

Question on Notice 1064, Tuesday, 28 September 2004

Mr LAWLOR asked the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Cummins) -
With reference to rural fire vehicles and the replacement program mentioned on page 37 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements-
Will he expand on this initiative and explain how it improves the firefighting capability of our rural volunteers?

Mr CUMMINS:

I thank the Member for his Question and would like to congratulate him on his ongoing strong support for Emergency Services within his electorate.

The Beattie Government has allocated a record \$303.54 million Budget for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service this financial year. Of this total figure, about \$150 million goes towards firefighting resources in rural and regional Queensland. The latest Budget means that since 1998, under the Beattie Labor Government, funding for fire services in Queensland has almost doubled.

The government will spend \$15.75M this financial year to deliver new urban and rural fire vehicles and trailers. During 2004-2005, the QFRS is spending \$12M replacing urban fire appliances and \$3.75M to provide for new rural vehicles into the service.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) constructs and provides firefighting appliances to rural fire brigades. These vehicles are made available at a subsidised price, which ensures that brigades only pay 20% of the construction cost.

The veteran replacement program was created to reduce the age of the Rural Fire Brigade vehicle fleet and to provide brigades with a more efficient and effective method of fighting fires. This is done, in most cases, by removing an old petrol powered appliance from a brigade and replacing it with a modern diesel powered unit, complete with the latest ancillary equipment.

The latest Medium Response appliance comes complete with a 2000 litre tank, pump, hose reels, and a foam proportioning unit. This proportioning unit can increase the effectiveness of water two-fold, allowing brigades to stay longer on the fire ground and therefore minimising down time in refilling.

The new Medium Response Appliance is based on an Isuzu NPS 300 cab chassis. These appliances are now turbo charged for better emission control and are now fitted standard with air conditioning, to relieve brigade volunteers during operations.