



Speech by

DESLEY SCOTT

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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EMERGENCY SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (6.40 p.m.): The need for efficient, vigilant, well-prepared and well-trained emergency services personnel has never been so clearly defined. Accidents as well as natural disasters of fire, flood, earthquake, et cetera make it imperative that we support our emergency services with adequate training and equipment and that they work within a satisfactory legislative framework which will allow them to respond to needs immediately. This legislation amends a number of administrative requirements, such as increasing the number of community representatives on the Emergency Services Advisory Council, which reports to the minister, from 14 to 16 to allow representation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It replaces the term 'chemical incident' with 'hazardous material emergency', thus giving a far wider application such as biological and other harmful substances. It allows the minister to make acting appointments.

Our local ambulance committees will work under a new model constitution and have provision for increased membership from the present nine to 15 or even beyond if the minister sees a need. Committee members will no longer be required to be members of community organisations but may be ambulance subscribers. The minister will also have the power to dismiss a member, should that be required. I have nothing but praise for my local ambulance committee and the exceptional fundraising they do and the support they give to my local ambulance officers.

Earlier this year, I was privileged to have the Minister for Emergency Services in my electorate to open our new ambulance centre. It is state-of-the-art and enables our officers to offer the highest level of service to our community and beyond. Many of our loyal, hardworking volunteers were present on that occasion and special recognition was given to Danny Daniels for his long record of dedicated service, along with his wife, Claire. May I salute those wonderful volunteers. I want to commend my ambulance and fire service officers, both in Woodridge and Browns Plains. They are not only there in our community for emergencies such as fire and accident but also attend many Neighbourhood Watch open days, our seniors clubs and many other community activities to heighten awareness in the community of what we each can do to prevent accidents, to gain skills to help in times of emergency and also to encourage the very essential installation of fire alarms in the home. My SES is similarly a very active group and is right there at a moment's notice to assist our emergency services teams or maybe to assist the police in searching for a lost bushwalker or a missing child. I know that they will be gearing up again for schoolies week to be a friendly face to guide a young person or keep them from harm and danger.

I recently accepted an invitation to inspect a number of our emergency services training facilities, and I can attest to the fact that they are world class. Other states and New Zealand send their recruits here for training and they leave the academy very skilled. From the Emergency Services headquarters at Kedron, we first travelled to Petrie in the member for Kurwongbah's electorate, where the department has established a great fire and safety education centre called Safehome.

Mrs Lavarch interjected.

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT: It is wonderful; I was very impressed. Excursion booklets have been produced for schoolchildren along with a teacher's handbook. Schools are encouraged to make it a whole day out. Queensland Rail offers free travel to Petrie where the children visit the local courthouse, police station and Meals on Wheels as well as the Safehome. Here they can see at first-hand fire dangers in the home, unsafe appliances and a simulated oven fire which is extinguished with a fire

blanket. A boy's bedroom demonstrates dangerous practices, and a sealed room with viewing window allows visitors to see the smoke building up in a house fire and then become part of the rescue, escaping from the house by keeping low to the floor. There is even a live demonstration of the damage mice can do to electrical wiring. Ian Hawkins, project coordinator, is very proud of this very innovative and effective means of educating both children and adults. Seniors groups and other clubs are all welcome.

The next stop on our tour was the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Academy at Whyte Island, which is out near the port of Brisbane and has been established through a memorandum of understanding with Caltex refineries. This facility has training rooms, an auditorium, cafeteria and accommodation quarters and enables practical, hands-on training to prepare trainees for most types of disasters. A tour of the site showed an elevated platform—recycled from a water park—various towers, buildings, a car park of wrecks which no doubt assist in methods of rescue from road accidents, a pool where foam can be used and a very impressive rubble heap where trainees learn rescue from catastrophic building collapses, such as in earthquakes, plane crashes and the like. This is no ordinary heap of rubble. It has been very skilfully designed with tunnels, huge concrete slabs, small crevices, pipes, et cetera and we learned of the three-day exercises they conduct there with all emergency personnel, equipment and the like. Believe it or not, they are able to find volunteers who will allow themselves to be concealed in confined spaces awaiting rescue. It is very true to life. Fortunately, these volunteers are released every three hours or so for a breather. There is no need to volunteer if you are even slightly claustrophobic.

Live fire training is possible using various types of flammable liquids and different building configurations, backdraft training, multilevel buildings and petrochemical spills. This is an amazing centre. I can attest to the professionalism of our emergency services personnel. I am happy to support these measures contained within this bill and commend those who work to protect life, property and are our frontline troops in any emergency.