

Additional Questions to Queensland State Police

State Police presence at major domestic and international airports

1. The Department of Transport and Regional Services has commented that as the number of Australian Federal Police/Australian Protective Service officers has increased at major airports, the number of State Police has declined (*Transcript*, Canberra, 24 November, p. 23).

Specifically, Mr Andrew Tongue, First Assistant Secretary, Transport Security Regulation Group, DoTaRS said:

My bigger worry, rather than any issue between, say, the federal police or ourselves and state police forces, is the relative absence of state police from our airports. As the Commonwealth has put resources in, particularly the counter-terrorism first response APS presence, it appears to us that we see fewer and fewer state police. An airport is no different to a shopping centre in terms of the community policing role

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Similar comments were provided by the Sydney Airport Corporation Ltd (*Transcript*, Sydney, 2 October, p. 24).

The Committee wishes to explore this issue in some detail.

- How many State Police Officers are stationed at, and/or patrol Brisbane domestic and international terminals?

No state police officers are based permanently at the Brisbane International and Domestic airport sites. The Brisbane International and Domestic Airport sites are situated geographically within the Hendra Police Division (North Brisbane District). Officers from that Division provide the "first response" to incidents requiring the attention of State Police officers.

In addition to the response provided by Hendra Division, the North Brisbane District Traffic Branch provides an almost daily presence conducting regular and frequent patrols and speed enforcement of the Airport and its environs.

- Is police presence continuous or for just part of the day?

The Hendra Division is responsible for maintaining regular patrols and providing the first response to incidents arising at both sites. The policing presence on a daily basis consists of regular patrols of both sites (dependent on operational requirements). Regular contact with airport community stakeholders is maintained with bi-monthly meetings, as well as participation in both the co-ordination and planning (including small and large scale training exercises) of emergency management at airport sites.

- How has the level of State Police presence changed over the past three years?

The Hendra Police Division has maintained responsibility for the State Policing presence during the past three years. The only change to policing numbers during this period has been a change in District structure in July 2002, though this has

had little effect on the policing numbers or response times in attending incidents at the airport sites. The change to the district process has provided additional training to district personnel in emergency management and or terrorist related incidents. This is an ongoing process that is to be continued during 2004. There has been no reduction of policing to that normally provided over the past three years.

- What is your response time for attending incidents at the airport?

The response time in attending incidents at the airport sites has ranged from between four minutes for emergency incidents or urgent matters, to a negotiated response time for low priority occurrences.

- The Committee observes there are many and a growing number of retail outlets at airport terminals. What is the nature and level of crime at Brisbane airport?

Over the past three years there have been 390 reported offences at the Brisbane airport sites. Of these the dominant offences include stealing from specific buildings (102 reports), and lost property (145 reports).

- How has the nature and level of crime at Brisbane airport changed over the past three years?

To answer this question a detailed analysis needs to be conducted of the relevant calls for service during this period.

2. The Committee has received conflicting evidence concerning the incidence of 'airport rage' (incidents where passengers 'act out' their frustration at delays and screening requirements)—the Australian Service Union's assertion that airport rage is a significant problem is not supported by other witnesses.

- How many incidents of airport rage have been reported to State Police officers during the past three years?

No incidents of airport rage have been reported to State Police. The only reported incidents which required a State Police response were to assist with airline passengers who had been involved in "air rage" incidents. State Police officers have responded to a number of these incidents. On these occasions offenders have been detained, and court proceedings commenced.

- Is there a trend in either the nature or number of incidents?

N/A

- Should the penalties for airport rage be brought closer to the penalties for 'air rage' (ie incidents occurring on board an aircraft)? Why or why not?

It is not appropriate for State Police to provide comment on the penalties for any offence within the State of Queensland.