

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

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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

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 1970s I worked as a Queensland National Parks ranger up at the O'Reilly's Green Mountains section of Lamington National Park. I have walked the trails of the national parks of the adjacent McPherson Ranges, Darlington Ranges and the New South Wales national parks that protect the Border Ranges, Nightcap Ranges and all of the water catchments regularly ever

since identifying the plants, animals, and their ecology. The topography and vegetation is similar to the rest of the hilly landscapes at lower elevations that have been cleared of vegetation and developed for farming and rural residential. All of those ranges, particularly the Border Ranges, McPherson Ranges, Main Ranges, Nightcap Ranges receive the heaviest rainfalls, occasionally equivalent to the 'rain bomb' that has just destroyed our economy, our businesses, homes, and lives.

It is well known that hydrologists measuring water flow within the undisturbed forests found that it took many months for each rain weather event to percolate down to the creeks. As rangers mainly involved in repairing the walking trails or as an ecologist ever since I / we noticed that there was relatively little increase in the headwater creek flows and the flows directly below the protected forested lands with no sign of siltation, mud, or erosion in the creeks after such massive rainfall events. We noticed that delicate plants such as the Christmas Orchid (*Calanthe triplicata*) always grows directly beside the torrents and never gets washed away by a rise in water levels and intensity. That proved to us that floods are not a normal event and have been created by land clearing at higher elevations and by intensive logging. Even after a nine-month-long drought in the mid-1980s the creeks were still running as if it had been constantly raining so clearing at higher elevations and by intensive logging is also responsible for reduced water flows during dry conditions.

It is well known that the gigantic canopy trees, the dense middle strata of smaller trees, the ground cover of ferns and mosses and the combined roots of all the plants absorb all of the rainfall before it gets to the creeks and rivers. The fact that our towns, such as Lismore, Woodburn, Broadwater, Coraki, Uki, Murwillumbah, Tumbulgum, and many others were established directly upon the riverbanks

during the early days of British settlement proves that massive flooding was unknown until the large scale clearing of native vegetation meant that rainfall was for the first time able to travel rapidly across the bare ground and cause massive flooding that began after farming had covered much of the land. However, the steeper headwaters were mostly undisturbed beyond selective logging because of the difficulty of access and a lesser demand for timber.

Consequently, flooding was less intensive and water levels rose at a slower speed. Now that the headwaters and the majority of the countryside has been cleared of the native forest communities by farmers, and particularly the NSW State Forestry with the removal of the shading trees and the dense shrub layers and ground covers, the massive increase in the speed and quantity of the rainfall runoff has created super floods reaching a height and at a speed unknown previously.

Removal of the gigantic canopy trees and the dense middle strata of smaller trees by intensive logging has also been responsible for the massive bushfires as the dense moist shrubs and ground covers dry out without the continuous canopy of the giant trees shading the plants and ground beneath them and are replaced by introduced weed species that provide extra fuel once drought conditions prevail, the severity of which is also caused by a lack of dense, damp native vegetation cover and their associated soils.

I blame the NSW State Forestry Corporation operations that have clear-felled the forests or who have massively disturbed the shrub layers and ground covers in their logging of selected trees. I blame the NSW Government for removing native vegetation protection laws and the consequent clearing of private vegetation for the devastating floods that has all but destroyed our community and our economy. Many local newspapers in north-eastern NSW have over the years published articles on the extreme concern

of many people in the community at the ever ongoing and increasing logging and clear-felling of the last of the forested headwaters particularly in NSW State Forests that once slowed the movement of rainwater down to the lowlands. Protection of these essential catchment and water storage forests have been removed by the NSW Government. The width of the stream-side forested corridors have now been reduced to only a few metres on either side ensuring that the last surviving trees will soon be washed away as the denuded slopes pour ever more water into our creeks. The NSW State Forestry Corporation has been given another five years to finish their operations in public forests ensuring the collapse of the forest community that is vital for our protection against flooding and runaway climate change. Now we can expect increased flooding and the continuous destruction of our towns, businesses, houses and an increase in drownings, mental health degradation, and a large increase in homelessness, poverty and suicide, all caused directly by the NSW Government in its refusal to understand the essential protection that undisturbed dense native vegetation provides.

The Australian Federal Government's failure to acknowledge and act upon rapid global warming which could have been ameliorated by the protection of our essential native vegetation, particularly old growth forests is also a major cause and contributing factor in the bushfires that removed the vegetation and the subsequent massive flooding and the destruction of our economy and our towns.

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

The NSW State Forestry Corporation operations that have clear-felled the forests or who have massively disturbed the shrub layers and ground covers in their logging of selected trees and the

decreased width of protected trees and other vegetation directly adjacent the streams and all waterways are the primary cause of the increased runoff from the headwaters and a contributing factor to the additional heights and speeds of the flood levels experienced along the flood plains. The NSW Government removal of native vegetation protection laws and the consequent massive increase in the clearing of vegetation on private properties is another of the causes and contributing factors of the devastating floods that has all but destroyed our community and our economy. The Australian Federal Government's failure to acknowledge and act upon rapid global warming which could have been ameliorated by the protection of our essential native vegetation, particularly old growth forests is also a major cause and contributing factor in the bushfires that removed the vegetation and which then led to the subsequent massive flooding and the destruction of our economy and our towns. The Australian Federal Government's failure to acknowledge and act upon rapid global warming has led to a rapid increase in the temperature of the Coral Sea that has increased the evaporation and the wind speeds so that increased rainfall events are now normal and highly destructive to our community.

1.2 Preparation and planning

The NSW Government is responsible for the lack of preparation and planning that led to the destruction of our economy, our towns, businesses, and homes because the government is almost entirely occupied with political point scoring and the blaming of other political parties, communities and individuals while refusing to act upon the findings of various government commissions and the advice of scientists and knowledgeable public servants. The Federal Government is also responsible for the lack of preparation and planning that led to the destruction of our economy, our towns, businesses, and homes because that government is also almost entirely occupied with

political point scoring and the blaming of other political parties, communities and individuals while refusing to act upon the findings of various government commissions and the advice of scientists and knowledgeable public servants. It is well known that we are in a climate catastrophe because of the rapidly increasing pollution of the atmosphere with global warming gases while encouraging the destruction of the forests that absorb the global warming gases and which directly moderate the climate.

1.3 Response to floods

The NSW Government is responsible for the extremely poor response to the floods and its careless attitude and extremely slow moving actions that led to the destruction of our economy, our towns, businesses, and homes because the government has reduced funding to the emergency services and concentrates almost entirely on using such funding instead for political purposes enhancing business opportunities for their donors and giving millions of dollars to clay-pigeon-shooting clubs and other such enterprises for their own political gain. The local shire government councils are forced to undertake additional works and responses by the NSW State Government so that it can direct additional funds for political purposes. Consequently, the local shire government councils have less funds available to increase staff experienced in responses to floods. The Australian Federal Government's extremely poor response to the floods and its careless attitude and extremely slow moving actions to provide assistance to flood victims was also exhibited and proves that it has little care for the rural communities that do not have politicians of the own party in power.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Both the NSW State Government and the Australian Federal Government have done little to transition from incident response to recovery proving that these governments have little regard to the rural communities and are primarily focussed on their own political power and

success. A perfect example of this was the prime minister's actions of only providing relief funding to those electorates that have member of his own party in government.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Both the NSW State Government and the Australian Federal Government have done little to help the flood affected communities to recover from the disaster and thousands of homes and businesses are now completely destroyed because of the actions by both governments in failing to protect the vegetated headwaters that have been mostly destroyed allowing a massive increase and speed of the runoff of rainfall that directly caused the flooding. This proves once again that these governments have little regard for the rural communities and are primarily focussed on their own political power and success. A perfect example of this was the prime minister's actions of only providing relief funding to those electorates that have member of his own party in government.

1.6 Any other matters

Our communities would not have been destroyed by the floods if our politicians and the Liberal National Party in both the NSW State Government and the Australian Federal Government had taken the advice of the results of expert commissions of inquiry and had acted on the protection of our protective native forested plant communities in our catchments and adjacent waterways so that water flow from rainfall events would have been slowed and flooding would not have been so severe. From their previous actions we can be positive that there will be no recovery from the flood disaster and the rapid increase in homelessness, poverty, negative mental health, negative physical health, and suicide will be ongoing. At the direct expense of the community that they are supposed to represent, the Liberal National Party in both the NSW State Government and the Australian Federal Government will likely increase their political power and wealth.

Supporting documents or images
