



Speech by

Hon. Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGEE

Hansard Wednesday, 20 May 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emergency Services

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (9.55 am): Wild weather across the state's south-east has kept our emergency services personnel busy overnight. Since 5 pm yesterday afternoon, the State Emergency Service hotline, 132500, has received more than 350 calls for assistance and advice. Early reports indicate that SES personnel have attended more than 34 jobs in the Brisbane, north coast and Toowoomba regions since five o'clock yesterday. Most of those jobs were temporary roof repairs and sandbagging. In the Glasshouse Mountains, SES personnel are currently responding to a number of calls for assistance mainly relating to roof repairs.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service attended 11 swift-water rescue incidents overnight where vehicles were driven into rising floodwaters. The first such incident occurred at around eight o'clock last night on Neurum Road in Neurum, with the most recent at seven o'clock this morning at the intersection of Old Gympie Road and Pikes Road in Beerwah. Other incidents occurred during the night at Royston, Nundah, Larapinta, Peachester, Waterford and Glass House. Thankfully, in all cases the motorists had safely removed themselves from the vehicle by the time our skilled fire and rescue officers arrived at the scene. But these incidents again reinforce the need for motorists to avoid driving through flooded roads and streets. So far this storm season we have tragically lost nine lives in flooded streams, creeks and drains. People are simply not heeding the warnings that are consistently reported during these wild weather events. Floodwaters are unpredictable and dangerous and I implore Queenslanders again to keep a safe distance at all times and to particularly keep an eye on children and young people and keep them under supervision where possible.

While I am on my feet, I take the opportunity to thank our tireless SES volunteers for their ongoing efforts to support Queensland communities in need. Additionally, many rural fire volunteers along with Queensland fire and rescue swift-water rescue teams and incident management teams provide invaluable support to local councils and disaster management groups during disasters and wild weather events. So far this year there have been around 5,000 SES activations and over 92,000 hours of operations performed by SES volunteers. They do a fantastic job and we should take every opportunity we can to thank them.