

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 23 June 2022 5:56:56 PM

Your details

Title Mr

First name Martin

Last name CONNER

Email

Postcode 2291

Submission details

I am making this submission as A member of the general public

Submission type I am making a personal submission

Organisation making the submission (if applicable) WILLIAMS RIVER WATER PTY LIMITED

Your position in the organisation (if applicable) Director

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 am a civil and environmental engineer with over 25 years industry experience. My last role was as the Principal Engineer in a council in the Lower Hunter. I led a team responsible for drainage, floodplain and bridge management.

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 The weather events that led to catastrophic flooding in NSW in 2022 were an Act of God. Maybe climate change was a factor but the actions of NSW are likely to do little in changing the frequency or intensity of future flooding. We just have to plan for it. There has been plenty of research into rainfall impacts of climate change and using a reference like Australian Rainfall and Runoff is the best method we have of predicting future flooding.

1.2 Preparation and planning My experience is that NSW SES is under resourced (permanent staff) and underprepared for significant flood events. Flood events are typically regional and stretch emergency services. More effort is needed in preparing Flood Plans for local government areas and emergency services should be preparing with councils by running simulations to prepare for the what ifs. Investment in cost effective flood mitigation will help but councils are expected to provide drainage and floodplain services with a flood levy rate charge that has remained the same since 2006. The state water utilities(Hunter Water and Sydney Water) and Central Coast Council go through an IPART pricing review and are currently charging 4 to 5 times as much as council receive to manage flooding and drainage. The current council funding is not sustainable.

I think NSW Flood Planning package in 2021 was a positive step forward but the clause 5.22 in the council LEP's should be a mandatory clause.

To reduce flood damages I think the funding pool for Voluntary House Raising and Voluntary House Purchase should be increased. People need their State and local governments to make the process easy. The process is difficult and the take up small.

To improve house resilience one option would to be encourage homes to be built in piers within the floodplain. Yes it will cost more but houses can be raised in be raised in the future if predicted flood levels rise. The problem is our flood models are based on past climatic conditions rather than an unknown future.

1.6 Any other matters

The issue of affordable flood insurance is essential if flood affected communities are to be rebuilt. One thing we could do is set up a NSW property floor level database so insurers must consider this when determining flood risk. Another thing is to encourage the Australian Government to develop a reinsurance pool to ensure properties built above the 1% AEP (100 year) flood level have access to affordable insurance. Houses below the 1% AEP flood level should be offered voluntary house raising or purchase support.

In addition the State Government could set a demonstration house that can float with floods. Examples globally exist. One of the biggest problems I've heard with house raising is that elderly residents would no longer be able to live in their house - too many steps.

Supporting documents or images
