

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 15 May 2022 1:34:11 PM

Your details

Title Ms

First name jill

Last name witham

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 My low-set house in South Lismore swamps, flooded above ceiling level. These were removed as 3 inches of mud & soggy insulation batts sat there, buckling the ceiling boards. I have never had enough money to raise this little cottage. Local council receives federal funding for only two houses to be raised per year. There is a long waiting list. We saved a lot of possessions, and

my backyard cabin, a second dwelling, was totally destroyed, as was my outdoor wooden laundry shed. I evacuated next door to a high-set, but it too, flooded. We clambered onto a flat portion of the roof and were rescued by locals in a boat 4 hours later. That day is a blur. It's May now and I am back in the house with time standing still. It's a shell, but being hardwood I still have walls and a raggedy kitchen. But at least I have a roof over my head. Tradesmen are few and far between. Fixing the house is going to take a long time. I lost all added value to my home. Air conditioners, fans, backyard cabin, outdoor toilet, insulation and more. I feel stuck here. No other option but to fix the house slowly as I have a mortgage. I own it. Every time it rains there is fear, but I learned that from the 2017 flood. People in low set houses have always lived in fear every time there is heavy rain. Now, it's all the folks in high-sets as well.

Terms of Reference (optional)

The Inquiry welcomes submissions that address the particular matters identified in its [Terms of Reference](#)

1.2 Preparation and planning

Nobody could have prepped for this flood. We prepped for a 1974 flood and it was a total waste of time and energy. May as well have been throwing special things into the car all day and taking them away. I never expected to be a roofie.

1.3 Response to floods

Men in tinnies from everywhere. Thank you. SES was not enough. It's not their fault. Nobody seemed to see this coming, despite seeing Queensland inundated with massive amounts of rain. It's a natural disaster and I feel there is nobody to blame realistically. The evacuation centre at the UNI was put together so fast by whom? I have no idea. But it was there early in the morning 28th feb, set up with a recovery van to collect people from the boats and ferry them to the UNI. A tea stall, clothing, a food van and more. This alone was entirely amazing. We

arrived there around midday and the evac centre was in full swing.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

This has been a long transition and it's still going on. The mood is flat, with occasional buoyance. We are resigned to living in a destroyed neighbourhood with half of the residents back home. Many of the rentals in my street, sit empty with nobody coming to fix these homes. It's a super slow process. I live alone and am 70 years old with no choice but to fully renovate/refurb the house. I have nowhere else to go, apart from couch surfing with relatives and friends.

1.5 Recovery from floods

The 2017 flood, I went through that one. The water came into my lowset by about 45 cm. It took around 4 months to get things back together. I prepped well and saved almost everything. This time, it's going to take a very long time to recover emotionally and physically. Let alone getting the house back together as a home. At least half of the flood zone houses are still empty. Nothing going on, still filthy, broken windows and empty. They are definitely not in recovery yet. Others, in their homes, some luckily almost finished fixing things. Recovery will be at least a 12 month process and then some. Not really sure if this is what your inquiry wants to hear, but there it is.

1.6 Any other matters

If it had not been for men with speedboats, hundreds of people in Lismore and other towns, would have drowned in this 2022 flood. How could BOM have got it so wrong? Just before we figured a plan to get onto the roof, BOM indicated 14 to 16 metres flood height. Vague and terrifying. It was just before daybreak and weather people had no clue as to how high it might go. That was the most terrifying moment I believe. Luckily, it peaked at at 14.5 metres. The photo added of a house almost underwater is mine. I took the photo around 8 am in the morning 28th february, while on my neighbour's roof. I am hoping for federal or state government financial help to raise the cottage, or land

buyback so I can move it elsewhere within
lismore.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [flood kitchen.jpeg](#)
 - [my house 28th feb flood.jpg](#)
 - [destroyed cabin.jpeg](#)
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