

**Question on Notice
No. 466
Asked on 5 April 2011**

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the weapons licensing management system—

- (1) How much additional funding has been allocated to the roll out of the new system since it went live last November?
- (2) What is the total cost of employee expenses for the additional 20 staff brought on to help with the back-log?
- (3) What is the new revised total cost for the entire roll out and what was the original budgeted cost of the roll out (reported separately)?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Police Service (QPS), through the Weapons Licensing Branch (WLB) has responsibility under the Weapons Act 1990 to administer the acquisition, possession and use of firearms in Queensland in addition to maintaining a firearms register. WLB relies heavily on electronic data management systems to record incoming documents, assess relevant applications, monitor licensing compliance and issue licenses and other authorities.

A computerised register is essential in maintaining the details of registered firearms and those people authorised to possess and use them.

On 30 November 2010, the QPS implemented stage 1 of a 3 stage project to introduce a contemporary Weapons Licensing Management System (WLMS). When all three stages are fully implemented, the system will streamline processes and provide 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 (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.

The QPS has assigned additional resources to provide assistance and work hours have been extended to reduce the delays in processing.

The Weapons Licensing Branch 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.

The QPS advised various industry groups including dealers and gun clubs that there would be delays associated with the implementation. The QPS also posted a notice onto the QPS website identifying that the implementation may result in delays. That notice remains in place and the QPS continues to advise industry groups of progress updates.

Since going live in November 2010, the QPS has remained in communication with industry groups outlining the progress of the new system and met with industry dealer representatives on the 21st of March this year.

To assist firearms dealers with their concerns the QPS suggested that dealers contact clients with longstanding orders to:

- ensure the clients had actually lodged a PTA application; and
- check whether the client had received their PTA, but had not contacted the dealer.

The QPS also established a dedicated business Email account for firearms dealers to follow up on any issues in relation to their clients and establish whether an application had been received and/or permit issued. In cases where applications had been lodged and not finalised, the QPS undertook to give those priority.

The below answers refer to the current stage of the WLMS. The budgets for the remaining stages are yet to be allocated.

(1) There has been no additional funding allocated to the roll out of the new system since it went live last November. Costs associated with additional employee expenses have been met from within the Administration Division.

(2) As at 6 April 2011, the total estimated cost of employee expenses, including additional overtime and staff costs was less than 1 percent of the total budget, \$133,530.72.

(3) The WLMS original concept was a 2 stage roll out at an estimated cost of \$13.5M. During the roll out of the first stage it was determined that the project should be devolved into 3 stages and a review of funding commitments was to occur. Once the review is completed, the QPS will consider any changes identified in the resources associated with a 3 stage project.