

QUESTION ON NOTICE
No. 1134
Asked on 29 September 2004

MR PURCELL asked Minister for Health(Mr NUTTALL) –

QUESTION:

With reference to my understanding that Queensland Health Scientific Services has undertaken recruitment of additional staff –

Will he advise the progress of the recruitment process and how this initiative will address the backlog in processing DNA profiling and crime scene samples?

ANSWER:

Fourteen new forensic scientists having started in Forensic Biology over the past two months, adding to the 16 technical and administrative staff previously employed to improve DNA and forensic testing turnaround times. Three more scientists are to start in Forensic Biology by the end of November.

The new scientists are being trained and integrated into newly formed teams for sampling, DNA profiling, results analysis, and case reporting for court evidence.

A new DNA sampling area is currently being refurbished. After completion in November the new DNA sampling team will be examining, sampling and DNA processing all new exhibits as they are received, as well as progressively working their way through the backlog of crime scene samples.

In addition, some temporary administrative staff have been employed to register the backlog of exhibits, and within the next few weeks QHPSS will be electronically transferring details to Queensland Police for advice on prioritisation of cases and exhibits. This will ensure that exhibits from cases such as solved crimes are given the lowest priority, and scientific resources can be focussed on those cases with highest priority from a judicial and ongoing police investigation perspective.

Recruitment is continuing for supervisory positions in Forensic Biology and in Forensic Chemistry.