LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 272

WRITTEN QUESTION

J Davis to the Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence, Hon Robyn Cahill OAM MLA:

Recovery of Acquitted Underspends

A number of domestic, family and sexual violence (DSFV) services have reported being required to repay acquitted underspends from previous financial years, including as far back as 2020–21.

1. **What policy or funding rule requires the recovery of previously acquitted underspends from DFSV service providers?**

   The General Terms and Conditions for grant funding agreements provide the Northern Territory (NT) Government with the right to review, audit, evaluate, and assess data or other information for reasons of transparency or accountability with respect to the allocation, management, administration or use of public funds by the funding recipient.

   The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Grants Policy – Unspent Funds, released in October 2025, mandates that unspent funds be reported to the appropriate delegate to determine whether these funds can be carried over, re-invested into the funded service, offset against future payments, or recovered by the department.

2. **What specific rule or policy allows the Department to reopen previously acquitted funding years?**

   The General Conditions for grant funding agreements allow for DCF to at any time conduct an audit or performance review with respect to the Funded Activity and inspect and/or audit provider's records (a 'review').

   Further, a Survival clause within the General Terms and Conditions enables DCF to assess reports after expiry or termination of the Agreement relating to key clauses to address historical financial control issues:

   - Public Accountability and Other Contributions
   - Intellectual Property
   - Confidentiality and Privacy
   - Insurance

- Risk and Indemnity
- Record Keeping
- Reports and Acquittal
- Audit and Performance Review
- Assets
- Unspent, Unacquitted and Misused Funds
- Transition Out.

3. How much funding is the Department seeking to recoup in total, broken down by financial year and service provider? Please provide as a table.

There was $9.4 million identified as unspent funds to 30 June 2025, of this $7.4 million was approved to be carried over to 2025-26, $0.45 million to be offset against future payments and $1.56 million to be returned.

Entity	Recovery Payment Offset	Recovery Invoice (excl GST)
Barkly Regional Council	-	$126,619
CatholicCare NT	-	$676,010.70
Dawn House Inc	-	$35,745
One Tree Community Services	-	$149,585
Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation	$414,199	$375,627
The Salvation Army	$24,160	$135,101
Womens Safety Services of Central Australia	$13,659	$70,016
Total	**$452,018**	**$1,568,704**

a. If recovery amounts are not tracked by financial year and provider, in which system are they recorded, and at what level?

Recovery amounts are tracked.

4. Can the Department confirm the funds were acquitted and accepted at the time under agreed conditions?

Underspends are identified upon acquittal and confirmed with recipients.

5. If the acquittals were accepted, on what basis are they now being reopened?

Acquittals may be reopened where the service provider's audited financial report does not align with the prior year's reported balances.

Reassessment may be required for several reasons, including:

- absence of sufficient records historically provided
- errors made in prior-year assessment of acquittals
- unrecognized historical carryover of funds between financial periods or agreements.

6. Under what circumstances does the Government consider it appropriate to reopen acquitted funding years for frontline services?

Reassessment may be required for several reasons, including:

- absence of sufficient records historically provided
- errors made in prior-year assessment of acquittals
- unrecognized historical carryover of funds between financial periods or agreements.