

Question on Notice
No. 631
Asked on 10 September 2013

MR KATTER asked the Minister for Health (MR SPRINGBORG)-

QUESTION:

As the North Queensland Rescue Helicopter Service has recently been recognised by the North West Hospital and Health Service with budget allocation for services—

Will the Minister recognise the desperate need of the service for some financial support to continue servicing the North West?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for Mount Isa for his question.

North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service was established in February 2008, independent of approval or funding by the State Government to provide emergency helicopter rescue services for the Mt Isa community.

North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service has been operating through corporate sponsorship, fee for service arrangements and fund raising activities and provides services on behalf of the Queensland Ambulance Service, Royal Flying Doctor Service, Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Australian Search and Rescue Authority and Emergency Management Queensland.

My Department has given careful consideration to the benefits of the services provided by North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service and has determined that due to the distances involved in transferring patients from smaller hospitals into Mount Isa for definitive care in major hospitals on the east coast, fixed wing aircraft is the most effective and efficient form of transport for critically ill or injured patients.

However, to formalise service delivery and safety standards if North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service is called upon to deliver emergency helicopter services on behalf of Government, my Department has established a fee for service agreement with North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service from January 2013 until 30 June 2017.

These service delivery standards are governed under a service agreement between the State Government, acting through Queensland Health, and North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service. Administration of this agreement is proposed to be transferred to the Government Air Service being established within the Department of Community Safety.

The State Government will continue to support North Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service through allocation of fee for service work through the Queensland Emergency Medical System Coordination Centre for the transfer of patients within the local North West Hospital and Health Service area and aerial support to the Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Police Service under the terms of this agreement.