



Speech by

**Mr T. MALONE**

**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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Hansard 16 March 2000

### **FLOODS**

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (7.05 p.m.): As everyone in this House knows, in recent weeks vast areas of Queensland have been flooded and hundreds of people have been affected to varying degrees by flood or cyclone damage. However, as always, the generosity and goodwill of Queenslanders has come to the fore. I have heard first-hand of many examples of the excellent work and kind-heartedness of volunteers, neighbours and people who have just turned up to help others.

As a member representing a northern electorate, and as Opposition spokesman for Emergency Services, I have had the privilege of meeting and speaking with numerous people who have been involved in the delivery of emergency services and in the mopping-up process. In particular, I have had the chance to speak at length with SES volunteers in many centres and have seen examples of the excellent work that they have done. On this occasion, those volunteers have again excelled themselves. Again, they have showed their dedication and willingness to work under extreme conditions to help their communities.

It renews my faith in fellow Queenslanders when I see the enthusiasm that has been maintained by these volunteers, sometimes after days of non-stop work. I spoke with some of these volunteers about the difficulties that they face when they undertake this emergency help. Unfortunately, I was disappointed to hear some of their stories. For example, I was told that one SES worker had been told by his employer not to return to work because he had taken too much time off to carry out his SES duties. I have not had time to definitely confirm that report, but I will do so in the future. I will provide the Minister with the details.

It appears that some SES units are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their numbers. This may be a reflection of the seemingly busy lives that many people lead these days, but it is of concern. During times of emergencies, such as those experienced recently in many areas of the State, the presence of the SES is vital. The efficient operation of the SES is critical not only to the preservation of property and possessions but also, on all too frequent occasions, to the preservation of lives.

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