



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Legislative Scrutiny Committee

# Annual Report 2024-25

October 2025



# Annual Report 2024-25



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Parliament House

State Square

Darwin NT 0800

Web: [www.parliament.nt.gov.au](http://www.parliament.nt.gov.au)

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## Chair's Preface

Pursuant to clause 4 of its Terms of Reference, this report details the activities of the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for 2024-25. Over the course of the reporting period, the Assembly referred eight Bills to the Committee for inquiry and report.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the Committee met its reporting due dates for all inquiries and in five instances tabled its reports ahead of the due date. Given the inquiry reporting dates, all reports were presented to the Speaker out of session pursuant to Standing Order 200(4).

While the Committee recommended that the Assembly pass all of the Bills referred for inquiry and report, as detailed in Chapter 2, in most cases the Committee proposed amendments to ensure that the Bills had due regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and the institution of Parliament, were unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise manner. That 59% of the Committee's proposed amendments and recommendations were subsequently accepted by the Government attests to the value and importance of the Bill scrutiny process.

Although the level of public participation in the Committee's inquiries varied according to the nature of the Bill under consideration, feedback from those organisations and individuals that made submissions and appeared before the Committee has been extremely positive. However, a number of people raised concerns with the short timeframes provided for the consideration of Bills.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all those who made submissions or appeared before the Committee. Your input has been invaluable and of great assistance to the Committee in its deliberations. The Committee thanks the Chief Executives of agencies and their staff for their responsiveness in providing information to the Committee and appearing at public briefings and hearings. The Committee also thanks Professor Aughterson for his advice. Finally, I would like to thank the Committee Secretariat for their support, and my fellow committee members for their bipartisan commitment to the legislative review process.



**Mrs Oly Carlson MLA**  
**Chair**

## Committee Members

Chair:	Mrs Oly Carlson, MLA Member for Wanguri
Deputy Chair:	Mr Andrew Mackay, MLA Member for Goyder
Members:	Justine Davis, MLA Member for Johnston  Mr Clinton Howe, MLA Member for Drysdale  Mr Chanston Paech, MLA Member for Gwoja

## Committee Secretariat

Committee Secretary:	Ms Julia Knight
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# Terms of Reference

## Sessional Order 14

### *Establishment of Legislative Scrutiny Committee*

- (1) The Assembly appoints a Legislative Scrutiny Committee
- (2) The membership of the scrutiny committee will comprise three Government Members, one Opposition Member and one crossbench Member.
- (3) The functions of the scrutiny committee shall be to inquire into and report on:
  - (a) any bill referred to it by the Assembly;
  - (b) in relation to any bill referred by the Assembly:
    - whether the Assembly should pass the bill;
    - whether the Assembly should amend the bill;
    - whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals, including whether the bill:
      - (A) makes rights and liberties, or obligations, dependent on administrative power only if the power is sufficiently defined and subject to appropriate review; and
      - (B) is consistent with principles of natural justice; and
      - (C) allows the delegation of administrative power only in appropriate cases and to appropriate persons; and
      - (D) does not reverse the onus of proof in criminal proceedings without adequate justification; and
      - (E) confers power to enter premises, and search for or seize documents or other property, only with a warrant issued by a judge or other judicial officer; and
      - (F) provides appropriate protection against self-incrimination; and
      - (G) does not adversely affect rights and liberties, or impose obligations, retrospectively; and
      - (H) does not confer immunity from proceeding or prosecution without adequate justification; and
      - (I) provides for the compulsory acquisition of property only with fair compensation; and
      - (J) has sufficient regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tradition; and
      - (K) is unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way.
    - whether the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament, including whether a bill:
      - (A) allows the delegation of legislative power only in appropriate cases and to appropriate persons; and
      - (B) sufficiently subjects the exercise of a delegated legislative power to the scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly; and
      - (C) authorises the amendment of an Act only by another Act.
- (4) The committee will provide an annual report of its activities to the Assembly.

Adopted 15 October 2024

# 1 Introduction

## Establishment and Functions of the Committee

- 1.1 The Legislative Scrutiny Committee was established by the Assembly on 15 October 2024 under Sessional Order 14. Pursuant to Sessional Orders 13 and 13.5 the capacity to refer Bills to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee came into effect as of 26 November 2024.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 As set out in its terms of reference, the functions of the Committee are to inquire into and report on any bill referred to it by the Assembly. In relation to referred bills, the Committee is required to determine:
  - whether the Assembly should pass the bill;
  - whether the Assembly should amend the bill;
  - whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals; and
  - whether the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament.
- 1.3 In accordance with clause 4 of its terms of reference, the Committee is required to provide an annual report on its activities.

## Report Structure

- 1.4 Chapter 2 provides a summary of bills referred to and considered by the Committee during the reporting period.
- 1.5 Chapter 3 provides an overview of statistics regarding the number of bills referred to the Committee, submissions received, inquiry timeframes, reports tabled and recommendations accepted by the Government.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, *Fifteenth Assembly – Sessional Orders – As amended 26 November 2024*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/business/standing-and-sessional-orders>, pp. 8-9 and 11-12

## 2 Bill Referrals

### Introduction

- 2.1 During the reporting period the Assembly referred eight bills to the committee for inquiry and report. In accordance with clause 3(b) of its terms of reference, following examination of a bill the Committee is required to determine:
- whether the Assembly should pass the bill;
  - whether the Assembly should amend the bill;
  - whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals; and
  - whether the bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament.
- 2.2 Following is an overview of bills referred to the committee during the reporting period, the outcome of the Committee's considerations and subsequent responses by the Government.

### Territory Coordinator Bill 2025

- 2.3 On 12 February 2025 the Assembly referred the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 (Serial 17) to the Committee for inquiry and report by 12 March 2025.
- 2.4 This Bill established the Territory Coordinator and granted the Territory Coordinator and the responsible Minister a range of powers to coordinate and consolidate regulatory processes for projects and developments of economic significance to the Territory.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.5 The Committee received 302 submissions to its inquiry with the majority of submissions either opposing the Bill entirely or opposing the Bill as introduced, with only two submissions supporting passage of the Bill as introduced. The Committee held public hearings on 26 and 27 February 2025 with 42 witnesses appearing. While there was general support for streamlining regulatory processes and developing the Territory's economy, there was significant opposition to the nature and extent of the powers the Bill confers on the Territory Coordinator and responsible Minister.
- 2.6 Following its examination of the Bill and consideration of the evidence received, the majority view of the Committee was that the Assembly should pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in recommendations 1 – 8, 10 – 22, 24 and 25. The amendments proposed by the Committee sought to address concerns regarding transparency and accountability and ensure the Bill was unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way.
- 2.7 For example, recommendations 4 and 5 proposes amendments to the appointment provisions for the Territory Coordinator to align them with those pertaining to other statutory officers in the Northern Territory. Recommendation

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<sup>2</sup> Explanatory Statement, *Territory Coordinator Bill 2025 (Serial 17)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/17-2025>, p.1

15 proposed that clause 73(2) be amended to clarify the intended operation of the Bill with regards to the making of a statutory decision under a step-in notice.

- 2.8 In relation to ensuring the Bill has sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament, the Committee formed the view that prescribing Acts as ‘relevant laws’ for the purposes of the Territory Coordinator Act should be via notice of motion to amend the Act in the Legislative Assembly, rather than by regulation, and proposed an amendment to the definition of Scheduled law in clause 3 at recommendation 18 accordingly.
- 2.9 Recognising Local Government as a distinct and essential sphere of government, at recommendation 24 the Committee proposed that the *Local Government Act 2019* be removed from the Schedule of Acts that are currently nominated as Scheduled laws, in favour of a partnership approach between the two spheres of government.
- 2.10 The Committee also proposed a number of minor amendments relating to consultation provisions within the Bill. Given the concerns raised regarding consultation processes, and noting that the Bill provided that public consultation is to be undertaken in accordance with the regulations, at recommendation 23 the Committee proposed that a number of factors that were raised in submissions be taken into consideration when developing the associated regulations.
- 2.11 Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 12 March 2025 for tabling in the Assembly on 18 March 2025. In responding to the report, the Chief Minister noted that the Government accepted eight recommendations in full (7, 9, 11, 18, 19, 22, 23 and 25), two recommendations in part (6 and 10) and did not accept 15 of the Committee’s recommendations (5, 8, 12 to 17, 20, 21, and 24).<sup>3</sup>
- 2.12 The Committee’s report, which included two dissenting reports, and associated documentation is available on the Committee’s website [here](#).

## **Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

- 2.13 On 13 February 2025 the Assembly referred the Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 13) to the Committee for inquiry and report by 12 March 2025.
- 2.14 The Bill amend the Criminal Code, the *Defamation Act 2006*, the *Limitation Act 1981* and the *Local Court (Criminal Procedure) Act 1928* to implement nationally agreed changes to the law of defamation.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.15 On 19 February 2025 the Committee held a public briefing with representatives from the Attorney-General’s Department. The Committee did not receive any submissions to its inquiry and had no matters to bring to the attention of the Assembly. As such, pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), on 5 March 2025 the

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<sup>3</sup> Government Response, *Inquiry into the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/17-2025#Report>

<sup>4</sup> Explanatory Statement, *Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 13)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/13-2025> p.1

Committee presented its 'No Issues' report to the Speaker for tabling in the Assembly on 18 March 2025 recommending that the Assembly pass the Bill.

- 2.16 The Committee's report and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

## **Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

- 2.17 On 19 March 2025 the Assembly referred the Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 19) to the Committee for inquiry and report by 30 April 2025.

- 2.18 Amending various pieces of legislation within the Attorney-General's Department portfolio, this Bill sought to:

provide a streamlined and efficient vehicle to address operation issues within a range of different pieces of legislation in a timely manner, for amendments not extensive enough to warrant their own amendment Bill, but are nevertheless required to ensure the legislation is up-to-date and correct.<sup>5</sup>

- 2.19 The Committee received one submission to its inquiry from the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) that raised concerns with proposed amendments to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2014 and the Residential Tenancies Act 1999.

- 2.20 With regards to the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2014, NAAJA opposed the proposed amendments to section 132 relating to costs orders and suggested that clause 17 be amended to align provisions with other jurisdictions. However, the Committee noted that the amendments envisaged by NAAJA were beyond the scope of the Bill. NAAJA also sought clarification regarding the proposed amendments to section 7 (Exemptions) of the Residential Tenancies Act 1999 as set out in clause 23.

- 2.21 Following consideration of the evidence received, the Committee recommended that the Assembly pass the Bill with no amendments. Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 14 April 2025 for tabling in the Assembly on 13 May 2025.

- 2.22 The Committee's report and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

## **Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

- 2.23 On 19 March 2025 the Assembly referred the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 20) to the Committee for inquiry and report by 30 April 2025.

- 2.24 This Bill amended the *Local Government Act 2019* and made consequential amendments to the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021. In

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<sup>5</sup> Explanatory Statement, *Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 19)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/13-2025>, p.1

presenting the Bill, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Community Development, the Hon Steve Edgington MLA, noted that:

It is important to emphasise that the amendments in this Bill are the first tranche of reforms that will be implemented in stages. By tackling some of the most pressing issues first, the amendments lay the groundwork for comprehensive changes that are currently underway.

The proposed changes in the Bill are designed to modernise and improve efficiency, transparency and overall effectiveness of the local government sector. The first phase seeks to align local government systems and processes with the best practices seen in local governments nationwide, ensuring the sector becomes more responsive and better suited to the needs of our communities. The changes will focus on provisions related to:

- prospective councils
- elections and casual vacancies
- publishing requirements for local government notices
- miscellaneous amendments.<sup>6</sup>

- 2.25 The Committee received six submissions to its inquiry. While submitters were generally supportive of the proposed amendments, clarification was sought regarding the intended operation of various provisions within the Bill. Submitters also put forward a number of suggestions as to how the Bill might be improved.
- 2.26 Following its examination of the Bill and consideration of the evidence received, the Committee recommended that the Assembly pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in recommendations 2 – 7. Recommendations 2 and 3 proposed that the Bill be amended to clarify the ramifications for non-compliance under section 19C, and the process for notifying the making of, and giving effect to, determinations based on recommendations of the Local Government Representation Committee.
- 2.27 Recommendations 4 and 5 seek to ensure that the intent of the Bill in relation to the filling of casual vacancies as set out in clauses 54 and 65 is unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise way. Recommendations 6 and 7 proposed amendments to the Explanatory Statement to clarify the policy purpose of clause 7 regarding the amendment to the powers of the Local Government Representation Committee and to address a number of typographical errors.
- 2.28 Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 29 April 2025 for tabling in the Assembly on 13 May 2025. In responding to the report, the Minister noted that the Government accepted all of the Committee's recommendations with the exception of recommendations 2 and 3.<sup>7</sup>
- 2.29 The Committee's report and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

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<sup>6</sup> Hon Steve Edgington MLA, Parliamentary Record, *Debates and Questions – Day 2 - 19 March 2025*, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/990874>, pp. 2-4

<sup>7</sup> Government Response, *Inquiry into the Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/20-2025#Report>

## **Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

- 2.30 The Assembly referred the Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill (Serial 22) to the Committee on 26 March 2025 for inquiry and report by 7 May 2025.
- 2.31 Amending the *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2007*, the Domestic and Family Violence Regulations 2008, the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006*, the *Victims of Crime Rights and Services Act 2006*, and the Victims of Crime Rights and Services Regulations 2010, this Bill sought to:
- insert mandatory sentencing provisions for breaches of Domestic Violence Orders;
  - expand the functions of the Victims Register to ensure victims can be notified when an offender breaches various orders; and
  - address minor administrative amendments including conversion to revenue units rather than reference to monetary amounts.<sup>8</sup>
- 2.32 On 1 April 2025, the Committee held a public briefing with representatives from the Attorney-General's Department. The Committee received 21 submissions to its inquiry. All submissions opposed introduction of mandatory sentencing, with various submissions also seeking clarification regarding the intended operation of several provisions within the Bill and putting forward suggestions as to how the Bill could be improved.
- 2.33 Following its examination of the Bill and consideration of the evidence received, the Committee recommended that the Assembly pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in recommendations 3 and 4.
- 2.34 Recommendation 3 proposes that section 24 be amended to provide that a person who is appointed as a Victims Financial Assistance Scheme assessor by the Director of the Crime Victims Services Unit must have the skills, qualifications, training and experience to properly perform the functions of the role. Recommendation 4 further proposed that the Bill's Explanatory Statement be amended to clarify the policy intent and explain the full extent of the proposed amendments to section 24.
- 2.35 In addition to the above, recommendation 2 sought to ensure the approved victim financial assistance form, lodgement process and any associated policy or guidance materials are easily accessible for those who face English and digital literacy barriers, and/or digital accessibility challenges.
- 2.36 Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 29 April 2025 for tabling in the Assembly on 13 May 2025. In responding to the report, the Minister noted that while the Government accepted

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<sup>8</sup> Explanatory Statement, *Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025* (Serial 22), <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/22-2025>, p.1

all of the Committee's recommendations, recommendation 2 was an operational matter that did not require the legislation to be amended.<sup>9</sup>

- 2.37 The Committee's report, which included two dissenting reports, and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

## **Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

- 2.38 On 27 March 2025, the Assembly referred the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 23) to the Committee for inquiry and report by 7 May 2025.

- 2.39 Amending the *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred sites Act 1989* and associated regulations, this Bill sought to ensure the legislation is contemporary and remains fit for purpose by making amendments to:

improve protections for sacred sites, reduce red tape and improve certainty and processes for economic development, and ways in which the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority can become more efficient.<sup>10</sup>

- 2.40 On 1 April 2025, the Committee held a public briefing with representatives from the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and the Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet. The Committee received 30 submissions to its inquiry. While submissions were generally supportive of the policy intent of the Bill, concerns were raised in relation to several of the proposed amendments as currently drafted.

- 2.41 Following its examination of the Bill, the Committee formed the view that the Assembly should pass the Bill with the proposed amendments as set out in recommendations 2-4. These recommendations sought to strengthen the legislation and ensure it was unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise manner.

- 2.42 Recommendation 2 proposed that, to ensure Ministerial nominees for members of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority have the capacity to fulfil their obligations as members of the Authority, section 6 be amended to include criteria or matters the Minister should take into account when nominating members of the Authority.

- 2.43 Recommendation 3 proposed that, to ensure the integrity of the original Authority Certificate is retained, consideration be given to amending the Bill to provide that the substance of the Authority Certificate is separated from the identity of the holders of the Certificate, such that the Certificate contains the substance of the given authority, including any conditions, with an addendum that identifies the holders of the Certificate.

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<sup>9</sup> Government Response, *Inquiry into the Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/22-2025#Report>

<sup>10</sup> Explanatory Statement, *Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*(Serial 23), <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/23-2025>, p.1

- 2.44 Acknowledging the importance of ensuring custodians are notified of any Authority Certificate transfers and the name/s of the holder of the Certificate, recommendation 4 proposed that, if not covered by an existing process, proposed sections 24A and 24B be amended accordingly.
- 2.45 While beyond the scope of the current Bill, the Committee was of the view that if the Act was to be the subject of further reforms, consideration should be given to contemporising the legislation and incorporating provisions similar to those in section 18 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972 (WA), whereby if the Minister becomes aware of new information about an Aboriginal site on land that is the subject of an Authority Certificate they may amend, revoke or confirm the Authority Certificate.
- 2.46 Pursuant to Standing Order 200(4), the Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 29 April 2025 for tabling in the Assembly on 13 May 2025. In responding to the report, the Minister noted that the Government did not support recommendation 2. In relation to recommendations 3 and 4, the Minister advised that these were operational matters for consideration by the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and did not require amendments to the legislation.<sup>11</sup>
- 2.47 The Committee's report, which include two dissenting reports, and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

## **Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025**

- 2.48 The Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 32) was referred to the Committee on 30 July 2025 for inquiry and report by 27 August 2025.
- 2.49 Amending the *Animal Protection Act 2018*, the *Criminal Code Act 1983* (Criminal code) and the Animal Protection Regulations 2022, the Explanatory Statement noted that the purpose of the Bill was:
- to ensure the Northern Territory (NT) animal protection laws remain fit for purpose, are achieving their objectives and meet ever-changing community expectations with regards to the protection and treatment of animals.<sup>12</sup>
- 2.50 On 8 August 2025, the Committee held a public briefing with representatives from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Attorney-General's Department. The Committee received 44 submissions to its inquiry. While all submissions were supportive of the policy intent of the Bill, concerns were raised in relation to several of the proposed amendments. In a number of instances submitters also proposed amendments that were beyond the scope of the current

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<sup>11</sup> Government Response, *Inquiry into the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/23-2025#Report>

<sup>12</sup> Explanatory Statement, *Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (Serial 32)*, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/32-2025>, p. 1

Bill including, for example, removal of cultural exemptions, recognition of animal sentience, and regulation of large-scale breeding such as puppy farms.

- 2.51 Following its examination of the Bill and consideration of the evidence received, the Committee recommended that the Assembly pass the Bill with a minor amendment to the wording of Item 1(1) in Schedule 2: Excluded electrical devices in clause 27. This recommendation sought to remove the reference to crocodiles in relation to the use of Electric Stock Prods and ensure the Bill was unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise manner.
- 2.52 The Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 27 August 2025, pursuant to Standing Order 200(4). In responding to the report, the Minister noted that the Government did not support the Committee's proposed recommendation.<sup>13</sup>
- 2.53 The Committee's report and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

### **Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025**

- 2.54 The Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025 (Serial 37) was referred to the Committee on 3 September 2025 for inquiry and report by 8 October 2025.
- 2.55 Amending the *Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2011* and the Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Regulations 2011, this Bill sought to increase recycling across the Northern Territory by broadening the scope of containers included in the scheme; including container lids, caps or other closures in the scheme; and making a number of administrative reforms to improve the overall operation of the scheme.<sup>14</sup>
- 2.56 The Committee held a public briefing on the Bill with representatives from the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment on 9 September 2025. The Committee received four submissions to its inquiry. While all of the submissions supported the Government's aim to increase the effectiveness of the current container deposit scheme, concerns were raised regarding expansion of the scheme to include plain milk containers and the associated timeframe for such.
- 2.57 Following its examination of the Bill and consideration of the evidence received, the Committee formed the view that the Assembly should pass the Bill with no amendments. The Committee also considered several matters that were raised

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<sup>13</sup> Government Response, *Inquiry into the Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025*, [https://parliament.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1556080/Government-Response-02-September-2025.pdf](https://parliament.nt.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1556080/Government-Response-02-September-2025.pdf), p. 45

<sup>14</sup> Explanatory Statement, Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025 (Serial 37), <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee/37-2025>, p. 1

in submissions or during the public briefing that were beyond the scope of the current Bill, including whether the refund amount for permitted containers should be increased. The Committee subsequently recommended that the next review of the operation of the CDS incorporate consideration of the impact of increasing the refund amount.

- 2.58 The Committee presented its report to the Speaker on 8 October 2025, pursuant to Standing Order 200(4). A copy of the Committee's report and associated documentation is available on the Committee's website [here](#).

## 3 Committee Statistics

### Introduction

3.1 As of 26 November 2024, when the Bill referral process came into effect, Sessional Order 13.5(1) provided that following the first reading of a bill, other than an annual appropriation bill, the Member in charge of the bill was to immediately move either:

- (a) a motion referring the bill to the scrutiny committee for report by a particular date; or
- (b) “that the bill be declared to be urgent”; or
- (c) “that the second reading of the Bill be made an order of the day for the first Assembly meeting after 28 days have elapsed.”

Clause 13.5(2) further provided that ‘the mover and any other Member may speak for up to five minutes to this motion and the question is to be put.’

3.2 On 13 May 2025, Sessional Order 13.5 was amended to provide that:

- (1) After the first reading of a bill, other than an annual appropriation bill, the second reading of the bill will be made an order of the day for the first Assembly meeting after 28 days have elapsed, unless the Assembly refers the bill to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee or declares the bill to be urgent in accordance with paragraph (2).
- (2) The Member in charge of the bill may move either:
  - (a) a motion referring the bill to scrutiny committee for report by a particular date, with the question to be put without amendment or debate; or
  - (b) “that the bill be declared urgent”, to which the mover or any other member may speak for 5 minutes.

3.3 As noted in Table 1 below, of the 30 bills introduced since the Bill referral process came into effect as of 26 November 2024, 8 were referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee, 1 was referred to the Estimates Committee, 8 were dealt with on urgency, and 13 were laid on the table for 28 days.

**Table 1: Bill Referrals**

Serial #	Title	LSC*	Urgent	28 days
10	Liquor Legislation Amendment (Repeal of Minimum Pricing) Bill 2024			✓
11	Petroleum, Planning and Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2025			✓
12	Correctional Services Legislation Amendment Bill 2025		✓	
13	Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	✓		
14	Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2025			✓
15	Fiscal Integrity and Transparency Amendment Bill 2025			✓
16	Police Administration Legislation Amendment Bill 2025			✓
17	Territory Coordinator Bill 2025	✓		
18	Portable Long Service Leave (Community Services Sector) Repeal Bill 2025			✓
19	Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	✓		
20	Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	✓		
21	Water Amendment (Aboriginal Water Reserves) Bill 2025			✓

Serial #	Title	LSC*	Urgent	28 days
22	Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	✓		
23	Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	✓		
24	Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025		✓	
25	Appropriation (2025-2026) Bill	Referred to Estimates Committee		
26	Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2025			✓
27	Racing and Wagering Amendment Bill 2025			✓
28	Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2025		✓	
29	Public Information Amendment Bill 2025			✓
30	Gaming Control Amendment (Community Benefit Fund) Bill 2025		✓	
31	Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 2025		✓	
32	Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	✓		
33	Transport Legislation Amendment Bill 2025		✓	
34	Lands, Planning and Environment Legislation Amendment Bill 2025		✓	
35	Electricity System and Market Operator Bill 2025			✓
36	Electricity Legislation Amendment (Market Reform) Bill 2025			✓
37	Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025	✓		
38	First Home Owner Grant Amendment (Extension of Scheme) Bill 2025			✓
39	Police Administration Amendment (Police Public Safety Officers) Bill 2025		✓	

\* Legislative Scrutiny Committee

## Committee Inquiries

3.4 During the reporting period, the Committee held a total of 25 meetings which included:

- 1 private briefing with the Committee's independent legal counsel;
- 4 public briefings with government agencies;
- 2 public hearings; and
- a total of 56 witnesses appearing before the Committee.

3.5 As noted in Table 2 below, the level of public participation in committee inquiries varied according to the nature of the bill under consideration and the timeframe for receipt of submissions. However, the Committee notes that feedback from those organisations and individuals that made submissions and appeared before the Committee has been positive with a number of people commending the Government for re-establishing the bill scrutiny committee and providing an opportunity for members of the public to participate in the legislative process.

**Table 2: Submissions Received**

Serial #	Title	No. of Submissions Received
17	Territory Coordinator Bill 2025	302
13	Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	0
19	Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	1
20	Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	6
22	Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	21
23	Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	30

Serial #	Title	No. of Submissions Received
32	Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	44
37	Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025	4

## Reports and Recommendations

3.6 As summarised in Table 3 below, the committee met its reporting due date for all inquiries, with five reports tabled prior to the due date. Given the inquiry reporting dates, all reports were presented to the Speaker out of session pursuant to Standing Order 200(4).

**Table 3: Inquiry Timeframes**

Serial #	Title	Date Referred	Report Due	Report Tabled
17	Territory Coordinator Bill 2025	12/02/25	12/03/25	12/03/25
13	Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	13/02/25	12/03/25	05/03/25
19	Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	19/03/25	30/04/25	14/04/25
20	Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	19/03/25	30/04/25	29/04/25
22	Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	26/03/25	07/05/25	29/04/25
23	Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	27/03/25	07/05/25	29/04/25
32	Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	30/07/25	27/08/25	27/08/25
37	Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025	03/09/25	08/10/25	08/10/25

3.7 As detailed in Chapter 2, the committee recommended that the Assembly pass all of the bills referred for inquiry and report. However, as indicated in Table 4, in many instances the committee proposed amendments to the bills to ensure that they had due regard to the rights and liberties of individuals and the institution of Parliament, were unambiguous and drafted in a sufficiently clear and precise manner. Of the 46 proposed amendments and recommendations put forward by the Committee and considered by the Government, 27 or 59% were accepted.

**Table 4: Proposed Amendments and Recommendations**

Serial #	Title	No. of Recommendations Proposed	No. of Recommendations Accepted
17	Territory Coordinator Bill 2025	25	10
13	Defamation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	1	1
19	Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	1	1
20	Local Government Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	7	5
22	Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	4	4
23	Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	4	3
32	Animal Protection and Related Legislation Amendment Bill 2025	2	1
37	Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025	2	2

- 3.8 Pursuant to Standing Order 201, where a report from a committee recommends action be taken by the Government, the Clerk is to refer the report to the relevant Minister(s). The Minister(s) is then required to report to the Assembly what action, if any, the Government proposes to take in relation to each recommendation of the committee within six months of the report being tabled. In accordance with clause 201(4), if a government response to a committee report has not been tabled within the six-month timeframe, the relevant Minister must:
- (a) present to the Assembly at the next available opportunity a signed statement stating the reasons for the delay in presentation of the response.
  - (b) make themselves available to appear at the next reasonably available opportunity following a request by the relevant committee to answer its questions on that statement.
- 3.9 As detailed in Chapter 2, of the eight reports tabled by the Committee during the reporting period, three included recommendations for action to be taken by the Government as opposed to recommendations relating to legislative amendments.<sup>15</sup> In all cases the Government responded within the required timeframe.

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<sup>15</sup> Inquiry into the Territory Coordinator Bill 2025; Inquiry into the Domestic and Family Violence and Victims Legislation Amendment Bill; and the Inquiry into Environment Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Legislation Amendment (Expansion of CDS and Other Matters) Bill 2025, <https://parliament.nt.gov.au/committees/list/legislative-scrutiny-committee#Inq>

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