

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Wednesday, 18 May 2022 8:51:57 AM



Your details

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Submission details

I am making this submission as	Other
Submission type	I am submitting on behalf of my organisation
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	Safe on Social Media Pty Ltd
Your position in the organisation (if applicable)	CEO
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

This essay has been submitted to me by a member of my youth advisory committee. She has given consent for this submission.

Her name is Drue Gorman, she is 16yrs old from Goonellabah and attends

After my school flooded, it left me and probably many others with a huge sense of loss.

The place we were so familiar with, where we went for six hours every day, five days a week, suddenly gone along with everything inside. Everything familiar.

I still don't think I have come to terms with it. But as our Principal always reminds us, "It's not just a collection of buildings, it's a community of people." As long as our school community is together, we will find our feet, and we have. Online and off.

Social media is one of the most significant aspects of our world today, brightening our future and the future of generations to come.

One question I would like to answer is, How can we as individuals use it to do good in the community instead of spreading hurtful messages, lies, and unkindness? This question can be answered right here...

The Lismore floods, February/March 2022.

The devastating events which took place earlier this year are the large-scale event that will sit at the forefront of many people's minds for many years to come. The natural disaster wiped out nearly all of downtown Lismore, businesses, homes, and belongings.

Lismore and many communities around the area came together during the floods. They were providing essential supplies and homes to the people in need. Social media was a way in which people could communicate the needs of individuals and families to others, in turn gaining the supplies needed. During the height of the flood, the SES was able to use platforms such as Facebook to find homes where people needed to be rescued. In the aftermath of the floods, social media was also used to bring the community together in cleaning up Lismore and the surrounding areas.

The flood surge in Lismore was not expected to reach the record-breaking height, causing many serious problems for families all around Lismore who could not escape their homes.

Over social media, individuals posted URGENT messages over many community pages hoping that they would reach the SES in time. The SES and the NSW State Emergency responded swiftly by roaming Facebook, taking note of all urgent posts they could then communicate with, and acting accordingly.

Through the hard work and the use of Social Media platforms, the Emergency Services could track and save many lives before it was too late. This was also done with the community's help, who offered their services when it was safe. Over a short period, I was able to work with some of the NSW State Emergency Services workers and volunteers by searching through different Facebook community pages (one of these pages was Resilient Lismore - Lismore Helping Hands) and communicating with any people that were still in urgent need of flood relief services.

This is one way social media was used positively by communities to save lives.

Between losing homes and beginning the clean-up, everything was a big mess. Many families required food, shelter, and clothing. This was when social media in all age groups came into action, gathering resources, fundraising, donations and finding places for people to stay.

In the aftermath of the floods, Social media played a massive role in morale. All of Lismore was cleaning out floodwater from buildings; couches in trees, mattresses in bushes, and mud everywhere. Everything had happened so rapidly that there had been no time to mentally stop and process the events that had occurred.

During the clean-up, people began to understand the damage and the need for support. Through social media photos and posts sharing the devastation, many groups came to Lismore every day to help clean. They were giving their time to the families of Lismore.

My Dad and his workmates spent all day, every day from around seven in the morning to five in the afternoon, helping people to clean out their homes. Many people like this were out helping in the community, most people helping family in friends, and some just helping out where and when it was needed. During this, I watched many people sharing their gratefulness for each other over social media.

Through social media, young people were able to ask their followers and the community for resources such as extra beds, sheets, pillows, and clothes that could be brought to the evacuation centres and dispersed among the people staying there. If evacuation centres

needed specific things like more food or hygiene supplies, they would often be minutes away because of the efficient use of social media. Instagram was also a great platform used so that people from in and around Australia could donate. Young people helped and were heard. The use of social media by young people in this time of need provided quick access to supplies and raised awareness and support.

The floods impacted everyone, whether they were directly affected or not. And although many people lost so much, we gained hope. Hope in our community, hope in each other, and hope that social media can be used positively in a time of need.

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 Youth

Supporting documents or images
