

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Burgoyne to the Minister for Police:

NT Police Dog Operations Unit

For all questions below, please provide a breakdown across all regions – Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Gove:

1. Please advise the current number of operational dogs in each region.

Answer: There are 16 fully operational dogs deployed across the Northern Territory. These dogs are based in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Groote Eylandt.

While the 2022/23 data shows 17 operational dogs and handlers, as of January 2024 there are currently 16, as one operational Police dog passed. The position (dog and handler) are being recruited.

2. How many dogs are currently managed by the Dog Operations Unit in each region? If possible, please provide answers across 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Answer: There have been no changes to the number of dogs in each region since 2017/18 the numbers have been consistent.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Darwin	8	8	8	8	8	8
Alice Springs	5	5	5	5	5	5
Katherine	2	2	2	2	2	2
Groote Eylandt	2	2	2	2	2	2

3. How many handlers are currently employed to team with the dogs in each region? If possible, please provide answers across 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Answer: There have been no changes to the number of positions allocated since 2017/18 (in line with normal transfer / leave etc.). At times, these positions have not always been filled, however this has been only for short periods throughout these time periods.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Darwin	8	8	8	8	8	8
Alice Springs	5	5	5	5	5	5
Katherine	2	2	2	2	2	2
Groote Eylandt	2	2	2	2	2	2

4. How many operational dogs were bred in each region?

Answer: All Northern Territory (NT) Police Force (NTPF) dogs have been bred interstate.

5. How many operational dogs were trained in each region?

Answer: Four Drug Dogs were trained interstate. All remaining NTPF dogs have been trained in Darwin and Alice Springs.

6. For those not bred or trained in each region, what was the cost per dog?

Answer: Average cost of a working dog pending age can be between \$4,500 to \$15,000.

7. Please advise if the dogs are currently used to assist in situations other than for the purpose of drug detection. Please give details.

Answer: The NTPF Dog Operations Unit currently have Drug Detection and Patrol Dog capabilities. Patrol Dogs are utilised for tracking (offenders and articles), apprehending offenders and building searches.

8. How many patrols are currently carried out in each region with the dogs? Please provide the time of day and the locations where this occurs. If possible, please provide answers across 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Answer: There is no recording system used within the NTPF that captures this information.

9. Please advise the budget for each Operations Unit and the total annual cost across 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Answer: The financial reporting is not classified in this way. The request is too time consuming.