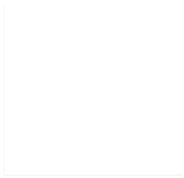


From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Sunday, 17 April 2022 2:34:04 PM



Your details

Title	Mrs
First name	NARELLE
Last name	GAROFANO
Email	
Postcode	2479

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	On the morning of 28 February 2022, a very good friend of mine was frantically communicating with the last source of connection with the outside world, social media. She was requesting information about the current flood height and predicted flood peak. Many of her FB friends were warning her that it was going to be over 14 meters and to get out.
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That morning my friend had to make the heart breaking decision to leave her pets who had joined her on a mattress propped up by a cabinet so that they sat above the floodwaters in her lounge room. She had sent her kids to their grandparents up on the hill, moved her car to a higher location and stocked up on food as she knew she would sit out the flood waters until they receded.

My friend had been through many floods as she was a long-term resident. Her mother had stood pregnant with her in the belly of her front deck of her Girrads Hill home in 1974 waiting to be rescued from the big flood. That flood didn't enter their living area of their home, it came up to the top step of their two-story Queensland at home.

The information my friend based her decision on to stay on 28 February 2022 was according to local SES and Council information about major flood levels.(See attached)

The Lismore Flood Safe document which was created in March 2015 indicates major flood level at 12 m 12 which was the 1974 Flood height.

People in houses around my friends place all made the same decision to stay based on major flood levels indicated by local SES and council suggesting that "Yes, it would be a major flood." However, everyone was using the same measurement tool to make this decision, which was the 1974 flood of 12.12 m indicator.

Sadly, thousands of people were caught out on this morning in Lismore. My friend reports that it was terrifying as when the flood waters started to enter her house, children in homes around her, who were also experiencing the same thing were screaming for their lives, as parents tried to calm them and reassure them. We will be rescued by the SES.

As a last post my girlfriend requested that we contact the SES to let them know of her whereabouts and that she has made the decision to swim and hang onto her roofs gutter. She relied on her friends on social media to contact the SES to let them know she needed rescuing.

My girlfriend, when the water was 40 cm from her ceiling, dove down, open a window in her living room and swam and caught the roof gutter in the torrent of floodwaters raging around her.

She clung on for an hour in the freezing cold water with insects biting her hands, arms and face as they also tried to escape the raging floodwaters.

A man came by in a canoe and she sang out to help her. He said no and then he pointed to the rear of his canoe and my friend could see he was towing a 80 year old woman to shore. He came back and rescued my friend. He went on to rescue another 40 people in the neighborhood and take them to the shore using his canoe.

That morning for many people who tried to call, the SES line just went to voicemail. Triple zero was also diverted and on hold that morning. People could not make contact with anyone who could help.

On Facebook, a local resident who had just been rescued started to make a list of people requiring help and assistance from posts in the Resilient Lismore-Lismore helping hands, which was established in the 2017 flood period to help with recovery effort.

She stood there on the shore line, directing local volunteers who turned up with boats, canoes, jet skis to send them to addresses where people had indicated they needed rescuing.

Thank goodness we are a strong community who care about one another and know when to step forward and help. It was quite clear that local emergency services and resources were not enough to support our community this morning.

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

Quite clearly the science is in and our local, state and federal governments need to take urgent steps to reduce carbon emissions, in order to reduce the catastrophic weather events affecting our countries and many countries around the world, including floods, fires, and cyclones and most recently tornados.

1.2 Preparation and planning

Any public funded housing in Lismore and surrounding flood affected areas should be relocated to non flood area. This is already a vulnerable community of people.

A buy back scheme offered to residents who own property in the urban flood affected areas.

Retail should be constructed with floods in mind and use material that can easily be dried and cleaned after flood events.

The introduction of market gardens, markets and other creative use of urban flood affected space should be requested.

Evacuation orders need to be given when people can still safely evacuate themselves and family, preferably in the day time, to be safe. Keep in mind people need extra time and assistance, eg elderly, people with a disability, etc...

1.3 Response to floods

Evacuation orders given early in a timely manner. Reduced number of rescues required, as demonstrated with the second flood event on the 30th of March, 2022.

The Federal response was slow and not ramped up quickly enough. It also discriminated between electorates even though all the people in flood

affected areas experienced the same devastating weather event.

Future response- Relocate public funded housing to non flood affected areas.

Have moveable retail/markets located in the current flood affected area so they can move to higher ground when weather event is impacting the area.

1.5 Recovery from floods

There has been significant trauma experienced by all those who were caught in the flood, live in the direct vicinity, attend schools, have a business, or work, or have family and friends in the flood affected areas of the Northern Rivers. We can't do this again.

Change has to happen on many levels.

Federally-address climate change genuinely as we can be leaders on clean energy source technology.

State-Address housing issue providing public funded housing in non flood affected areas and look at buy back scheme, shared with the Federal government, so residents aren't forced to live with issue daily in the back of their minds. Plus we don't want to waste resources when we know this is going to happen again.

Local- Create a forum to re-imagine Lismore and surrounding flood affected areas knowing we will be flood affected moving forward in the future and it could be as catastrophic as February 28, 2022

1.6 Any other matters

My friends home and her belongings destroyed out the front. Window and roof gutter circled where she escaped and clung to and Girrards Hill flooded.

Lismore SES and Council Flood Safe document.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [IMG_4448.jpg](#)
- [IMG_0359.jpg](#)
- [IMG_0359_0.jpg](#)



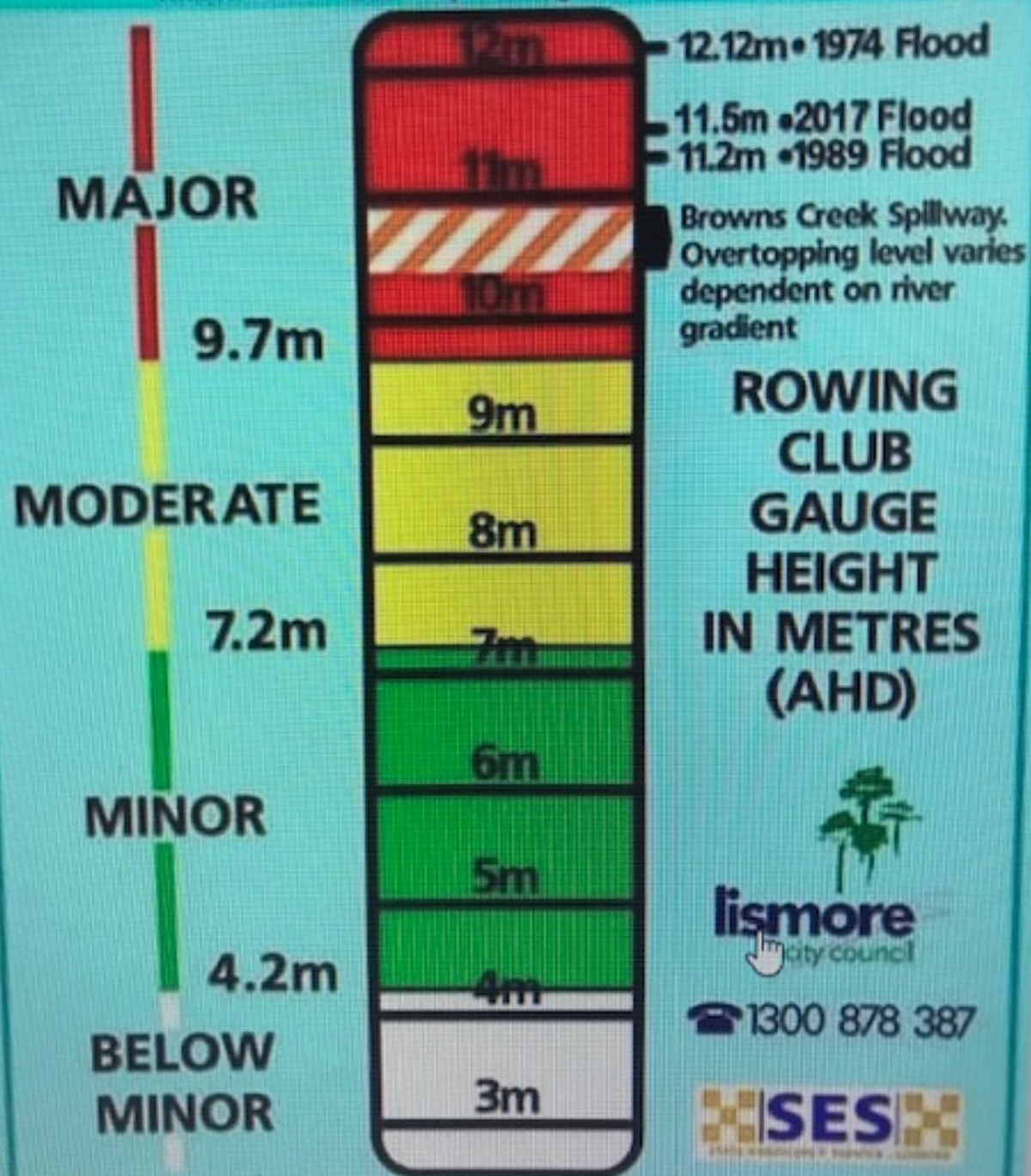




Lismore FloodSafe



Information and help during a flood or storm



1300 878 387



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