



Speech by

Hon. MERRI ROSE

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard 23 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Ambulance Service; Increased Travel

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: Queensland Ambulance Service vehicles travelled more than 24 million kilometres in 1998-99 responding to almost half a million cases. That is the equivalent of driving around the world more than 600 times.

In 1998-99, they clocked up about 1.5 million kilometres more than in the previous financial year to treat and transport ill and injured people. The travelling distance has increased by almost 10 million kilometres since 1995-96 and by 5 million kilometres over the past two years, to 24,042,240 kilometres.

Code One emergency cases increased from the 125,828 shown in the 1997-98 annual report to 135,064 last financial year, while Code Two cases—which are also life-threatening responses—were up from the 124,712 noted in the 1997-98 annual report to 135,064 in 1998-99. These statistics, which are contained in the QAS 1998-99 annual report, clearly indicate the high workload of the State's ambulance paramedics, intensive care paramedics and patient transport officers. They also show how well the QAS serves people living in cities, towns and isolated communities right across the State.

The QAS is now the best ambulance service in Australia and one of the best in the world and Queenslanders can be proud of the high level of service provided by highly professional and dedicated officers. The annual reports confirm what I have been saying—that emergency cases are increasing at a rate of around 6% per annum. Ambulance caseload increased from 454,490 in 1997-98 to 481,797 last financial year.

The Greater Brisbane region was by far the busiest, with 175,739 total cases, ahead of South-Eastern with 76,901, North Coast 56,311, Northern 46,181, Central 45,092, South-Western 39,325 and Far Northern 35,998. The State total was 481,797 cases—up from 454,490 in 1997-98. Greater Brisbane also had the most Code One emergency cases—44,236—ahead of South-Eastern 28,736, North Coast 20,521, Northern 11,407, Central 10,864, Far Northern 10,106 and South-Western 8,437. Despite the increase, response times across the State have been stabilised, with 65% of Code One emergencies responded to in under 10 minutes.

There is a record ambulance budget in 1999-2000, with additional funding for caseload growth, new ambulance officers, new vehicles and improved communications. There is a big capital works program with strategically located new stations so we can improve efficiency, responses and service delivery. The QAS is proud of its record and the quality of service it delivers to communities right across the State.
