

**Question on Notice
No. 786
Asked on 25 May 2005**

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

How will Rural Fire Brigades in Ipswich West benefit from an increase in funding earlier in the year?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question and would like to congratulate him on his ongoing strong support for Emergency Services within his electorate.

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 four years. This initiative is known as the Department of Emergency Services (DES) Volunteer Support Package.

The enhanced \$21.83 million volunteer support package includes \$2.87 million over three years commencing with 2004-05 for training, communications network upgrades and research for Rural Fire Service volunteers.

The mid year budget review has seen the Beattie Government release a further amount of \$2.95 million to support rural fire brigades. This is comprised of a further five iZone officers to accelerate firefighting competency training and to increase community preparedness and capability to respond to a bushfire threat in the rural-urban interface (iZone) areas including those communities in the Ipswich West area.

Rural Fire volunteers will also receive incident command and control training, upgrading of the two way radio equipment used by the brigades operating in the iZone areas and further expansion for aerial operations training.

A fleet of 10 medium attack 4x4 appliances for the use of strike teams responding to high intensity bushfires and an additional three 4,000 litres capacity pumper tankers fitted with 12,000 litres capacity portable dams to further enhance high intensity bushfire response capability are being constructed. Five of these appliances will be based in South Eastern Region in preparation for the fire season.

This package will ensure the ongoing safety of the community and our volunteers through the provision of structured training and increased standards of operational and personal protective equipment. It will also support and enhance the capability of all our emergency services volunteer organisations and ensure their ongoing viability.