



Speech by

Hon. MERRI ROSE

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard 26 August 1998

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Goondiwindi Floods

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (9.58 a.m.), by leave: As floodwaters bore down on the Goondiwindi district last week, the Department of Emergency Services swung into action. The Department's Squirrel helicopter and the fixed-wing King Air aircraft were dispatched to the region, carrying disaster managers and 1,000 sandbags. The helicopter remained in the flood zone until the danger passed. It was on stand-by for medical evacuations and search and rescue tasks in the Goondiwindi/Inglewood areas. It also completed a range of tasks, including highway and road reconnaissance, visited isolated homesteads and allowed inspections of flood damage. Heavy rain inundated a wide area, resulting in major flooding and road closures. While there was no serious flooding of towns, many isolated properties were cut off.

Last Thursday, I activated Commonwealth/State Natural Disaster Relief Arrangements for the area. The arrangements enable primary producers who have suffered substantial losses to apply for concessional loans, cover counter-disaster operational costs incurred by the local government and enable restoration of damaged public assets. The move has been widely applauded by the councils concerned. Floods can be devastating for communities and councils. Government funding helps ease the personal and financial pain.

I am happy to report that floodwaters are now receding across the south-west, although flood warnings remain current for the McIntyre, Weir, Bulloo, Paroo and Moonie Rivers and their tributaries and a number of properties are likely to remain isolated for some time. While the flood threat is all but over, damage to roads and other property is still being assessed. There will be a big repair bill, which will be helped by swift Government action.

The Goondiwindi region flood was the first in the term of this Government; it will not be the last, with the end of the El Nino and the advent of the La Nina and the certainty of a return to traditional wet seasons. The Government took swift and effective action to help flood-affected communities—people in need. This really is a Government for all of Queensland.
