



Speech by

Hon. Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGEE

Hansard Tuesday, 1 September 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Ambulance Service

Hon. NS ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services) (10.08 am): The Queensland Ambulance Service is one of the best, if not the best, performing ambulance services in the country. Last year the QAS responded to around 744,000 incidents—an average of one every 42 seconds—with a patient satisfaction rate, independently assessed, of 99 per cent. In December 2007 the Premier and I announced the outcomes of one of the most comprehensive audits of the Ambulance Service in its recent history. The QAS audit made 20 recommendations and contained 45 initiatives to improve service delivery and refocus attention on front-line service delivery.

Substantial progress has been made towards implementing the cabinet endorsed recommendations, and the results are there for all to see: the best ambulance officer to population ratio in the country; some of the best response times in the country; a decreasing response to incident ratio—an indicator of efficiency and effectiveness—a massive structural shift from the back office towards the front line; the second lowest staff attrition rate for any jurisdiction in Australia; Australian and world-leading clinical enhancements; major technology, resource and capital upgrades; and innovative demand management strategies.

No ambulance service in the country can guarantee a perfect response in every instance. It is easy for some to criticise and undermine from the sidelines. However, our government is 100 per cent behind the Ambulance Service and its more than 3,600 officers and staff. Our support is demonstrated by the \$494 million budget allocation this financial year, which includes funding for an additional 50 ambulance officers on top of the 505 added over the past two budgets.

Over the past week the Queensland Ambulance Service has been subject to criticism from some members of the community and the media. Media coverage in the past week has focused on a number of ambulance responses where there were sad and tragic consequences for some individuals and their families. Our condolences and thoughts go out to those involved. However, as sad and tragic as some of these cases are, they are not representative of the high-quality service provided by ambulance officers and the Queensland Ambulance Service generally. All Queenslanders can have confidence in and be proud of the high-quality service provided by their local ambos.