

**Submission
No 81**

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

Name: Ms Marion Conrow

Date Received: 1 July 2022

FLOOD INQUIRY SUBMISSION JUNE 30th 2022

Marion Conrow

INTRO

My name is Marion Conrow I am artist who has majority resided in Lismore since 1988. In 1989 I purchased my home at South Lismore, in 1997 this also become the base for creative business creating projection installations for events and video production. In 2007 I had a severe motor vehicle accident and sustained a mild Traumatic Brain Injury which has totally altered my life. My home has been my sanctuary during recovery, its also been a base for many creatives to use as a landing pad. Recently my arts career is growing with exhibitions and events throughout Australia. Our area of South Lismore has grown into a creative precinct with many artists purchasing a home. It is a great community, a drawcard for Lismore.

Below are many points some are elaborated on others are points. Having been displaced until 10 days ago I like many have not been in a position to feed into the inquiry though I was fortunate to speak of Boral's spill at the Parliamentary hearing in Lismore and this is being followed up. This will be expanded outside this report. I apologise for the roughness of this submission.

There is also incredible evidence via drone footage I recommend following the links to Rod Evans google drives I have given to Catherine Cusack whom I am corresponding with.

THE EVENT Sunday 27th/Monday 28 Feb 2022

While it is acknowledged this was an extreme weather event,
Where did all the water come from?

Why did it hit Lismore with a wall of water? In South Lismore a tidal wave 1.5metres instantly caused water to rise that height causing severe impact damage. South Lismore was in effect hit with a Tsunami. The water quickly rose another metre, this rapid rising of water with a very fast current from the north west is to be examined, fit took out many lives human and fauna. The many whirlpools probably caused by the pumping system also made the water more treacherous.

Was there a dam overflow as rumoured from Kyogle dam?

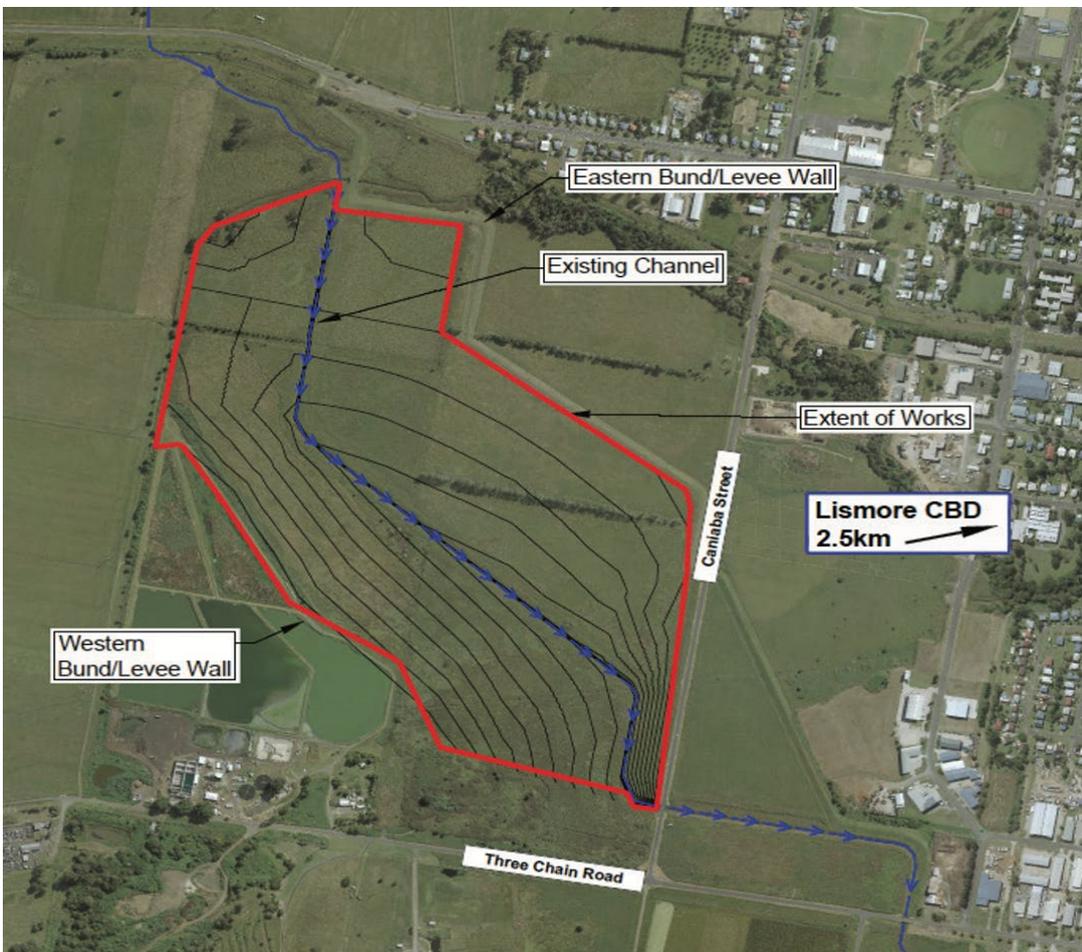
Why were the upstream rain gauges not working?

Why was the last SES flood warning that it would be 12.15 or higher by midday on the Monday 28th Feb, whereas it became 13.5 meter warning in the wee hours that no one received? (I was watching it unfold on friends facebook so could warn my friends who were awake at 1-2 am. For those asleep I can only imagine their terror of awakening staring at their ceilings.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Rapid rising of water with current from the north west is to be examined.
- Fix rain gauges and implement better systems and why were these not in place after 2017?
- Bring an effective communication system bringing in local knowledge and SES together with effective delivery ie text or other.
- Better evacuation processes AND facilities for those with disability and animals can attend if flooding is a threat. (For many elderly with kids disability and animals going to a huge space without contained and facilities is not a friendly option so staying home actually seems safer who was to know this weather event was to be biblical.)

LISMORE LEVEES/BUILD UP OF INDUSTRIAL AREA



The South Lismore Flood Mitigation Works project completed in October 2020 involved excavating 410,000m³ of soil from a 58-hectare area of land located behind the Lismore Regional Airport and adjacent to Caniaba Street owned by council. Funded by \$8.2 million grant from the NSW Government, material from the excavation site was used to raise industrial land downstream within Lismore's floodplain, expanding the South Lismore Industrial Estate and "help drive economic growth in Lismore"

The levee banks built to protect businesses in the CBD from lower floods and the building of the industrial estate, is at the expense of North and South Lismore residents and businesses. My home is now lodged between two levee banks about 1000 metres apart, what used to be a flood plain now has been geographically engineered making us floodway. Normally the floodwaters would follow the rivers south east across a vast expanse of land making for a gentler course.



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The levee banks built to protect businesses in the CBD from lower floods and the building of the industrial estate, is at the expense of North and South Lismore residents and businesses being lodged two levee banks about less than 2kilometers apart, what used to be a flood plain is now floodway.

Also the resultant basin becomes a huge dam right behind South Lismore, it's overtopping directs through South Lismore with considerable impact and consequential damage. How this is legal is questionable and needs investigation.



Also the resultant basin becomes a huge dam right behind South Lismore maybe only 300 metres from our homes and businesses. The overtopping of the dam crashes right through South Lismore with considerable impact and consequential damage. How this is legal is questionable and needs investigation. It is not a flood protector as spieled but is in fact a very dangerous form of geographical engineering/tampering.

REFERENCE

<https://yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au/south-lismore-flood-mitigation-works/photos/61321>

As this event was known to top the levee why was the levee used? The impact for the CBD in overtopping causes considerable impact damage.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I would recommend that the building and levee be reversed to flood plain as was be reinstated, if not lismore city council needs to fully compensate or make safe all houses and businesses affected within South Lismore.

That levees not be used when a known overtopping event is going to happen.

BORAL

My home is currently uninhabitable as Borals unmaintained asphalt plant leaked all contaminants onto it and my neighbourhood. The end of a habitat corridor now all animals bandicoots frogs lizards insects everything is dead. The bitumen is still there. Its a natural disaster and loopholes means EPA has no power, and Boral has not cleaned up and its now close to 4 months after the spill. Its a mess and I have to live in a tiny caravan under the house, I have no insurance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

No toxic industries on flood plain, council has said publicly they wont be policing it and EPA cant so it needs a remedy.

COUNCIL

Not helpful. Keeping us in the dark.

HOUSING/ FUTURE HOUSING

emergency housing issues I could say so much !! Home is important being displaced is unsettling. Those displaced will not be as able to feed into this inquiry.

INSURANCE

They want our money but avoid paying out.

In 2017 everyone in my end of crown street was covered except those with Allianz. Even though they said there was storm water the majority was flood water which wiped out any storm water claim seriously surely a percentage would be fair

I took it to afca did a report I though was good Allianz response didn't even have the river right as the spoke of the tweed obviously a rushed cut n paste they pay a fortune not to pay out its not fair. AFCA is ineffective I wanted to complain about them but the number was not attended due to Covid. Government departments are eroded.

Afterwards no one would insure me only Allianz and AAMI, I went with AAMI but flood cover was unaffordable

I have noticed in 2022 most insurance are playing the make clients jump hoops while in trauma which in affect is abuse.

Ive met people in east lismore where is never has flooded and the companies are denying claims as they didn't have flood cover. What kind of scam is that?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Dismantling of AFCA creating a truely independent ombudsperson with the little person interests at heart.

Maybe follow what Queensland is doing? NSW doesn't seem to care?

NATURE

Last time I drove through Dorroughby what was much rainforest seemed to be largely gone and more and more macadamia plantations, ground cover of theses plantation is needed as the amount of red soil washed to Ballina is a travesty. ITs bad for the land, its bad for the river and everything living in it and then ultimately the sea where so many more animals died.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

There are many very experienced local environmental scientists and other who will give great solutions in this inquiry, answers lie in many smaller initiatives not just building bigger walls, nature is bigger than us.

DISABILITY

As a person with disability there was a severe lack of services.

There was no housing, I was told by a mental health outreach person to sleep in my ute and valium. This is outrageous but the fact is there wasn't enough accommodation and there were no options besides the evacuation centres that aren't disability friendly ie i am not good near lots of people stimuli noise and bright lights.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Evacuation centres need to be ready to pop up and I suggest somewhere quiet for those like myself and also the poor people with Covid who had to camp outside.

OUR DEAD

There are others who will talk of the amazing community effort who saved each other. But we all know more died than the 4/5 who are recognised. The figures of sightings of corpses does not stack and its of concern that our invisible humans have been made invisible in death.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

These humans need to be identified and a memorial be built for them.