

ESTIMATES 2008-2009

Question on Notice

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

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Maintenance of Operational Capacity

Zed Seselja MLA : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : **Emergency Services Agency – Maintenance of Operational Capacity (page 83, BP3)**

1. Why would existing capacity diminish in the absence of this new funding? Did previous provisions in the forward estimates of the ACT budget include insufficient funding to continue existing capability?
2. What amount of the cost over each of the four forward years relates to the mobile fleet service unit and how many of the 27 staff positions relate to the mobile fleet service unit?
3. What is the division of responsibilities among the 27 proposed personnel?
4. Are the 27 staff positions funded under this budget measure currently filled, or are 27 new staff to be recruited by the ACT Government?
5. What are the present arrangements for servicing the fleet of vehicles and how is this arrangement deficient?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. There is increased demand for ambulance and fire services in the ACT which is consistent with national trends. Factors driving this increase locally include: demand for aero medical services, demographic changes (including ageing population and increased prevalence of chronic disease), changes in hospital practices, socio-economic changes, accessibility to alternative primary health services, increase urban/commercial buildings, road traffic and community expectations / perceptions.
2. The mobile fleet service costs will include \$0.082m capital in 2008-2009 for the purchase of tools and equipment; \$0.248m in 2008-2009 for 1 x mechanic (includes salary, salary on costs, recruitment, training, PPE and administrative costs), then \$0.156m pa indexed from 2009-2010; and \$0.048 pa indexed for vehicle lease and running costs.
3. The 27 personnel includes: 12 x firefighters, 14 x ambulance and 1 mechanic.
4. No, these positions are not currently filled and will be filled via recruitment.
5. At present vehicles are required to be taken to the ESA Workshops at Kambah for maintenance and servicing. The mobile fleet servicing unit will allow for more efficient maintenance and minor servicing of specialist emergency services vehicles on site at stations and incidents, therefore not taking vehicles out of response areas and reducing Volunteer needs to move vehicles to and from workshops.

Urban Search and Rescue

Zed Seselja MLA : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : **Emergency Services Agency – Urban Search and Rescue & Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Equipment (page 82, BP3)**

1. Why has the supply of this equipment by the Commonwealth ceased?
2. What was the level of funding support and what was the nature of equipment which was last supplied to the ACT by the Commonwealth?
3. What equipment previously funded by the Commonwealth needs replacement and what are the reasons for replacement?
4. What items are intended for purchase in 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Commonwealth supplied a one-off equipment grant of CBRN equipment in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 as part of a National Capability Enhancement Program.
2. The Commonwealth provided funding support under two programs. The first was the CBRN Enhancement Program which funded the provision of equipment and support valued at \$1.6m. The equipment supplied comprised, chemical biological and radiological detection equipment, protective equipment and decontamination equipment. This program provided ongoing maintenance funding of \$30k for 3 years from 2002-2006. The second program, the Urban Search and Rescue program, provided \$1.3m worth of equipment to the ACT. Under this program no ongoing maintenance funding was provided. The equipment provided included medical equipment, search and rescue equipment, and transport equipment.
3. Equipment previously provided and in need of replacement includes chemical, biological and radiation detection equipment, protective clothing and decontamination equipment. The equipment needs replacement due to a number of reasons including, reaching the end of its service life, wear and tear, obsolete technology.
4. Items intended for replacement in 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 include chemical, biological and radiation detection equipment, protective clothing and decontamination equipment and urban search and rescue equipment.

Incidents of road rage and other offences

Richard Mulcahy : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : incidents of road rage and other offences in the ACT

1. How many complaints of road rage have been made to the police in the last twelve months?
2. Can you confirm anecdotal evidence that there has been an increase in the number of complaints?
3. How many prosecutions have resulted from complaints?
4. Do police consider themselves impaired from enforcing the law in this regard by the fact that quite often road rage incidents can not be substantiated by independent witnesses?
5. Have you considered recommending to the Government changes to the existing legislation to make it easier for road rage offenders to be prosecuted or addressed?
6. Specifically, have you considered whether on-the-spot fines might be an appropriate measure?
7. In relation to all offences, are you aware of Court decisions in recent times that diminish the weight or value of evidence given to a Court by a police officer compared to a member of the general public?

Training / new recruits

Steve Pratt : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : Output Class 4: Emergency Services – Training/New recruits

1. What funds have been allocated for Volunteer training in 2008-09 budget?
2. What proportion of a. Fire Brigade officers and b. Ambulance officers are fully trained in CBR management?
3. How many of the 12 new fire brigade officers announced in Budget 2008-09 are fully trained and when do you expect them on line for duty?
4. How many of the 14 new Ambulance officers announced in Budget 2008-09 are fully trained and when do you expect them on line for duty?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Bushfire Readiness initiative announced in the 2007-2008 budget provides \$0.221m for training in 2008-2009, the majority of which will be allocated to volunteer training.

The internal ESA budgets for 2008-2009 are yet to be finalised. Similar amounts to those in 2007-2008 will be allocated, approximately \$157,000. In addition the ESA provides 3 FTE dedicated to volunteer training, which are supported by 3 FTE in the ESA Training Section as well as time provided by other areas of ESA staff to training programs (ie: ACTFB, ACT Ambulance Service training areas).

2. a) All ACTFB staff are trained in CBR response and management.
b) The ACT Ambulance Service has 11 staff that have completed CBR training.
3. None. The last recruitment process run by the ACTFB in 2007 short listed a pool of potential candidates for the next recruit college. The potential candidates have undergone their psychometric testing and are now undergoing their medical examinations. Following this there will be a final pool of 12-16 recruits. It is intended to commence their training early in the coming financial year with the aim of the recruits graduating before Christmas 2008. The recruit course generally lasts for 16 weeks.
4. None. Several avenues of recruitment are being used, these include lateral recruitment of fully trained personnel and targeted (accelerated transition of allied medical professionals). It is anticipated that eight FTE will be in place by December 2008 and the remaining six by May 2009.

67 Police and Emergency Services Pratt

Headquarters

TRN network

Steve Pratt : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : Output Class 4: Emergency Services – TRN network

1. What funding has been allocated in 2008-09 Budget is designated funding for Trunk Radio Network project works?
2. How many TRN base stations have now been established, how many more are to be established and by when will they be installed?

Vehicle replacement

Steve Pratt : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : Output Class 4: Emergency Services – Vehicle Replacement

1. What progress has been made on the up to date replacement of RFS front line fire tenders and communications vehicles and how much funding is in the budget for replacements?
2. What is the status of the RFS front line fleet, as at 20 May 08?
3. How many front line RFS fire tenders require major repairs and when will they be repaired by [by vehicle registration and unit call sign] and how much funding is allocated in the budget for this purpose?
4. Is there funding in the budget for the acquisition of an elevated platform for the SES and if so, by when will it be in service?
5. What is the status of the purchase of a SuperTanker vehicle and when will it be fully on line?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Emergency Services Agency has a Strategic Fleet Asset Management Plan (2006) that relates to fleet management across all services with a ten-plus year outlook. The 2007-2008 ACT Budget provided \$6.5m over four years specifically for fleet replacement over and above normal fleet replacement funding. This provides for all fleet requirements to be replaced in future on schedule. This funding allowed for the purchase in 2007-2008 of eight heavy tankers, nine command vehicles and the refurbishment of a super striker tanker for the RFS. In 2008-2009 will have programmed the replacement of the other super striker tanker and between 6 and 10 light to medium units will be programmed subject to current review of light and medium units being undertaken by the Volunteer Captains and the RFS.

The ACT Government is committed to updating the whole Emergency Services Agency fleet. The Emergency Services Agency had \$4,506,500 allocated for replacements for 2007-2008 and has \$3,295,000 allocated for financial year 2008-2009.

2. Eleven (11) command vehicles
Twenty two (22) light tankers
Seventeen (17) heavy tankers
Three (3) heavy CAFS tankers
Three (3) medium CAFS tankers
Two (2) super striker tankers
Seven (7) quick fill units
Forty four (44) slip-on units
3. No RFS vehicles require major repairs. The 2007-2008 budget for Emergency Services Agency for workshops was just over \$1m (this includes all costs some of which are salaries, equipment, parts, tyres, tools, freight and uniforms). All vehicles are in good order.
4. No. The ACT State Emergency Service carried out a comprehensive evaluation of an elevated platform in 2007 and the ACTSES unit commanders and staff

have recommended not to purchase a platform. Platforms, if required, are readily available through hire services.

5. A Statement of Requirement (tanker design) has been developed and is being reviewed by Volunteer Brigade Captains. Following the Captains endorsement of recommendations the Commissioner will authorise Tenders under Public Service delegations. Tenders are expected to be called in July 2008 for delivery by December 2008.

The other super tanker was fully refurbished in 2007 and online in January 2008.

Communications

Steve Pratt : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : Output Class 4: Emergency Services - Communications

1. What is the current communication method used to replace the scrapped Firelink mobile data and vehicle location system?
2. If there is no replacement; are there any plans to find an alternative and when will the service be in operation?
3. If there are no replacements anticipated, where is the means that allows the Commissioner ESA, the Chief Officer RFS and other senior authorities to have timely reporting on the accurate location of people and vehicles in the field fighting or moving to bushfires and which allows those people to send a DURESS Signal, if required?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

1. The Firelink system did not achieve the anticipated requirements, which is why it was abandoned. Communications are by existing TRN and methods used successfully for over 30 years in RFS operations.
2. Modern alternatives exist to achieve the desired outcome, such as those currently used by the ACT Fire Brigade (ACTFB) and ACT Ambulance Service (ACTAS). As the current ACTFB and ACTAS system reaches its end of life an evaluation of extending the system to include ACT State Emergency Service and ACT Rural Fire Service will be undertaken with Volunteers and the Emergency Services Agency to establish its cost benefit.
3. Durress signals is a capability of the TRN system. As indicated in the answer to (1) existing tried and tested RFS operational systems are adequate to maintain command and control functions.

QTON – Emergency Services Agency Fairbairn project

Mr Pratt : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : the Emergency Services Agency Fairbairn project

The \$18.4 million for this relocation project when was that or parts of that first appropriated? How far back has this project gone?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The Emergency Services New Headquarter Fit-out project first appeared in the 2006-07 Budget with a total cost of \$17.329m. This appropriation was provided in addition to the related capital works project titled "Headquarters and Joint Emergency Services Training Centre" with a total cost of \$1.100m.

In the 2007-08 Budget, the two projects were combined under a single title "Emergency Services Agency - New Headquarters and Joint Emergency Services Training Centre" with a total cost of \$18.429m (see note 2 on page 253 of 2007-08 Budget Paper 4). This title was shortened in the 2008-09 Budget to "Emergency Services Agency - New Headquarters".

427 Police and Emergency Services Smyth

QTON – Dobbins report

MR SMYTH : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : Report titled “Identification, development and implementation of a program of Australian best practice in AIIIMS training to enhance ACT Emergency Services Authority’s emergency management capability” which is also known as the Dobbins Report.

Asked if the report can be tabled.

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–

I am pleased to provide a copy of this report, which is attached.

(For details of attachment, please contact Committee Office)

470 Police and Emergency Services Pratt

QTON - Fire Brigade officer - CBRN training

MR PRATT : To ask the Minister for Emergency Services

In relation to : CBRN training for 14 new fire fighters to be employed under the "Maintenance of Operational Capacity" announced in the Budget.

How many Fire Brigade officers will be fully CBRN qualified?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

All 14 of the new fire fighters will be trained in basic CBRN response and management.

471 Police and Emergency Services Dunne

QTON - Staff numbers - RFS and SES

MRS DUNNE : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : ACT Rural Fire Service and ACT State Emergency Service volunteers

So how do current numbers for RFS and the SES compare to what they were in 2001.

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

Both the RFS and SES have increased numbers of volunteers since 2001.

The SES has increased by around 10% from approximately 180 volunteers in 2001 to 198 as at May 2008.

The RFS has increased by around 50% from approximately 300 volunteers in 2001 to approximately 450 as at May 2008.

472 Police and Emergency Services Pratt

QTON - Fairbairn rent

Mr Pratt : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : Emergency Services Agency rental payments.

How much more rent are you paying at Fairbairn compared to what you are paying at Curtin?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

As at May 2008, the rent at Fairbairn is \$1,456,856 p.a. (ex GST) more than Curtin inclusive of precinct levies and \$1,349,402 p.a. exclusive of GST and precinct levies.

RFS Volunteer retention

MR PRATT : To ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services

In relation to : RFS Volunteer retention

Can you tell us what the loss rate of volunteers has been in this current financial year (against the question of retention)?

MR CORBELL: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

I am advised that the ACT Rural Fire Service records are updated annually at Brigade AGM's, due in September each year.

There are records of 550 registered volunteers. The active membership at the beginning of the financial year was 441 and has dropped by an estimated 8% to 408.

You will appreciate that these figures fluctuate at any one time due to recruitment of new members, and members leaving the Service for reasons ranging from retirement, relocating away from the ACT, and even death. Last bushfire season was particularly quiet and lack of activity has had an added effect on active members.

Recruitment last year was 45 new members with a current recruitment drive being undertaken. The RFS aims to recruit around 50 new members each year based on an average 10% turnover.