

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Higgins to the Minister for Police:

**Firearms Registration Services**

1. Would you please advise the number of firearms registrations processed at the following police stations in the financial year 2017/18:
  - Darwin
  - Casuarina
  - Peter McAuley Centre, Berrimah
  - Palmerston
  - Humpty Doo
  - Batchelor
  - Adelaide River
  - Daly River
  - Katherine
  - Timber Creek
  - Wadeye
  - Tennant Creek
  - Alice Springs
2. Please advise the reasons behind centralising firearms registration in the Top End only.
3. Please advise how much is expected to be saved through this move.

## **ANSWERS:**

1.

- Darwin – 407
- Casuarina – 551
- Peter McAuley Centre, Berrimah – 2,856
- Palmerston – 559
- Humpty Doo – 258
- Batchelor – 21
- Adelaide River – 22
- Daly River – 2
- Katherine – 310
- Timber Creek – 12
- Wadeye – 82
- Tennant Creek – 17
- Alice Springs – 627

**Total:** 5,724

2. Firearms licensing applications and enquires haven't been centralised across the Top End. They have been centralised in Darwin Metropolitan Command. In practical terms, this means applications for licenses have been centralised at the Peter McAulay Centre (PMC) for Darwin, Casuarina, Palmerston and Humpty Doo stations only. All other police stations across the Northern Territory accept applications for licenses.

At present there are 17 separate licensing application types, all requiring different forms of supporting documentation. It is a very complex framework. The Firearms Policy and Recording Unit (FPRU) have found at times upwards of 50% of applications required significant follow up by the FPRU prior to the application being successfully progressed.

Darwin Metropolitan Command took 1775 applications. With a 50% error rate and a conservative timeframe of one hour spent on each deficient application; this equates to 887 hours or 110 working days to correct applications to a suitable standard. The FPRU has four funded administrative positions. This increase in taking corrective procedures has added a significant burden and created delays and a backlog of applications.

Centralisation of applications was facilitated to ensure only correct applications were received with a view to minimising errors and thus expediting processing timeframes. Since the introduction of the centralisation, there has already been a reduction in processing timeframes which in turn, provides a better service to the public.

The centralisation saw an extensive communication strategy implemented including notification to all stakeholders (firearms council, dealers, gunsmiths, gun clubs) as well as posters being erected at all affected stations. Media releases and radio interviews were undertaken and no negative feedback was received prior to the implementation of the centralisation. One enquiry was received by the office of Hon Kezia Purick MLA.

To accommodate license holders, the PMC has extended its opening hours to include Saturday from 8am to 6pm. This was achieved within existing staffing levels and hasn't incurred any budgetary expenses (nil allowances payable).

3. There have been no budgetary savings as a result of the centralisation. No front counters have closed or had their opening hours reduced, nor has there been any reduction or reallocation of staff. However, as discussed in the answer to the second question, the centralisation has resulted in significant efficiencies within the FRPU, allowing members to provide an increased service capability to the public.