

Legislative Scrutiny Committee  
Northern Territory Legislative Assembly  
GPO Box 3721  
Darwin NT 0801

E [DCF.officeofceo@nt.gov.au](mailto:DCF.officeofceo@nt.gov.au)

T 08 8999 2749

Via email: [LSC@nt.gov.au](mailto:LSC@nt.gov.au)

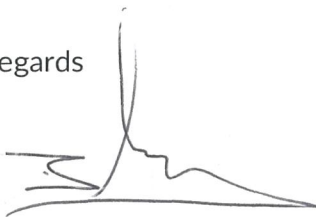
Dear members of the Legislative Scrutiny Committee

**Re: Response to questions taken on notice**

I refer to the questions taken on notice at the Legislative Scrutiny Committee Hearing on 27 May 2026, the response for which are addressed in the document attached to this letter.

The response includes a break-down of notifications and substantiated report of sexual harm to a child. The request for historical data to be provided for the specified age groups was not possible for all the requested reporting years given the timeframe to respond; however, the data for specific age groups for the 2024-25 and 2025-March 2026 reporting periods is provided.

Regards



Brent Warren  
Chief Executive Officer

5 June 2026

## Response to questions taken on notice

### Question 1

- a) In the last 5 years, how many children in the Northern Territory have been reported to the department as having been raped, sexually assaulted, sexually abused, sexually exploited or otherwise subjected to sexual harm?

The Department of Children and Families receive notifications where it is alleged that a child has suffered harm or is at substantial risk of suffering harm pursuant to section 15 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act*.

Sexual Harm is one of four harm types. The others are physical harm, emotional harm or neglect.

Harm to a child is any significant detrimental effect caused by any act, omission or circumstances of the parent/caregivers that impact on a child's physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing and development.

Sexual harm can include inappropriate touching, grooming, indecent exposure, failure to provide children with appropriate privacy during daily self-care routines, penetration and sexual exploitation.

Sexual abuse includes the inducement or coercion of the child to engage in or witness sexually explicit conduct for the sexual gratification or profit of the person responsible.

Sexual exploitation is any sexual activity or sexual threat that is imposed on a child by their parent, caregiver or someone in a position of authority over them. It includes sexual abuse but can include involving the child as a participant or spectator in trafficking, taking sexually explicit images, prostitution, a pornographic performance or an act of a sexual nature.

The client information management information system allows the Department to code each child protection notification to identify the type of harm(s) that apply. One or more of the four harm types can be captured. Sexual harm will always be prioritised as the primary harm type for reporting purposes.

There are three types of child protection investigations

- A General child protection investigation
- A CAT child protection investigation is commenced when serious allegations of neglect, sexual and physical harm are received, including those where multiple alleged PBR's are identified. CAT is a multi-agency team of Authorised Officers from the Department, the NT Police and the Australian Federal Police.
- A s84A child protection investigation is commenced when allegations are made that a child in care has suffered harm or exploitation, is suffering harm or exploitation; or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation.

Where a child protection investigation substantiates harm, it is also possible to denote the type of harm, or harms, to a child. The details of the specific types of harm a child has suffered or is at substantial risk of suffering is captured in narrative text within a child protection investigation

assessment. Narrative text cannot be counted to report on the number of individual types of sexual harm or exploitation children may have suffered or are at risk of suffering.

Available data is presented below to show trends over time, available information on age group and investigation type.

**Notifications (allegations) received within the financial year by number and proportion where sexual harm is the primary harm type reported**

|                            | 2019-20 |    | 2020-21 |    | 2021-22 |     | 2022-23 |     | 2023-24 |    | 2024-25 |    | 2025-26 |    |
|----------------------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|-----|---------|-----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| <b>Total Notifications</b> | 25,500  |    | 28,293  |    | 30,535  |     | 21,507* |     | 22,655  |    | 24,684  |    | 13,006  |    |
| <b>Sexual Harm</b>         | 1,802   | 7% | 2,586   | 9% | 3,212   | 11% | 2,061   | 10% | 1,951   | 9% | 1,975   | 8% | 860     | 7% |

\* In March 2023, a new client management system (CARE) was implemented. For the 2022-23 transition year, data is derived from two data sets.

**Proportion of Child Protection Investigations commenced where sexual harm is the primary harm**

|                                |  | 2024-25 (Actual) |                 | 2025-26 (31 Mar) |                 |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                                |  | Investigations   | Unique Children | Investigations   | Unique Children |
| Total investigations commenced |  | 5,602            | 4,759           | 3,027            | 2,814           |
| Sexual harm                    |  | 866              | 811             | 428              | 412             |
| %                              |  | 15%              | 17%             | 14%              | 15%             |

**Child Protection Investigations commenced where sexual harm is the primary harm type reported by investigation type**

| Investigation type          | 2024-25 (Actual) |                 | 2025-26 (31 Mar) |                 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                             | Investigations   | Unique Children | Investigations   | Unique Children |
| Child Abuse Taskforce (CAT) | 329              | 318             | 125              | 122             |
| General                     | 466              | 447             | 278              | 274             |
| Section 84A                 | 71               | 63              | 25               | 23              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>866</b>       | <b>811</b>      | <b>428</b>       | <b>412</b>      |

\*Section 84A are investigations pertaining to reports of children in out of home care

### Child Protection Investigations substantiated as sexual harm within the financial year

|                            | 2019-20 |    | 2020-21 |    | 2021-22 |    | 2022-23 |    | 2023-24 |    | 2024-25 |    | 2025-26 |    |
|----------------------------|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|---------|----|
| <b>Total Substantiated</b> | 1,332   |    | 1,914   |    | 1,713   |    | 1,526   |    | 1,223   |    | 1,431   |    | 790     |    |
| <b>Sexual Exploitation</b> | 69      | 5% | 107     | 6% | 101     | 6% | 84      | 6% | 71      | 6% | 94      | 7% | 45      | 7% |

\* In March 2023, a new client management system (CARE) was implemented. For the 2022-23 transition year, data is derived from two data sets

- b) Please specify how many were: under the age of 16; under the age of 14; under the age of 10; under the age of 5; were infants under the age of 12 months; and toddlers, broken down as: one-year-olds; two-year olds; three-year-olds.

Notifications (allegations) where sexual harm is the primary harm type reported by age

| Age at intake   | 2024-25 (Actual) |                              | 2025-26 (31 Mar) |                              |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
|                 | Notifications    | Unique Children <sup>1</sup> | Notifications    | Unique Children <sup>1</sup> |
| Under 12 months | 39               | 33                           | 22               | 20                           |
| 1               | 47               | 42                           | 22               | 21                           |
| 2               | 51               | 47                           | 22               | 21                           |
| 3               | 79               | 67                           | 33               | 31                           |
| 4               | 99               | 90                           | 42               | 40                           |
| 5               | 111              | 103                          | 40               | 39                           |
| 6               | 121              | 109                          | 45               | 39                           |
| 7               | 96               | 92                           | 57               | 51                           |
| 8               | 111              | 99                           | 46               | 43                           |
| 9               | 119              | 104                          | 43               | 41                           |
| 10              | 119              | 103                          | 56               | 50                           |
| 11              | 101              | 94                           | 43               | 39                           |
| 12              | 136              | 122                          | 54               | 54                           |
| 13              | 167              | 144                          | 72               | 69                           |
| 14              | 199              | 167                          | 94               | 89                           |
| 15              | 179              | 153                          | 83               | 75                           |
| 16              | 115              | 97                           | 49               | 48                           |
| 17              | 86               | 80                           | 37               | 35                           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>1,975</b>     | <b>1,673</b>                 | <b>860</b>       | <b>786</b>                   |

1. The total number of unique children may be less than the overall total, because a single child can be counted more than once if they were the subject of multiple notifications at different ages during the reporting periods.

Child Protection Investigations substantiated as sexual harm by age

Data suppression has been applied to age groupings due to the small populations.

| Age at investigation commenced | 2024-25 (Actual) |                 | 2025-26 (31 Mar) |                 |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|                                | Investigations   | Unique Children | Investigations   | Unique Children |
| 0 to 4 years old               | 8                | 8               | 9                | 9               |
| 5 to 9 years old               | 19               | 19              |                  |                 |
| 10 to 14 years old             | 45               | 45              | 22               | 21              |
| 15 to 17 years old             | 22               | 22              | 14               | 14              |
| TOTAL                          | 94               | 94              | 45               | 44              |

Question 2

- a) In the last 5 years how many children presented with an STI?
- b) Please specify how many were: under the age of 16; under the age of 14; under the age of 10; under the age of 5; were infants under the age of 12 months; and toddlers, broken down as: one-year-olds; two-year olds; three-year-olds.

This information is not captured in reportable fields for children subject to children protection notification, investigation or a child in care.

Health checks and screening that identity and STI is reportable to the NT Department of Health Centre for Disease Control.

Latest available reporting for the Northern Territory on sexually transmitted infections testing notifications for all children under the age of 15 years is provided below.

| Notifications for children <15 years of age | Jan-Jun (6 months) 2025 | 5-year Jan-Jun mean (2020-2024) |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Chlamydia notification count                | 13                      | 31.2                            |
| Gonorrhoea notification count               | 20                      | 24.0                            |
| Infectious syphilis notification count      | 4                       | 4.0                             |
| Trichomoniasis notification count           | 34                      | 29.0                            |

Source: Northern Territory Department of Health. Surveillance Update for Notifiable Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood-Borne Viruses in the Northern Territory. 2025; Vol. 26, No.1