



Speech by

Tony ELLIOTT

MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

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ASSISTANCE FOR GOONDIWINDI CONTRACTORS

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham—NPA) (10.45 p.m.): Honourable members would have heard of the floods in areas in and around Goondiwindi. I am sure that many members have seen the graphic footage on television. There have been eight flood peaks down through that area. While that has done a tremendous amount of damage to farms, I think we should look at the other problem which perhaps is not as evident, that is, the effects on the contractors of the area—the earth movers, backhoe operators and other people who do work for the various farmers around the place. Many of them have not turned a wheel since April. Some of them will finish up going six months or more with absolutely no income.

I put to the House that these people are urgently in need of some sort of assistance. Honourable members might say, "Here he goes. He is calling for help from the public again." Precedents have been set right here in Brisbane, and I was here when that was done. After the 1974 floods, the then coalition Government gave assistance to large numbers of businesses that were affected by the floods, particularly along Ipswich Road.

I was on Fred Campbell's committee in those days, and in the end we wrote off quite a few loans that people were unable to repay. The main reason loans were given at low interest rates was to get those businesses up and running again, because a lot of them were totally wiped out; they were devastated. There was no insurance, as is the case with the people I speak about tonight. There is no way they would have insurance in respect of lost revenue. They will lose their plant and equipment, because they will not be able to meet the finance payments due on them. If we are not careful it will continue, and soon there will be great difficulty getting the cotton crop in the ground. That will be disastrous as well.

Time expired.
