

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 7 April 2022 9:24:47 PM

Your details

Title Mrs

First name Samantha

Last name Brown

Email

Postcode 2480

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

We spent a lot of time trying to find a house to purchase within our means, which unfortunately was only in the low lying areas. We checked floor heights for every house we checked. So when we bought our home on the "right" side of the wall and with floor boards over the 1 in 100 level we felt we had made the best decision within our budget.

When the news came we would flood at the end of February we felt confident that our house would be fine. As the predicted level was around the 2017 height we began moving everything under our home to above chest height, as the night went on and the predicted height kept rising however we began moving things into the house. At the time thinking we were being a bit silly and over prepping as it was our first flood. During the countless hours of flood prepping we made the choice to stay at home as we felt at that time our home was safe being above one in one hundred floor height. We had jugs of fresh water prepped, batteries charged, torches ready and a 'just in case evacuation bag' from our cancelled weekend away in the hall.

It wasn't until 12:30pm just as I was about to go to bed that I thought I'd better check for any updates that I saw the latest river height prediction of 13.5 that I made the call to evacuate myself and our two little children. Being on the "right" side of the wall meant we still had the option of someone driving in and picking us up. So the boys and I evacuated to a friend's while my husband sent an alarm for 3 (before the predicted levee breach time) and stayed at the house.

Moments after I arrived at our friend's I received my first evacuation order and my heart sunk, it wasn't an evacuation order but rather a message saying it was too late to evacuate and there was a serious risk to life. My husband still asleep within our home, I anxiously waited for him to wake up. Desperately searching social media for any information on what was happening from other locals. Instead it was post after post of people desperately trying to be saved.

Finally my husband woke and we made the call that he should get out before it was too late, the luxury of being on this side of the wall and on one of the last streets that usually floods meant that even though the levee had already breached the water was only just creeping in to the neighbour's across the street backyard.

In the 30 minutes it took him to get our cats and a few personal items the water had gone from nothing to chest deep. He managed to walk out in the water to an awaiting friend and was evacuated to our friends house by 5am.

We evacuated to a friends home in east Lismore an area considered safe from flood.

Unfortunately not this time and by 9am after breaking down and realising our home was gone. We were forced to evacuate a second time as the drains began to spill over and the water level started rising quickly.

Our family and our friends evacuated again, all in distress as their children expected that what happened to us would happen to their home.

Thankfully it only got to a metre under their home, a home that doesn't even have floorboard height or any other flood info online as it doesn't flood.

That day we ended up evacuating with our children three times before we safely made it to the childrens grandparents home.

What followed in the days after was like something out of a disaster movie and I'm sure the only way we coped was that feeling of dissociation. What was a home we had renovated our self, only finishing one room a day before the flood, became a pile of rubbish on the street.

The amazing part in those early days was the community, the two young men that came in and got all our billy furniture out and consoled me as I picked through mud desperately or irrationally trying to save my boys lego. The strangers who fed us everyday during a time where we would have forgotten to eat, the people who would dropped off water. Vinnies who dropped of a care package allowing me for the first time in over a week to wash my hair. It was the community who saved Lismore and the community who helped pick us up off the ground in those early days. Now while most days are quieter it's the adf and the fire brigades out everywhere, stopping in to see if you need a

hand.

Terms of Reference (optional)

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

1.3 Response to floods The government was too slow. We lost an entire town and people needed guidance and to feel like the people in power had our backs. Instead we were left feeling alone and scared of what the future may bring. 6 weeks later those feelings haven't changed.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery The incident response was the community and we are still really waiting to see what recovery will actually look like. It's been slow but this is also a disaster like nothing Lismore has seen before. A single agency or team running recovery would be so much better. We need a united front and a clear voice

1.5 Recovery from floods We need to consider buy back schemes, how many more times can you keep rebuilding a city before we actually do something. The cost while great would surely be better than rebuilding constantly.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [A5DE3930-5B00-4373-80ED-86219F06EEB7.jpeg](#)
 - [604F07F9-D648-4581-82ED-A3E5FCB5A487.jpeg](#)
 - [5A3F598E-2731-48C8-B287-D42C270579C7.jpeg](#)
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