

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Joshua Burgoyne to the Minister for Territory Families

Youth Detention Staff Safety

1. Please advise the number of Youth Justice Officers who have been attacked in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre since January 2021.

ANSWER:

There have been a total of 83 incidents involving young people assaulting Youth Justice Officers from 1 January 2021 through to 9 April 2021.

66 Assaults against Youth Justice Officers – No Injury.

17 Assaults against Youth Justice Officers – Injury.

2. What Personal Protective Equipment is provided to Youth Justice Officers working in the Don Dale Detention Centre?

ANSWER:

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities currently provide the following personal protective equipment to Youth Justice Officers in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre:

- face shield;
- gloves; and
- fluid suit (to protect from spitting, urine etc).

From June/July 2021 the following will be available:

- turtle humane shields (child friendly padded shields);
- armadillo full length shields;
- helmets;
- protective riot suits;
- protective gloves; and
- puncture proof vests.

3. What support is offered to Youth Justice Officers who are the victims of assaults in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre?

ANSWER:

Youth Justice Officers are offered a number of supports which include counselling services through the Employee Assistance Program and Employee Assistance Service Australia. Additionally, Youth Justice

Officers are encouraged to report the incident to Northern Territory Police for investigation. Following an incident and prior to return to normal duties, Youth Justice Officers who have been injured are placed on a return to work plan which may involve taking non-client focused roles within the Centre including Gate House duties, Communications, Visitor Reception and Administrative roles until they are comfortable to return to normal client focused roles.

4. Please advise the procedure required to request authorisation for the use of force from the Superintendent of a detention centre pursuant to the *Youth Justice Act 2005* (NT).

ANSWER:

Youth Justice Officers are permitted to use force in any instance where they believe there is immediate danger to anyone in the detention centre, including themselves, their colleagues or other detainees. Additionally, Use of Force is permitted to prevent a serious threat to the safety and security of the Detention Centre.

Youth Justice Officers are not required to seek permission from the Superintendent to use force in these cases as the power is delegated to the Youth Justice Officers.

5. Where the use of force is authorised by the Superintendent, over what period is the authorisation valid?

ANSWER:

The Use of Force is valid for the entirety of the incident until the immediate threat or danger is resolved.

6. Please provide the number of occasions the use of force has been authorised in the period from January 2021.

ANSWER:

As explained above, Youth Justice Officers are permitted to use force without authorisation from the Superintendent in instances where they believe there is immediate danger to anyone in the Detention Centre.