



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Tuesday, 6 March 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rural and Remote Paramedics Program

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.19 am): As members of this House are aware, Queensland's paramedics are some of the best trained and equipped in the world. They are also some of the most innovative in service delivery. Last year, I had the honour of officially launching the Graduate Certificate of Rural and Remote Paramedic Practice at James Cook University, Cairns. I am pleased to advise the House that a further 18 paramedics have now enrolled in this milestone course. They come from communities across Queensland—from Thursday Island to Texas.

The establishment of this course is part of the Beattie government's election commitment to explore an expanded scope of practice for Queensland Ambulance Service paramedics working in rural and remote locations. It is a key plank in looking for better ways to maximise the clinical expertise of our highly trained paramedics who do such a fine job in rural and remote communities across Queensland. Already the feedback from the first batch of students who began the course in November has been positive.

This qualification will enable 60 paramedics to provide an expanded scope of practice to isolated communities, with the first group of students to graduate at the end of 2007. The Beattie government is committed to providing a world-class ambulance service to all Queenslanders, regardless of where they live. This important initiative will help provide greater assistance to rural doctors and remote area nurses in the isolated Queensland communities where they live and work.

Historically, the Queensland Ambulance Service has provided an acute service to Queensland communities, responding to prehospital emergencies. But there are communities in Queensland who could benefit further from our paramedics and their clinical skills. The strength of this new qualification lies in the interdisciplinary collaboration between doctors, nurses, allied health staff and other community members to develop strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of people in rural and remote communities. I look forward to seeing our graduate isolated practice paramedics in their communities. I am sure that they will provide great assistance to the rural and remote health workforce.