



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 310

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Hon Joshua Burgoyne MLA:

Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority

1. A member of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA) board also chairs the NT Planning Commission — an appointment made by the Minister on 22 September 2025 — and until recently served as managing director of a government consultancy company. How are the actual or perceived conflicts of interest arising from these concurrent roles being managed?
2. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 records total expenses for the AAPA of \$8.376 million budgeted and \$10.309 million revised for 2025–26, against \$7.435 million budgeted for 2026–27, with the Protection of sacred sites output falling from \$7.940 million revised to \$5.672 million. Output appropriation over the same period rises from \$3.323 million to \$3.445 million. The Budget Paper attributes the decrease to “self-generated revenues returning to baseline and finalisation of time-limited funding for increased sacred site clearance requests from Northern Territory Government agencies”.
 - a. What was that time-limited funding, what was its total value and term, which agency or agencies provided it, and on what date was the decision taken not to continue it?
 - b. What volume of sacred site clearance requests from Northern Territory Government agencies did that funding support in 2025–26, and what volume is forecast for 2026–27?
 - c. Is the AAPA expected to receive fewer clearance requests in 2026–27 than in 2025–26 and, if so, on what basis?
 - d. What is the AAPA's forecast self-generated revenue for 2026–27, and what assumptions underlie it?
3. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 sets the AAPA a target of 100 authority certificates issued for 2026–27, against a 2025–26 estimate of 118, while retaining the measure “Average time between receiving authority certificate

applications and completing service (days)” at no more than 120 days, with a 2025–26 estimate of 120 days. Staffing for 2026–27 is 37 full-time equivalent.

- a. How many authority certificate applications were received in each of the three years to 2025–26, and how many were completed?
 - b. If demand in 2026–27 matches the 118 certificates issued in 2025–26 rather than the target of 100, how will the average 120-day standard be met with reduced expenditure?
 - c. What was the longest time taken to complete an authority certificate application in 2025–26?
 - d. How many applications were on hand and incomplete at 30 June 2026, and how long had the oldest been on hand?
 - e. What was the AAPA's full-time equivalent staffing in each of the three years to 2025–26?
4. The AAPA is an independent statutory authority established under the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989.
 - a. Has AAPA advised the Minister of any effect of its 2026–27 funding on its capacity to perform its statutory functions and, if so, on what date and can that advice be provided?
 - b. What consultation with the AAPA preceded the 2026–27 budget decision, and on what dates?