

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Education:

**Ochre Card Backlog**

1. How many teachers were forbidden from teaching children due to the expiration of their ochre card? Please provide numbers as at 28 February 2019.
2. How many temporary exemptions have been processed by the Government to allow teachers to teach?
3. Were any classes cancelled due to teachers with current working with children's checks/ochre cards being unavailable? If yes, please provide details of how many classes and at which schools.
4. How many teachers were required to perform duties 'outside the classroom' due to their ochre cards being expired? Please provide numbers at 28 February 2019.
5. What is the average time for processing the renewal of an ochre card?
6. How many teachers have current ochre cards in the Northern Territory? Please provide numbers as at day 1, Term 1, 2019.
7. How many NT registered teachers were waiting on renewal on day 1, term 1, 2019?
8. What explanations can you provide for the reported backlog of ochre card renewals?

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**ANSWERS:**

1. As a precautionary measure, there were instances where teachers without current clearance were required to perform duties outside of the classroom and some schools delivered alternative learning programs. This was managed at a local school level and reporting is not readily available without extensive administrative effort to collate.
2. The Department of Education processed a total of 693 requests for exemption, with 643 of those requests being school-based employees.
3. There were instances where teachers without current clearance were required to perform duties outside of the classroom and some schools delivered alternative learning programs. This was managed at the local school level and reporting is not readily available without extensive administrative effort to collate.

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5. *The response to Question 5 was provided by Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services:*

The process is not linear and there are many dependencies that will impact time for turn around. Some applications will take longer due to additional work requirements at many phases of the process.

The majority of online renewal applications received in SAFE NT, will be finalised with clearance notice numbers issued within three weeks or less.

The majority of new applications for a clearance will be finalised with clearance notice numbers issued within six weeks.

Any person who comes to the attention of the Screening Authority for scrutiny and assessment, may take upwards of four months to complete, depending on how quickly the applicants react to requests for further information and submissions to the Authority.

6. Retrospective system reports cannot be generated. Reporting is not readily available without extensive administrative effort to collate. To do so would be administratively burdensome and divert resources away from the agency's core business.

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8. *The response to Question 8 was provided by Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services:*

In addition to delays is the National Police Checks System, an unexpected influx of renewals adversely impacted on efficiencies.