



Speech by

Hon. Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGEE

Hansard Thursday, 6 September 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Ambulance Service

Hon. N ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (9.59 am): The Queensland Ambulance Service is constantly working to build on the level of clinical care provided by our highly trained paramedics. For example, advanced care paramedics have recently commenced training in advanced procedures for diabetic emergencies using dextrose rather than glucagon. This new treatment provides a more controlled response by paramedics, delivering improved patient outcomes.

Additionally, following on from a government election commitment, Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics now carry specific antibiotics to enable the early treatment of meningococcal. Since its introduction in November last year, seven patients have been administered the new drug for suspected or confirmed meningococcal disease.

In October, the Queensland Ambulance Service is proposing to take another step forward in cardiac treatment. The service is investigating an initiative which will allow intensive care paramedics to administer a 'clot-busting' drug to patients who are suffering a heart attack. This is a huge leap forward for our paramedics and is at the cutting edge of cardiac care. These few examples of innovation in clinical practice demonstrate that the QAS is at the forefront of emergency pre-hospital care.

On another matter, in the House yesterday the member for Kawana raised a particular ambulance response on the Sunshine Coast. During question time I asked him to provide me with the details of the case to enable the facts to be verified. Just before 5 pm yesterday afternoon—almost seven hours after question time and after the member had apparently found the time to talk to Channel 10 and the *Sunshine Coast Daily*—his office sent me a factually incorrect email to my office at Kedron.

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order. The information as requested was given to the office yesterday. The member's response earlier—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ROBERTS: I understand the sensitivity of this matter for the family concerned and it is unfortunate that I need to further respond to this matter in the House today. However, like other members of the opposition, the member for Kawana has made claims that are factually incorrect and which cast a slur on the professionalism of our ambulance officers.

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order. He is casting aspersions upon my name and my role. I did not cast aspersions upon the organisation at all, just this government.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Again, there is no point of order. I do warn the member for Kawana about frivolous points of order.

Mr ROBERTS: I had the opportunity to review the electronic report form relating to this incident and I can advise the House as follows. The patient in question called the Queensland Ambulance Service at 6.07 am on 3 September. The case was classified as a code 1, requiring a lights and sirens response. The ambulance was on the scene seven minutes later—not 20 minutes, as claimed by the member for

Kawana. Also, contrary to media reports, paramedics offered to transport the patient to the closest hospital at Caloundra. However, the patient and the family voluntarily declined the offer of transport and advised that they would make their own arrangements.

Approximately three hours later the Queensland Ambulance Service received another call to the same address. On the information provided to the call taker, this call was classified as a code 2C, which under ambulance protocols requires a response within two hours. I can report to the House that the ambulance was on scene 36 minutes later—well within the recommended two-hour response time. On this occasion the patient accepted transport and was taken directly to Caloundra Hospital.

This record shows that the member for Kawana has completely misrepresented the facts of this case. The response from the Ambulance Service was professional, appropriate and well within the recommended protocols for urgent and non-urgent responses.

Mr Schwarten: He should apologise.

Mr ROBERTS: The member for Kawana should apologise to the House and to the professional ambulance officers concerned for his shabby, poorly researched and unprofessional approach to this matter.

Mr DICKSON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DICKSON: The minister should apologise to the people of Queensland.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DICKSON: This is a seriously ill man—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DICKSON:—with leukaemia who is dying.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana! I have not given you the call yet. Members come to order. There is a point of order. It better not be frivolous. I call the member for Kawana.

Mr DICKSON: This is about a seriously ill patient dying of leukaemia.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr ROBERTS: Our ambulance officers work under extreme pressure in urgent situations and they make life and death decisions on a daily basis. They do an outstanding job and I commend them and thank them for their professionalism and commitment to providing quality care and responses in emergency situations.

This case demonstrates that the opposition is not interested in the facts of the situation. They are more interested in a headline in the *Courier-Mail* or on the evening news. This is just one example of the inaccuracy of some of the recent reporting on ambulance matters that has been played out in the media primarily based on the misinformation provided by the opposition. I invite the media in future to verify the opposition claims before going to print.