

**Question on Notice
No. 515
Asked on 23 March 2010**

MR SORENSEN asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to SES funding—

1. Why do SES units have to rely on financial support from local government which in most cases is insufficient?
2. Why are SES volunteers expected to put in extra time to fundraise to provide funds for provision of rations to feed members while on SES activities in their local area?
3. Why do SES volunteers need to fundraise to buy much needed office equipment that should be supplied?

ANSWER:

The Bligh Government has a proud history of supporting our State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers who selflessly give their time to support their local communities.

During the 2009 State election campaign, the Premier committed \$5.64 million over five years to provide 93 vehicles, 19 flood boats and four new trailers for SES groups to help boost their response capability in times of natural disaster. As part of this election commitment, \$1.2 million has been allocated this financial year to provide 20 vehicles, four floodboats and two rescue trailers.

The Bligh Government will contribute \$14.068 million in direct funding to the SES this financial year, which includes the \$1.2 million to deliver the 2009 election commitment for 20 vehicles, four floodboats and two rescue trailers in 2009-10. It also includes \$1.957 million to provide five floodboats, four rescue trailers and personal protective equipment as part of a 2006 election commitment and a further \$3.297 in volunteer training also committed to as part of the 2006 State Election.

The State Government is committed to working in partnership with local governments to support the SES. This partnership has been in place over many decades.

Section 80 of the Disaster Management Act states that the functions of a local government include 'to ensure it has a disaster response capability'. The same section then explains that 'disaster response capability, for a local government, means the ability to provide equipment and a suitable number of persons, using the resources available to the local government, to effectively deal with, or help another entity to deal with, an emergency situation or a disaster in the local government's area'.

In many instances, local governments provide their local SES group or unit with a facility to meet, train and store equipment. While the State Government provides vehicles and grants and equipment.

I am advised that while fundraising is an approved function, SES members are not expected to undertake fundraising activities to support or enhance operational capability, nor is there any reliance on doing so. When SES groups are activated, it is the responsibility of the tasking agency to provide refreshments. In other instances involving training, Emergency Management Queensland is responsible for catering, travel and accommodation costs. It is not unusual, however, for SES units to provide refreshments from their own funds to provide for tea and coffee at meetings of their group.

Ongoing collaboration between the State Government and local governments is vital to ensure SES groups get the best results locally. The Bligh Government will continue to support the SES with vehicles, flood boats, equipment and training.