



Speech by

Mr M. VEIVERS

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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QUEENSLAND FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Mr VEIVERS (Southport—NPA) (10.17 a.m.): I take this opportunity to clear the air regarding certain uninformed statements made by the Minister for Emergency Services a moment ago. The Staib report, which I commissioned, indicated that there was a need for \$30m per year in extra funding. We provided that. The Masters report, commissioned by the board that I put in place, indicated a trust fund balance of \$6m in the red in 1997-98 and \$8.5m in the red in 1998-99. This year's budget came in at \$18m in the black. There was \$11m in carryover and \$7m in savings, through good management by this Government.

At the time of changeover from the former Queensland Fire Service, the QFRA had a debt of \$21m. This debt is now \$13.5m, thanks to the coalition reducing that debt over its 29 months in office. The 1997-98 budget indicated that the trust fund would be in an overdraft situation for eight months. The actual time in overdraft was two months, and the Minister knows this. This was achieved despite not drawing down on the loan funds available for the Kedron Park complex.

During 1997-98, under my guidance, we also focused on bedding down a large range of industrial and human relations issues. A new award and a certified agreement were finalised. I am proud of my achievement of putting in place the Queensland Fire and Rescue Board, to take the politics out of the fire service—the Minister is putting it right back there—and to provide long-term stability and focus on what is right for the community. The board has adhered to this objective. I am informed that the new Minister is not taking any notice of the board, a very professional group of people who have done a great job for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. I emphasise strongly: the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority is currently not in trouble.

Time expired.
