



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL (ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D)

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (2.34 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the estimates committee report. It is a dynamic time for emergency services in this state. As I told the estimates committee hearing, today's emergency services are operating in a rapidly changing environment. Global warming, Queensland's growing and ageing population, the threat of terrorism and flu outbreaks are placing greater demands on staff and volunteers. In this environment it is important that our personnel are better trained and better resourced than ever. The Beattie government has provided a record \$744.1 million for the Department of Emergency Services for 2006-07. This funding will ensure that the department continues to provide all Queenslanders with a first-class emergency prevention, preparedness and response capability.

The Beattie government has a proud record of providing the funding and commitment to ensure that our emergency services personnel have the training, equipment, funding and infrastructure they need. This year's budget, which represents an increase in funding far above any increase in inflation, certainly shows that. For example, the Beattie government is investing \$48 million over four years to provide emergency management in Queensland with a state-of-the-art fleet of rescue helicopters. The government has also committed more than \$100 million over three years to boost the working conditions of ambulance staff. This year's budget also includes just under \$110 million for capital works.

However, I can assure the House that the government will not be resting on its laurels. We will continue to pursue a positive agenda. The Beattie government will ensure that the department has the resources and the whole-of-government commitment to continue caring for the safety and wellbeing of Queenslanders.

The Department of Emergency Services is an organisation that is committed to ongoing improvement. The process of the lessons learned from Cyclone Larry and several business excellence awards is proof of that. As we say, there is no such thing as good practice, just better practice.

In his statement of reservations in the Estimates Committee D report the member for Mirani expressed concern about several matters. I do not accept the concerns that were raised. These issues were addressed during the estimates committee hearing. Therefore, I reject the member's comments that my responses were unsatisfactory.

In closing, I would like to thank the chair of the estimates committee, the member for Mudgeeraba, for her involvement and courtesy. I would also like to thank the other members of the committee, including the members for Mirani and Nanango, for their courtesy and the manner in which the estimates hearing was conducted on the day.