



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Legislative Scrutiny Committee

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## **Associated Minutes of Proceedings**

# **Inquiry into the Attorney-General Legislation Amendment (Boards, Committees and Statutory Offices) Bill 2026**

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July 2026





**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**  
15th Assembly

**Legislative Scrutiny Committee**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Meeting No. 39**

12.00 pm, Thursday 14 May 2026  
Litchfield Room

**Present:** Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Chair, Member for Wanguri  
Mr Clinton Howe MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Drysdale  
Mrs Laurie Zio MLA, Member for Fannie Bay  
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly  
Justine Davis MLA, Member for Johnston

**Secretariat:** Candice Maclean, Executive Director  
Katie Helme, Committee Secretary  
Dr Will Dreyer, Senior Research Officer  
Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer

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**1. MEETING**

The Chair welcome Mr Young to the Committee.

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Mr Howe moved and Mrs Zio seconded that:

The Minutes of Meeting No. 38 of 27 April 2026 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

**3. BILL REFERRALS**

The Committee discussed the proposed inquiry plan.

Mr Young moved, and Justine Davis seconded that:

The Committee write to the Government to seek an extension to the reporting date until 25 August 2026 to enable sufficient time for stakeholders, including remote organisations, to make submissions and for the Secretariat to assess the submissions received.

The Committee divided.

For  
Mr Young  
Justine Davis

Against  
Mrs Carlson  
Mr Howe  
Mrs Zio

Question negatived.

Mr Howe moved and Mrs Zio seconded that:

The Committee adopt the proposed inquiry plan.

Question put and passed.

**4. NEXT MEETING**

10.00 am, Wednesday 27 May 2026

Meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Oly Carlson', written in a cursive style.

**Mrs Oly Carlson MLA  
Chair**



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

15th Assembly

## Legislative Scrutiny Committee

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

#### Meeting No. 40

10.00 am, Wednesday 27 May 2026

Litchfield Room

**Present:** Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Chair, Member for Wanguri  
Mr Clinton Howe MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Drysdale  
Mrs Laurie Zio MLA, Member for Fannie Bay  
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly  
Justine Davis MLA, Member for Johnston

**Secretariat:** Candice Maclean, Executive Director  
Katie Helme, Committee Secretary  
Dr Will Dreyer, Senior Research Officer  
Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

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#### 1. BILL REFERRALS – PUBLIC BRIEFINGS

##### ***Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026***

The Committee heard from representatives from the Department of Children and Families:

- Brent Warren: Chief Executive Officer
- Michelle Ganzer: Acting Executive Director, Strategic, Policy and Commissioning

Questions on Notice:

1. In the last 5 years, how many children in the Northern Territory have been reported to the department as having been raped, sexually assaulted, sexually abused, sexually exploited or otherwise subjected to sexual harm? Please specify how many were:
  - under the age of 16; under the age of 14;
  - under the age of 10; under the age of 5;
  - infants under the age of 12 months; and
  - toddlers, broken down as: one-year-olds; two-year olds; three-year-olds.
2. In the last 5 years how many children presented with an STI? Please specify how many were:
  - under the age of 16; under the age of 14;
  - under the age of 10;
  - under the age of 5;
  - infants under the age of 12 months; and
  - toddlers, broken down as: one-year-olds; two-year olds; three-year-olds.

The witnesses withdrew.

##### ***Attorney-General Legislation Amendment (Boards, Committees and Statutory Offices) Bill 2026***

The Committee heard from representatives from the Attorney-General's Department:

- Janet Hanigan: Executive Director, Strategic Policy Coordination
- Rosslyn Chenoweth: Principal Policy Lawyer, Legislation and Legal Policy

The witnesses withdrew.

## **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Justine Davis moved and Mr Howe seconded that:

The Minutes of Meeting No. 39 of 14 May 2026 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

## **3. BILL REFERRAL – ATTORNEY-GENERAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND STATUTORY OFFICES) BILL 2026**

The Committee agreed not to hold public hearings on the Bill and discussed sending written questions on issues raised in submissions to the Attorney-General's Department.

Justine Davis moved and Mr Howe seconded that:

The Committee authorise publication of all submissions received, redacting personal information such as signatures, personal addresses and phone numbers prior to publication.

Question put and passed.

## **4. BILL REFERRAL – CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (EVERY CHILD MATTERS) BILL 2026**

Mr Young moved and Mr Howe seconded that the Committee invite the following witnesses to public hearings on 4 and 5 June 2026:

- |                                            |                                              |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| • Department of Children and Families      | • Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT    |
| • NT Office of the Children's Commissioner | • Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara               |
| • SNAICC – Voice of Our Children           | Yankunytjatjara Women's Council              |
| • NT Anti-Discrimination Commission        | • Northern Territory Council of Social       |
| • Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT | Services                                     |
| • NT Police Association                    | • Aboriginal Housing NT                      |
| • North Australian Aboriginal Justice      | • Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition |
| Agency                                     | • Katherine Women's Legal Service            |
| • Northern Territory Legal Assistance      | • Anglicare NT                               |
| Forum                                      | • CatholicCare NT                            |
| • Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation   | • Palm Tree OT                               |
| • Australian Medical Association NT        |                                              |

Question put and passed.

The Committee discussed holding a public hearing in Alice Springs and the logistical challenges associated with the inquiry's short timeframe.

Mr Young moved and Justine Davis seconded that:

The Committee hold a public hearing in Alice Springs on 3 June 2026 to ensure organisations can meet with the Committee face-to-face.

The Committee divided.

For  
Mr Young  
Justine Davis

Against  
Mrs Carlson  
Mr Howe  
Mrs Zio

Question negated.

Mr Howe noted his preference that the Committee undertake more regional and remote engagement, but that it was not possible in this instance due to the timeframe and logistics.

The Committee discussed sending written questions to the Department of Children and Families.

Justine Davis moved and Mrs Zio seconded that:

The Committee authorise publication of submissions 1 to 149, except submissions 4, 72 and 112 and any others that requested to remain confidential, redacting:

- the first section of submission 15
- personal information such as signatures, personal addresses and phone numbers from all submissions prior to publication.

Question put and passed.

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

**6. NEXT MEETING**

Public Hearing: 9.00 am, Thursday 4 June 2026.

Public Hearing and Deliberative Meeting: 9.00 am, Friday 5 June 2026

Meeting closed at 12.13 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Oly Carlson', written in a cursive style.

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY  
15th Assembly

**Legislative Scrutiny Committee**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Meeting No. 43**

9.00 am, Friday 5 June 2026  
Litchfield Room

- Present:** Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Chair, Member for Wanguri  
Mr Clinton Howe MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Drysdale  
Mrs Laurie Zio MLA, Member for Fannie Bay  
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly  
Justine Davis MLA, Member for Johnston
- Secretariat:** Katie Helme, Committee Secretary  
Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer  
Caelan Ikin, Administration/Research Officer

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**1. PUBLIC HEARING: INQUIRY INTO THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (EVERY CHILD MATTERS) BILL 2026  
*Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT***

The Committee heard from the following representatives from the Foster and Kinship Carers Association NT:

- Amanda Thompson: Chief Executive Officer
- Denise Higginson: Manager Practice & Assessment
- Denise Jenkins: Board Vice Chair & Foster Carer
- Jackie Williams: Board Member & Foster Carer
- AnneLouise Cooper: Board Member & Foster Carer
- Kay Thomson: Board Member & Kinship Carer
- Stephen Atherton: Board Member & Foster Carer
- Sandy Potter: Board Member & Foster Carer
- Amy Banson: Foster Carer

The witnesses withdrew.

***Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation***

The Committee heard from Katrina Hill, Family Services Manager from Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation.

Question on Notice: The Bill seeks to place early intervention into legislation. Is it the view of Larrakia that is a good thing prior to removal?

The witness withdrew.

***Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council***

The Committee heard from the following representatives from Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council via videoconference:

- Andrea Mason: Acting Chief Executive Officer
- Alexandra Liddle: Assistant Manager, Child & Family Wellbeing Service
- Steven Bruce: Senior Project Officer, Child & Family Wellbeing Service

The witnesses withdrew.

**Aboriginal Housing NT**

The Committee heard from the following representatives from Aboriginal Housing NT:

- Leeanne Caton: Chief Executive Officer
- Pallas Gelfling: Policy Officer

The witnesses withdrew.

**Northern Territory Council of Social Services, Anglicare NT and Catholic Care NT**

The Committee heard from the following witnesses:

- Claire Pirrett: Interim Chief Executive Officer, Northern Territory Council of Social Services (via videoconference)
- Emma Hohnberg: Director Business Development, Anglicare
- Jayne Lloyd: Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Care NT

The witnesses withdrew.

**ARDS Aboriginal Corporation**

The Committee heard from the following representatives from ARDS Aboriginal Corporation:

- Sylvia Nulpinditj: Co-Chief Executive Officer
- Eleanor Connop: Senior Conflict Resolution Lead
- Yangipuy Wanambi: Member, Gapuwiyak Leadership Group on Child Protection Matters (via videoconference)

Tabled Paper: *Gulkmaram ga Yätj Raki'mala ga Dhä-manapan ga Latjuny Raki': Decolonising Child Protection: Severing Unhealthy Ties and Restoring Secure Attachments*

The witnesses withdrew.

**Department of Children and Families**

The Committee heard from the following representatives from the Department of Children and Families:

- Brent Warren: Chief Executive Officer
- Michelle Ganzer: Executive Director, Strategy, Policy, and Commissioning

Questions on Notice:

1. What is the vacancy rate breakdown by region in your department in every region across the NT?
2. Please provide vacancy rates for the DCF regions for the previous 5 years.

The witnesses withdrew.

**2. BILL REFERRALS – WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO AGENCIES**

***Inquiry into the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026***

Justine Davis moved and Mr Howe seconded that:

The Committee forward the questions regarding issues identified in submissions to the Department of Children and Families for a written response to be received by Tuesday 16 June 2026.

Question put and passed.

***Inquiry into the Attorney-General Legislation Amendment (Boards, Committees and Statutory Offices) Bill 2026***

Justine Davis moved and Mr Howe seconded that:

The Committee forward the questions regarding issues identified in submissions to the Attorney-General's Department for a written response to be received by Tuesday 16 June 2026.

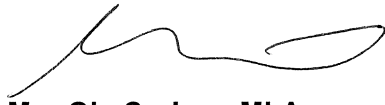
Question put and passed.

**3. OTHER BUSINESS**

**4. NEXT MEETING**

Deliberative Meeting: 12.00 pm, Thursday 25 June 2026.

Meeting closed at 2.48 pm.



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



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

15th Assembly

## Legislative Scrutiny Committee

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

#### Meeting No. 44

12.33 pm, Thursday 25 June 2026

Litchfield Room

**Present:** Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Chair, Member for Wanguri  
Mr Clinton Howe MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Drysdale  
Mrs Laurie Zio MLA, Member for Fannie Bay  
Justine Davis MLA, Member for Johnston

**Apologies:** Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly

**Secretariat:** Julia Knight, Committee Secretary  
Katie Helme, Committee Secretary  
Dr Will Dreyer, Senior Research Officer  
Candice Maclean, Executive Director

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#### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mrs Zio moved and Justine Davis seconded that:

The Minutes of the following meetings be confirmed:

- Meeting No. 40 of 27 May 2026
- Meeting No. 41 of 2 June 2026
- Meeting No. 42 of 4 June 2026
- Meeting No. 43 of 5 June 2026

Question put and passed.

#### 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

#### 3. CORRESPONDENCE

Justine Davis moved and Mr Howe seconded that:

The Committee authorise publication of the responses to the questions taken on notice and written questions regarding the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026 and the responses to written questions regarding the Attorney-General Legislation Amendment (Boards, Committees and Statutory Offices) Bill 2026.

Question put and passed.

Mrs Zio moved and Mr Howe seconded that:

The Committee authorise publication of the non-confidential tabled papers received at public hearings on 4 and 5 June 2026.

Question put and passed.

#### **4. BILL REFERRAL - ATTORNEY-GENERAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND STATUTORY OFFICES) BILL 2026**

The Committee discussed the evidence received and potential recommendations.

Justine Davis dissented to the Committee's decision not to adopt the proposed recommendation that clause 2 be amended to specify that clauses 3, 4, 5 and 6 come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Administrator by notice in the Gazette.

Mr Howe moved and Mrs Zio seconded that:

That the Committee direct the Secretariat to draft the report as discussed during the meeting.

Question put and passed.

#### **5. BILL REFERRAL - CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (EVERY CHILD MATTERS) BILL 2026**

The Committee discussed the evidence received and potential recommendations.

Justine Davis dissented to the Committee's decision not to adopt the following proposed recommendations:

- That the Legislative Assembly not pass the Care and Protection of Children Legislation Amendment (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026.
- That proposed sections 12C(2)(a) and (b) be amended to replace the words 'should be given the opportunity to' with the words 'have the right to'.
- That proposed section 12C(3)(b) be amended to provide that an Aboriginal child has a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family community, culture, traditions, language and country, particularly when the child is placed with a person who is not from the child's community or kinship group.
- That proposed section 8 be amended to remove the words 'in the following order of priority'.
- That proposed section 8(3) be amended to remove 'may also be relevant' and insert 'must be considered'.
- That proposed section 12A be amended to provide that, as far as practicable and consistent with the best interest of the child, if a child is removed from the child's family the child should eventually be returned to the family.
- That section 12C of the Bill be removed and replaced with:
  - (1) Kinship groups, Aboriginal community -controlled organisations and communities of Aboriginal people have a major role, through self-determination, in promoting the wellbeing of Aboriginal children.
  - (2) When a significant decision involving an Aboriginal child is to be made:
    - (a) the child's family members have a right to participate, and to be enabled to participate, in an administrative or judicial process for making the decision; and
    - (b) the child and the child's family have a right to identify any of the following persons that the child or family would like to participate in the making of the decision:
      - (i) a person with cultural authority;
      - (ii) a member of a kinship group;
      - (iii) a member of an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation;
      - (iv) a member of a community of Aboriginal people; and
    - (c) a person identified in accordance with paragraph (b) has the right to participate in the making of the decision.
  - (2A) When a decision involving an Aboriginal child is made, the decision should be healing focussed and trauma informed.
  - (2B) An Aboriginal child has the right to be brought up within the child's own family and community and on the child's own country.
  - (2C) An Aboriginal child has a right to be supported to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions, language and country, particularly when the child is placed with a person who is not from the child's community or kinship group.

- (2D) If an Aboriginal child is to be placed with a person, the principles set out in subsections (3) and (4) apply.
- (3) An Aboriginal child should, as far as practicable, be placed with a person in the following order of priority:
- (a) a member of the child's family;
  - (b) an Aboriginal person in the child's community in accordance with local community practice;
  - (c) a person who:
    - (i) is not an Aboriginal person; but
    - (ii) in the CEO's opinion, is sensitive to the child's needs and capable of supporting the child to develop and maintain a connection with the child's family, community, culture, traditions, language and country.
- (4) In addition, an Aboriginal child should, as far as practicable, be placed in close proximity to the child's family and community.

Justine Davis moved and Mrs Zio seconded that:

The Committee recommend that proposed section 12C(1) be amended to insert the words ' , Aboriginal community-controlled organisations' after the word 'groups'.

The Committee divided:

For  
Justine Davis  
Mrs Zio

Against  
Mrs Carlson  
Mr Howe

There being an equality of votes, the Chair used her casting vote to oppose the motion.

Question negatived.

Justine Davis dissented to the Committee's decision not to adopt the following proposed recommendations:

- That proposed section 12B be amended to provide that when a significant decision involving a child is to be made, the decision should be healing focused and trauma informed.
- That proposed section 12D(2) be amended to remove 'within 2 years after the removal'.
- That proposed section 12D be amended to provide that proactive efforts must be timely, practical, thorough and purposeful, aimed at addressing the grounds on which the child or young person is considered to be in need of care and protection, conducted in partnership with the child or young person and the family, kin and community of the child or young person, and culturally appropriate.
- That proposed section 65D(1)(a) is amended to remove the words ' , or is at risk of occurring,'.
- That proposed section 102C be amended to require the CEO, when applying for a family responsibility order, to specify how the requirements of section 65D(5) were satisfied, including what facilities and services were available to the family and how those services could reasonably be accessed.
- That proposed section 102K be amended to require personal service of a family responsibility order on a parent, rather than allowing for service at a last known address.
- That clauses 19 and 21 are removed from the Bill.
- That the Department of Children and Families publish policy guidance on the 'high probability of reunification' threshold.

Mrs Zio moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee direct the Secretariat to draft the report as discussed during the meeting.

Question put and passed.

## 6. OTHER BUSINESS

**7. NEXT MEETING**

Deliberative Meeting: 9.00 am, Tuesday 7 July 2026

Meeting closed at 3.08 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Oly Carlson', written in a cursive style.

**Mrs Oly Carlson MLA  
Chair**



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

15th Assembly

## Legislative Scrutiny Committee

### MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

#### Meeting No. 45

9.00 am, Tuesday 7 July 2026

Litchfield Room

- Present:** Mrs Oly Carlson MLA, Chair, Member for Wanguri  
Justine Davis MLA, Member for Johnston  
Mr Clinton Howe MLA, Deputy Chair, Member for Drysdale  
Mr Dheran Young MLA, Member for Daly  
Mrs Laurie Zio MLA, Member for Fannie Bay
- Secretariat:** Julia Knight, Committee Secretary  
Katie Helme, Committee Secretary  
Dr Will Dreyer, Senior Research Officer  
Georgia Eagleton, Senior Research Officer

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#### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Mr Howe moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Minutes of Meeting No. 44 of 25 June 2026 be confirmed.

Question put and passed.

#### 2. CORRESPONDENCE

Noted.

#### 3. BILL REFERRAL - ATTORNEY-GENERAL LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND STATUTORY OFFICES) BILL 2026

Mrs Zio moved and Justine Davis seconded that:

The Committee adopt the Chair's draft report, *Inquiry into the Attorney-General Legislation Amendment (Boards, Committees and Statutory Offices) Bill 2026* as amended, to be tabled out of session with the Speaker on Wednesday 8 July 2026 pursuant to SO200(4) for subsequent tabling in the Assembly on Tuesday 21 July 2026.

Question put and passed.

#### 4. BILL REFERRAL - CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (EVERY CHILD MATTERS) BILL 2026

Mrs Zio moved and Mrs Carlson seconded that:

The Committee adopt the Chair's draft report, *Inquiry into the Care and Protection of Children Legislation (Every Child Matters) Bill 2026* as amended, to be tabled out of session with the Speaker on Wednesday 8 July 2026 pursuant to SO200(4) for subsequent tabling in the Assembly on Tuesday 21 July 2026.

Question put and passed.

#### 5. NEXT MEETING

Deliberative Meeting: 12.00 pm, Thursday 23 July 2026 – TBC

Meeting closed at 9.30 am.

**Mrs Oly Carlson MLA**  
Chair