



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Ms Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Public Service

In relation to: Public Service and Industrial Relations and Frontline Service Numbers

Hearing: 21/07/2026

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Transcript provided: 24/07/2026

Answer Due: 31/07/2026

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA took on notice the following question(s):

Ms Clay: No, that is great. And are you able to tell us, in that 24,000 and 30,000 figure, how many of those people were involved in delivering essential services or delivering frontline services? I actually do not mind what sort of phrase you use. Like, do you actually know? Are you able to tell us that, maybe on notice? Is that information you have?

Mr Khan: If the data is available, Ms Clay, we will provide it to you.

Ms Clay: Yes, I would love to have it on notice. And if the data is not available, I would love to know how government is constantly reassuring us that they are protecting essential services to the community if government is not, in fact, tracking that in any way. I would love to have that explanation if it comes back that we do not keep that data. Can you explain how you are making sure that you are making good on that regular promise?

Ms Stephen-Smith: I think, Ms Clay, so often these decisions are best taken at the directorate level by the teams on the ground around how they deliver their services, and us having a number at a global level at whole of government is not actually going to provide any assurance that we are maintaining frontline services. What is going to have assurance is the directorates themselves understanding the services that they deliver and ensuring that they are managing within their budget to enable continuity of those essential frontline services.

So I am not sure that a single number of however many out of 30,000 is in any way actually helpful for us tracking that but it could require a lot of administrative background work. It could take a couple of people in every directorate a few weeks to work out the answer to that question to deliver zero value in it in terms of actually delivering frontline services.

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The ACT Public Service is diverse, and roles contribute to service delivery in different ways, including direct service delivery, operational support, policy, regulation, corporate support and enabling functions. As a result, the ACT Government does not maintain a whole-of-government dataset that categorises every ACT Public Service position as "frontline", "essential service" or otherwise.

While the Government determines priorities and funding, directorates are responsible for delivering government services to the community and are best placed to understand the operational requirements, risks and workforce settings for their services. For this reason, decisions about staffing levels, workforce allocation and budget management are made by directorates with regard to maintaining service continuity and protecting the delivery of frontline services.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026-2027

Signature:



Date:

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By the Minister for the Public Service, Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA