



Speech by

# Hon. Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGEЕ

Hansard Tuesday, 9 October 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Ambulance Service

**Hon. N ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.01 am): Ambulance services in Queensland are responding to increasing demands. The Queensland Ambulance Service has a record budget of \$404.4 million this year with funding for an extra 250 ambulance officers. Last month the Premier and I announced an audit of the Queensland Ambulance Service. Comprehensive terms of reference have been developed, and I table those terms of reference.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'Audit of the Queensland Ambulance Service'.

The audit will help us to ensure that the Queensland Ambulance Service operates efficiently and effectively. It will benchmark the Queensland Ambulance Service with services across Australia. Specifically, the audit will look at how increasing demands for ambulance services are managed, how resources are allocated to get the best value for money for taxpayers, how the workforce is managed to best meet the workload and how the Ambulance Service works with the health system. I can report that significant progress has already been made.

The government has announced that it has accepted a recommendation for a new 12-hour roster system at the state's busiest ambulance stations and communication centres. Currently, officers at Queensland's 90 24-hour, seven-day-a-week stations are working 10-hour shifts. Under the new system there will be a core roster comprising two 12-hour day shifts and two 12-hour night shifts, effectively giving paramedics four days on and four days off. This will result in paramedics having more consecutive days off more regularly.

I was pleased to read today's *Gold Coast Bulletin*, which reported—

Gold Coast ambulance workers are 'over the moon' about a proposed rostering system that would give them more consecutive days off.

That is consistent with feedback that I have received across the state over the past couple of days. Another feature of the proposed roster system is a mechanism to minimise the impact of shift overruns where paramedics are called out on jobs towards the end of their shift. These new roster arrangements have been negotiated between the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union. The ambulance commissioner and the union issued a joint statement on roster reform yesterday, and I table that joint statement.

*Tabled paper:* Copy of a joint statement, dated 8 October 2007, by the Commissioner, Queensland Ambulance Service, and the Secretary, Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union titled 'Roster Reform Evaluation Outcomes'.

I look forward to the rollout of the new roster system in the new year. It will provide a better work/life balance for our ambulance officers. In combination with the implementation of the 38-hour week on 1 October, the new roster system will mean our ambulance officers will effectively receive nine weeks leave, made up of annual leave and accrued time off, each year. These initiatives demonstrate that the government is responding to the needs of our ambulance officers and to the needs of Queenslanders who use the service.