



Speech by

**Hon. Pat Purcell**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

Hansard Wednesday, 10 May 2006

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Ambulance Service**

**Hon. PD PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.14 am): I would like to draw the attention of the House to recent comments made by honourable members opposite attacking the Queensland Ambulance Service. The Queensland Ambulance Service gives a world-class service. I will give two examples of that service. Out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival rates have risen and response times for code 1 emergencies are improving.

The member for Maryborough, in his local newspaper and in the last sitting of parliament, has criticised the Queensland Ambulance Service transport service for non-urgent cases, including the inadequate transport of a patient with a broken arm. QAS examined the case and it acted appropriately.

First and foremost, QAS exists to save lives. Let me repeat that: it exists to save lives. It does this very, very well—better than any other state in the Commonwealth and probably better than anywhere else in the world. QAS provides a comprehensive patient transport service for non-urgent cases. However, emergency services are just that: they are there to respond to emergencies. This is what the community ambulance cover is about—providing the resources for a world-class emergency prehospital response service. It is a shame that the member for Maryborough cannot see this and is misleading the public about the Queensland Ambulance Service.

Meanwhile, the member for Charters Towers has used the press to slam paramedics in his electorate. In 2003, the Beattie government instituted statewide roster reform, in consultation with the union and staff, to give paramedics a better working environment. Last March, at the staff's request, the Charters Towers roster was revised to allocate the most staff during peak case load periods. But the member for Charters Towers has said that this is 'a dangerous scenario and as a result lives will be lost'. This is scaremongering at its worst, and it is absolute rubbish.

Coverage has been boosted for the high workload periods. There has been no reduction in coverage for Charters Towers and response times have improved. It is worth wondering whether the member for Charters Towers really cares for paramedics in his electorate. Not only has it taken him three years to pick up on the Queensland Ambulance Service reforms; he would also like paramedics to go back to the bad old days of working 14-hour shifts, and that will not be happening.