

Question on Notice

No. 23

Asked on Tuesday 12 February 2019

MR S MINNIKIN ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to fare evasion on the South East Queensland network—

Will the Minister advise (a) the incidence of fare evasion on (i) school bus services as reported by drivers, (ii) urban bus services and (iii) City Train services, (b) how many Senior Network Officers are dedicated to decreasing fare evasion, (c) the number of on-the-spot fines issued for ticket offences and (d) any other measures used by Translink to quantify this issue (reported separately 2016-17 and 2017-18)?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Chatsworth for the question.

The Palaszczuk Government takes the issue of fare evasion seriously and is committed to addressing this issue. The Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) employs a frontline operational workforce of 55 senior network officers (SNOs) who work alongside 27 Queensland Rail authorised officers, 78 Queensland Police Service (QPS) rail squad officers and 31 GoldlinQ customer service officers to stage regular station lockdowns and patrols, educate public transport users, and issue penalty infringements and warning notices.

A further round of recruitment for SNOs is about to get underway with advertisements appearing in the next few weeks.

The safety of passengers is always a priority for the Palaszczuk Government. At the same time, there is a strong community expectation that users of the public transport network accept their responsibility to pay their fares.

The number of fare evasion incidences on school bus services reported by drivers, via the fare evade count key, was 876,923 in 2016–17, and 1,537,572 in 2017–18 financial year.

The number of fare evasion incidences on urban bus services reported by drivers, via the fare evade count key, was 1,061,611 in 2016–17, and 1,645,359 in 2017–18 financial year.

There is no fare evade count data on Citytrain services as the driver does not make observations due to customers touching on and off at the platform, rather than on the actual vehicle.

In 2016–17, there were 14,731 penalty infringement notices and 27,229 warning notices issued on Queensland rail services.

In 2017–18, there were 11,027 penalty infringement notices and 22,562 warning notices issued on Queensland rail services.

During 2016–17, a total of 20,866 penalty infringement notices were issued by all officers for ticketing offences only.

During 2017–18, a total of 17,143 penalty infringement notices were issued by all officers for ticketing offences only.

The Palaszczuk Government is concerned that fare evasion on school services almost contributes equally to overall fare evasion numbers, despite being around 12 per cent of total trips taken.

To address the issue of fare evasion, TransLink has implemented several additional revenue protection, safety and security initiatives across the TransLink network to address fare evasion, including:

- the installation of secure fare gates at several railway stations
- repeat targeted deployments on bus and rail services with the highest rates of fare evasion. SNOs deploy specifically on these services and target them through joint operations
- continued roll-out of the school 'Step Up' education program to multiple schools throughout the SEQ network, targeting schools with high fare evasion and behavioural offences
- dedicated additional SNO outposts located at the Gold Coast and Morayfield, focused on undertaking revenue protection and enforcement duties within the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Northern network areas.

It is important that all areas of the community work together to tackle fare evasion. That is why the Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring early intervention methods, such as 'Step Up' and liaising with Youth Justice, are undertaken alongside compliance measures such as the deployment of SNOs, and special operations involving QPS. The government is also committed to working with bus operators and bus drivers to address this issue and will hold a roundtable with parents, police, operators and schools to find new ways to tackle this issue.