



# Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

## Answer to question on notice

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Asked by: Mr Cain

Addressed to: Minister Cheyne

Redirected to: Human Rights Commission

Reference: Human Rights Commission

Hearing: 19/02/2025

In relation to: SUBJECT 1 – Resourcing of the Human Rights Commission

Question received: 28/02/2025

Answer Due: 07/03/2025

1. What level of resourcing is required for the Commission to perform its duties at the best possible level?
2. Does the government provide sufficient funding and resources to the Commission?
3. Are there specific areas where a lack of funding or resources is a particular concern?
4. What areas should be prioritised for greater funding or resource allocation?
5. Have there been any instances where a shortfall in resourcing negatively affected the Commission's capacity to perform its duties?

Penelope Mathew: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

As noted in the Human Rights Commission's annual report: 'the Commission is under-resourced in areas such as: community education; engagement and media; financial management; and IT and administrative support for the many services offered by the Commission.' These functions are central to ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission's operations. Without investment in these core functions, the burden of responsibility for their completion falls on frontline service delivery roles, which has downstream impacts on the Commission's capacity to respond to clients.

Details concerning matters impacting the Commission's service delivery, such as the continuous growth in complaints received, demand for victims' services, and public advocacy are contained in the annual report. In addition, competing demands mean that inevitably some areas of work need to be prioritised over others – for example, there is a need to scale back

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legislative scrutiny work when the Commission is intervening in human rights cases. Another example is the balance between the competing demands of the jointly held roles of the Public Advocate and the Children and Young People Commissioner.

One area for which resourcing has not been available is public education. This is a key function of the Commission and critical to the maintenance of a human rights culture in the Territory. The Commission does undertake some of this important preventative work – for example, training new employees in Bimberi and the AMC. However, the Commission aspires to undertake more extensive community education on human rights and, preferably in partnership with the JACS Legislation, Policy and Programs unit, continuous education of public servants and frontline workers in high-risk areas. A Commission education unit of three to four staff is required in order to complete this work. The Commission is currently looking at a fee-for-service model to fund such a unit in the future.

The Commission is in regular communication with the government about these needs and avails itself of the opportunity for budget bids when appropriate.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Legal Affairs

Signature:



Date: **06/03/25**

By the President of the Human Rights Commission