



Speech by

**Hon. Pat Purcell**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

Hansard Thursday, 30 November 2006

---

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Queensland Ambulance Service, Meningococcal Policy**

**Hon. PD PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.08 am): I will update the House about important initiatives being implemented by the Beattie Labor government. During the recent election campaign, the government promised to implement a \$1.5 million plan to help paramedics combat meningococcal disease.

The disease is very aggressive, especially in children and young people. There are about 100 cases of meningococcal each year, and mortality can be as high as 10 to 40 per cent. Paramedics are often the front line of medical services, and this policy will ensure that they can act quickly. This is especially important in rural and remote areas where patients face a long ambulance trip to hospital.

The policy will mean that paramedics will be trained in diagnosing the disease and treating it with fast-acting antibiotics, ambulance vehicles will be stocked with the antibiotics and patients who fall victim to this disease will have quicker access to the medications that make a real difference in improving outcomes. I am pleased to report that the Beattie Labor government is well on the way to delivering this commitment.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has developed a one-day training session for all QAS paramedics. Rosters are being altered to allow paramedics to be relieved from their normal duties to attend the in-service training, which starts this month. This week, the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 will be amended to allow paramedics the necessary approvals to use the antibiotic, and it will be progressively rolled out as crews are trained. By the end of this financial year, the QAS is aiming to have all front-line paramedics trained to diagnose and treat meningococcal and to have all vehicles supplied with the antibiotics. I am pleased to say that the Beattie Labor government is getting on with the job of delivering this life-saving policy.