



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 279

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Alcohol Policy, Hon Steven Edgington MLA:

Sobering Up Shelter Capacity and Alcohol Harm

1. How many sobering up shelter beds are currently funded in each of Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Katherine?
 - a. What was the occupancy rate of each facility in 2025–26?
 - b. On how many occasions in 2025–26 was a person turned away from each facility because no bed was available?
 - c. If refusals for want of capacity are not recorded, in which system is admission to each facility recorded, and in what format?
2. The answer to Written Question No. 144 of the 15th Assembly stated that persons apprehended under section 128 of the Police Administration Act 1978 can be taken to a sobering up shelter by police, “where the capacity of sobering-up shelters allows”. In 2025–26, how many persons apprehended under section 128 were taken to a sobering up shelter, and how many were instead held in police custody?
 - a. Of those held in police custody rather than taken to a shelter, in how many cases was the recorded reason that shelter capacity was unavailable?
 - b. If the reason for not conveying a person to a shelter is not recorded, in which system is the disposition of a section 128 apprehension recorded, and in what format?
3. What assessment has been made of demand for sobering up shelter capacity against the beds currently funded in each of those centres?
 - a. On what date was that assessment made, and will it be provided to the Assembly?

- b. What change in funded capacity, if any, is provided for in 2026–27?
- 4. Clifford and others, Pedestrian deaths and serious injuries in the Northern Territory (Menzies School of Health Research, 2025) found that “Pedestrian crashes were 65 times more likely to end in fatality and three times more likely to end in severe injury when alcohol was involved (either pedestrian and/or driver)”, and that drug involvement increased the odds of fatality by 13 times. Has that research been considered in setting sobering up shelter capacity or alcohol policy?
 - a. On what date, and by which agency?
 - b. What measures, if any, have been changed as a result?