

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Giles to Minister for Children and Families/Child Protection

Safe Houses – Territory Wide

I am seeking information regarding what I have termed 'safe houses' that being locations or facilities where youth under 18 years of age are placed under care and protection of others:

Section 57 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* (the Act) provides for Authorised Officers under the Act to take children and young people to their usual place of residence and if this is not practical or appropriate, to a safe place. 'Safe places' are not defined under the Act and it is up to the judgement of the Authorised Officer to make a decision about what constitutes a 'safe place'.

'Safe Houses', which can be utilised as a 'safe place', are a short term emergency accommodation option for young people to ensure their safety. The Department of Children and Families operate Safe Houses in Darwin and Alice Springs

1. How many safe houses are there in Alice Springs and in other locations across the Northern Territory and what are the general locations?

There are two 'Safe Houses' located in Alice Springs and one Safe House in Darwin.

2. How many and which ones of these safe houses are Territory Government funded?

The Department of Children and Families fully funds all three Safe Houses with funds provided by the Northern Territory Government.

3. How many and which ones are part funded by the Territory Government?

As above, all three Safe Houses are fully funded by the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Children and Families.

4. What financial contribution did the NT Government provide to each of the safe houses for the financial years 06/07, 07/08, 08/09, 09/10, 10/11 to 28 Feb 2011?

During the time period specified the Safe Houses were not in existence therefore no funding was allocated.

5. How many to your knowledge are funded by other agencies?

As answered in Questions 2 and 3, all Safe Houses are fully funded by the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Children and Families.

6. Who are the recipients of the services of these safe houses?

Section 56 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act* outlines who is eligible to access Safe House services.

7. How many people under the age of 18 were supported in each of these 'safe houses', including location, in each month between the period 1 January 2007 and 10 March 2011 and what were the ages of each person statistically?

During the time period specified the Safe Houses were not in existence.

8. How many times did people re-enter the safe houses and what is the average nights stay for each child?

Since the opening of the Alice Springs Safe Houses four clients under the age of 18 have re-entered.

There have been no clients to re-enter the Darwin/Palmerston Safe House since its opening.

The length of stay in a safe place is not prescribed in the *Act* but it is intended to be short term overnight. Periods of time beyond overnight are probably related to needing protection, and a provisional care and protection order would be sought in those instances.