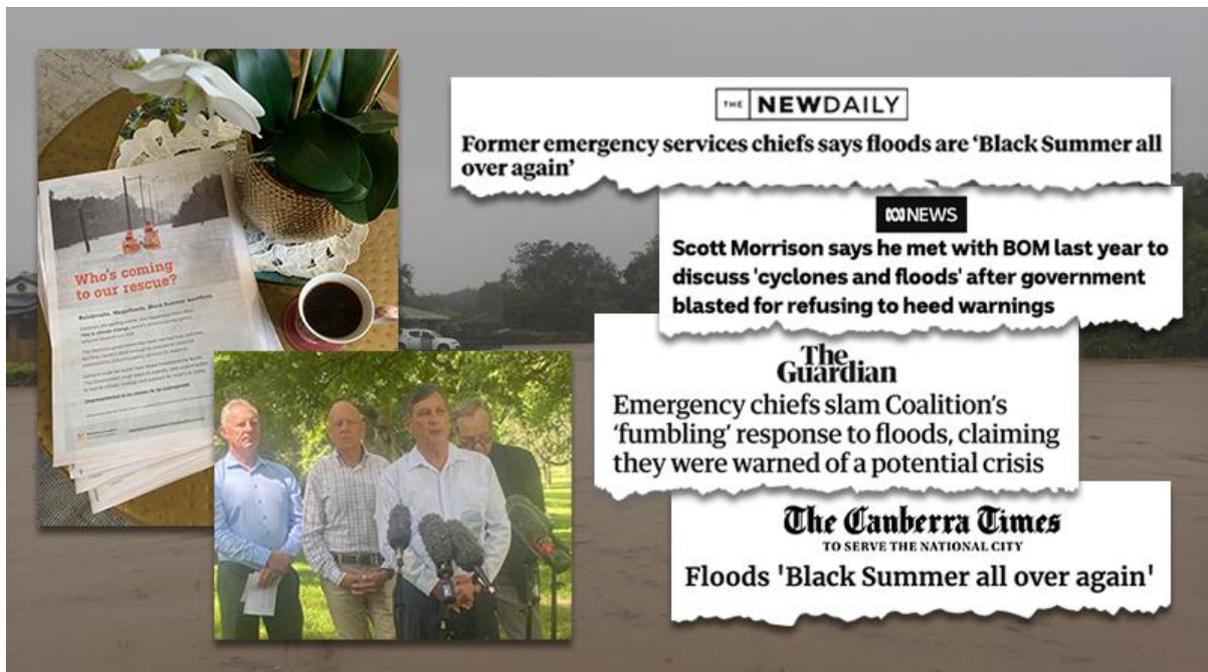


The whole region around my home in Lake Conjola was devastated by bushfires back in January 2020. By February, we were flooded (1). I remember feeling frustrated, as my community was torn apart by one disaster after another, with little warning, or preparation.

As a former Major General, and former Commissioner for the ACT Emergency Services Authority, I joined my colleagues in the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action (ELCA). ELCA formed to [speak up through the media](#), call for urgent action to reduce emissions, and push for resources to prepare emergency services and communities for the next climate-fuelled disaster.

**But in the wake of the recent floods, it's clear that the lessons from Black Summer still haven't been learnt.** If they had, this disaster could have unfolded very differently.

So we're speaking up again. [Find out how we're elevating climate action in the national conversation about emergency management.](#)



[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Emergency Leaders for Climate Action (ELCA) is a group of 37 former emergency services leaders who have dedicated our lives to helping others. **For 506 days, we've been calling for state and Federal Governments to implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Natural Disaster Arrangements (2).**

This week, ELCA [launched a public statement](#), published an ad in the Courier Mail, and held a press conference to **highlight Australia's dangerous lack of preparedness** for accelerated climate change, and **keep the public informed** on what *can* be done to keep people safe.

**If the recommendations from the Royal Commission had been fully and urgently implemented:**

- **Communities would have been told to expect historic flood lines to be broken**, and could have made informed decisions to keep themselves and their families safe.
- **Emergency services and their teams would have been better prepared to respond.**
- **Critical infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, would have been reinforced;** keeping towns and cities connected.
- **Telecommunications would have been strengthened and remained operational**, enabling people to get the help they needed.
- **Evacuation centres would have been well signed, accessible and appropriately stocked** with mattresses, food and fresh water.

**Ultimately, the impact on people could have been less severe and the response would have been faster.** More lives and livelihoods may well have been saved.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Many Australians are hurting today, and they need real on-the-ground support. The Australian Defence Force (ADF) is there to help, and will help, but as global temperatures rise, climate-driven events like floods, cyclones and bushfires will only become more intense (3).

Whether we like it or not, **we are in a new era of disaster management**, and our defence and emergency services are ill-equipped to address the scale of the crisis we face. What we need now is transformative climate action.

It's time all Governments stepped up and prioritised our safety. [Check out some of the media pressure we've built this week, then share it online](#) to push for urgent action that will protect communities, and **give our emergency services a fighting chance** against climate-fuelled extreme weather.

 [Share](#)

 [Tweet](#)



**Major General Peter Dunn, AO**

Former Commissioner, ACT Emergency Services Authority

Member of Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

[\*\*Emergency Leaders for Climate Action\*\*](#) (ELCA) is a growing coalition of former senior fire and emergency services leaders who have dedicated our lives to helping others. We not only appreciate, but

*personally understand the efforts of all emergency responders who are doing their utmost in extremely challenging circumstances. We stand alongside all those who have experienced devastating loss in the wake of these floods, and hope to help protect communities from worsening extreme weather events in the future.*

***ELCA is a project supported by the Climate Council.***

*References:*

1. [\*\*Last month these South Coast towns were fighting bushfires. Now they are battling floods\*\*](#), *The Canberra Times*, February 10, 2020
2. [\*\*Bushfire Royal Commission Accountability Tracker\*\*](#), *Emergency Leaders for Climate Action*
3. [\*\*Breaking down the latest IPCC report\*\*](#), *Climate Council Explainer*, 1 March 2022