

30 August 2017

Ms Elizabeth A Trevan AM., BEM  
22 City View Drive  
LISMORE NSW 2480

Dear Ms Trevan

**Re: Lismore Citizens' Review of March 2017 Flood**

I acknowledge your letter of 10 August 2017, and the copy of the Lismore Citizens' Review of the March 2017 Flood.

I read the report with interest. I was disappointed to have received this report without any attempt to contact the NSW State Emergency Service (NSW SES) during its drafting, despite my correspondence of 20 July 2017 inviting you to personally contact me. I note that your report makes a number of assumptions about the role and nature of the staffing at the NSW SES Richmond Tweed Region Headquarters – most of the paid employees there are long term Lismore locals and they are supplemented by local volunteers with considerable experience. These are the people who responded to what was by any measure a challenging event both in terms of its scale and speed of onset and who like the volunteers in the NSW SES Lismore City Unit feel the weight of the communities' distress.

Engagement with NSW SES would have also provided you and your colleagues with a more robust understanding of the Australasian Interagency Incident Management Systems (AIIMS). It should be noted that AIIMS is used in every State and Territory to manage emergency incidents from Floods to Fires, including Queensland. NSW SES will continue to develop its utilisation of AIIMS as best practice emergency management with Unit Controllers, such as the NSW SES Lismore City Controller being trained as 'Level 1' incident controllers and exercised in both incident control and division/sector command roles.

Attached I have provided the NSW SES response to the recommendations you have made. You will appreciate that the responses only refer to those recommendations which fall within the remit of the NSW SES. I have, however, liaised with both the Bureau of Meteorology and Lismore City Council in preparing our response as I did with the Owens' Review.

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Since the March 2017 Flood, the NSW SES has committed to address a range of areas identified in a number of forums, from the many community meetings held in Lismore to the review undertaken by Mr. David Owens. I am happy for either Deputy Commissioner Greg Newton or myself to meet with you to discuss your concerns and address any outstanding issues next time we are in the Region.

Going forward, the task of keeping communities safe in the face of floods is a shared one between the NSW SES supported by other emergency services, local government and the communities themselves. We are embarking on a number of new initiatives next month that will provide opportunities for your community to volunteer in ways not offered before, which will greatly assist future responses.

Regards



**Mark Smethurst DSC, AM**  
**Commissioner**