



Speech by

**JULIE ATTWOOD**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Hansard 24 March 1999

#### **AMBULANCE SERVICE**

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): Last Friday I visited the Oxley Ambulance Station to listen to the concerns of staff and witness first-hand their operational procedures. The station officer, Steven Owens, and two ambulance officers—Adam Starr and Anthony Parsonage, a paramedic—explained the types of call-outs that are a routine part of their job. Most calls related to existing medical complaints that flare up, whilst others relate to alcohol and drug abuse, strokes, epilepsy and motor vehicle or work related accidents.

A small factor in their having to attend emergencies revolves around people not helping themselves. Families do take care of their children and each other, but there are situations in which the family unit is dysfunctional and care is not taken to maintain a healthy and emotionally supportive living environment. It is the acceptance of responsibility which distinguishes some family environments from others.

During my discussions with those ambulance officers, the emergency telephone rang three times. Within two minutes of the phone calls, the ambulance officers were heading towards their emergency destination with siren blaring. The best way to get an early response is to dial 000 in case of accidents, fires and other emergencies. Calls dialled on general lines may not be treated as urgent, but 000 calls go straight to the central communications centre and jobs are dispatched immediately.

We owe a lot to our dedicated ambos, who have shown me in a couple of hours how challenging their job can be. They do not know what situation will confront them at each call-out but are prepared with their medical training and people skills to save lives. Considering the life and death nature of the situations they face day or night, these heroes deserve the best conditions of employment and equipment that the Government and community can provide. I strongly encourage the younger generation to become ambulance subscribers, because we never know when we will need their service. For non-subscribers, the expense of calling an ambulance can cause financial embarrassment and add to the stress of the situation.

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