

Question on Notice
No. 217
Asked on 20 March 2014

MR RICKUSS asked the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services (MR DEMPSEY)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise if all the money collected by the Emergency Fire and Rescue levy will be used by the Emergency Fire and Rescue department?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is committed to revitalising our frontline emergency services. I can advise that 100 per cent of the funds raised by the Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Levy are paid into the Emergency Management Fire and Rescue Fund.

Over the past few years Queensland has endured numerous floods, fires and cyclones. Those who have experienced these disasters know they can happen anywhere, anytime and our emergency services need to be in the best position to help the communities that are affected.

Despite our history of natural disasters, the former Labor Government failed to implement any meaningful disaster response plan, except to borrow money, contributing to \$80 billion of state debt. It is for this reason the Queensland Government developed a sustainable funding model through the EMFRL, to ensure our emergency services remain among the best in the world.

During times of trouble, Queenslanders all rely on our emergency services; whether they are volunteer marine rescue or swift water rescue crews, emergency helicopters, disaster recovery teams or other emergency services. Our emergency staff and volunteers play a vital role in our community.

The Government is continuing to listen to community concerns regarding the levy to ensure it is fair to all property owners, while enabling the delivery first class emergency services across Queensland.

As a result, from 1 July 2014, community organisations within Class E will be able to apply to their local council for an exemption from the levy. These organisations may include community halls, libraries, country showgrounds and churches, to name a few. Those deemed exempt will also be eligible to claim a refund for the previous payment, backdated to January 1, 2014. Those who hold a Commonwealth pension card are also eligible for a 20% discount on their levy contribution.

The Government remains committed to having the best emergency services in Australia, so that Queenslanders can get the response they need when it matters most.