



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 249

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Attorney-General, Hon Marie-Clare Boothby MLA:

Prosecution Outcomes and DPP Capacity

1. The answer to Written Question No. 89 of the 15th Assembly provided a table of charges laid by offence category for the period 25 August 2024 to 31 March 2025, totalling 25,801 charges. Please provide the same table for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, with additional columns showing, for each offence category, the number of charges finalised, the number withdrawn, and the number on which the prosecution was discontinued.
 - a. If finalisation outcomes cannot be reported against the same offence categories, in which system is each recorded and what would linking them require?
2. How many charges were withdrawn by the Director of Public Prosecutions on the day of hearing in the Local Court in the 12 months to 30 June 2026?
 - a. Please provide a breakdown for Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.
 - b. If the number for any location is too small to report separately, please provide the Territory-wide total.
 - c. What were the primary reasons recorded for those withdrawals?
3. What analysis has the Government undertaken of the causes of prosecutions being withdrawn or failing to proceed?
 - a. How many matters were affected by witness availability issues?
 - b. How many were affected by deficiencies in briefs of evidence, disclosure issues or other procedural problems?

- c. How many were affected by workforce or capacity constraints within the prosecution system?
 - d. If reasons for withdrawal are not recorded in categories of that kind, in which field or system is the reason for withdrawal recorded?
- 4. Has the Government examined whether staffing shortages, turnover or lack of case continuity within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions are contributing to delays, adjournments, withdrawals or failed prosecutions?
 - a. What findings has that analysis produced?
 - b. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 lists Director of Public Prosecutions demand pressures at \$8.5 million in each of 2025–26 and 2026–27. How many additional positions did that funding create, by classification, and how many were filled as at 30 June 2026?
 - c. What was the separation rate in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in each of 2024–25 and 2025–26?
- 5. What assessment has the Government made of prosecution delays and repeated adjournments in regional courts, particularly Katherine?
 - a. What are the most common causes recorded for those adjournments?
 - b. Have any matters been discontinued because they could no longer be adjourned or effectively progressed and, if so, how many?
- 6. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 reports the Director of Public Prosecutions measure “matters finalised with a guilty verdict” at 97 per cent against a target of at least 95 per cent for 2025–26.
 - a. What were the numerator and the denominator of that figure?
 - b. Are matters in which charges were withdrawn, or in which the prosecution was discontinued, included in the denominator?
 - c. If they are not, what is the figure when they are included?
 - d. When was that performance measure last reviewed, and by whom?

7. Given the Government's emphasis on arrests, bail decisions and time on remand, what public reporting exists on whether prosecutions ultimately result in convictions, withdrawals, dismissals or other outcomes?
 - a. Which of those outcomes are published, in which document, and at what frequency?
8. Will the Government publish data on prosecution outcomes, withdrawals and discontinued matters and, if so, from when and in which publication?
9. What key performance measures does the Government use to monitor whether the criminal justice system is progressing matters from charge to final determination?
 - a. Are rates of late withdrawal, discontinued prosecutions and collapsed matters reported to Government and, if so, in what document and how often?
 - b. Has the Government identified any change in the rate of charges withdrawn or prosecutions discontinued since the commencement of the sentencing and bail amendments of the 15th Assembly?
 - c. If a comparison of that kind has been made, over which periods was it made, and what did it show? If no comparison has been made, is one planned?
10. How are those measures used to inform policy, resourcing decisions and future reforms?