

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Burgoyne to the Minister for Territory Families and Urban Housing:

Family Responsibility Agreements and Family Responsibility Orders

1. Please advise the number of Family Responsibility Agreements currently in place in:
 - Darwin;
 - Katherine;
 - Tennant Creek;
 - Alice Springs, and
 - Nhulunbuy

2. Please advise the number of Family Responsibility Orders currently in place in:
 - Darwin;
 - Katherine;
 - Tennant Creek;
 - Alice Springs, and
 - Nhulunbuy

Answer

- Family Responsibility Agreements (FRAs) and Family Responsibility Orders (FROs) are legislated under the *Youth Justice Act 2005* (YJA). These provisions were an attempt to create a legal process to make parents responsible for their young people. We know that these provisions in their current form do not work.
- The Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory noted that these provisions had not been utilised due to a lack of funding and clarity as to the Court's inquiry process and the available services and supports prior to the granting of an order.
- Prior to 2016, the former Family Responsibility Unit had only ever made three FROs and the scheme was under review.
- Our youth justice programs are focused on making young people responsible for their behaviors and learning consequences for their actions.

- Our youth justice practice is evolving and we are improving engagement with families to more clearly hold parents and responsible adults to account when their child is engaging in offending behaviours that may place them at risk of appearing before the Youth Justice Court.
- Currently FROs are punitive in nature, with non-compliance resulting in things like televisions being taken away. The legislation we are currently progressing will see non-compliance result in a child protection response. This is being done so that FRAs actually work and enhance our focus on supporting families early to break the cycle of crime. We expect these changes to be complete and FRAs underway within the next three to four months.