

Question on Notice

No. 2208

Asked on 29 November 2016

MR MOLHOEK ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE AND MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND SKILLS (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the Specialist Domestic Violence Court at Southport—
Will the Attorney-General detail (a) how many protection order applications were received by the Court each month for the past 12 months (reported separately), (b) how many applications in (a) were set down for a trial by the Court each month for the past 12 months (reported separately), (c) what is the average wait time for trial hearings in the Court (as at 1 November 2016) and (d) what is the average wait time for respondents to get on to an offender program through the Court (as at 1 November 2016)?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Southport for his question.

The Palaszczuk Government supported the continuation of the Southport Domestic and Family Court Trial as part of \$198.2 million funding package in the 2015-16 State Budget, addressing domestic and family violence. The Court trial forms part of the Government's response to the *Not Now, Not Ever* report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, led by Dame Quentin Bryce.

From November 2015 to October 2016, a total of 3,530 protection order applications have been lodged at the Specialist Domestic Violence Court at Southport. The applications include protection order applications, registration of interstate orders, urgent temporary protection order applications lodged by the police, and applications for protection orders arising from police protection notices.

The 12 month breakdown is as follows:

Month	Number of protection order applications lodged
November 2015	308
December 2015	268
January 2016	363
February 2016	362
March 2016	311
April 2016	284
May 2016	271
June 2016	276
July 2016	245
August 2016	262
September 2016	280
October 2016	300

Due to the way that court events are classified in the data collection application used by Queensland Courts, the relationship between the lodgement of an application within a specific month and when it was set down for trial in a subsequent month cannot always be accurately identified.

However, I am able to advise generally on the number of matters that were set down for hearing in the Specialist Domestic Violence Court each month from November 2015 to October 2016.

Month	Number of matters set down for hearing
November 2015	37
December 2015	23
January 2016	60
February 2016	56
March 2016	44
April 2016	32
May 2016	47
June 2016	43
July 2016	53
August 2016	41
September 2016	26
October 2016	56

As the Member may be aware, not every protection order application lodged is set down for hearing. Approximately five percent of applications proceed to hearing. The remaining 95 percent of matters are finalised by consent without the need to proceed to hearing, or are dismissed, or are withdrawn by the applicant.

At Southport, if an application for a temporary order or an application requesting a temporary order be varied is filed before 3.30 pm, the application will be listed to be dealt with on the same day it is filed. This ensures that aggrieved parties have a temporary domestic and family violence protection order made and are protected prior to the hearing.

Where an application for an order or application to vary an order does not request a temporary protection order, the practice is for the matter to be set down before the court within a few days or a week.

If the application for a protection order proceeds to hearing, the average wait time for the hearing as at 1 November 2016 is seven and a half months. This includes the time for collecting and preparing evidence for hearing. Again, I emphasise that temporary protection orders and support services are available throughout the court process to protect victims.

Finally, in addressing the Member's question relating to average wait time for respondents to attend a perpetrator program ordered through the Court, I can report that there are two programs which both have an average wait time for male respondents to commence the program of approximately eight to 12 weeks.

Individual counselling is also available.