

**Question on Notice
No. 989
Asked on 6 June 2006**

DR FLEGG asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to emergency departments –

- (1) Will he detail the security staffing levels at each emergency department across the State?
- (2) What was the number of assaults on emergency department staff over the most recent twelve month period and if available, will he provide the figures for assaults for the previous two years?

ANSWER:

- (1) The information sought by the member is not routinely collected and collated centrally. To obtain the information sought would involve requesting the provision of data from each Health Service District and individual hospitals. This would involve the manual collection of the data by areas of the Department that should otherwise be involved in the delivery of health services, placing an unreasonable burden on Departmental officers and diverting them from their primary health care role.

However I can advise that security staffing levels across Queensland's public hospitals vary. For example, security staff are employed permanently in larger facilities such as Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, and are rostered on 24 hours per day. These security staff have facility wide responsibilities, and are not Emergency Department specific. In some smaller facilities, security firms are contracted to hospitals eg. Gympie and Gladstone. These services are located off-site and provide random patrols at the facility or respond to incidents on an on-call basis.

Queensland Health takes the safety and wellbeing of its staff working within Emergency Departments very seriously. In 2004 a Taskforce on Violence against Nurses was set up with the involvement of the Queensland Nurses Union, and the recommendations of the Taskforce are being followed by Queensland Health. In 2006-07 funding is being provided to continue to train staff and instructors on prevention and protection against violence in the workplace. Training programs are tailored to suit the individual working environments and involve de-escalation and communication skills for staff.

- (2) Information on assaults are kept by the individual hospitals. Queensland Health is currently in the process of upgrading its incident reporting systems to enhance Queensland Health's ability to analyse and report on safety incidents occurring within Emergency Departments.