

Question on Notice

No. 1223

Asked on 18 September 2018

MS S BOLTON asked the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services (HON DR S MILES) –

QUESTION

With reference to the practice of ambulance and emergency staff undertaking non-urgent transports—

Will the Minister advise if there are any plans to service these transports using different methods where possible to free up our valuable first responders?

ANSWER

In Queensland, there are a range of transport options to assist people to travel to medical appointments. These include community transport, public transport, private transport and taxis. The majority of patient transports are delivered through these services. The Government continues to subsidise travel and accommodation through the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme for those patients required to travel more than 50 kilometres from their nearest public health facility, to access specialist medical treatment.

The Queensland Government also provides options for non-urgent patient transport through ambulance services where requests are medically authorised. The Government has committed to not privatise the Queensland Ambulance Service's (QAS) patient transport services. The QAS continues to provide medically authorised non-urgent patient transport options to requesting public and private health services. The safe and timely transportation of patients to medical appointments is a key element for achieving better health outcomes in Queensland.

The QAS provides transport for patients where the transport has been medically authorised by medical professionals at private practices, nursing homes, private health facilities or diagnostic centres. The QAS acute paramedic crews do not routinely attend non-urgent transports, which are categorised as either a Code 3B or 4B incident response.

The QAS Patient Transport Service (PTS) provides non-urgent patient transport services to the community and is vital in reducing the impact on emergency ambulance resources of non-emergency transport workload. Most of the QAS PTS workload occurs within South East Queensland. The South East Queensland QAS PTS Operations Centre provides improved coordination and dispatch services for the greater metropolitan region of South East Queensland. The QAS continues to enhance the quality and sustainability of QAS patient transport services so the needs of Hospital and Health Services and the broader community continue to be met.

The South East Queensland PTS delivery model has a key performance driver of reducing the number of Code 3B and 4B incidents that are passed to acute paramedic crews, thus maximising acute ambulance availability.

The QAS continuously monitors workloads across the State to ensure the most appropriate level of service is provided to all communities.