

# Rally asks NRRC the hard questions

by Miriam Torzillo

On Monday 23rd January, a crowd of about 75 people gathered outside the offices of the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) to explore this question: What can people do to participate in and have a voice in the political process?

A group of citizens in Lismore under the banner of Reclaiming our Recovery decided to take action and put out a call via social media and personal contacts for the community to rally in solidarity.

This was the antithesis of the ‘case by case’ individualised approach that has been used by the NRRC to date.

In an example of non-violent action and representation, they physically and tangibly took their issues and concerns about the Resilient Homes program directly to the



Photo: Chibo Mertineit

agency that is making decisions about their future. The rally chanted, connected and told their stories.

The crowd also heard from speakers: Harper Dalton from Relocate Lismore Homes, Julia Melvin from MoveMe, Trevor Acfield from Reclaiming our

Recovery and Adam Guise from Lismore City Council. The idea for this rally emerged from interactions on social media and in face-to-face meetings with people in North Lismore and with the broader community.

What became evident was that even though people might have had specific

concerns about their particular situations, there were also shared concerns and shared questions. There were many stories and voices, but strong shared themes.

In particular, there was consensus about the lack of transparency from the NRRC, which was

exacerbating anxiety and confusion. People were also concerned about fairness, and about affordability. There were fears that some, like those on low incomes, those with mobility issues, renters and an ageing community would lose out or be further marginalised. They were also concerned about what they saw was the creep of profiteering; people or companies who seemed to be profiting from this disaster.

The shared questions and concerns were combined into a list of three questions and three demands. These were originally intended to be presented to staff at the NRRC.

In the end this was not possible, following a decision to close the office for the duration of the rally.

The demands were instead stuck to the front windows of the office. The crowd were also invited to write their own messages, as well

as create their own signs and placards.

In the final part of the event, participants took their messages to the windows to form a collaborative installation of their questions and concerns, while others took to the microphone to ask their burning question or voice their major concern, or to tell a part of their story.

The success of the rally is evidence that this kind of citizen action can have positive results.

The NRRC contacted organisers on the day of the rally, offering a meeting with the director David Witherden, as the first of what the acting executive director described as a series of on-going regular meetings.

This is a big conversation, and hopefully this is only the beginning.

For more information and to connect, contact us via: [www.facebook.com/groups/1727074754320672](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1727074754320672)

## A JOINT EFFORT

NIMBIN TOWN HALL, 5:30PM WED 1 MARCH

ROADMAP TO CANNABIS LEGALISATION

PUBLIC FORUM



ADAM GUISE

Greens for Lismore Candidate



CATE FAEHRMANN

NSW Upper House MP



DR AMANDA COHN

Rural General Practitioner



EDDIE LLOYD

Lawyer & Drug Law Reform Advocate



THE GREENS

Authorised by D. Hayden, The Greens NSW,  
62 Molesworth Street, Lismore.



# SOLAR POWER FOR WORK & HOME

## GRID CONNECT OR STAND ALONE

Talk to a specialist today!

# RPC.COM.AU

## 02 6689 1430

Registered Electrical Contractor  
198555C (NSW) 69172 (QLD)  
ABN 74 003 323 420

## SOLAR SPECIALISTS SINCE 1987