

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Yan to the Minister for Health:

Search and Seizure Powers

Under Section 53 of the Public and Environmental Health Act 2011, authorized officers have search and seizure powers, as well as the ability to enter a place without a warrant. Recent legislative changes grant these same powers in the “post-emergency” period under Section 57G.

- 1. In the period between 23 March 2020 and 19 April 2022, how many times did an authorised officer as defined by the Public and Environmental Health Act 2011, enter a place without a warrant in accordance with Section 53? Please specify the reasons for this.**
- 2. In the same period, how many times did an authorised officer as defined by the Public and Environmental Health Act 2011, search a place or seize a thing in accordance with Section 53? Please specify the reason for this.**
- 3. Since 19 April 2022, how many times did an authorised officer as defined by the Public and Environmental Health Act 2011, enter a place without a warrant in accordance with Section 57G? Please specify the reasons for this.**
- 4. In the same period, how many times did an authorised officer as defined by the Public and Environmental Health Act 2011, search a place or seize a thing in accordance with Section 57G? Please specify the reason for this.**

A response to the questions 1-4 is too administratively onerous and to do so and would result in undue diversion of resources from service delivery. A partial response is therefore provided per below.

NT Health Authorised officers (AO):

- Throughout this period AO's were deployed across NT Health within business units including the Border Restrictions Unit (BRU) team and the Environmental Health team.
- Both teams were focused on supporting compliance with the Chief Health Officer Directions, for example at border entry points, quarantine checks and COVID-19 Business Safety Plans.
- If there was a requirement for use of further powers, including search and seizure, these were referred to NT Police for management.

NT Police:

- The information requested is not easily captured within any existing mechanisms or systems, and to extract the information is too administratively onerous which would result in undue diversion of resources from service delivery.