

Question on Notice No. 746, Friday 18 June 2004

**Mr QUINN** asked the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Cummins) - Will he detail the total number of callouts to heart attacks and other Code 1 medical emergencies that the Queensland Fire Service attended as a result of a lack of ambulance availability (to attend in the prescribed ten minute benchmark) for each year since 2001-02 (reported separately)?

**Mr CUMMINS:**

In peak periods I am sure the community would expect our emergency services to work together as they have always done, for the benefit of all Queenslanders. As I have said previously, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service does not carry out the role of the Queensland Ambulance Service.

There are many reasons why the Queensland Ambulance Service may call upon the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service for assistance. This could be as diverse as rescue assistance, dangerous hazards, accidents, assisting with the lift and extrication of heavy patients, or to drive the ambulance whilst paramedics treat a seriously ill patient.

Whilst the Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Fire and Rescue Service both maintain data storage systems, the detail you have requested is not recorded. Therefore I am unable to detail the total number of callouts for heart attacks and other Code 1 emergencies as specified in the question.

It is the practice of the Queensland Ambulance Service to assign the nearest available crew to each and every case, using the computer aided dispatch and the Medical Priority Dispatching system to prioritise each and every call.

Further, first aid assistance may be in the form of Queensland Ambulance Service first responders, fire officers or police officers. Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Officers are trained in first-aid and carry life saving oxygen resuscitation equipment that can provide life saving support to a patient even though the ambulance may only be minutes away. A first aid response of this nature, and the use of fire officers to provide it, is indeed a standard procedure of high performance contemporary ambulance services worldwide. It is a component of the highly effective Queensland Emergency Medical System, of which Queensland can be very proud. The Queensland Ambulance Service has maintained response times despite the ever increasing demands on service. Paramedics attended to over 8,000 more Code 1 patients in less than 10 minutes in the last financial year, than the previous year.