



Speech by

Tony ELLIOTT

MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

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BUSH CONNECTION, TOOWOOMBA

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham—NPA) (7.26 p.m.): Tonight I wish to raise the subject of Bush Connection in Toowoomba, which has done some wonderful work in helping families who have moved into Toowoomba. Many of those families have lost their family farms and have been forced to move to Toowoomba. Bush Connection has found them jobs and housing, school placements for the children and social contacts with people with like interests and, in many cases, like problems.

The concept works because those people feel comfortable with Bush Connection's surroundings. It is not operated out of some flash office or run by some bureaucracy. If it were, people would not be as relaxed or as willing to participate as they are now. This is where the city council in Toowoomba has come into its own.

The Toowoomba City Council owns the house that Bush Connection operates from. It has provided a huge service to the community by allowing Bush Connection to rent the house and operate so successfully. Regrettably, the lease is coming to an end. Funding is needed to purchase the house for Bush Connection.

I have spoken to the Minister for Primary Industries and the Minister responsible for rural communities, and I know that they both recognise the wonderful work that Bush Connection is doing. They are working towards finding some funding for this acquisition. However, we all need to recognise that the Toowoomba community has a vested interest in seeing this marvellous concept continue.

Tonight I call on all interested bodies to do some soul searching and to seek out the funds that are needed in a show of respect for the fantastic work that Mary-Louise North, her staff and all the volunteers have carried out over the past few years that Bush Connection has been running. I ask all of the organisations in Toowoomba that have an opportunity to do something constructive to do so to ensure that Bush Connection continues its good work.
