



Speech by

Hon. Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Thursday, 19 April 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Ambulance Service, Student Paramedics

Hon. PD PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services) (10.10 am): I am pleased to advise the House that 41 new Queensland Ambulance Service student paramedics begin their on-road training this week. These recruits are the latest of an additional 350 paramedics the Beattie government is recruiting over four years, helping to boost pre-hospital medical care throughout Queensland.

This week we have seen some of the usual misinformation peddled from members opposite regarding the Queensland Ambulance Service and community ambulance cover. There is no doubt that Queensland's growing and ageing population is leading to an increased demand for ambulance services. Our hardworking paramedics are getting to more code 1 life-threatening cases in under 10 minutes than ever before—and there are more of them to get to. That is why this government made the tough decision and introduced the community ambulance cover.

Members opposite are quick to criticise the community ambulance cover at any opportunity as making no difference to the QAS, but the facts just do not bear out their claims. Since the introduction of the community ambulance cover in 2003, the number of paramedics has increased by over 400 officers, the number of ambulance vehicles has increased by more than 100 vehicles, and the QAS has also purchased nearly 400 defibrillators. As well as that, we have also completed 24 new, replacement or refurbished ambulance stations and field offices. Despite the claims by the opposition, it is clear that the community ambulance cover has helped put more paramedics and vehicles on the road, purchase more life-saving equipment and build more stations around the state.

I can also update the House on the status of the paramedics we have recruited from the United Kingdom. The first group went on the road last week, and QAS officers have just returned from the UK where they have been finalising the selection process for additional applicants. The Beattie government is committed to providing Queenslanders with a world-class ambulance service, and the new student paramedics hitting the road this week are the latest example of that commitment.