

**Submission
No 53**

REVIEW OF THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY ACT 2022

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My home was majorly affected by the flood, I am still in a caravan about to finally start recovery, fix my home. i am on the buyback.

RE: Review of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022

THIS REVIEW- ACCESSIBILITY

I have concerns about the accessibility of this review, I found out a week ago when a friend posted it on facebook, I note that there are only 24 submissions, AND that BLACKTOWN claims to have been invited? Where are the other invites? Where are the submissions from councils in Northern NSW, the only submission which was confidential which seemed to be from NNSW is someone who hates the PODS and has a vested interest.

With a short window to write (I have been on the road and working), I will ad-hoc write what comes to mind I apologise if its jumps around. These notes will be point form and not in any particular order.

I am an artist who has been based in Lismore since 1988. I have an acquired Brain injury.

Please note that Janelle Saffin has been amazing looking after our interests, there is however clearly a lot at play that is unknown.

ISSUES

Since the beginning these are some issues:

***LACK OF CLEAR INFORMATION** – simple pdfs are available now, but initially most of the process was ad-hoc

***LACK OF CLEAR ROLL OUT OF THE BUYBACK in many regards**

In regards to lismore its NOT that big, a simple walk and on the ground examination would indicate homes that were affected and the degree, locating owners while harder is not impossible and an assessment of their situation could be made before triage. There are older home owners still living elsewhere, there houses fenced off, many didn't think they could return so they didn't get a chance to fix their homes. There HAVE been suicides. I was told my home was not safe but luckily I paid no heed, opened the fence bought a cheap caravan and lived on site. I cleaned my home so now it is salvageable. This situation is NEGLECT!

***PODS**

Initially we were told pods would be able to be on our land, heavens knows what they cost someone made a mint, but no they were only in locations which for me is not doable with a TBI. I lived in a caravan without amenities for 12 months. Im older so using a bucket made things tricky at times.

THERE IS STILL NOWHERE to take our caravans or cabins to if it floods as local councillors with vested interest didn't want "our type" there. As mostly educated artists which brings culture to Lismore I found the classism against floodies while distressed traumatising.

PSTD COMPLEX TRAUMA- LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Anyone who went through that flood in Lismore would be highly traumatised. Trauma and being in survival mode severely affect peoples ability to make decisions. This could have legal implications for any decisions made with NSWRA.

While I have been offered a contract I haven't heard back or received it and I think the appeal and new amount was offered in November 2023?

There seems to be administrative and communication issues, the poor people in office don't know whats happening, and it appears that paper work submitted need to go via Smarty grants which some of the valuers had no idea how to use! I made to reports regarding my house and they did not have them at either assessment.

I have written emails made calls been into the office but my situation is unknown and the contract is in the ether?

Currently as I was so stressed thinking about flood recovery fighting a multinational company that polluted my home, I have been so distressed I thought I just need to forget about everything for now, so I am practicing not giving a F**K.

The reality is there is NO consistency, I need to save my home, but if I accept they buyback they may change that and the house is theirs thats already happened to others who gifted their home, was in the NSWRA contract and then NSWRA withdrew that! How can we have faith when the rules change at the drop of a hat?

Now prices are going up n up in Lismore, my home fixed would be worth the same as what im offered the only advantage is the land packages where we still have NO pricing and we have to wait 2 years! For those with offers under 500k who want to save their homes (**very grateful that has been on the cards**), the land would have to be 250k or under, moving home, stamp duty, DA's, amenities, certificates etc add up.

Then the other huge part is who is going to do all the organising?? Im done, i have nothing left, I don't have the energy to buy land, organise a house move etc, land swaps would have really helped and an en masse house relocation as NSWRA planned initially, but that was ditched for bigger better?? The easiest option for me right now is to fix my home and just get back in their, I want to stay in lismore where I have formed community bonds and culture over the last 35 years. My home is central on a huge block, I would love to be safe out of flood zone but 450 K wont do that, I just don't think I can do another 2-3 years of unknown and flood recovery, for my mental health and I need it over. It impacted my career just after getting it on track. Note this is my 3rd life affecting natural disaster since 2017. Where IS safe? Fires, Floods, Tsunami, tornados, sinkholes, viruses?

We have an AMAZING COMMUNITY we could have led the way, they just should have let the first test of 20 relocatable homes, made it a creative community of artists, environmentalist, all the various skill sets we have that are SO qualified, if the funds were given to the people we would have something great, but no they money will go to big business and NGOS. If the money had gone to the Koori mail they would have something happening too? Was the Bundjalung flood policy actually even looked at? It was the first document of its kind in regards to this flood, it had recommendations !

<https://files.dpc.nsw.gov.au/assets/flood-inquiry-submissions/1242-Bundjalung-Nation-20220731.pdf>

Seriously I am grateful but cynical as soon as there is money there are the big players ready to make a their money. Lismore area should be a case study for disaster capitalism. I would like to see exactly where each and every funded dollar went.

There is so much information but really all I want to know along with others is what IS THE PLAN??

CAN IT BE TRANSPARENT CLEAR CONSISTENT, save our beautiful historic homes we need to NOT create waste, we also need to hold our VERY special community TOGETHER !

AND PLEASE NOTE ITS IS THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED THIS EXPERIENCE WHO ARE YOUR VERY BEST INFORMATION RESOURCE!

Thank you Marion Conrow

1. (a) *establishing the NSW Reconstruction Authority to facilitate community resilience to the impact of disasters in New South Wales through prevention, preparedness and adaptation, and*
2. (b) *providing for the functions and powers of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, including functions and powers to –*
 1. (i) *facilitate the protection, recovery and reconstruction of affected communities, and*
 2. (ii) *mitigate against the impact of potential disasters on communities, and*
 3. (iii) *improve the resilience and adaptability of affected communities in relation to potential disasters, including, for example, by the betterment of affected communities, and*
3. (c) *providing for the exercise of functions by the chief executive officer of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, subject to the Minister's control and direction, including ensuring the Authority exercises its functions effectively and efficiently.*

To ultimately promote community resilience, it is recommended that the primary object and strategies to achieve this object, be revised as follows (amendments are in bold text for clarity):

promote community resilience in New South Wales through – (a) social infrastructure

2. (b) *disaster prevention, preparedness and adaptation, and*
3. (c) *recovery and reconstruction following disasters...*

The primary object is to be achieved by –

1. (a) *establishing the NSW Reconstruction Authority to facilitate community resilience in New South Wales through **social infrastructure**, prevention, preparedness and adaptation, and*
2. (b) *providing for the functions and powers of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, including functions and powers to –*
 1. (i) *facilitate **social infrastructure**, the protection, recovery and reconstruction of affected communities, and*
 2. (ii) *mitigate against the impact of potential disasters on communities, and*

3. (iii) *improve the resilience and adaptability of affected communities in relation to potential disasters, including, for example, **via social infrastructure and** the betterment of affected communities, and*

(c) providing for the exercise of functions by the chief executive officer of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, subject to the Minister's control and direction, including ensuring the Authority exercises its functions effectively and efficiently.

Correspondingly, it is recommended that the terms of the Act be revised to align with the current and emerging evidence-base on community resilience. This would involve ensuring the terms:

- Define community resilience, recognising its multifaceted nature
- Recognise that the effects associated with a disaster can be exacerbated by ongoing hardship
- Stipulate strategies that prioritise sustained community engagement – this might involve supporting and sustaining community hubs, which are driven by communities