

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Territory Families:

Youth Detention Centre Planning

Pinelands

1. How was the Pinelands rehabilitation and detention centre site chosen?

ANSWER:

The announcement followed a comprehensive analysis of potential site options, including both Crown and privately owned sites. The criteria used in site selection was:

- access to support and life skills that are age and culture appropriate;
- connected or reconnected to, and have positive relationships with, community and family;
- accessing education and training to be job ready;
- feeling safe and secure;
- proximity to support services and access to public transport; and
- good development capability (land tenure, size, shape, serviceability etc).

2. What alternate sites, if any, were considered? Please provide reasons why they were not preferred.

ANSWER:

Sites in less dense areas were assessed but were found not suitable due to issues regarding accessibility for staff and visitors.

The existing Tivendale Road site was previously considered but was found unsuitable due to proximity to a proposed primary school and future residential land use. Other Crown land considered was unsuitable due to the close proximity to existing residential properties and insufficient land size.

3. Will the construction of a youth detention centre and rehab facility bring down land values in the Pinelands industrial precinct?

ANSWER:

The Centre is not anticipated to have an adverse effect on property values. International studies on the impact of prisons on surrounding land values have found that that prisons have not caused a reduction in property values in areas close to prisons compared with areas away from prisons.

4. Is there potential for a curfew to be imposed on Pinelands businesses?

ANSWER:

No. The siting of the facility within Section 67 allows for the facility to be adequately buffered from adjoining industrial businesses.

5. On average, how many visitors (family, service providers, NTPS staff) visit Don Dale each day?

ANSWER:

From Monday to Friday there are approximately 50 staff at the Detention Centre each day, including Youth Justice Officers, Departments of Education and Health staff and administration support. Approximately 15 other professionals visit each day, including legal representatives, program providers, and deliveries. On weekends these numbers reduce slightly.

Much of the community feedback received recently from Pinelands residents' concerns vehicle movements within the locality, and the potential for the new facility to impact on existing traffic.

Before the preferred site can be confirmed, a number of studies and assessments must be completed as part of the rezoning application. This includes a Traffic Impact Assessment. Just like for noise assessments, if a traffic impact is identified, then it is the responsibility of the developer to describe how to mitigate the impact. Options include a different access road or better intersection, with the critical point being an acceptable mitigation for the rezoning application to be approved.

6. On average, how many people take public transport to detention facilities?

ANSWER:

People visiting the current facility do so via a range of transport methods. Data is not kept on transport methods.

Future facilities must have access to public transport to ensure that support networks for young people in custody can be strengthened and maintained.

7. What considerations, if any, were given to the high volume of road trains and other heavy vehicles on McKinnon road in selecting the Pinelands site?

ANSWER:

Given the small size of the Centre and associated traffic volumes, it is not anticipated that any significant traffic issues will arise. Appropriate access to the site will be resolved as part of the development consent process for subdivision of the site and a Traffic Impact Assessment will form part of this application. This report will identify the maximum traffic impact of the Centre and whether any road upgrades will be required.

8. How many beds will the new training facility have?

ANSWER:

The new Centre in Darwin will have core capacity for 30 beds:

- the average number of children in detention varies considering those sentenced and those on remand, with the overwhelming majority on remand; and
- in the past 12 months, the average daily number of young people detained or on remand at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre was 22.

9. Will residents at the centre be exposed to noise pollution from industrial activity in Pinelands?

ANSWER:

No. The site for the facility allows for the facility to be adequately buffered from adjoining industrial businesses.

10. What scholarly research concludes that adult and youth detention facilities ought not be built in the same area?

ANSWER:

The Commissioners of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory did extensive research into best practice and the requirements for youth detention centres, including the co-location of adult and youth detention centres.

The final report references co-location of new centres within adult facilities as inappropriate and emphasises that new facilities must be purposefully designed for young people, and that in order to break a cycle of repeat offending, therapeutic and rehabilitative care must be provided in custody.

The final report of the Royal Commission states that 'the new facilities should not be located on or in close proximity to adult precincts'.

Alice Springs

11. Where will the Alice Springs facility be located?

ANSWER:

Investigations for the Alice Springs site are ongoing.