

**Question on Notice
No. 901
Asked on Tuesday, 7 June 2005**

Ms NELSON-CARR asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR CUMMINS) –

QUESTION:

How will the Community Ambulance Cover benefit the growing population of the Townsville Region?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and for the strong support she has shown not only towards the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS), but all sections of emergency services within her electorate.

This question gives me the opportunity to highlight the tremendous increases in funding that the Queensland Ambulance Service has received under the Beattie Government.

The Beattie Government's Community Ambulance Cover has delivered the Queensland Ambulance Service a solid and predictable funding base for the first time in its 112-year history. This allows the QAS to plan with confidence for the future, knowing that they have such a sound and predictable funding base, as well as providing all Queensland residents with ambulance cover Australia wide.

In addition to the Community Ambulance Cover, the Beattie Government's 2004 election commitments to the QAS includes \$35.9 million to recruit 240 extra paramedics plus \$28.6 million for 22 new or refurbished ambulance station and \$29.5 million for 200 new or refurbished ambulance vehicles. This will provide significant benefits to all Queensland residents, including those who work or reside in the twin cities of Townsville and Thuringowa.

As part of this commitment, the State Budget for the 2005-06 financial year has committed \$7.9 million for replacement ambulance vehicles for the QAS.

The Community Ambulance Cover Enhancement Package for the Townsville and Thuringowa electorates include an additional 35 ambulance paramedics to be distributed between those ambulance station servicing the area, to assist in further reducing response times and introducing safer rostering procedures for our hardworking paramedics. These new staff will further assist the QAS in maintaining and enhancing an already world-class ambulance service within the Townsville and Thuringowa electorates, and Queensland as a whole.

To support these additional staffing numbers, major renovations are being undertaken at the Black River Ambulance Station (\$250,000) and the Kirwan Ambulance Station (\$600,000). In addition to these extensions, the Beattie Government is further committed to the establishment of a new additional ambulance station in Townsville and the redevelopment and replacement of the current Hugh Street Ambulance Station, of which these two projects total \$3.65 million. This forms part of the Beattie Government's 2004 election commitment for \$4.5 million for QAS projects in the Townsville area to improve ambulance services.

The QAS are initiating new rosters across the State and these rosters are now in place at Townsville and Thuringowa. These rosters do not only reflect better working lifestyles for QAS paramedics, but are better aligned to workload demographics. The introduction of these initiatives has seen an improvement in response times across the Northern Region from 69.97% of all Code 1 cases attended to in less than 10 minutes during the first quarter of this financial year to 76.18% of all Code 1 cases attended to in less than 10 minutes during the current quarter, to date.

QAS paramedics do a magnificent job protecting the lives of Queenslanders every day and it is important that the Government provides them with the best possible resources to do their job.