



Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Occupational Violence Taskforce; Paramedic Safety Taskforce

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (2.22 pm): I would like to update the House on the steps being taken to protect our healthcare workers from being assaulted while they are caring for their patients. Following an increase in the number of verbal and physical assaults against front-line health workers, including paramedics, I was determined to investigate options to help reduce the risk of assaults on Queensland's health workers. This led to the formation of the Occupational Violence Taskforce for our hospital and health service staff and the Paramedic Safety Taskforce.

The Paramedic Safety Taskforce delivered its interim report at the end of January and has recommended a number of measures to help improve the safety of paramedics. These interim recommendations include enhanced situational awareness and safety training for all paramedics and a public awareness campaign, both of which are being fast-tracked.

All front-line ambulance staff will be undertaking the enhanced training which aims to mitigate the risks of violence by helping paramedics to identify, de-escalate and withdraw safely from potentially dangerous or confronting situations. We are also implementing a \$1.35 million public awareness campaign 'Zero tolerance—no excuse for abuse', which is aimed at minimising violence against both paramedics and front-line healthcare workers. This morning I attended a meeting of the Occupational Violence Taskforce. I am pleased to inform the House that the work of the task force is progressing well.

Our healthcare workers, including paramedics, are not punching bags. They deserve our respect and gratitude for the important work they do in our community. There is absolutely no excuse for anyone to abuse or physically assault a healthcare worker. I urge the Queensland community to join together and show zero tolerance for this type of antisocial behaviour.