



From the office of
GLEN ELMES
Member for Noosa
Shadow Minister for Climate Change & Sustainability

HANSARD - QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Wednesday 2 September

Sunshine Coast, Ambulance Services

Mr WELLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. Will the minister advise if the Sunshine Coast region currently has 24-hour, seven-day-a-week intensive care paramedic coverage? If not, will the minister support funding in next year's budget for this service?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question and also for the very positive and proactive support that he provides for the Ambulance Service in the Sunshine Coast area. I can advise the member that, in fact, there are currently around 27 intensive care paramedics located in the Sunshine Coast region and that they provide 24-hour coverage, I am advised, across three 24-hour shifts. Before I talk a little bit more about the provision of the services by these highly skilled intensive care paramedics, I will outline for the member's interest that the Sunshine Coast area has 285 highly trained ambulance operatives available to support his local community.

Over the past two years, the number of ambulance officers has increased by 87. In terms of additional and new vehicles to the north coast region, over the past two years there have been 28 new vehicles supplied to that area. Intensive care paramedics are really at the high end of the level of service provided by the Queensland Ambulance Service. It is a qualification that any advanced care paramedics can apply for. It is a very intensive 12-month training program, which requires the highest calibre of applicants.

As I have indicated, any advanced care paramedic can apply. The fact they are of the highest calibre means that many of these people end up being appointed to higher duties or relieve in higher duties arrangements in regions. That does not mean that those intensive care paramedics are not available for support and to perform their role as an intensive care paramedic. Indeed, the model of service provided by the Ambulance Service across Queensland factors in that intensive care paramedics, because they are the best in terms of their clinical skills, will be appointed to these higher positions but arrangements are made to ensure that they are available to support the crews on roster as well. As I have indicated, the Sunshine Coast area has a sufficient number of intensive care paramedics to provide that 24-hour coverage.

There are around 27 of them available. That includes staff rostered on duty and also those who fit into those higher duty arrangements to provide support as well. I am advised that the north coast region is currently examining options to create further ICP coverage in that area as more qualified staff become available.

For the member's information, I point out that the Sunshine Coast area is provided with 24-hour coverage from 15 ambulance stations in the area: Caloundra, Beerwah, Kawana, Maleny, Nambour, Cooroy, Pomona, Maroochydore, the Cooloola Coast, Gympie, Noosa, Tewantin, Coolum, Buderim and the Maroochydore Airport.

Thursday 3 September

Sunshine Coast, Intensive Care Paramedics

Mr ELMES: My question is to the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. I refer to the minister's answer to a question asked by the member for Nicklin yesterday about intensive care paramedics. I table this leaked QAS memo and staff roster, which warns that because several of the region's eight to 10 intensive care paramedics were in line for promotion, there can be no guarantee of coverage.

Tabled paper: Copy of a memorandum from Michael Riordan, Acting Area Director, Sunshine Coast Area, Queensland Ambulance Service regarding support roster expressions of interest.

Who should the public and the QAS staff believe--the minister or the memo and the staff roster?

Mr ROBERTS: I am very well aware of the memo that was leaked to the member for Noosa. It does not accurately paint a picture of what is actually happening on the Sunshine Coast. If the member would like to read my answer yesterday I clearly explained to him that currently on the Sunshine Coast there are, from recollection, around 27 intensive care paramedics. A number of those are on higher duties. They are available for relief. They provide 24-hour coverage across three 24-hour shifts on the Sunshine Coast. The memo that the member is referring to was sent to individuals to advise them that should people remove themselves from current intensive care positions then those positions would need to be replaced by other people on those rosters. The memo that the member has does not indicate that there is not adequate people to cover intensive care rosters on the Sunshine Coast.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable minister's time has expired. The time for question time has ended.
