



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

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Mr Peter Cain MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Public Service

In relation to: Public Service and Industrial Relations and ACT PS – workers residing outside ACT

Hearing: 21/07/2026

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Answer Due: 31/07/2026

Ms Stephen-Smith took on notice the following questions:

MR CAIN: And during 25-26, how many employees were recruited into the ACT public service while residing outside the ACT and surrounding region and were approved to remain permanently interstate?

Ms Stephen-Smith: I will take that question on notice.

MR CAIN: Thank you. Does the ACT—

Ms Stephen-Smith: Sorry, Mr Wright has something.

Mr Wright: Sorry, Mr Cain. One of the things that in terms of our systems and the ability to verify that type of information is the address that people provide to us at the point of their recruitment, it may be the address that they were living at the time that they applied for the job, rather than the abode that they are inhabiting now. And this happens in all the different services in which I have worked, so—

MR CAIN: So do you track if they change their residential address?

Mr Wright: We do ask them to change their residential address and encourage that, but not everyone updates their HR21 system to do so.

MR CAIN: Is that something they are required to do though and they do not do it?

Mr Wright: It is not a requirement. We certainly encourage it because it allows us to communicate more effectively with them.

MR CAIN: So if you do not—

Ms Stephen-Smith: Mr Cain, what we might do is we will take the question on notice. We will actually go out to each directorate because, as I said, these arrangements do tend to be quite unusual, so we will do our best—make our best effort to ask each directorate if they have explicitly approved such an arrangement and come back to you with an overall number.

MR CAIN: Thank you. You may include in that, in fact I would like you to, why is it you do not require a notification of a change of address? In fact, do some due diligence as well, otherwise you cannot accurately report who is working permanently interstate with—for the ACT public service? There is no requirements to report workers working permanently interstate. Any arrangement is based on agreement between the employee and their manager taking into account the relevant whole of government and directorate based policy.

Ms Stephen-Smith: Well, I am not sure that the change of address requirement would help us in that regard, Mr Cain, because a lot of our public servants, not the majority, but a fair few live in New South Wales. So if we were doing it on state of residence, and many will spend some of their time working from home in New South Wales—

MR CAIN: Well, that is the point of my question.

Ms Stephen-Smith: —But not necessarily be—but their home workplace would be in the ACT, so—

MR CAIN: I encourage you to be generous with your answer, of course. So does the ACT public service actively advertise positions as being available on a permanent, remote basis, or are interstate work arrangements only considered after appointment?

Ms Stephen-Smith: I would have thought that they would at least be considered during the appointment process. So I would be surprised if someone was recruited with no knowledge of the fact that they had not intended to move to the ACT and it was not part of the recruitment conversation. But again, I do not know if Mr Wright has more.

MR CAIN: So just to finish off perhaps, so how many ACT public service employees are currently approved—and this is maybe already captured by what you are going to take on notice, how many employees are currently approved to permanently perform their duties from an interstate location?

Ms Stephen-Smith: I think that is the question we have already taken on notice, but we will take it on notice again just in case.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, I think that is a different—so the first—

Ms Stephen-Smith: We will take it on notice just in case, and Hansard and the secretary can consolidate, whatever.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. And just a supplementary on that one as well, can you also take on notice what the whole of government policy that governs permanent interstate work arrangement for the ACT public service is?

Ms Stephen-Smith: We will take that on notice.

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

The ACT Public Service collects personal data from employees at the point of onboarding. Once employees are onboarded, they can update their contact details through the HR21 system. Employees are encouraged to keep their details up to date and are reminded to do so at various intervals, but there is no mandatory requirement for updates to be made.

The data collected does not, of itself, confirm whether an employee has an approved permanent interstate work arrangement. Approval of interstate or remote working arrangements is managed by individual directorates having regard to operation requirements, the duties of the role and the relevant whole of government and directorate policies. Whole of Government policies exist to support these instances and are available on the [ACTPS Employment Portal](#), specifically the [Flexible Working Arrangements Policy](#) and the [Flexible-Working-Arrangements-Policy-Working-Remotely-Interstate-or-Overseas](#).

As to the figure of how many employees are currently approved to perform their duties from an interstate location, this information is not centrally collected as it is at the discretion of each directorate to determine the requirements needed to meet the deliverables of their specific workplaces. Collecting this information consistently across all directorates would represent an unreasonable diversion of resources and would not be possible within the timeframe for responding to questions in the Budget Estimates process.

The Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy is not aware of any ACT Government roles being advertised as being available on a permanent, remote basis, or interstate work arrangements.

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