



Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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VOLUNTEER MARINE RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (9.14 pm): Recent reports put community safety volunteer associations receiving \$2.6 million in grants. Of that amount, the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association—or VMR—was reported to receive nearly \$600,000. That sounds like a large sum, but let me break it down. That means that \$22,542 was available for each of the 25 Volunteer Marine Rescue groups to manage their boat replacement program. I have the honour of hosting a Volunteer Marine Rescue group in my electorate. In fact, the Jacobs Well Volunteer Marine Rescue is the only Queensland Ambulance Service first responder on the water for personal injury cases in Queensland. That group's patch encompasses all waterways from the north arm of the Coomera River to the northern point of Macleay Island in the north and 50 nautical miles out to sea. The Jacobs Well VMR has a total of four vessels.

In the past two years, the vessel replacement program at Jacobs Well cost \$473,000. That program included the replacement of two vessels, new engines for those two vessels, the refit of one vessel that was due to be replaced—but because of a lack of funds a refit was done—and a replacement engine on an additional vessel. Vessels are replaced every 10 years and engines are replaced every two years. The suggestion that a contribution of \$22,542 can appropriately accommodate the vessel replacement program beggars belief.

I turn to the ongoing costs. The running costs of engines is \$60 to \$70 per hour per vessel. The primary rescue vessel holds 500 litres of unleaded petrol and uses it in just six hours. Last year total fuel expenses at the Jacobs Well VMR were approximately \$43,000. The total operational cost of the Jacobs Well VMR is approximately \$250,000 per financial year. The average cost for each volunteer in their first year in this vital service is \$1,100 out of their own back pocket.

What about the important work that these volunteers do? Over the past two years, activations at the Jacobs Well VMR were 40 medicals, of which 16 were Queensland Ambulance Service activations. There were 620 vessel assistance activations, of which 29 were Queensland Police Service activations. The total patrols or training amounted to 1,068 activations. The Jacobs Well VMR fielded 6,425 radio and telephone communications over that period. They put in many hours of ongoing training.

This group is made up 100 per cent of volunteers—people putting their own time and their own money into a cause that saves peoples' lives and their property. Today, the very important and relevant point was made to me that if those vessel assistance activations did not occur in a timely fashion by these volunteers then in many cases they would soon become medical activations. I make these points and call on this government to fund more adequately the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association to ensure that it remains a viable essential service.