

Bills Committee on Rail Merger Bill
Administration's Response to the Follow-up to Bills Committee Meetings

Issue	Response				
(1) The two railway corporations to provide information on the employment of persons with disabilities (PwDs), including the an updated figure of PwDs employed, breakdown of these PwDs staff by disability category, and whether MTRCL would consider publishing the number of PwDs it employed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As at end 2005 and 2006, the number of PwDs employed by MTRCL and KCRC is set out as follows, with breakdown by category: 				
		MTRCL		KCRC	
	Categories	End of 2005	End 2006	End 2005	End 2006
	Physically handicapped, visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded or mentally ill	58	74	8	8
	Chronically ill *	167	186	213	206
	Total (% of total employees)	225 (3.5%)	260 (3.9%)	221 (3.8%)	214 (3.5%)
<p>* The chronically-ill employees of MTRCL include employees with tumor/cancer, heart disease, hypertension and diabetes while the chronically-ill employees of KCRC include employees with tumor/cancer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MTRCL agreed that MergeCo would publish annually the number of PwDs it employs. 					

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<p>(2) KCRC to provide a summary of passengers' views collected from various sources including customer liaison groups on the way the corporation handled railway incidents and the related contingency arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In two liaison group meetings in the past two years, KCRC received passenger feedback on the way the corporation handled railway incidents and the related contingency arrangements. A summary of the views expressed is given below: <table border="1" data-bbox="813 437 2063 1066"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="813 437 1099 533">Date of the liaison group meeting</th> <th data-bbox="1099 437 2063 533">Summary of views expressed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 533 1099 727">May 2007</td> <td data-bbox="1099 533 2063 727"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should improve the signage at the tunnels • Should increase staff support to assist passengers • Should arrange connecting bus service as soon as possible and increase the number of boarding locations </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 727 1099 1066">July 2005</td> <td data-bbox="1099 727 2063 1066"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCRC can meet its pledge to address the incident within a short time • Should organize drills with participation from passengers • Should increase the frequency of in-station broadcast • Should increase staff support to maintain order and assist passengers • Should notify passengers as soon as possible via the media </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> • KCRC indicated that it would take into account passenger feedback in its review of the handling of railway incidents. 	Date of the liaison group meeting	Summary of views expressed	May 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should improve the signage at the tunnels • Should increase staff support to assist passengers • Should arrange connecting bus service as soon as possible and increase the number of boarding locations 	July 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCRC can meet its pledge to address the incident within a short time • Should organize drills with participation from passengers • Should increase the frequency of in-station broadcast • Should increase staff support to maintain order and assist passengers • Should notify passengers as soon as possible via the media
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(3) The Administration to consider stipulating in the integrated Operating Agreement the requirement for the post-merger corporation (MergeCo) to comply with the guidance notes, practice notes and advice as might be issued by the Government from time to time relating to the noise level emitted due to maintenance works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant clause will be amended to stipulate that the MergeCo shall take into account the guidance notes, practice notes and advice as may be issued by the Government from time to time relating to the noise level emitted due to maintenance works.
(4) The two railway corporations to examine possible means to improve the air flow at platforms of non-enclosed railway stations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fans and spot cooling systems are already installed at the platforms of some of the stations of the East Rail of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC), and at above ground MTR stations, to cool waiting areas and to improve their air circulation. • The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) is exploring different ways to improve the waiting environment at non-enclosed railway stations. It is seeking information on the provision of cooling facilities in the rail system in Malaysia and will make reference to the information obtained in examining the feasibility of the application of these facilities to the MTR system. • In parallel, MTRCL is also examining the feasibility of other possible ways, e.g. installation of additional cooling fans, enhancement of the existing ventilation system, etc. to improve the air flow in non-enclosed railway stations in the context of its station improvement plan for the relevant stations. MTRCL envisages that the study result will be available before end of this year.

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(5) MTRCL to explain the cost elements of providing the required facilities and system for radio reception on board the trains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTRCL estimated that to provide for radio broadcast of seven commercial radio FM channels, the investment required would be approximately \$100 million. The key cost elements are the costs for the design and installation of transmission cables throughout the railway tunnels, and for the installation of antennae and other necessary equipment inside all railway stations.
(6) KCRC to advise the number of low-floor bus vis-a-vis its total bus fleet size operating in the TSA; and their plan, if any, to replace all their conventional buses with low-floor buses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At present, KCRC has 110 buses operating within the North-west Transit Service Area, among which 60% or 66 are low-floor buses. The Corporation has recently purchased 11 new low-floor buses which will be delivered in 2008 to replace existing buses. When these newly-purchased buses are put into service, the % of low-floor bus in KCRC fleet will be 70%. • The remaining conventional buses will be replaced progressively having regard to route development plans and passenger demand. It is envisaged that the replacement plan will be completed progressively within 8 years.

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<p>(7) MergeCo to disclosing its programme of the future operations or plans for the rail and TSA bus service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing arrangement for KCRC to submit to Transport Department (TD) annually a future plan for its light rail and KCRC bus service within the North-west Transit Service Area (TSA), which shall include information on any plan for service adjustments, will apply to MergeCo. MergeCo will be required to consult the relevant District Councils (DCs) and disclose relevant information to them for discussion prior to implementing such plan. Therefore there is already a mechanism for MergeCo to disclose information in its plan. • In case the plan of MergeCo is revised after the consultation with DCs, MergeCo will also be required to notify and disclose the relevant information to the DCs before implementation. • It is an established practice that relevant railway operating and financial information is published by the relevant railway corporations themselves, for example, vide publication of their annual reports, Sustainability Report, ‘Our Pledge for Service 2006’, MTR Performance Achievements, etc. The relevant provisions in the MTR Ordinance enables the Government, if necessary, to disclose information obtained from MTRCL after consultation with the corporation, but they also specify clearly that there is no obligation on the Government to obtain the agreement of the corporation before disclosure. These provisions are included in the present legislation in view of the listed company status of MTRCL.

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<p>(8) The Administration to provide information on:</p> <p>i) the noise level of train operation near both ends of non-enclosed railway stations; and</p> <p>ii) the noise level of railway maintenance works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has advised that most of the open sections of the KCR and MTR are exposed to high background noise levels emitted by buses and other modes of transport in the areas. For instance, the prevalent background noise level of such emission at the open section between Kwai Hing MTR Station and Kwai Fong MTR station is 70dB(A). By comparison, the noise level of MTR trains is lower, ranging between 61dB(A) and 65dB(A). • According to the EPD, track maintenance (e.g. high noise producing replacement and track grinding works) carried out without quiet equipment could have a noise impact of 80-82dB(A) on residents in the vicinity (e.g. at Fanling Centre which is about 40m from the track). Since the introduction of quieter track grinders in May 2006 by the KCRC, the noise level recorded during the same process at the same receiver has been reduced by about 10% to 73 dB(A). In December 2006, EPD issued a Construction Noise Permit (CNP) to KCRC requiring the installation of specially arranged acoustic kiosks, portable acoustic barriers or screens for noise reduction. As a result, the noise level generated from track grinding has been further reduced to about 70 dB(A).
<p>(9) The two railway corporations to advise the quantity of their acoustic screens / sheds used for railway maintenance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of acoustic screens/sheds used by the MTRCL and the KCRC for railway maintenance are 18 and 162 respectively. The number of acoustic screens/sheds used by MTRCL is relatively smaller because most of the MTR railway network in the urban area is located underground where noise from maintenance activities does not impact on the households nearby. On the other hand the length of the track at the overhead sections of the MTR network which are situated near residential areas is short. The number of screens/sheds used by the Corporation is adequate.