

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

## WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Health:

**Banned Drinkers Register**

1. **What is the cost of the Banned Drinkers Register technology and equipment installed at each Take away liquor outlet in the NT? Please provide details of the machines and the cost of each machine.**

The total cost of the Banned Drinker Register (BDR) technology and equipment installed at take away liquor outlets is a combination of monthly charges and one off costs for installation. The composite of this is below:

Device	Cost Per Month (\$)
Terminal and Scanner (*)	158.88
Router (**)	267.20
Telstra (**)	59.09
Telstra Satellite (***)	226.95

(\*) per terminal and scanner, per month, noting some outlets have more than one terminal and scanner.

(\*\*) per outlet, per month

(\*\*\*) this is an average cost per month for each of the 23 liquor outlets that utilise satellite equipment.

Purchased item	One-Off Cost (\$)
60 iPhones	64 800.00
iPhone Cases	3 900.00
Cabling Works	134 223.00
Satellite Installations	227 652.00
Technical Consultant	248 846.19

2. **What is the total cost of all the computers and technology purchased to roll out the Banned Drinkers Register?**

All terminals are leased pursuant to the NTG All of Government ICT contract (monthly device costs are listed in question one).

Additional software purchased for the BDR as at 12 February 2018 is as follows:

<b>Software</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Acufill SDK Licence	\$46 362.02
Self-hosted API	\$80 603.72
Mobile Solution Licence	\$90 745.20
BDR Software	\$970 603.58

**3. Where were the Identification machines and the associated technology sourced from?**

The BDR terminals and scanners are leased under the NTG All of Government ICT Contract managed by the Department of Corporate and Information Services and are sourced from Vertical Technology Group (VTG).

iPhones used to implement a mobile solution for drive-through bottle shops were sourced from the NTG All of Government Telstra Contract and the BDR software sourced through MyTech Consulting Services.

**4. Were the Identification machines purchased through a local NT company?**

As noted, BDR terminals and scanners are leased under the NTG All of Government ICT Contract managed by the Department of Corporate and Information Services. This technology is sourced from Vertical Technology Group (VTG) which is a locally based company.

**5. How many of the old Identification machines were reused from the Banned Drinkers Register in 2011/12?**

The BDR terminals were found to be outdated and unable to operate on a secure Windows 10 platform. The BDR Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Scanners, 334 in total, used in 2011-12 were able to be re-used.

**6. Who will provide the ongoing servicing and maintenance of these machines?**

NEC will provide the ongoing servicing and maintenance for these machines under the NTG All of Government ICT contract.

**7. How many take away liquor outlets were issued the identification machines and will operate under the Banned Drinker Register in the NT?**

As at 7 February 2018, there are 198 active take away liquor outlets with BDR equipment and technology installed.

**8. What was the cost of installing the machines?**

The cost of installing the machines – such as personnel costs (both NTG and external contractors), trades, travel and related installation costs – by 1 September 2017 was approximately \$450,000.

This does not include the costs of equipment and machines as outlined in Questions 1 & 2.

**9. What company (s) installed the machines in the take away liquor outlets?**

NEC installed the technology and equipment in the take away liquor outlets under the NTG All of Government ICT contract.

**10. What contracts were issued in relations to roll out of the Banned Drinkers Register?**

MyTech Consulting Services was awarded a contract for the Provision of Support, Maintenance and Enhancement Services for the Banned Drinker Register Information System for a Period of 36 Months (Q17-0013 – Darwin refers)

**11. Were these contracts issued to NT companies?**

Yes, MyTech Consulting is an NT based company.

**12. What is the ongoing cost of operating the Banned Drinker Register?**

The on-going cost of maintaining and operating the technology and technical systems and equipment associated with the BDR is expected to be approximately \$4.9 million per year.

**13. What is the total cost of establishing the Banned Drinkers Register throughout the NT?**

The total estimated costs in establishing a functioning technical system to operate the BDR is approximately \$5.15 million.

**14. What happens if the Banned Drinkers Register machines cannot operate at the Take away liquor outlets (for whatever reason)? Will the Take away liquor outlet be able to continue to sell alcohol?**

It is an offence for a licensee – who is required to use the BDR – to sell alcohol without using the BDR. However, there is a defence of reasonable excuse to that offence. The *Liquor Act* notes that a reasonable excuse for a contravention of the requirement in subsection 31A(5)(a) or (b) may be based on a failure of the system to operate

properly for a reason other than the defendant's conduct. An example of such a situation might be a power failure.

**15. How exactly will the Government address the secondary supply of alcohol in 2017? Will there be a different approach than in 2011/12?**

The Alcohol Policy and Legislation Review Report, published in October 2017, emphasised the importance of addressing secondary supply. The Government will continue to support NT Police in targeting secondary supply. Operation Haven, currently underway in Alice Springs and Central Australia, is targeting the secondary supply of alcohol.

**16. How many alcohol rehabilitation beds were provided in the NT under Alcohol Mandatory Treatment in August 2017?**

There was funding allocated to support 80 beds in August 2017. Beds were reduced on a sliding scale to ensure that clients were safely transitioned into alternative clinical services as Alcohol Mandatory Treatment ceased on 31 August 2017.

**17. How many alcohol rehabilitation beds will be provided in the NT as of the 1 September 2017, after Alcohol Mandatory Treatment is scrapped by your Government?**

At 1 September 2017, there were 229 beds funded by the Department of Health for alcohol and other drugs residential rehabilitation.

**18. How many sobering up beds will be provided in the NT as of 1 September 2017?**

At 1 September 2017, there were 88 sobering up beds funded by the Department of Health.

**19. How many sobering up beds will be provided at the Stringy Bark Centre?**

There are currently 32 beds at the Stringybark Sobering Up Shelter.

**20. How many alcohol rehabilitation beds will be provided at the Stringy Bark Centre?**

There are currently 40 beds for alcohol and other drugs residential rehabilitation at the Stringybark Centre.

**21. How many Road Houses with liquor licenses are excluded from the Banned Drinkers Register?**

Licences which are exempted from the scanning requirements outlined in section 31A of the *Liquor Act* are listed in Schedule 1 of the Liquor Regulations.

No 'Road Houses' with liquor licences are exempted under the Regulations.

**22. What will be done to control or regulate the sale of take away liquor to people on the Banned Drinkers Register at these road houses that are not equipped with the Identification machines?**

No 'Road Houses' with liquor licences are exempted under the Regulations and all such licences are equipped with technology and equipment to scan identification in accordance with BDR requirements.

**23. People on the Banned Drinkers Register will be able to drink freely in any establishment selling alcohol across the bar. Are there plans to address this?**

The Riley Report on the Review of Northern Territory Alcohol Policies and Legislation recommended: '*The Liquor Act be amended to require any licensee trading under an extended trading authority to install an approved ID scanner linked to the BDR at each entry to their licensed premises and those on the BDR be denied entry.*'

The Government supports this recommendation and will implement this for venues operating until 4am as a Stage 2 of the Banned Drinker Register.

**24. What savings will the NT Government make in scrapping Alcohol Mandatory Treatment and introducing the Banned Drinkers Register?**

Alcohol Mandatory Treatment (AMT) and the Banned Drinker Register (BDR) are very different in scope. As the BDR sits within a comprehensive and public health focused approach to alcohol harm reduction, making direct comparisons is difficult. As noted in the independent evaluation of AMT, a range of factors made the actual costs of the AMT program difficult to determine.

The published figures in Budget Paper 3 2017-18 indicate that the budget allocated to alcohol and other drugs across the Department of Health, Top End Health Service and Central Australia Health Service was reduced with the cessation of AMT by a total of \$7.594 million.

**25. What was the cost of providing an alcohol rehabilitation bed under the NT Government Alcohol Mandatory Treatment program?**

An independent evaluation of the AMT program was undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers Indigenous Consulting and reported in December 2016.

The report compared the costs of mandatory residential treatment to community residential treatment.

The average cost of a closed episode of completed treatment in the mandatory residential treatment was \$57 731, or three times more expensive than the community residential treatment services.

The community residential treatment services was \$17 830.

**26. What will be the cost of providing an alcohol rehabilitation bed under the new Gunner Government's alcohol strategy in 2017?**

The government has taken a comprehensive and public health focused approach to alcohol harm reduction, including increasing the type and range of treatment options available. The estimated cost of each residential rehabilitation bed is \$12 555 p.a.

**27. Could you provide details of the penalties or ramifications of people on the Banned Drinkers Register choosing not to participate in alcohol rehabilitation and treatment programs?**

A person who chooses not to engage in a therapeutic support program will remain on the Banned Drinker Register (BDR) for the full length of their ban. To encourage people to engage with assessment and therapeutic support, the BDR Registrar can consider a ban reduction as an incentive for participation in and successful completion of a recommended therapeutic program.

**28. The NT Government will still be providing Alcohol Mandatory Treatment for people on court orders. Could you provide details of exactly how this Alcohol Mandatory Treatment operates?**

Alcohol Mandatory Treatment ceased on 1 September 2017 when the legislation was repealed and the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act* commenced.

The NT Government has introduced a range of initiatives to provide support to people whose alcohol use problems have resulted in court orders. NT Correctional Services manages two community-based sentencing options, the Community Custody Order and the Community-Based Order, to divert offenders from the prison system into rehabilitation.

The NT Government funds alcohol and other drugs therapeutic support services through the Department of Health. These services include non-government providers of residential rehabilitation services in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek which are available to people who are court ordered to undertake treatment for alcohol problems. NT Correctional Services also provides funding for additional treatment beds in Darwin and Katherine

**29. Is the Government committed to providing Alcohol Mandatory Treatment to people on court ordered Alcohol Mandatory Treatment orders?**

Alcohol Mandatory Treatment ceased on 1 September 2017 when the legislation was repealed and the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act* commenced.

The NT Government is committed to supporting people who are court ordered to undertake treatment for alcohol problems in the range of NT treatment services available.

**30. Does the Government consider court ordered Alcohol Mandatory Treatment as expensive, unethical and ineffective?**

Alcohol Mandatory Treatment ceased on 1 September 2017 when the legislation was repealed and the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Act* commenced.

However, alcohol and other drug treatment as part of a court order can be an effective intervention to improve the health and safety of individuals and their communities. Court ordered treatment utilises the same voluntary community treatment services, so the costs of the treatment program are the same.

Ethically, court ordered treatment is only applicable to offenders, and is offered as an alternative to a prison custodial sentence for offenders assessed as suitable. This is different than the mechanism of Alcohol Mandatory Treatment, which is now repealed.

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