



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 141

WRITTEN QUESTION

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

Pepper spray and domestic family and sexual violence

- 1. It is well established that most perpetrators of violence are intimate partners and family members. How will specialist domestic family and sexual violence (DFSV) services be involved in the development of procedures and legislation for the trial so that the trial responds to the possibility of it being used by people who choose DFSV?**

The Northern Territory Police Force (NTPF) is leading the development and delivery of the proposed trial to allow members of the public access to Oleoresin Capsicum (OC) spray for self-defense purposes.

NTPF will provide updates as planning progresses through official NT Police Force and NT Government channels.

- 2. How will it be identified as a weapon in the NT Government's DFV Risk Assessment and Management Framework's Common Risk Assessment Tool?**

The Common Risk Assessment Tool (CRAT) under the Risk Assessment Management Framework (RAMF) combines evidence-based risk factors, with the victim survivor's self-assessment of their risk, and the worker's professional judgement. The RAMF and CRAT are intended to guide and support all DFV and related organisations and services to better assess, respond and manage DFV risk.

The RAMF and the CRAT identify there are many significant risk factors that are important in any case of DFV and should be responded to, regardless of any intent of homicide. Any access to, or use of weapon or object by a person committing DFV is considered a high-risk factor, particularly if used in the most recent violent incident, as past behaviour strongly predicts future behaviour.

- 3. How will police be trained to identify use of pepper spray by perpetrators as a weapon?**
 - a. Please give specific details about training and evaluation.**

This question is best directed to the Northern Territory Police Force.

4. **Given instances of perpetrator misidentification, how will police be trained to identify pepper spray use by victims as a means of resistance and not misidentify the victim as the perpetrator?**
 - a. **Please give specific details about training and evaluation.**

This question is best directed to the Northern Territory Police Force.

5. **How will community-based Men's Behaviour Change Programs be supported to acknowledge pepper spray as a new legal weapon and updating programs to ensure they're able to respond this new legal weapon?**

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP) align with the RAMF and include continuous DFV risk assessment and management of victim-survivors whose partners/ex-partners attend the program. Risk assessment includes the use of weapons, which could include pepper spray.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is working on RAMF expansion practice guidance and tools for working with adults who use violence. Consultation with DFV services will be undertaken to ensure it meets practitioner and service needs, including weapon-related DFV risks. The RAMF expansion for adults who use violence is in the development phase with the planned launch in 2026.

MBCPs funded by DCF are required to align with the NT Minimum Standards and Application Process for Declared DFV Rehabilitation Programs.

6. **How will prison based DFSV programs be supported to acknowledge pepper spray as a new legal weapon and update programs to ensure they're able to respond to the new weapon?**

This question is best directed to the Department of Corrections.