

Question on Notice
No. 586
Asked on 24 March 2010

MR RYAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND FAIR TRADING
(MR LAWLOR) —

QUESTION:

Will the Minister explain the important work that the Office of Fair Trading's trade measurement compliance staff undertake for Queensland residents?

ANSWER:

The Office of Fair Trading's Trade Measurement Branch ensures fairness in trade where the transaction is based on the measurement of goods.

The *Trade Measurement Act 1990* provides the legislative principles for ensuring measurement in trade is conducted fairly and appropriately.

The Trade Measurement Branch operates a spot inspection program to ensure commercial measurement systems used throughout Queensland conform to national and international standards.

While many residents can relate this work to their daily purchases, Trade Measurement's role also extends to Queensland's billion dollar export market which supports our international reputation as a trading partner and encourages investment in Queensland.

From 1 July 2009 to 28 February 2010 the Trade Measurement Branch conducted 2,573 spot inspections at wholesale and retail premises and finalised 108 complaints. While conducting these inspections the branch checked 4,249 measuring instruments and 8,332 pre-packed lines at wholesale and retail outlets to ensure Queenslanders are receiving correct measurement.

As a result of these activities 1,297 enforcement actions were initiated. The enforcement actions included 1,154 official warnings, 141 infringement notices and 2 prosecutions.

The identified breaches with prepacked goods and over the counter transactions resulted in potential savings to the community of \$410,351.

The operations of the trade measurement program actively contribute to the Office of Fair Trading's commitment to promoting an equitable, competitive, informed and safe marketplace within Queensland.

On 13 April 2007, the Council of Australian Governments agreed to establish a national system of trade measurement that includes the Commonwealth taking full responsibility for the trade measurement system.

The national trade measurement system, to be administered by the National Measurement Institute, will commence on 1 July 2010.

The arrangement with the Commonwealth includes agreement on benchmarks in terms of minimum service delivery to ensure there is no reduction in consumer protection to Queenslanders following handover of responsibility to the Commonwealth.