



Speech by

Dr PETER PRENZLER

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard 17 September 1998

NATURAL DISASTER, HELIDON

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (10.19 a.m.): I rise to speak on a matter of great concern to a number of residents in my electorate. The residents I refer to reside in Railway Street, Helidon, on the eastern bank of Lockyer Creek. These residents are about to be consumed in a natural disaster that brings with it the potential for the loss of human life. It is a disaster that should be looked at on an ultra-urgent basis by this Government.

The land that these people reside on is being eroded at an increasing and alarming rate by flooding in the Lockyer Creek. Residents have brought their concerns to the notice of Ministers in what was then the coalition Government. Those Ministers claim in their correspondence to these residents that this was natural erosion. The new Government also has been contacted by these residents and others. It referred to the correspondence of the previous Government and reiterated its findings. This real concern of the residents has become a political football, kicked between the Departments of Natural Resources and Main Roads.

There are two main road bridges over the Lockyer Creek, side by side. The second bridge was built in the early 1990s. It is very obvious by inspection that we also have many thousands of cubic metres of dumped fill on the southern side of these bridges, directly obstructing natural water flow during flooding. This fill redirects floodwaters towards the banks in question. It is also very interesting to note that all the erosion is below the bridges— nothing at all above.

The concerns of these residents are very real. This problem falls outside the jurisdiction of the local government but directly under the jurisdiction of this Government. If this erosion was on the beachfront at the Gold Coast, many millions of dollars would be spent to correct it.

We must hear these people, whether the erosion has been natural or has been unnaturally accelerated by these Main Roads bridges or what would now be illegally dumped fill in the natural watercourse. I hereby call upon the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Minister for Environment and Heritage and Natural Resources to come with me to Helidon to inspect this problem, to talk to the residents about it and to consider solutions before we are all shocked by a terrible disaster.
