

RAILWAYS, SECURITY

458. Hon RAY HALLIGAN to the Minister for Transport:

Can the minister provide details on the Government's plans to increase security on Perth's urban rail network?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE replied:

Contrary to recent claims by the Opposition, which professes to have authored these initiatives, a safer public transport task force was created by this Government in early September 1999, consisting of representatives from the Department of Transport, Westrail, the Western Australia Police Service, the Ministry of Justice and Safer WA. In October this year, on the recommendations of that task force, the Government committed an additional \$30m towards a significant program of short and long-term initiatives to improve safety on the urban rail system. The Safelink program provides for additional staff to be employed on the urban rail system as well as a range of capital improvements. It should also be stated for the record that Westrail already invests \$11.1m per annum in ongoing security initiatives, including 108 special constables; eight revenue protection officers; customer service assistants; four Aboriginal liaison officers; closed-circuit television at 22 of the 57 stations; closed-circuit television at four station car parks; video cameras on all trains to record activities on board; emergency buttons and telephones on all trains and at all stations except two; and secure car parks at selected train stations.

In the short term, the Safelink program comprises the following key components -

Increased staff security: A greater physical security presence will be provided on trains and at stations, with a total of 70 additional personnel on the system between January and February next year. An increased security presence is currently being achieved through a combined squad of Western Australian police officers and Westrail staff operating on the system and the recruitment and training of an additional 18 staff to come onto the system by December.

Heavy fines: Severe penalties will be imposed for offensive or threatening behaviour that endangers the safety and comfort of other passengers.

Passenger safety watch: It is intended to empower the community to take greater ownership of its train system and report offences that occur on the rail system, including graffiti, vandalism, etc. A dedicated telephone number is provided, together with reward incentives, to encourage greater community reporting of offences.

Video surveillance: Video monitoring of all stations and trains.

The Safelink program has now been launched through a substantial public awareness campaign, with the distribution of posters and brochures for trains, train stations and passengers commencing this week. The key features of the Safelink longer-term strategy include -

- (a) the manning of 20 stations throughout operational hours;
- (b) increased security presence on all trains for part of the journey;
- (c) digital closed-circuit television surveillance of all 57 stations;
- (d) centralised and real-time monitoring of the closed-circuit television network;

Point of Order

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I thought that responses to questions should be succinct. The minister's response is anything but succinct.

The PRESIDENT: The question was succinct; it is the answer that is the problem. I make this point to members, and I make it to the Minister for Transport in particular: This answer is in the form of a ministerial statement. I am sure that the House would grant leave for this sort of statement. I do not mind when an answer is about half a page long, but this one appears to be considerably more.

Questions Without Notice Resumed

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: Mr President, I shall wind up.

- (e) station emergency help buttons linked to closed-circuit television network;
- (f) live voice public address and passenger information systems at all stations;
- (g) completion of 18 secured station car parks;
- (h) security lighting upgrade at all stations; and

- (i) restricted access barriers at 13 stations.

This new security strategy is a significant government initiative.