

**INQUIRY INTO RESPONSE TO MAJOR FLOODING
ACROSS NEW SOUTH WALES IN 2022**

Name: Mr Fulin Yan

Date Received: 29 April 2022



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The Hon. Walt Secord MLC
Shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage
Shadow Minister for Police and Counterterrorism
Shadow Minister for the North Coast
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Chair,

In March of 2022, a 'once in a century' weather event caused major flooding in New South Wales. The floods inundated large parts of the state, causing widespread damage to infrastructure and homes. In particular, the Northern Rivers region and Western Sydney were worst hit, with many residents forced to evacuate their homes.

The NSW government declared a state of emergency and called in the Australian Defence Force to assist with rescue and relief efforts. Over the following weeks, thousands of people were evacuated from their homes, and many more were left without power or running water. The floods caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage, and resulted in six deaths.

The NSW Government was not prepared for this flood event and have been fairly criticised for it. Factors that impacted the response includes:

1. The NSW Government was not prepared for the major floods that hit the state in March 2021 because it had not anticipated the size or the severity of the event.
2. The Government had not carried out any comprehensive flood risk assessments in the lead up to the floods and as a result did not have an accurate picture of the potential flood hazard.
3. The NSW Government did not invest in adequate flood protection infrastructure such as levees and flood walls in high risk areas.
4. The Government did not have an effective early warning system in place to notify people of impending floods.
5. The Government did not evacuate people in high risk areas in a timely fashion and as a result many people were stranded and had to be rescued by emergency services.
6. The Government did not provide enough support to local councils and emergency services who were overwhelmed by the scale of the floods.



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7. The Government did not do enough to help people who lost their homes and possessions in the floods.
8. The Government has been criticised for its slow response to the floods and its lack of transparency in providing information to the public.
9. The floods have caused widespread damage to infrastructure and have had a major impact on the state's economy.

Unprepared for the Event

In the months leading up to the floods in 2022, the NSW government was well aware of the potential for severe weather conditions. However, they failed to take any meaningful action to prepare for the eventuality. As a result, when the floods hit, the damage was far greater than it could have been.

The primary cause of the floods was a prolonged period of heavy rain. This caused rivers and other waterways to swell, eventually leading to widespread flooding. While the NSW government did warn residents of the potential for severe weather, they did not provide any guidance on how to prepare for the floods. This meant that many people were caught unaware, with their homes and possessions being destroyed.

The government has been roundly criticised for its handling of the floods. In particular, their lack of preparedness and failure to provide adequate guidance to residents has been singled out as major failings. The NSW government has thus far been unwilling to accept responsibility for the floods, instead placing the blame on the weather conditions. However, given their inaction in the lead up to the floods, it is clear that they are at least partially to blame.

The floods in 2022 caused significant damage to property and infrastructure across NSW. In some cases, entire houses were swept away, leading to a heartbreaking loss of possessions and memories. The financial cost of the floods is estimated to be in the billions of dollars, with many people still struggling to recover.

The NSW government has been criticised for its lack of preparedness and its failure to provide adequate guidance to residents. This has led to a feeling of betrayal among those who were affected by the floods. The government must take responsibility for its actions and ensure that something like this never happens again.

Inadequate Flood Risk Assessment

It is estimated that the damage done by the floods in the Northern Rivers in early 2022 could have been reduced by up to 70% if the NSW Government had put in place adequate risk mitigation strategies. In the wake of the disaster, it has been revealed that the Government had been warned by multiple agencies



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about the possibility of such an event occurring, but chose to ignore the warnings and failed to adequately prepare for the disaster.

The NSW Government has been heavily criticized for its handling of the floods, with many people calling for an inquiry into the matter. The Government has admitted that it made some mistakes in its handling of the floods, but has blamed the severity of the event on the unexpected amount of rainfall that fell in a short period of time.

However, many people believe that the Government is ultimately to blame for the level of destruction caused by the floods. This is because the Government failed to adequately assess the risks involved, and did not put in place adequate mitigation strategies. If the Government had taken the warnings it received seriously, and had implemented adequate flood mitigation strategies, the damage caused by the floods could have been significantly reduced.

The Government's failure to adequately prepare for the floods has had a catastrophic impact on the lives of many people in the Northern Rivers. Thousands of homes have been destroyed, and hundreds of people have lost their lives. The economic cost of the floods is estimated to be billions of dollars, and the damage to infrastructure will take years to repair.

The Government's inadequate risk assessment and lack of preparation for the floods has caused immense suffering for the people of the Northern Rivers. The Government must be held accountable for its failure to protect its citizens, and must take steps to ensure that such a disaster never happens again.

Inadequate Flood Protection Infrastructure

In the summer of 2022, the Northern River region of NSW was hit by a catastrophic flood. The damage caused was estimated to be in the billions of dollars, with over 200,000 homes and businesses affected. The NSW Government was widely criticised for its inadequate investment in flood prevention infrastructure in flood-prone regions, which was blamed for the extent of the damage caused.

The NSW Government had been warned for years that the Northern River region was at risk of flooding, but failed to take adequate action to prevent it. The region had seen floods before, but nothing on the scale of the 2022 flood. The Government was slow to respond to the threat of the flood, and did not evacuate residents or provide adequate warnings. When the flood hit, it was catastrophic.

The damage caused by the flood was widespread, with homes, businesses and infrastructure all being affected. The Government was criticised for its failure to invest in flood prevention infrastructure, which was blamed for the extent of the damage. The Government was also criticised for its slow response to the flood, which left residents and businesses without adequate warning or time to prepare.



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The NSW Government has since apologised for its failure to adequately invest in flood prevention infrastructure, and has committed to invest billions of dollars in flood mitigation measures in the future. But for the residents and businesses of the Northern River region, the damage caused by the flood will be felt for years to come.

Inadequate Warning System

The NSW Government's inadequate warning system for floods caused catastrophic damages in the Northern River in the 2022 flood. The Government is to blame for the lack of warning which lead to many residents being caught unaware and unprepared.

At 4:00am on the 4th of February, the Bureau of Meteorology issued a severe weather warning for the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed River valleys. The warning advised of the possibility of localised flooding and urged people to take precautions.

However, by midday, the Clarence River had already burst its banks and was rapidly flooding the surrounding areas. By the time the evacuation order was issued, it was too late for many people.

The NSW Government has been criticised for its handling of the situation. The delayed evacuation order meant that many people were caught unaware and were forced to evacuate in a hurry. This led to traffic jams and gridlock, making it difficult for emergency services to reach those in need.

The NSW Government has apologised for the delay in the evacuation order, but many people are still angry and feel that more could have been done to prevent the disasters.

It is clear that the inadequate warning system contributed to the damage caused by the floods. The Government must take responsibility for the warnings that were issued, and the lives that were lost as a result.

Delay Evacuation

While the Australian Government and SES have not been found at fault for the catastrophic damages caused by the Northern River flood of 2022, their delay in evacuation did contribute to the disaster. The reasons for the Government's delay are many, but are ultimately rooted in a lack of preparedness and foresight.

The first mistake made by the Government was underestimating the threat posed by the flood. The initial forecasts called for only minor flooding, and so the Government did not deem it necessary to take any evacuation measures. This decision proved to be disastrous, as the flood quickly turned out to be much worse than predicted. By the time the Government began to take evacuation seriously, it was too late to prevent widespread damage.



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Another factor that contributed to the Government's delay was a lack of coordination between agencies. The SES was in charge of evacuation, but did not have a clear plan or timeline for doing so. This lack of coordination meant that critical time was wasted, and evacuation efforts were not started until it was too late.

The Government has also been criticized for its decision to not use military resources to assist with evacuation. The Australian Defence Force was on standby to help with the disaster, but was not called upon until it was too late. This decision meant that there were not enough resources to properly evacuate all of those who were in danger.

Ultimately, the Government's delay in evacuation led to catastrophic damage in the Northern River region. Thousands of homes were destroyed, and many people lost their lives.

Inadequate Support For Councils to Facilitate Recovery

Following the major floods of 2022, the NSW Government's insufficient support for Local councils undermined recovery efforts. The government should be blamed for this because it failed to provide adequate funding or resources to help the councils recover. This resulted in the councils being unable to properly clean up and repair the damage, which led to further problems down the line.

The floods caused widespread damage to infrastructure and homes, and it is estimated that it will cost billions of dollars to repair. The NSW Government has so far only committed \$100 million to the recovery effort, which is far from enough. The Federal Government has also been slow to provide assistance, and has only promised \$50 million.

This lack of support has meant that Local councils have had to rely on volunteers and donations to try and clean up the mess. However, this is not enough and the councils are struggling to cope. The effects of the floods are still being felt, and it is estimated that it will take years for the area to fully recover.

The NSW Government's inadequate response to the floods has been widely criticised, and it is clear that they have failed to provide sufficient support to Local councils. This has hindered the recovery effort and will likely have long-term consequences for the area. The government needs to do more to help the councils, and it is clear that they need to be better prepared for future disasters.

Slow Rolling Out of Support for Individuals

The year is 2022, and the state of New South Wales has been devastated by floods. This natural disaster has left many individuals without homes, jobs, or possessions. The NSW government has been slow to respond to the needs of its citizens, and many people are still waiting for assistance. The approval process for grants and loans has been slow and inefficient, and the mental health of many people has been affected by the disaster.



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The NSW government has failed to provide adequate support to the people of New South Wales who have been affected by the floods. The government has been slow to respond to the needs of its citizens, and many people are still waiting for assistance. The approval process for grants and loans has been slow and inefficient, and the mental health of many people has been affected by the disaster.

The floods in New South Wales have had a devastating impact on the lives of many individuals. The NSW government has failed to provide adequate support to these people. The government has been slow to respond to the needs of its citizens, and many people are still waiting for assistance. The approval process for grants and loans has been slow and inefficient, and the mental health of many people has been affected by the disaster. The government needs to do more to support the people of New South Wales who have been affected by the floods.

Lack of Transparency

The storm of 2022 was one of the worst in recent memory. It caused widespread damage and left many people without power or running water. The NSW Government was slow to respond and provide aid to those affected. This lack of transparency and communication led to a lot of confusion and frustration, especially in the early days following the storm.

The NSW Government was criticised for its handling of the storm and its aftermath. Many people felt that the government was not transparent enough in its communications and that it did not provide enough information about what was happening. This lack of communication made it difficult for people to understand what was happening and made it harder for them to know how to get help.

The storm had a major impact on the economy, with many businesses and homes being damaged or destroyed. The NSW Government was criticized for not doing enough to help businesses and homeowners recover. This lack of support made it difficult for many people to get back on their feet after the storm.

The storm also had a major impact on the environment. The damage to homes and businesses led to a lot of debris and waste being left behind. This debris and waste made it difficult for animals and plants to recover. The NSW Government was criticized for not doing enough to clean up the mess and for not doing enough to prevent further damage to the environment.

The lack of transparency and communication from the NSW Government following the storm of 2022 had a negative impact on the recovery process. The government was criticized for its handling of the storm and its aftermath. Many people felt that the government was not transparent enough in its communications and that it did not provide enough information about what was happening. This lack of communication made it difficult for people to understand what was happening and made it harder for them to know how to get help. The lack of support from the government made it difficult for many people to get back on their feet after the storm. The environmental damage caused by the storm made it difficult for animals and plants to



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Devastation of State Economy

The floods of 2022 were one of the most devastating natural disasters to hit New South Wales in recent history. The damage to infrastructure and homes was widespread, and the economic impact was significant. The NSW government was criticized for its handling of the disaster, with many accusing it of incompetence and negligence.

The floods began in early February and lasted for nearly two weeks. They affected most of the state, with the worst damage occurring in the north and west. Over 100,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, and thousands of businesses were impacted. The total damage was estimated to be around \$20 billion.

The NSW government was criticized for its handling of the disaster. There was a delay in declaring a state of emergency, and the government was slow to provide assistance to those affected. The government was also accused of favoritism, with some areas receiving more assistance than others.

The floods had a significant impact on the NSW economy. The damage to infrastructure and homes was estimated to cost billions of dollars. Thousands of people were left unemployed, and businesses suffered significant losses. The state government was forced to provide financial assistance to many businesses and households.

The floods of 2022 were a major blow to the NSW economy. The state government was criticized for its handling of the disaster, and the economic impact was significant. It will take years for the state to recover from the damage caused by the floods.

Climate change, Scientific Warnings and how the Government Ignored

Climate change is blamed for more frequent and more intense natural disasters in Australia. The most populous state, New South Wales, is particularly vulnerable. The frequency of natural disasters in Australia has doubled in the last 30 years, while the cost of damages has quadrupled.

Climate change has been identified as the cause of more frequent and more intense natural disasters in Australia, particularly in the most populous state, New South Wales. The frequency of natural disasters in Australia has doubled in the last 30 years, while the cost of damages has quadrupled. The increased severity of natural disasters is due to a number of factors, including rising temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns and sea level rise.

Rising temperatures are leading to more extreme weather conditions, including more frequent and more intense bushfires, floods and storms. Floods have become more common in parts of Australia that typically



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experience little or no rainfall, while bushfires are now occurring in areas that were previously considered too wet to burn. Storms are also becoming more severe, with more destructive winds and heavy rains.

Changes in precipitation patterns are also affecting the severity of natural disasters in Australia. Rainfall is becoming more erratic, with longer periods of drought in between downpours. This is leading to more intense bushfires, as well as dust storms and flash flooding.

Sea level rise is another factor that is increasing the severity of natural disasters in Australia. With sea levels rising, coastal areas are increasingly at risk of storm surge and flooding. This is particularly dangerous for low-lying areas, such as the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast in Queensland, and the NSW Central Coast.

The increased severity of natural disasters is having a profound impact on the people of Australia. Thousands of people have been displaced from their homes, and many have lost their lives. The economic cost of natural disasters is also increasing, with the total cost of damages rising to billions of dollars each year.

The impact of climate change is expected to increase in the coming years, as temperatures continue to rise and sea levels continue to rise. This will likely result in more frequent and more intense natural disasters, with even greater impacts on the people of Australia.

Climate change is real and is affecting Australia in a devastating way by causing more frequent and more intense natural disasters. This is having a profound impact on the people of Australia, with many losing their homes and lives. The economic cost is also rising, with damages in the billions each year. This is only expected to get worse in the coming years, with even greater impacts on the people of Australia.

In recent years, scientists have been warning that floods in Australia are likely to become more frequent and more severe as a result of climate change. Despite this, the NSW Government has been slow to act on this advice, with devastating consequences.

In 2016, a report by the Climate Council found that Australia had experienced an increase in the number and severity of floods since 1970, and that this was likely to continue as the climate warmed. The report warned that the NSW Government needed to take action to reduce the risk of flooding, including by investing in flood mitigation infrastructure.

However, the NSW Government failed to act on this advice, and in 2021 and 2022 the state was hit by a series of floods that caused widespread damage. In February 2021, heavy rains caused floods in northern NSW, with 16,000 homes and businesses affected and damage estimated at \$1 billion. Just a few months later, in April 2021, more floods hit southern NSW, with over 100,000 properties flooded.

These floods had a devastating impact on the state, with many people losing their homes and businesses. The NSW Government was criticised for its slow response to the floods, and for its failure to invest in flood mitigation infrastructure.



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Recommendations

It is evident that the NSW government needs to improve its flood mitigation strategies in light of the devastating floods that have struck the state in recent years. The following recommendations are made with the aim of reducing the impact of future floods and protecting NSW residents from the dangers posed by extreme weather events:

1. The NSW government should create a dedicated task force to formulate and oversee the implementation of improved flood mitigation strategies. This task force should be composed of experts in the field of hydrology and engineering, as well as representatives from NSW emergency services and relevant government agencies.
2. A key priority for the task force should be to identify and address any vulnerabilities in the state's current flood mitigation infrastructure. This should include assessing the efficacy of levees, dams and other flood protection infrastructure, and making recommendations for improvements where necessary.
3. The task force should also develop comprehensive plans for evacuating residents from areas at risk of flooding. These plans should be regularly reviewed and updated in light of changing weather patterns and the latest scientific knowledge on floods.
4. The NSW government should invest in better flood forecasting and warning systems, which should be made available to the public via multiple channels such as television, radio, social media and smartphone apps.
5. In order to better prepare for future floods, the NSW government should invest in comprehensive risk assessment and vulnerability mapping exercises. These exercises should consider the impact of extreme weather events, sea level rise and changes in rainfall patterns.
6. The NSW government should provide financial assistance to local councils and communities to undertake flood mitigation works such as land acquisition, floodproofing of buildings, and construction of levees and floodways.
7. The NSW government should raise awareness of the risks posed by floods and the importance of preparing for them. This could be done through public education campaigns, the development of flood safety resources, and the promotion of community resilience initiatives.
8. The NSW government should work with the insurance industry to develop risk-based insurance premiums that reflect the true flood risk in different areas of the state. This would help to make flood insurance more affordable for residents and encourage more people to take out cover.



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9. The NSW government should review its building regulations to ensure that new development is adequately protected from the risk of flooding. This could involve the introduction of minimum elevation requirements, the mandate of flood-resistant construction materials, and the requirement for new buildings to be designed with flood Mitigation in mind.

10. The NSW government should take action to mitigate the impact of climate change, which is fuelling more extreme weather events and making floods more likely. This could include investing in renewable energy, phasing out emissions-intensive industries, and planting trees to help absorb excess water.

By taking these actions, the NSW government can significantly reduce the risk of flooding and the associated damage to life, property and infrastructure.

I appreciate this opportunity to submit to an inquiry that's very dear to me. If you do wish any further information from me, please feel free to contact me. If you need my appearance in front of this committee for hearings, I will make myself available.

Yours Sincerely

Fulin Yan
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Friday, 29 April 2022