

Question on Notice No. 805, Tuesday 17 August 2004

Mr LAWLOR asked the Minister for Emergency Services (Mr Cummins)—
With reference to page 15 of the ministerial portfolio statements that states the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) has established a State-wide Community Service Unit structure to enhance the way in which communities are engaged and as the local ambulance committees also do vital work in engaging the QAS with the community—
How has the introduction of the Community Ambulance Cover (CAC) impacted on the role of local ambulance committees?

Mr CUMMINS:

I would like to thank the Member for Southport for his interest and ongoing strong support for Emergency Services within his electorate. I understand the Member has recently been to the Annual General Meeting of his local LAC. This gives me an opportunity to highlight the tremendous increases in funding that the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) has received under the Beattie Government. The Beattie Government's election commitments over the next three years to the Queensland Ambulance Service include \$35.9 million to recruit 240 extra paramedics, plus \$28.6 million for 22 new or refurbished ambulance stations and \$29.5 million for 200 new or refurbished ambulance vehicles.

The introduction of the Community Ambulance Cover has delivered the QAS a solid and predictable funding base for the first time in its 112 year history. The Community Ambulance Cover replaces the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) Subscription Scheme.

The introduction of the Community Ambulance Cover, and the closure of the subscription scheme and Customer Service Offices, emphasised a need for the QAS to continue to communicate and work closely with Queensland communities.

The introduction of the Community Service Unit (CSU) provides a streamlined and consistent framework, in which the QAS work strategically with a network of 179 Local Ambulance Committees (LAC) to engage communities in community safety initiatives.

LACs continue to be the key to providing the QAS with feedback and advice regarding service delivery, promoting ambulance services in the community and raising funds for service enhancements over and above those enhancements provided by the State Government.

LACs work in partnership with the CSU to enhance community capacity and ensure ownership of community safety preventative and preparedness strategies at the local level.

The establishment of Regional Community Services Units ensures there is a strong support structure in place to enable LACs to advocate, on behalf of their community, and the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS).