

Question on Notice No. 571, Thursday, 20 May 2004

Mr ENGLISH asked the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Cummins) -

With reference to the recent announcement of twenty flood boats, with a combined value of over half a million dollars, being delivered to SES units across the State during May and June –

Will he outline how this boost will help local communities prepare and respond to natural disasters?

Mr CUMMINS:

The Department of Emergency Services (DES) provides Local Governments with floodboats for suitably trained State Emergency Service (SES) Volunteers to support their communities in times of emergency or disaster.

The safety of all volunteers is and will continue to be paramount amongst the concerns of the Government and myself. They are part of 88,000 Emergency Services volunteers who save Queenslanders lives every day. They do a great job.

To assist our volunteers in 1998-1999 a State Government Floodboat Replacement Program of \$1.5 million over four years was initiated for the replacement of non-compliant and aged floodboats. Since 1998-1999, the replacement program has achieved a reduction of average age of floodboats. A total of 100 floodboats have been replaced since the start of the program. The replacement of 20 floodboats in 2003-04 will continue to ensure that local communities have floodboats more capable of performing the tasks required and that are safer than those utilised previously due to age and condition. Twelve of the 20 floodboats which are being replaced in 2003-04 are greater than 25 years old.

Our ongoing commitment of \$3.3 million will help ensure that SES Volunteers were adequately resourced and able to respond to any challenges they were faced with. An additional 1,250 SES volunteers statewide will benefit from wet/cold weather protective equipment for search and rescue activities. 2,500 active volunteers will receive an additional set of overalls and seven flood rescue boats will be purchased to replace aged vessels.