



Speech by

## CHRISTINE SCOTT

### MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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Hansard 8 November 2001

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

**Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT** (Charters Towers—ALP) (4.45 p.m.): I am pleased to rise in support of the bill before the House. The bill aims to provide more resources to front-line service delivery through better coordination and smarter use of resources. Indeed, I hope to see further gains for the dedicated volunteers within my own area. It would be appropriate to start some of those in the International Year of the Volunteer. Emergency Services have held celebrations and ceremonies honouring their volunteers throughout the regions, and I have been informed that more are planned for the future.

Emergency Services is a very people-orientated service where no-one knows where they will be required or where they will be most urgently needed. This is more so in rural and remote Queensland where most of the Emergency Services personnel are volunteers.

Contrary to the statement by the member for Mirani, I believe that the volunteers in my area have taken part in community consultation with the Emergency Services Advisory Council through our local rural fire brigades, the Rural Fire Council, the local ambulance committee and the Ambulance Commissioner's local committee reference group, of which I am an elected member. I have been assured that this consultative process will not change. These important interactive support mechanisms ensure the needs of the community are carefully considered and the most appropriate services delivered.

I cannot stress too greatly the importance of consultation with the community. Indeed, in my previous roles on the Premier's Council for Women and Ergon's regional electricity council, I came in contact with many volunteers across a wide range of industry areas. I found that people across the north all say the same thing: it is good to be able to discuss issues before they become problems, because often we are able to find solutions quickly. What works in Brisbane or the other major cities does not necessarily work in small communities where the task of responding to emergencies often falls upon the shoulders of a very few truly dedicated volunteers. Few think of the impact responding has on small businesses in our community. Volunteers are not confined to those on the end of a fire hose or those who pull people out of car wrecks. They include the employers who let their staff go to do those things.

I cite the case of the Fennamores of Greenvale. Pound for pound, Greenvale stands proud when it comes to people who are prepared to put up their hands and help out. Two of this town's citizens who are not backward in coming forward when it comes to lending a helping hand are the resident voluntary ambulance officers, Kerry and Lyn Fennamore. This husband and wife team give a 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week commitment that not just locals but people travelling through the district will receive the fastest medical care possible.

I first met Kerry and Lyn in 1997 and I know that they have been volunteers in this field since 1995. During this time they have completed a certificate 3 level in health and science, as well as advanced resuscitation, first aid certificates, and a driving course in Brisbane which incorporated car handling techniques and included other skills such as driving fast around corners and on wet roads. All of those are very necessary skills for the work that they undertake to help keep our community safe.

Lyn and Kerry have been armed with the technology and the knowledge to save the life of anyone having a cardiac arrest through the completion of a 'heart start' certificate course and have attended a number of single-vehicle road accidents on the Gregory Development Road adjacent to

their home in Greenvale. The police and QAS have always given them top marks for their handling of even multiple-vehicle accidents resulting in a number of victims.

For their day jobs, Kerry operates a contract electrical business, while Lyn dedicates her time to the children at our local Greenvale Primary School. Whenever anyone becomes ill or is injured, this committed and dedicated pair work with the Townsville Communications Centre and decide whether to use road transport or call in the Queensland rescue chopper. The QAS has been supportive and ensures Greenvale's honorary ambos are kept up to date with procedures. Kerry and Lyn sometimes travel far afield to further their clinical skills by working as third officers with the Charters Towers, Townsville or Ingham QAS crews. They never hesitate to go the extra mile or stay on call all the time, because they know the vital role they play when a bad accident occurs or someone has a cardiac arrest.

In recognition of the selfless commitment of this couple, they were awarded the Queensland Premier's International Year of the Volunteer Award earlier this year. Sometimes we forget the economic and personal sacrifices people like Lyn and Kerry make for the safety of the community at large. Today I wish to record my appreciation for their magnificent achievements and ask the parliament to join with me in honouring the Fennamores in Greenvale and our emergency services personnel and volunteers across the state.

The SES unit and rural fire brigade at Pentland also share a joint facility and are a credit to what is a small, concerned and caring rural community. Pentland received a light attack rural fire appliance valued at \$50,000 in February 2001.

Today I would also like to tell parliament about the wonderful work being done by the Hervey Range Rural Fire Brigade, which is now in its 10th year of operation. This brigade was born of a community meeting at David and Elizabeth Pearce's home on Hervey Range after Dave Luxton, who is now our rural fire commissioner, approached the community and voiced the belief that a brigade would be beneficial for the people of the area. The very first office bearers were Margie and Graham Freestun, as secretary and second officer; Lee-Ann Fryer, as warden; Harry Telford as first officer; and Peter Fryer as third officer. This brigade has always taken the innovative step of having a phone coordinator, and their first such coordinator was Bob Garbutt. Consistency, stability and endurance have been the characteristics of this brigade. So their office bearers are almost unchanged today except that Lee-Ann is now secretary, Martin Haines is first officer, Graham Freestun is second officer, Lee-Ann's husband, Peter, is third officer, and Cheryl Haines is now phone coordinator. Jan Marshall and Sue Young are in control of catering for volunteers during operations, and no doubt the dulcet voice of Frank Young is somewhere there in the background.

This rural fire brigade works hard, but it also knows how to stop for a bit of fun combined with some fundraising. I was pleased to travel to join them recently for a progressive dinner up on Hervey Range, where they have the convenience of almost living in Townsville suburbia with the enviable climate of Charters Towers. I had indicated to our Emergency Services Minister, the Hon. Mike Reynolds, that he also might like to attend, but as is the way with ministers Mike had a previous engagement. However, he did give me a cheque to present on the night to the fire brigade for the equivalent cost of two tickets to this fun occasion. I know we should all be inspired by the dedication and commitment shown by this group of volunteers. They are truly remarkable people and deserve all of the accolades and recognition associated with being a volunteer organisation and working tirelessly and selflessly to help others. It is a very real pleasure for me to be able to tell the parliament today that their hard work paid off recently and culminated in the receipt of a medium attack rural fire appliance valued at \$62,000.

We know that volunteers do not put a dollar value on what they do and we also know that their work is priceless, so I would today like to record special congratulations to the members of the Hervey Range Rural Fire Brigade for their achievements, both past and present, and in this International Year of the Volunteer I ask the parliament today to join with me in saluting these unsung heroes and their community.

These amendments will see all emergency services move forward as one innovative and integrated department. This includes both career staff and, as I said previously, the magnificent volunteers. The Beattie government will maintain and strengthen the focus on the broader community safety role for all operational areas of the department. We will build upon the tremendous achievements made across the portfolio in rescue operations, emergency response, community safety and prevention and disaster mitigation. In all those areas local input will be preserved through the maintenance of community consultation. I look forward to seeing improvements for the staff in my area, particularly the volunteers, and I commend this bill to the House.

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