

Question on Notice

No. 754

Asked on 18 June 2004

Mr HAYWARD asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the pilot program locating Justices of the Peace in Court Houses-

Will he consider extending the program to council libraries which are greater in number and often more accessible than Court Houses?

ANSWER:

The volunteer Justices of the Peace that have been operating in the Court Houses at Beenleigh, Southport, Gladstone, Innisfail, Charters Towers, Toowoomba, Ipswich and Maroochydore have been very well received and their effort and support is very much appreciated. Consideration will be given to expanding this initiative if there is local interest and the volunteers are available.

There are eighty-three (83) Magistrates Court offices throughout the State where, by virtue of their role, Registrars are able to perform the functions of a Justice of the Peace on behalf of the public.

I am always mindful of making Justices of the Peace more accessible to the public and in March this year I launched a partnership between Westfield Chermside Shopping Centre and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General with a view to establishing volunteer Justices of the Peace at the shopping centre.

Local Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations have been volunteering their time at the centre each Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11am to 3pm and are available to witness documents such as affidavits, statutory declarations and Land Title documents.

This program has now been extended to Westfield Carindale Shopping Centre and interest has been received from Westfield Garden City as well as Stockland shopping centres in Townsville and Cairns. I am aware that a number of shopping centres on the Gold Coast including Pacific Fair, Robina Town Centre, Australia Fair and Nerang Plaza are also providing this much needed service to the public.

At this stage, given the success of the program in shopping centres, I have not considered the placement of volunteer Justices of the Peace in council libraries, however, if there is a request from a Council to do so and the volunteer Justices of the Peace are available then I am happy to consider this option.