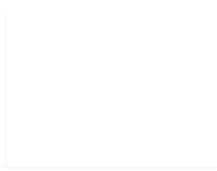


**From:** [NSW Government](#)  
**To:** [Flood Inquiry](#)  
**Subject:** Floods Inquiry  
**Date:** Wednesday, 13 July 2022 10:20:03 AM



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|--|---|
| <b>Title</b>                               | Mr  |
| <b>First name</b>                          | Harry   |
| <b>Last name</b>                           | Johnson   |
| <b>Email</b>                               |   |
| <b>Postcode</b>                            | 2466  |
| <b>I am making this submission as</b>      | A resident in a flood-affected area   |
| <b>Submission type</b>                     | I am making a personal submission   |
| <b>Consent to make submission public</b>   | I give my consent for this submission to be made public   |
| <b>Your story</b>                          | <p>This year's floods have resulted in detour-only access to Iluka as well as limited flooding to a limited number of low-lying properties adjacent to the Clarence and to properties close to a new housing estate being developed.</p> <p>My partner and I were only minimally adversely-affected. At present</p>   |
| <b>1.1 Causes and contributing factors</b> | <p>At present we are experiencing 1 degree of climate change. This additional 1% of global heating has resulted in a 7 percent above normal increase in moisture in the atmosphere.</p> <p>In certain weather conditions we now experience more frequent and severe rainfall events that result in extensive and extended rainfall events. Recently the Lismore region received a year's normal rainfall over 4 days. This sort of weather event is not a normal extreme weather event.</p> |

Such rainfall events of such magnitude have only infrequently occurred in the past.

Until we adequately address climate change, our children, grandchildren and future generations will have to come with more frequent and severe weather events for decades into the future.

Flood plains are named flood plains because they are areas that are prone to flooding. Today some flood plain areas are no longer suitable for human habitation.

In normal weather conditions when soil is not already saturated, a forest area contains and slowly releases 85% of the rain that falls.

In a cleared urban area nearly 100% of the rain that falls has to be effectively drained away to prevent it causing very considerable long term damage. As we allow our populations to increase, our cities increase in size so it becomes more difficult to manage rainfall effectively.

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## **1.2 Preparation and planning**

For decades different Australian State and Federal governments and the powerful lobby groups and media outlets on which they depend for their re-election, have told the public that it will cost too much to adequately address climate change.

However the real cost of climate change that has been pointed out for decades by environmental organisation and by at least one recent former Labor Leader is what it will cost not to address climate change.

If we don't adequately address climate change, future costs of climate change will continue to increase. Today we spend a mere 3% of our outlay on climate change in preparation and 97% in response to an extreme climate event.

Our children are a cohort of 20% of our present population. But they are 100% of the future.

And if we value our children and grandchildren as much as we value ourselves, our children, grandchildren and their future generations deserve better than this. They will not thank us, the generation who have never had it so good, for the state of the world today, the world those

still too young to vote will inherit from us.

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### **1.3 Response to floods**

The response to the floods needs to be a rapid and ideally a local response. To achieve this I suggest consideration should be given to paid workforce for we now have many people who have experienced a severe flooding event who are now homeless and unemployed. This paid workforce would help rescue flooded citizens and help retrieve valuable household effects, livestock and pets etc.

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### **1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery**

This same workforce would then move into the 2nd aspect of their employment, namely assisting in the rebuilding of local communities. This phase of their employment would continue until some degree of community normality had been achieved. During this phase some employees might be able to return to their former employment.

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### **1.5 Recovery from floods**

I see the third phase as being an extremely practical measure in which floodplain areas designated as being "no longer suitable for human habitation" become revegetated both for food supply by the farming communities and those floodplain areas not suitable for food growing would be reforested with local provenance native trees, shrubs and groundcovers.

Tree planting is an easily learnt, labour-intensive form of employment and we have an oversupply of formally-employed people who are trying to get back on their feet.

Many people in particular retirees who no longer live in a home with a garden still enjoy gardening and as volunteers might well relish the opportunity of making a valuable, practical contribution in their local community.

Local community nurseries could provide the seedling feedstock for reforestation programs and much plant propagation activities can be performed whilst seated and as such these tasks are suitable for community members with a

range of disabilities.

This replanting phase of the workers' employment would continue until the next major flooding event occurs. At which time the workforce are on hand and ready to respond to the rescue phase of their employment contract.

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**1.6 Any other matters**

As stated at the start of my submission, the most important front-end approach is to adequately address climate change. I do not want to have to say to my 7 year old grandsons:-"This is your world, welcome to its ruins."

I believe a war-effort approach to adequately address climate change is essential. As Prime Minister Albanese puts it, it must be a co-operative approach with both the Government and the Opposition working together.

Similarly Local, State, Territories and the Federal government must work together, along with business, community groups, environmental groups, the scientific, our universities and the media if we are going to adequately address climate change, the greatest existential threat facing us today.

We must stop building housing estates and other buildings on flood plains where flooding will continue to to become more severe for decades to come.

Many thousands of homes must be relocated to flood-free locations that are also not prone to bushfires or inundation and storm surge due to sea level rises.

Many more new homes need to be built to better withstand cyclones. PV panels should be mandated on all new homes and mandated on all homes being mandated.

We can anticipate receiving many thousands of climate refugees from our neighbours in the Pacific region. Those people we welcome to Australia need to be adequately housed in safe locations.

Finally to education; high quality education must be provided to everyone so that all are better able to make better choices to help address and adapt to climate change and help mitigate

climate change.

It concerns me greatly that those climate activists who recently disrupted traffic in Sydney have been so harshly treated by our present State government. The recent and on-going floods have severely disrupted traffic despite the fact that it has been well-known for at least 40 years that climate change unaddressed will spoil our children's future.

Who will pay the climate change bill for future generations? Who is going to give the go-ahead for more coal mines, and gas projects? Who allowed so much flood plain land to be developed for housing? Who is responsible for allowing the sale of extremely flood-prone land to poorly informed buyers? There are many similar questions today's young people are starting to ask.

Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to make a submission to an issue that has already greatly adversely affected so many thousands of people.

Breathe safely and all the best in the future you choose for those you cherish and for those still too young to vote for their future world

Harry Johnson

Former Teacher/ Coordinator, Kingfisher Recycling Centre, Aspley Special School, Brisbane, Qld.

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