

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Tuesday, 5 April 2022 7:50:44 PM

Your details

Title	Mrs
First name	Louise
Last name	Somerville
Email	<input type="text"/>

Submission details

I am making this submission as	A resident in a flood-affected area
Submission type	I am making a personal submission
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	Resilient Lismore
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	Social media and comms admin and moderator
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	On Feb 28, 2022 Lismore had the biggest and
-------------------	---

most destructive flood disaster in recorded history with a flat height level of 14.4 m. My brother was rescued from the top four window of his flat by the Brunswick heads Surf Lifesavers in a Dingey. He is now living with us in definitely and is very traumatised as he lost everything.

My brother is one of the lucky ones as he has a family who care and who can have him live with them until such time as he finds a place to live. Thousands in our region are not so lucky and YET the government has not set up temporary accommodation for these people on any vacant land whatsoever.

This is a first world country.

This is Australia.

How can this unconscionable act be allowed.

In my role at Resilient Lismore I monitor our social media Facebook page, answer emails and messages, and generally assist in our role of helping as much as we can on a volunteer basis to help to get our community back on their knees. We run a volunteer sign up organisation and provide PPE gear, cleaning supplies, registered volunteers from the community, support to existing government organisations to decipher and share factual information to the community, support our local council by sharing information they need to get out to the community and to soften the blow as much as we can.

Lismore is destroyed.

I have lived here since 1964, the year I was born. Tomorrow is my 58th birthday and right now, unless we have a reconstruction commission formed to seriously step in and help get intergenerationally -traumatised people out of a flood zone and higher into the hills, I don't see a good future for Lismore or for my four children here.

This is heartbreaking to me.

We had various government officials visit, one being a prime minister who wouldn't even speak to us, promising this.. promising that giving money (not enough) and yet not really seeing what NEEDS to happen here. If this doesn't show that the climate is changing, and what's ahead, nothing will.

Resilience NSW has been absolutely bloody hopeless. Every time our organisation or the police or the New South Wales state member Janelle Saffin's's for other groups run by volunteers have asked for things to be paid, or a hub to be set up to help feed people ...clothe people ...wash people or listen to people this request has not been actioned speedily or with thought for what these people have been through. The lack of speed due to bureaucracy and emails stuck in inboxes and papers stuck on desks has been catastrophic.

So what can we learn?

As the world warms, floods are becoming increasing hard to predict. While dams and levee banks can reduce flood damage, they work best in minor and moderate floods. In catastrophic events such as the February flood, there is little they can do. We need our city to MOVE...to retreat to higher ground...and we need a government willing to support making that happen.

At the end of this inquiry I hope that serious change can happen for our city. We need our city to be moved over time to a higher ground ... residents to begin with. Land swaps are crucial to this working.

I have just purchased this book and I suggest everyone involved in this inquiry read it in the next few days before you do anything else. Rising from the Flood: Moving Grantham by Jamie Simmonds.

<https://floodcop.com.au/2020/03/20/an-authors-insight-rising-from-the-floodmoving-grantham/>

Jamie Simmonds stepped into a role in January 2011 – immediately after the horrendous Grantham floods – to assist the Lockyer Valley Regional Council Mayor, Steve Jones co-ordinate an ambitious and rapid turnaround plan to relocate the flooded families into a new town.

What happened in that 12 month period is a unique story that Jamie shares in his book “Rising from the Flood”. In a very personal and first hand account, the book details:

We are one of the most important regional cities in the far north east of New South Wales and we have been terribly let down. We have had many attempted suicides and the mental health crisis and housing crisis in this area which was already bad before has now become unmanageable.

Do something.

Like really.....DO SOMETHing.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Louise Somerville
Oliver Street
East Lismore NSW 2480

Married mother of 4 adult children
Library Technician (29 years)
Foundation member of Knitting Nannas Against Gas
CWA member
HSC Supervisor
Market Co-ordinator
Uniform shop co-ordinator

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images

