



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Wednesday, 18 April 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Emergency Service, Hand-held Radios

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.17 am): I am pleased to announce today that the Beattie government is delivering on another key election promise, with new hand-held radios for State Emergency Service volunteers currently being delivered to regions throughout Queensland. The new radios were promised as part of the \$52 million Safeguarding Cyclone Communities commitment. The first 525 hand-held radios purchased under the program are worth over \$600,000 and are currently being distributed to regions ahead of the rollout to local units.

The new handsets have been designed with volunteers in mind. They are easy to operate, compact in size and are weather proof, making them ideal for responding to any situation. By introducing these new standardised handsets, if a radio fails any other radio can be used to continue the operational response. Over the next five years \$6.7 million will be spent on improving radio communications for volunteers to support them in their vital work.

The equipment continues the government's focus on interoperability within our emergency services. The new radios allow more flexibility at incident scenes by continuing to allow separate agency incident commanders to communicate without having to be in the same place. This is achieved by maintaining access to the common emergency channel, which allows SES controllers to talk with police, ambulance and fire commanders at the scene of any incident.

As part of the program 30 base station repeaters will also be purchased, allowing a wider area of radio coverage and ensuring that this vital equipment is kept serviceable and up to date. An extra eight field technicians will also be funded to provide training for volunteers across the state, maintain equipment, and improve radio communications for volunteers.

The purchase and distribution of these radios will also make the handsets standard across Queensland, meaning SES volunteers in areas like Mount Isa and Mount Morgan will be using the same technology as those in Brisbane. Having everyone use the same equipment means we will be able to streamline our volunteer training. This represents a significant investment in improving radio communications during responses to major incidents and shows this government's commitment to supporting our volunteers. I would like to thank the Premier and Deputy Premier for the great support of the volunteers in this program. As everybody knows, communications is the lifeblood of Emergency Services.