

**Submission
No 17**

REVIEW OF THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY ACT 2022

Name: Name suppressed
Date Received: 16 May 2024

Partially
Confidential

Ra submission

I am a disaster survivor.

I lost everything in the 2022 disaster.

My house was heavily damaged and took six months for me to be able to camp in it.

To this day I have received no actual information on the buyback process. I applied day one, and yet I still have no idea what to expect.

I expected an information pack, and have called many times to get mine, each time I was told it would be mailed shortly. I never received it.

We are forced to get our info from Facebook, yes I have actually been advised to go to Facebook to get info. This info is just random people saying what they were told by RA, it is often contradicted by other people saying their own experiences.

Examples, note the direct opposite was also stated:

All houses demolished.

Houses are raised above the 2022 level.

You gift a house you got money for in the buyback and keep the money.

Houses be raised / retrofitted and used as public housing.

There are interest free loans to help bridge the gap when buying a new house after buyback.

You can keep any items from the house.

You will be compensated for work done on the house after the disaster.

You had to wait until you got your buyback letter (approval or denial) before going to the appeal.

Here are some things odd with the RA

Told I would be contacted with approval/denial *shortly* (this was over two years and never got contacted)

Told The buyback amount would be the higher of the before flood valuation and the now valuation.

Told The buyback amount would be the before flood valuation. (three days later)

Told I did not have to fill in a separate application form on that horrible smarty grants.

Told I had to fill in another separate application form on that horrible smarty grants.

Told There was nothing else I had to do, to get the buyback offer. (I have since had to do very much for the RA)

Told I had to take even more photos for the valuer, Valuer in person asked why I took them as she couldn't use them and had to ignore them and take her own.

Ra made valuer appointment without my knowledge and refused to tell me what exactly it was for or would entail.

Two Ra staff showed up unannounced with the valuer, who was supposed to be independent.

The same valuer did both before disaster and after disaster valuations on the same day.

The valuer used has terrible reviews.

Was told to call to get my buyback offer, and instead asked the same questions again.

Was asked the same questions, on separate occasions about 8 times.

Was asked my accessibility needs (PTSD, CPTSD, major depression, chronic anxiety, ASD) and then RA consistently did the opposite of what was required.

These are simple, basic politeness and customer service things like;

Provide information in writing,

Provide requirements in writing in as much advance as possible,

Do not show up to my house unannounced,

Do not cold call,

Be as consistent and concise as possible.

It is my running theory, based on my experience, that the phone lines are manned by an international call center that is not allowed to access our files.

It is my running theory that the emails are answered by a malfunctioning Ai.

At one point during the appeal process, one of my doctors wished to post a medical certificate, i emailed asking for the RA mailing address and received a reply saying that it was a difficult and specific request that a specialist would have to get back to me.

There was no specific email to send sensitive information to during the appeal process, my private medical records had to be sent to the general inquiries email for just anyone to look at.

Often emails would be referred to a specialist and no specialist would ever reply.

Simple questions such as *what was the first day applications were made available*, have gone unanswered. This made filing in other forms and the appeal process difficult.

The Ra have received the valuations before i have.

Im told it takes up to 13 weeks for the RA to make an buyback offer after the valuations are in...why?

The RA change their name many times.

After the head of the RA was fired for gaslighting the survivors about what we were promised the next head did a press conference claiming we were mistaken that the RA was a disaster response. Ans should have been fired immediately.

The map, RA quite late released a map, it was very low resolution, didnt have street name or house numbers, and was blotchy with vague colour differences. We were supposed to determine our priority by looking at this map. 1 to 3. Most people i showed said the map cant be real but they thought i was 1 or 2.

Recently RA asked me what priority i was on the map, i explained i never received my copy and could only look on my phone but was 1 or 2 i thought. I asked them, they sat in my house at my address on the map and said they didnt know...

RA claimed to have had this map for ages and had been using it. If so there is no excuse for how long it took to contact survivors with approval letters (I never got one after almost 2 and a half years and counting). If they knew what priority we were they could have printed out the letters and sent them immediately. There was no personalised approval, it was supposedly just based on the maps, so there is no excuse.

Too long didn't read

The RA have been agonisingly slow, secretive, and inconsistent. They have treated disaster survivors horrible and have given some such as myself permanent conditions such as PTSD. This level of incompetence is I believe criminal in its negligence.

Everyone needed to be sent out a info pack on application, with the procedure, what to expect, what we had to do, timeframes, the map even. Most of the issues above are due to a lack of information being provided. If we had the info in writing we wouldnt rely on roumer and could argue the point with rogue RA staff. It is strongly believed we are not given the info so that they can change their procedure every other week.

We need a case manager now to liaise with all the different departments / business / charitys and get us what we are entitled to. If they fail they are fired.(i am waiting on back home grant, disaster grant, council to apply the rates relief, a replacement birth certificate, the power back on subsidy, i never got emergency housing or a caravan, i never got counseling, didnt have food, water, clothing bedding for months).

We were actually promised this at the disaster centres early on.

We need a royal commission, we need criminal trials, we need compensation.

