



Speech by

**Hon. Pat Purcell**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

Hansard Wednesday, 9 August 2006

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Water Conservation**

**Hon. PD PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.15 am): The worst-ever recorded drought in Queensland has triggered a number of studies and water-saving initiatives from the Department of Emergency Services. The department is working to ensure it reflects—and in many cases exceeds—community standards. Water management is taken very seriously by all the department's divisions, but especially by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service.

All water-saving initiatives undertaken by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service are being carefully balanced with its responsibilities for community and firefighter safety. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and the United Firefighters Union have been working with Queensland Health, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water to conduct a study into the use of recycled water. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has also been consulting with local authorities throughout south-east Queensland on how we can best manage proposed pressure management strategies for reticulated water. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service regions are working with local authorities to ensure that their training activities take place in accordance with the by-laws of the local authorities. Firefighters now conduct many demonstrations, training and drills without the use of water. Also, at the live fire training facility at Whyte Island, used water is now returned to the nearby Caltex refinery.

Water-saving initiatives are also being implemented right across the department. For example, in 2006 the Kedron Park complex achieved a 38 per cent reduction in water consumption compared with 2005, principally by maximising recycling opportunities, including using recycled swimming pool backwash water on gardens. The department also ensures that it is watering plants with hand-held buckets, using alternative ways to clean and maintain facilities and retrofitting approved water-saving devices. Future initiatives currently being investigated and trialled for possible statewide application include installation of water tanks for grounds irrigation, minimising water usage on urinals, installation of waterless urinals and the possible storage and recycling of air conditioning waste water. The harvesting and re-use of rainwater is also recommended for all departmental projects.

The department is very conscious of its role in water management, whether that is by conserving this valuable resource during everyday use or by taking measures to ensure its availability for emergency situations.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of ministerial statement by Hon. P Purcell titled 'Water saving initiatives by the Department of Emergency Services'.