



Speech by

Mrs J. SHELDON

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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SUBCONTRACTORS

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (7.13 p.m.): Tonight I wish to raise in the House an issue of considerable concern in my electorate and on the Sunshine Coast. On Friday, 5 October a major building company, Imagemaster Constructions, fell over. Because of that, a large number of subcontractors have been very adversely affected.

I refer to a letter I received which highlights a very typical example of the problems faced by the contractors themselves. This letter is from the owner of Applikote. He is a painter of some note, vice-president of the Master Painters Association and a board member of the Building Industry Group Apprenticeship Scheme. He is well informed on the correct procedures for business management and he runs his business very well. His name is Rod Crossley. I know that he has written this letter to the Premier, but he also sent me a copy. In it he says that his life work since he took over from his father in 1976 has been this business. He is an employer of 15 dedicated, mostly long-term employees—up to 21 years. As I said, he really is an established businessperson. He currently has three apprentices and has trained over 20.

When Imagemaster fell over, it owed Applikote \$90,000. Overall, it owed subcontractors across the board well in excess of \$3 million. Mr Crossley says that he feels this is going to tip him over the edge. He has put up his own personal security and it now looks as though his wife and children will be without a home. His letter states—

My employees have their entitlements protected in accordance with the EBA we have with the CFMEU.

He raises a very valid point when he says—

When fire wipes out communities governments step in to help. The same applies with drought and flood.

I am not saying that that should not happen—I guess he is not, either—but very viable businesspeople and subcontractors who employ and create jobs out there in the community are left to fall over through no fault of their own.

I know that this is a very difficult issue. I am not making this issue into any form of political attack. I know of the problems that subcontractors have and I know of the difficulty in trying to sort them out. I am trying to work through a process at the moment. One thing Mr Crossley and a number of other people have raised is the possibility of a government loan for a term of, say, 10 years with no interest to be paid. I did write to the minister about this issue. To his credit, he responded to me very quickly. He said that the matter I have raised is being investigated and that he will reply to me once that investigation is completed. I think we do need to help these people and look at the issues affecting them.

Time expired.
