



Speech by

Mr S. ROBERTSON

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

Hansard 7 September 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Emergency Service

Hon. S. ROBERTSON (Sunnybank—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (9.57 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie Labor Government is proud of its record of support for the State Emergency Service and its 35,000 volunteer members. SES volunteers perform valuable work for their communities—work that is recognised by this Government, which is committed to ensuring a strong and viable future for the 405 SES groups in Queensland.

It was this Government's precise wish to boost the profile and recognition of the SES which led to the re-establishment in 1998 of the separate position of Director, SES & VMR Support within the Department of Emergency Services, a position that had been abolished by the previous Government.

Labor's commitment to the SES is also reflected through record budget funding for the SES, including an additional \$1m each year for support of our volunteers with uniforms and equipment, the four-year \$1.5m floodboat replacement program and \$1m a year for the SES cadets youth program. We also provide through my department strong organisational support and leadership for the SES by developing, implementing and monitoring SES plans, policies and procedures, as well as managing SES training and logistical arrangements.

Key initiatives undertaken by this Government also include a comprehensive stocktake of all SES equipment so that we can better resource units in the future, plus planning for a range of initiatives to celebrate later this year the 25th anniversary of the SES and next year's International Year of Volunteers.

The Department of Emergency Services is also working on the development of a strategic plan for the Queensland SES for 2001-06, plus a longer-term—10 years plus—SES strategic directions paper. These blueprints for the future will be based upon comprehensive research and consultation with SES volunteers and a wide range of stakeholders, including local government and State agencies that rely on SES volunteer support in delivering services to the community.

This Government particularly values the input of SES volunteers at the grassroots level to assist in the development of the SES strategic plan. To that end I have instructed my department to prepare a comprehensive SES volunteer survey that will next week be sent to every SES member in Queensland, seeking their ideas and opinions about the future of their organisation. This survey aims to measure Statewide attitudes of SES volunteers to issues such as SES operations, training, management, equipment, recruiting, support from local government, district offices and State office, and future ideas for the SES. The survey is the first of its type and the views and opinions of SES volunteers will play a vital role in the development of the SES strategic plan.

The Beattie Government has made considerable effort to strengthen the links with SES volunteers over recent years. We are listening and we are delivering. I believe that involving grassroots SES volunteers in development of the strategic plan, by giving them a strong say in the future of their organisation, will further strengthen those links and result in a strong, viable SES well into the future.
