



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Thursday, 25 May 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Services, Disaster Training

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.11 am): The Beattie government has a strong commitment to caring for the safety of all Queenslanders and preparing for and responding to emergencies. This is demonstrated by the government's continued record funding for the Department of Emergency Services. This funding helps to ensure that our staff and volunteers have the best equipment, vehicles and, of course, training.

In addition, the Beattie government is committed to ensuring that staff from different agencies and services are trained not only in their own field but also in other fields and in working with each other. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Beattie government's commitment to the Department of Emergency Services, which is an Australian leader—indeed, a world leader—in ensuring cooperation and engagement between different arms of the emergency services.

I am pleased to report that, as I speak, an important training exercise is being held which involves dozens of firefighters and emergency service personnel. The Urban Search and Rescue Category 2 course has been conducted at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy at Whyte Island for the past two weeks.

Staff have been learning skills to rescue people from building collapse, incidents caused by earthquakes, landslides, aircraft crashes and terrorist bombs. From midnight on Tuesday, these personnel and visitors from other states and countries have combined to put these new skills into practice in a continuous 48-hour exercise that will conclude at midnight on Thursday.

The exercise involves dozens of firefighters from Tasmania, Western Australia, the Northern Territory, Singapore and Hong Kong, Queensland, Ambulance Service paramedics, and special disaster victim identification staff from the Queensland Police Service. The skills learnt during this course are those used by staff who conducted building assessments in areas that were devastated by Cyclone Larry and by the staff who travelled to Banda Aceh after the Asian tsunami.

The exercise now underway is a shining example of the high level of training and cooperation within the Department of Emergency Services. Queenslanders can be confident that, should the worst happen, the emergency services will be ready to respond with highly trained personnel.

Tabled paper: Copy of ministerial statement by Hon. Pat Purcell titled *Disaster Training*.