

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice:

Bush Courts & Community Courts

1. Why are there no bush court hearings in Milingimbi? Currently people from Milingimbi have to get a boat to Ramingining on the right tides and be collected there from the barge landing and driven into Ramingining. This creates lots of difficulty with people missing court hearings that they otherwise would have attended. It seems far easier for a judge and lawyers to travel by plane across the water. Why is this not happening?
2. How many community courts will run during this financial year? Is there a budget allocation to employ elders from those communities that will be participating in community courts, to ensure the programs success?

ANSWER

1. Historically, the number of matters from Milingimbi and Ramingining was very small and could not warrant a separate circuit court. However, this has changed in recent years and Ramingining now has its own circuit. The Local Court will investigate numbers of charges arising at Milingimbi and will refer the matter to a yet to be establish group called 'Island Access to Justice'. The group will determine the best method of servicing areas the Court does not visit, such as Croker Island, Goulburn Island and Milingimbi. Membership of the group will include The Chief Judge of the Local Court and representatives from police, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency and the Director of Public Prosecutions.
2. Funding has been provided for community courts in three locations in 2023-24. An allocation for funding Law and Justice Groups – that include members who may be elders, will be engaged in the Community Court process has been provided. However, specific amounts are fluid as it depends on the community's local action plan that outlines what activities the Law and Justice Groups intend to complete over the three years.