



Mick Gentleman MLA

Manager of Government Business
Minister for Business
Minister for Fire and Emergency Services
Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Minister for Police and Crime Prevention

Member for Brindabella

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

Our ref: FILE2023/22140

Dear Mr Duncan *Tom*

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2023, regarding petition E-PET-021-23, Increasing the police presence at Kippax Group Centre. The petition requests the Assembly call on the Government to increase the number of police officers at the Kippax Group Centre and ensure that regular patrols are provided by police officers on foot and in police vehicles to increase safety for citizens. Pursuant to Standing Order 100, this letter constitutes my response.

Visible and regular police presence in the vicinity of Kippax Group Centre

ACT Policing's priority is always the safety and security of the community and 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 can affect anyone and is often opportunistic in nature, requiring residents and business owners to always remain vigilant.

ACT Policing is committed to maintaining its visibility and presence throughout Canberra, including at the Kippax Group Centre. Target areas for patrolling are based on intelligence, with ACT Policing's

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Intelligence Team analysing a variety of information sources to identify patterns, convergences and prioritisation to maximise crime reduction opportunities and increase community safety.

ACT Policing is aware of the rise in concerns in Kippax and across the West Belconnen area more generally.

As part of its commitment to community consultation, all ACT Policing Station Inspectors engage with business owners and operators as opportunities arise, to raise awareness about burglaries and other criminal conduct, and when requested, to provide education on how to protect and secure businesses from criminality.

ACT Policing's leadership team at Belconnen Police Station has been highly vigilant with engagement in West Belconnen, and the Officer Charge of Belconnen Police Station has indicated that police officers are keen to continue building relationships with business owners and residents in Kippax and surrounding suburbs.

Senior members also attend community forum sessions, including Belconnen Community Council meetings, when available upon request. At these sessions, police address questions from and work with business owners on strategies to help reduce anti-social behaviour incidents and limit the opportunity for crime to occur.

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. 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 Holt 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.

Resources and police response

Target areas for patrolling are based on intelligence, which draws on a number of sources including community involvement and engagement directly with ACT Policing. ACT Policing takes advice from ACT Policing Intelligence on patterns of offending in the areas surrounding the Kippax Shopping Centre and works with the centre owners and tenants to share the responsibility of ensuring the community and businesses remain safe.

ACT Policing has resources other than those located at Belconnen Police Station, and its dispatch system ensures the closest and most available resources will be allocated. Canberra's condensed

geographical nature means police officers can move across the territory in a timely manner, with police undertaking duties in different patrol zones as required.

While police stations will always be a part of the police ecosystem, it is important to recognise that 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.

ACT Policing prioritises its responses to life threatening emergencies first, followed by incidents where there is an immediate threat to a person or property. Response times to specific incidents are also impacted by other operational priorities occurring at the time.

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.

The ACT Government has previously announced an investment of an additional \$107 million over five years towards delivering 126 new ACT Policing personnel. This funding injection is a record spend on the police force since self-government began, and represents a significant increase in resourcing for ACT Policing. Bolstering police numbers and equipping police with the necessary resources means police will be better able to respond to incidents and the evolving needs of the ACT community, and continues the transition towards a more visible, proactive and connected police service.

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.

Community engagement

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 steadily increased its community engagement activities in 2023. As a result, police officers have attended and hosted numerous events in local Canberra shopping centres and cafes, engaging face-to-face and re-establishing ACT Policing's strong relationships with the Canberra community.

ACT Policing held its first Coffee with a Cop at Kippax Fair on Friday 19 May 2023, with more than 60 community members embracing the opportunity to meet police officers informally over coffee. Topics discussed include but were not limited to policing in the area, community safety, crime prevention, careers within ACT Policing and policing in general.

ACT Policing received more than 117 requests in 2023 to attend community events in a public engagement capacity. ACT Policing continues to facilitate officer attendance at these events as

operational priorities allow, further demonstrating its commitment to strengthening relationships with the community.

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

Yours sincerely



Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Police and Crime Prevention

14/2/2024