NTCAT
Northern Territory
Civil and Administrative Tribunal

ANNUAL REPORT



2025/2026

Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal

NTCAT
Northern Territory
Civil and Administrative Tribunal

The Honourable Marie-Clare Boothby

Attorney-General

Parliament House

DARWIN NT 0801

Dear Attorney-General

NTCAT ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026

In accordance with section 151 of the *Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2014*, I submit for your attention the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal's annual report for the period 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026.

Yours faithfully



Mark O'Reilly
President
Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal
16 September 2026

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President's Report

This report for the year 2025/2026 is NTCAT's twelfth Annual Report.

Last year's Annual Report included a reference to the fact that the Attorney-General's Department had been directed by Cabinet to commission a Review into NTCAT. At that stage it was unclear what the parameters of the Review would be. NTCAT undertook to work with the Department to settle terms of reference and to engage a suitable consultant to undertake the Review.

That work has now been done. The Review has been conducted by Michael Talbot, the Principal of SaM Productions Consulting, and a Report has been released to the Department with recommendations. I extend my thanks to Michael and to the Department for the professional and efficient manner in which the Review was commissioned and undertaken.

I now look forward to working with the Department to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations in a way which will allow NTCAT to operate consistently with its objectives.

The Council of Australasian Tribunals publishes the Australian and New Zealand Tribunal Excellence Framework as a self-assessment tool for Tribunals in measuring performance and quality.

The latest iteration of that tool observes that:

> "Whatever they look like, tribunals are an important part of the justice system in Australia and New Zealand. They provide a quick, cheap and relatively informal means of dispute resolution...
>
> An excellent tribunal resolves disputes in a fair, accessible and efficient manner within a reasonable timeframe. When determining disputes and deciding cases, excellent tribunals interpret and apply the law consistently, impartially and independently – protecting the rights of the community the tribunal serves."

The Review and recommendations should be seen as an opportunity for NTCAT to strive for excellence. Any implementation of the recommendations should bear in mind the Tribunal Excellence Framework.

As a Super Tribunal, NTCAT impacts the fabric of the Northern Territory community in many ways. It determines issues relating to human rights, trade and commerce, planning and development, professional standards, housing, community safety and more. It is to the benefit of the community, as a whole, for NTCAT to have the resources it needs to perform its functions at a high standard.

As has been pointed out in previous Annual Reports, NTCAT's jurisdictional responsibilities have steadily expanded during its twelve-year life span. That increase in responsibility has not been matched by additional resources. The willingness to confer new jurisdictions on NTCAT is a testament to the good work the Tribunal has done now for more than a decade. NTCAT has proven its ability to efficiently and effectively determine a wide range of matter types of varying complexity. It is right and proper that, as new avenues of civil disputes or new mechanisms for administrative review arise, NTCAT is the appropriate body to take on the task. It is also right and proper that sufficient resources are allocated to enable the task to be undertaken well.

Previous reports have raised concerns that increased jurisdictional responsibility without appropriate resourcing undermines NTCAT's ability to do the work it was designed to do. Where recommendations arising from the Review seek to address resourcing issues they should be adopted and implemented.

On a similar note, a recent audit of NTCAT's premises at Casuarina has highlighted a number of security concerns. It is important that safe and user-friendly premises are provided for the benefit of users and staff of NTCAT.

An important task for me over the coming 12 months is to continue to advocate for a proper allocation of resources and a safe space to continue the important work of the Tribunal.

As always, I am grateful to the committed team at NTCAT who work hard every day to deliver civil justice in the NT.

I would like to make particular mention of outgoing Member, Andrew Macrides. Andrew's appointment as a Member pre-dates my own. I am very thankful to have worked with him for almost the past 10 years. He has been a valued Member of the Tribunal but has also played a key role in strategic thinking for NTCAT. He has been approachable, supportive and instructive for NTCAT staff and Members including myself. I wish him the very best.

Mark O'Reilly



President
Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal

About the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal

The Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) is a "Super Tribunal" or in other words a Tribunal that has absorbed the work of a number of smaller Tribunals and Boards. During its lifetime NTCAT has also taken responsibility for some of the civil proceedings that were previously dealt with by the Local Court. Each State and Territory in Australia has its own Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

NTCAT has been hearing and deciding cases since January 2015. As its name suggests, NTCAT broadly has two types of work to do, namely, deciding Civil Law cases and deciding Administrative Law cases. In determining these cases NTCAT exercises Original and Review jurisdictions.

In its Original Jurisdiction NTCAT generally decides civil disputes for the first time. For example, in a tenancy, unit titles or small claim dispute, NTCAT exercises quasi-judicial power to make a decision in favour of one party or the other.

NTCAT's Review jurisdiction is generally exercised when another body has already made an administrative decision and the relevant legislation gives NTCAT authority to conduct a review of that decision. The role of the Tribunal is to review the merits of the original decision and to ensure that it was the "correct or preferable decision". For example, a decision of a consent authority under the *Planning Act 1999* to allow or disallow a particular development to go ahead or of a Minister to refuse to grant a production licence under the *Petroleum Act 1984* may be challenged in certain circumstances and it is NTCAT's job to reconsider the original decision. NTCAT may confirm the original decision, vary it or set it aside and make a different decision, applying administrative law principles.

The central idea behind NTCAT is that it is to be accessible. It is designed to operate as a "one-stop-shop for civil and administrative appeals.[1]" It provides a single, central, easy to use system which operates independently of government.

NTCAT was brought into being by the *Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2014* (the NTCAT Act). It is worth setting out the objectives included in section 10 of that Act:

> **Objectives of the Tribunal**
>
> The Tribunal must:
>
> (a) promote the best principles of public administration; and
>
> (b) be accessible to the public by being easy to find and easy to access; and
>
> (c) be responsive to parties, especially to people with special needs; and
>
> (d) ensure that proceedings are processed and resolved as quickly as possible while achieving a just outcome, including by resolving disputes through high-quality processes and the use of mediation and alternative dispute resolution procedures when appropriate; and
>
> (e) keep costs to parties involved in a proceeding to a minimum insofar as is just and appropriate; and

[1] Press release from former Attorney-General and Minister for Justice John Elferink 21 October 2014.

(f) use straightforward language and procedures; and

(g) act with as little formality and technicality as possible; and

(h) be flexible in the way in which it conducts its business and adjust its procedures to best fit the circumstances of a particular proceeding or a particular jurisdiction.

Essentially NTCAT is required to operate in a way that allows easy access to a flexible, informal, inexpensive and responsive forum for resolving or deciding a wide variety of disputes. NTCAT is designed to be less intimidating than a court. Parties are very often not legally represented. Indeed, in Small Claims disputes, legal representatives are only allowed to appear with leave of the Tribunal. The Tribunal is not bound by the rules of evidence and may inform itself in any way it considers appropriate.

Nevertheless, while efficiency and flexibility are important, the objectives of the Tribunal are also aimed at fairness. Outcomes must be just and the Tribunal must comply with the rules of natural justice.

The need for flexibility is apparent from the broad range of jurisdictions exercised by NTCAT. When it commenced operations in 2015 it had been conferred with jurisdiction under 31 different pieces of legislation. That number has now grown to 82.

Small claims and tenancy disputes have already been referred to. They are two of NTCAT's highest volume jurisdictions. Others are guardianship and matters under mental health legislation.

The Tribunal also exercises jurisdiction in a range of diverse subject areas including anti-discrimination; taxation; planning; mining; medical and other professional regulation; freedom of information; regulation of associations; building; liquor licensing; gaming and wagering; and many others. While individually these matters arise less frequently, together they form a substantial part of NTCAT's workload.

Throughout these jurisdictions there is a very broad range of complexity. Many tenancy and small claims matters are straightforward and can be resolved quickly. That can also be the case with guardianship and, due to their nature, most matters under the mental health legislation can be dealt with in a single sitting.

Some cases, though, raise novel legal arguments and have ramifications for the community at large. They may require legal representatives to be involved and sometimes require multi-day hearings. In mining and environmental disputes, for example, legal representatives usually appear and there is a high volume of evidence to consider.

For most Territorians involved in civil disputes, NTCAT is the face of the justice system. It determines a broad range of different subject matters with a broad range of complexity.

The NTCAT Act requires that almost all of NTCAT's various jurisdictions require written reasons for any decisions it makes. Published NTCAT decisions can be found at Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The decisions of NTCAT involve considerations of basic human rights as well as legal rights created by legislation. They adjudicate on competing interests between commercial enterprises and consumers; landlords and tenants; environmental preservation and development; privacy and the right to information among others.

In short – NTCAT makes a critical contribution to civil justice in the Northern Territory.

A significant feature of NTCAT's processes is that almost all applications can be made through a standard application form: an Initiating Application. The Initiating Application and all other documents and material are filed electronically. NTCAT operates on a paperless system. The Initiating Application simply requires an applicant to identify the issues in dispute. It does not require the strict formality of pleadings. On receipt of an application, the NTCAT registry issues orders depending on the type of dispute that is identified. The aim is that users of the Tribunal will be given clear, easy to follow directions that let them know the next steps to be taken.

In broad terms, once an Initiating Application has been filed with NTCAT the other party or parties to the dispute will have an opportunity to file a Response. If a Response is filed, appropriate disputes will be scheduled for a Compulsory Conference which aims to explore the prospects of an agreed resolution between the parties. Many matters resolve at the Compulsory Conference stage. Those that do not will be listed for a hearing before a different NTCAT Member.

280 matters were listed for a Compulsory Conference during the reporting period. 121 of those matters settled at the Compulsory Conference. Another 31 settled prior to the hearing and another 4 were withdrawn.

An important quality of the Tribunal is its independence. Section 11 of the NTCAT Act means that the Tribunal cannot be directed by the Minister responsible and neither can its Members.

Independence is critical because it is common for one party to a dispute before NTCAT to be a government agency or statutory body. Under certain pieces of legislation NTCAT has jurisdiction to reconsider a decision of a Minister. Clearly it is important that decisions are made separately from Government. To that end the President of NTCAT holds appointment as a Local Court Judge.

NTCAT has registries in Darwin and Alice Springs. There are three full-time Members and a staff of 11 including a Registrar and Deputy Registrar. NTCAT also relies on a large pool of sessional Members. Under some pieces of legislation NTCAT is required to include specialist Members to sit as part of a Tribunal panel. For example, medical professionals sit on the Tribunal in Mental Health matters and in disciplinary proceedings relating to health professionals. Matters dealing with firearms regulation require Members with policing and firearms expertise. A number of NTCAT's sessional Members are practising lawyers with many years of experience.

Our Jurisdictions

As at 30 June 2026, jurisdiction had been conferred upon NTCAT under the following Acts:

CONFERRAL	LEGISLATION
1-Jan-15	*Energy Pipelines Act 1981*
1-Jan-15	*Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Conferral of Jurisdiction for Native Title Matters) Act 2014*
1-Jan-15	*Petroleum Act 1984 and Petroleum Regulations 2020*
1-Jul-15	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1992*
1-May-16	*Cullen Bay Marina Act 1992*
28-Jul-16	*Advance Personal Planning Act 2013*
28-Jul-16	*Guardianship of Adults Act 2016*
30-Nov-17	*Independent Commissioner Against Corruption Act 2017*
25-Apr-20	*Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003*
14-Apr-21	*Administration and Probate Act 1969*
2-Jul-24	*Health Care Decision Making Act 2023*
1-Jan-15	*Control of Roads Act 1953*
1-Jan-15	*Fences Act 1972*
1-Jan-15	*Building Act and Building (Resolution of Residential Building Work Disputes Regulations) 2012*
1-Jan-15	*Geothermal Energy Act 2009*
1-Jan-15	*Heritage Act 2011*
1-Jan-15	*Lands Acquisition Act 1978*
1-Jan-15	*Mineral Titles Act 2010*
1-Jan-15	*Termination of Units Plans and Unit Title Schemes Act 2014*
1-Jun-15	*Caravan Parks Act 2012*
1-Jun-15	*Health Practitioner Regulation (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2010*
1-Jun-15	*Local Government Act 2019*
1-Jun-15	*Residential Tenancies Act 1999*
1-May-16	*Small Claims Act 2016*
1-May-16	*Unit Title Schemes Act 2009*
1-May-16	*Unit Titles Act 1975*
3-Jun-20	*Mental Health and Related Services Act 1998*
27-Nov-23	*Associations Act 2003*
27-Nov-23	*Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act 1990*
1-Jan-15	*Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996*
1-Jan-15	*Gaming Control Act 1993*
1-Jan-15	*Gaming Machine Act 1995*
1-Jan-15	*Kava Management Act 1998*
1-Jan-15	*Liquor Act 2019*
1-Jan-15	*Pastoral Land Act 1992*
1-Jan-15	*Planning Act 1999*
1-Jan-15	*Poppy Regulation Act 2014*

1-Jan-15	*Private Security Act 1995*
1-Jan-15	*Tobacco Control Act 2002*
1-Jan-15	*Totalisator Licensing and Regulation Act 2000*
1-Jan-15	*Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006*
23-Apr-15	*Darwin Waterfront Corporation Act*
9-Jun-15	*Marine Act 1981*
9-Jun-15	*Ports Management Act 2015*
1-Jul-15	*Administrators Pensions Act 1981*
1-Jul-15	*Cooperatives (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2015*
1-Jul-15	*Legislative Assembly Members' Pension Act 1979*
1-Jul-15	*Superannuation Act 1986*
1-Jan-16	*Education Act 2015*
1-May-16	*Information Act 2002*
5-Jul-16	*Training and Skills Development Act 2016*
10-Aug-16	*Racing and Betting Act 1983 (now the Racing and Wagering Act 2024)*
1-Jan-17	*Fisheries Act 1988*
1-Sep-17	*Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017*
14-Nov-18	*Expungement of Historical Homosexual Offence Records Act 2018*
1-Jul-19	*National Disability Insurance Scheme Authorisations Act 2019*
11-Dec-19	*Auctioneers Act 1935*
1-Jan-20	*Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004*
3-Feb-20	*Construction Contracts (Security of Payments) Act 2004*
2-Mar-20	*Firearms Act 1997*
6-May-20	*Hemp Industry Act 2019*
12-Jun-20	*Sex Industry Act 2020*
1-Jul-20	*National Disability Insurance Scheme (Work Clearance) Act 2020*
1-Nov-22	*Animal Protection Act 2018*
29-Nov-22	*Burial and Cremation Act 2022*
27-Nov-23	*Agents Licensing Act 1979*
27-Nov-23	*Bushfires Management Act 2016*
27-Nov-23	*Commercial and Private Agents Licensing Act 1979 and Regulations*
27-Nov-23	*Community Housing Providers (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2013*
27-Nov-23	*Meat Industries Act 1996*
27-Nov-23	*Northern Territory Rates Act 1971*
27-Nov-23	*Notifiable Diseases Act 1981*
27-Nov-23	*Taxation Administration Act 2007*
30-Apr-24	*Livestock Act 2008*
12-Jun-24	*Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976 and Regulations and Bylaws*
1-Jul-24	*Environment Protection Act 2019*
2-Jul-24	*Racing and Wagering Act 2024*
2-Jul-24	*Water Act 1992*
31-Oct-25	*Environmental Protection (Beverage Containers and Plastic Bags) Act 2011*
13-Sep-25	*Swimming Pool Safety Act 2004*
13-Sep-25	*Valuation of Land Act 1963*
09-Feb-26	*Plumbers and Drainers Licensing Act 1983*

Our People

NTCAT values the essential contribution made by its capable and committed staff.

That commitment is evidenced by NTCAT's engagement with the People Matter Survey, which is for all NT Public Sector employees and happens every 2 years. The employee response rate from NTCAT was 100%. The results from the survey showed an employee engagement score of 83%, representing a very strong level of staff engagement.

Senior Staff

Andrew Macrides' name has appeared in every Annual Report since NTCAT's inception. He was one of the architects of NTCAT Act and has been a Member of the Tribunal since it commenced hearing cases in 2015. When the Bill was passed into law, Andrew was present in parliament, and it was observed by the Attorney-General at the time that for him it must have been like witnessing the birth of a child.

During this reporting period Andrew announced his intention to take extended leave commencing at the end of the financial year. At the time of writing his plans had changed and he was not intending to return to NTCAT.

NTCAT extends its gratitude to Andrew for his enormous contribution in establishing the Tribunal, presiding over cases and offering invaluable mentorship to Members and staff. He has been an integral part of the collegial culture of NTCAT. He will be sorely missed. We wish him and his family well.

For the reporting period, NTCAT's senior staff comprised of:

- Judge Mark O'Reilly – President
- Andrew Macrides – Member
- Ingrid Meier – Member
- Peta Yujnovich – Registrar and Director
- Danielle Hutchinson until August 2025 then Ellie Poulter – Acting Deputy Registrar
- Dane Armstrong – Acting Tribunal Manager

Tribunal Coordinators

The senior staff were supported by a Listing Co-ordinator, a Senior Tribunal Coordinator and eight tribunal coordinators – five in Darwin and three in Alice Springs.

Members

NTCAT has over 45 Members to hear and decide cases. NTCAT has three permanent Members including the President, who is responsible for the management and administration of the Tribunal. The remaining Members work on a sessional basis, meaning they are only engaged in connection with particular proceedings – for example, to conduct compulsory conferences and hearings.

NTCAT's Members are appointed for their specialist knowledge and qualifications from a diverse range of professional backgrounds. This is important to provide flexibility in the make-up of the Tribunal when it is dealing with specialised areas, for example professional disciplinary matters.

The President, two Full-Time Members and the Registrar (who is able to constitute the Tribunal for certain matters) have had the conduct of the majority of the caseload of NTCAT for the reporting period.

Sessional Members

The following were sessional Members of NTCAT during the reporting period.

Ordinary Members appointed by the Administrator under section 16 of the NTCAT Act who are lawyers with at least 5 years' experience as a legal practitioner:

- Katrina Joanna BUDRIKIS
- David Graham ALDERMAN
- David Richard BALDRY
- Russell Raymond GOLDFLAM
- Kenneth John GRIME
- Lesley HASTWELL
- Ronald Michael David LEVY
- Leslie Alexander MCCRIMMON
- Robert Frederick PERRY
- George Michael ROUSSOS
- Benjamin Robert GRIMES
- Joshua Craig INGRAMES
- Julian Quentin JOHNSON
- Megan Louise LAWTON
- Jodie Alva MATHER
- Alison Tryphena PHYLIS
- Richard Hugh BRUXNER
- Linda Ann MORGAN
- Richard Grant GILES
- Gregory John SHANAHAN
- Michael McKillip GROVE
- Sally May GEARIN
- Samantha Julie MILES
- Ian Leonard READ

Ordinary Members appointed by the Administrator under section 16 of the NTCAT Act who hold suitable qualifications, or have suitable knowledge or experience relating to the jurisdiction of the Tribunal:

- Randall Sydney CHIN
- Steven Howard ROBERTSON
- Jill Diane HUCK
- Kathleen Gail LUPPINO
- Paul Hubert RYSAVY
- Diane Louise SZARKOWICZ
- Teresa Mary GARRONE
- James Lawrence Merewyn GREENWOOD
- Suzi Anastasia KAPETAS
- Frances Mary KILGARIFF
- Patricia Diane KURNOTH
- Peter John O'BRIEN
- Arnold Clyde WAUGH
- Donald Lewis ZOELLNER

- Monika Ruth MOY
- Marion ISOBEL GUPPY
- Elizabeth VEEL
- Miriam Ruth MCDONALD
- Adam SATTAR
- Barry Gavin JENKINS
- Elizabeth Ann PARRELLA
- Claudia Monique Giselle ESPENSCHIED
- Mary Elisabeth FROST

Additional ordinary Members appointed by the Minister under section 17 of the NTCAT Act:

- Tony CHALKER

Our Engagement

The President continues to represent NTCAT on the executive committee of the Council of Australasian Tribunals ('COAT') and on the Australian Guardianship and Administrative Council ('AGAC'). The President is also a Member of the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration and is a Member of the Northern Territory Judicial Commission.

The Tribunal is also represented by Ingrid Meier as an Advocate on the Diversity and Inclusion Justice Network (DIJN).

The Tribunal meets quarterly with the office of the Public Guardian and Trustee.

NTCAT continues to take every opportunity to consult with Departments, statutory bodies and other entities seeking to confer jurisdiction on the Tribunal by way of new or amended legislation.

Our Facilities

During the reporting period, NTCAT has continued to maintain registries in Darwin (Casuarina) and Alice Springs.

During the reporting period NTCAT commissioned a review of security arrangements at its Darwin premises. Given the findings of the report, which identified safety risks in the continued use of one of the hearing rooms, NTCAT suspended in person hearings from one hearing room.

It is recommended that the recommendations of the security review be implemented in full as soon as possible. As highlighted in previous annual reports, there are serious security and functional concerns with the current premises. For example, there is no facility for security screening. Security measures for NTCAT should be in line with those required in a Court setting. NTCAT will continue to advocate on this front.

The review also identified other opportunities to strengthen the safety of Members, staff and Tribunal users such as duress alarms. The report has been provided to relevant departmental staff and NTCAT is awaiting their advice with respect to the recommendations in the report.



NTCAT hearing room, Darwin



NTCAT entrance, Alice Springs

Our Performance

Procedures and systems

During the reporting period, NTCAT continued to strengthen Registry practices to support effective and efficient case management. This included enhancing triage procedures, staff training and procedural guidance, as well as developing an NTCAT Service Guide and a new triage process for considering service of documents before hearings. These measures are intended to streamline proceedings and increase the likelihood that matters can be dealt with at the first hearing. The process for using Microsoft Teams during listings was also improved, making it easier to provide remote participants with hearing access links.

NTCAT also revised Form 7 – Unattested Declaration to streamline the default decision process and introduced Form 8 to simplify applications for fee waivers by parties experiencing financial hardship. Payment-processing procedures were strengthened to improve security and provide greater protection for client information.

As much as possible NTCAT maintains a uniform process for initiating an application in any of its jurisdictions. The nature of any Initiating Application filed triggers a standard process and determines which orders and directions will be issued by the registry.

The Mental Health, Adult Guardianship and Internal Review jurisdictions require a departure from the standard procedure. As new jurisdictions are conferred NTCAT assesses the suitability of current procedures on a case by case basis and adjusts its processes accordingly.

Matters that have come before the Tribunal

This section provides information on the number, nature and outcome of matters that have come before the Tribunal in the reporting period as required by section 151(2)(a) of the NTCAT Act.

In this reporting period 3,293 new NTCAT proceedings were commenced across all jurisdictions, up from 2,746 in the previous reporting period.

The Mental Health jurisdiction accounted for the highest volume of new matters (994). Over recent years proceedings under the Mental Health legislation have accounted for the highest number of NTCAT matters. That is significant given the particular resource implications of this jurisdiction. The relevant Act requires a panel of three Tribunal Members to sit on each matter. The panel must be comprised of a suitable medical professional, an experienced legal practitioner and a suitable community Member. These matters are listed three times each week to deal with the Darwin and Alice Springs lists at the respective hospitals. The relevant Act requires that legal representatives be appointed by the Tribunal in certain circumstances. The cost of legal practitioners is currently borne by NTCAT.

As with previous years, the other high volume jurisdictions were under the *Guardianship of Adults Act 2016* and *Advance Personal Planning Act 2013* (together referred to as guardianship matters) with 717 new proceedings commenced; the *Small Claims Act 2016* with 825 new applications; and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999* with 646 new applications.

The number of proceedings commenced in NTCAT's remaining jurisdictions has increased from 89 last year to 111. This rise in less commonly exercised jurisdictions has been predicted in previous Annual Reports. It is an inevitable result of the increase in jurisdictions conferred on the Tribunal.

There are now 82 separate Acts (up from 78 last year) conferring either original or review jurisdiction on NTCAT.

In most cases new conferrals are in our Review jurisdiction which means proceedings can be complex and lengthy. Over recent years there has been a trend upwards in Health Practitioner Regulation and Firearms matters, both of which require multi-Member panels and specialist knowledge.

Of particular note is the fact that 9 applications were commenced under the *Associations Act 2003.* In the last reporting period 2 applications were commenced. This is one example of recently conferred jurisdiction that translates into a significant work-load for the Tribunal. Similarly, the *Burial and Cremation Act 2022* has accounted for several applications over the past two years. There were 5 in the previous reporting period and 4 this year. Those matters involve very sensitive subject matter relating to disputes about the appropriate way in which to dispose of the remains of a family member. While the raw numbers of each new jurisdiction may not be high, they have a significant cumulative effect. Between those two pieces of recently conferred jurisdiction there have been 13 cases commenced. Add to that the *Racing and Wagering Act 2024,* the *Taxation Administration Act 2007* and extended jurisdiction under the *Firearms Act 1972* and the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1992,* and it accounts for upwards of 30 new matters to be determined by the Tribunal. These matters tend to be complex and resource intensive.

In the coming year jurisdiction will be conferred on NTCAT to make decisions under the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 2026.* This is another example of the breadth and continually expanding responsibility of NTCAT. It is to be expected that proceedings under this new Act will be very sensitive in nature and will require the consideration of expert medical evidence. There will also be a need to deal with these matters swiftly and efficiently for the sake of the parties involved. No additional resources have been allocated to recognise the new conferral of jurisdiction.

Table 1 below reveals an increase in the number of proceedings filed under the *Small Claims Act 2016*. It also reveals that the number of proceedings in this jurisdiction fluctuates significantly from year to year. This is explained by the cyclical nature of proceedings filed by one high profile Applicant. As anticipated in the previous annual report, there has been a sharp increase in these matters.

In this reporting period, there was a 300% increase in matters under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1992,* 350% increase in proceedings commenced under the *Associations Act 1992,* and 66% increase in new matters relating to the *Health Practitioners Regulation (NUL) Act 2010.*

In this reporting period new NTCAT proceedings were commenced under the following Acts:

- *Agents Licensing Act 1979*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Associations Act 2003*
- *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996*
- *Building Act 1993*
- *Burial and Cremation Act 2022*
- *Caravan Parks Act 2012*
- *Cullen Bay Marina Act 1992*
- *Fences Act 1972*
- *Firearms Act 1997*
- *Guardianship of Adults Act 2016*
- *Health Practitioner Regulation (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2010*
- *Information Act 2002*
- *Liquor Act 2019*
- *Local Government Act 2019*
- *Mental Health and Related Services Act 1998*
- *Mineral Titles Act 2010*
- *Petroleum Act 1984*
- *Planning Act 1999*
- *Private Security Act 1995*
- *Racing and Wagering Act 2024*
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1999*
- *Small Claims Act 2016*
- *Taxation Administration Act 2007*
- *Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004*
- *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976*
- *Unit Titles Act 1975*
- *Unit Title Schemes Act 2009*
- *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006*

The following tables include breakdowns of proceedings commenced and concluded in 2025/2026.

In both the guardianship and mental health review jurisdictions, a large part of NTCAT's workload involves the review of earlier orders made in respect of a person. There will usually only be one Tribunal "matter" (or file) for that person, but it may remain on foot for many years (with sporadic activity throughout that period). As such, many proceedings in these jurisdictions are not 'commenced' or 'concluded' in the same sense as proceedings in other NTCAT jurisdictions. Because of these differences, statistics for the guardianship and mental health review jurisdiction are presented separately below.

Table 1: Proceedings Commenced: Jurisdictions other than Adult Guardianship & Mental Health Review

JURISDICTION	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Agents Licensing Act 1979	0	0	0	2	0	3
Animal Protection Act 2018	0	0	0	0	1	0
Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017	5	3	2	0	0	0
Anti-Discrimination Act 1992	18	4	2	3	2	8
Associations Act 2003	0	0	0	0	2	9
Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996	2	0	0	0	0	1
Building Act 1993	9	7	7	6	8	6
Burial and Cremation Act 2022	0	0	0	0	5	4
Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003	1	0	0	0	0	0
Caravan Parks Act 2012	0	1	0	1	0	2
Cullen Bay Marina Act 1992	0	0	1	0	0	1
Fences Act 1972	4	0	1	2	5	5
Firearms Act 1972	1	0	1	3	12	9
Fisheries Act 1988	0	0	0	1	0	0
Gaming Machine Act 1995	0	0	0	4	0	0
Health Practitioner Regulation (N.U.L) Act 2010	4	5	9	6	6	10
Health Practitioners Act 2004	0	0	2	0	0	0
Heritage Act 2011	0	0	0	0	1	0
Information Act 2002	2	6	2	1	1	2
Lands Acquisition Act 1978	1	0	0	0	0	0
Liquor Act 2019	4	1	0	4	2	2
Local Government Act 2019	4	4	0	5	2	5
Mineral Titles Act 2010	0	3	0	0	1	1
Pastoral Land Act 1992	1	1	0	0	1	0
Petroleum Act 1984	0	4	2	2	2	2
Planning Act 1999	9	2	2	4	2	1
Private Security Act 1995	2	2	4	1	0	1
Racing and Wagering Act 2024	0	0	0	0	1	2
Residential Tenancies Act 1999	422	468	510	598	578	646
Small Claims Act 2016	1170	370	1413	926	553	825
Superannuation Act 1986	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taxation Administration Act 2007	0	0	0	0	1	1
Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004	3	0	4	0	1	3
Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1976	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unit Titles Act 1975	10	15	11	9	22	21
Unit Title Schemes Act 2009	1	2	1	1	0	3
Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006	10	7	3	4	11	8
TOTAL	**1683**	**905**	**1977**	**1583**	**1220**	**1582**

Table 2: Proceedings Commenced: Adult Guardianship

JURISDICTION	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Advance Personal Planning Act 2013 **(new applications)**	1	10	7	13	12	19
Guardianship of Adults Act 2016 **(new applications)**	250	216	265	258	230	257
Health Care Decision Making Act 2023	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
Guardianship of Adults Act 2016 **(reassessments of existing orders initiated)**	349	282	342	466	428	440
TOTAL	**600**	**508**	**614**	**737**	**671**	**717**

Table 3: Matters requiring discrete orders: Mental Health Review

DISCRETE ORDER	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Involuntary detention mental illness	226	172	196	249	212	238
Involuntary detention mental disturbance	19	12	15	14	7	15
Review tribunal order	43	31	33	30	27	10
Revoke admission discharge from facility	0	0	6	3	4	2
Discharge within seven days	6	4	10	4	3	2
Community Management Order made	223	232	236	297	389	513
Community Management Order declined	6	7	4	6	5	7
Review report – further action	0	4	3	0	0	1
Review report – no further action	45	68	33	37	28	10
Authorise electroconvulsive therapy	27	19	20	18	23	34
Authorise non-psychiatric treatment	7	11	4	6	4	4
Authorise major medical procedure	1	1	7	5	3	1
Warrant to apprehend for assessment	37	60	29	51	33	23
Adjournment	60	65	56	91	118	133
No order made	3	8	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	**703**	**694**	**651**	**812**	**856**	**994**

Table 4: Proceedings Concluded: Jurisdictions other than Adult Guardianship & Mental Health Review

JURISDICTION	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Agents Licensing Act 1979	0	0	0	0	2	0
Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017	4	4	2	0	0	0
Animal Protection Act 2018	0	0	0	0	1	0
Anti-Discrimination Act 1992	8	12	6	3	1	6
Associations Act 2003	0	0	0	0	1	6
Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996	1	1	0	0	0	0
Building Act 1993	0	9	20	5	3	5
Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003	0	1	0	0	0	0
Burial and Cremation Act 2022	0	0	0	0	3	3
Caravan Parks Act 2012	0	0	0	1	0	0
Cullen Bay Marina Act 1992	0	0	1	0	0	1
Fences Act 1972	4	0	1	0	7	4
Firearms Act 1972	0	1	1	1	9	9
Fisheries Act 1988	0	0	0	1	0	0
Gaming Machine Act 1995	0	0	0	0	0	2
Health Practitioner Regulation (N.U.L) Act 2010	1	7	8	4	6	11
Health Practitioners Act 2004	0	0	1	1	0	0
Heritage Act 2011	0	1	0	0	0	0
Information Act 2002	4	6	2	1	1	1
Lands Acquisition Act 1978	0	1	0	0	0	0
Liquor Act 2019	6	0	0	2	4	1
Local Government Act 2019	0	8	0	1	4	3
Mineral Titles Act 2010	0	2	0	0	1	1
Pastoral Land Act 1992	0	1	1	0	0	1
Petroleum Act 1984	0	0	2	3	1	6
Planning Act 1999	7	6	2	3	3	2
Private Security Act 1995	1	1	5	2	0	0
Racing and Betting Act 1983	1	0	0	0	0	0
Racing and Wagering Act 2024	0	0	0	0	0	1
Residential Tenancies Act 1999	429	472	512	578	560	654
Small Claims Act 2016	904	1136	725	1243	770	605
Superannuation Act 1986	0	0	0	0	0	0
Taxation Administration Act 2007	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004	0	2	1	4	1	2
Unit Titles Act 1975	9	18	11	10	17	19
Unit Title Schemes Act 2009	1	0	2	2	0	1
Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006	7	7	7	3	10	6
TOTAL	**1387**	**1697**	**1310**	**1868**	**1405**	**1351**

Table 5: Hearing Outcomes: Adult Guardianship

TYPE OF ORDER (Section of *Guardianship of Adults Act 2016*)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
New guardianship order (s11)	191	171	161	187	178	190
Continued guardianship order – reassessment (s11, s38)	313	263	256	355	365	351
Interim (urgent) guardianship order (s20)	92	77	70	36	23	27
Specified measures (s35)	50	6	0	0	0	0
Vary guardianship order (s39)	83	58	68	88	68	74
Revoke guardianship order (s39)	26	17	27	42	67	36
Register interstate order (s54)	6	4	13	6	8	13
TOTAL	**761**	**596**	**595**	**715**	**709**	**691**

Review rights and provision of written reasons

Section 151(2)(d) of the NTCAT Act requires information on the level of compliance by decision makers with the requirements to notify persons of reviewable decisions and their rights to seek review, and to provide written reasons for reviewable decisions when requested to do so.

There were no concerns arising from proceedings before the Tribunal about compliance by decision makers with the requirement to provide notice of decisions and a right of review.

There has been a high level of compliance with the requirement to provide written reasons on request under section 35(1) of the NTCAT Act and no cause to require written reasons under section 36.

2026-27 Priorities

Outstanding matters

This section provides information on the number, and nature of matters before the Tribunal that are incomplete as at the end of the financial year, as required by section 151(2)(b) of the NTCAT Act.

At the end of the reporting period, as shown in Table 6, there were 722 matters that remained active in addition to the ongoing matters in the adult guardianship and mental health jurisdictions.

Table 6: Proceedings Active: Jurisdictions other than Adult Guardianship and Mental Health Review

JURISDICTION	ACTIVE (as at 30 June 2021)	ACTIVE (as at 30 June 2022)	ACTIVE (as at 30 June 2023)	ACTIVE (as at 30 June 2024)	ACTIVE (as at 30 June 2025)	ACTIVE (as at 30 June 2026)
Alcohol Harm Reduction Act 2017	1	0	0	0	0	0
Agents Licensing Act 1979	0	0	0	2	0	3
Anti-Discrimination Act 1992	13	6	3	2	2	6
Animal Protection Act 2018	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associations Act 2003	0	0	0	0	1	2
Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1996	1	0	0	0	0	1
Building Act 1993	9	8	0	1	5	6
Burial and Cremation Act 2022	0	0	0	0	0	2
Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003	1	0	0	0	0	0
Burial and Cremation Act 2022	0	0	0	0	2	2
Caravan Parks Act 2012	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cullen Bay Marina Act 1992	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fences Act 1972	0	0	0	2	0	1
Firearms Act 1972	1	0	0	2	5	5
Gaming Machine Act 1995	0	0	0	2	0	0
Health Practitioner Regulation (N.U.L) Act 2010	3	4	4	5	4	7
Health Practitioners Act 2004	0	0	1	0	0	0
Heritage Act 2011	0	0	0	0	1	0
Information Act 2002	1	1	1	1	0	2
Lands Acquisition Act 1978	1	0	0	0	0	0
Liquor Act 2019	0	2	0	2	1	2
Local Government Act 2019	4	0	0	4	2	3
Mineral Titles Act 2010	0	1	1	0	0	1
Pastoral Land Act 1992	1	1	0	0	1	0
Petroleum Act 1984	0	4	4	2	2	0
Planning Act 1999	6	2	2	2	2	1
Private Security Act 1995	1	2	1	0	0	1
Racing and Wagering Act 2024	0	0	0	0	0	1
Racing and Betting Act 1983	0	0	0	0	1	0
Residential Tenancies Act 1999	79	132	126	120	144	150
Small Claims Act 2016	792	122	764	446	256	502
Taxation Administration Act 2007	0	0	0	0	1	1

Teacher Registration (Northern Territory) Act 2004	3	1	4	0	0	1
Unit Titles Act 1975	5	6	7	4	9	12
Unit Title Schemes Act 2009	0	2	1	0	0	2
Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2006	5	7	2	3	5	6
TOTAL	**927**	**301**	**921**	**600**	**444**	**722**

Emerging trends or special problems

Section 151(2)(c) of the NTCAT Act requires information on any trends or special problems that may have emerged.

Over recent years NTCAT Annual Reports have highlighted the fact that as the Tribunal's jurisdictional responsibilities expand, there is a need for increased resources. This seems self-evident. The statistics for the past year indicate that the Tribunal's work-load is increasing.

Lack of Sufficient Staff

The Review into NTCAT has recommended the appointment of two additional full-time Tribunal Members, with one of those Members being appointed as a Deputy President.

Despite a requirement under the NTCAT Act, the Tribunal has never effectively had a Deputy President and there is currently no mechanism for the appointment of an Acting President. There are certain functions of a President under the NTCAT Act that currently cannot be delegated. Wherever that is the case there is a risk that the Tribunal will not be able to perform its functions. Any arrangements for an Acting President would need to be mindful of the need for independence. The most fitting solution to that problem would be the appointment of an independent Deputy who can act in the President's place when the need arises.

Two additional Members would enable the Tribunal to deal with more cases in-house and would reduce the reliance on sessional Members.

The Review of NTCAT also recommends that the supernumerary positions in the registry be confirmed as permanent positions. These positions are an AO5 Senior Tribunal Coordinator and SAO1 Deputy Registrar. These positions expire on 30 December 2026.

These positions were approved in recognition of the increasing administrative needs of the Tribunal. The Attorney-General's Department has indicated these positions will be funded ongoing. As reported last year and the previous year, it is essential for the ongoing efficient management of the Tribunal that these roles become permanent rather than remaining as supernumerary. This will create both certainty for the employees in these roles and long-term stability in staffing for the Tribunal.

During the reporting period NTCAT called for expressions of interest for sessional Members. While the current pool of sessional Members is large, it must be remembered that many of those Members are specialists who only sit on specific types of matters as required. They are not engaged regularly and are paid only on the basis of the work that they do. There is no cost associated with maintaining a pool of sessional Members.

Some Members who remain appointed are no longer available to undertake NTCAT work and their appointments will expire in due course.

Accordingly, there is currently a need to expand the available pool of legal Members. In the absence of sufficient full-time Members there is a heavy reliance on legal practitioners who have been appointed as Members to preside over cases. In order to maintain efficiency and quality NTCAT requires appointment of several new sessional Members who are legal practitioners. Following the call for expressions of interest, several names have been recommended for appointment but no appointments have been made.

Inadequate Premises

The review of security at NTCAT's Casuarina premises has already been referred to. NTCAT's continued reliance on outdated and unsafe premises raises significant risk for users and staff.

Forecast of workload in next financial year

Section 151(2)(e) of the NTCAT Act requires forecasts of the workload of the Tribunal in the next financial year. Based on the activity of the last 3 reporting periods, lodgements to date and pending matters, the following estimates are made for the 2026 / 2027 financial year:

Jurisdiction	Estimate of new matters
Small Claims and other similar disputes	950
Residential Tenancies	600
Guardianship	750
Mental Health	1000
Matters in non-routine jurisdictions	120
	3,420

The above estimates do not distinguish between simple and complex matters.

It is also noted the NTCAT will be conferred jurisdiction under the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Act 2026.*

Proposals for improving the management and operation of the Tribunal

Section 151(2)(f) requires the report to contain any proposals for improving the management and operation of the Tribunal.

NTCAT has already taken steps to implement some of the recommendations in the Review. For example, we have reviewed our process for taking credit card payments from applicants and have made some changes to our website with more changes to come.

We maintain an ongoing process of review of forms and processes.

In this reporting period, the cost of sessional Members compared to the previous reporting period increased by over $180,000. This is attributable to increased filings, and particularly an increase in matters in the review jurisdiction, which tend to be more complex. Further, the number of orders made in the mental health jurisdiction increased, and these require a panel of three to comprise the Tribunal.

It is trite to observe that an increase in the work that NTCAT must do without a commensurate increase in resources will impact our ability to adhere to our important objectives of accessibility, efficiency, achieving just outcomes, flexibility and high quality.

The recommendation that two additional full time Members, including a Deputy President be appointed will improve the quality and efficiency of the Tribunal and will be the most cost effective way of responding to increasing demand.

Implementation of the recommendation that the supernumerary positions in the registry be confirmed as permanent positions is critical to the ongoing management and operation of the Tribunal.

Recommendations were also made to improve the website and public facing information by having it available in multiple languages, providing video guides on the website, and reviewing the website and other public facing documents for comprehensibility. NTCAT has requested additional resourcing from the Attorney-General's Department to undertake this work.