

**Subject:**

Submission to Extreme Weather Inquiry

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I am concerned about the impact of climate change on my local environment and community. My job brings me into contact with a wide range of people across the stretch of the Mid North Coast. In the course of these interactions, I have come to learn a lot about how local people experience and deal with the climate.

I have lived on the Mid North Coast for two years. During that time I have experienced two notable extreme weather events: widespread flooding at one period of time, extended high temperatures and lack of rain at the current time.

Each of these extreme weather events has an impact on the community of which I am a part. Businesses suffered when floods cut off many roads (including the main Pacific Highway at some points). My own work was put on hold for a week due to the impracticality of reaching locations for events or meetings that were scheduled. Some local businesses suffered financial disadvantage at this time.

Emergency services, both paid and voluntary, are stretched each time an extreme weather event is experienced. This places additional burdens on these emergency services individuals, their families, and community support services, dealing with the consequences of extreme events. This is a hidden cost to the community.

The current run of extreme high temperatures, combined with an extended dry run, has been impacting local farms and agricultural businesses. Either their stock is suffering and their produce is diminished, or they are needing to expend more on buying in water, feed, etc.

I am aware that there have been floods akin to the one I experienced, in decades past. There have also been periods of dry, drought conditions in past times. My understanding, from reading the scientific literature, is that the occurrence of these events is become more frequent, and the extremes being experienced are intensifying.

I am also aware that there are local industries which are well-placed to offer constructive and sustainable options for purchase and use -- the solar industry, for instance, has grown significantly in recent years. However, government support for such industries is limited and constrained. I would hope to see government policies which place sustainable energy industries at the forefront of incentives and long term support.

I am aware that scientific research has clearly linked the changes taking place in the climate to the increase in negative human activity over the past two centuries -- increasing use of fossil fuels being the central factor. The reality is, that we can begin to modify the intensity and frequency of such events through modifying our lifestyle. We need incentive as well as legislation to ensure that society as a whole moves in this direction.

I am pleased to be able to make this submission to this Enquiry and trust that serious consideration will be given to practical steps to address the causes as well as the impacts of climate change.

John Squires