Question on Notice
No. 1250
Asked on 16 September 2009

MR FOLEY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR POLICE, CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the response to Question on Notice No. 713 of 2009 advising that patient transport to medical appointments falls within the Minister's portfolio—

As many rural patients are having problems getting suitably timed transport to travel to medical/hospital/specialist appointments out of the region, will the Minister allocate funding to organisations such as St John's Ambulance Service to provide the necessary transport when warranted?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) provides transport to medical appointments that are authorised by a medical practitioner who deems they require ambulance transport.

The QAS Patient Transport Service provides a valued service to Queenslanders. In 2007-08, QAS provided 164,560 medically authorised patient transports and in 2008-09 it increased to 179,404 transports.

The QAS consistently monitors workload and provides staff and resources to meet the demand and while it endeavours to meet the time frames for transporting patients to scheduled medical appointments, there will unfortunately, be occasions where it is not possible. Issues associated with traffic congestion, other patient collections and drop offs can impact schedules.

On 6 October 2008, Cabinet determined that allowing the QAS to manage and dispatch emergency and non emergency requests is the most effective front-line service delivery model and decided not to allow non emergency services to be made contestable. As a consequence, the Department of Community Safety is not in a position to fund other organisations.

The Bligh Government continues to support the QAS and provided record funding of $494.6 million in 2009-2010, an increase of $38.9 over the previous year. Included in this record budget is $3.5 million for an additional 50 ambulance officers and $20.9 million for 150 new ambulance vehicles to meet increasing community needs.