

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Member for Araluen to the Minister for Health:

#### Individual Support Program

1. How many recipients of care are currently receiving assistance from Department of Health Individual Support Program in the Territory?
2. What is the breakdown of recipients in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and remote communities?
3. How many service providers operate in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and remote communities?
4. What is the percentage for Territory owned business to interstate business who are/have been providing Registered nurses and Personal care attendants and in home services to recipients through the Department of Health Individual Support Program.
5. What is the percentage distribution of contracts to interstate owned companies in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017?
6. What is the percentage distribution of contracts to Territory owned companies in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017?
7. Do you know what percentage of Territory owned service providers employ or contract Territorians to provide workers within the health industry?
8. Do service providers have to provide proof of employment or contracting Territorians for work in the health industry?
9. Name the service providers which are Territory owned who have contracts to provide services for Registered nurses and Personal care attendants and in home services.
10. What is the process for requesting quotes from companies registered and providing services from Department of Health Individual Support Program?

11. What is the time frame from acceptance of quote to a contract being sent out to the company?
12. What is the procedure for cessation of contract at the end date of the contract e.g. is notification given to the company? Feedback given?
13. What is the process for the cessation of contract without notice?
14. How many service providers have had their contracts ceased without notice given in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017?
15. What is the percentage of interstate to Territory owned business whose contracts were ceased without notice?
16. Why would a service provider have a contract ceased without notice?
17. Are payments made to service providers prior to contracts being signed?
18. On what grounds does the Department of Health Individual Support Program hold back payment for services?
19. What is the procedure after an invoice is sent from the service provider to claim interest on unpaid or late invoice payments?
20. When a service provider claims for interest on invoices not paid by the Department within the 30 day period of time who has the authority to withhold the payments to the company?
21. Is notice given to the service provider with regards to the holding of payments over 30 days?
22. What would be the reasons for the Core Agreement to be changed for a service provider?
23. Why is it necessary for all workers working in a hospital setting or Government organisation to have an Ochre card?
24. Is this a Government revenue raising scheme?
25. It is a requirement for all Health workers to have an Ochre card and criminal history checks. Is this double dipping?
26. Would the legislation allow for just an Ochre card requirement?
27. If this is the case why is there not a National registration? It appears that care workers can move interstate and use their Working with Vulnerable People

card or similar State cards for 28 days. They then move interstate again and commit crimes against vulnerable people and children and not get caught.

28. The checks for criminal history and the Ochre card can take several weeks to be approved. This is creating a hole in the health industry and leading to a shortage of people to in the industry. Could this be addressed so service providers could get this processed quicker?
29. What checks and balances are in place to prevent a conflict of interest between DOH staff and the manipulation of contracts at the Department of Health and Adult Guardianship?
30. With [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) coming into play how many Territory based companies have contracts with the Health Department Individual Support Program and how are they being supported by the department to secure business?
31. How many Territory based companies have been approved by the Department of Health Individual Support Program for work within the [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) system?
32. There are only 4 workers compensation companies operating in the Territory. What action is taken against companies refusing to give quotes?
33. What is the Government doing to encourage other insurance companies to operate in the Territory?
34. The Government says they support small business however it appears they are not aware or interested in the reality of what it takes to run a small business and the costs associated. When are you actually going to personally speak with small business and make change?

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1. There are currently 145 clients, Territory-wide, with Individual Support Packages
  2. Darwin Urban: 67  
Darwin Remote: 7  
Katherine: 15  
Central Australia (Urban and Remote): 56  
Tennant Creek: Nil – Tennant Creek now forms part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and all clients have transitioned.
  3. There are currently 40 providers that are engaged by the Office of Disability to provide services in the Northern Territory.
  4. All service providers who receive funding through the Office of Disability meet the NT Government Procurement Framework definition of a Territory Enterprise. A Territory Enterprise is an enterprise operating in the Northern

Territory, with a significant permanent presence in the Northern Territory and employing Northern Territory residents.

5. 0%
6. 100% of contracts are awarded to Territory Enterprises.
7. All service providers are Territory Enterprises employing territory residents.
8. All quotes from potential service providers have to meet a minimum requirement for local content. To meet the definition of a Territory Enterprise, service providers need to be operating in the Northern Territory with a significant permanent presence in the NT and employ local, NT residents.
9. The Office of Disability currently engages the following, Northern Territory-based service providers for the delivery of services by registered nurses, personal care attendants and in home services. Where the organisations are national, all meet the NT Government Procurement Framework definition of a Territory Enterprise.
  - Anglicare
  - Australian Regional and Remote Community Services Limited (ARRCS)
  - Calvary Home Care Services Limited T/A Calvary Community Care
  - Carers NT Inc.
  - CASA Central Australia Incorporated
  - Carpentaria
  - Central Desert Regional Council
  - Chelsea's Disability & Family Care Agency
  - Drake Australia
  - East Arnhem Regional Council
  - Golden Glow Corporation (NT) Pty Ltd
  - Healthscope Operations Pty Ltd
  - HPA Incorporated
  - Industry Education Networking Pty Ltd
  - Lifestyle Solutions (Aust) LTD
  - Life without Barriers
  - Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Indigenous Corporation
  - MacDonnell Regional Council
  - Malabam Health Board Aboriginal Corporation
  - North Australia Global Services Pty Limited (T/as Territory Care and Support Services)
  - NT Friendship & Support Inc.
  - Roper Gulf Regional Council
  - Somerville Community Services Inc.
  - Step Out Community Services Incorporated
  - Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation
  - The Trustee for The Jackson Family Trust T/as Territory Disability Services (formerly T/as Centre Labour Force)
  - Victoria Daly Regional Council
  - Waltja Tjutangku Palyapyi Corp.
  - West Arnhem Regional Council

10. A request for quote is sent to service providers with a de-identified client profile. Quotes received are assessed against standard assessment criteria based on the Value for the Territory framework, taking into consideration client/guardian preference.
11. This time can vary as there are different variables that can affect the process, which can take up to several weeks to complete.
12. The end date of a contract is the natural expiry date. The Office of Disability will engage with the client to assess current need and future service requirements.
13. Contracts are not ceased without notice.
14. Contracts are not ceased without notice.
15. Contracts are not ceased without notice.
16. Contracts are not ceased without notice.
17. Yes, this can occur at times to ensure the continuation of service provision to clients. Payments are only made if services are delivered.
18. Where there are identified anomalies in the amount being invoiced or errors on the invoice, the invoice will not be paid until the anomalies/errors have been addressed.
19. Service providers need to submit a tax invoice to claim the penalty interest within 90 days of the late payment being made. The invoice is to be submitted to the government organisation that received the original invoice. The invoice details must include:
  - a. date of deemed receipt by the NT Government organisation of the original invoice
  - b. date of payment
  - c. copy of the original invoice
  - d. period for which the supplier considers interest is due amount of penalty interest sought.
20. If the service provider meets all the conditions listed in the 30 Day Payment Policy, the NTG is obliged to pay the invoice. The 30 Day Payment Policy can be found at [http://www.nt.gov.au/dcis/finance/30\\_day\\_payment.shtml](http://www.nt.gov.au/dcis/finance/30_day_payment.shtml).
21. Payments are only withheld where anomalies or errors have been identified with the invoice. Service providers are notified on receipt of invoice so that the anomalies or errors can be resolved.
22. Where clarification of terms or conditions may be required.

23. There is no legislative requirement under the Care and Protection of Children Act (the Act) for all hospital workers to hold an Ochre Card, however any child-related work as defined under S 185(2) of the Act will require the worker to hold an Ochre Card. This includes any work that involves or may potentially involve contact with children.
24. The principal purpose of the Ochre Card is to assist in managing and mitigating any risk of harm to children who may come into contact with service providers.
25. There are clear distinctions and differences between an Ochre Card and criminal history check and both will inform decision makers about the suitability of prospective employees.
26. There is no legislative requirement under the Care and Protection of Children Act for all health workers to hold an Ochre Card and undergo a criminal history check. However employers, such as the Department of Health, will utilise both processes to make appropriate employment decisions.
27. Working with Children Check schemes are administered separately by each state and territory. Following release of the report by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse, collaborative work is being progressed nationally to improve information sharing between jurisdictions.
28. In recognition of the application processing period, employers can apply through Territory Families, on behalf of an employee for a 45 day temporary exemption to start working with children while their Ochre card application is being processed by SAFE NT. The employer needs to have child safe practices in place to support the exemption. There is no application fee charged for seeking an exemption.
29. All employees of the Northern Territory Public Sector are employed under the NT Public Sector Employment and Management Act (the Act). As per Section 5F(2) of the Act, Employment Instruction Number 12 – Code of Conduct stipulates the basic level of conduct expected of Public Sector Officers. The Department of Health has a Conflict of Interest Policy that staff need to adhere to in regards to declaring conflicts. Such actions are also underpinned by the NTG Procurement Policy and Framework as well as the Related Party Declaration that comes under the Australian Accounting Standards.
30. There are currently 40 providers that are engaged by the Office of Disability to provide services in the Northern Territory.

The Department of Health, Office of Disability, is implementing a number of Sector Development Fund Projects to support the implementation of the NDIS in the NT. The projects form an integrated and comprehensive approach to sector development within the NT, strengthening and developing the market in a considered and planned way.

31. The Office of Disability has developed the NT Quality and Safeguarding Framework (the Framework), which has the key focus of building the capability and capacity of the NT disability service sector to meet full Scheme national registration in June 2019, and to support the sector during this period.
32. Currently 15 organisations have been approved under the Framework with a further 52 organisations completing the process. Of the 15 organisations, all meet the criteria of a Territory Enterprise as per the NT Government Procurement Framework.
33. It is a commercial decision for insurers as to whether they wish to apply to operate in the Northern Territory.
34. Business Round Tables have been established to listen to the concerns of small businesses and discuss particular approaches, issues and initiatives. The Round Tables focus on targeted themes, industry specific issues, or regional/locational issues and are held on a monthly basis with selected Northern Territory business people. Several Business Round Tables have been held across the Northern Territory since December 2016. There are two more coming up in October 2017; one will be held in Casuarina: the second one, an Indigenous Business Round Table, will be held in Nhulunbuy.

In the Northern Territory a competitive business tax environment is maintained:

- The annual payroll tax threshold is second highest in the country and the payroll tax rate is comparable to the national average.
- Stamp duty on new motor vehicles (value \$35,500) is equal lowest in Australia.
- The motor vehicle registration cost is considerably below the national average
- Taxation on insurance is comparable with the national average and unlike other states/territory, the NT does not impose a land tax.

The Department of Trade, Business and Innovation (DTBI) support small business through the following programs and initiatives:

- Financial support to peak industry bodies through Industry Support Grants to assist with industry sector development.
- The Business Upskills program, provides practical, hands on and informative workshops facilitated by industry experts to help business owners develop and strengthen their business practices.
- The Aboriginal Business Development Program, provides grant funding to support emerging and established Aboriginal owned and operated businesses to enter into or expand commercial business arrangements.
- The Small Business Champions (SBCs) program provides one-on-one client management and support to assist small businesses to meet business challenges, develop capabilities, and navigate department and government services, licensing permits and approvals.
  - There are currently 24 SBCs that have delivered 511 programs in excess of \$3.9 million to 452 businesses in 2016/17.
- Territory Business Centres, located in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, and Tennant Creek.
- October Business Month (OBM) which offers a program of workshops, seminars and conferences provide business owners, managers and staff

with professional development and networking opportunities to increase their business capability and promote economic growth.

- The Business Innovation Support Initiatives (BISI) grants scheme, which helps start-up companies and to establish small and medium sized enterprises.
- Organisation of innovation and entrepreneurship events; and sponsors business innovation events with other partner organisations.
- Stimulus programs, including the recent Home Improvement Scheme (HIS), Immediate Work Grants (IWG), and the First Homebuyer Home Renovation Grant
- The Biz Secure program provides assistance to small to medium-sized businesses with security improvements to their premises.
- The Smarter Business Solutions Program provides grants and technical advice on potential cost saving opportunities.
- The Buy Local Plan, which supports small business by ensuring local content is considered at all levels of the contract throughout the procurement lifecycle.
- An independent Buy Local Industry Advocate has been appointed to promote and monitor compliance with the Buy Local Plan, and will act as an advocate on behalf of Territory Enterprises.
- All Capital Grants are required to include buy local provisions, ensuring that Territory Enterprises benefit from the broadest possible range of government expenditure.