



Mick Gentleman MLA

Manager of Government Business
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety

Member for Brindabella

Mr Tom Duncan
Clerk
ACT Legislative Assembly
London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Our ref: FILE2023/5733

Dear Mr Duncan *Tom*

Thank you for your letter of 9 May 2023, regarding petition 006-23 lodged by Mr Michael Pettersson MLA. The petition requests a new police station and additional police resources for Gungahlin District. This letter is my response, pursuant to Standing Order 100.

The ACT Government notes the petitioners' concerns regarding:

- An improved new office space within six months;
- An increased number of police officers in the ACT budget 2023-24;
- Committing to a timeline for increasing resources to meet the demands of Gungahlin;
- Ensuring proper community consultation is followed.

ACT Policing's highest priority has always been the safety and security of the community along with its workforce.

When discussing crime in the ACT, it is important to remember the advice from successive Chief Police Officers that Canberra is a very safe city – one of the safest in Australia. The ACT Government continues to work with, and invest in, ACT Policing to ensure that incidents of crime remain low and that they are responded to quickly when they do occur. While the ACT experiences low crime rates compared to other jurisdictions, the ACT Government acknowledges that property crime does not discriminate; it can affect anyone and is often opportunistic in nature, requiring residents and business owners to always remain vigilant.

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ACT Policing is committed to maintaining its visibility and presence throughout Canberra, including in Gungahlin. Target areas for patrolling are based on intelligence, with ACT Policing's Intelligence Team analysing a variety of information sources to identify patterns, convergences and prioritisation to maximise crime reduction opportunities and increase community safety.

Community Focused

In consultation with the ACT Government, ACT Policing is transitioning to a community-focused, proactive model of policing under the Police Services Model (PSM) to ensure the ongoing safety of the Canberra community. This includes a strategic accommodation plan that will consider future policing needs. Additionally, education and public messaging are important components of crime prevention, community safety and enhancing confidence in police. ACT Policing is committed to raising awareness of community safety through active engagement with the entire community and the delivery of effective safety messaging.

ACT Policing Intelligence advises on patterns of offending in the district of Gungahlin and officers will continue to work with the community and key stakeholders to ensure the community is safe. ACT Policing encourages continued reporting of suspicious behaviour by members of the community, in order to be able to prioritise its resources effectively and efficiently.

Gungahlin Joint Emergency Service Centre (JESC)

In response to critical accommodation issues for ACT Policing at the JESC, the Government is relocating the ACT Rural Fire Services and ACT State Emergency Service units from the JESC to premises in Mitchell in mid-2024. Following this relocation, the JESC will be reconfigured, allowing ACT Policing to increase its operational footprint to relieve urgent accommodation pressures.

Sufficient police for a faster response time

Canberrans can be assured that police resources have always been available to support and protect our community – and always will be. Like all organisations, ACT Policing has to manage its resources appropriately in line with operational priorities, which impact police response times. ACT Policing prioritises its responses to life threatening emergencies first, followed by incidents where there is an immediate threat to a person or property.

Canberra's condensed geography means that officers can move across the territory in a timely manner, with police regularly undertaking duties in different patrol zones as resources are required. As such, ACT Policing has additional resources available to respond to incidents in Gungahlin, as well as those located at Gungahlin Police Station. ACTP's dispatch system ensures the closest and most available resources are allocated. While police stations will always be a part of the police ecosystem, ACT Policing officers have more communication tools and technology than ever before, which allows them to do more of their work on the road and respond faster to crimes when they are occurring.

The ACT Government is continuing to ensure that Canberra remains adequately served by our frontline police officers and that ACT Policing has the resources necessary to keep our community one of the safest in the world.

Since the petition was tabled, the ACT Government has announced an investment of an additional \$107 million over five years towards delivering 126 new ACT Policing personnel. This continues the transition towards a more visible, proactive and connected police service. This funding injection represents a significant increase in resourcing for ACT Policing.

By bolstering police numbers and equipping them with the necessary resources, police will be better able to respond to incidents and the evolving needs of the ACT community. This funding injection is a record spend on the police force since self-government began.

Through the transition to the PSM, ACT Policing is developing the ability to more effectively deploy its resources based on intelligence and manage its workforce efficiently.

I trust this brings the petitioners assurance that their concerns are understood and have been acknowledged by the ACT Government.

Yours sincerely



Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Police and Emergency Services

7/8/2023