

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 19 May 2022 4:43:00 PM

Your details

Title Mrs

First name Georgina

Last name Johanson

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 The first flood in February 2022. The evacuation warnings were not specific enough. We are in East Lismore and fairly new to the area. We got evacuation orders via text message (I think this was for the first flood but not sure now) but were not sure if they applied to us so we hoped we would not be impacted and went to bed .The first we knew of how high the water had risen was 7

am when I got up and looked outside the front of the house. The water was 3 houses down and still rising. The end of our street Spring Street East Lismore was cut off so we climbed our back fence to get onto Ballina Rd. There we saw some boats ferrying people from the flood waters. Very few SES at that time. There were so many people in their pyjamas with pets in tow coming off the boats. Most pets had no collars or leads and animals had started to fight on the foot path adding to the stress of the situation. It was still raining fairly heavily off and on. I rushed back over my fence and found some lengths of furniture strapping and took those back to the 'Prima House Jetty'. We noted any animals coming in on the boats who needed tying up and set about securing them.

There were people cut and bleeding, some said they had lost their pets when they had jumped out of the boat and one boat had turned over near the 'transfer bridge ' on Ballina Rd near the Norco factory and one man was covered in blood.

The SES began to arrive around 7.30 I think. But most boats were civilians.

We could not be of any more assistance when our strapping ran out but by this time the SES had cord available so we went back home.

I filled my ute with as much food as I could spare. Being a hoarder from way back I had quite a few kgs of rice etc which I took up to the university for use at the evacuation centre. As well as clothing , under wear and dry dog food. My next issue was my 91 year old father who is on a CPAP or breathing machine. When the power went out his machine would not work. I rang around the local B&Bs to find a place for him to go that still had power but I could not find one.

The first night I sat up most of the night to make sure he kept breathing.

The next day I managed to source a small generator from my neighbour who had sourced it from a friend. We both used it 12 hrs on and 12

hrs off to try to keep our freezers going. At night we added my fathers breathing machine but the generator was very hungry. I could not find any 20L jerry cans but people were generous enough to give me a few 5L ones. The next issue was getting fuel. I had to queue twice a day to fill the few 5 L cans I had. Then the petrol ran out. We took off our freezers and decided to just keep the fuel for my dads machine.

We had no power and no way to cook any food. We didn't really know what was going on around us as all communication was lost. The mobile phones didnt even work and soon the batteries were gone on those anyway. We could not travel anywhere as we had to conserve fuel as petrol had run out at the one service station in Goonellabah. We had no battery powered radio. I think we were out of power for 7 or 10 days. Luckily I had a supply of batteries and candles and a few dry logs left for the fire box. We dug up potatoes from the back yard and threw them into the fire place for dinner a couple of nights. What is so shocking is that we the people of Lismore were totally on our own for about 5 days before food was brought in and rescues started. As a country we are totally unprepared for any kind of disaster.

Our internet and mobile service was intermittent for over a month. My husband works from home and I also run a business from home. He was unable to work for over two weeks and I lost stock when the Australia Post sorting centre was flooded. It took over a month to get my supplies back.

Neither of us have been able to claim any assistance for these losses. We lost our frozen food and my husband had to use up his holidays. So on top of all the donations of time cleaning out others houses, food donations and money given to those in need we have been ineligible for any assistance from the government. We also lost our building materials which were in a warehouse in South Lismore. We had fully paid for the timber but it was not insured as it was in a

flood zone. To replace that it will cost us 3 times the price now so we will not be building our house. We have a barn which we will move into as soon as we can get people to help us make it livable.

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

There are questions about the functioning of rain gauges that had been damaged in the bush fires in 2019 and never fixed.

Supporting documents or images
