

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 19 May 2022 9:38:52 PM
Attachments: [Lismore submission 2022.docx](#)

Your details

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Submission details

I am making this submission as	A member of the general public
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	<p>The attached submission was emailed to the Lismore Mayor on 25th April 2022 in response to viewing a media interview shown on TV. I have received no acknowledgment so thought it appropriate to submit it again through this channel.</p> <p>Based on my deep knowledge of flooding</p>
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behaviour in the Lismore precinct, as well as the lower river, I noted the Mayor referred to a number of well worn theories to address flooding impacts. The Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Richmond River County Council in conjunction with the community consultation processes pertaining to the Lismore levee project will be found to explain why many options previously canvassed in the community do not stand careful scrutiny as a solution for Lismore's future benefit. Improvements can be made and my attached submission speaks to that approach.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [Lismore submission 2022.docx](#)
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25th April 2022

Good evening Cr Kreig,

I watched tonight's 60 Minutes program and wish to convey my thoughts to you whilst presuming that you have already been bombarded with plenty of advice on what should be done for the betterment of the whole community and economy of Lismore and environs.

I now reside in Newcastle but remain both a Lismore and Richmond Valley ratepayer. I lived in Lismore for more than 30 years and throughout construction of the Lismore levee which was completed in 2005.

You will know that the height of the levee was dictated by the anticipated impacts inside and outside the levee wall both in the CBD and South Lismore, during flood conditions. It has served its design purpose but it was always going to be overtopped. Despite objections from some, no levee was built in North Lismore for two key reasons – to avoid creating an unsafe residential environment and also to discourage development in that area. Those principles remain valid and for that reason building a higher levee is not likely to provide an economic worthwhile remedy.

The Lismore levee came to fruition after the business community complained about the economic disruption wrought by repeated floods in the 1980's. The levee in its current form is an insurance policy against the "nuisance floods" and that premium/loan repayment is still carried in the Council's budget. Lismore adjacent to the river cannot be flood proofed, nor will dredging nor tree planting nor channels nor even a dam achieve that result. The massive volumes of water heading past Lismore in a flood confirm that as fact.

I suggest rather that the Council should explore an investment strategy by creating the infrastructure which will facilitate community acceptance that there is a great future for Lismore. This approach is hardly likely to meet resistance from the community as I do not advocate the case for forcing households and businesses to relocate. However, if substantial areas of serviced land is made available for residential, commercial and industrial use, the economics of supply and demand will drive the change. Further drivers will be the lower risk rating applied by banks and insurance companies and the welcome description of land that is in all weather conditions "flood free".

Lismore has plenty of land beyond Goonellabah which could be sourced and rezoned for this purpose. Water and sewer infrastructure is in place with immediate capacity. This would not be a quick fix but the Lismore levee took 15 years from start to completion and planning for the future is one of the Council's priority roles. There is also a very large tract of prime land owned by the State Government at Wollongbar currently occupied by the DPI whose function these days may not require the exclusive use of such land. An unexplored opportunity perhaps!

If I may add and this is a matter relevant to Lismore, Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater and Wardell. The current arrangements at the designated evacuation centres are not adequate to deal with all displaced people. This should be a high priority project for the Government to finance and remedy because notwithstanding all other measures which may be taken the reality is that there will be further floods no matter what mitigation steps are taken and so these shortcomings deserve to be addressed without delay. In all these locations, and no doubt others, it is essential that purpose built evacuation centres be established. The reasons are obvious as they need to be equipped to house families, pets, those with general and special medical needs and in some instances for long periods. It was possible to rapidly build or establish quarantine centres around the country over the past couple of years. Purpose built evacuation centres are arguably more necessary.

I am genuinely concerned for the future of Lismore and its community welfare generally and fervently hope that under your guidance the reasonable aspirations of the locals will be achieved.

Best wishes,

Paul O'Sullivan