

**Question on Notice
No. 1592
Asked on 28 October 2009**

MS DAVIS asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

With reference to bullet proof vests—

- (1) How many vests are currently being used across the QPS and how many vests have been retired from service in the last year (reported by police region)?
- (2) What was the total budget for the purchase and replacement of vests in 2008-09 and 2009-10 (reported separately by year)?

ANSWER:

The Bligh Government is committed to providing officers of the Queensland Police Service (QPS) with the facilities, resources and protective equipment they need to effectively maintain safe and secure communities across the state. The safety of officers as they undertake their policing duties is a significant priority for this Government and the QPS. In 2009-10, the Bligh Government has allocated a record \$1.706 billion budget to the QPS, which includes \$43.5 million for operational policing requirements, such as protective equipment for police officers.

All protective body armour issued or approved by the QPS is tested against the internationally-accepted United States National Institute of Justice Standard, which is used by all police services in Australia. Protective body armour is not bullet proof but does have bullet-resistant qualities. The standard of armour that the QPS uses is capable of defeating the highest threat levels.

To support the effective use of body armour, specific training, which includes information on the limitations of body armour, is provided to all officers in the Queensland Police Service.

The vests are made from advanced materials, however officers are reminded no vest or any ballistic material is actually classified as 'bullet proof'. Body armour merely provides a certain level of protection which can be overcome in some circumstances

There are currently 4,485 items of protective body armour in operational use throughout the QPS. The requested regional breakdown is:

Far Northern Region 299; Northern Region 320; Central Region 469; North Coast Region 542; Southern Region 480; South Eastern Region 514; Metropolitan North Region 458; Metropolitan South Region 410; State Crime Operations Command 424; Operations Support Command 237; Special Emergency Response Team 189; Armoury 143.

The QPS has disposed of 700 items of protective body armour during the past 12 months. This figure includes armour which has been replaced as part of the replacement program, and also items identified as damaged and unfit for further operational use.

I am advised the QPS is unable to provide the requested regional breakdown of items of protective body armour disposed of during the past 12 months. Protective body armour that has an expired manufacturer's warranty is returned to the QPS armoury and details of these items are recorded on a Weapons Asset Control System Register. The current register, however, does not track individual movements for each item. The register only records the current location of the item. As a result, the QPS is unable to provide a regional breakdown of disposed items.

The QPS budget for the purchase and replacement of protective body armour in 2008-09 and 2009-10 was \$471,154.03 and \$75,217.63 respectively. The QPS has implemented a program to replace protective body armour upon expiry of the manufacturer's warranty period. The variance in budget from 2008-09 to 2009-10 was caused by the requirements of this replacement program. In 2008-09, 554 items required replacement, whereas only 91 items are due for replacement in 2009-10.