

**Question on Notice  
No. 354  
Asked on 8 May 2014**

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

**QUESTION:**

With reference to reports on ABC regional radio that the Minister undertook to delay the collection of the Emergency Services Levy for drought-affected council areas and to allow people with a mining lease to have the land classification changed to vacant land for the purpose of calculating the Emergency Management, Fire and Rescue Levy—

- (1) What council areas are delaying payment?
- (2) What has the Minister done to alert the public that the amount of levy they pay can be reduced or delayed?
- (3) What effect will these changes have on the amount of Emergency Management, Fire and Rescue Levy collected?
- (4) Will the Minister ensure that every rural fire brigade receives the money that is owed to fund their activities despite the changes in levy amount paid?

**ANSWER:**

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. That is why the Queensland Government is continuing to revitalise our frontline emergency services.

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 has developed a sustainable funding model through the Emergency Management Levy (EML), to ensure our emergency services remain among the best in the world.

From 1 January 2014, the levy was extended to all Queensland properties to ensure a more equitable funding base was provided for our emergency services. A new class, Class E, was created to capture districts that were not part of levy classes A-D. Property owners in this category pay the lowest levy contribution. Those who hold a Commonwealth pension card are also eligible for a 20% discount on their levy contribution.

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. It is our emergency staff and volunteers who play a vital role in our community.

In relation to Member's questions:

- (1) It is a decision for Councils.
- (2) It is a decision for Councils.
- (3) The delay in payment will not impact the amount of the levy collected as payments will be received in each council's final remittance for 2014.
- (4) The levy does not affect the funding of rural fire brigades.