

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Friday, 24 June 2022 11:27:10 PM



Your details

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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	My wife and I established one of the largest community volunteer responses to the northern rivers floods. We did not expect to receive and distribute so much. We sent over 500 vehicles to flood effected areas in the region. We were some of the initial responders and supply lines to Lismore, Mullumbimby, Coraki, The Channon, Woodburn, Wardell and Evans head to name
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just a few of the locations. I'm astonished at the generosity of the community and the swift response from the Byron community....we were literally the only dry town in the initial flood...not the case for the second flooding event.

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 literally there were no first responders we could find. We had boats, jet skis, helicopters, and high 4wd convoys in pairs entering areas that the agencies couldn't do. In fact not many of our fabulous volunteers received any recognition nor help from authorities of any kind....it was a disaster however literally there was no help for over 2weeks. No one could believe the lacklustre response from organised groups such as SES, fire, police, rescue, army, government at every level or other organised groups.

1.2 Preparation and planning

I don't believe there was any. It all seemed to be reactive and consequently the devastation was worse.

We knew major flooding was scheduled due to QLD warnings 3 days in advance. What mitigation followed was totally flawed....emergency warning systems didn't work, updates were impossible and only via social media while the internet was on.

1.3 Response to floods

Response was out of touch, slow, disrespectful, uncoordinated and difficult to understand.

Literally it was 2 weeks before someone contacted us to offer assistance. We even had to beg the ADF to remove our rubbish from our operation.

The authorities had no idea what we did and didn't want to learn from us. Our operation of distribution and survival supplies to thousands of

people was initially the only lifeline.

1.4 Transition from incident response to recovery

Again this was messy, slow and disorganised. Many people had lost everything so were turned away for not having particular paperwork. Many needs were unmet in the community and continue to be. I literally have delivered tents to people until this date that for some reason don't qualify for help with temporary accommodation. They either had a pet, too many children, a disability, couldn't walk up stairs or any other kind of challenge and it was met with an inflexible and uncompassionate response. The commissioner for Resilience was NOWhere to be seen and there was no other point person communicating in a coordinated manner to the public.

The lack of leadership was atrocious....there needs to a flood response group formed like was implemented for The Bushfire response.

1.5 Recovery from floods

As the recovery continued my wife and I tried to lobby local council of Lismore, state and federal governments to take further action on housing. This was not received well nor considered in an effective way. We had a short term housing solution to provide +200 short term housing solutions using local suppliers and yet we continue to see people in substandard accommodation OR moved on every few weeks to different locations. There was NO recovery plan there was NO consideration or decision makers who could be called upon outside of their discipline to make decisions.

The worse part was that while we knew of thousands of displaced people in very poor conditions the RFS and Army managed to build large tent cities or gain access to sports centres when residents were literally left out in the cold. Evac centres were not Evac centres...they were makeshift inappropriate facilities and community led initiatives! Next the designated infrastructure needs to be earmarked as proper centres

equipped within reason for natural disasters.

1.6 Any other matters

I could not believe that the internet hub was under water at Woodburn. This needs to be moved immediately and never rebuilt in a flood zone.

Local government of Lismore needs to be overhauled so that it can implement local initiatives to rescue their own town. The housing taskforce has taken far too long to implement any effective short term accomodation. Housing needs to be fast tracked and supported with land release red tape removed. Trades and support need to be brought in by the government to support towns not just money but physical workers incentivised to complete works (govt paid). It's crazy we can't repair homes faster than this.

Supporting documents or images

Attach files

- [6AFA3F96-6C92-4068-8A17-01BB3DBE0394.jpeg](#)
 - [1092C53F-BF2A-4CB5-903B-4E59D0F67ABB.jpeg](#)
 - [1B181FAA-6064-4125-ABA8-FFA66FBF37BC.jpeg](#)
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