Thank you love

Hi there - have just seen your post on the Lismore page offering to donate laptops. Not sure if this is only open to those in Lismore (lots of donations are) but we were flooded in West Ballina and still in recovery. We don't like to take any resources away from Lismore but finding it difficult to access donations here. Myself and my kids lost most of our possessions and waiting now for our rental property to be gutted so desperately trying to find a place to go. We would be very grateful for the donation of one of those laptops.... I work from home so work and home was flooded - have applied for assistance with business grant to try and get an office back up and running but weeks in and no news of this grant. I'm sure you've been inundated but thought I'd message anyway. Cheers, I

Hi! I saw your post on the resilience page. Just wondering if there was any funds left towards kitchen supplies. We are a family of four from south Lismore who lost our house, business and car. I understand if you have already been inundated with requests. Thanks so much!

Hi lovely, I would love if you would consider our

family. We are a family of 5 who live in East lismore where it has never flooded and we lost everything we are currently in our 10th accommodation and really struggling with 3 daughters no doubt you've had alot of people needing help but would love to be considered x Thankyou so much I really appreciate it ♥ my girls absolutely love lego, they lost all there lego friends sets and don't have any now so I'm sure they would absolutely love some. Thanks so much x

Hi Francesca Hart I'm interested in having a laptop please . Thanks for your kindness
Hi Francesca. I lost everything in the floods. Have not started to get any kitchen small appliances yet as going to be in a gutted caravan & will need some items to be a little independent (like a kettle & toaster or even toaster oven or microwave) & also to use when my home is habitable again. I would love a laptop but pretty sure they would already be asked for by others more in need of one. Thank you in advance for considering me for any assistance. Kind regards
Hi Francesca. I've got 2 kids desperate to replace their laptops if there are any left? My son & daughter in law would love a stick blender please. She has Autism spectrum & blending foods really supports her sensory issues. Many thanks.

Hi Francesca, I have just seen your post that you have some laptops. Not sure if you are only handing these out to children. But if you would consider gifting one of these to my husband it would be very much appreciated. We lost our business he uses he broken laptop daily but it struggling as it is slowly dying. We are not in a position to replace it at present and he would never ask for one to be donated. I am happy to send pics if it helps. Thank you
I'm probably to late been going through Givit since my house flooded to see if I cud get a laptop, but nothing yet .. If there are any left I would be so great full ,I have been missing out on every

Hi just messaging about one of the laptops we lost everything at our East Coraki home our laptop had all our BAS and cattle records we are so far behind and have no laptop to start our system up again .

Hi Francesca, we lost all of our kitchen ware, we would love some assistance with plastic ware, cutlery, dinner set. Anything would be greatly appreciated. Kind regards

"Hi Francesca

Would you have any funds/vouchers available for crockery and pots and pans."

Hi I seen your post about a laptop me and my partner lost our computer in the Lismore flood it had all our pictures of my deceased father and my partner deceased mother on and it was the only way I could comunicate with my family overseas (13) hours difference UK so makes it hard to contact them

Hi Francesca I'm just about to start a traineeship in real estate. I am a single mum to 15 mth old boy. We lost everything in the flood including my ipad which I used to do my study. We are at coraki Much love.

Hi I am just enquiring about the post you put up about the laptops ect I have 7 kids that have lost everything from cabbage tree island and would really love to be considered for a laptop and vouchers of still available. Thank you.

I we.lost everything in the floods I have 5 kids and my son's high school was Richmond river which was destroyed in the floods and now he has been transferred to a new school in ballina He's in year 8 he's finding it hard to adjust has he is the only one in his class that doesn't have a laptop so I feel so bad as I can't afford one So it would be so amazing for him of I could get one
Thanks in advance

Oh I lost my laptop any and all help would be much appreciated

Hi I am about to move into a unit and I wondered if you have a microwave? Of a voucher that I could use for one. I need a fridge and a king single bed for my 17 year old too if you know of

any.

Supporting documents or images
