

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Question No. 12 of Year 2025

Legislative Council

ASKED BY: Hon Meg Webb MLC

ANSWERED BY: The Hon Jo Palmer MLC

QUESTION:

My question is to the Honourable Leader of the Government;

*In relation to the government's arrangement with the organisation JCP Youth and specifically regarding the organisation's BlackOut Challenge program, can the government:*

- 1 Confirm whether the Department or Government were aware of the BlackOut Challenge, which is a component of JCP's Beast Program, prior to it being advertised and run earlier this year?  
And;
  - a - If the government was aware of the BlackOut Challenge, please detail when it was informed of the program, and any assessment details the government undertook to ensure appropriateness;
  - b - If the government was not aware prior to the program being advertised and run, when was it made aware, and please detail any assessment of consideration made of its appropriateness;
- 2 Detail whether information has been either sought by the government on the BlackOut Challenge, or been provided by JCP Youth, and when was that information provided?
- 3 Detail how the BlackOut Challenge Program fits within the JCP Youth Beast Program, and more particularly within the [Funding Agreement](#) with JCP Youth?
- 4 Clarify to what extent the funding agreement takes into account extended operations of the Beast program, and whether all programs under the Beast programs come under the conditions of the funding agreement, regardless of whether the Government funding agreement directly funds it?

- 5 Clarify whether should the BlackOut Challenge Program not be funded and covered by the funding agreement with JCP Youth, are participants in the Blackout program drawn from children who are also part of the funded Beast Program?
- 6 Detail how participants were selected for the recently run BlackOut Challenge Program?
- 7 Confirm whether the BlackOut Challenge Program included participants under state care and protection, and/or any type of youth justice order, and if so, how was permission sought and provided for their participation?;
- 8 Confirm whether any concerns have been raised with the government in regard to the Blackout Challenge and if so, when, and what were the nature of those concerns, and how has the Government responded to those concerns?
- 9 In context of schedule 2, section 2.2.4 (Consumer Outcomes) of the Funding Agreement with JCP Youth which states, the Service Provider will ensure that service delivery models employed are consistent with providing positive outcomes for consumers and utilise evidence-based and therapeutic practice, detail:
  - a - Whether, and if so on what basis, does the government consider the wearing of balaclavas, as per photos depicting JCP workers wearing in recent social media posts following the Blackout Challenge in October this year, to be an example of utilise evidence-based and therapeutic practice?; and
  - b - How monitoring of the funding agreement takes into account the success rate of completion versus participation, in light of these recent JCP Youth social media posts indicating only one participant out of 43 was successful in completing the Blackout Challenge?

**ANSWER:**

- 1. Confirm whether the Department or Government were aware of the BlackOut Challenge, which is a component of JCP's Beast Program, prior to it being advertised and run earlier this year? And;**

**a - If the government was aware of the BlackOut Challenge, please detail when it was informed of the program, and any assessment details the government undertook to ensure appropriateness;**

**b - If the government was not aware prior to the program being advertised and run, when was it made aware, and please detail any assessment of consideration made of its appropriateness;**

- (a) The JCP Youth BEAST Program is a flexible and individualised service tailored to each young person.**

I am advised the Blackout challenge is an optional, voluntary activity offered to the department-referred JCP Youth BEAST program participants.

I am advised JCP Youth informed the Department for Education, Children and Young People (the department) approximately three weeks prior to the Blackout challenge commencement.

I am advised no concerns were identified by the department regarding the safety of the department-referred participants.

I have requested that the department undertake an assessment of the appropriateness of the Blackout challenge for department referred BEAST participants.

- (b) Part b to this question is not applicable.**

- 2. Detail whether information has been either sought by the government on the BlackOut Challenge, or been provided by JCP Youth, and when was that information provided?**

- I am advised DECYP has sought and received information about the Blackout challenge, including how it fits within the broader BEAST program, how program participants are engaged to participate, when and how**

consents and permissions are obtained, travel arrangements and how JCP Youth offers and prepares participants to participate in the Blackout challenge.

- JCP Youth provided information to the Statewide Youth Practice Manager in September 2025, as part of its broader JCP Youth Operational practice discussions.
- These discussions occurred with operational staff in the time leading up to the Blackout challenge as part of planning for individual participants.
- The Blackout challenge fits more broadly within the BEAST program as a facilitated activity for BEAST participants. The Blackout challenge is one of many programs facilitated throughout the year that BEAST participants can engage in.
- JCP Youth facilitators and team leaders obtain consent from both the young people and their guardians or carers during their regular engagement in the BEAST program.
- Transport to and from the Blackout challenge was provided by JCP Youth and participants travelled in JCP Youth registered vehicles to a destination where the Blackout challenge was held.
- As the Blackout challenge is an 'opt-in' 'opt-out' program, JCP Youth always has staff on hand to transport a young person home if a participant decides they do not wish to continue participating in the Blackout challenge. This is a consistent practice for any JCP Youth program.
- As with any program offered by JCP Youth, participants are provided an overview of what the program will entail, where they will be going, what they can do if they do not wish to participate further. Young people also can ask questions regarding any worries or concerns they may have.
- JCP Youth follow-up with participants regularly including when their time in the BEAST program has ended to check in with the young person to ensure their wellbeing. The first check-in occurs 2-4 hours after being transported back by JCP Youth.

**3. Detail how the BlackOut Challenge Program fits within the JCP Youth Beast Program, and more particularly within the Funding Agreement with JCP Youth?**

- The Blackout challenge is not specifically named within the JCP Youth funding agreement; however, outdoor recreation programs and development camps are listed as program options for department-referred BEAST participants.
- Department-referred participants in JCP Youth's BEAST program may voluntarily choose to participate in the Blackout challenge.
- I am advised the young people who are not referred by the department to the JCP Youth BEAST program may also participate in the Blackout challenge and are therefore, outside of the funding agreement.
- The participants not referred to JCP Youth by the department are not monitored by the department and therefore not included in JCP Youth reporting requirements under the funding agreement.

**4. Clarify to what extent the funding agreement takes into account extended operations of the Beast program, and whether all programs under the Beast programs come under the conditions of the funding agreement, regardless of whether the Government funding agreement directly funds it?**

- I am advised by the department that the JCP Youth BEAST Program is a flexible and individualised program tailored to each young person based on outcomes identified with the participant.
- I am further advised that any component or activity of the JCP Youth BEAST program for a department-referred participant is covered under the JCP Youth funding agreement.

**5. Clarify whether should the BlackOut Challenge Program not be funded and covered by the funding agreement with JCP Youth, are participants in the Blackout program drawn from children who are also part of the funded Beast Program?**

- I am advised the Blackout challenge is not specifically named within the funding agreement between the department and JCP Youth.
- However, outdoor recreation programs and development camps are listed as a program options for department referred BEAST participants and therefore covered as part of the funding agreement.

**6. Detail how participants were selected for the recently run BlackOut Challenge Program?**

- I am advised participation in JCP Youth BEAST program activities offered to department referred participants is voluntary and this includes the Blackout challenge.
- I am advised any department referred BEAST program participant may be offered a placement on the Blackout challenge by JCP Youth and may opt-out at any time.
- Suitability for the Blackout challenge is determined by the individual and JCP Youth according to individually identified outcomes.
- Department referred JCP Youth BEAST program participants discuss their involvement in the Blackout challenge with the young person's lead JCP Youth worker. This discussion includes what the Blackout challenge is, what to expect and the participant's ability to opt out at any time.
- Based on these discussions and in collaboration with the young person, JCP Youth staff establish suitability of the participant to engage in the Blackout challenge as part of their overall BEAST program activities schedule.

**7. Confirm whether the BlackOut Challenge Program included participants under state care and protection, and/or any type of youth justice order, and if so, how was permission sought and provided for their participation?;**

- I cannot make comment on individual participant circumstances due to confidentiality reasons.
- I am advised under the funding agreement department referrals of young people to JCP Youth occurs according to the following criteria:
  - Young people involved in court/repeat offending behaviours who may be disengaged from formal education and/or relevant support services.
  - Young people exiting custodial sentencing with an identified recidivism risk.
  - Young people in contact with the youth justice system with a remanded status.
  - Young people demonstrating impulsive and risk-taking, offending-related behaviours, and/or
  - Any identified young person who is likely to benefit from a diversionary program, at the Department's discretion.
- Under the funding agreement, JCP Youth must obtain written consent from both the referred participant and the participant's parent or guardian before the participant commences in the BEAST program and any of its components or activities.

**8. Confirm whether any concerns have been raised with the government in regard to the Blackout Challenge and if so, when, and what were the nature of those concerns, and how has the Government responded to those concerns?**

- My office was contacted by a constituent on 17 October 2025 raising concerns about a JCP Youth social media post in relation to its Blackout challenge.
- My office subsequently requested information from the department about the Blackout challenge and I requested the department to undertake a deeper

assessment of the appropriateness of the Blackout challenge for DECYP referred BEAST participants.

- I have requested the department provide me with an update as soon as this information is available.
- I am advised the department acts according to all legislative requirements when responding to any child safeguarding concern.

**9. In context of schedule 2, section 2.2.4 (Consumer Outcomes) of the Funding Agreement with JCP Youth which states, the Service Provider will ensure that service delivery models employed are consistent with providing positive outcomes for consumers and utilise evidence-based and therapeutic practice, detail:**

**a - Whether, and if so on what basis, does the government consider the wearing of balaclavas, as per photos depicting JCP workers wearing in recent social media posts following the Blackout Challenge in October this year, to be an example of utilise evidence-based and therapeutic practice?; and**

**b - How monitoring of the funding agreement takes into account the success rate of completion versus participation, in light of these recent JCP Youth social media posts indicating only one participant out of 43 was successful in completing the Blackout Challenge?**

**(a)** I am advised the face coverings worn by young people participating in the program was done to support privacy and inclusion of the participants who provided consent to have their photo shared to social media but chose not include their faces, which was actioned in agreement with the wishes of young people and their families.

Where face coverings are worn by staff, this is done briefly and by people well known to all participants.

All required consents were obtained for publishing photos of the participants on social media and approval obtained prior to posting.

I am advised the attire consisted of standard cold-weather apparel such as jackets, cargo pants, gloves, and face coverings used for warmth and safety; noting the clothing worn also included items such as neck gaiters or thermal hoods, which can be referred to as balaclavas. I am

advised JCP Youth has acknowledged that the use of face coverings may be perceived differently by those viewing images without context.

I am advised JCP Youth operates within the legal framework *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* and that the practices and approach applied by JCP Youth is consistent with child-safe and trauma-informed principles.

JCP Youth ensures consent obtained from young people is meaningful, ongoing, and reflective of the participant's maturity and comprehension of what participation involves, which ensures the participant's needs are placed at the centre of JCP Youth practices.

**(b)** The funding agreement between JCP Youth and the department includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure how many young people have been supported through the BEAST program, how well the services were delivered by JCP Youth, and how the enrolled participants benefited from their time in the BEAST program.

I am advised JCP Youth considers that participant success is not defined by completion of the 12-month BEAST program or any of the individual activities such as the Blackout challenge. For many young people referred by the department to the JCP Youth BEAST program, participating any part of the program can be a significant achievement for the participant.

JCP Youth varies the BEAST program activity inclusions to meet the needs of each individual participant, which may include participation in the Blackout challenge.

I am further advised there is no requirement on any young person to participate in specific JCP Youth BEAST program activities if offered by JCP Youth, including the Blackout challenge. Individual programs are designed with young people to meet their pre-identified outcomes.

I am advised under the funding agreement, JCP Youth monitors and reports on multiple success measures including individual outcomes developed between JCP Youth and each young person.

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED



Hon. Minister Jo Palmer  
**Minister for Children and Youth**  
**Minister for Education**

Date: 10.12.25.