



Speech by

Mr ALLAN GRICE, OAM

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Hansard 4 March 1999

GOLD COAST WATER POLICE

Mr GRICE (Broadwater—NPA) (7.14 p.m.): I rise to speak about a couple of issues pertaining to the Gold Coast. First I mention the Water Police, who do some great work on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast Water Police area runs from the New South Wales border right up to the Logan River and takes in all the rivers, canals and creeks over hundreds of kilometres.

I have to say that Water Police numbers have been kept up by this Government. Under our Government there was an increase in numbers, the purchase of a brand new 35-foot catamaran and a renewal of and increase in the number of jet skis. The Water Police are still undermanned, but everyone would like extra police everywhere and we know that that is not always possible.

There is one problem. The boats and the skis are tied up because there is no fuel to put in them. They have the best equipment—they have defibrillators and so on on the boats—but the boats are tied up. The police are being told that they are to be left tied up except in a dire emergency. They are not on patrol because there is not enough fuel.

This situation does not apply to just that department. Fisheries is similarly well equipped. It does a multifaceted job. It tows in boat owners who have mechanical problems or who get into distress—it does rescue operations—and a big part of its job is to check that both commercial and amateur fishermen are fishing appropriately with regard to bag limits, size limits and female crabs. Again, on the Gold Coast its craft are tied up. Fisheries has been told quite clearly, "Do not use fuel because we are out of budget."

Where are the priorities? We talk about personnel, services and things that departments need to do their jobs, and that is reasonable. I am not criticising them, but they are not able to work.

Time expired.
