

**Question on Notice
No. 297
Asked on 22 March 2011**

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise the average time taken for a weapons licence application to be finalised in Queensland?

ANSWER:

Given the multitude of moving variables associated with processing thousands of weapons licence applications, it would be inappropriate to speculate on any approximate average time for finalisation.

Weapons licence applications are currently being processed as soon as practicable, however there are many incorrect or incomplete applications that are prolonging the process. I am advised approximately 60 percent of applications received are either incomplete or contain incorrect information. These instances require significant resources to finalise and detract from the time taken to finalise others.

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) can confirm that priority is given to occupational licences where a licence is necessary to earn a livelihood and applications for licence renewal are given priority over new applications.

The time taken to process applications for a new licence depends on a number of factors. These include:

- the number of new applications received each week;
- the type of licence applied for;
- the categories of firearms sought;
- the genuine reason for needing the licence;
- the types of checks necessary to establish the suitability of the applicant;
- the number of applications containing incorrect information requiring correction by the applicant; and
- the number of incomplete applications for which additional supporting information is required to be sought.

The previous weapons licensing system was held on a computer mainframe that was planned for decommissioning. The new Weapons Licensing Management System (WLMS) was designed as a replacement. The first stage of a three-stage implementation process went live on 30 November 2010. When all three stages are fully implemented, the system will streamline processes and provide significantly increased efficiency of service to licence holders, firearm dealers and shooting clubs.

To ensure data integrity and accuracy during migration to the new system, it was necessary to temporarily suspend data processing for a period of time. There was also a disruption to processing activities due to the recent flood events (Weapons Licensing

Branch (WLB) office closure) and the need to provide operational assistance to disaster relief (both uniform officers and staff members).

No data was lost during this process however there were a number of transcription issues and processes identified that required remedial correction in the system. These have either been undertaken or are currently in progress.

The WLB is addressing these delays through the rostering of overtime; the reallocation of staff, including the realignment of other internal QPS resources; and the hiring of 10 temporary staff. This has resulted in up to 20 additional staff working to process the outstanding applications.

Since the 'go-live' of the new system on 30 November 2010, and until 4 April 2011 over 2,189 new licence applications have been completed.

As at 4 April 2011, approximately 1,957 licence applications were being processed.

Licence renewal applications lodged at a police station prior to the expiry of the licence continue in force for a further 42 days. As at 4 April 2011, a total of 374 renewal applications were being processed. Of these applications, 197 were incomplete and awaiting further information from the applicant or other inquiries.