



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 267

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Children and Families, Hon Robyn Cahill OAM
MLA:

Every Child Matters Act Costs

1. Noting the passage of the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Act 2026 (Act No. 22 of 2026, assented to on 13 August 2026), can the Minister advise:
 - a. Does the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 already require that the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child be the paramount consideration? If so, in which section, and what does the new Act change about that requirement?
 - b. the total cost of developing the legislation, including consultation, legal drafting and departmental resources;
 - c. the projected costs of implementing the Act; and
 - d. the funding allocated in the 2026–27 Budget to support implementation, and the output under which it is recorded?
 - e. If development costs were not separately tracked, in which system was expenditure on the reform recorded, and at what level of disaggregation?
2. Section 2 of the Act provides that, subject to subsection (2), the Act “commences on the day fixed by the Administrator by Gazette notice”, and that if a provision does not commence before 11 May 2028 it commences on that day.
 - a. Has a Gazette notice fixing a commencement day been made? If so, on what date was the notice made, on what date was it gazetted, and which provisions does it commence?
 - b. Which provisions of the Act are in force as at the date of this answer?

- c. If no commencement notice has been made, what must occur before the Act can commence, and by what date is commencement expected?
 - d. What is the reason for providing a commencement backstop of 11 May 2028, and was a shorter period considered?
- 3. Did the Department undertake financial modelling of the anticipated costs of implementing the reforms?
 - a. Which government agencies were included in the modelling?
 - b. Which non-government agencies were included?
 - c. What are the projected costs to each affected agency, and in which outputs are they reflected in the 2026–27 Budget?
 - d. Can the Minister table that financial modelling?
- 4. What were the total costs of consultation with children and young people specifically relating to the reforms?
- 5. What implementation funding, training and practice guidance is being provided to the workforce and to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations in preparation for commencement of the Act?
 - a. Is there a budget line for implementation of the Act; if so, under which output and in what amount, and if not, from which existing appropriation will implementation be met? The Department's answers to questions on notice of 5 June 2026 and to written questions of 18 June 2026 were tabled with the Legislative Scrutiny Committee; if the answer is recorded there, please state where.
- 6. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026-27 records the appropriation for the Department of Children and Families and its component outputs.
 - a. What is the amount appropriated for 2026-27 to out-of-home care, to family support and early intervention, and to child protection services, stated separately?
 - b. For each of those three, what was the 2025-26 budget and the 2025-26 revised figure?
 - c. Which of those amounts is higher in 2026-27 than the 2025-26 revised figure, and which is lower?
 - d. What new money is provided in 2026-27 for family preservation, reunification support or early intervention, as distinct from out-of-

home care placement costs, and under which output is each recorded?

7. On the Independent Review into the Conduct of the Department of Children and Families, announced on 13 May 2026 and conducted by Ms Karen Webb and Mr Greg Shanahan, the First Interim Report of which was tabled on 21 July 2026 as Tabled Paper 750:
 - a. What is the total cost of the review, including fees paid to each reviewer, and under which output is that cost recorded?
 - b. Are the review's terms of reference published? If so, at what address; if not, will they be tabled?
 - c. Has any further interim report, or the final report, been received? For each, on what date was it received, and on what date will it be tabled. If the final report has not been received, on what date is it due?
 - d. Of the recommendations in the First Interim Report, which has the Government accepted, which has it not accepted, and what has been implemented to date?
8. Has the Department conducted, commenced or discontinued a review of the Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 at any time since 1 January 2025, separately from the Legislative Scrutiny Committee's inquiry into the Bill?
 - a. If so, on what date did it commence, what were its final terms of reference, and were those terms provided to the persons invited to comment on them?
 - b. Has it reported? If so, on what date, and will the report be tabled. If it has been discontinued, on what date and by what decision?