



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 262

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Child Protection, Hon Robyn Cahill OAM MLA:

Child Protection Workforce

1. In 2025 the Minister stated there was an overall 40 per cent vacancy rate in child protection, with 36 vacancies in Central Australia at that time. What is the current vacancy rate for child protection positions?
 - a. Please provide a breakdown by region.
 - b. Where a figure for an individual region, service or category is too small to report, please provide the Territory-wide total.
 - c. The Northern Territory Coroner, in the findings of the inquests into the deaths of Miss Yunupingu, Ngeygo Ragurk, Kumarn Rubuntja and Kumanjayi Haywood [2024] NTLC 14, delivered on 25 November 2024, recorded evidence that 39.8 per cent of the Department's child protection positions across the Territory were vacant. Was that figure accurate as at the date of that evidence, and what is the equivalent figure now?
 - d. For each region, and for the Territory as a whole, please state as at 30 June 2026 the number of child protection positions funded, the number filled, and the number vacant.
 - e. What is the average and the highest number of open cases held by a case manager in each region?
2. The 2024–25 Annual Report shows \$4.941 million was spent on salaries for the 21 key management personnel — around 6 per cent of the total staffing budget. Given existing vacancies and workload pressures, how does the Government justify this allocation at senior levels?
3. What proportion of the Department's budget is allocated to assessing reports that are ultimately unsubstantiated?

4. Budget Paper No. 3 for 2026–27 expresses the measure “child protection investigations commenced” as a maximum — no more than 5,000 — and reports 4,100 for 2025–26, attributing the variation to “a decrease in notifications and fewer matters progressing to investigation”. The 2026–27 target remains no more than 5,000.
- a. How many notifications were received in each of the three years to 2025–26, how many were screened in for investigation, and how many were screened out?
 - b. Of the reduction in investigations in 2025–26, how much is attributable to fewer notifications received and how much to fewer notifications progressing to investigation?
 - c. Have the criteria or thresholds for progressing a notification to investigation changed since 1 July 2024? If so, on what date, in which document, and approved by whom?
 - d. Why is this measure expressed as a maximum, so that fewer investigations is recorded as better performance, and when was that framing last reviewed?
 - e. What measure, if any, records whether children the subject of a notification screened out were subsequently the subject of a further notification, and what is that figure?