



Speech by

Dr PETER PRENZLER

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard 12 November 1998

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Dr PRENZLER (Lockyer—ONP) (7.22 p.m.): On Monday, 2 November an horrific accident occurred on the Cunningham Highway at Cunningham's Gap. The accident occurred at 6.50 a.m. and involved an interstate bus and a B-double semitrailer. The driver lost control of his vehicle while braking, and the truck tipped over onto its right-hand side and slid into the path of a bus carrying Victorian tourists. The truck driver and a female tourist were killed. Twenty-seven passengers were injured, six of them critically.

The emergency services of Queensland once again responded, drawing together units from the Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority, and volunteer units from the Rural Fire Division and the State Emergency Service. The first ambulance at the scene was from Boonah, and it arrived within some 20 minutes of the accident occurring. I join with the Emergency Services Minister in praising their quick, essential and early response. In particular I recognise Steven Standfield and Rebecca Everest who, being first on the scene, quickly assessed the severity of this accident.

Some 16 ambulance units, three helicopters and four hospitals were involved in the transport and treatment of the injured. Praise for all of the people involved cannot be expressed in words, but on behalf of the people of the Boonah district and the people of Queensland, I say thank you.

Unfortunately, once again a deficiency in emergency services arose during this crisis. This deficiency relates to the SES road rescue vehicle from Aratula. Because of a police edict, these vehicles are not classified as emergency services vehicles and thus cannot display flashing red lights but only flashing amber lights such as those displayed by road maintenance vehicles. This bureaucratic restriction will eventually result in the loss of life and may also endanger the lives of the rescuers themselves. I urge the Ministers of the relevant departments to lift the restriction applying to these vehicles and allow these people to get on with essential emergency services for Queensland.
