



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Services

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.07 am): A great deal has been made in the media, and on the political front, about standards being achieved by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service. In particular, the member for Chatsworth has made outlandish claims that the fire service is overloaded with bureaucrats. He has also criticised the Ambulance Service. This is politics and nothing more.

On behalf of my side of the parliament, I would like to commend our ambulance officers and our fires for the magnificent work they do out in the community making Queensland a safer place for Queenslanders.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr PURCELL: I note there were a lot of 'Hear, hears' on my side of the parliament but none from the other side. I think the emergency services officers in the opposition electorates would be most disappointed that the opposition members do not support them in this place today. It does little to instill confidence within the general community and it does little to acknowledge and recognise the valuable contribution made by front-line paramedics and firefighters in this state.

If we are looking to get a fair comparison of our emergency services then there is only one reference document, and that is the latest report on government services. That is the only document that endeavours to compare apples with apples. This year, the report on government services shows that emergency services in this state are in good shape. For the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, the report shows that the number of structural fires is down, fire deaths are down, property loss is down and the number of people taking appropriate safety precautions is up. That number will increase further when we bring legislation relating to fire alarms into this House later this year. Queensland's three-year average for fire deaths is now the second lowest in the nation. Despite a booming population, the QFRS continues to meet its response time targets.

The situation is exactly the same with the Ambulance Service. Despite a growing and ageing population, the report on government services shows that the QAS is reaching more code 1 patients faster than ever before, our expenditure per person is higher than any other state, and patient satisfaction rates are the highest they have ever been, at 98 per cent.

These results are a credit to emergency services personnel throughout Queensland. I would like to personally thank them. I have been out into many of the electorates of the members opposite talking to our emergency services personnel and thanking them for the work they do. These figures show that both services are on track. I support our 8,000 staff and almost 85,000 volunteers. They do a magnificent job. I know they provide a first-class service and I know those standards are supported by independent research—by the latest report on government services and the Queensland community itself.