



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Mr Andrew Braddock MLA (Deputy Chair),
Ms Leanne Castley MLA

Inquiry into ACT Budget 2021–22
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
19 October 2021

Asked by Leanne Castley MLA on 19 October 2021: Madelin Bayer, Environment Protection Authority, and David Pryce, Deputy Director-General, Access Canberra, took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 19 October 2021, Pages 22-23]

In relation to: Noise complaints – resolution timeframes and costs

Ms Bayer: In terms of percentages for 2020-21, this is just in relation to noise, to begin with: for 49 per cent, the category is “amplified”, which is amplified music; 22 per cent is in relation to construction noise; 11 per cent is in relation to mechanical plants and equipment, which includes things like air conditioners; five per cent is in relation to vehicles; and three per cent is in relation to gym equipment. There are some others that are very low percentages, as well.

MS CASTLEY: I am wondering about the time frame. How quickly were the complaints dealt with? Was there any legal action required?

Ms Bayer: In terms of the time frames, that can vary quite greatly. I can take it on notice in relation to some specifics. That can vary quite greatly, depending on the type of noise that is complained about. Some noise can be addressed quite quickly—music and things of that nature. With respect to other noise, such as air conditioners, it might take longer to try and resolve that complaint. It can vary quite greatly.

MS CASTLEY: Do you have an idea of the total cost to your agency—how much it costs your staff to look into these things?

Mr Pryce: It is hard. It would take some effort. We would have to take that on notice, if that is what you wish, to break that down as a particular category.

MS CASTLEY: Yes, thank you.

MINISTER CHEYNE: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) does not capture aggregated data about the average length of time or staffing costs to respond to noise complaints. Rather, the EPA records outcomes of enforcement actions taken by its Environment Protection Officers such as sending an advisory letter, issuing an environment protection order, or issuing an infringement notice.

In 2020-21, the EPA:

- issued four infringement notices for the “offence to make noise louder than noise standard”, and
- served one environment protection order in response to excessive noise.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature: 

Date: 26/10/21

By the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Tara Cheyne MLA