



Trish Doyle MP

Member for Blue Mountains



02 4751 3298 | bluemountains@parliament.nsw.gov.au | 132 Macquarie Rd Springwood NSW 2777

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NSW Police and Fire and Rescue NSW

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This motion yet again reveals the cynical self-interest that drives this Government. The member for Holsworthy routinely comes to Parliament with inane motions that do little to contribute to public debate. On 8 May she moved a motion to congratulate the Government on its election result two months earlier. Today we are forced to listen to the crow and spin about the Government's mismanagement of the emergency services sector. The member for Holsworthy tells us that the Government is a friend of emergency services but Labor—and, more importantly, emergency services workers and volunteers—know this is a lie.

In the recent budget the Liberal-Nationals Government cut \$12.9 million from recurring funding to Fire and Rescue NSW. There is no way that Fire and Rescue NSW can cut \$12.9 million from its budget without cutting back on shifts, crewing and overtime for frontline staff—our fireys! This comes on top of a \$26 million cut in this year's budget to Fire and Rescue NSW's capital expenditure budget. This is a huge hit to its capacity to renew and upgrade its equipment, firefighting appliances and premises. This is the truth of the Government's so-called commitment to the emergency services and it repeats itself throughout the sector. The Government has cut \$4.8 million from recurring funding to the Rural Fire Service and a staggering \$75.2 million from its capital expenditure budget. How is that for a thank you to the volunteers? The State Emergency Service is forced to spend valuable volunteer time and public money patching up and repairing tired, clapped-out vehicles that the Government refuses to replace—that is the reality of the fleet replacement program.

The volunteers who sustain those organisations know the truth. They are not watching Parliament today listening to the craven nonsense of the member for Holsworthy; they have better things to do. However, they know that the Government is made up of a bunch of bankers who come in here and bank on about what a good job they are doing while making cuts to essential services that the community relies upon. It is disgusting. At the last election Labor promised to fund 200 new firefighters. We made that promise because we know that Fire and Rescue NSW anticipate attending 13,000 more fires this year than last. The member for Holsworthy boasts about attending the graduation of 16 new firefighters; however, this number does not come close to addressing the attrition rate of retirements in the organisation. The overall number of firefighters is not growing but is declining in the long term. The workload for our firefighters grows each year but their funding and their workforce is cut with each successive Liberal budget.

There is dishonesty in this motion. It really is a self-congratulatory motion. The member for Holsworthy could instead do some good with her time in this House and lobby the emergency services Minister to properly fund the sector. The member should implore Minister Elliott to do his job in Cabinet instead of rolling over each week for the Treasurer to rub his belly. As the new shadow emergency services Minister I extend my gratitude to our emergency service workers across the State. I will fight in this place for them and the resources they need to provide community safety.