

**Question on Notice
No. 417
Asked on 24 March 2005**

MR WELLINGTON asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR CUMMINS) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the significant increase in population and tourist movements in the Mary Valley – Will he support the location of an ambulance station in the Mary Valley at Kenilworth; if so, what is he doing to bring this request to reality; if not, what support will he provide to the volunteers who are members of the Kenilworth First Response Unit?

ANSWER:

The Beattie Government is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to supporting this state's emergency service volunteers through a \$21.83 million funding package over three years. This initiative is known as the Department of Emergency Services (DES) Volunteer Support Package.

This commitment acknowledges the many thousands of Queensland volunteers who selflessly devote their time to assist their local communities, and ensures that these volunteers are adequately resourced to respond to any challenge.

The Volunteer Support Package builds on the successes achieved by programs instituted during the previous term of the Beattie Government to improve volunteer management and safety. The Beattie Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing support for the vital role that volunteers in the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Community First Responder Groups and other volunteer organisations undertake in delivering emergency and counter disaster services.

I take pride in assuring Mr Wellington and the community of Kenilworth that they are well served by the Kenilworth First Responder Group, which in turn, is well supported by ambulance paramedics provided from neighbouring Maleny, Nambour and Cooroy Ambulance Stations, in conjunction with additional support and assistance provided by the Sunshine Coast Helicopter Rescue Service.

The Kenilworth First Responders are very proactive in seeking to enhance their service to the community. The Kenilworth First Responders have obtained two grants from the State Government, one from the Jupiter's Casino Community Benefit Fund for \$35,000 in 2003 and one from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for \$22,000 in 2004 for the purchase of two 4WD vehicles, for which they should be commended.

The staffing model in the Kenilworth catchment is consistent with other similar sized areas across Queensland. The case load currently does not justify the provision of a permanent ambulance station in the Mary Valley.

To ensure the community of Kenilworth has access to early emergency response at all times, the Kenilworth First Responder Group was established in May 2002 and was fully supported by the QAS with the provision of comprehensive training and the supply of vital life saving equipment, such as defibrillators and communication equipment. Uniforms, including overalls, rain jackets, warm coats and personal safety equipment have also been supplied by the QAS.

The Sunshine Coast has enthusiastically embraced the establishment of the Kenilworth First Responder Group, which is proving to be extremely successful and the QAS regularly monitors caseloads and response times.

The Officer-in-Charge, Maleny Ambulance Station, regularly visits Kenilworth to provide follow up skill maintenance training sessions to its members, as well as providing support to the community when they respond to an incident.

As a demonstration of the QAS's commitment to the Kenilworth First Responder Group, the Assistant Commissioner and the Area Director (Sunshine Coast) from the North Coast Region, QAS has visited the group, to provide assurance that the members of the Kenilworth First Responder Group receive ongoing training development, life saving skills maintenance, and uniforms, as outlined in the QAS First Responder Policy.

I wish to assure the Member that managing and maintaining excellent levels of emergency service resources to provide an appropriate service, reflecting the demand profiles within communities such as Kenilworth, will continue to be a key priority of my department.