

From: [NSW Government](#)
To: [Flood Inquiry](#)
Subject: Floods Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 19 May 2022 8:04:20 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 submitting on behalf of my organisation
Organisation making the submission (if applicable)	WATER Northern Rivers
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	WATER Northern Rivers is an alliance of community groups and members concerned with water security in the Northern Rivers. We
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actively oppose the Dunoon Dam and support the implementation of diverse water sources for our future water security. Our members live across the most flood affected LGAs including Lismore, Byron, Ballina, the Richmond Valley and the Tweed.

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

A hydrological study on the proposed Dunoon Dam completed for Rous County Council by Hydrosphere consulting (2011) estimated an increase in flood intensity by 18% in 3km downstream from the dam wall. For those living downstream of the proposed dam wall location, this would be catastrophic. Some of these people, including some members of WATER Northern Rivers, were severely impacted by the recent February 28th floods. When water falls on a full dam the surface of the water acts as an impervious surface causing water to run off at a fast rate.

It's also worth noting the apparent failure of the dam wall at Rocky Creek Dam during the first major flood event. Residents of Whian Whian, Dunoon and The Channon were contacted during the early hours of the morning by SES with the following text message: "NSW SES DAM FAILURE EVACUATION ORDER. ROCKY CREEK DAM. People at your home address BELOW ROCKY CREEK DAM should evacuate now to a higher ground". Although the dam wall did not apparently burst, to receive this information as the first major flood event was occurring, caused further and unnecessary harmful distress to people. Furthermore, Rocky Creek dam withholds a volume of 40% of the Rocky Creek catchment area. Had the dam wall actually burst, the tsunami of water, the volume of almost double which was already coming down Rocky Creek, would have exacerbated the

carnage to an unfathomable degree. Both points here have clearly demonstrated that dams are not reliable in flooding events.

1.2 Preparation and planning

See section 1.3, response to floods as preparation and planning.

1.3 Response to floods

In the case of flood response, after the immediate rescue and recovery, people want to see flood mitigation practices in place. This links medium-term flood response to preparation and planning. Flood mitigation options that have been talked about in the pre-election political arena include:
raising the levee,
engineering the rivers
building dams.

The proposed dam at Dunoon would, if built, do minimal to nothing to mitigate flooding in Lismore as it represents only 3.6% of Lismore's total catchment area (Rous County Council, personal communications 2022). Furthermore, in a flood event it is highly likely that any on or off stream dams would already be full, meaning they would have zero capacity to retain any of the inflowing water. To build a dam or include one in any sort of flood mitigation strategy, would not only do nothing to mitigate flooding in Lismore, but actually make it much worse for those living in its immediate vicinity (see section 1.1). This would be both irresponsible, costly and a mistake in the making.

1.5 Recovery from floods

Regarding the vulnerability of potable water supply during floods. Potable water was compromised at many locations around the Northern Rivers during the February 28th flood events and for sometime after, including as a result of the second flood one month later. Water supply was either contaminated or delivery infrastructure inundated. WATER Northern Rivers acknowledges the difficult but necessary task to secure safe and flood proof potable water supply during flood events. Having numerous

decentralised water networks decreases the vulnerability of potable water supply during these events.

1.6 Any other matters

WATER Northern Rivers recognises it is of concern that Mick Fuller is leading this enquiry. The ex-police commissioner left the police force shrouded in corruption and there has been no transparency as to why this individual would be selected to lead this enquiry, or how much he is being paid.

Supporting documents or images
