



Speech By  
**Tim Mander**


**MEMBER FOR EVERTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2017

**MOTION**

**Emergency Services Personnel**

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to adopt the LNP policy on protecting front-line emergency services workers in Queensland.

Nobody supports our front-line emergency support personnel more than the LNP. Our police, our firefighters and our paramedics are hardworking people who go out and literally put their lives on the line to protect Queenslanders. We on this side of the House believe that those workers need to be protected. Time and time again we hear about these front-line emergency personnel being assaulted whilst doing their jobs. I ask members to imagine paramedics—people not trained to be able to defend themselves—being assaulted while they are trying to do their job.

The number of assaults that are taking place is increasing. In the past two years Queensland paramedics were assaulted more than 400 times. The figures show that from July 2015 to March 2017 ambulance officers were deliberately attacked 414 times. We constantly hear of these attacks against paramedics and particularly the police on a daily basis.

In my regular meetings with representatives of the Queensland Police Union they have said that their greatest priority was to make sure that their workers were protected—to make sure that when our police officers went out to do their job there was a clear signal to the community that you do not touch a police officer whilst they are doing their work. Unfortunately, that continues to happen.

The penalties against these assaults are simply not severe enough. For example, Douglas Asiata committed a serious assault of a police officer. He coward punched a cop during a drunken brawl. His penalty sparked outrage among police. This 25-year-old pleaded guilty to affray and serious assault. What happened to him? He received no jail sentence. He received an 18-month probation order and 100 hours of community service. We on this side of the House think that is not good enough. We think that penalty does not send a clear message to the community.

We have listened to the police, we have listened to the paramedics and we have listened to the firefighters. If we are fortunate enough to win government, our policy is that if a person is found guilty of serious assault against one of our front-line emergency personnel they will spend a minimum of seven days behind bars and, of course, if the case is serious, longer than that. We call on the government to support that.

What did this minister say in response to this policy? He wrote letters to the editors of papers throughout the state. In that letter he said—

Currently, a charge of serious assault against an emergency services officer already carries a penalty of up to 7 years in prison, and up to 14 years if it includes aggravating circumstances.

The minister brags about that, but it was the LNP's policy to impose those penalties. The minister continued—

So when I read that the LNP would change the law to ensure that those who seriously assault our emergency services workers would only get seven days (yes seven days) in prison, I thought it was a sick joke.

I will tell members what is a sick joke: this minister continuing to mislead the public. He has deliberately misled the public about our policy. As if anybody was going to get only seven days for this offence! The minister has a record of misleading the public. The minister misled the people of Townsville when he promised 20 extra RAP squad members. Now we find that that is not an additional figure. The minister misled Gary and Leanne Pullen when he led them to believe that their son's killers would not get parole under the new policy.

Tonight I challenge the minister to ensure that any person who commits a serious assault against a police officer, paramedic or firefighter will spend time behind bars. The LNP is the only party that will ensure that will happen to send a clear message that we value our front-line emergency services personnel.

*(Time expired)*