

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 1742**  
**Asked on 13 November 2008**

MRS MILLER asked the Minister for Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS) -

QUESTION:

How does the government assist State Emergency Service volunteers in the Ipswich region?

ANSWER:

The Bligh Government values the State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers who selflessly devote time and energy to assist their local communities and has reiterated its commitment to support the attraction, recruitment, training and recognition of emergency services volunteers in the recent "Toward Q2" vision statement.

Direct funding and subsidy programs for the SES are provided through the Department of Emergency Services and Emergency Management Queensland.

SES volunteering has been improved through enhancements to regional training delivery via the provision of training and assessment qualifications for volunteer trainers and the development of new training materials and resources. A \$52 million funding package over five years has boosted equipment and training for SES volunteers. In 2007-2008, Emergency Management Queensland more than doubled the number of SES volunteers receiving training and the number of qualifications issued for SES volunteer training rose from 3870 in 2006-07 to 7741 in 2007-08.

The SES Non-Recurrent Subsidy Program is a Queensland Government program which aims to assist local governments to provide a high quality emergency and disaster service by supporting the activities of the SES. The Program subsidises accommodation, motor vehicles (including accessories) and office equipment on an annual basis. I have recently approved funding of \$3,000 for the 2008-2009 financial year to the Ipswich City Council to assist with the purchase of four laptop computers for the Ipswich, Marburg, Goodna and Rosewood SES Groups to enhance operational capability.

In 2007-2008, Ipswich City Council received subsidy funding of \$2,000 for the provision of data projectors for Ipswich, Rosewood, Marburg and Goodna SES Groups. Goodna SES Group was also allocated funding for the provision of a rescue trailer during this financial year.

In 2004-2005, subsidies totalling \$80,000 were paid to Ipswich City Council for accommodation refurbishments to the Ipswich SES Headquarters and an extension to the existing facility at Rosewood to accommodate the Rosewood Cadet Group.

SES Volunteer Executives in the Ipswich region also receive an annual 'out of pocket' allowance under the SES Recurrent Subsidy Program to assist with defraying the costs associated with performing their volunteer executive duties throughout the year. Volunteer Executive Allowances ranging from \$272 to \$358 per individual are paid to Local Controllers, Deputy Local Controllers, Group Leaders, Cadet Coordinators and Volunteer Executive Committee members on an annual basis.

In addition to the SES Subsidy Programs, the Bligh Government is continuing to demonstrate its commitment through investing \$10.26 million over five years to enhance equipment for SES volunteers as part of the 2006 Election Commitment "Safeguarding Cyclone Communities".

Under this Election Commitment funding, the Ipswich SES has been issued with the following personal protective clothing and equipment:

- 328 x pairs of two-piece overalls at a cost of \$40,912;
- 207 x webbing belts at a cost of \$4,736;
- 423 x SES t-shirts at a cost of \$2643; and
- 216 x kevlar helmets at a cost of \$18,262.

On 23 April 2008, the Payroll Tax (Harmonisation) Amendment Bill introduced new exemptions for employers of SES volunteers applying to wages paid or payable to an employee in relation to any period during which the employee is taking part in emergency services as a volunteer.

Recent Bligh Government initiatives supporting volunteers include greater protection from assault through legislative amendments. Offenders now face up to seven years jail for assaulting SES volunteers.

Volunteering helps build stronger, more connected and caring communities and the Bligh Government has publically restated in "Toward Q2" its intention of continuing to support those who provide this incredibly valuable service to the community.