

Question on Notice No. 586, Thursday 20 May 2004

Ms NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Cummins)–
With reference to a marine stinger education package which was delivered last
September to Ambulance Service paramedics in North Queensland –

- (1) Has that proven to be a worthwhile service?
- (2) With the current marine stinger season in North Queensland nearing an end, are new strategies being put in place to respond to the next stinger invasion of northern coastal waters later this year?

Mr CUMMINS:

I thank the Member for her Question and would like to congratulate her on her ongoing strong support for Emergency Services within her electorate. In answer to her question, I provide the following advice.

- (1) Queensland Ambulance Service Paramedics have been educated in the recognition and emergency management of Marine Stinger incidents since the late 1980's. Via the Marine Stinger Program, Paramedics undertake annual skills validation in the management of Marine Stinger victims, including the administration of Box Jelly Antivenom, if required. The revised Marine Stinger Education Package released in 2003, represented a significant revision of the existing program to ensure the knowledge and clinical practice of QAS Paramedics remains up to date with contemporary medical management and delivery of the program, via progressive educational methods. The format and content of the training package has been well received by staff.
- (2) The QAS has been fully involved with a number of Queensland agencies including Queensland Health, Universities and Surf Life Saving, in the recent review of management of Marine Stinger incidents. The 2003 training program contains a large amount of well-researched information and it will continue to be under review to ensure any further developments in Marine Stinger knowledge is included in future Paramedic practices. As well as this, in conjunction with Mission Beach Rotary Club and the Cardwell Shire Council, beach vinegar stations have been installed to include:
 - signage for beachgoers to include information on triple zero;
 - first aid instructions;
 - directions to the nearest Surf Life Saving hut; and
 - a location numbering system to assist Paramedics of the exact location.

The QAS has also delivered a pilot program for Marine Stinger education to school students in Far North Queensland, which has received positive feedback from both students and teachers. The aim of this program has been to promote safe beach usage during the Marine Stinger season, via community education, in the hope of preventing encounters with potentially dangerous sea animals.

The recently announced installation of vehicle fridges in coastal ambulance vehicles will ensure Box Jelly Antivenom is delivered in a timely and appropriate manner to emergencies in northern coastal waters.