

### STOCKPORT

Mr BROCK (Frome) (16:01): I rise today to talk about the effect of rains in December last year on Stockport, a small community in the Clare and Gilbert valleys area. On 7 and 8 December last year that community suffered both physically and emotionally. There were rains all over the state. The rain started early on 7 December and continued over the next 24 hours, with this small community coping all the run-off waters from the surrounding locations within the Clare and Gilbert valleys.

The lives of the people living in this community of approximately 240 were turned upside down during this period. The large amounts of floodwater came down mainly during the night, and the flooding and the overflowing from the Gilbert River (which runs right through the middle of this small community) resulted in approximately 45 of the 60 homes becoming uninhabitable.

In effect, some of these homes may never be repaired and may have to be demolished. This is going to be a great cost not only financially but also emotionally because these people have been living there for a long time. The rains came through these homes with such force that many of the residents had little or no opportunity to save many or any of their precious items, including family heirlooms, photographs of weddings and christenings, and many other irreplaceable items.

We can always replace some things, but other things we cannot replace, such as photographs of christenings and the personal effects of your ancestors, deceased relatives or, maybe, your own family. The levels of water going through some of these homes were in excess of four to five feet in depth. The majority of the community had to be evacuated to the town's recreation centre after the river broke its banks during the night.

An emergency recovery centre was established for these affected people, and I congratulate government agencies on their quick response in providing some financial assistance and food, as well as emotional consideration. Lots of clothing and food came in, and a lot of emotional support was given to these people.

I toured the location with minister Rankine, the federal member Nick Champion, and Brian Koch, who is—

Mr Griffiths: He's a good man.

Mr BROCK: —he is a good man—the Chairman of the Stockport Community Association. The effect on these people was heartbreaking—to see them shovelling mud which was throughout their homes, plus the overbearing stench coming from the rotting mattresses and associated issues. Cars were washed away and ended up in trees vast distances from their original destinations, plus other large items of equipment.

The many volunteers from all walks of life need to be congratulated on their dedication, as well as risking their lives to assist others, even when their own homes were greatly affected. The Clare and Gilbert Valleys Council needs to put steps immediately in place to provide equipment and people to help move the debris which is accumulating. The damage bill will be very high. However, the effects will be in the minds of these people for many years, and, in some cases, many people may never emotionally get over the effects both financially and emotionally.

Many of these people may not have adequate insurance cover or in many cases may have no insurance cover at all. The other issue I have is the wording of insurance policies regarding claims, especially with respect to flood damage. During all this trauma, these people assisted each other and continued to assist others even though their own treasures and homes may have been lost.

As mentioned earlier, there was one person who maintained leadership throughout the whole situation, and that was Brian Koch. He kept people's enthusiasm and morale right up, and he continued this for many days following the initial effect. The Premier returned from overseas and immediately was driven directly to Stockport to inspect the damage. Touring and speaking to residents together with myself, Mayor Allan Aughey, CEO Roy Blight and federal member, Nick Champion. The media coverage of the damage to this region was overshadowed by the tragic flooding in Queensland, and our thoughts and prayers are also with these people. I congratulate the community of Stockport for their resilience and their dedication to each other, and I congratulate them again.

Motion carried.