

Question on Notice

No. 73

Asked on Wednesday 13 February 2019

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

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise the net increase of fully qualified drivers (excluding tutors and train operation inspectors) as at 1 February 2019 and, of those drivers, how many were recruited externally?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Chatsworth for the question.

Since October 2016, Queensland Rail has been working hard behind the scenes to increase its supply of train drivers, through the largest recruitment and training program the organisation has ever undertaken. A key component of this program was the recruitment of external trainee driver applicants, both those with and without prior Queensland Rail driving experience.

The external recruitment drive from August 2017 attracted significant interest, with more than 10,000 applications requiring to be assessed.

Drivers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of up to 1000 customers at any one time, so it is incredibly important that we get the right people into these safety-critical, highly sought after roles. To manage this, Queensland Rail has implemented a multi-staged, competitive recruitment process which involves psychometric and psychomotor testing, an assessment centre, panel interview, and health assessment. This approach is not dissimilar to recruitment programs for other agencies, such as the Queensland Police Service.

Queensland Rail has offered 256 trainee driver positions. As at 1 February 2019, 125 have completed their training and are now operating on the network. This represents a net increase of 66 drivers since October 2016, taking into account natural attrition, which includes 15 tutors and five train operation inspectors who are available to drive revenue services as required.

Queensland Rail is continuing to train more traincrew in more driver schools than ever before, with 76 trainee drivers currently in training (as at 1 February 2019) and seven new driver schools commencing in 2019. Across the 2019 training schedule, 100 trainee drivers will commence training.

I can confirm that we have seen 20 external candidates placed into driver schools in 2018. Further to this, 35 offers have been made to external candidates who are due to commence trainee driver training in 2019.

It was on the LNP's watch that driver training was cancelled in 2014, and driver recruitment suspended. In fact, under the LNP, and when the Member was the Assistant Minister for Public Transport, zero drivers commenced training in 2014. There were eight driver training schools in 2018, compared to no new schools held in 2014.