

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Saturday, 21 May 2022 11:04:29 AM

Your details

Title Ms

First name Patricia

Last name Thorne

Email

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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 Hi there
My house is 13metres AHD supposedly above flood level (until 28 Feb 2022), according to council and real estate agents when I bought it. It is raised 2 metres above the ground. The flood went 1.8 metres into my house in a raging torrent. Everything was tossed around like in a washing machine, furniture had moved from one

room to another.

28/2/2022

On flood day my 21 yo son woke up early morning before light after hearing a loud bang. He got up, stepped into water, and waded into the kitchen to find that the loud bang was the fridge falling over after starting to float . After a while after trying to save a few things, and with the rising water he climbed up a tree outside our sunroom to get on our roof. He's 6 foot and the water was up to his chest when he climbed He sat on the roof for hours, he could see our older neighbours standing in waist/chest high flood water on their front steps as they couldn't get on their roof. Waiting.

Tinnie boats were motoring around our neighborhood saving people in lower set houses, a few at a time. Eventually he was picked up by a community member in a tinnie and dropped on Nimbin Road near the quarry with a heap of other people. They all waited there until a boat was available to take them to the Lismore cbd side of town.

I was stuck at work in East Lismore. SES were not in South or North Lismore due to being flooded and then not being safe to cross the river. And apparently they only have 5 boats? Is this true

27/2/2022

When I left at 6pm the night before to go to my work for my 3 and a half hour shift (6pm-9.30pm), I'm a Mental Health support worker. The flood estimate from the SES was 10.6 metres (would not cover any of my yard or street, I expected to be able to drive home after work as I knew that level wouldn't cover any of the roads I had to drive on), by the time I finished work at 9.30pm I was stuck at work as Whyrallah Road in East Lismore and Ballina Road (Bruxner Highway) were under water. I couldn't get home. The next day I watched the Bom readings and

SES updates as the estimates kept rapidly increasing. It's approaching 1074 levels, it's surpassed 1074 levels, it's just under my floor level, above my floor, up to 1.4 metres above my floor as (it actually is went 1.8 metres above my floor as the brown line in my kitchen shows.

Now I hear of 16-16.5 m PFH which would mean my house needs to be lifted another 3.5 metres to be above flood level. That would mean my house would be 5.5 metres above the ground to be above flood level. Is this possible? How much would this cost? Is it affordable.. that's a lot of structural metal!

I am now in my 50's and the idea of having to climb into my roof so I don't drown in my home is not a pleasant one. I don't even know if I can get on my roof..?

The local SES called for local people to come with boats to help, then I heard that was retracted half an hour later (from afar so I've heard). Luckily the local people were too busy trying to save their family, friends and then strangers as the situation became alarmingly apparent.

Everyone in my block in South Lismore was saved by a community member. There was no SES on the known flood plains of North and South Lismore, due to being cut off by the flooding river.

Obviously people living on a floodplain need to have a local flood emergency response plan. People in South Lismore need someone in South Lismore to pick them up and take them to a high point/dry land (near the quarry on Nimbin Road). The same for residents in North Lismore. We now know that if the river is overtopping the levee the SES won't be coming to help us (it's too dangerous in the rapidly moving water as it flows into the CBD). And the river was still to rise

2 metres above the levee. Southies and Northies were not going to be saved by the SES in these conditions.

Expecting the volunteer service of the SES (which is based on Bangalow Road, the other side of the river) is ridiculous (especially since they were flooded as they are by the river on what was considered flood safe land).

A volunteer organisation cannot be expected to deal with these type of disasters. It's not within their skill level and they obviously don't have the resources necessary.

My 21 yo son is not going to move back to our house again. I am fixing it up and am now camping in it. I live day to day doing what needs to be done to be able to live in it, and now work mainly evening shifts to make this possible.

It's getting cold, I'm working on reducing the amount of cold air entering the house (which is impossible atm). Walls are now back up, I'm working (with the help from 2 friends) on making removable architraves to cover the 15cm opening at the bottom of my walls. The cold evenings are slowly reducing the amount of mosquitoes that try to eat me after dark (a friend has given me a mosquito net to sleep in), I don't need a mosquito born disease at this point in time.

I plan to get an electric blanket to put on my single mattress (kindly given to me by a friend). To keep me warm and cosy while in bed thru winter. I'll have to wear camping clothes when I get out of bed to keep warm, until the house warms up around lunchtime, and wear them after 4pm in winter when it starts to get cold. I notice if I go to a shop in Goonellabah I am wearing too many clothes, I get hot, I am wearing a lot heavier clothing than most of the shoppers, I see someone else overdressed and

we make eye contact, we both know we are both living on the floodplain in a damaged house or caravan, or car, or homeless.

I don't think about the future too much, it's overwhelming and complicated when I do. I focus on my day to day life to keep my emotions stable and positive. I focus on the things I can do something about, and do them. I provide support to my Mental Healthy clients at work, I'm good at supporting people, I'm understanding and present, connected.

It's the things I can't do anything about which stresses me. Like fast rising flood water, the height of my house in increasing flood water heights, a safe place to live, can I climb into my roof, will I be safe in my house now I know it's not above flood level, the cost of housing off the floodplain. A house block of land flood free is way more expensive than my house and land put together.

I have a beautiful old Queenslander made from beautiful and strong old timber which I love..it has been thru floods before it was lifted and survived beautifully. Timber lining boards probably 80 years old which have been removed, cleaned, put back up and repainted, they look amazing.

These lining boards are from local trees which were a part of The Big Scrub Rainforest, beautiful big rainforest trees. There's no crumbling plaster or particleboard in my house, just beautiful timber lining boards which are from the grand old trees from this area.

I could go on, but I have to go. I have to go to Resilience NSW to apply for The Back Home Grant. My friend told me it took her 4 hours when she applied there. I have no internet at home or computer so need to go to get help.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images
