



Sue Higginson

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The Hon. Chris Minns

Premier

By email: premier@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Cc. The Hon. Janelle Saffin, Minister for Emergency Services and Recovery

By email: office@saffin.minister.nsw.gov.au

Urgent call to halt demolition of homes in Lismore and honour recovery promises

Dear Premier Minns and Minister Saffin

I am writing to express my deep concern about the ongoing demolition of homes in Lismore by the NSW Reconstruction Authority, and to join the calls from community members and housing advocates urging your Government to immediately halt these demolitions and instead prioritise the relocation or reuse of these dwellings.

The people of Lismore and the broader Northern Rivers were promised a recovery that would be community-led, compassionate, and future-focused. Instead, we are witnessing the destruction of viable homes - many of which have been lovingly maintained and restored - while the community is still awaiting buybacks, retrofits or relocations more than three years after the devastating floods.

The destruction of these homes not only flies in the face of those promises, but is also further eroding confidence in the recovery process and the work of the Reconstruction Authority. At a time of widespread housing insecurity and crisis across the state, demolishing homes that could be safely relocated is indefensible. These homes are not just structures - they represent hope, stability, and the possibility of a better future.

New aerial footage has also revealed that some of the homes being removed are transported to a facility where they are being further shredded and piled in heaps of waste. Precious Big Scrub timbers and heritage hardwoods reduced to mulch in the process. This cannot seriously be construed as recycling. It is, at best, a cynical form of greenwashing. Framing the destruction of beautiful, heritage-rich homes as a sustainable outcome is both misleading and deeply disrespectful. This is vandalism dressed up in feel-good language, and the community is right to call it out for what it is.

It is particularly disturbing that homes previously identified as candidates for relocation are instead being crushed, shredded and sent to undisclosed locations with no oversight on what, if any, recycling is taking place. This appears to contradict assurances made by the Government that structurally sound homes would be relocated or at least recycled properly. Moreover, there are credible reports that community members willing to purchase and relocate these homes have been turned away, with little transparency as to the criteria or processes governing these decisions.

Premier, Minister - your Government has the opportunity to demonstrate that recovery in Lismore still means something. I urge you to:

- Immediately pause all demolitions of structurally sound homes in Lismore;
- Publicly disclose the guidelines used to assess homes for relocation, demolition, or reuse;
- Make all eligible homes available free of charge for relocation, provided the mover covers relocation costs;
- Ensure the process is trauma-informed and genuinely community-led, in line with your Government's commitments.

This is not just about the physical waste of big scrub homes. It's about trust, accountability, and justice for a community that has endured more than most. Please stop the destruction and deliver on the recovery that was promised.

I would be happy to discuss this matter with you further on **0428 227 363**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sue Higginson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Sue Higginson
Member of the Legislative Council & Solicitor