



Speech by

CATE MOLLOY

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard 6 November 2002

EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 31 October (see p. 4392).

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (12.45 p.m.): I rise in support of the Emergency Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2002. The bill is part of a continuing commitment by this Labor government to ensure the safety of all Queenslanders. I congratulate Minister Reynolds and his terrific staff on bringing this bill before the House. The bill makes amendments to a range of sections aimed at improving administration of the Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990, the Ambulance Service Act 1991 and the State Counter-Disaster Organisation Act 1975. Improving administration of local ambulance committees under the Ambulance Act bears out the ability of emergency services to diminish the impact of future disasters under the State Counter-Disaster Act and will better the community representation on the Emergency Services Advisory Council under the Fire Act, which brings up to speed the operations of the QFRS.

We all realise the pivotal role ambulance committees play both as lobby groups, support bases and in offering community ownership. The changes to the act were a direct result of the consultation with the Ambulance Commissioner's local ambulance committees reference group, comprising 14 representatives from across the state. The consultations undertaken developed a new constitution. Ultimately, this will enhance the work done by those committees. I know that the ambulance committee of Tewantin has worked hard to help the Tewantin community regain a new ambulance station. I attended the opening of this new station with Minister Mike Reynolds, Councillor Frank Pardon, Councillor June Colley and friends of mine from the area, friends who are ambulance officers—Bill Fahey and Dave Sternberg—and other wonderful officers too numerous to mention here but who included fire officers, community members such as Bernie Paul and local police officers. All are touched by the same qualities that drive them to serve their communities.

Emergency services may be called upon to deal with any number of shocking disasters involving hazardous chemicals. Demand on the service is already highly technical in terms of the nature of situations the officers encounter. They deal with situations which require high levels of expertise, which brings me back to the bill. We all are aware of the need today of our emergency services to respond competently and decisively to emergencies that arise out of hazardous materials emergencies. Therefore, to this end, the department has spent a considerable amount of time over the past 12 months drawing up a framework that supports the Queensland disaster management system in preparing for, responding to and basically managing a hazardous chemical emergency should that occur. Look at the call-outs today. At any given time of the day in the state of Queensland, emergency service officers are called out to manage hazardous chemical emergencies. They take their lives into the areas of high risk and follow through to protect the lives of their communities. Further amendments to this bill will allow for a smoother running of fire and rescue services. Collectively, these amendments will provide for higher efficiencies and service delivery and I commend the bill to the House.