



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

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA

Addressed to: Attorney-General

Reference: Attorney General

Hearing: 22/07/2026

In relation to: Drug and alcohol sentencing list

Question received: 28/07/2026

Answer Due: 06/08/2026

1. What is the capacity of the DASL (ie number of referrals it can accept) and number of participants referred, for each of the last 4 years
2. What is the waitlist/demand for places in the DASL (please provide data if available, otherwise whatever qualitative measure is used)
3. Given the commitment made in the supply and confidence agreement with the ACT Greens and noting the Estimates hearing responses, can you provide further information regarding any progress regarding the potential expansion of the DASL to the Magistrates Court.

Ms Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

(1) The Drug and Alcohol Sentencing List (DASL) is funded to support 42 active participants at any one time, as of the 2023-2024 budget. Prior to this, the DASL was funded to support 25 active participants.

From 2019 to 31 July 2026, 293 people have been referred to the DASL. After the person has been referred, they must undertake an eligibility assessment and if they are found eligible, must undertake a suitability assessment and if found suitable they can be sentenced to a Drug and Alcohol Treatment Order (DATO).

The number of participants referred in the last 4 financial years are as follows

1 July 2025- 30 June 2026 – 33

1 July 2024- 30 June 2025 – 43

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1 July 2023- 30 June 2024 – 30

1 July 2022- 30 June 2023 – 25

(2) There is currently no backlog or waitlist for the referral for initial eligibility screening assessment.

(3) The Supply and Confidence agreement in November 2024 agreed to continuing support for the drug and alcohol court, including the exploration of expansion to the Magistrates Court. Since that time, the following has occurred:

- The DASL has continued to be funded for 42 participants.
- A monitoring and evaluation framework has been prepared to support ongoing monitoring and improvements as the program continues to mature, as well as better facilitating future evaluations of the DASL.
- In September 2025, the ACT Government passed legislation responding to concerns that when the Supreme Court is not sitting (including on weekends and during the December shutdown) that the Magistrates Court does not have authority to deal with a person who has breached their DATO. The Magistrates Court is now empowered to hear and make certain temporary orders for persons subject to a DATO, who have been arrested under a warrant for a breach of the DATO (other than by commission of an offence) when the Supreme Court is not sitting.
- The DASL Working Group (which has members including Canberra Health Services, the Health and Community Services Directorate, ACT Corrective Services, ACT Courts, the Director of Public Prosecutions and Legal Aid) meet quarterly to discuss possible legislative reform and operational issues that need to be addressed.

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

Signature: 
By the Attorney-General, Ms Tara Cheyne MLA

Date: 7/8/26