Question on Notice

No. 540

Asked on Thursday 17 April 2008

MR NICHOLLS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (MR MICKEL) —

QUESTION:

With reference to TransLink Transit Officers—

(1) How many transit safety officers were employed by QR Limited as at 30 June 2006, 30 June 2007 and 14 April 2008?

(2) How many transit safety officers reported being assaulted or harassed whilst on duty in 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 to date?

(3) How many hours of defensive training do transit safety officers complete before commencing in the position and how many hours of refresher training do officers complete each year?

ANSWER:

(1) I am advised the number of TransLink Transit Officers employed by QR Limited as at 30 June 2006, 30 June 2007 and 30 June 2008 to date is as follows:

- 2006 – **69**
- 2007 – **106**
- 2008 – **110** budgeted positions
- **101** employed as at 19 May 2008 plus **7** currently in training will graduate in early June 2008

I am advised there is also a recruitment process being conducted by QR Limited both internally and externally for an additional **10** trainee TransLink Transit Officers and it is anticipated that training will commence in July 2008.

(2) I am advised that the number of TransLink Transit Officer assaults reported in 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 (to date) are as follows:

- 2005-2006 – **21**
- 2006-2007 – **37**
- 2007-2008 (as at 14 April 2008) – **32**

(3) I am further advised that TransLink Transit Officers are currently afforded 24 hours training in applied situational techniques during their initial intensive 12 week training period. In addition, TransLink Transit Officers are provided with eight hour refresher training annually.

The Government recently announced that it would amend the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act* to extend the current powers of transit officers to allow them to use reasonable force to remove people from public transport or detain them for alleged criminal activity.

Following the amendments transit officers will have the power to remove someone from a train, bus or ferry if they are threatening others or being a nuisance. As well, the amendments will enable transit officers to detain offenders for serious offences such as assault, grievous bodily harm, unlawful wounding and wilful damage. It is expected that this power would be only used as a last resort.

In recognition of these new powers, I am advised transit officers would have to undergo extensive initial training and twice yearly refresher training. It should be noted that this training will be in addition to the current transit officer training.