



Ellis welcomes Mid-West funding

THE Barnett government's offer of immediate financial help for areas affected by flooding, including the shires of Northampton and Murchison, has been welcomed by Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis.

Premier Colin Barnett has declared a 'state natural disaster' in Carnarvon and the Gascoyne area, including parts of the Pilbara and the Mid-West affected by heavy rainfall from the monsoonal low.

Mr Ellis said that he had close personal experience with the devastation caused by flooding when the Moora district was repeatedly inundated 11 years ago.

The banks of the Round Hill Bridge collapsed, isolating Miling and the outlying district and cutting off critical access to the Great Northern Highway.

"At the time I was deputy shire president and the then shire president Michael Bates and I were responsible for evacuating the town, which was flooded three times in four months," Mr Ellis said.

He said he would never forget the trauma of families evacuated from their homes and properties and as a farmer he was sickened by the tragic loss of livestock.

Mr Ellis said his heart went out to the families and businesses affected by the current flood, especially those who had to leave their properties.

He said it was particularly heartbreaking just before Christmas.

"I know of one family whose inundated historic homestead on their pastoral property at Gascoyne Crossing is made of mud brick and the wife is waiting in Perth to hear whether the roof will hold

and whether they will be able to save any household goods," Mr Ellis said.

However, he said that rural communities pulled together in emergencies, when the true spirit of the bush prevailed.

As a former volunteer firefighter, Mr Ellis praised the emergency service personnel who have been working around the clock during the current emergency.

"FESA, State Emergency Service volunteers, the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service, WA Police, Main Roads WA, the Department of Child Protection, Water Corporation, Horizon Power and local government workers are doing an amazing job," Mr Ellis said.

He encouraged people affected by the flood to apply for assistance.

The impact of the floods meets the criteria to be declared an 'eligible natural disaster' for the purposes of the WA Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (WANDRRA).

WANDRRA is administered by FESA, with assistance from other agencies, and provides help to people who have suffered the direct impact of a declared natural disaster.

Mr Ellis said people affected by the flood could apply for assistance and obtain further information from the Department of Child Protection on 1800 199 008 for personal support, the Department of Food and Agriculture on agwestfbd@agric.wa.gov.au or 1800 198 231 for primary producers or the WANDRRA administrator on 9323 9552, wandra@fesa.wa.gov.au or visit www.fesa.wa.gov.au for small businesses or other enquiries.

Brian Ellis can be contacted on 0429 082 332.