

Estimates Committee 2010
Questions Taken On Notice

(11/06/2010 to 18/06/2010)

Date: 17/06/2010

Output:

Sub Output:

Subject: Sobering-up shelters

From: Mr Matt Conlan to Hon Kon Vatskalis
Health

7-22

Question:

Yes. If possible, could the department please provide the occupancy rates for sobering-up shelters across the Territory? All of it.

Answer:

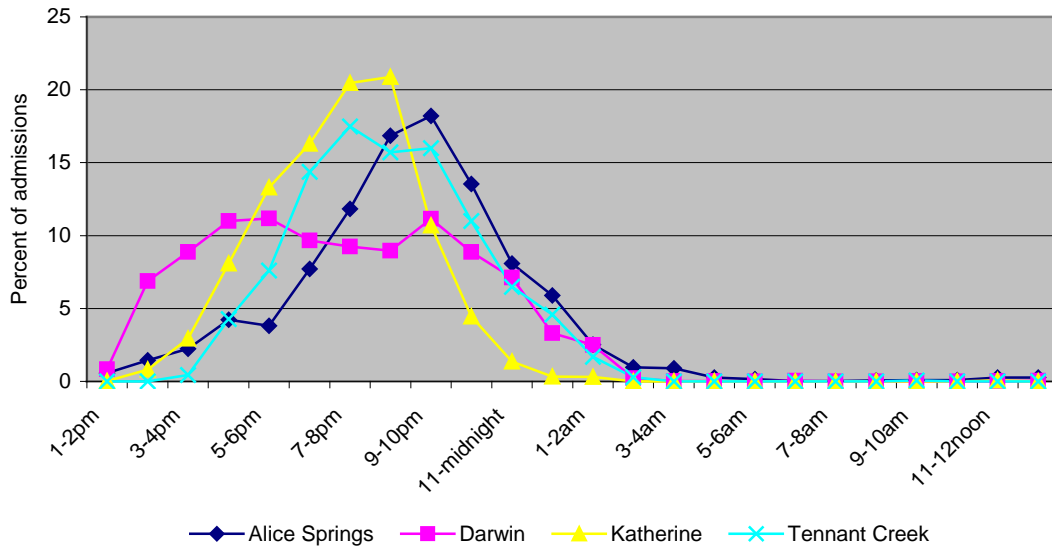
Answered On: 12/08/2010

QUESTION ON NOTICE 7.22

Could the department please provide the occupancy rates for sobering up shelters (SUS) across the Territory? All of it.

ANSWER

1. A measure of 'occupancy' like those used in hospitals (or residential settings) can not be used to measure the occupancy rates of SUS services, because of the short stay nature of the service and the varying operating hours.
2. Sobering Up Shelter bed numbers and operating days and hours vary between regions.
3. Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek SUS operate for 18 hours a day six days a week and take admissions for 12 hours per day.
4. Alice Springs SUS operates for 24 hours a day six days a week.
5. Nhulunbuy SUS operating hours have varied over the past financial year and are currently 14 hours a day over four days a week and accepts admissions for seven hours per operating day.
6. For the period 30 June 2009 to 31 March 2010 approximately 21% of all client admissions had a length of stay (LOS) of five hours or less, with 14% being for one hour or less. The median LOS was approximately eight hours per admission.
7. The LOS figures suggest that each SUS bed could be occupied more than once per operating day. So, a simple occupancy rate calculation does not reflect the actual use of SUS beds or operating hours.
8. Sobering Up Shelter admission rates vary during the operating day and between regions (see graph below). Each region has peak periods during an operating day with quiet periods before and after the peak. For the period 1/7/2009 to 31/3/2010:
 - a. Admissions to Darwin SUS were consistent between 4pm and 11pm.
 - b. Admissions to Alice Springs SUS peaked between 7pm and 11pm.
 - c. Admissions to Katherine SUS peaked between 5pm and 9pm.
 - d. Admission to Tennant Creek SUS peaked between 6pm and 11pm.



9. For the period 01/07/2009 to 31/03/2010 Sobering Up Shelters recorded less than one admission per bed per operating day.

10. This is due to beds being unused before and after peak periods. That is, while a SUS may open its doors at 2pm it may not get busy until the evening and so over the hours between it has empty beds. Similarly, once a SUS is full or near full, referrals taper off, some clients leave and so again there are empty beds.

	Alice Springs	Darwin	Katherine	Tennant Creek
Number of admissions	4,750	5,893	3,352	1,356
Number of beds	26	32	18	16
Number of admitting days	227	226	228	180
Average admissions per bed per operating day	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.5