

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 11 May 2022 2:22:53 PM

Your details

Title Ms

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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 I was in Victoria for my father's funeral when the flood happened, so I was unable to save any of my entire life's work or any equipment. So not only am I grieving I am trying to survive and rebuild while glamping in my home. For two months I have lived here with no hot water (temp resolved now due to the generosity of a neighbour, also flooded, who gave me a tiny plug

in hot water system. Luckily my house survived , next door is on top of my caravan in the back paddock. I have been running the Keen st warehouse Lismore as an arts collective since 2001. The warehouse built in 1910 was designed to be flooded, it has slats for walls so the water can come in and go out, the hardwood frames are bolted together rather than screwed. In 2006 I opened the shopfront as a community gallery which I called 33.3 and ran this until 2017 when it flooded. This is also the headquarters for The Creative People Collective which is a not-for-profit group that puts on events such as Artwomb and Roar Women's Music Festival. I was in the process of renovating the gallery to reopen (still from 2017) when we got hit twice by flood this year and was halfway through a major sculpture/shadow art exhibition as part of my university degree. After the 2017 flood I decided to go back to uni rather than concentrate on the gallery in order to have something separate from the space I had video footage of this however it was on my laptop which got flooded and the uni art department is now a recovery centre. We have also supported/participated in the performing arts, music/comedy/poetry, industries using the space to conduct multi-disciplinary workshops, Larry Laughs Loud comedy workshop, a Glee club and put on three Roar Women's Music Festivals as part of Woman's Week. Having been through the 2001 and 2017 floods (the warehouse many more since 1910), there were lofts where we stored art / equipment that had never seen water in its 110-year history. (Has now!) Also, others put my camera gear etc, and musical equipment up there in my absence. This flood was like nothing any of us has ever seen before it went over the apex of the warehouse, all was lost. It has been devastating to lose my entire oeuvre of 40 years and decades of work by others dating back to the seventies. But we have rebuilt before and will do so again. Hopefully with your help. I was heavily involved with Linc tv back in the old analogue

days I was on the board and my show was called CULT ID which was a youth music and Arts program. From the early 2000's to 2017 we stored the entire tape stock in the warehouse upstairs and up high unfortunately we didn't realise that the bottom of the shelving was chipboard and all the tapes fell into the water. We have a wonderful group called The Memory Bank that has washed and stored the survivors for digital transfer. However they need funding for labour as it is extremely time consuming. I am now back in my house and the volunteers are almost non existent I am alone and grieving my father I am concerned for my own mental health as well as that of many others as we are afraid the government will not come to our aid and not rebuild the CBD and we will be forced to leave and we don't want to. We love our town and if we can build something as monumental as the Snowy Hydro Dam then we can redirect a river! And stop funding Fossil Fuel companies! Actually I think like many more advanced countries this can be done by banning political contributions to Parties by major companies.

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

Global warming which has increased the intensity of La Nina trade winds and volume of rain. The government needs to stop mining fossil fuels and invest in Solar Power. Not implementing any of the suggestions made after the 2017 flood which is a travesty and mismanagement by the Local council. This should not be handled by Local government and should be taken over by the state or Federal government.

1.2 Preparation and planning

If taken over by the Federal government the river by pass that was suggested in March 1981 by the engineer Guido Colombo
(<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12->

13/curious-nc-lismore-built-on-a-floodplain/9252362) should be implemented. All people in North and South Lismore should be evacuated before the water reaches the first floor of their house. The Arup-Cardno JV, including Cardno multidisciplinary specialists should be held responsible for the many deaths, Trauma and damage to property in-cured in the entire flood region as I believe by not putting in giant concrete aqueducts under the highway near Wardell caused the town to flood and backed up the river making the flood in Lismore a few more meters higher. The rivers should be dredged regularly. Trees should be planted along the entire riverbank. This could be done as a farmers incentive scheme with free trees and in collaboration with Envite for work for the Dole. There should be bigger pumps to help the water recede quicker. There should be more massive water reserves down the end of Keen st past the baseball fields as suggested in councils proposal which they couldn't pull their fingers out to get done in 5 years!!! (as well as other places up and down river.)

1.3 Response to floods

The SES headquarters should be back in Lismore on high ground and there should always be a fleet of boats available, and they should have petrol powered diamond cutting saws like the man in Wardell who saved 44 people in one night did. (the SES had hatchets!) the government should issue all houses in flood zones ladders for the sides of houses and free openable sunlights. The Army should have instant response and have helicopters, boats etc instantly deployed during the event.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

There should be more space available for evacuation centres (plural) and seperate spaces with trained professionals for drug addicts, violent people and people with mental health. As many good people were scared in the evacuation centre at SCU. There should be a fleet of camper vans and tiny houses made instantly available as soon as water subsides.

There should be food packages available to be distributed by SES boats to those not in flood but trapped from shops in the days after the onset. The Army should be here as soon as water recedes to help with clean up. having said that there should be an edict that no one Army/volunteers/ Police/SES can enter someones house and start throwing things out without the owner/resident/designated other present. Unless there is some immediate danger.

1.5 Recovery from floods

There should have already been in place a website and trained management team with a proper backed up logging works system such as the council already has in place for road works etc, instead of expecting the community to hit the ground running and come up with the Resilience program by themselves! Because they did not have access to this simple computer program volunteers were forced to call the flood affected multiple times a day to asked if the job we requested had been done, we were far too busy to field these calls and the telecommunications were atrocious! One week I received around 20 phone calls asking if I needed help and only 7 volunteers! The people on the phone could have volunteered on the ground if once jobs were logged in the system when the vollies finished that logged job they logged off and we wouldn't have to field so many calls! Indeed Telstra should have a royal commission into their behaviour as I was told on somewhere between 50 to 100 calls and 2 months of being shoved around between companies only to find out that I wasn't even with Telstra it was a company called more telecom and this caused me so much unnecessary trauma in a two month period and I wasn't even trapped on a roof with no reception! There should be a satellite telecommunications option for Lismore/ Northern Rivers.

1.6 Any other matters

The amount of money available for a house rebuild in 2017 was \$30,000 why is it only \$20,000 now? It should be more. There should

also be a royal commission into the charities and where the money went as in 2017 the first thing we got was a new fridge and washing machine from the Red Cross (now it was only \$500 not enough to buy both) and ST Vincents started rolling out furniture and delivered within a month, Its now 2 months and they have only sourced a van this week as two of their local trucks were flooded but they cant get two or more (filled) trucks to come from neighbouring towns? or the Gold Coast or Sydney? Even now there is hardly any furniture available, and it was only yesterday that we found out white good were available through GIVIT but when you go to their website and ask for help all it does is direct you to a list of other charities such as Red Cross!!! not good enough we feel abandoned and personally I feel abandoned and alone by everyone.

Supporting documents or images
