

Question on Notice
No. 756
Asked on 24 May, 2005

MISS ROBERTS asked the Minister for Health (MR NUTTALL) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the John Tonge Centre –

- (1) What are the number of tests which remain outstanding at the John Tonge Centre?
- (2) How many have been carried out over the last three months?
- (3) How many additional people have been employed at the centre to deal with the case backlog?

ANSWER:

The Government have been attentive to the ever increasing demand for forensic services with the budget having been more than doubled in the past four years, an election commitment last year of \$11 million dollars over three years with \$5 million already spent or allocated and an additional 24 scientists now working in this laboratory.

We have acknowledged that it is still struggling to cope with demand. At the request of the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Health is also proceeding with a tender to outsource DNA testing for up to 10,000 property related cases in the backlog. The tender is due to close on 4 July 2005. Scientists are now fully trained in pre-testing sampling and in results management of the commercially obtained DNA results.

(1) & (2)

	Cases remaining at 30 April 2005	Cases completed in last 3 months
Toxicology	578	5,182
Pathology	197	342
Chemistry	501	862
Biology	11,469	639

- (3) Since 2003, 24 additional scientists and 16 technical/administrative staff have been employed to improve DNA and forensic testing turnaround times, and to address backlog of cases. In addition, Forensic Biology are currently recruiting to five base grade scientist positions, as well as five additional operational staff to assist with DNA analysis.