

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Stirling
Services

to Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency

Freight Liner FL 80 Vehicles

1. Can the Minister advise how many freightliner FL 80 vehicles have been purchased by the Northern Territory Government for use in the Fire Services?
2. Please provide the date of purchases and cost of each vehicle.
3. Where have those vehicles been placed?
4. Did the Northern Territory Government seek information on trials of these vehicles conducted by other States e.g., NSW, Qld or Victoria?
5. Can the Minister advise of the reliability record of each vehicle? For example, can the Minister advise how much has been spend on maintaining these vehicles, how often each of the vehicles has been placed in the workshops for maintenance?
6. Can the Minister advise if stress fractures to aerial devices attached to these vehicles has been detected and what has been the cost to repair those stress fractures?
7. Can the Minster advise on the usage of the aerial device commonly known as the Bronto? How many times has it been taken from the stations on call outs which may require such a vehicle?
8. Can the Minister advise if the Bronto has suffered hydraulic failures and other problems associated with its hydraulic system? Is it believed that these failures result from the lack of use of the vehicle in training and real response situations?
9. Can the Minister provide details on the expenditure of \$5.11 million on capital equipment for service as stated in Question Time, October 12 1999?

ANSWER

1. The Northern Territory Government has purchased five (5) Freightliner FL80 vehicles for use by the Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service.
2. The date of purchase and cost of each vehicle was:

| | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|
| NTGSV 8086 | June 1998 | \$600,000 |
| NTGSV 8079 | January 1999 | \$600,000 |
| NTGSV 8087 | January 1999 | \$600,000 |
| NTGSV 8091 | April 1999 | \$420,000 |
| NTGSV 8063 | June 1999 | \$420,000 |
3. The vehicles are stationed at the following locations:

| | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| NTGSV 8086 | Stationed at Darwin |
| NTGSV 8079 | Stationed at Alice Springs |
| NTGSV 8087 | Stationed at Casuarina |
| NTGSV 8091 | Stationed at Palmerston |
| NTGSV 8063 | Stationed at Darwin |

4. The NT Fire and Rescue Service was the first fire service in Australia to purchase this particular type of vehicle. The vehicles were selected after considerable research by a working party that included the head of NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services Mechanical Workshops and a group of NT Fire and Rescue Service firefighters with mechanical expertise. The decision was reached following a 2-day workshop led by Mr Rob Wilson, a mechanical engineer from the Melbourne Fire Brigade. Since that time, the Metropolitan Brigade in Victoria, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, the Fire and Emergency Services Authority of Western Australia and the Tasmanian Fire Service have purchased Freightliner Telesqrts and pumpers.

5. The maintenance record of each vehicle is as follows:

| | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| NTGSV 8086 | 46 occurrences at a cost of | \$6 933.00 |
| NTGSV 8079 | 03 occurrences at a cost of | \$69.62 |
| NTGSV 8087 | 17 occurrences at a cost of | \$1 011.55 |
| NTGSV 8091 | 06 occurrences at a cost of | \$ 994.60 |
| NTGSV 8063 | 08 occurrences at a cost of | \$ 422.93 |

Of the occurrences above, 21 were covered under warranty by Australian Fire Co. The remaining costs are for general maintenance as well as repairs and minor breakages caused in the day to day operation of these vehicles not covered under warranty. The costs above include items such as full sets of tyres for some vehicles.

Vehicles 8086 and 8087 were the first vehicles to come on line in Darwin and both vehicles were used extensively for training purposes prior to becoming front line appliances. Both vehicles suffered some "teething" problems early in their service to do with manufacturer's quality control and were mainly associated with the hydraulic and electrical systems on the ladders. The prime movers themselves have never given any problems. Problems associated with these vehicles have been rectified under warranty.

6. There have been no stress fractures found on the Telesqrts, however there have been a number of ladder rungs on which cracking was evident on the outer extremities of the rung, where the welding has been ground too far back. This is a result of poor manufacturing rather than a stress fracture. The ladder was removed from operations, as there were concerns that the rung could have twisted in the frame during use. The total repair cost has been estimated at \$1 000 and this cost will be recovered from the manufacturer under warranty.

7. Since it began operational duties in 1996, the Bronto Hydraulic Platform has responded 57 times to incidents that have included cliff rescues calls, automatic fire alarms and calls to alarms at high rise fires. The Bronto is also used on a regular basis in drills and the vehicle and hydraulic systems are checked at least twice a week.

8. The Bronto Hydraulic platform has 3 recorded hydraulic faults since its introduction into service in November 1996. Two of these relate to the same problem – the boom

creeping forward – and a technician from Bronto Finland is presently in the NT to fix this minor problem, which will be addressed under warranty. The other fault was a hydraulic leak, which was simply repaired by tightening a union joint. Further, there is no question of lack of use. The vehicle is used on a daily basis as well as for training and operations.

9. Details of expenditure on NTFRS vehicles purchased since 1995/96 to date as part of the eight (8) year major appliance replacement program follow:

| | | | |
|---------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1995/96 | Bronto | Darwin | \$1M |
| | Tanker | Alice Springs | \$150,000 |
| | Tanker | Jabiru | \$150,000 |
| 1997/98 | Telesqurt | Darwin | \$620,000 |
| 1998/99 | Telesqurt | Alice Springs | \$620,000 |
| | Telesqurt | Casuarina | \$620,000 |
| | Tanker | Yulara | \$230,000 |
| | Pumper | Palmerston | \$420,000 |
| | Small Rescue | Tennant Creek | \$170,000 |
| | Small Rescue | Jabiru | \$170,000 |
| 1999/00 | Pumper | Darwin | \$420,000 |
| | Tanker | Nhulunbuy | \$230,000 |
| | | <u>TOTAL</u> | <u>\$4,800,000</u> |