



Speech by

Phil Weightman

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard Wednesday, 5 September 2007

REDLANDS STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE AWARDS

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (10.06 pm): Recently some real heroes in the Redlands community were acknowledged for their outstanding efforts to make our community safer at the Redlands SES awards presentation evening. I thank the minister for making the night a memorable night for all attending, where some worthy people were recognised for many years of good service to the SES.

In my past life as a police officer, for 26 years it was my job to play a role in protecting members of the community. I got paid to do that; however, the heroes of the Redlands community who were honoured at the awards evening volunteer to help our community when help is most needed. These are local residents who put their hands up to do the work when it is most needed. They train hard in their own time, and they need to train hard because lives often depend on their abilities. Too often we think of our SES volunteers as people who do crowd control or who are used as extra bodies to help the police during searches, but they do more. They help in complicated land searches, repairing storm damage, assisting in white water rescues and many more tasks that require high levels of expertise and safety.

As the state member for Cleveland, I want to continue building a better lifestyle for all of us who live on the bayside. That involves building a better community, and it is the volunteers in our community who are the fabric who keep our community sewn together. I believe that volunteers are the true heroes in our communities.

Award recipients that night were Tom Short, for a remarkable 15 years of dedicated service, and Gary Soutar, Peter Gould and Doug Brunner who were honoured for their 10 years of valiant service to the SES. They are wonderful examples for the rest of our community. The presentation evening was also an opportunity to say thankyou to the 90 fantastic volunteers who make up the Redlands SES. These are the same people who volunteered to go up north during Cyclone Larry to assist in the clean-up operations. They enjoy a very good reputation for being a well-organised and very disciplined volunteer SES group. I know they train hard to improve their range of expertise in a variety of fields. This makes them a sought after commodity in times of disaster. On behalf of a very grateful community, I would like to thank the volunteers of the Redlands SES on a job well done.