

Labor Council backs striking cotton chippers

The State Labor Council declared its support yesterday for striking Aboriginal cotton workers in the Namoi Valley.

The council's organiser, Mr B. Unsworth, said he had consulted the Cotton Chippers Caucus, which represented the 500 workers involved in the week-long strike.

"The officers of council are totally sympathetic with the workers involved," he said.

"They are striking in support of a log of claims for better wages, better accommodation and amenities.

"Social problems in the area are enormous, with many Aborigines living in shocking conditions on the banks of the Namoi River."

Suitable camping areas with permanent facilities were needed so that Aboriginal families could live decently while working in the area.

He said: "The Labor Council will be giving the workers any assistance they require. We will be working closely with the Australian Workers' Union."

However, a "Herald" correspondent in Wee Waa



Mr Unsworth

reported that a full complement of 50 Aboriginal and white chippers were working on Mr Paul Kahl's property, Glencoe, the scene of an alleged "strike" a week ago.

In Wee Waa late yesterday strike organisers were arranging free food supplies for strikers.

One supermarket was filled with scores of Aborigines and their families stocking up with food.

The manager, Mr Duncan McFarlane, said his staff had been taken by surprise by the rush.

The Aboriginal militant leader Mr Michael Anderson, had explained the situation and a limit of \$590 was set, he said. This was filled in an hour and a half.