



Speech by

Hon. MERRI ROSE

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard 9 December 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Flood Danger, South-east Queensland

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (9.57 a.m.), by leave: This summer Queensland's south-east corner is again likely to be hit by severe flooding. Bureau of Meteorology Queensland Regional Director Rex Falls says there is a high likelihood of wetter than normal conditions. Honourable members will recall the widespread flooding across the south-east and other parts of the State last spring and summer. The weather patterns were said to be similar to those which led to the devastating 1974 floods. They brought storms and flooding late last year and early this year across an area stretching from the Gold Coast to the south-west, through the Brisbane Valley, Sunshine Coast, north coast and central, northern, far northern and far-north western areas of Queensland.

Cyclone Rona, storms and subsequent flooding left a damages bill running into hundreds of millions of dollars. We could be in for a repeat this summer. We have already seen our first cyclone watch of the season off far-north Queensland. Mr Falls warns we can expect serious flooding. He also warns of above average cyclonic activity along the Queensland coast and in the Gulf of Carpentaria. We cannot influence weather patterns which will dump heavy rain on those areas already saturated during an unseasonably wet winter. But we can heed the warnings of the experts and learn from our past experiences. Preparation is the key to minimising cyclone, flood and storm damage. Information can be obtained from local councils and State Emergency Service units.

There are action tips for cyclones and severe storms—and we have experienced this destructive force in recent weeks—tips for preparing for floods, tips for during and after floods and tips on how to cope with storm surges which accompany cyclones. Tips range from trimming trees and branches around homes, clearing guttering and downpipes and checking roofs at the beginning of the storm season, to evacuation in the event of a severe incident. People who live in areas most susceptible to cyclones and floods should not be complacent. They should prepare an emergency kit containing a portable radio, torch and spare batteries, stocks of fresh water and canned food, matches and a fuel lamp, portable stove and cooking gear, utensils and waterproof bags, a first-aid kit and masking tape for windows. And they should keep a list of emergency telephone numbers on display.

Cyclones, storms and floods can be deadly adversaries, as we witnessed so tragically last summer, with several deaths in the south-east. We cannot afford to take risks with fast-flowing water. It can easily sweep away vehicles from causeways and people who tempt fate by crossing swollen creeks and waterways. People should remember the 1998-99 death toll. Parents should warn their children of the dangers of playing in floodwaters. The clear message is: keep out of floodwaters. Do not take risks and do not be complacent. One death is one too many.
