



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Wednesday, 2 September 2009

COMMUNITY AMBULANCE LEVY

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (11.39 am): Over two weeks ago I was contacted by an elderly lady, Mrs Lavinia Way, who owns a holiday property at Tugun on the Gold Coast and as such has paid the community ambulance levy since its inception in 2003. Imagine her shock to discover, upon needing to call an ambulance for her 85-year-old husband on 4 August, that they were not covered. Lavinia discovered that in order to use this service for free, despite paying for it since 2003, one must be a resident of Queensland for more than six months of the year. If that is the case, then people with holiday homes should be exempt from paying this cover.

Mrs Way says no government can introduce a compulsory fee then deny the service that this fee pays for without being accused of fraud. Even the call centre operators at Smart Service Queensland agreed with her that levying people with no rights to the service is wrong, but they have since been told not to pass on their own points of view. Mrs Way deserves an apology and she wants a refund of the fees that she has paid.

What is the government doing with all of this revenue? How many other innocent people have been slugged with this fee? Will the minister stop this immoral behaviour? To put an elderly couple, one of whom is seriously ill, under this unnecessary stress is absolutely disgraceful. Mrs Way has nothing but praise for the ambulance officers who attended her husband, who is now recovering in Melbourne, but she has enormous scorn for this government and she would like to see some justice. To date, she has had no success in receiving a response from the government.

It is an utter disgrace for people in this state to be forced to pay an ambulance levy year after year and then, when they need to access the service, to be told that it is going to cost them money. But why should we be surprised when we consider the culture that the government has allowed to prosper in Queensland ambulance services?