

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Edgington to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Family and Sexual Violence:

Domestic Violence Programs

1. How many domestic violence offenders were assessed to participate in a rehabilitation program under Section 7A of the *Bail Act 1982* in the 2021/22 financial year? Of these, how many were assessed as suitable, and how many were assessed as not suitable?

Answer:

Under section 24 of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007* offenders can be ordered by the Court to attend a rehabilitation program as part of a Domestic Violence Order.

This provision is being trialed as part of the Specialist Approach to Domestic and Family Violence at the Local Court in Alice Springs (the Specialist Approach). An order under section 24 may only be made if the Court is satisfied the defendant is a suitable person to take part in the program and there is a place available in the program. In deciding whether to make such an order the safety and protection of the protected person must be the paramount consideration. The defendant must consent to order and plead guilty to any criminal charges. The Court may then release the defendant on bail in accordance with the *Bail Act 1982* for a period of time to participate in the program.

As part of this trial, fourteen offenders in Alice Springs were assessed for suitability to participate in a declared rehabilitation program pursuant to section 24 of the *Domestic and family Violence Act 2007*.

Of these 14 offenders, 11 were assessed as suitable, one was assessed as not suitable and no finding was made regarding suitability for two offenders.

2. How many domestic violence offenders were not assessed to participate in a rehabilitation program under Section 7A of the *Bail Act 1982* in the 2021/22 financial year?

Answer:

The number of defendants who were not assessed to participate in a rehabilitation program is unknown. It is noted that defendants must consent to an assessment under the practice directions for the Specialist Approach (Local Court Practice Direction 30A-1).

3. How many domestic violence offenders were ordered to attend a rehabilitation program as a part of their bail conditions, under section 24 of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007* in the 2021/22 financial year?

Answer:

In the financial year 2021-22, eleven offenders were assessed as suitable and an order was made to attend a prescribed rehabilitation program as a condition of their Domestic Violence Orders pursuant to section 24 of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*. Ten of the 11 offenders were on bail.

4. Of the offenders who attended a rehabilitation program while on bail? Of these, how many completed the program? How many failed to complete the program?

Answer:

Of the 11 offenders who attended a rehabilitation program in compliance with the order made pursuant to section 24 of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*, three offenders successfully completed the program, four offenders failed to complete the program and four are pending. That is a successful or pending outcome in 64 per cent of matters and an unsuccessful outcome in 36 per cent of matters.

5. How many domestic violence offenders were arrested on further domestic violence charges while they were on bail in the 2021/22 financial year? How many were perpetrated against the same victim as the original offence?

Answer:

Section 85G provides that the Court may revoke an order made under section 24 if there is an unacceptable risk to the safety or welfare of the protection person or any other person (section 85G). In this situation bail would also be revoked.

Under section 85B a program cannot be satisfactorily completed if the defendant breached a DVO in force, or committed a violent or sexual offence.

There was a total of 1946 individuals on bail for DV-related offences during 2021-22. Of those, 266 had an arrest for a new DV charge while on bail; 166 of the 266 had at least one of the same victims in the new case as in the case for which they were on bail.

6. How many domestic violence offenders were arrested on further domestic violence charges after completing a program in the 2021/22 financial year? How many were perpetrated against the same victim as the original offence?

Answer:

Of the three offenders who successfully completed the Tangentyere Council Men's Behaviour Change Program in Alice Springs in the 2021-22 financial year (see questions 3 and 4 above) none have been arrested in the Northern Territory for further domestic and family violence related charges.

7. What are the rehabilitation programs currently available to domestic violence offenders? Where are they located, and what was the total expenditure on these programs in the 2021/22 financial year?

Answer:

The Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department) provides funding for two community based Men's Behaviour Change programs in the Northern Territory. Total funding provided is \$1 million per annum encompassing both services.

The two programs are:

- Marra'ka Mbarintja Men's Family Violence Prevention Program, referred to as the Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP), located in Alice Springs. Tangentyere Council is the lead agency in the consortium and delivers the men's behaviour change group. The Women's Safety Service Central Australia provides support to female partners/ex partners of men who are referred to the MBCP and Jesuit Social Services supports the program by coordinating data collection, reporting and action research process evaluation.
- MBCP run by Catholic Care Northern Territory. Two Community Groups run from Berrimah, and one specifically for Mission Australia's Residential Rehabilitation Program (Stringybark). A Wadeye group has been running consistently since May 2021 due to additional funding from the Department to support regular travel by facilitators. There is ongoing consultation about the delivery options for Tiwi given facilitator capacity and travel costs.