

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 738**  
**Asked on Tuesday 24 May 2005**

MR McNAMARA asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR CUMMINS)

QUESTION:

Will he advise what the Department of Emergency Services has done to ensure that our emergency services professionals and volunteers located across this vast state have access to the best information and communication equipment.

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his Question and would like to commend him for his commitment and ongoing strong support for Emergency Services within his electorate.

I am pleased to advise that the Department of Emergency Services is progressing a number of major information and communications technology initiatives aimed at improving communication and information services to emergency services professionals and volunteers across the State. These initiatives include the following:

a joint project in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service examining opportunities for improvements in voice, data and radio networks, emergency communications centres and associated emergency response capabilities across the State;

The implementation during 2005 and 2006 of a singular common State-wide Computer Aided Despatch system for the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. This system will replace the three ageing Computer Aided Despatch systems currently supporting the operations of the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service;

Upgrades to provide a higher speed broadband communication service to ambulance and fire stations across the State. The broadband services will improve access by our paramedics and fire fighters to the department's electronic information services including email and access to the internet. In 2005, my department is upgrading 122 stations to a broadband communication service and by mid 2006 a further 105 stations will be upgraded.

Undertaking a major upgrade program of the department's digital communications network infrastructure to provide improved redundancy capabilities and resiliency and at the same time facilitate transition of a number of analogue voice and radio services to a digital based service;

the provision of mapping information, through the department's web services, to emergency services professionals, to assist with incident location, providing knowledge about the environment near an incident and with planning;

Improvements in the web site that my department established to allow our emergency services volunteers to publish information to their volunteer groups about their respective volunteer service and to discuss their volunteer service.

As well as those department-wide or joint projects that I have just outlined, I am pleased to advise the current status of major initiatives being undertaken by the operational Divisions within my department.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has recently completed the installation of 18 satellite telephones in ambulance vehicles across the State, including 8 in the Northern Region, 4 in the South Western Region and 6 in the Far Northern Region. A further 11 units will be installed in South Western Regions during the rest of this year to coincide with ambulance vehicle construction schedules. In addition, the installation of 3 new radio repeater sites to extend or improve the coverage of the networks west of Townsville (Mt Bluey), at the Brisbane Airport and at Boronia Heights in the Logan area;

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has recently completed the remote alarms initiative which has provided fire alarm and station turnout improvements at 71 fire stations, replaced 8 older Very High Frequency (VHF) radio repeaters (used in urban areas) with Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio repeaters at 8 sites, upgraded 10 VHF sites for rural operations and 6 site upgrades to support site linking changes. An additional 5 sites have been installed to meet the higher priority extended radio coverage requirements for urban and rural operational areas and developed and installed remote station turnout systems throughout the State.

Counter Disaster and Rescue Services has purchased a total of 254 waterproof handheld radios with waterproof speaker mikes and 13 UHF base repeaters and issued to Counter Disaster and Rescue Services units. This communications equipment will replace older and technically obsolete portable hand held radios, ensuring reliable communications for State Emergency Services operations in all weather conditions. In addition, equipment has been purchased to allow the construction of 10 solar base repeaters which will be distributed throughout the State and is completing the purchase of 200 mobile radios and waterproof speakers for the State Emergency Services Flood Boat fleet UHF radio installation. The floodboat installation initiative is progressing under Regional plans and arrangements.

These commitments by my department to is a visible acknowledgement of support to the many thousands of Queensland volunteers who selflessly devote their time to assist their local communities, and ensures that those volunteers are adequately resourced and able to respond to any challenge.